Sussex Botanical Recording Society

Newsletter

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President's message

Greetings to you all for 2013 and wishes for a good year for the SBRS. We will not this year have Rod Stern as our Chairman - an office which he has fulfilled splendidly for so many years, but has decided to resign. Together we have nominated an appropriate successor for election this year - Nick Sturt is known to you all and chaired the Autumn Get-together. The reins would be well guided in his hands. And happily Rod will still be with us as he plans to come to meetings.

In the last years of the 1970s the Sussex Flora Society was preparing the *Sussex Plant Atlas* for publication, much as the SBRS is now looking forward to the completion of the new *Flora*. Recording for the *Atlas* began in 1966, and the *Atlas* was planned as a ten year project with seven years field recording followed by a couple of years for checking, filling gaps etc. We found that this part of the project took longer than anticipated, and we had not time to get the full coverage for which we hoped, but publication was finally achieved in 1980. New records were still being found - one I particularly recall was *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* at Thorney. Always rare in Sussex, this *Oenanthe* had decreased, with only one sighting in West Sussex between 1966 and 1978. This was on the edges of a marshy pond in a field between Itchingfield and Christ's Hospital, spotted by Ron Boniface and me. Although there were a few sites in East Sussex, because this was the only West Sussex record it was very carefully checked, keyed out and refereed before inclusion. The locality, Weston's Farm, is no longer a working farm, and in the field I am told that there is now a large farm shop. Then in 1979, when records were no longer accepted for inclusion, the SFS had a late summer field meeting on Thorney Island, where *Oenathe pimpinelloides* was found in quantity - in five tetrads! This was sufficiently significant to be added to the *Atlas* text - a speedy addition just before going to press. For the new *Flora* there is still time to add many records and we hope that some exciting ones are just waiting to be discovered in 2013.

The helpful notes from your Recorders today make the requirements easier to identify; this had been even more difficult before the publication of the *Atlas*.

Good hunting. Mary Briggs

(Ed's note: fortunately *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* does still occur on a road verge near Christ's Hospital)

Secretary's Note

Dates for your Diary:

Saturday 2nd March 2013

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. at Staplefield Village Hall. As Rod Stern wishes to retire as Chairman of the SBRS, a post he has held for over 26 years, nominations are required for a new Chairman. We have one nomination for Nick Sturt; any further nominations (agreed by the nominee) must be seconded and sent to me in writing to arrive at least one week before the AGM. After the AGM, there will be details of this year's field meetings, a progress report on the New Flora and details of interesting records received. Please bring your digital photographs or slides of Sussex plants to show to the meeting, which will finish with tea and biscuits. The hall will be available from 1.30 p.m. if you wish to bring any books or plants for sale.

Saturday 2nd November 2013

The Autumn Get-together will be held at Staplefield Village Hall. The doors will be open from 10.00 a.m. and the meeting will start promptly at 10.30 a.m. The meeting will include progress on the New Flora and reports of field meetings. Please remember to bring a packed lunch; tea, coffee and cakes will be available. Members are invited to bring books and plants for sale, any items of interest or specimens for display, and digital photographs or slides to show in the afternoon. Offers of homemade cakes are always welcome and prove very popular, and the sale of them boosts our funds. Please remember to put the date in your diary now, so that you do not forget to come to this very enjoyable day.

I can email the latest address list to any member who would like one but, for reasons of confidentiality, this list is not available on the website. Don't forget to let Arthur Hoare know if you are willing to receive the newsletter electronically as this saves the Society money which will be used for publication costs of the New Flora.

Rita Hemsley

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Treasurer's Note

Up until recently, ever since we have had a website we have been fortunate that we have not had to pay for the hosting, courtesy of first Alan and then Ian Knapp - to both of whom we owe a great debt of gratitude. However, now the host server can no longer have us and so we have had to move to a new server, for which payment must be made. So, after discussion, your Committee has decided that we shall have to ask at the 2013 AGM for the membership to agree to new subscription rates. The proposal will be for rates of £8 for individuals and £11 for two persons at one address. These rates should enable the Society to remain solvent whilst we continue to concentrate on the new *Flora*! Please refrain from paying 2013 subscriptions until the rates are confirmed.

I must not close this note without saying thank you to all of you who have already made donations towards the *Flora*, most especially to Mike Goodchild, who gave an extremely generous sum. Of course further donations are always welcome!

Please note my new email address:
trevorlording@btinternet.com.

Trevor Lording

Rod Stern

As announced at the Autumn Get-together, Rod has sadly decided to relinquish the gavel and has resigned his Chairmanship of the SBRS. The Society owes him so much, and we give him our gratitude, admiration and affection. It is a suitable time for some memories:

Thoughts of Chairman Rod

by Nick Sturt

A few days before Christmas I was reminiscing with Rod about some of the early field meetings of the Society. Although I had encountered our esteemed former Chairman before, I was first amazed by his expertise when he was leading a group through the northern part of Petworth Park. I noticed some grass-like leaves in a damp hollow and asked him what these could be: without hesitation he said 'Most probably either *Carex laevigata* or *vesicaria*'. I did not think it possible to recognise from these relatively nondescript leaves not only that this was a sedge but that it was one of two particular species of sedge… Then over the years I came to realize that Rod has an expert knowledge not only of mosses and liverworts but also of higher plants – indeed there are very few species of native British plants that in a long botanical life he has not seen. Of course, he started young, as several of his schoolfellows whom I have met confirm.

Before his move to Sussex, Rod had been a major player in the Surrey Flora Committee and botanised in the company of some famous names of the past, among them Ted Lousley and Francis Rose. On one early SBRS outing we were joined by another of Rod's Surrey colleagues, Ted Wallace, who had travelled by train – in those days there was always at least one fixture every season with a rendezvous at a railway station so that those without their own transport might easily attend. I was able to glimpse just a little of Ted's formidable knowledge of both vascular plants and bryophytes on this day, but my clearest memory is of a very irritating official who stopped the party just as it was getting to grips with the marginal vegetation of an interesting-looking pond. A rather small man, he dismounted from a quaint motorcycle wearing what looked like the standard issue helmet of the army of the Third Reich and insisted (in less than courteous terms) that whereas we might just possibly have been granted access to the wood we certainly had no right to set foot on the edge of the pond; and he proceeded to form a diminutive and remarkably intimidating

barrier to prevent us. I still wonder about the botanical treasures we may have missed on that day.

The two meetings to which I have referred took place very early in the 1980s, soon after the publication of the *Sussex Plant Atlas*. Yet there was no sense that anyone in the newly created SBRS was resting on their laurels: there was always a discovery to be made, knowledge to be gained, work to be done. Rod himself has invariably used the word *work* to describe the activities of the Society and it is *work* that he has undertaken with great dedication and relish. As Chairman much of this work has been unseen by the membership – the piles of correspondence, the sitting on numerous committees. Although he has lived towards the western end of the county until recently he has made it a rule to attend at least one meeting in the Far East. But I have noticed that the work which Rod likes best is that which is done on a balmy Summer evening at one of the splendid local Chichester meetings which he has organised for many years. I have to say that on these occasions he has not always arranged the weather to the complete satisfaction of the other local members, and more than once as we have taken ineffectual shelter under trees the recording card has dissolved in my hands; but it has always been a worthwhile event and it has always been fun.

As we press on towards the completion of the *New Flora*, let it not be forgotten that it was Rod who, when the *Sussex Plant Atlas* had been produced, was most insistent that the assemblage of botanists under the banner of the Sussex Flora Society should not simply disband, its combined botanical energy dissipated. With other key figures, most notably Mary, he brought into being the SBRS. The rest, as they say, is history, and under President Mary and Chairman Rod the Society has flourished indeed.

CORRECTION!

In the last Newsletter Howard Matcham's postcode was given incorrectly. It should be: PO18 OLB.
Sorry, Howard.

Thanks to Ian Knapp

The SBRS Committee would like to thank Alan Knapp's son, Ian, for his help to us following Alan's tragic death.

Ian had assisted his father in devising our digital recording system and setting up our website, and his aid to us in getting to grips with Alan's digital legacy has been invaluable. He was ever on hand to advise Judith and Roy, enabling progress with the new *Flora* to continue without too many hiccups. In addition, through Ian's company we enjoyed free hosting of our website.

Ian has now left the company, and we have moved to a new website host, so this is a suitable moment to record our heartfelt gratitude.

Obituaries

Roger Derek Wise 1925 – 2012

Some members will remember with delight our field meeting some years ago in the grounds of Derek's house in Barcombe, where we enjoyed species-rich grassland and other interesting habitats. After tea, we admired his wonderful collection of early botanical books. David Lang writes:

Derek Wise was born in Suffolk near Ipswich, where he spent an idyllic childhood, developing a lifelong interest in the natural world in many of its aspects.

Leaving Cambridge, he joined the Fleet Air Arm and trained as a Petty Officer Pilot in America. After the war he joined Charrington's Brewery, where he became a director.

Moving to Sussex, living first in Piltdown, then in Lewes, and latterly in Barcombe at Berewood House, he developed a keen interest in wild flowers, relishing botanical outings with the SBRS and enjoying a rather wild garden with orchids growing on the lawn and on an old railway line which ran along the edge of the property.

Derek was a bibliophile and book collector of note, and visitors to Berewood House will remember rooms literally full of books, crammed from floor to ceiling, leaving nowhere to sit down. He became an expert on the work of the writer and artist Edward Lear, and like him was a genuine 'character', who never lost his interest in life.

Elizabeth Rich

We were sorry to hear that Elizabeth had died last year. She was a loyal member of the SBRS for many years. Rachel Nicolson writes:

Elizabeth had always been interested in flowers and wildlife. When she lived in London she was a member of the London Natural History Society. She was Minuting Secretary to the Council of the BSBI for many years. And of course she was a long-time member of the SBRS, and a contributor to the *Sussex Plant Atlas*. More recently, she was also a contributor to Tim Rich's *Flora of Ashdown Forest*. We didn't get to know each other well until we were both in our 60s and lived more in the present!

Cataloguing Bexhill Herbarium

by Jacqueline Rose

When Paul Harmes telephoned Julian Porter, the curator at Bexhill museum, to arrange for Matthew Berry to extract the Sussex records from the herbarium held there, he was told that Ellen Campbell, Frances Winch and I had already begun to catalogue the herbarium, so it was decided we should all join in.

The most interesting collection to us was put together by Phyllis Stockdale, very carefully and properly, perhaps with advice from her father, an amateur botanist, and the well-known botanist F J Hanbury, who was a friend. She began the collection in 1910 when she was aged 12, and it continued until she was 16, with a few later additions.

The herbarium seems to have been given to Bexhill museum in about 1930, and is in good condition, partly, because few people seem to know about it, and partly because of what Julian calls 'good housekeeping', careful storage and checking. Some sheets were put in the freezer for a specified length of time when we noticed insect damage that could have been recent.

Phyllis Stockdale lived in East Grinstead, and the Sussex plants came from thereabouts, including some rather surprising ones, such as Dorset Heath, from Hanbury's home, Brockhurst. The rest were gathered during her holidays, mostly in the West Country, apart from a few interesting specimens from the Botanical Exchange Club. She pressed and mounted her specimens, each species on a single sheet of paper of the recommended size, approximately 38cm x 28cm, showing as many features of the plant as possible, and wrote the scientific name, location, name of the collector and date in the bottom right hand corner. These were gathered into brown folders of heavier paper, one for each genus, so some folders contain a large number of sheets, some only one. Some sheets of specimens collected by other people have found their way into the folders but have very little information on them and were consequently useless to us. The task provided us with a wonderful opportunity to study plants that we have never seen, or compare plants that flower at different times.

There is with her collection a brief biography, with contributions from Rachel Nicholson and Patrick Coulcher, but mostly from Phyllis' daughter, Paula. After leaving East Grinstead High School Phyllis worked in a bank, where she met her future husband, Gerald Horrill. They moved to the outskirts of Eastbourne, where, with her husband and three children, she made outings into the local countryside, always collecting flowers. It seems she corresponded with Wolley-Dod, and she appears in her married name as a contributor to *The Flora of Sussex*. In the collection of biographical notes is a photograph taken in Eastbourne, touching as old photographs tend to be, of Phyllis hand in hand with her little girl, who clearly shares her curiosity in the world, and Phyllis' mother, in a most impressive hat, leading by the hand a sober little boy who carries a spade.

Her herbarium fills six large pallets. We worked in a store room, between rails of the museum's collection of clothes and a variety of toys and other objects that were crammed into every space while the museum was being refurbished. Julian was as helpful as possible, and sometimes we were set up in the motor museum, which was rather cold. These conditions, however, were preferable to the distractions of the general office where all the other volunteers worked!

A second herbarium was compiled by Mabel Cobbe, at much the same time, in notebooks for her own reference. Matthew painstakingly sorted through them, but there were no Sussex records. There is still a little more to look at, Julian having produced a local study done by a student which may or may not be of interest, but the work left is primarily entering the data that we have collected, species, locations and dates, on electronic forms designed by Paul.

Field meeting reports 2012

West Sussex VC13
by Nick Sturt & Frances Abraham

Worthing, April 28th, leader Nick Sturt (by NS)
April's showers sweet had been doing much to pierce to the root the drought of March but the twelve only slightly Chaucerian members plus guest Gill from Hampshire had more to put up with in the form of a sharp East wind that whipped along the front at Worthing. David, who had stepped up to the plate to take on the TQ10 Hectad, led a macho band into TQ10H where Offington Cemetery provided sufficient interest for the whole of a long morning, with some unimproved grassland yielding *Trifolium subterraneum* (Subterranean Clover), a stray plant of *Hippocrepis comosa* (Horse-shoe Vetch) on a road verge, and a healthy crop of aliens, as one would expect from this particular gang.

Meanwhile the author headed to East Worthing with a mixed gender group to look at an industrial estate, residential roads, the seafront and Brooklands Park, in the hope of providing TQ10R with a more respectable score than 204. New records came relatively easily, many on the 'missing' list but some, like *Stellaria pallida* (Lesser Chickweed), new finds. Tony and Ady were on hand to obviate the use of a key in many instances and some impressive vegetative identification was performed by the group as a whole, with grasses well covered. Brooklands Park was probably the least rewarding of the areas but there was the consolation of the first swallows and martins skimming the pond and probably wondering why they had left Africa.

An even colder afternoon did not deter the combined force, who sought to boost TQ10A and B. Here too there were species to add – some common but one or two notable, pride of place going to David's *Philadelphus coronarius* (Mock-orange) and a patch of *Allium paradoxum* (Few-flowered Garlic) which Dawn recognised without hesitation.

Stansted Estate, May 12th, leader Mike Shaw (by NS)
At last the sun shone and the hearts of the eight members and guest Bonita were glad. The author reflected that he was in Arnold territory and calculated that it was 106 years and 8 days after the death of that botanist. Mike led a team of four into SU71Q where early on was a stand of *Luzula sylvatica* (Great Wood-rush), and patches of *Festuca heterophylla* (Various-leaved Fescue) were admired before the quest for new finds. From then on the woods may have been relatively unspectacular but over 20 additions were made. In contrast the author, Frances, Rod and Vanessa were in splendid habitat in SU70U – a damp meadow adjoining Brickkiln Pond – but new species were hard to come by. A little *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue) was the catch of the morning, although a few more names were added to the list.

In the afternoon Lordington Copse provided excellent entertainment with the *Helleborus viridis* (Green Hellebore) and *Vinca minor* (Lesser Periwinkle), both noted in the late 19th Century by Frederick Arnold when he looked after the parish, plus *Polygonatum multiflorum* (Solomon's-seal) in quantity, some good patches of *Orchis mascula* (Early Purple-orchid) and some other useful additions to both SU71V and Q. All those attending thanked Mike for a splendid day organised with typical forethought and precision, and were grateful too to Stansted Estate for allowing access to areas not normally open to the public.

Warnham Mill Nature Reserve, 30th June, leader Arthur Hoare (by FA)
The purpose of this meeting, apart of course from gathering records for the new *Flora*, was to survey the Reserve before work is carried out on the millpond, which is likely to bring considerable change to the vegetation.

Eleven members gathered for a gentle day's outing. It is a pity that there are few places where one can get to the open water of the main pond - the margin is very overgrown - but it was good to see *Typha angustifolia* (Lesser Bulrush) as well as *T. latifolia* (Bulrush), *Carex vesicaria* (Bladder Sedge) and *Schoenoplectus lacustris* (Common Club-rush). Peering from the boardwalk over an arm of the pond, we were pleased to see *Oenanthe aquatica* (Fine-leaved Water-dropwort), *Ranunculus peltatus* (Pond Water-crowfoot), *Myosotis laxa* (Tufted Forget-me-not), *Carex pseudocyperus* (Cyperous Sedge) and a carpet of *Lythrum portula* (Water-purslane). Some dipping ponds produced the uncommon *Potamogeton obtusifolius* (Blunt-leaved pondweed) as well as a range of more frequent aquatics. Some species, such as *Sagittaria latifolia* (Duck-potato), have been introduced to Warnham, and it is difficult to judge whether some others are native or have been planted.

The far end of the millpond grades into willow and alder carr, which can be crossed on boardwalks. We admired the enormous leaves of *Petasites japonicus* (Giant Butterbur) here. The winding paths through drier woodland produced *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine) and a lucky few also

saw a single plant of *E. purpurata* (Violet Helleborine).

By the golf course area *Galium verum* (Lady's Bedstraw) and *Sanguisorba minor* (Salad Burnet) fattened our list, but must have arrived on introduced soil. In Walnut Tree Plantation Gareth excelled himself by finding the narrow-leaved, non-stinging nettle subspecies *Urtica dioica* ssp. *galeopsifolia*, which has seldom been recorded in Sussex. We tested it gingerly and lo, it did not sting.

We added a few species to the overall list for the Reserve, and 30 to the tetrad list - pretty good, considering that TQ13R already had over 300 species recorded post-1999.

Oreham Common area, July 29th, leader Nick Sturt (by NS)

Oreham Common still supported *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort) and *Siliaum silaus* (Pepper-saxifrage) but the general impression was that it badly needed grazing to restore its former glory. The boundary between TQ21G and H crosses the Common more or less where the fourteen members converged and it was Arthur and Mike who were designated to keep the two recording sheets separate in the morning as their party sought to improve upon the scores of the squares. Meanwhile, Dawn marched Rita, Richard and Gill south in TQ21G, returning with the prize of *Thalictrum flavum* (Meadow-rue) – a trophy unfortunately tarnished by its proximity to habitation where other native species fell under suspicion of having been introduced – and also a *Callitriche* (Water-starwort) which Elisabeth identified as *C. platycarpa* (Various-leaved Water-starwort). Frances, Kathryn and the author headed off to the northern end of TQ21H where there were plenty of run-of-the-mill species to add to the card and an unexpected group of *Salix pentandra* to quicken the pulse.

Having lunched together, on to the strangely remote church of Newtimber, to cross a couple of meadows and stroll under the A23 and emerge as if by magic at the foot of the Downs. Round Hill was not in great shape (and one hopes very much that when it gathers momentum the National Park will be able to bring back to condition such areas of chalk grassland) but its vertiginous slope did yield a good number of missing species such as *Asperula cynanchica* (Squinancywort), *Carex caryophyllea* (Spring Sedge) and *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet-saxifrage) as well as the new find of *Thymus pulegioides* (Large Thyme). This tetrad, TQ21R, was already standing comfortably over 300, but the visit produced a further 39 species without trouble and thus indicated how important it is to look at the missing species lists and make deductions about overlooked habitats, rather than just to judge by the total scores.

Worthing area, August 12th, leader Nick Sturt (by NS)

Reinforcements from the east in the form of Helen, Roy and Matthew enhanced both the value and the pleasure of the day, which started in the urban surroundings of TQ10M, a tetrad that had been well worked for the *Sussex Plant Atlas* by the incomparable Betty Bishop. One group searched the residential area north of the A27, with Dawn pouncing upon many a garden escape as well as *Euphorbia platyphyllus* (Broad-leaved Spurge), while the other (which included Eric, who had himself escaped from Hampshire for the day) mingled uneasily with fervent Sunday shoppers at the retail park spotting aliens such as *Rapistrum rugosum* (Bastard Cabbage). Plants of the morning were *Spiranthes spiralis* (Autum Lady's-tresses) on a traffic island in First Avenue, a strange amenity planting on chalk of a single *Frangula alnus* (Alder Buckthorn) and a strip of *Lotus glaber* (Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil), apparently the relic of a fodder crop.

In the afternoon the task was to record Lychpole Hill in TQ10N. There was plenty to keep the party of twelve amused with some good patches of downland turf supporting specialities such as *Asperula cynanchica* (Squinancywort), *Filipendula vulgaris* (Dropwort) and *Thymus pulegioides* (Large Thyme). On top of the hill the foul-smelling *Anthemis cotula* (Stinking Chamomile) was present in quantity and there was a pleasing arable margin. It was the descent of the hill that was problematical as the misguided leader led his trusting band into steep, impenetrable scrub and was forced to think again, if indeed he had thought in the first place. At length a gentle wander back along the foot of the hill was achieved with further arrays of chalk plants and a haul of more than 180 species in total, 25 new for the tetrad.

East Sussex VC14

by Matthew Berry, Judy Clark, Rita Hemsley, David Lang, Helen Proctor & Roy Wells

Jevington, 2nd May, leader Matthew Berry (by MB)

There was a good turnout of ten members given the mid-week scheduling and overcast skies. In the morning we split into two unequal groups, one following the leader to botanize in TQ50Q and the

other, comprising Helen and Peter, taking on TQ50R. Out of a total of thirteen new records for the former, notable finds included the missing SPA natives *Moehringia trinervia* (Three-nerved Sandwort) and *Sanicula eropaea* (Sanicle). We also found a good population of *Adoxa moschatellina* (Moschatel). *Carex caryophyllea* (Spring Sedge), one of our 'target'species, was present in some decent chalk grassland. Another target species, *Arabis hirsuta* (Hairy Rock-cress) could not be found. In the Filching area Helen and Peter achieved the highest number of new tetrad records, with 33 species. Their finds included aliens such as *Nigella damascena* (Love-in-a-mist) and *Alchemilla mollis* (a Lady's-mantle).

After lunch we walked as a group into TQ50K, spending most of the remaining time on Lullington Heath. *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet), *Myosotis ramosissima* (Early Forget-me-not) and *Erophila verna* (Common Whitlowgrass) occurred close to our footpath. Broken ground along a track at the more sheltered western edge of the heath produced *Myosotis discolor* (Changing Forget-me-not), *Trifolium micranthum* (Slender Trefoil) and *T. subterraneum* (Subterranean Clover). Eighteen new records were added to the tetrad.

Despite the sometimes almost wintry temperature, the general concensus was that this had been a worthwhile meeting.

Salehurst 2nd June, leader Roy Wells (by RW)

Ten members assembled at Bourne Farm, Salehurst on Saturday 2nd June. This beef-rearing farm is mainly improved grassland but the owner Mr. Booth and his Farm Manager, David Plumley, maintain a large unimproved hay meadow for conservation. This was our objective. The beauty of the spring flowers was impressive; a reminder of how most of the countryside must have appeared in times gone by. We were all soon deeply involved in identifying the 60 odd species, common and rare, in the meadow, plus many more in areas around including a couple of small ponds. *Orchis morio* (Green-winged Orchid), most plants just past flowering, was present in many hundreds and *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue) abounded. Several roses in the hedgerows looked interesting but it was a bit too early in the year to sort them out, with the exception of the *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar), flinging its apple scent wantonly on the breeze and unfurling the petals of its first flowers.

Our lunch was enlivened by Helen unexpectedly bursting forth with patriotic fervour, unfurling a union flag and providing us all with strawberries and cream somehow concealed about her person in honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Tetrad recording was not our main objective on this particular day, but nevertheless we still managed to add ten records to the total for the square.

Plashett Park Farm, Ringmer, 17th June, leader David Lang (by DCL)

Seven members were blessed with a pleasant dry day with a modicum of sunshine to record the area of Plashett Park Farm in TQ41M, N and S. Most of the area is under crop cultivation or grazing by cattle and sheep, so that the most interesting parts were those bordering streams or beside small ponds. Here *Oenanthe crocata* (Hemlock Water-dropwort) and *O. fistulosa* (Tubular Water-dropwort) were growing profusely in the ditches, the latter species being distributed throughout the area recorded. One area was covered with *Conium maculatum* (Hemlock). All seemed rather 'run-of-the-mill', until towards the end of the day we entered a meadow which had clearly never been sprayed and had suffered minimal grazing. This was a stunning carpet of flowers, dominated by *Ranunculus bulbosus* (Bulbous Buttercup) and *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Oxeye Daisy), with large patches of *Genista tinctoria* (Dyer's Greenweed), *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass Vetchling) and *L. pratensis* (Meadow Vetchling). The farmer is keen for this area to be included in a stewardship agreement. A total of 169 species was recorded, with some 40 or so new records for the area - a worthwhile day!

Wivelsfield, 27th June & 4th July, leader Rita Hemsley (by RH)

On the first meeting, two SBRS members joined me at Wivelsfield Recreation ground to add records to TQ31P on a dull summer's evening. We visited a variety of habitats and found *Papaver dubium* subsp. *lecoqii* (Yellow-juiced Poppy) and *Rosa canina* group *'Pubescentes'* (Hairy Dog-rose) in the hedgerows. We added 30 new records for the tetrad including many missing *Sussex Plant Atlas* species. My thanks to Ady and Ernie for supporting me.

The 4th July meeting was a very select SBRS gathering. We met on the old runway of the wartime airfield to record in TQ31U on another dull evening. We found *Lepidium campestre* (Field Pepperwort) in a field edge and *Hypericum hirsutum* (Hairy St John's-wort) and *Geranium pyrenaicum* (Hedgerow Crane's-bill) on the road verges and added eleven new records before the light became too bad to continue recording. My thanks to Ernie for joining me.

Hargate Forest, 21st July, leader Helen Proctor (by HP)

A select group of seven members met at a corner of Hargate Forest, a 61 hectare site that is owned and managed by the Woodland Trust. The woodland is situated on the northern border of East Sussex, close to Tunbridge Wells and within TQ53T. The southern part consists of semi-natural woodland, while conifers in the north are being thinned, especially near the rides, in order to allow heathland species to regenerate. A stream flows through the forest, and ponds have been created by the Woodland Trust.

Five additional *Sussex Plants Atlas* species were recorded. A large meadow, surrounded by woodland, gave us *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort) and *Succisa pratensis* (Devil's-bit Scabious) as well as a good view of a Silver-washed Fritillary butterfly. *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine) was, surprisingly, found underneath *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron). After much hunting, *Lythrum portula* (Water Purslane) was found in damp ruts in tracks. However, one SPA species could not be recorded, as the Woodland Trust had successfully eradicated it! This was *Rhododendron luteum* (Yellow Azalea) of which the dead stems still covered a large area. An open grassy area by a wide track produced *Euphrasia anglica* (Eyebright) and we were pleased to see *Convallaria majalis* (Lily-of-the-valley) still surviving. However, we were unable to confirm an earlier sighting of *Dryopteris aemula* (Hay-scented Fern).

Seventeen additional species were recorded, bringing the tetrad total to 353.

Staplecross area, 19th May, leaders Jacqueline Rose and Judy Clark (by JC)

Seven stalwart members and Owen Johnson met in Brede High Wood car park, hoping to record early species in TQ72R, 72V and 72W, and TQ82A and 82B. We spent the morning together in TQ82A as Patrick Roper had to leave at lunchtime and Brede High Wood is his home territory.

Eighteen new records were added to the tetrad list, starting with naturalised *Tellima grandiflora* growing by the car park entrance. The ever eagle-eyed Jacqueline spotted that a sedge growing in profusion beside the path was *Carex strigosa* (Thin-spiked Wood-sedge) and not the more common *C. sylvatica* (Wood-sedge). Another find was the beautiful *Euphorbia amygdaloides* (Wood Spurge), just a couple of plants, their bracts gleaming palely in the undergrowth. This was a surprise to Patrick as, despite his great familiarity with Brede High Wood, he had never before seen it there. Another interesting species was *Frangula alnus* (Alder Buckthorn), occasional in the woods, about which Patrick had a tale to tell. Its wood provides the best quality charcoal for gunpowder, especially time fuses, and so for centuries it was of great military importance. When supplies could not be obtained from abroad the wood had to be harvested from trees growing in Britain and obviously it was crucial that plants were correctly identified. During the Second World War locating supplies and supervising the cutting was entrusted entirely to women, regarded as more dependable when it came to carefully recognizing this not so common shrub.

During the afternoon we split up to make better use of the expertise within the group. Helen, Peter and Owen had much the best time of it in TQ82B, adding 25 new records. These included *Cardamine amara* (Large Bittercress), *Orchis mascula* (Early Purple-orchid), *Sedum telephium* (Orpine) and not one but two *Mespilis germanica* (Medlar), a missing scarce species for the tetrad.

Meanwhile the remaining contingent, now reduced to Judy, Jacqueline and Rita tramped rather unfruitfully around TQ72V, adding a meagre four records, or perhaps that should be three and a half: *Polypodium vulgare* agg. (Polypody) had already been recorded and we just added the species. Greater success might have been forthcoming in TQ72R or 72W but, out of time, these two had to await another day.

Sunninglye Farm, nr Tunbridge Wells, 19th August, leaders Geoffrey Kitchener & Helen Proctor (by HP)

The objectives of this joint meeting with Kent Botanical Recording Group (KBRG) were to gain more records for TQ63I and J and to assist KBRG with recording areas near the county boundary. Benefits included the sharing of expertise on *Epilobium* (Willowherb), *Rumex* (Dock) and *Rosa* (Rose) species. Access to the Bayham Estate, the originally publicised venue, proved not to be possible. However, the neighbouring Sunninglye Farm, being in the Countryside Stewardship scheme, allowed open access to the entire farm and falls within TQ63I and J.

Ten members formed two five-a-side teams. A short walk took us to the first field and a wood, most of which was in TQ63J. 32 species were added, but *Bellis perennis* (Daisy) remained elusive! Matthew delved into the far corner of the wood in TQ63I and found a diminutive *Festuca gigantea* (Giant Fescue) only 3" high! We continued downhill through a large unimproved meadow where *Achillea ptarmica*

(Sneezewort) thrived in two places. In the valley of the River Teise, *Scutellaria galericulata* (Skullcap) was found, as well as *Stachys* x *ambigua* with both parents. The Kent contingent was pleased to find the hybrid on their side of the river too. In a large colony of *Rumex* species we attempted, with Geoffrey's guidance, to identify the hybrids *Rumex* x *pratensis* (*R. crispus* Curled Dock x *R. obtusifolius* Broad-leaved Dock) and *Rumex* x *ruhmeri* (*R. conglomeratus* Clustered Dock x *R. sanguineus* Wood Dock). Other good finds were *Equisetum palustre* (Marsh Horsetail), *Lychnis flos-cuculi* (Ragged-robin), *Lythrum salicaria* (Purple Loosestrife) and *Mentha* x *verticillata* (*M. aquatica* Water Mint x *M. arvensis* Corn Mint). The Kent group also scored *Potentilla* x *mixta* (Hybrid Cinquefoil = *P. erecta* Tormentil x *P. reptans* Creeping Cinquefoil).

A total of 44 species were added to the Sussex side of the Teise in TQ63I, bringing the grand total for the tetrad to 211.

Rye Harbour, 15th September, leaders Paul Harmes and Barry Yates (by HP)

A record 24 members assembled at Rye Harbour on a cool but dry morning. Besides recording for the *Flora*, a further objective was to assess the colonization of species on newly created saltmarsh.

Salicornia species were studied. These included *S. ramosissima* (Purple Glasswort), *S. dolichostachya* (Long-spiked Glasswort) and *S. pusilla* (One-flowered Glasswort), the latter occurring in permanently wet areas. The hybrid *S. pusilla* x *ramosissima* was identified by the presence of two flowers instead of one or three as in the parent species. Other species seen included *Armeria maritima* (Thrift), *Atriplex portulacoides* (Sea-purslane), *Frankenia laevis* (Sea-heath), *Parapholis incurva* (Curved Hard-grass) and *Suaeda maritima* (Annual Sea-blite). Several plants of *Euphorbia paralias* (Sea Spurge) were making a fine display in a sandy area. On the shingle bank near the sea, a long, wide belt of *Solanum nigrum* (Black Nightshade) with berries and *Lathyrus japonicus* (Sea Pea) was admired. *Limonium hyblaeum* (Rottingdean Sea-lavender) and *Althaea officinalis* (Marsh-mallow) were surprising finds on shingle. The effect of protection from rabbits was evident in the continued survival of *Lactuca saligna* (Least Lettuce) and of the re-introduced *Crepis foetida* (Stinking Hawk's-beard).

Interesting fungi records: mainly from West Sussex 2011

by Howard Matcham

"Titter thee not," as the late, great, Frankie Howerd would have said; for I have had my nose immersed within the dung heap, more precisely, a surfeit of deer pellets, horse middens and individual heaps of lovely excreta, and what a jolly lot of fungal delights were sniffed out, excavated with my trusty trowel, scraped off with a knife or dug out with my finger nails. Lots of 'gloop' in moist chamber cultures decorate shelves and bookcase ledges in my study, quietly producing seldom recorded Sussex fimicolous taxa. Just getting out of bed in the morning is such fun, greeting my dog, skipping into my study checking on the previous night's fungal results, and then making my wife a cup of tea!

After the miserable December of 2010 fungi were a considerable while in emerging from any substrate and it was not until April that I found anything of interest. A conglomerate of deer pellets in woodland had the common orange discomycete *Cheilymenia granulata* which is extremely unusual as this species is normally confined to cattle dung. I can only assume that as cattle were in a field immediately adjacent to the wood, deer were jumping the boundary fence and consuming grass with spores attached. A local bridleway is always a good source of horse dung in various stages of decay and I frequently collect from here, with the dung covered with dozens of the minute *Thelebolus stercoreus*, the single ascus containing about 1000 spores. Early morning with dew on the grass is the time to spot phycomycetes on horse dung: when the dung appears to be covered in a white felt, this is usually *Pilaira anomala* with cylindrical sporangiophores elongating rapidly when the sporangiophore is ripe, placing it in contact with an adjacent grass blade. This summer I found the much less common *Oedocephalum pallidum* abundant on the horse dung deposited on one ride; this phycomycete covers the dung as mealy colonies, very attractive under the microscope.

At the end of April wandering through woodland I came across wet depressions in the woodland floor and decided to look at the small acrocarpous mosses growing within them; while doing so I noticed a small orange discomycete that I assumed in the field to be growing on moss protonema, and on looking at it under the microscope I was able to confirm that, out of the four mosses in the collection, the fungus was growing on the protonema of *Pohlia lutescens* (Yellow Thread-moss). This convinced me that I had collected a bryophilous fungus, which only grow on mosses and are seldom recorded. I

subsequently identified it as *Octospora melina* as it had ellipsoid spores with coarsely verrucose walls which are unique to the genus in Britain. Allowing the substrate of mud to dry, I sent the collection to Brian Coppins at Kew who to my surprise replied that it was in fact *Octospora phagospora*, new to Britain. This species is unique in the genus in auto-digesting four spores leaving four remaining, but when I had first looked at the specimen the asci contained eight spores as they had not yet auto-digested; while drying and the asci maturing the auto-digestion took place. I have published a short note on this species in the November edition of *Field Bryology*, No.105, page 37, with a light microscope photograph showing four warted spores, each containing a de Bary bubble.

Walking in the same wood during early August I turned over a *Picea abies* (Norway Spruce) log and saw underneath on the spruce litter a beautiful blue-black felted resupinate fungus. Looking at it microscopically in 2% KOH it turned an intense blue-green. Puzzled, I perused my extensive literature and decided it was *Tomentella botryoides* which would be new to Europe! Sending it on to Kew, it was initially thought to be this species but, to be sure, Martin Bidartondo kindly DNA sequenced part of the collection and it was found to be a *Pseudotomentella* species possibly new to science! However, Alick Henrici to whom I sent the collection spent a day in the Kew herbarium checking *Pseudotomentella* species until the answer was found to be *P. atrofusca.* This species is new to Britain and a consolation in not being my first species new to science. This spruce plantation has good colonies of *Cantharellus cibarius* (Chanterelle); *Hydnum rufescens* (Terracotta Hedgehog) and *Cantharellus ferruginascens* (Pale Chanterelle). I sent a voucher specimen of the latter to Kew as this is a Vulnerable Red Data Book species and extremely local in its distribution; Martin Ainsworth confirmed the collection - the species is new to Sussex and few specimens are in the Kew herbarium.

During September the same plantation had good colonies of *Clavulina cinerea* (Grey Coral), which had been parasitized by the ascomycete *Helminthosphaeria clavariarum*. The conidial state is very conspicuous as it markedly blackens the stipe. Associated with *C. cinerea* was *C. coralloides* (Crested Coral), distinctive in the much finer pointed branches, and also *Ramaria flaccida*, another Coral fungus seldom recorded in Sussex. Also present is *Ramariopsis kunzei* (Ivory Coral), another seldom recorded species.

Early October saw an explosion of Geastraceae with four species of puffball and *Geastrum triplex* (Collared Earthstar) all in close proximity. *Lycoperdon molle* (Soft-spined Puffball) is not often recorded in West Sussex (this is the sixth record - it was last recorded in 1999) and *L. nigrescens* (Blackish Puffball) is seldom recorded in either vice-county. The former is possibly overlooked while the latter, if it is present, should be easily spotted. *L. perlatum* (Common Puffball) and *Handkea excipuliformis* (Pestle-shaped Puffball) were exceptionally abundant under *Picea* in mixed, deciduous and conifer woodland.

The above is an abridged version of an article I wrote for publication in Adastra *(2011), an annual review of wildlife recording in Sussex published by the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre.*

During June 2012 I looked at the trunk of a roadside Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) at Goodwood and noticed a minute orange-coloured pyrenomycete covering the trunk and giving it the appearance of an orange pincushion. Very attractive, but possibly yet another fungus able to decimate our native trees, because microscopic examination revealed it to be very similar to the Asian pathogenic *Endothia parasitica*. This is not yet known from Britain but it was accidentally introduced into the USA where it has virtually wiped out their native Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*). Searching the internet for other species in the genus I found that I had collected *Endothia radicalis*, which proved to be the second British record. Kew has confirmed my determination. The first record of this species is from Kent, where two separate collections were found on Sweet Chestnut in 2008.

Daffodil records please

by Frances Abraham

In our records for the new *Flora*, there are a number of tetrads where recorders have sent in records of *Narcissus* sp. but have been unable to give the species because their visit has been too early or late in the season to be sure of whether they are native *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* ssp. *pseudonarcissus* or an introduced species.

If this includes you - please could you make a special effort this spring to re-visit these colonies at flowering time so that we can get an accurate picture of the distribution of Wild Daffodil.

Recording Update 2012/2013

by Paul Harmes, Mike Shaw & Arthur Hoare

Firstly, we would like to extend the sincere thanks of the New Flora Working Group (NFWG) to all members who contributed records during the 2012 recording season. We would also like to thank all who undertook additional fieldwork for the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) Threatened Plants Survey, and other projects. This is all very valuable work, and much appreciated

This was the second full year of targeted/focused recording, designed to increase the search for missing Sussex Plant Atlas, Plant Atlas Supplement, and Sussex Scarce Plant Register Species, as well as under-recorded habitats such as wetlands. It was also important to down-grade the emphasis on numbers of species recorded in a tetrad tetrad.

Precise figures for the success of this change of emphasis are not available. However, it is apparent that a significant percentage of the 10,000 or so additional records are in the categories described, together with a healthy number of species new to Sussex.

We also asked you to look at specific plant groups, in particular *Hieracium*. The 'critical' species occurring in Sussex need to be addressed in the new *Flora* and so *Rubus*, *Euphrasia* and *Taraxacum* also need a strategy. The NFWG continues to explore the way forward with these groups. *Rubus* in East Sussex was well recorded in the late 1990s during the recording for the *Flora of Ashdown Forest*. This work was extended beyond the northeast of the county by Rob Randal and Paul Harmes, and will be incorporated into the *Flora*. Meanwhile, West Sussex has benefitted from three years of work by David Allen and Mike Shaw, and others have also been involved in both VCs. *Euphrasia* is the next target on our list. There are only four recently confirmed species in Sussex, together with various hybrids. Elizabeth Sturt is keen to look at this group, and we are actively seeking expert assistance for her.

The website has been updated on three occasions during the year. As a result of this, you have wisely checked data you have sent to Paul, and anomalies and omissions have occurred, some of which were clearly his fault. On a number of occasions, several of you have highlighted species that had not made it onto the website. Some of these were owing to grid reference errors, and plants occurring just over a tetrad boundary. Our Master Database has a macro that automatically converts a grid reference of four or more digits to a tetrad, so that you do not have to do this on the electronic recording card. It is when we run the macro that these anomalies are found. Nevertheless, there have been a number of apparent unexplained omissions when data has been uploaded to the website. We are actively looking at this issue. The next update for the website will be in January 2013. We urge you all to do some random checking, and let Paul know if anything is still missing. It is intended to purge the database in late December and early January, before the next upload to the website. Hopefully that will give us a clean data set for uploading to Mapmate in February.

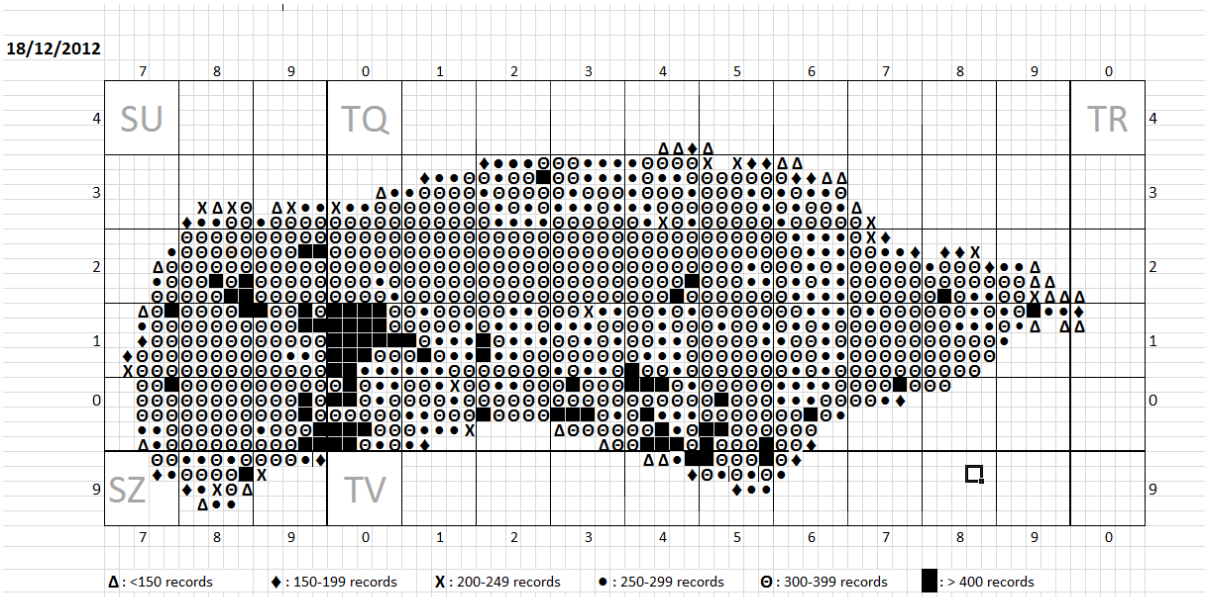
The database has now been frozen until the end of January 2013. This is to enable Mike to carry out an audit of the data, and remove any duplicate records. If you have any outstanding records, please still send those in electronic format to Paul, and paper copies to Arthur. These will appear in the 2013 records, with the previous year's date appended.

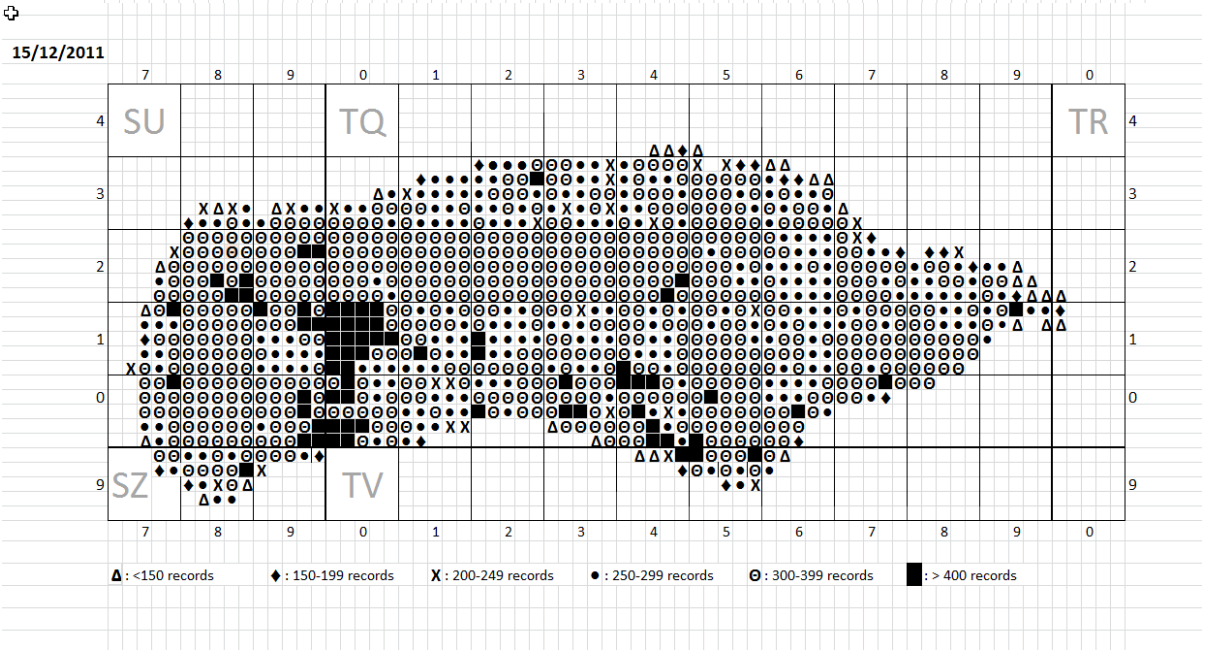
In 2013, we will continue to record as we have in 2012, although we now need to completely remove the '300 species per tetrad' aim. It is particularly vital that our focus should be on the missing records. We also need to ensure that all habitat types within a tetrad have been visited and recorded. Please go over the species lists for each tetrad in your hectad(s) to check that important habitat types have not been missed, and ensure that each has had three or more visits to them at varying times of year, covering varying types of vegetation. If you need help with some groups, such as aquatic species or grasses, do please tell Mike or

Paul. If we are not available, tell one of the other members of the NFWG, and we will do all we can to assist. The field meeting conveners (Nick Sturt & Pat Donovan, assisted by Helen Proctor) will also help if you can't contact anyone else.

Recording Progress Maps

The map showing the number of species recorded for each tetrad from 2000 to 15/12/2012 is shown below as usual. This time, we are also including beneath it the map showing the position as at year ago - it is interesting and encouraging to see them together.





Field Meetings 2013

Saturday 20 April Helen Proctor	Marklye Area, Heathfield, to hunt for SPA missing species in TQ52W. Limited parking. Phone/e-mail Helen (see bottom of page) for venue.
Saturday 27 April Dawn Nelson	Woolbeding Common area. Spring recording on the heaths and in the woods nearby. Meet at carpark opposite viewpoint, SU869260.
Sunday12 May Rita Hemsley	Meet in long-stay car-park, Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint, TQ281165. Remedial work in this part of TQ21.
Saturday 18 May Helen Proctor	Beechen Wood and the Ouse valley in TQ42K and possibly surrounding tetrads. Meet in car park of workshops, TQ456207.
Sunday 9 June Helen Proctor and Geoffrey Kitchener	Lamberhurst. Joint with the Kent Botanical Recording Group in VC border tetrads TQ63T & Y. Meet in Lamberhurst car park (free), TQ676362.
Saturday 15 June Roy Wells	Downland Search for *Tephroseris integrifolia* in TQ50R and W. Meet in Butts Brow car park, TQ580017. (£4+ parking charge).
Saturday 29 June Helen Proctor	Broadwater Warren RSPB Reserve to look for species in restored heathland, in TQ53N. Meet in the car park at TQ554372.
Saturday 6 July Peter Smith	Ouse Valley in TQ40I for wetland plants and Downland species in TQ40B. Meet in the car park in Rodmell, TQ421064.
Sunday 14 July Kathryn Knapp	Some needy tetrads in the extremity of VC13, starting with TQ33U. Meet in Crawley Down car park, Burleigh Way (behind Royal Oak pub: TQ347375).
Sunday 28 July Nick Sturt	Multi-tetrad day in TQ11 & 12. Meet in lay-by/picnic area by A281 N of Henfield TQ212179. We shall disperse in the morning, to regroup in the afternoon at nearby Bines Green.
Saturday 3 Aug Jacqueline Rose, Judy Clark, Ellen Campbell	Brede Valley, to visit extensive wetland restored by the Maxfield Nature Conservation Trust. TQ81H, I & possibly N. Meeting details to follow in the May newsletter.
Sunday 18 Aug Nick Sturt	Knepp Estate. Recording to include Kneppmill Pond and the Adur in TQ12K. Meet in Pound Lane just N of the W entrance to the estate, parking on verges (TQ149223). We shall move on into the Park from here.
Saturday 24 Aug Jacqueline Rose, Judy Clark, Ellen Campbell	East Guldeford. Ditches, clovers and arable weeds in TQ92F, K, L & possibly G. Details to follow in the May Newsletter.
Saturday 31 Aug David Lang	Beechen Wood and surrounding area. Meet in car park of workshops, TQ456207.
Sunday 15 Sept Rita Hemsley	Glynde Levels for aquatic species in TQ40U. Meet in the car park at Glynde at TQ457087. We may relocate.

All meetings start at 10.45 am unless indicated otherwise.

Since some venues have limited parking, and for environmental reasons, members are encouraged to share cars whenever possible.

In the event of queries please contact Pat Donovan 01825 73344
or Helen Proctor 01323 844680 hm.proctor@btinternet.com(E Sx);
or Nick Sturt 01243 551292 n.sturt@mypostoffice.co.uk (W Sx).

Those attending SBRS field meetings do so at their own risk.