



Sussex Botanical Recording Society

Newsletter

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President's Message

For the SBRS this has been a sad autumn with the loss of Alan Knapp. Alan was a leading member of the Society, with his plans for, and progress with, the New Flora of Sussex, as BSBI Recorder for West Sussex, and for his perceptive recording through the County over the years. At his Memorial meeting in September we said how very many happy memories we have of Alan, and at the Autumn Get-together we were pleased to welcome his wife Kathryn. We were able to show many slides illustrating the happy and enjoyable times we had shared botanising with Alan. The New Flora team has been continuing the work as planned and, although some arrangements and the time schedule will need some revision, a dedicated group of members is making good progress, and all contributions from all members are gratefully received. The New Flora Working Group (Paul Harmes, Nick Sturt, Arthur Hoare, Frances Abraham and Mary Briggs) will meet again early in the New Year and any changed procedures or instructions will be published in the May 2011 Newsletter. We look forward to achieving the Flora, which we plan to dedicate to Alan, in due course.

This autumn you will have noticed the numbers of fruits on all the trees and shrubs. Many were in spectacular abundance. David Lang's quince tree produced one and a half hundredweight of fruit, and at Arun Prospect we found a young quince tree, not previously noticed, but this year with fruit. Known as a 'mast year' (and referred to as such on Radio 4) I was prompted to check the definition in the OED: *Mast* is 'the fruit of the beech, oak, chestnut and other forest trees, especially as food for swine'. Shakespeare is quoted as saying 'the oakes beare Mast, the Briars scarlet Heps.' Frances tells me that on TV recently they showed oaks in the New Forest with a very heavy crop of mast – so many acorns that the ponies were eating too many, becoming ill, and having to be moved.

The botanical note about mast in the OED will almost certainly have been entered by the late Richard Palmer, the botanical lexicologist who worked for OED. His parents lived in Lindfield near Haywards Heath, and Richard knew the Sussex flora well. He spent most of his weekends at Lindfield during the Sussex Flora Society recording for the *Sussex Plant Atlas*, when the Lindfield tetrads had among the highest totals of that survey.

Mary Briggs

Secretary's Note

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 5th March 2011

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. at Staplefield Village Hall. After the AGM there will be further details of this year's field meetings, details of tetrads requiring extra attention for the New Flora, and interesting records received. Please bring your digital photographs or slides to show to the meeting, which will finish with tea and biscuits. We would particularly welcome any photographs taken on early field meetings for possible inclusion in the introductory chapter of the New Flora. The hall will be available from 1.30 p.m. if you wish to bring any books or plants for sale.

Saturday 5th November 2011

The Autumn Get-together will be held in 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, reports of field meetings and an illustrated talk. Please remember to bring a packed lunch; tea or 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.

Rita Hemsley

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Newsletter by email?

Would you be prepared to receive SBRS Newsletters by email in future? It would save postage and printing costs, and the time needed for dealing with paper copies. It would also mean that you would receive any photos in the Newsletters in colour. Please email Rita at <rita.hemsley4@btinternet.com> if you would be happy with this. Of course we will continue to send paper copies to all who would prefer it, but please consider this option...

Treasurer's Note

The subscription rates for the calendar year 2011 remain the same as for 2009 and 2010, namely £5 for a single membership and £7 for joint membership at one address, with part of the subscription going into the fund for the New Flora. Payment may be made to me at the AGM or Autumn Get-together or sent to me at my home address: Westfield House, Church Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1EE.

Some members, unprompted, have made in memory of dear Betty Bishop and Alan Knapp generous donations to the fund for the New Flora. If any other member wishes to do the same, please contact me.

Trevor Lording

Alan: an obituary by Nick Sturt

Everyone at the Autumn Get-together was thinking about him even before Rod arose to say a few words about 'Dear Alan'. Shared memories and photographs lightened the proceedings as this respected and indeed loved Honorary Member of the Society was recalled.

Born on the 25th February 1947, Alan George Knapp grew up in South London and as a child was encouraged to take an interest in the natural world and the practical things in life. His mother would spend hours reading to him – story books, nature books, books about dinosaurs and trains. And his father, a very good handyman, encouraged Alan to help him with practical tasks such as wiring a plug or mending a leaking tap.

At Colfe's School, Lewisham, his interest in all things scientific and technical developed and he was particularly inspired by a chemistry teacher who made the subject 'come alive'. In the 1950s and 1960s it was possible to buy all kinds of potentially dangerous chemicals over the counter in the high street, including sodium. Alan decided to investigate the vigorous reactivity of this metal by burying a small piece of it in the earth and applying water from a can. The resultant explosions evidently produced a garden landscape reminiscent of The Somme!

University College London provided a more controlled environment in which to study Chemistry. Those who remember Alan's casual attitude toward sartorial elegance will be surprised to learn that on his first day he wore a white shirt and a tie. Thereafter it was the usual student garb of jeans and a T-shirt. He was, of course, extremely bright and was always happy to explain the intricacies of some chemical problem taxing others, and he regularly reviewed the lecture notes to the great benefit of his fellow students. Among these was a girl from Leigh in Lancashire called Kathryn Sarginson who had in fact fallen for Alan on the day of the shirt and tie.

Alan excelled in the Chemistry Department, winning the Faculty of Science Medal, awarded for distinction in the final examination. Study for a doctorate was the next step, and the next prize the Ramsay Memorial Medal, an award for distinguished work carried out in the Department of Chemistry at UCL. Alan and Kathryn married while they were pursuing postgraduate research, setting up home in a rented flat in Golders Green and later moving to Romford. Postdoctoral research at Queen Mary College, London, followed and it was during this time that Alan became very interested in electronics. On the domestic front this bore fruit in the form of a home-made amplifier and loud speakers and an enormous television which doubled as either a seat or a table. Beyond the home, however, the combination of chemical and electronic expertise made Alan highly employable. A career in university was an option, but he decided to go out into the world and Philips was the company which was to benefit from his talents from 1973 until his retirement some 30 years later.

Employment prompted a move to Crawley, within easy commuting distance of the Redhill office, and in these settled conditions it was not long before the arrival of a son, Ian, and a daughter, Suzanne. At about this time Alan developed what was to become a huge interest in botany. Colleagues were birders but Alan preferred objects of study which were not so fast moving and somehow plants appealed to his scientific mind. At the Horsham Natural History Society Alan came to know Arthur Hoare who happily lived nearby. Arthur furthered Alan's ventures into botany and introduced him to the Sussex Botanical Recording Society: the rest is, as they say, history. His boundless enthusiasm and curiosity, his careful and rigorous approach and, very quickly, the generosity of his help went on to establish him as a universally popular field meetings leader and guru. At such meetings in both vc13 and vc14 he was always the centre of attention, often besieged by the bearers of scraps of plant material, species names to be entered on the card and queries of every conceivable kind. All of which were fielded with courtesy as well as knowledge. There were in addition the banter and the fearless punning that so enlivened these outings.

For several years he was the Field Meetings Convenor for West Sussex but his contribution as an SBRS Committee member went far beyond that: his energy, ideas and judgement, as well as his ability to form productive

partnerships and teams, will all be sorely missed. There arose the chance in 1997 to support Mary in her role of BSBI County Recorder for West Sussex at a time when the Society was beginning to receive regular queries from developers seeking botanical data for their proposed sites. Alan played a major part in preparing the *Sussex Rare Plant Register* (2001) and he was able to write a particularly deft piece of software whereby the data on notable species could be removed from this database simply by inputting map coordinates. Meanwhile, being a BSBI recorder required progressively more advanced computer skills and Alan stepped up to take the lead role for vc13 in 2008. By this time, of course, the work towards a new county flora, with Alan as one of the main protagonists, was well under way – thanks in no small part to the wonderful website, designed in conjunction with his son Ian, which greatly facilitates both the gatherers and the analysis of data.

Alan's skill in photography should not be overlooked: at every indoor meeting of the SBRS there would be slides of superb quality to illustrate new finds and key plant details, and it was natural that a large number of his photographs should be selected to illustrate Mary Briggs' book *Sussex Wild Flowers* (2004). He also contributed notes prolifically to the Society Newsletter. Yet beyond the SBRS literature Alan wrote comparatively little in his own name. There simply was not time for everything! A fine article on species of *Potamogeton* appeared in *Sussex Botany* Issue 1 and most recently there is the important note on *Ranunculus x hiltonii* published posthumously in *BSBI News*. He was, however, a co-author of the *Flora of Ashdown Forest* (1996) and, as has been noted, a major contributor to the *Sussex Rare Plant Register* (2001). It is just this experience which will have been of great value when it came to sketching out, with Frances and others, the draft species accounts for the new county Flora. It is a matter for considerable regret that the proposed analysis of the changes in the county flora since the *Sussex Plant Atlas*, to which Alan had been giving much penetrating thought, was never completed for the new work.

His scientific bent prompted Alan to challenge everything: there will be many in the SBRS who will know exactly what is meant – any little vagueness about the identification of a plant or its precise site would be questioned and the reporter would be required to think more carefully. Kathryn was amused to note how one of the members who wrote to her was kind enough to describe the interrogation technique as 'gentle probing comments'!

But even more than Science in general and Botany in particular, it was his family that was always most important to Alan. Those who have come to know Kathryn will realise how great a part she has always played in supporting Alan's achievements. Even before his retirement the SBRS had consumed a large amount of time but thereafter Alan and Kathryn enjoyed a busy schedule of visiting all parts of Sussex recording for the new county Flora. It should be noted that he rightly regarded Kathryn as a good 'spotter' and indeed she has

a tally of records in her own name. He was proud of both Ian and Suzanne, and his three grandchildren brought him a huge amount of pleasure over the last few years. He treasured the time he spent with them, providing tuition in rudimentary Science and Maths, making them wooden roads and losing no opportunity to get them muddy. One recalls Alan's own propensity for getting muddy in the eager pursuit of his beloved aquatics!

Alan, alas, has not lived long enough to see the new Sussex Flora through to publication, succumbing to cancer on 29 August. The Flora will be very much his crowning achievement, for it is his vision above all that has shaped it, and all those who are working towards the goal have been affected not to say inspired by Alan. He was always hugely interested in our records and we were confident that our efforts were truly appreciated. The occasional rejected one only spurred us on to do better in the future...

The images of Alan shown at the Get-together typically featured him in the thick of it – wielding his trusty grapple (the genus *Potamogeton* was a particular favourite), sifting cheerfully through the tangle of vegetative matter brought ashore, or on hands and knees looking for tiny trophies (*Anagallis minima* always pleased him inordinately). In the majority of the pictures shown he was in the midst of a throng of members eager for his opinion, his thoughtful feedback, and his generous acknowledgment of their contributions. That is how we shall always remember Alan.



Alan drying off after a dip in the River Adur to gather a specimen of *Butomus umbellatus* which was required for genetic analysis by Cambridge University.

A personal tribute to Alan Knapp

by Helen Proctor

Commitment to the aims and objectives of the Society, his teaching skills, gentle nature and sense of humour were some of the qualities I admired in Alan.

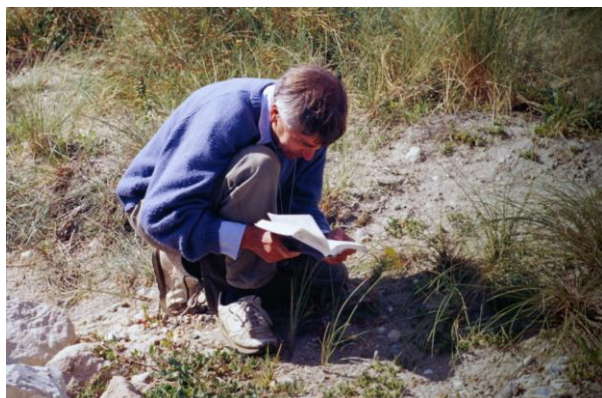
Alan came to most of the meetings, regardless of distance. He was often the first at the venue, reassuringly confirming one's arrival at the right place!

Alan was able to manage the recording card **and** the GPS as well as including some excellent teaching on plant

identification. The notes in my diaries bear testimony to his beneficial teaching. For instance, “Look for the glands on the hypanthium” for *Epilobium obscurum*. His aquatic plant knowledge was particularly valuable. Microscope identification was confirmed later on the same day of a meeting. Alan set standards in recording which are still referred to, today.

With Alan’s agreement, I brought my Essex friends, Peter and Monica to the 2008 meeting at Brede High Woods. Believing my guest, Peter to be following me, I introduced him to Alan. However, I unwittingly “introduced” Peter Davys! Alan pretended a formal introduction, “How do you do? It’s nice to meet you” and we roared with laughter.

Although no longer with us in person, Alan’s botanical knowledge and his recording standards will hopefully remain with us, together with many happy memories.



Alan keying out an *Oenothera* on the dunes at East Head

West Sussex Field Meeting Reports 2010 by Nick Sturt

Field meetings this Summer were not the same without Alan, whose quiet enthusiasm, skill and patience – not to say his wit – always added a tremendous ‘feel-good’ factor to the proceedings. Nevertheless, we persevered and achieved much.

Fulking, 5th June

Five members (seasoned Dawn, Ernie and Judy, the vc13 Field Convenor and welcome new recruit Debbie) assembled by the dusty lane, somewhat daunted by the magnificence of the scarp shimmering in a heat haze. The steep grassland basked under the bluest of skies as the party picked its way up, noting 5cm spikes of *Carex caryophylla* (Spring Sedge) and quantities of bright lemon-peel *Pilosella officinarum* (Mouse-ear Hawkweed). The restless binoculars of Ernie scanned the slopes and dazzling Adonis Blues skipped past; vertiginous and verdant banks were scaled and nooks explored: *Ononis repens* (Common Restharrow) not yet in flower, *Polygala vulgaris* (Common Milkwort) in a

variety of decorative hues, embroiderings of golden *Hippocrepis comosa* (Horseshoe Vetch), the cucumbery essence of *Sanguisorba minor* (Salad Burnet). At length the ridge was reached where more purposeful pedestrians moved at faster pace, and thoughts turned to lunch. Indeed the Field Convenor had already introduced himself to his cheese sandwich when Ernie beckoned: one flowering plant of our quarry *Tephrosia integrifolia* (Field Fleawort) hard by the South Downs Way in the sort of short turf that it favours: near the grid reference of the last record but not quite spot on. Over the rest of the picnic strategy was discussed and an earthwork identified in the next tetrad east, which a second grid reference seemed to confirm. The approach above the precipitous slope, the anticipation, and then the long satisfaction of discovering one after another small group of the *Tephrosia*. The elation was considerable and photographs taken to record the occasion. The walk back, down from Edburton Hill and along the base of the Downs, was brightened by two discoveries – some *Ophioglossum vulgare* (Adder’s Tongue) and the vision of a lately arrived Hon Sec in a fetching hat and neckerchief. One gentleman’s day was complete!

Milland, 19th June

The gold nail-varnish sported by Dawn seemed strangely auspicious to the small and select band which set out from the green in Milland on a Summer’s day with an uncomfortable chill on the wind. It was rather routine bashing at first – south past the crossroads and into a mixture of ‘improved’ pasture and uninspiring arable. At least *Spergula arvensis* (Corn Spurrey) revealed itself here and there was a steady trickle of new records for SU82N. It was to be the afternoon, however, which provided the cherries upon the botanical cake. In Hatch Copse Judy gasped the hallowed word ‘Sedgefest’ and with justification: plenty of *Carex laevigata* (Smooth-stalked Sedge) on the damp edges of a ride forced through by the progeny of the late National Grid with *C. binervis* (Green-ribbed Sedge) taking over in patches where in places the drainage was poor; *C. viridula oedocarpa* (Common Yellow Sedge) again in the wetter parts and *C. pilulifera* (Pill Sedge) in drier ones, some *C. flacca* (Glaucous Sedge) and *C. nigra* (Common Sedge), good clumps of plump-utricled *C. ovalis* (Oval Sedge) and even one small stand of *C. pallescens* (Pale Sedge). A number had been looking out for *Isolepis setacea* (Bristle Club-rush) which was one of the desiderata for SU82I: when it did appear it was in a good patch of about 4m², more than many were accustomed to see. Frances was a stern task-mistress and worked her slaves for six hours, but at the end all were visibly aglow with satisfaction as they topped into their cars.

Bolney, 31st July

The Field Convenor for vc13 has difficulties with the Julian calendar but most members managed to assemble on the day intended, including the esteemed P. A. Harnes who looked svelte in shorts and wellington boots. He and Frances led one contingent off into TQ22V where they amassed nearly 40 additional species. Meanwhile in TQ21U the author and his henchman Arthur plodded around, adding nearly 40 species. The highlight was a

mill leat with pretty *Scutellaria galericulata* (Common Skullcap) and *Lythrum salicaria* (Purple Loosestrife). The morning had been a mere aperitif to the banquet that was the afternoon, starting from Gatehouse Lane, Burgess Hill, and entering a small wood with a selection of ancient indicator species – *Crataegus levigata* (Midland Hawthorn), *Sorbus torminalis* (Wild Service-tree), *Veronica montana* (Wood Speedwell), *Carex strigosa* (Thin-spiked Wood-sedge). At the damper end of this wood Frances discovered a huge specimen of Black Poplar hitherto unknown to her; she checked it very carefully since it bore an unusually light bark, but all the characters tallied. Out into clay fields resplendent with *Pulicaria dysenterica* (Common Fleabane) which yielded such gems as *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass Vetchling) and *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort), then across the ring-road into a botanically dull suburb of Burgess Hill with only one spike of *Epipactis helleborine* (Common Helleborine) to cheer. More profitable surroundings on the homeward leg culminating in *Euphorbia platyphyllos* (Broad-leaved Spurge) near the cars. On adding up the score, however, it was found that, although 82 new species had been found, the total for the tetrad was now a tantalising 10 short of the magic 300. While others departed with honour, Judy forced the author to convey her to an industrial estate where the deficit was quite quickly made up. Even then she was reluctant to leave and eventually the only recourse was to apply force and sedate her with Harveys Sussex Bitter.

Henfield, 15th August

This time the burden of leadership for one of the morning sorties was laid upon the broad shoulders of Arthur, who set off for the western portion of Albourne (TQ21N), while a smaller band explored Furners Lane on the edge of Henfield (TQ21I) with the Field Convenor. Tales and specimens were exchanged over lunch at picnic tables at the layby and it soon emerged that (a) both parties had comfortably raised their tetrads over the 250 mark and (b) nothing dangerously exciting had been seen. A wander around Shermanbury (TQ21E) was decreed for the afternoon and the upper reaches of the Adur provided such delights as *Butomus umbellatus* (Flowering-rush) and *Impatiens capensis* (Orange Balsam). Moving onward, Tony helpfully diagnosed some *Oenothera x fallax*, Arthur pointed out the remains of a wasps' nest dug out by badgers and Dawn demonstrated her understanding of *Taraxacum* and *Rubus*. While sensible members were gathering speed with the end in sight, the author realised that the total for the tetrad had reached only three short of 300. Ady, whose attention to the missing species list had been exemplary throughout, chipped in with *Genista tinctoria* (Dyers' Greenweed) and *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass Vetchling) while others lighted upon a little *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort) with *Matricaria discoidea* (Pineappleweed) as a less glamorous insurance in case the leader's arithmetic was as imperfect as his grasp of the calendar.

Chapel Common, 5th September

After his record-breaking meeting of 2008 it had seemed wise to rest Bruce for a while. He returned for a jog in the far NW of the county in rather less propitious

circumstances – the long dry Summer had not been kind to heathland species and the herd of Shetland cattle on Chapel Common had dined upon just about anything green. It would take more than this to defeat the Maestro, however, and soon *Potentilla recta* (Sulphur Cinquefoil) and *Pilosella aurantiaca* (Orange Hawkweed) were wowing the group. Just after lunch the *piece de resistance* was produced in the form of minuscule green spheroid clusters at which the party squinted through extra-strong magnifying lenses while Bruce shouted *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) with quite excessive glee. A wander to see some dried-up remnants of *Cuscuta epithymum* (Common Dodder) and then to a large patch of *Calamagrostis epigejos* (Wood Small-reed) where Frances joined us to be whisked by Landrover to Wheatsheaf Common. On this curious bulge into neighbouring Hampshire, as cannonades of golf-balls were dodged, a tempting array of goodies was spread before the company – *Rhynchospora alba* (White Beak-sedge), *Potamogeton polygonifolius* (Bog Pondweed), *Ranunculus omiophyllus* (Round-leaved Crowfoot), *Lycopodiella inundata* (Marsh Club-moss). These were duly adored but such is human nature that soon other specialities were desired... and lo! were found in the form of *Eleocharis multicaulis* (Many-stalked Spike-rush) and *Eriophorum angustifolium* (Common Cottongrass). Another triumph for the inimitable Brucie with his *Strictly Come Planting*!

East Sussex Field Meeting Reports 2010

by Roy Wells, Helen Proctor, Jacqueline Rose and Rita Hemsley

Burwash area, 24th April

The 24th April was warm and sunny, an ideal day to kick off a new season of field trips. Seventeen members successfully navigated their way to Witherden Hill in the more rural northern part of East Sussex, despite a couple of them passing each other going in opposite directions on the way to the meeting point. Once assembled, and after enthusiastic greetings amongst old friends, we split into three groups to record TQ62I, covering between us a wide range of habitats: woodland, hedgerows, meadows, riverbank and even a bit of arable carrying *Brassica napus* (Rape). We recorded a satisfactorily large number of woodland plants which were just beginning to come into their full glory, including *Sanicula europaea* (Sanicle), *Adoxa moschatellina* (Moschatel), *Allium ursinum* (Ramsons), *Ribes rubrum* (Red Currant), *Ribes uva-crispa* (Gooseberry), *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks), and large stands of *Cardamine bulbifera* (Coralroot). *Viola arvensis* (Corn Pansy) figured from the arable. We collected 40 new records for TQ62I.

In the afternoon we relocated to Brock Wood to record TQ62M as a single group. The paths to the south-western part of the wood were overgrown and obliterated and we were confined to the north-western end of steep woodland with a ghyll at its base, which had a good range of its expected flora. We saw more *Cardamine bulbifera*

here and in dampish patches good colonies of *Valeriana officinalis* (Common Valerian). There were very large, tree-size *Frangula alnus* (Alder Buckthorn) and we saw small plants of *Thuja plicata* (Western Red Cedar), evidently seed established from planted trees. As one might expect so early in the year we found some plants just emerging that could not be accurately identified that were the cause of considerable speculation but no satisfactory conclusion. We finished our day rather earlier than usual but nonetheless added a further ten records for the tetrad.

Staplecross area, May 8th

Light showers were forecast and light showers there were, and heavier. However, this is a particularly lovely area, and the late spring flowers, early grasses and newly leaved trees were a joy to see. We split into four pairs, each armed with instructions.

Pair 1: On the wide grass verge beside the lay-by just north of Hollow Wall Farm on the Bodiam road, we found an array of 'good' hedgerow species: *Stachys officinalis* (Betony), *Primula vulgaris* (Primrose), *Viola riviniana* (Common Dog-violet) and *Carex flacca* (Glaucous Sedge) – many already recorded for the tetrad, but nevertheless nice to find. On the high bank beside the road on the way to the Farm footpaths was a glorious display of *Polystichum setiferum* (Soft Shield-fern) shuttlecocks, a new record. The path to the east was less interesting, although *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus* (Bluebell) and *Silene dioica* (Red Campion) made a splash of colour on a recently scraped bank.

Pair 2: Compasses Lane is shady at its lower end, but for most of its length it is of open aspect, with fine sweeping views of the Weald on one side. Despite the open aspect it has an uncompromisingly woodland flora, with large patches of *Melampyrum pratense* (Common Cow-wheat), *Allium ursinum* (Ramsons), *Veronica montana* (Wood Speedwell), *Melica uniflora* (Wood Melick) and of course *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus* (Bluebell). *Viola reichenbachiana* (Early Dog-violet) and *V. riviniana* (Common Dog-violet) were present in several places, and we found a colony of the hybrid between the two *V. x bavarica* at one place, without either parent. The banks showed *Lathyrus linifolius* (Bitter Vetch) and *Vicia sepium* (Bush Vetch) charmingly entwined in places. The leaves of *Stachys officinalis* (Betony) and shoots of *Hypericum pulchrum* (Slender St John's-wort) gave promise of glories to come. We wandered away from the lane to a stream which glowed with *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* (Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage) and *Cardamine amara* (Large Bitter-cress). We did not find the Medlar which was formerly recorded here, but 46 new records for the tetrad left us well pleased with the morning's work.

Pair 3: A well-maintained bank had a lovely display of *Orchis mascula* (Early Purple-orchid). Apparently this is a steadily enlarging colony. Hedgerow banks gave a few common species not so far recorded in the tetrad. Likewise in Bodiam Castle grounds a damp wood on the

west side, grassland edges and the moat and pond offered a few more unrecorded species.

Pair 4: The wind was cold, the clouds were murky; what else to do but botanize? Ellen and Judy, assigned an area east of Ewhurst Green in TQ72X, soon abandoned looking for early grasses in the drizzle for the relative shelter of Smutts Wood (West Wood on the OS map). They were rewarded almost instantly by the gold of *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks Buttercup) glowing amongst the green, and *Adoxa moschatellina* (Moschatel). Ellen had had a call from a resident of Staplecross giving us permission to look at some *Viscum album* (Mistletoe) in her garden, and after lunch we went to look. A new record for TQ72W, it was almost completely enveloping what was almost certainly *Crataegus persimilis* (syn. *C. prunifolia*, Broad-leaved Cockspurthorn). This North American species has shorter thorns than the similar *C. crus-galli* (Cockspurthorn) but they are no less sharp! Then we all braved the showers to look at a nearby field in TQ72W, with large patches of *Carex flacca* (Glaucous Sedge) and *Adoxa moschatellina* (Moschatel). Beyond, a bank of apparently recently excavated soil had numbers of *Orchis mascula*. Grateful thanks to all who joined us on such an uninviting day. We made 120 new records in all, and brought all our three tetrads, TQ72Q, TQ72X and TQ72W, to well over 250 species.

Chailey Common, May 23rd

On the hottest day of the year so far, thirteen members met on Chailey Common to increase the records in four tetrads, each of which had approximately 255 species recorded. Two groups left by car to update TQ32R at Scaynes Hill and TQ32O in another part of the Common, while the remaining group walked to TQ32W. Scaynes Hill provided the most records, including as it did an urban environment. We returned for lunch in the shade on Red House Common and, although very hot, everyone continued in the afternoon in TQ32V, spending more time searching in the shade than out in the open. Moving from the Common to neighbouring fields and damp woods proved more productive, and Ernie found a feral goldfish swimming in a ditch, though for how much longer the ditch would contain water was uncertain. After adding 22 new records we returned to the Common and enthusiastically searched for the missing scarce species *Chamaemelum nobile* (Wild Camomile), but to no avail. We added 102 new records in total, thanks to the hard work of all who came.

Waldron, 24th July

Eleven members assembled outside Waldron Church and divided into groups to record plants in TQ51P, TQ51U and TQ51I in the morning. One group recorded species at Burnt Oak Farm by kind permission of the owner, Mike Farrant. *Sorbus torminalis* (Wild Service-tree) was seen in a hedgerow. The woodland included several ancient woodland indicator species. Manure heaps and waste ground produced four *Chenopodium* species. Exotic trees were recorded in a plantation elsewhere in the same tetrad by two other members. Everyone met up at Tyler's, near Dower House Farm at Blackboys for lunch. We then

proceeded downhill to Butlett's Wood. The highlight of the afternoon's recording was the discovery of *Phyteuma spicatum* (Spiked Rampion), previously seen by the landowner, who wishes the location to remain confidential. In a meadow was the hybrid *Cirsium vulgare* x *arvense*, which had flowers typical of *C. vulgare* (Spear Thistle), but the leaves of *C. arvense* (Creeping Thistle). Varied habitats included ancient woodland, hedgerows, meadows, streamsides, a marsh, and arable field edges, resulting in 195 species being recorded in TQ51J. The warm, sunny weather was enjoyed.

Thanks are due to Paul and Alison Wright for permission to visit Browning's Farm, and to Andrew Tyler for the extra parking space.

Iden area, 21st August

(Joint meeting with Kent Field Club)

On a grey Saturday morning in August, Geoffrey Kitchener, the Kent County Recorder, and eight of his colleagues met with eleven members of SBRs at New Bridge on the River Rother near Iden for a joint field trip. Here the Kent Ditch forms the boundary between the two counties, and the north bank of the Rother runs in Sussex for a while, then in Kent as the boundary takes a southerly turn to run along the centre of the river itself. Thus, we set off in East Sussex recording TQ92C for our own flora. We soon started to make interesting finds in the river, on the banks and on the levee. On the levee we found a very strong colony of *Petroselinum segetum* (Corn Parsley), and further groups were found as we moved along. Grappling the river revealed the Potamogetons: *P. pectinatus* (Fennel Pondweed), *P. lucens* (Shining Pondweed) and *P. perfoliatus* (Perfoliate Pondweed), which has been recorded elsewhere in the Rother but is otherwise uncommon in Sussex. The leaves of *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* (Frogbit) were much larger in the river than those usually seen in ditches, and there was some doubt as to whether they were *Nymphoides peltata* (Fringed Water-lily) as no flowers were present. On the banks a plant of *Impatiens capensis* (Orange Balsam) made a brave show, and *Oenanthe lachenalii* (Parsley Water-dropwort) was an interesting find. One of Geoffrey's areas of expertise is hybrid docks, and he was able to show us *Rumex* x *pratensis*, the hybrid between *R. crispus* and *R. obtusifolius*, and also *R. x schulzei*, that between *R. crispus* and *R. conglomeratus*. Frustratingly, our 25 new records left us one short of our 250 species target for the tetrad.

After lunch, conveniently taken behind the levee, sheltered from the stiff breeze and on the boundary of river, counties and tetrads, we moved off to record in Kent, first along the Kent boundary of the Kent Ditch. Masses of both *Alisma plantago-aquatica* (Waterplantain) and *A. lanceolata* (Narrow-leaved Waterplantain) gave good practice in the placement of stigmas on the fruiting bodies. *Althaea officinalis* (Marsh-mallow) was in beauteous evidence. There was a good clutch of aquatics including more *Potamogeton*, and a charophyte, the identity of which could not be discovered. Many of the East Sussex contingent said that

they couldn't do it, but knew a lady who could. Back to the river, hybrid willows abounded, the sun came out, *Lythrum salicaria* (Purple Loosestrife) splashed the banks with carmine purple, and we ended with a lovely late afternoon. All agreed that it had been a good day and that it would be a good idea to have another joint meeting next year.

(Ed's note: the charophyte has been sent to the UK referee because the lady was flummoxed...)

New Flora Recording in 2010 & 2011

by Paul Harmes

Firstly, on behalf of the New Flora Working Group, I would like to make it clear that work on the New Sussex Flora is continuing to move forward.

In March 2010, the Flora Working Group asked the membership to focus recording for the year in the following way:

- Get to a total in excess of 300,000 records for the whole County
- Take number of records in **all complete tetrads** to over 250
- Get over 400 tetrads to 300 or more records

What did we achieve?

- A total, by mid-November 2010, of c.306,000 records
- All but a handful of the complete tetrads have 250+ records
- We now have 536 tetrads with 300+ records

This represents a fantastic and targeted effort by the recorders, and the gratitude and thanks of the Flora Working Group go to all those who contributed. We thank Mike Shaw for kindly preparing the Progress Map below.

We now need to look forward to the recording season 2011.

For the first three or four months of the year we would like the membership to concentrate on recording early flowering species.

These include:

Ranunculus auricomus, *Viola reichenbachiana*, *Viola odorata* (including the varieties where possible), *Veronica hederifolia* (including subsp. *lucorum* and subsp. *hederifolia* where possible), *Erophila verna* and *Galanthus*, *Crocus* and *Narcissus* species, all of which are showing gaps in the records. If at all possible, please try to identify Daffodils to species, or 'Cultivar'. Whilst a record for *Narcissus* agg. is better than nothing, it would be good to try and get a picture of which species are becoming naturalised.

However, all identifiable species missing from tetrads should be included. Please continue to send your records to Paul Harmes.

At the AGM, in March, there will be more detailed information on what we would like from recorders during the spring, summer and autumn period.

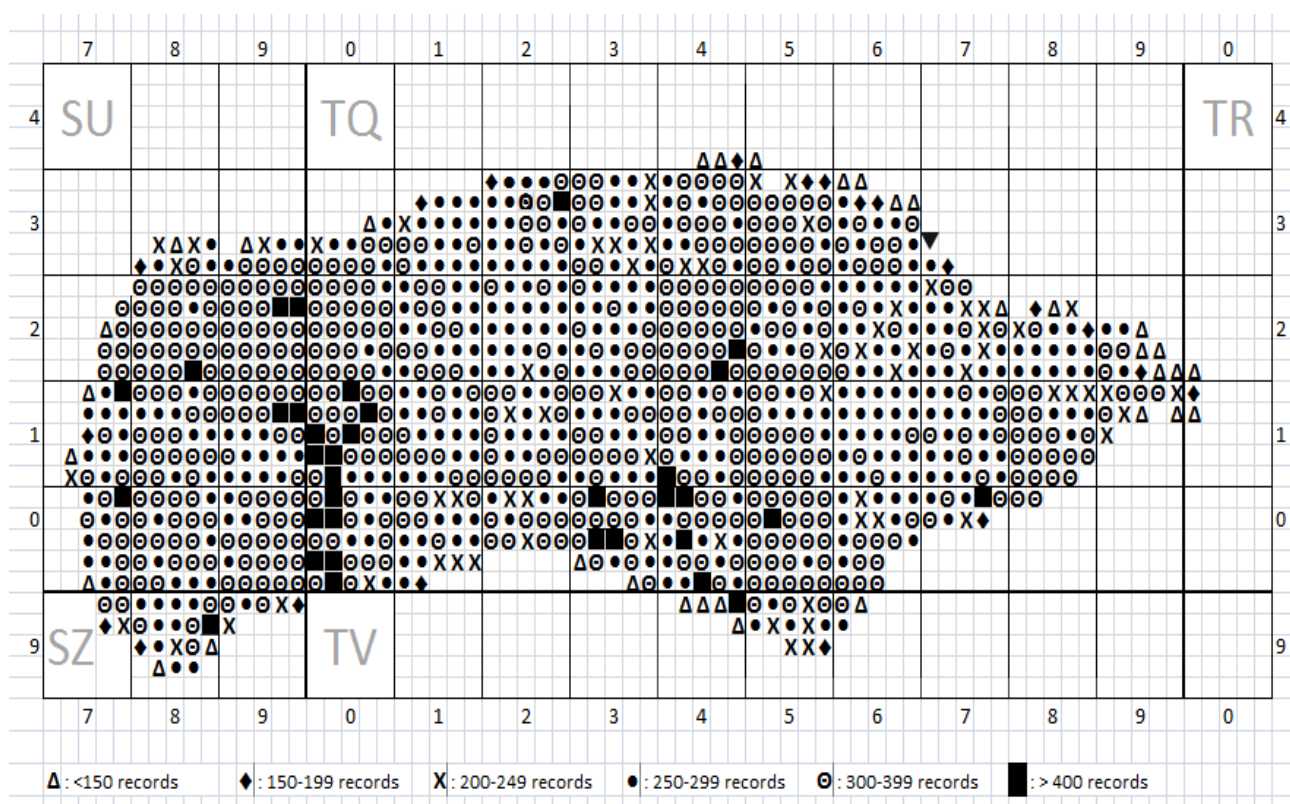
Broadly, this will involve an 'Adopt a Hectad' programme, where we will ask individual recorders to accept responsibility for a specific 10km square, and who will act as the point of contact for that square. Specific, targeted recording of specified rare species, missing

common species and missing species that were recorded in the Sussex Plant Atlas are some of the most likely requests. I will prepare this data during the late winter and early spring. There are 58 hectads (10km squares) for which we will need coordinators. Some will require more work than others.

Please give this matter some thought, and if you feel you can help us with one or more hectads we would be most grateful.

May I, once again thank you all for your magnificent efforts in 2010, and take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year.

Tetrad Recording Update 11-11-2010



SBRS website

Many members will be missing the regular updates to our website, which Alan designed with the help of his son Ian, and which he kept up to date so meticulously. We are hoping that it will be up and running again as soon as possible in 2011.

2011 Field Meetings

The following are the meetings for the earlier part of the season. As the recording priorities emerge, details of further meetings will be announced on the website and in the May Newsletter.

Saturday 2nd April Rita Hemsley	Early Spring recording in Mid-Sussex. Meet at Finches Field, West Hoathly, TQ366325. We shall work in TQ33Q and L.
Saturday 16th April Arthur Hoare	Meet at Southwater Country Park (signposted from A24) in the car park at TQ161259. We shall then drive on to record tetrads nearby.
Saturday 30th April Pat Donovan	Near Brightling to record TQ62Q and W. Meet at triangle of roads at TQ671210, one mile N of Wood's Corner.
Saturday 14th May Nick Sturt	Multi-tetrad meeting in TQ22/21. Meet E of A23 at Bolney Crossways TQ266225, parking on verges. We shall then move on to do remedial work in under-achieving tetrads. TQ22K, 21I and T look like good candidates.
Sunday 29th May Roy Wells	Recording in TQ62 and 63. Meet at the Stonegate village hall, Forge Field in Cottenden Road, TQ668286.
Saturday 11th June Frances Abraham	Parham Park. Details to follow in May Newsletter.

All meetings start at 10.45. Since some of the venues have limited parking, and for environmental reasons, members are encouraged to share cars whenever possible.

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