



Sussex Botanical Recording Society

Newsletter

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May 2007

Chairman's Message

Members of the SBRS and its predecessor, the Sussex Flora Society, have not been much concerned about such matters as who owns the records and whether legal aspects have been properly observed. Their job was to get on with recording in the field and to pass on their records to the recorders for the counties. How records were dealt with after that was not something with which members needed to be involved.

However, the situation has gradually changed over the years. It is not only botanical recording which is involved. Sometime ago the Sussex Wildlife Trust established a Biological Recorders Working Group (BRWG) as a body working to the Trust's Conservation Committee. This included members representing various wildlife interests, such as birds, plants and insects. The BRWG worked well and after several years the Trust's Council decided that this work was so important that something more permanent was needed. So a separate Recording Committee was set up responsible to the Trust's Council. One of the topics discussed by BRWG and the Biological Recording Committee was the ownership of records. This became increasingly important as the value of records was being recognised. For example, surveys of sites for certain invertebrates could only be carried out by one or two experts who lived and/or worked in Sussex, and in some cases earned part or most of their living from such work, which might have been on contracts with private firms or public bodies.

The Trust now has the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) with Henri Brocklebank in charge, and we have been working with her and SxBRC on various projects in recent years. The time has now come when we need to clearly establish our duties and responsibilities in respect of our records and the SxBRC. Elsewhere in this Newsletter there is a note about our agreeing to share records with SxBRC. I doubt whether our members wish to be aware of all the details of the

proposed agreement, but they should at least be aware of what the SBRS Committee is doing in this respect.

Rod Stern

Secretary's Note

Saturday 3rd November 2007

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 at 10.30 a.m. There will be reports of field meetings and interesting records and an illustrated talk. Please remember to bring a packed lunch; tea or coffee and biscuits will be available. Members are invited to bring slides to show in the afternoon, books and plants for sale and any items of interest or specimens for display.

Saturday 8th March 2008

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. at Staplefield Village Hall followed by a showing of members' slides and finishing with tea and biscuits. The hall will be available from 1.30 p.m. Nominations for new committee members or officers, agreed by the nominee, should be sent to the Secretary a week before the A.G.M.

Rita Hemsley

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Message from the Treasurer

To help the accumulation of reserves which we shall require to produce the new Flora of Sussex the Committee has decided that from 1st January 2008 the annual subscription will be increased to £5 per individual and £7 per two members sharing the same address. The additional amounts will be earmarked for the Flora Fund, which latter hopefully will be of a sufficient size when required to bring to fruition all the hard work of so many of our membership.

This is the first increase in subscription in my period as treasurer and as it is for such a worthwhile reason I hope it will meet with the approval of you all.

The subscriptions for 2007 remain at £3 (individual) and £4.50 (two members at one address) and, for those who have not yet paid, may be paid to me at the Autumn Get Together or by being sent to me at my home address:– Westfield House, Church Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1EE.

Thank you.

Trevor Lording

***Ranunculus omiophyllus* – overlooked, or has it gone? by Alan Knapp**

One species for which we have very few recent records is Round-leaved Crowfoot, *Ranunculus omiophyllus*. It was never very common with the *Sussex Plant Atlas* map showing 8 records from West Sussex and 15 from East Sussex, but since 2000 we have only 2 records from West and 4 from East. It would be nice to think it was overlooked but the truth may be that it really has declined. It likes shallow water or muddy places on fairly acid soils and was formerly most often found in an area extending eastwards from St Leonards Forest, through Worth Forest into Ashdown Forest. Please look out for it and do take care to check that it is this species and not the slightly more common *R. hederaceus*. The main difference is that the lobes of the leaves in *Ranunculus hederaceus* are broadest at the base and get continuously narrower toward the tip whereas in *R. omiophyllus* the lobes are widest part way up so that if you start at the base and move toward the tip of the lobes, the lobes first get broader before narrowing again toward the tip. There is one other rather similar but much

rarer small flowered aquatic buttercup - Three-lobed Crowfoot, *Ranunculus tripartitus*. If you think you might have found that please let one of the recorders know immediately. Note: The Plant Crib 1998, T.C.G. Rich and A.C. Jermy, has a good section on the identification of aquatic buttercups.

Obituary: Robert Alan Finch 1938-2006 by Peter Finch

Although Dr Finch was not a member of the SBRS himself, he learnt much of his botany in Sussex, and we send our sympathy to his family on their sad loss. His brother Peter Finch writes:

My youngest brother Bob died on December 18th 2006. Even from a young child, he was interested in wild plants, and this interest was encouraged by our parents and by our family environment.

During the war, he would often disappear up on to the East Hill at Hastings, where a detachment of Canadian infantry was encamped. After having taken lunch with the Commanding Officer, he repaid their kindness by instructing the men on how to identify the wild plants which grew in the East Hill area – all this at the tender age of six years!

His botanical education continued and, during his time at Hastings Grammar School, he was greatly encouraged by the Biology master there, Mr ‘Dougie’ Brightmore, with whom he developed a firm friendship. He collaborated with Dr Derek Booth in a research project, in which they investigated the botanical and zoological status of the shoreline below the cliffs at Rock-a-Nore, Hastings.

On leaving school, he won a scholarship to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he studied botany and taxonomy and, having obtained his doctorate, he spent a year lecturing in Newcastle. He then went to Cambridge, where he obtained a post at the Plant Breeding Institute at Trumpington, working on the genetics of barley.

After the Institute closed down, he worked on bryophytes for a couple of years at Monks Wood before taking early retirement. In the course of his botanical work he discovered two moss species which were new to Britain and, in conjunction with P.D. Sell, did a lot of work on *Leontodon* and *Hieracium*. He was never happier than when

working on bryophytes, most especially mosses, and he produced very fine photographs of many moss species, together with a moss herbarium. He was a proof-editor for the Journal of British Bryology.

His passing is a desperate loss to his wife Jessica, to our family and to all his friends.

SBRS and the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre

by Paul Harmes and Alan Knapp

As you are no doubt aware, the SBRS has always shared its records with the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI). More recently, we have been asked to share these records with the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC). This helps to ensure that SxBRC has a full and accurate picture of the distribution of vascular plants and charophytes across Sussex. It also helps to ensure that developers and the planning authorities in Sussex are made aware of any areas of botanical importance, hopefully reducing the chances of destruction of such sites. In addition, SxBRC sends us the botanical records which they receive.

SxBRC wishes to make the exchange of records more formal. Before we agree we need to be sure that the SBRS membership is willing to give us permission to pass on to SxBRC the records which they submit to the East and West Sussex Recorders. We would therefore like to know if anyone has any problems with this - if you do have any issues to raise please contact us by the end of June. Some of you may be concerned about confidential records, e.g. for very rare species or where landowners may be sensitive. As part of our agreement we already mark such records as confidential when we send them to SxBRC, and details of records marked as confidential are not released by them. We will ensure that this is part of our more formal agreement. In addition, if you do not wish to allow any part of your records to go to SxBRC, then make this clear when you send them to us, and we will not pass them on to them.

Hopefully all of you will agree with us that sharing records with SxBRC is a benefit to all concerned and to the protection of plant biodiversity in Sussex but, if you do have any issues to raise or questions to ask, please get in touch.

Basic Plant Identification Course

by Paul Harmes

I am proposing to run a basic Plant Identification course in conjunction with the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

It will commence in October 2007 and run fortnightly right through to May 2008, and consist principally of two hour classroom sessions at Woods Mill, Henfield, and a number of field meetings.

If you are new to plant recording and identification or know of anyone who might benefit from this course, please contact Mike Russell on 01273-492630 or by e-mail to mikerussell@sussexwt.org.uk.

Culpeper: a Sussex Herbalist?

Peter Davys has come across a reference to the famous herbalist Nicholas Culpeper (1616-54) being buried in Wilmington churchyard – and apparently the grave was subsequently destroyed. Culpeper lived at Isfield as a child, where his maternal grandfather was Vicar, but he seems to have spent most of his adult life in London. Does anyone know anything about his connection with Wilmington? And why was his grave destroyed?

What has changed in Your patch?

by Arthur G. Hoare

We now have the *Sussex Plant Atlas* records computerised thanks to the sterling work of Frances Abraham, Dawn Nelson and Sylvia Simkin. This means that Alan will soon be able to provide lists of missing species that were recorded in the SPA but as yet do not appear in the New Flora records. Before these lists become readily available there is to be a bit of fine tuning of the computer program.

A list was created for one of my local squares which I recorded for the *Atlas* in the mid 1970s, and this high-lighted a number of missing plants. This situation prompted me to look at what has changed in the intervening years. A lot of the absent species are due to the changing face of Crawley. Many of these plants were recorded before the major development of Pound Hill

North. In those days a pond was hidden away in the woods and one had to battle through dense undergrowth of *Rhododendrons* to reach it. At that time I found *Epipactis purpurata* and *Osmunda regalis* growing on the north bank of the pond, and *Ranunculus sceleratus* elsewhere in the margin. The *Epipactis* was under the *Rhododendron* and the *Osmunda* had its feet in the water. There were a lot of exotic trees and shrubs scattered about the area, some of which still exist - these are relics of Worth Park Estate which met its demise before the new town was built. The area was made up of a number of small fields and scrubby places, some of which were fen-like wet woodland. It was here that I found

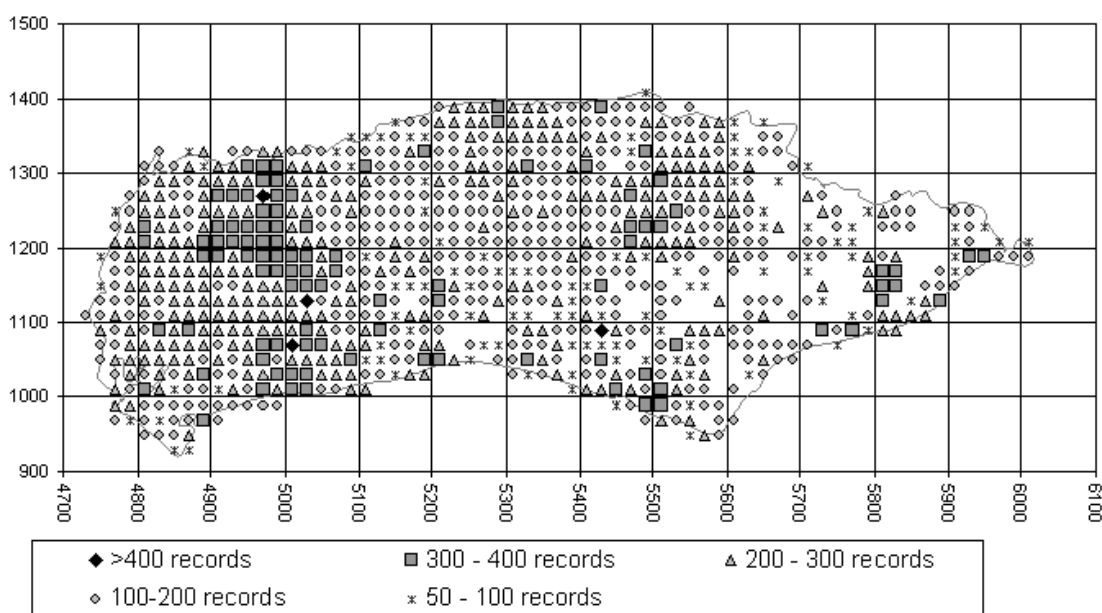
Blechnum spicant, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Caltha palustris*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Stellaria uliginosa* and the great tussocks of *Carex paniculata*. *Knautia arvensis* was frequent along the edge of a field adjacent to the railway, and over the fence on the embankment were to be found *Origanum vulgare*, *Linaria vulgaris*, *Senecio sylvaticus* and *Fragaria vesca*. The *Origanum* appeared when the bank was reinforced with limestone chippings after a landslide. This was still in the age of steam when the banks were kept free of trees and shrubs in case they caught fire.

Progress of the new Flora of Sussex - March 2007

by Paul Harnes and Alan Knapp

We have now had two full seasons of recording for the flora, and are making reasonable progress as shown in the map below. The total number of records at the beginning of March was 169,600, which means that between March 2006 and March 2007 we added 51,350 records. This is a fine achievement, but it is only 75% of the number of records received in the same period from 2005 to 2006. It was clear that the number of records would fall each year as more and more areas were recorded but, if the decrease continues at this rate, we will not achieve our target of an average of about 300 records per tetrad by the end of 2010. We would therefore ask everyone to contribute whatever they can in 2007, concentrating on the 250 tetrads with <100 records (i.e. those on the map with blank squares or a star symbol (*). We have already approached some recorders and asked them to concentrate on particular areas and, if anyone would like further guidance, please talk to Paul or Alan. It would be a great result if the map in next year's spring newsletter had no blank squares.

Post 2000 records - totals as of 24-04-2007



There are still many (about 990) records from the *Sussex Rare Plant Register* which have not been refound since 2000 and we'd like your help to refind as many of these as possible. Updated lists are available on our website and, for any of you without access to the internet, we can provide printed lists for given 10km squares or tetrad maps of particular species - it is not practical to provide the full list in printed form as it is so long. Contact Alan Knapp if you would like a list.

Finally, as you saw in the last newsletter, we have made a start on the form of the species accounts and have now finalised the format, so we plan to produce more draft accounts this year.

New record card (2007)

by Alan Knapp

Thanks to the high level of recording going on we are reprinting our record cards, and have taken the opportunity to make some minor changes to the species on the back of the card. The previous cards are fine so, if you have a stock, please use them all up. The changes on the new card are that five entries

have been removed. The aggregates *Arctium* agg. and *Rosa* agg. have gone as we need specific species records for these groups for the new Flora. Note however that *Arctium* **min*, the *Arctium minus* aggregate, remains as it is often very hard to separate *Arctium nem* and *min*. Three rare species for which we get almost no records, *Anagallis minima*, *Ornithogalum angustifolium* and *Valeriana dioica* have also been removed. We have added three increasingly common introductions - *Alchemilla mollis*, *Euphorbia lathyris* and *Lobularia maritima*. In addition, some species now have their names in italics, although the italic effect is rather muted in order to ensure that we retain clarity with the small font on the cards. These are species (mainly trees) where the status is often unclear and we would like you to include a status letter by the record on the front of the card. Finally, a few extra species have a + sign, indicating that we want more detailed information.

Selected records of interest received in 2006

Records have been selected by Alan Knapp (West Sussex) and Paul Harnes (East Sussex). They would like to point out that there is only space to include a small proportion of the many interesting records received, and to apologise if anyone's favourite record has not been included.

WEST SUSSEX VC13

Species	Locality	status	Comments	Rec.
<i>Amaranthus blitoides</i>	Barnham	C	Rather uncommon, 1 plant only here	DMD
<i>Bromus arvensis</i>	Tillington	C	Sandy arable field	FA
<i>Bromus arvensis</i>	S of Tillington	C	Sandy arable field, first sighting for many years	FA
<i>Bromus secalinus</i>	Near Keyfox Farm, Petworth	C	Arable margins. More records for this species this year than ever before.	FA
<i>Campanula patula</i>	Fyning	N	2 plants in field. All other sites known searched but not found anywhere else in 2006.	DNE
<i>Carex muricata</i> subsp. <i>lamprocarpa</i>	Heyshott Common	N	On old railway from in two places	SBRS
<i>Crassula tillaea</i>	Chapel Common	N	Many plants on disturbed sandy tracks, previously though extinct in Sussex	MED
<i>Crepis biennis</i>	Goodwood	N	One plant in grassland. Possibly an overlooked species	N&ES
<i>Dactylorhiza x hallii</i>	Iping Marsh, Stedham	N	1 spike (<i>D. maculata</i> x <i>praetermissa</i>)	DCL
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	Jubilee Oaks, Billingshurst	C	Newly turned waste ground	SMS
<i>Digitaria ischaemum</i>	Near Manor of Dean	E		FA
<i>Epilobium palustre</i>	N of Bramber	N	3rd recent VC13 record. Growing in very wet area.	AGK
<i>Eruca vesicaria</i> subsp. <i>vesicaria</i>	Old Shoreham	C	1 very large plant E of Church.	EB
<i>Euphorbia platyphyllos</i>	E of Henfield	C	Arable field.	DBB/

				PB
<i>Euphorbia portlandica</i>	S.Thorney Island	N	10's of plants, some as seedlings. Same place as last year's discovery so hopefully it is in Sussex to stay.	AGK/ ADP
<i>Euphorbia serrulata</i>	Burpham	U	Cottage flower bed	MBE
<i>Gnaphalium sylvaticum</i>	N of Singleton	N	A very welcome find as this species is now rare across Sussex	RBL/ SBL
<i>Guizotia abyssinica</i>	Fulking	C	Disturbed area near cricket field	AGK
<i>Helleborus viridis</i>	Hoyle Copse	N	New site, 3 main clumps	JSI
<i>Hypochaeris glabra</i>	Chapel Common	N	2 plants on sandy track	AGK/ FA/ DNE
<i>Lamium hybridum</i>	Buncton Manor Farm	N	Edge of wheat field stubble, apparently uncommon but this species may be under-recorded.	O&M H
<i>Lathraea clandestina</i>	Coombes Road, Lancing	E	5 groups near base of trees on verge.	EB/ J&PC F
<i>Lavatera x clementii</i>	Ifield	S	1 plant in hedge near station	GBU/ PJN
<i>Leonurus cardiaca</i>	Aldwick Bay Beach	E	Several plants, apparently persisting on beach	JCO
<i>Leonurus cardiaca</i>	Wepham	P	Cottage garden	M. Berry
<i>Lilium martagon</i>	Hammerhill Farm, Cuckfield	E	Naturalised in woodland on N side of bridle path	PAH
<i>Limonium procerum</i> subsp. <i>procerum</i>	Shoreham Beach	N	Bank above Widewater. Known in many places on E.Sussex, good to have it also in W.Sussex.	DWD
<i>Lycopodiella inundata</i>	Graffham Common West	N	3 plants on bare area over fence from footpath	BMI
<i>Misopates orontium</i>	Near Knightsfield	N	One plant in arable field	DNE
<i>Nectaroscordum siculum</i>	Fyning	E	Near gardens	DNE
<i>Nepeta cataria</i>	Wepham Down area	N	Approx 5m strip along W side of track N of Lee Farm	N&ES
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Fishbourne	E	This species is appearing more and more frequently as an established escape	RCS/ VST
<i>Persicaria minor</i>	Amberley Wild Brooks	N	Several plants just in flower on bare mud beside the ditch	BBE
<i>Prunus padus</i>	Handcross	S	1 tree on bank by road	AGH
<i>Pseudofumaria alba</i>	Fontwell, West Sussex	S	On wall outside Denman's gardens, Denman's Lane, Fontwell	MMS
<i>Pyrola minor</i>	Graffham Common	N	c.50 plants in bracken. Only the second conf. known site in Sussex.	BMI

			Close to a location reported in W.Dod	
<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Near New Hill Barn	N	30 or so plants, both flowering and in fruit (recorded in December)	N&ES
<i>Serratula tinctoria</i>	Ifield Golf Course	N	4 plants on edge of golf course	GBU/ PJN
<i>Triglochin palustre</i>	Warningcamp	N	In ditch, this is much rarer than <i>T.maritima</i> .	N&ES
<i>Veronica agrestis</i>	Chilgrove Green	N	Two small patches on disturbed soil.	N&ES
<i>Veronica agrestis</i>	Compton area	N	Setaside field. Very uncommon in West Sussex	RBL/ SBL
<i>Veronica peregrina</i>	West Grinstead	C	12 plants on gravel, Camelia Botnar Nursery	ESR
<i>Veronica prostrata</i>	Maidenbower	E	Established garden escape	AGH
<i>X Festulolium loliaceum</i>	Lancing Ring	N	Around fence line of pond, det. BC	SBRS
<i>Zostera noltei</i>	SW Thorney & South Chidham Peninsula	N	Confirmation of continued existence of colonies not recorded for some years	ADP

EAST SUSSEX VC14

Species	Locality	Status	Comments	Rec.
<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	Lullington Heath	U		WME
<i>Ammi majus</i>	Crowborough Common	C	In <i>Phacelia</i> field	JBY
<i>Apium inundatum</i>	SWT – Pevensey Levels	N		BBE
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i> subsp. <i>ferronii</i>	Saltdean	N	Short turf	AS
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i> subsp. <i>ferronii</i>	Newhaven	N	Short turf	AS
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i> subsp. <i>ferronii</i>	Beachy Head	N	Cliff top	AS
<i>Bromus secalinus</i>	Groombridge/Withyham area	E	Arable fields	JBY
<i>Bromus secalinus</i>	Frant area	E		AGK
<i>Bromus secalinus</i>	N of Manor Farm	E	Arable fields	AGK
<i>Calamagrostis epigejos</i>	Milton Hyde	N		HMP
<i>Camelina sativa</i>	Brighton	C		AS
<i>Camelina sativa</i>	Balls Green	C	Arable margin	JBY
<i>Camelina sativa</i>	W of Hawkins Bridge	C	Turnip/swede crop	AGK
<i>Carex rostrata</i>	Hooe Common	N		CMPR
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Sheepcote Valley	N	Rabbit disturbed area	AS
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Telscombe Cliffs	N	Large patch	AGH
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Beachy Head	N	Long grass by fence	MBE
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Seven Sisters	N	Short turf	MBE
<i>Chenopodium murale</i>	River Ouse	N		AS
<i>Chenopodium quinoa</i>	Withyham	U		ESR

Cirsium dissectum	Wivelsfield	N	Wet meadow	AGK
Cirsium dissectum	Poundgate	N	By path	JBV
Cirsium dissectum	Ashdown Forest	N	Single plant	JBV
Clinopodium acinos	Malling, Lewes	N	Chalk bank	PMD
Dianthus armeria	Eastbourne	N?	Chalk grassland	JAR et.al.
Dianthus armeria	Birling gap area	N?	Chalk grassland	CPJC
Dorycnium hirsutum	Brighton	C	Pavement	AS
Galactites tomentosa	Brighton	C		PTH
Galeopsis speciosus	Barcombe	C		DCL
Galeopsis speciosus	Hastings	C	By fisherman's huts	JAR
Galium parisiense	Sheepcote Valley, Whitehawk	E	Good colony	AS
Helleborus viridis	Confidential	N		DCL
Helleborus viridis	Hurst Green	N		O&MH
Hieracium sublepidostoides	S of Cackle Street	N		AGK
Pyrola minor	Heathfield	N	Old railway line	RAN/ EJR
Solanum laciniatum	Brighton	C	Gutters and base of wall	AS
Thalictrum flavum	Filsham	N	Reed-bed	PGM
Thelyptris palustris	Newbridge	N	Known site	ESR
Tilia cordata	Abbots Wood	N	Woodland	JPD/ HMP
Triglochin palustris	Jury's Gut Sewer	N	Ditch	RCS
Typha x glauca	Hankham Level	N		AGK et.al
Typha x glauca	Norman's Bay	N	Ditch	AGK
Veronica scutellata	SW of East Grinstead	N	Marshy Field	AGH
Vicia lathyroides	Links Avenue, Newhaven	N	Top of reservoir	AGK/ AGH
Vicia lathyroides	Pett Level	N	Broken foundations of buildings	FWI/JM
Viola canina	Milton Hyde	N	2 patches	SBRS
Wolffia arrihza	Pevensey by old A259	N	Drainage ditch	PAH et.al.
Wolffia arrihza	Pevensey Levels	N	Drainage ditch	RPW
Wolffia arrihza	NW of Pevensey	N	Drainage ditch	AGK et.al

Key to recorders' initials:

ADP: A. de Potier, **AGH:** A.Hoare, **AGK:** A.Knapp, **AS:** A.Spiers, **BBE:**B.Bennatt, **BC:** B.Clough
BMI: B.Middleton, **CMPR:** C.Ryland **CPJC:** P.Coulcher, **DBB/PB:** D. & P.Batchelor, **DCL:**
D.Lang, **DMD:** D.Donovan, **DNE:** D.Nelson, **DWD:** D.Wood, **EB:** B.Bishop, **EJR:** E.Rich, **ESR:**
E.Sears, **FA:** F.Abraham, **FWI:** F.Winch, **GBU:** G.Burnsall, **HMP:** H.Proctor, **JAR:** J.Rose, **JBV:**
J.Byatt, **JCO:** J.Cole, **JM:** J.Medlock, **J&PCF:** J. & P.Finch, **JPD:** P.Davys, **JSI:** Jonathon Simons,
MBE: M.Berry **MED:** M.Edwards, **MMS:** M.Shaw, **N&ES:** N. & E.Sturt, **O&MH:** O. & M.Hollings,

PAH: P.Harmes, **PGM:** P.Marchant, **PJN:** P.Nobbs, **PTH:** P.Thomson, **RAN:** R.Nicholson,
RBL/SBL: R.& S.Bucknall, **RCS/VST:** R. & V.Stern, **RPW:** R.Wells, **SBRS:** Sussex Botanical
Recording Society, **SMS:** S.Simkin, **WME:** W.Meadway
