



Sussex Botanical Recording Society

Newsletter

No. 93

<http://www.sussexflora.org.uk>

May 2021

Chairman's Message

On the subject of deadlines Douglas Adams famously said that he liked the sound of them whooshing by. I am a more timorous beast than he and I write this on the last day of March with the Editor's deadline focusing my mind. Well, focusing it to some extent, since part of it is still out among the daffodils of Flexham Park (TQ20B) where, just off Bruce Middleton's Serpent Trail, there was the sort of 'host' that would have knocked W. Wordsworth off his poetic feet. When you read this a month or so hence, the season will have moved on and I hope that you will have been able to enjoy re-acquainting yourselves with the familiar Spring flowers of wood, meadow and wayside.

Since the AGM at Staplefield in March last year we have lost several prominent members who made significant contributions to the Society and the tributes to them bulk large in the pages which follow. Mike Shaw made an enormous contribution to the SBRS over twenty years, including a stint as BSBI Recorder for VC13. Venturing back in time further, David Lang was a regular feature of both indoor and field meetings until quite recent years, and always ready to share his enthusiasm and knowledge in the matter of our native orchids. Peter Davys' special expertise lay in trees, especially the Elm, but he was a good general plant man and much loved for the modest way in which he imparted his knowledge. Pat Donovan, we have had cause to remark before, was one of a small band who set up the SBRS and helped to nurture it; she too was in her heyday a familiar face at meetings. Her artistic skills were also highly regarded: her sublime work adorns Tim Rich's *Flora of Ashdown Forest* but not everyone got to see the candid pencil sketches of fellow members which she would make while seated among you at gatherings in Staplefield village hall. The Society has been enriched by all these different individuals and many members will have their own very fond memories of them.

The need now is to look to the future. In 1980 Pat and her fellows recognised that the publication of

the *Sussex Plant Atlas* did not render a co-ordinated body

Continued on page 2

Dates for your Diary

We hope that by the Autumn indoor meetings will be allowed once again. So keep your fingers crossed for:

Saturday 30th October 2021

The Autumn Get-together, combined with the postponed Annual General Meeting, will be held at Staplefield Village Hall. The doors will be open from 10.00 a.m. The meeting will start promptly at 10.30 and will include a talk by our President, David Streeter. Remember to bring a packed lunch; tea, coffee and cakes will be provided. Members are invited to bring books and plants for sale, any items of interest or specimens for display, and digital photographs to show in the afternoon (see note below). Homemade cakes are always welcome.

Saturday 5th March 2022

As usual, the Annual General Meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. at Staplefield Village Hall. After the AGM there will be information on this year's field meetings, and details of interesting records received in 2021. The hall will be available from 1.30 p.m. if you wish to bring any books or plants for sale. The meeting will conclude with tea and cakes. If you bring digital photographs of Sussex plants to show, please include captions.

Contents

Chairman's message	1
Dates for your diary.....	1
Treasurer's note.....	2
SWT Storrington Group	2
Photo competition 2021	3
Recording 2021.....	3
Village green survey.....	4
Churchyard survey & management.....	4
Lesser Butterfly-orchid 1935.....	5

Epilobium & CTW.....	6
Frant bryophytes.....	6
Obituaries: David Lang, Mike Shaw, Pat Donovan, Frank and Madeleine Dougharty, Peter Davys.....	8
Notable records 2020.....	12
SBRS Officers & Committee members...	14

Treasurer's Note

Following preparation of the Society's Accounts for 2020 they await Independent Examination before the AGM in October, so I am at present unable to give many details. However I may say that the Society is still financially secure and the Flora Fund, which stood at 31st December 2019 at £25,776.97, has increased by circa £1,000.

Subscriptions for 2021 remain as for 2020 i.e. £8 for an individual and £11 for two people at the same address and receiving one copy of the mailings as they arise. Subscriptions may be sent to me at my home address or paid at the AGM/Autumn Get-together in October, assuming we are allowed to gather together by then! If anyone has not paid their subscription for 2020 or earlier, if you are uncertain of your subscription status please contact me and I shall let you know: please now so do if you wish to remain a member.

Trevor Lording

A request from the Chairman: we should be very grateful to hear from a member with accountancy or book-keeping skills who would be willing to audit the Society's accounts.

Continued from page 1

of field botanists superfluous as the flora is constantly changing, both of its nature and due to the impact of man. The same holds true now after the latest *Flora of Sussex*. We have already set up projects looking at churchyards and village greens across the two vice-counties: Helen Proctor and Jacqueline Hutson have been steering these and have written up their progress for you to read later in this issue. Now the Committee, led by its President, has identified the surveying of important species and habitats as an activity which the SBRS should be addressing more particularly. I am able to announce that under the auspices of Ruth Eastwood and Paul Harmes there will be a study of the health and distribution of *Gentiana pneumonanthe* (Marsh Gentian) on Ashdown Forest reporting to the new Forest CEO James Adler. In fact the survey will extend beyond the Forest in the case of the Gentian as well as

covering other scarce species on the Forest itself such as *Rhynchospora alba* (White Beak-sedge). The project will inform how as a Society we go on to undertake work towards a new Rare Plant Register to update the one published in 2001.

The Committee is reviewing the way in which we record plants. Mike Shaw was able, with help, to keep in operation the Electronic Record Card and associated processing software created by Alan Knapp, but the time has arrived when we need to find a new system which will be as simple as possible for recorders and also straightforward to feed into an SBRS database and convert into the appropriate format for the BSBI. Nevil Hutchinson has been giving this a great deal of thought since he took up the baton of IT in the Society and he will share his thoughts with you all in due course. The situation is complicated a little by the fact that BSBI is also considering the way ahead and it will be important to keep in step with that organisation so as to ensure that the system which we eventually adopt is fully compatible and so minimises the hoops through which Nevil – wonderfully agile though he is – is required to jump.

We are also looking ahead to future publications, with Brad Scott lending his professional expertise. We have in view something on the best examples of Sussex churchyards from the pen of Helen Proctor, a work on the 18th Century Woolgar's *Flora Lewesensis* by Paul Harmes and, perhaps, something exciting on William Borrer of Henfield.

So during the Covid emergency we have not been standing still. We have tried to keep in touch with you through Newsletters and occasional emails, and the SBRS Website continues to be an excellent resource with new items regularly posted by Brad. Nor should I overlook Nevil's *Plant of the Week* which attracted a loyal following last year, so that when it was interrupted your Chairman had to reassure droves of fans who feared that the blogger had met with some disaster. In taking on the weighty task of handling all the incoming records I fear Nevil may have left himself too little time to resurrect this popular feature in the immediate future.

As the situation is now, it looks as if the first tranche of our field meetings will fall under a general limit of groups of six. The booking arrangements for meetings up to the end of June will have been sent out to you by email or post by the time this reaches you. We look forward with

anticipation to seeing you, in line with whatever protocols are in place, and meanwhile the Committee is planning how to make the combined Autumn Get-together and AGM on 30th October into something of a celebration. Before that time I wish you all many happy days in the field.

Nick Sturt

SWT new regional group

The Sussex Wildlife Trust is planning to form a new group based around Storrington and part of the Arun Valley from north of the Downs to south of Horsham, and a varied programme of events is envisaged. If you might be interested in joining email:

<swtstorringtonregion@gmail.com>.

Photo Competition 2021

Don't forget to take photos for this year's photo competition. The categories this year are for a) a close-up of one or more plants and b) a plant or plants growing in water. The full rules are given in the January 2021 SBRS newsletter. To inspire you, here are two runners-up from last year's competition:



Alison Minns' picture of Wild Carrot came third in the category for a close-up.



Nick Sturt's photo of Bulbous Buttercup was runner-up in the category for a weed in a garden

Plant Recording in 2021

Nick Sturt

Since there are quite a number of new members (welcome one and all!) it seems appropriate to explain in more detail the work of the Society and what our aims are in recording the flora of Sussex as well as to specify some particular targets for the year ahead.

Firstly, you will note the name of the Society. 'Sussex Botanical Recording Society' has always seemed to me to have a certain 'clunkiness', for want of a better word, but on the other hand it is a case of 'doing exactly what it says on the tin'. We are primarily about recording, finding out what is there, rather than, say, advising on management or other matters which are the province of specialists, many of whom make a living from such expertise. This is not to say that we are not interested in these subjects and the recent churchyard survey under Helen's aegis has set out to feed back the results to parishioners and provide some general guidance on how a site might best be managed for the benefit of

biodiversity. Since the Society's foundation it seems to have become increasingly important to engage the populace in the wild plants of the county in order to help secure their survival in the face of all manner of threats. For similar reasons, as a Society we should also be in the business of monitoring scarce and rare species and habitats. At the risk of tripping over another cliché, we are 'a broad church' and we welcome all who have an interest in plants, whether or not they choose to take an active part in recording. We endeavour to produce informative and stimulating newsletters and website content, with links to social media, to cater for all. Of course, our President is a most distinguished plant ecologist and naturally he will emphasise to you that plant recording on its own is not much more advanced than train-spotting compared with real science and the addressing of the many fascinating factors influencing the distribution and behaviour of different species. And you cannot argue with that!

Nevertheless, we need to start with the records. The records which we gather are collated in a database and then shared with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) at Woods Mill and the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI). The BSBI is on the point of publishing the results of a national survey begun in 2001, to which the SBRS has contributed, as Atlas 2020. Routinely the BSBI will go on to start again from 2021 collecting data for the next ten year period: you will note that this is in itself a vast and most worthwhile monitoring exercise. We as a Society will feed into the BSBI project, recording for the moment on a tetrad (2 x 2km square) basis. We continue to review the question of recording at a monad (1 x 1km square) level and we are happy to accept data at this resolution. We also welcome recording on a site basis but all such records must be qualified by a tetrad or monad tag. So if you feel you would like to record the plants in your home tetrad or a particular site please do so. The focused effort that went into the survey for the 2018 *Flora of Sussex* in its final stages homed in on less intensively studied squares and species: the consequence of this is that there are a very large number of the 1,000-plus tetrads in Sussex which have had little or no attention for a long time. You will be able to cross-reference your own findings with the 2001-2015 tetrad species lists obtainable on our website.

Your records should be sent, preferably in the form of the current Electronic Recording Card (ERC) available on the website, to Nevil

Hutchinson. Hard copies of the recording card can be printed off from the website and are recommended for general recording in the field as they prompt you to include relevant detail where it is required, for example grid references for notable plants and species additional to those listed in the columns. Back at home you can transfer your records onto the ERC. The ERC is straightforward to use but help is available should you encounter difficulties. As I have mentioned before, any records which you have of rare or interesting species should be reported as soon as possible as an expert confirmation may be required. This applies to any species new or nearly new to East or West Sussex and to so-called critical species and difficult groups, for example Hawkweeds, Brambles and Eyebrights. Aliens and exotics should be referred to Matthew Berry. If your spectacular find has not been verified the record cannot be added to the database and your chance of fame is gone!

Finally, allow me again to direct you to the current project on village greens, recreation grounds and other public spaces. Jacqui needs you to sign up for these (and then to fulfil your promise to survey and report) as a recording priority this Summer.

Village Greens yet to be done

Jacqui Hutson

We hope that restrictions are lifted sufficiently this year to allow the search for botanically interesting village greens and recreation grounds to continue. Some great sites have been found so far but there are still many registered greens that have not yet been graced by a visit. These are listed on the projects section of the SBRS website. There must also be greens that are not on the registered lists maintained by the two county councils and there may be botanical gems among them. So if one of these is near you we would like to hear about it. You can check if one you are interested in has already been recorded by consulting the separate list.

Please get in touch if you would like to record a green or two and I will send you the relevant registry map(s). I guess that some of them might need only a fleeting visit if they are obviously more or less monocultures of rye grass - but we

would like to know about these too so that we can tick them off. I wish you a wonderful summer and I look forward to receiving lots of records.

Impact of churchyard recording on management

Helen Proctor

A big thank-you to the members who have offered to record the remaining burial sites on my list - all except St. Mary the Virgin at Rye. More records are still welcome, especially where fewer than ten grass species have been recorded. I find that further visits often lead to adding records of new species. Notes on the management are welcomed. I would also be interested for information on former activities and land management in medieval churchyards that may have affected the flora.

Distribution of the plant lists, together with more media publicity about biodiversity loss has encouraged more church communities to ask for management advice. The vicar at St. Peter's old churchyard at Hamsey, near Lewes is really enthusiastic about changing the management. Previously, monthly grass cutting allowed only the basal leaves of *Centaurea nigra* and *C. scabiosa* (Common and Greater Knapweed) to appear.

At St. Nicholas, Mid Lavant, the vicar initiated a change of management, supported by a team of volunteers. Passers-by have enjoyed seeing bees and butterflies return to the colourful, flower-rich border. A further conservation area is planned. Communication with the District Council's contractors ensures they are aware of the areas to be left uncut.

At St. Michael's churchyard, Amberley, our member, Richard Robinson, has organised late summer work parties to scythe and strim the grass. The grass cuttings were dried and turned, then fed into a manual hay baler. Fourteen bales of hay have been enjoyed by a local horse! The grass, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, (False Oat-grass) has reduced in quantity and *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet-saxifrage) has returned.

Collection and disposal of grass cuttings by contractors increases the cost but community involvement can ensure this is done. At St. John's,

Burgess Hill, Sheila Preston has completed the task, single-handed, for several years, ensuring low soil fertility is maintained and enabling the survival of species such as *Silene silaus* (Pepper-saxifrage) and *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid). Sheila has now moved away. Last year, the entire churchyard was mown and the arisings left in situ. The church is now looking for a local co-ordinator who could lead a small group of volunteers. If you could help, please let me know.

Lastly, Kerry Lemon has been commissioned to create art works for the Big Yellow Development in the Old Shoreham Road, Hove. She hopes to depict some of the plants which flower in Hove Cemetery.

Keep up the good work, everyone, and spread the word to save more wild flowers for biodiversity and future generations to enjoy!



Dactylorhiza fuchsii (Common Spotted-orchid) in Ebernoe churchyard in 2019 (photo: Frances Abraham)

Lesser Butterfly-orchid in Ashdown Forest in 1935

Brad Scott

Often, when encountering an online database of newspapers, journals or books, I try searching for plant- or place-related terms, and I've been pleasantly surprised at the richness of material that idle curiosity can uncover. The Biodiversity

Heritage Library is a well-known open access digital library for biodiversity literature, and is the place to go if you want to look at texts ranging from John Ray's *Historia plantarum* right through to many twentieth century natural history periodicals. While having a tea break one day, I simply searched for "forest row", the village where I live, and was intrigued by the results. A nice clutch of items came from the *Proceedings of the South London Entomological and Natural History Society*, which held field meetings in the area from 1932 to 1937, typically in July. The majority of the species recorded were insects, especially Lepidoptera, but some plants do get a mention as well.

All the Forest Row meetings were led by Stanley Jacobs (1896–1989), a well-known figure in British entomology (Sokoloff 1990) who lived in Bromley in the 1930s. The group met on 10 July 1932 "on the borders of Ashdown Forest", possibly around Broadstone Warren and Kidbrooke bog, where "sun dew" and Bog Asphodel were reported. The following year they were back on 9 July, this time exploring "the woods and open moorland on the right of the Forest Row–Lewes road, opposite Hindleap Warren", which could well be the same spot. Here they found "deep" Sphagnum, 'Dwarf Sallow' and Aspen, and it was the location they returned to in 1934.

The Forest Row visit of 30 June 1935 attracted twelve members of the society, though a more detailed description of the location is not given. This is unfortunate since the report notes: "Several specimens of the sweet scented Lesser Butterfly Orchis, *Habenaria bifolia*, R.Br., were found, and the Bog Asphodel, *Narthecium ossifragum*, Huds., and Sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia*, L. were also just beginning to bloom, and a patch of the Dodder, *Cuscuta epithymum*, Murr., on heather was found."

The orchid species currently named *Platanthera bifolia* (L.) Rich. is certainly now rare in East Sussex, though was known on Ashdown Forest from at least the 1880s (Wolley-Dod 1937), and the *Flora of Ashdown Forest* (Rich *et al.* 1996) reports it from Kidbrooke Park bog through the 1940s. It is likely that that was the area that the south London group visited as well; only a mile or so from the village, it is also the part of the forest that I walk every morning. It still harbours some nice bog plants, including the bryophytes *Sphagnum molle*, *S. subnitens*, *Kurzia pauciflora*,

and *Odontoschisma sphagni*, with *Campylostelium saxicola* occurring on sandstone blocks in the stream. However, the *Molinia* is getting somewhat dominant, birch is encroaching on the bog, and the flora has undeniably altered quite radically; this same spot was also a location for *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) in the nineteenth century, and *Rhynchospora alba* (White Beak-sedge) was still there in the late 1940s. The Alder carr nearby was once home to *Phegopteris connectilis* (Beech Fern); and I've never seen Dodder in the area.

As we have seen in the recent issues of this Newsletter, the continuing Covid-19 lockdown is an opportunity for continuous, thorough exploration of one's local patch; this can also be enhanced by the discovery of past records, and through that activity we can better picture how our now-familiar local flora may have changed within recent human memory.

Rich, T., Donovan, P., Harmes, P., Knapp, A., McFarlane, M., Marrable, C., Muggeridge, N., Nicholson, R., Reader, M., Reader, P., Richard, E., & White, P. (1996). *Flora of Ashdown Forest*. Sussex Botanical Recording Society.

Sokoloff, P. (1990). Obituary: Stanley Norman Aflalo Jacobs, 1896–1989. *The Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation*, 102, 5–6.

Wolley-Dod, A. H. (1937). *Flora of Sussex*. Kenneth Saville.

Epilobium and CTW

David Streeter

The following note started out as a minor topographical correction to *The Flora of Sussex* sent to the editor to adjust the record. By return, I was reminded that not everyone would understand the CTW acronym, and perhaps I would like to add an explanation. The paragraph that follows was the original note, the second comprises the CTW explanation requested by the editor.

Whilst enjoying a quiet moment browsing the *Flora* I came across a minor tidying up of a not very significant species, *Epilobium pedunculare* (Rockery Willowherb). Kenneth Bull's record should read Ship Street, not Ship Road. (important difference in East Grinstead!). My 1955 record is the same site: 'a path near East Grinstead' was also

Ship Street (in the middle of the town!). I didn't know of Kenneth's record at the time neither had I any idea of what the plant was. I remember it because I ran it down from scratch with my newly acquired 1st edition of CTW and was very pleased with myself!

For those fortunate enough to have memories too short to recognise the acronym, CTW translates to Clapham, Tutin and Warburg, the authors of *Flora of the British Isles*. CTW was first published by CUP in 1952 and was a landmark event as for almost thirty years British botanists had been dependent on the 7th edition of Bentham and Hooker's *Handbook of the British Flora* (first published in 1858) as the standard reference on British plants. CTW remained the standard comprehensive work on the British flora until the arrival of the first edition of Stace in 1991. I still find CTW a valuable source of information, the species descriptions and the habitat notes tend to be more comprehensive than Stace although the taxonomy is, of course, long out-of-date. If you are thinking of adding a copy to your library, I would suggest that you find a copy of the 1962 2nd edition. If you discover that you like the CTW keys, then there is *Excursion Flora of the British Isles* (3rd edition) which contains just the keys and shortened descriptions that really does fit into the pocket!

Blogpost Written in the Churchyard at Frant in Sussex

Brad Scott

Despite having done some research on the novelist and poet Charlotte Smith (1749-1806), I hadn't realised that one of the bryologically under-recorded parts of East Sussex was around Frant, the village south of Tunbridge Wells in which she lived for a couple of years from July 1801. She also had extensive botanical interests, corresponding with James Edward Smith, owner of the Linnaean collections, as well as with several other members of the Linnean Society. Though mosses don't figure especially heavily in her work, I didn't need any other justification to head off to the village on a cold, damp and grey Sunday afternoon for a quick investigation.



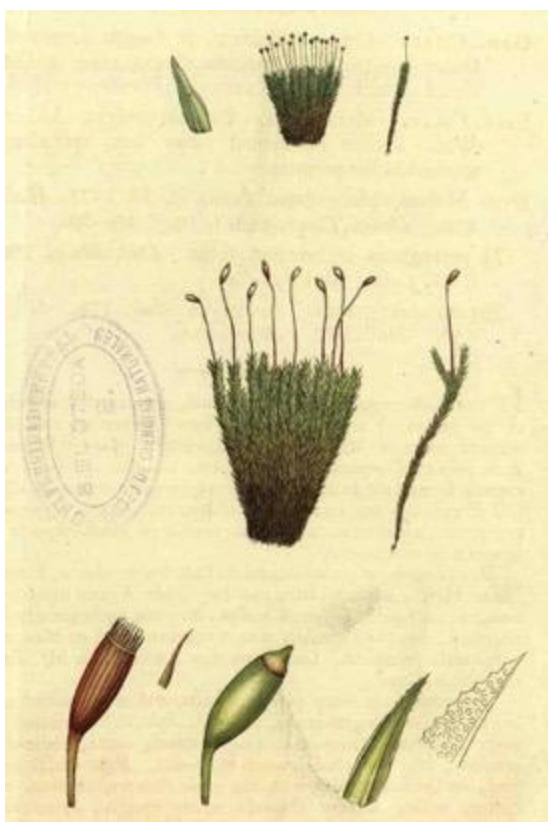
Looking at the lists of the previously-recorded bryophytes from the tetrad is like tracing the course of vessels through the sea from the vestiges of their log books, as the trails of other botanists have passed through the village and its immediately surrounding area. Here we find that Barbara Ottley found *Calypogeia muelleriana* and *Cephalozia bicuspidata* in Eridge Park in 1971, and in the following year Francis Rose and Brian Coppins recorded *Orthotrichum anomalum* from Frant churchyard, a solitary moss noted while studying the lichens. Thereafter, there are some wonderfully interesting, yet unlocalised, records from the formidable Rose/Stern/Matcham trio: *Frullania tamarisci*, *Leucodon sciuroides*, *Orthotrichum stramineum*, *Trichocolea tomentella*, and *Zygodon rupestris*, which I guess would have been somewhere in the eastern end of Eridge Park. Finally, there are a few from Tom Ottley from 2013, presumably picked up on the way back to the car after recording in Chase Wood to the north of the village.

Situated at the highest point for miles, the church at Frant sits about 180m above sea level, on the Ardingly Sandstone. The altitude and geology have provided the conditions for possibly the mossiest churchyard I have ever seen in Sussex, with probably more *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus* than grass, and vast patches of *Plagiomnium undulatum* and *Pseudoscleropodium purum* carpetting the floor. Occasional smaller mats of *Thuidium tamariscinum* and the bright-tipped *Cirriphyllum piliferum* are also found, along with the darker, spiky *Polytrichastrum formosum* and *Polytrichum juniperinum*, the last mixed up with *Dicranum scoparium* spreading across the ground. And, among all these, at least four or five different waxcaps (*Hygrocybe*), though they had all gone over, and needed a more expert eye than mine. It is all rather splendidly heathy.

The gravel paths were also quite luxuriantly coated, with *Didymodon insulanus* predominating, plus areas of *Pseudocrossidium hornschurchianum*, *Ceratodon purpureus*, and the odd clump of *Syntrichia montana*. The gravestones, of course, have their own flora, often

coated in the spreading pleurocarp *Homalothecium sericeum*, or clumps of the common *Bryum capillare*, *Grimmia pulvinata* and *Tortula muralis*. The latter is one of the few mosses mentioned in Charlotte Smith's poems, when she writes of "the mural moss" in her poem *Flora* (1804); she certainly owned a copy of Withering's *Botanical Arrangement* (1776, 1787 etc), in which it is named *Bryum murale*, and it is clearly an important botanical source for much of her writing.

However, the most interesting of the finds on the gravestones were a few tufts of *Aulacomnium androgynum* with its distinctive drumstick-like ball of gemmae. This isn't too surprising since this species is often found on the sandrocks at Eridge and other places nearby.



Tab. 1238, *Mnium androgynum* as drawn by James Sowerby in volume 18 of *English Botany* (1804). In the text, James Edward Smith described the gemmae as "little powdery heads of male blossoms". Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid

Then, pretty much the final discovery was a little *Orthotrichum anomalum* on a gravestone at the eastern side of the churchyard, which was a good refind from the earlier records. This quick visit brought the tetrad total to 43, but there are still many common species to be located in the centre of the village, and further exploration of Eridge Park should add to the richness. However, even at 2pm the light was already rubbish. It was cold and

damp too, so I didn't want to hang around much. Still, it was a useful initial bryological session, with literary connections.^[1]

^[1] This item originally appeared on the Sussex Bryophytes blog on 30 November 2020. Its title is a lame allusion to Charlotte Smith's 'Sonnet Written in the Churchyard at Middleton in Sussex'; where Middleton is on the coastal margins of the county, Frant is up near the border with Kent. See Roberts, B. (2017). "Breaking the Silent Sabbath of the Grave": Charlotte Smith's Sonnet XLIV and Her Place in Literary History. *European Romantic Review*, 28(5), 549–570: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2017.1362342>

Obituaries

Sadly, we have lost a number of botanical friends and colleagues over the last months. We miss both their friendship and their expertise. We send our sympathy to their families.

Michael Maurice Shaw

(7th March 1949 – 12th December 2020)

In what was to be his last season of field botany Mike found fresh pleasure and satisfaction in the territory around his home in Aldwick. It was not only the restrictions in place due to Covid that confined him to the immediate area for there was also the recent onset of an eye condition which prevented driving. Notwithstanding, Mike notched up a large number of interesting records, some of which were re-finds of species identified as missing from the tetrads in which they had occurred in the 1980 *Sussex Plant Atlas*: somehow they had evaded the efforts of Mike and several others to track them down before the deadline for inclusion in the 2018 *Flora of Sussex*. Other records were of aliens and exotics, for example *Amaranthus blitum* (Guernsey Pigweed), *Malva alcea* (Geater Musk-mallow) and *Paulownia tomentosa* (Foxglove-tree). Of course, Mike was a connoisseur of plants which had jumped garden walls or made a dash across the Channel. He shared this enthusiasm with a number of botanists within the SBRS and the weirdest apparitions were frequently forwarded to Matthew Berry and Eric Clement for their consideration.

Of course, there was much more to the botanist Michael Maurice Shaw than a passion for such novelties. He will probably be remembered in the circles of field botany for *BSBI Handbook No.20*

Hawkweeds of South-East England. In this relatively rarefied niche Mike was following in the footsteps of some notable past workers in the county – E. S. Marshall at the beginning of the 20th century and our late Chairman R.C. Stern in more recent times come to mind. Published in February of last year, Mike lived long enough to be pleased with its reception and sales. It built upon the work he had put in to fashion the *Hieracium* species accounts for the *Flora of Sussex* and both treatises were the product of collaboration with David McCosh. Apparently fearless when it came to critical groups, Mike had also prepared the account of *Rubus* subgenus *Rubus* (Brambles) for the *Flora*, this time working with David Allen and Rob Randall. The *Flora* is enhanced by both sections, which represent comprehensive and up-to-date coverage of their respective groups.

Paul Harmes recalls persuading Mike to join the SBRs while on a WFS meeting on Amberley Wild Brooks led by the late George Forster. He soon came to the attention of the BSBI Vice County Recorder Alan Knapp, to whose office he would succeed after Alan's untimely death in 2010. Mike's study of plants was greatly facilitated by his scientific training so that he was habituated to the idea that logical problems could usually be solved by the application of logic, given the due degree of persistence. In time he would graduate to *Rubus* and *Hieracium* because of this approach but he was not a specialist to start with and he retained the broadest interest in the range of plants that he encountered. He was recognised as a good man to have on a field meeting for both reasons, and one of my favourite photographs of Mike is of him stretched out on a heathy track patiently keying out *Potentilla norvegica* (Ternate-leaved Cinquefoil) on one such SBRs event. The meetings which he led himself were always popular, though in later years as he became less agile due to a creaky back and dodgy leg they became less frequent, since he could not rely upon being sufficiently mobile on the day. I should add 'or on the day before' because Mike believed in preparation and there would always be a thorough 'recce' – not in order that there should be no surprises on the day but purely so that those attending should have the best possible experience.



Mike keying out *Potentilla norvegica* on Lavington Common in 2015

(photo: Nick Sturt)

Thoroughness was a Mike virtue. It characterised his years as a BSBI Recorder for VC13 (2010-15) and I witnessed it myself when he was co-opted onto the working party responsible for the *Flora of Sussex*. He was not afraid of hard work or repetitive, tedious tasks. Both during and after his years as BSBI Recorder Mike devoted many hours panning thousands of iRecord records for just a few reliable nuggets of gold. The work he did at the Booth Museum on Wilberforce Jones' herbarium was altogether more congenial but I can vouch for the fact that it was carried out in uncomfortably low temperatures.

For all the same reasons Mike was highly respected by his patients and his fellow medics in the General Practice in Bognor. Although his mother had been a midwife, he did not come from a medical family as such. He and his younger brother Peter benefited from scholarships to Rugby School where they both took advantage of their privileged situation. In due course Mike opted for science A levels and went on to study Medicine at Guys Hospital. It was during this time that Mike met a nurse called Jean and they married in his final year, 1967. After qualifying there were a couple of medical jobs before Mike opted for General Practice and established himself in Bognor in 1972. Here their two children were brought up: Roger, now an IT consultant, and Elizabeth, a teacher.

The childhood years living in the village of Churchover outside Rugby are looked back upon by Peter as 'idyllic': he and Mike had the run of the countryside and the grounds and buildings of Coton House where their father was Bursar of the training school for Associated Electrical

Industries. This was when their interest in the natural world was formed and at an early age Mike was pressing specimens in his tennis racket press which he had adapted for the purpose. Sixty years or so later Mike's *Hieracium* herbarium is bound for the Natural History Museum (BM).

At Mike's funeral under lockdown tributes were read from school friends attesting to Mike's sense of humour. Evidently he buckled down in lessons but outside the classroom he was something of an entertainer. I found myself on the receiving end of his sense of fun on one occasion. We had been surveying some tetrads for the *Flora* and towards the end of the day we were at Christ's Hospital station looking for casuals. The ground around the old goods shed looked promising and we chose not to see the Keep Out signs. I was engrossed in the task when an irate official arrived to remove me. Some way away I noticed Mike laughing uproariously: he had spotted the approaching gentleman and quietly retreated to enjoy my discomfort!

Mike continued to help and to support the work of the SBRS after he stepped down from being BSBI Recorder and retired from the committee. In particular he was anxious to support Nevil as he took on the collation of records. It is likely that Mike's memorial will be his *Hieracium* Handbook, for it will be consulted and cited for very many years to come. But I shall more naturally think of the work he did with the team to realise the *Flora of Sussex*, and I picture his long frame folded into a small armchair in front of Frances' living-room fire while we all hammered out a succession of tricky issues with the aid of tea and biscuits.

Nick Sturt

David Lang

(11th July 1935-23rd December 2020)

David's early years were spent in Orpington, Kent. He entered Tonbridge School in 1947. His wonderful Biology teacher, Lyn Thomas, introduced him to his lifelong pleasure of botany and bird watching. In 1948, David and a school friend restarted the Natural History Society at Tonbridge. One of the first external lecturers was Dr Francis Rose, then living and working at the East Malling Research Institute. His lecture was on British Orchids and that was what really sparked off David's fascination with orchids and a lifelong friendship with Francis Rose. Kent, of course, is one of the richest counties for orchids and some of the classic sites were David's

formative orchid hunting ground, reached by bicycle (pers.com. Robin Lang).

After qualifying as a veterinary surgeon, he joined the Cliffe practice in 1965, living in Lewes with his family. Later he moved to Barcombe where he maintained an immaculate garden of vegetables and Himalayan seed-sown plants.

Simon Linnington told me that David used to see wrynecks in his back garden in Crofton Road, Orpington. As his ornithological interest developed, he visited the North Kent marshes to watch wildfowl. When he came to Sussex he joined the Sussex Ornithological Society and participated in bird recording, initially at Barcombe reservoir when it was created in 1966. These counts were included into the national Wetland Bird Survey for which he became a counter, a role that he continued right up to December 2018. He was also a keen sea-watcher, joining the group that logged the seabirds passing up-Channel in spring from Seaford.

David became a very knowledgeable botanist with a particular interest in orchids. He had many talents including photography and was meticulous in detail in all that he accomplished. He was kind and caring and always willing to share his knowledge. He had an amazing sense of humour. His congeniality led to his making many friends.

He joined the SBRS when it was formed in 1978 and the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland in the same year. He explored all of Sussex, recording orchid species and counting numbers of flowering plants every year. At Malling Down Nature Reserve, I remember him showing me *Herminium monorchis* (Musk Orchid). Near Mount Caburn, he completed annual counts of *Orchis ustulata* (Burnt Orchid) reaching 9,000 flowering plants one year! He found a Bee Orchid with a brown lower labellum, which he jokingly called *Ophrys apifera* var. *bournevillii* but was actually named *Ophrys apifera* var. *atrofuscus*, which is mentioned in his book *Britain's Wild Orchids* (2004). His generosity extended to taking me on a grand tour to see the less common *Cephalanthera* and *Epipactis* species in West Sussex. Paul Harnes shared many outings with David as well as showing him more orchids, new to him, during Naturetrek tours to France and Samos. David wrote nine books, including four on British orchids: his *Wild Orchids of Sussex* (2001) is invaluable, containing much original research.



David in Tasmania (photo: Peter Tonelli)

David loved travel, especially exploring the Himalaya. Following a tour to Bhutan, he agreed to lead a trek in Sikkim. In late April 1987, I was one of four people, led by him and Dhamey Tenzing Norgay, son of Everest's 'Sherpa' Tenzing fame. Prior to the expedition, David carried out detailed research on the vascular plants we were likely to encounter. These included many species of Rhododendrons, Primulas and Orchids that we were likely to see. His interest in birdwatching was an asset especially appreciated by a fellow trekker. David took medications to treat the local people's livestock. My sprained knee was treated with udder linament! David's musical talent enabled him to write the music for the Ghorkali porters' song about Spring. We sang the song one evening, seated around a fire in a barn at 13,000'. David's veterinary tales generated fits of laughter. During some evenings, we would sit around a large table to sort out the day's botanical finds. This was a memorable holiday, relived in a chapter of his book, 'Sikkim Himalaya'.

David had a kind, caring and congenial personality and was very talented. He has left a legacy of knowledge of Sussex orchids and birds, ably shared with many botanical and ornithological friends on happy occasions. He will be sorely missed.

David's son, Robin, has set up a web page with Grace Funeral directors. You can write a tribute to David. Donations to the Sussex Botanical Recording Society and the Sussex Wildlife Trust are lcomed.

[Tribute to David Lang MRCVS, 1935 - 2020 \(muchloved.com\)](http://muchloved.com)

Helen Proctor

Patricia Margaret Donovan

(27th May 1928 – 24th November 2020)

Pat was born and brought up in Sanderstead, Surrey, where she attended St Anne's College. After WWII she studied at Wimbledon College of Art, followed by employment as a draughtsman in an architect's office. In 1951 Pat married Peter and they lived on the top floor of Peter's parents' house. They moved to Buxted in 1956: after viewing several dilapidated properties including one with a demolition notice on it they bought Oakfield, in which they spent the rest of their married life, raising two daughters there, Ann and Frances. After Peter died Pat enjoyed happy years in Random Cottage, which was more in the centre of the village.

Pat's inquiring and observant mind along with her artistic skills and formal training made her a very talented field botanist who could faithfully and sensitively portray the plants she found. She was heavily involved with the Sussex Flora Committee (later Society) and the production of the *Sussex Plant Atlas*. Pat was one of the earliest members of the SBRS, helping to form it when the previous society had achieved its goal of publishing the *Atlas*. For many years Pat was the Field Meeting Convenor for East Sussex for the SBRS, a task to which she brought her many skills and kind personality. Pat always enjoyed the field meetings with their great friendliness and camaraderie – especially the company of other stalwarts now departed, for example Mary Briggs, Breda and Ernie Burt and Alan Knapp.



Pat had played an important part in recording for the *Atlas* and she also worked on Tim Rich's *Flora of Ashdown Forest*. For the latter she produced some magnificent watercolours; the original of the painting used for the cover hangs on Tim's wall and is a source of pleasure to him every day. Pat was also one of the leaders in the SBRS's first churchyard survey, which combined happily her love of plants and churchyards. In the course of this she discovered that *Leontodo saxatilis* (Lesser Hawkbit) was frequently overlooked in such sites and so she set out to find it in churchyards across the county. In her work on churchyards Peter was a valuable assistant as, although he was not particularly interested in plants, he was well versed in the emerging IT of the day and used his skills to assemble her records.

Pat herself was more of a technophobe and her other interests were all of the practical/artistic sort. Among these was the production of icing-sugar flowers and delicate cribs to decorate cakes for special occasions. She spun and wove, attending courses and belonging to societies dedicated to these crafts. She also attended courses on art and her early work in an architect's office had a lasting effect as throughout her life she would take pleasure in producing accurate sketches of details of old buildings.

Pat was a 'Green' long before it became a recognised movement. She hated waste and unnecessary extravagance. She was a quiet and unassuming lady, warm, good company and a fountain of knowledge which she freely shared without any sense of arrogance. She will be greatly missed by many and long remembered with affection.

Trevor Lording

Frank & Madeleine Dougharty

Older members may well remember Frank Dougharty and his wife Madeleine, of Cattlestone Farm at West Chiltington. They were both knowledgeable naturalists and members of the SBRS for many years, contributing to the *Sussex Plant Atlas*. Frank was much involved with the Sussex Wildlife Trust in its early days, and a stalwart of the Horsham Natural History Society. He was the most delightful man, with a twinkle in his eye and a wonderful sense of humour. Cattlestone Farm was a botanist's delight with species-rich pastures and wonderful arable weeds, including *Scandix pecten-veneris* (Shepherd's-needle). Frank and Madeleine died tragically last Christmas in a devastating house fire, aged 90 and 86 respectively. We send our sympathy to their four children.

Frances Abraham

John Peter Davys

(19th July 1926 – 18th October 2020)

There was nothing in the unassuming manner of Peter Davys to suggest that he came from quite illustrious stock, his paternal Great-Great-Great-Grandfather having been the principal tutor to the young Queen Victoria and subsequently Bishop of Peterborough. The church theme seems to have ended with Peter's Grandfather who was Vicar of Cromer in Norfolk, and Peter's father was a mechanical engineer. His career required moving the family fairly frequently and so although Peter was born in Sheffield perhaps his formative experience of natural history was in Lincolnshire where at about the age of eight he began to record the birds visiting the Davys' garden. The outbreak of WWII precipitated a move from Lincoln to Uxbridge, with Peter leaving Lincoln Grammar School and entering Fray's College. Evidently he did not particularly enjoy his school years but pneumonia and the associated bronchial problems, which were to trouble him for much of his life, will have been highly disruptive. It was his weak chest which prompted him to join the Forestry Commission in the early 1950s since he found working outdoors to be beneficial for his health. In the FC he struck up a firm friendship with our late Chairman Rod Stern through their mutual love of trees and the natural world.

Helen Proctor recalls Peter residing in a staff house, 'Forest Lodge', close to Abbots Wood, Arlington: 'While he was a knowledgeable, all-round naturalist, his special interest was in trees and he got to know 'his patch' really well. I first

met him when I explored Abbots Wood with my parents in about 1978. Later he showed me the sites for certain trees and Spiked Rampion. Later, he moved to Whatlington Lodge when he managed Barnes Wood, north of Battle.'

Owen Johnson remembers Peter as 'sprightly and energetic': 'We went on various tree-hunting trips together, and he would show me old wild trees preserved in out-of-the-way corners of the FC forests that he knew so well, and I would show him trees I'd been finding around the rest of Sussex. We'd keep an eye out for wild flowers too, such as the clubmoss in Sedlescombe churchyard. More recently, he still used to phone me every now and again to talk about trees. I was impressed by the boyish enthusiasm he always kept, which went well with his very open and friendly manner.'

Stuart Sutton (an FC Ranger) writes that Peter remained interested in what the FC was doing, regarding conservation at Abbots Wood: 'He was pleased to hear about the reintroduction of the Pearl-bordered Fritillary in 2004, as he had known the localities of the butterflies before their extinction in the late 1990's.' Peter also showed Stuart where Wild Service trees were located and the old colonies of Spiked Rampion. Canopy closure has since affected most of these sites. About six years ago, when Peter was finding it

harder to get about, he was excited to be offered a drive to see a new colony of 15 or so plants that Stuart had discovered.

Peter retired from the Forestry Commission in 1986 and moved to Polegate. Subsequently he joined East Sussex County Council as a field officer for the Dutch Elm Disease control programme, which meant that he got to know every elm tree in the Cuckmere Valley; he would inspect them every few weeks throughout the summer so that any DED infections could be dealt with straightaway. Peter's expertise with Elms is testified by his contribution to the genus in the recent *Flora of Sussex*. He had joined the SBRS in 1986, becoming a familiar face at the indoor meetings and on the East Sussex Field Meetings. His membership of the Seaford Natural History Society went back even further – 47 years! Both societies remember him as a most charming and restrained 'gentleman' in the true sense of the word.

We should like to extend our sincere sympathies to Jean, his wife of 66 years, and their daughter Sarah.

**Trevor Lording, with thanks to Helen Proctor
for her help**

New and interesting records 2020

Selected by Nick Sturt and Mathew Berry

West Sussex VC13

Species	Location	Tetrad	Status	Notes	Recorder
<i>Amaranthus blitum</i>	Bognor Regis	SZ99J	C	In pavement/wall angle	MMS
<i>Centaurea calcitrapa</i>	N of Shoreham	TQ20E	N	Locally common, valley NW of Old Erringham	FA
<i>Cuscuta europea</i>	S of Pulborough	TQ01T	N	On nettles where management work had been carried out by RSPB	Martyn Waller
<i>Datura ferox</i>	W of Earham	SU90J	C	Clearing at edge of wood with <i>D. stramonium</i> and putative hybrid plants	N&ES
<i>Dianthus deltoides</i>	Aldwick Bay	SZ99E		Several small patches on stabilised shingle, probably spread from old throw-out	MMS
<i>Erica vagans</i>	High Beeches Gardens	TQ23Q	E	Self-sown at meadow edge	Sarah Bray

<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>	Ambersham Common	SU91E	N	One plant with a seed head	JSI
<i>Eryngium agavifolium</i>	Easebourne	SU82 W	C	One plant in crack of narrow pavement W side of A272. First seen in 2018, confirmed in 2020	DNE
<i>Lathyrus aphaca</i>	Portslade area	TQ20N	N	Rough grassland S of A27	FA
<i>Malva alcea</i>	Nyetimber	SZ89Z	C	In a pavement crack adjacent to arable	MMS
<i>Malva verticillata</i>	Elsted	SU81E	C	Several plants on verge	DNE, JOA, DES
<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	High Beeches	TQ23Q	N	One plant on verge outside Gardens	Sarah Bray
<i>Nonea lutea</i>	Midhurst	SU82V	C	Verge within Grange car park	DNE
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	High Beeches	TQ23Q	U	One plant inside the Gardens, possibly on introduced soil.	Sarah Bray
<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>	Bognor Regis	SZ99J	C	Seedling at wall base in station car park	MMS
<i>Salix aurita</i>	Ebernoe	SU92Y	N	In scrub on former arable	FA
<i>Utricularia australis</i>	Loxwood	TQ03K		Wey and Arun Canal	Richard Bullock
<i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i>	Bognor Regis	SZ89Z	E	Duck pond, Sussex Drive	MMS

East Sussex VC14

Species	Location	Tetrad	Status	Notes	Rec.
<i>Allium scorodoprasum</i>	Eastbourne	TV59Z	C	One plant by footpath, back of houses on Peppercombe Road	MBE
<i>Bidens triplinervia</i>	Lewes	TQ41A	C	Base of step outside property, New Road	PAH
<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	Selmeston	TQ50D	N	Cricket field	PSM
<i>Cotula australis</i>	Lewes	TQ40E	E	Many plants down middle of residential road	PAH
<i>Cotoneaster marginatus</i>	Lewes	TQ30Z	E	Bush in hedge north verge of Brighton Road (A277)	PAH
<i>Digitaria sanguinalis</i> ssp. <i>pectiniformis</i>	Eastbourne	TQ60K	E	New to British Isles? Many plants sandy ground west side of marina entrance	JNO
<i>Erigeron annuus</i>	Lewes	TQ41F	C	One plant in grassy track near Brooks Road	PAH
<i>Erigeron x stanleyi</i>	Patcham	TQ30E	C	<i>E. acris</i> x <i>E. floribundus</i> . 17 plants with both parents in clearing on Brighton by-pass	AS
<i>Euphorbia prostrata</i>	Brighton	TQ30H		One plant pavement weed Whichelo Place. First seen here in 2016	AS
<i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i>	Pevensey Bay	TQ60L		On shingle by gardens a few metres SW of Sea Road car park. 11 sturdy plants	Caroline Bateman
<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	Ashdown Forest	TQ42N		Not as frequent on the Forest as formerly. <i>Viola palustris</i> nearby.	HUTC & PAH
<i>Moenchia erecta</i>	Selmeston	TQ50D		Cricket field	
<i>Nemophila menziesii</i>	Eastbourne	TV69E	C	One plant with other weeds	MBE

				at base of Wish Tower	
<i>Oenanthe pimpinelloides</i>	Lewes	TQ41A	N	Along banks of Ouse	PAH
<i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>	Plumpton area	TQ31S	N	Not seen in E. Sussex for many years	JHN
<i>Sisymbrium irio</i>	Brighton	TQ30C	C	Bottom of wall by pub in Albion Hill and in gutter of Montreal Road	AS
<i>Teucrium hircanicum</i>	Newhaven	TQ40K	C	One plant on earth bank by new road off A259	JMR
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Eastbourne	TV69E	C	Self-sown in pavement cracks of forecourt, Eversfield Road	MBE
<i>Viola canina</i>	Selmeston	TQ50D		Cricket field	PSM
<i>Viola lactea</i>	Pound Common	TQ32V	N	13 plants In low heathland scrub	JHN

Recorders' initials

AS	Tony Spiers	HMD	Helen Dignum	JOA	Jill Oakley
DES	Sue Denness	HUTC	Nevil Hutchinson	JSI	Jonathan Simons
DMD	David Donovan	JAR	Jacqueline Rose	MBE	Matthew Berry
DNE	Dawn Nelson	JHN	Jacqueline Hutson	MMS	Mike Shaw
FA	Frances Abraham	JMR	Janice Reynolds	N&ES	Nick & Elisabeth Sturt
HBG	Hastings Botany Group	JNO	John Norton	PSM	Peter Smith

