

Gwent-Glamorgan Recorders' Newsletter

Issue 17
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SEWBReC

SOUTH EAST WALES BIODIVERSITY RECORDS CENTRE
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Welcome to another jam-packed issue of the Gwent-Glamorgan Recorders' Newsletter. It's been a busy summer, and as usual we've got news of lots of interesting and exciting finds including unusual plants in Gwent (page 13), under-recorded fly mines in Taf Fechan (page 3) and even a new spider for Britain found on Flat Holm (page 23)! There are also some species for you to look out for over the coming months including oil beetles (page 9) and earthtongues (page 10). Annie Irving of the Mary Gillham Archive Project shows us highlights from Mary's 1958 Australian road trip (page 5), and of course there's an update from the Project (page 18) and from SEWBRc (page 27).

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the newsletter, I hope you enjoy reading it.

Amy Hicks, SEWBRc (Editor)



New viewing platform for Goldcliff Lagoons

Alan Rosney & Mike Pointon

The Friends of Goldcliff Lagoons (FoGL) have been busy building a new viewing platform on the south eastern edge of the reserve – near the sea wall. It opens up different views of the back of the reed beds. Work was undertaken at the end of breeding season to avoid potential disturbance. The project was instigated by Mike Pointon on behalf of FoGL; the construction being supervised by the reserve managers, Tom Dalrymple and Kevin Dupé, whose expertise proved invaluable. In common with the other platforms, it is an open structure with viewing slats. It has been named the Marsh Platform, in recognition of John Marsh, whose enthusiasm for the project has been boundless.

The red arrow on the satellite image [bottom right] marks the location of the new platform. Also included are some photos of the work in progress [right] and lastly the finished article [top].

The Friends of Goldcliff Lagoons are a small group of enthusiastic volunteers, who contribute to keeping the reserve in good condition. They also help out with tasks such as bird surveys. Why not get in touch? Contact Mike Pointon - wryneck100@btinternet.com



The Fly Miners of Taf Fechan

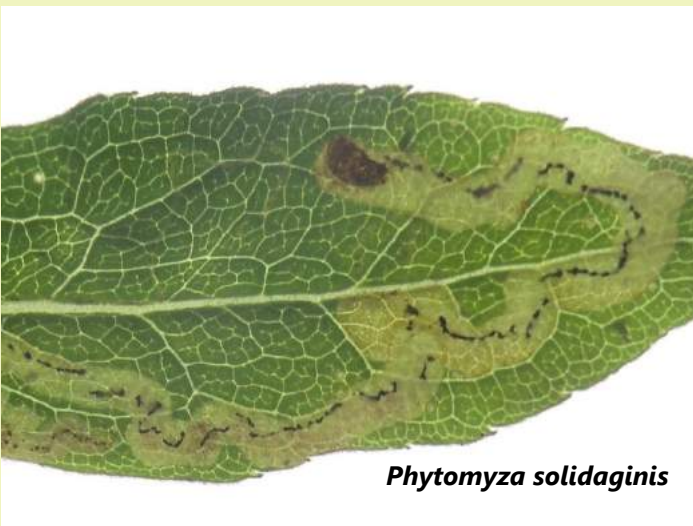
Graham Watkeys - Taf Fechan Volunteer Warden



Liriomyza taraxaci on *Taraxicum officinale* agg. The large holes are just leaf damage and nothing to do with the miner.



The long winding mine of ***Ophiomyia maura***. The widely spaced large blobs of frass are diagnostic.



Phytomyza solidaginis

What are leaves? Well if you're a plant they are solar generators that produce all your food (and as a by-product all that lovely oxygen) but if you're a leaf miner they are nothing but big green sandwiches providing both protection and a source of food. In fact it's such a successful way of living that several different taxa use it. Probably the most well known and most comprehensively recorded of these are the Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) but it's also used by several groups of Coleoptera (beetles) as well as Symphyta (sawflies) and of course the Diptera (flies). Why single out the Diptera? Because, of the above mentioned taxa they are probably the most substantially under-recorded and frankly I have a developing soft spot for them, particularly a group of Flies called the Agromyzidae.

The adults are generally very small (usually 1 – 6 mm) and are almost never seen despite many of them being bright yellow and black. They can only be identified through genital dissection (so what else is new?) but their mines are thankfully often diagnostic. Here are a just a few of the species I have found this year at Taf Fechan.

Liriomyza taraxaci as its name suggests is a miner of Dandelion. You could not wish for a more ubiquitous and easily found plant but strangely this miner had no records on Aderyn*. It now has two; the first was from my garden and the second from Taf Fechan.

Goldenrod (*Solidago virgaurea*) is perhaps less ubiquitous a host but where it is found it is well worth looking for the distinctive long winding mines of ***Ophiomyia maura***. Again there were no Aderyn records of this species and upon contacting the recording scheme it turned out this may well be the first ever record of this species from Wales.

Phytomyza solidaginis is another Goldenrod miner but with a very different frass pattern; it produces connected chains situated to the edges of the corridor rather than isolated blobs. Why evolution would produce such different patterns in what is a simple biological function is frankly a bit of a mystery to me. It does however beat its fellow Goldenrod miner tarsis-down with its number of records; it had a grand total of one.

*Editor: For those who haven't yet discovered Aderyn, it is a new online tool developed by Local Environmental Records Centres (LERC) Wales. You can use Aderyn to view species distributions across Wales with the [Distribution Maps Tool](#), or to see what species are found in a 1km square with the [What's in My Area Tool](#).

Galiomyza violiphaga mines the leaves of Violets leaving large blotches often several on one leaf. This is the only species on Violet that has this particular mine morphology making it fairly easy to identify. Aderyn held one other record for this species up in north Wales.

This last example is more challenging to identify as there are two similar species with nearly identical and often morphologically overlapping mines but it demonstrates the problems of under-recording. ***Clematis vitalba*** or Travellers Joy/Old Man's Beard was SEW-BReC's species of the month for September, it's considered to be under-recorded with 2431 records (hopefully this number has gone up by now). Its two Dipteran miners ***Phytomyza vitalbae*** and ***Phytomyza fulgens*** have 10 and 8 Aderyn records respectively, a massive discrepancy. Taf Fechan only has one fairly isolated plant (already recorded) but I found a mine - which was confirmed as ***P. vitalbae*** by Barry Warrington - fairly easily and I'm still checking for ***P. fulgens*** on a regular basis. The fact that such a tiny Fly can find a single isolated host must mean it's going to be common on most plants and have a widespread distribution? Without more records nobody really knows.

I feel at this point I should mention that none of these species are considered to be particularly rare (or at least I don't think so) they are just under recorded. Yes I would like to think Taf Fechan is particularly diverse in its range of species and it may well be. I would also like to think that I am particularly skilled (or perhaps lucky) in discovering these species but the truth is I'm just actively looking for them and very few other recorders are doing the same.

If you would like to have a go at recording Agromyzids the vital starting point, as with identifying any leaf miner, is to know what plant it is feeding on. Many are host species specific (monophagous) others not (polyphagous) but most keys will start with host plant. Other important diagnostic features include the shape of the mine and the pattern of frass (larval poo) in the mine. A photo taken with light shining through the leaf (transmitted light) will show both features in the most detail. Other information like whether the larva pupates in the mine or vacates it is also helpful, as well as where on the leaf the larva exits.

There is now an active Agromyzidae recording scheme. Please contact Barry Warrington at agromyzidaeRS@gmail.com to register for the monthly newsletter and for any help with identification. There are also a couple of very useful websites for leaf miners in general: leafmines.co.uk and ukflymines.co.uk. Each can be searched by plant genus.



The blotch mines of ***Galiomyza violiphaga*** (above) and the same shown in transmitted light (below) showing the frass and the larval exit slit.



Phytomyza vitalbae mining *Clematis vitalba*

Greenfield School Visit to Taff Bar- goed Park

**Paul Virgin - Warden, Taff
Bargoed Park**

The Greenfield school visits to the park activities program have been a great success. 10 children from the local area attended, taking part in exciting activities.

Pond dipping took place at our small but purposely constructed pond near the reedbeds. This area really is teeming with life and the children encountered dragonfly nymphs, diving beetles and even newts.

The mini beast hunts were also a great success with the children unfazed by even the creepiest of crawlies! The children became sleuths for the day, taking part in tracking down animals after Tracks, Trails & Signs activity.

S .Murphy K53 Teacher, Greenfield School commented: *"Both pupils and staff thoroughly enjoy our organised sessions to the park. The staff's wealth of knowledge, approachable manner and special nature make our weekly visits extremely enjoyable for us all. We have learnt so much from the staff and built incredible relationships with our fabulous pupils. The environmental activities the children have been taking part in have given them great understanding of the natural environment and the species within it."*



© Paul Virgin

Mary
Gillham
Archive
Project.

Mary Does Centralia

Annie Irving - Mary Gillham Archive Project Volunteer

Fifty-nine years ago Mary Gillham was in Australia, officially employed as a lecturer in botany at the University of Melbourne but unofficially spending every spare minute exploring that country's vast open spaces. And, though Mary was a self-proclaimed lover of islands, she did not hesitate to explore the dry and dusty Australian outback. On 10 August 1958 she set off with three friends, Ady, Lorna and Prue, in a borrowed Volkswagen Combi they nicknamed Willie, for a one-month tour of central Australia.

Remember, these were the days before GPS, sat-nav or mobile phones, and tarmac roads were few in the outback. Luckily for us, Mary kept her diaries and many of her photos from that very adventurous, often hazardous trip so, to celebrate Mary and her daring exploits and to show a side of Mary that many may not have seen, we've used that media to put together an interactive map of their journey. Now everyone can follow along with mad Mary and her crazy friends just by clicking on this [link](#).



10 August: Mary set off with friends Ady, Lorna & Prue in a VW van with 9gals water, 8gals petrol, salami sausages & pineapple to see Australia

11 August: Near Orange stopped to re-pack and sort out un-necessaries to cut down weight. Willie Volkswagen wasn't pulling too well!

13 August: Talked to 2 drovers with 3500 merinos. Horse-drawn wagon piled with kit under tarpaulins. Did 3-4 miles a day if there was water



18 August: Discovering Avon Downs cattle station, where Prue spent time talking to the women & children of some of the Aboriginal stockmen

Interactive map of the trip

20 August: 133 miles of saltbush plains, chatting to stock drovers & a camel with 'disdain for miserable human race showing in every sinew'



30 August: Highlight of the trip: world's largest monolith Ayer's Rock at dawn & tumbled monoliths of the Olgas at sunset

3 September: 277mls towards Port Augusta. Highlight: the welcome sparkle of the Sturt's Desert Pea, a highly sought-after prize among flower lovers

6 September: Prue, Lorna, and Mary in the Grampian Mountains, western Victoria, on the last lap of desert trek



The Knoll Woodland: An Unusual Natural Feature in Southern Gwent

Colin Titcombe

To the south-east of the old red sandstone ridge of Wentwood lies a low plain which is broken by a series of escarpments of varying alignments. These escarpments are formed by ridges of Carboniferous limestone which protrude through the gently undulating, and more recent, Triassic deposits.

The limestone ridges are mostly represented as folds, but occasionally as faults which, in some places, embellish these scarps with small cliffs. Because of their steep and rocky terrain most of these scarps are unsuitable for agricultural purposes and have been left as near-natural (coppiced) woodlands which typify this part of south-east Gwent.

Their calcareous soil content bequeaths them a rich and varied flora which includes many rare species. The limestone areas which are covered by pasture land are usually rather poor, agriculturally, with only a very shallow soil cover- the next best thing, botanically, to a karst landscape. Consequently many of these pastures have never come under the plough and, nowadays, form small tracts of very rare 'natural pasture'. Like the woodlands, these also form a habitat for rare plant species, most notably orchids.

Such is the importance of these sites that some of them in the Penhow area have been decreed Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). One of these is the 'natural pasture' at the Brockwells Farm (Caldicot) and another is the bed of an old quarry known as Burness Castle (Rogiet).

Between them the two sites can boast such species as the **Green Winged Orchid** (*Orchis morio*), **Autumn Ladies Tresses** (*Spiranthes spiralis*), **Pyramidal Orchid** (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), **Shining Cranesbill** (*Geranium lucidum*) and **Star of Bethlehem** (*Ornithoglossum umbellatum*) among many more.

Isolated sites provide a home for much rarer species – **Meadow Sage** (*Salvia pratensis*) in a pasture near Rogiet, **Mezerion** (*Daphne mezereum*) in the Minnetts Woodland north of Rogiet, **Cut-leaved Selfheal** (*Prunella laciniata*) at Common-y-Coed which lies to the north of Undy and which forms the most westerly site for this very specialist species, **Purple Gromwell** (*Lithospermum purpurocaeruleum*) near Carrow Hill – possibly now extinct on this site, and the **Hellebores** (*Helleborus viridis* and *foetidus*) at the Salisbury Wood and Cwm Wood.

Just a short walk south of Penhow Castle, at the northerly termination of one of these limestone ridges, lies the unusual wooded hillock known as The Knoll (31/ 424 904). From the top of this vantage point much of this rich floral area may be seen.

The knoll itself is unusual in that it is almost bereft of soil; the result of some sort of weathering or erosion process. The limestone here is of the series known as the Lower Dolomite, and is the same as that worked on the opposite side of the main road (A48) at Penhow Quarries, although a fault on the southern side introduces the lower limestone shale to the surface – a more calcareous (limey) deposit. The surface of the knoll is virtually a scree deposit, littered with moderate sized rocks of the Lower Dolomite. These contain pockets of calcite and the fossil remains of crinoids (Sea Lilies) in reasonable abundance. Application of a dilute hydrochloric acid on these rocks shows only a slight reaction indicating a reduced content of calcium carbonate – the effects of dolomitisation.



Autumn Ladies Tresses
(*Spiranthes spiralis*) © Rebecca Johnson



Stinking Hellebore (*Helleborus foetidus*) © Annie Irving

The tree cover on the knoll consists primarily of **Ash** (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with a make-up assembly of **Hazel** (*Corylus avellana*), **Wild Cherry** (*Prunus avium*), **Blackthorn** (*Crataegus monogyna*), **English Oak** (*Quercus robur*), **Elder** (*Sambucus nigra*), **Holly** (*Ilex aquifolium*), and **Wych Elm** (*Ulmus glabra*) – each and every one of them a native species to the region.

As for mammals, grey squirrels and wood-mice are possibly the only resident species in this almost soil-free and undergrowth-free little wood, but it also forms just a small part of a red fox's home range.

Birds include the typical woodland species of the general area – woodpigeons, jays, carrion crows, magpies, the common thrushes, the common tits, woodland finches, great spotted woodpecker, green woodpecker, tree-creeper and goldcrest.



Photos © Clare Dinham

Buglife Cymru's Autumn Oil Beetle Hunt

Clare Dinham—Buglife Cymru

Last spring we asked for your help in recording oil beetles in Wales, and thanks to your help we now have a much better idea of where these threatened beetles are; we can now use this information to help to protect and enhance the wildflower-rich habitats upon which the beetles rely.

You may have now caught the oil beetle recording 'bug' and can't wait until next spring to get out and look for more beetles. Well, fear not though as this is the time of year that our third and most elusive species of oil beetle in Wales – the Rugged Oil Beetle - emerges.

Rugged oil beetles (*Meloe rugosus*) are primarily nocturnal and the adults can be active between September to April, in grasslands on chalk, limestone and sandy soils. In Wales, the Rugged Oil Beetle is only known from a small area in South East Wales. However, given that the beetle is most active at night and during the winter months it is likely that its presence has been overlooked in Wales – it may be more widespread.

This autumn we need your help! Please let us know if you spot a Rugged Oil Beetle in Wales, there is every chance that your sighting could be a new discovery!

Already, the project has led to the discovery of many new sites for oil beetles in Wales, and in England we rediscovered the Mediterranean Oil Beetle after we thought it was extinct in the UK! Like its Rugged counterpart, Mediterranean Oil Beetle (*Meloe mediterraneus*) is also nocturnal and active during the autumn and winter months This species may be present in South Wales and your sightings can really make a difference.

If you see any large, conspicuous black beetles on your travels please submit your sightings and a photo to our [Oil beetle survey page](#). Our [Oil beetle Identification guide](#) will help you identify your beetles, but even if you're unsure please send in your record anyway as we have experts at hand to identify them from your photographs.

Diolch!



Photos © David Harries

The distribution of *Microglossum* species in Wales

A project led by the Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network

David Harries—Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network

The Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network has launched a project which aims to provide information on the distribution of *Microglossum* species across Wales.

A number of recent publications have clarified the taxonomy of species in the *Microglossum* genus - and it seems that our historic concept of the Olive Earthtongue (*Microglossum olivaceum*) covers a number of morphologically and genetically distinct species. It is important that we gain a better understanding of the status of the species complex, as *Microglossum olivaceum* is listed on Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 as a species of "key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in relation to Wales"

Mycologists across Wales have been invited to collect, photograph, document and preserve collections of *Microglossum olivaceum* sensu lato.

Collections will be forwarded to the project team who will arrange for:

- Morphological (microscopic) investigation, cataloguing and retention of the collections.
- Extraction and amplification of the DNA barcode for each collection.
- Cleanup and sequencing of the DNA extracts (at Aberystwyth University).

The results will be reviewed and interpreted with assistance from the Mycology Group at Aberystwyth. The output will provide a preliminary distribution map for *Microglossum* in Wales which takes account of the most recent understanding of the species complex.

The project team gratefully acknowledges support from Dr. Gareth Griffith (Aberystwyth University), Dr. Brian Douglas and colleagues (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew - Lost and Found Fungi project), the British Mycological Society and Natural Resources Wales.

If you know of good collections of this species complex in your area, please contact your local fungus recorder, or myself (djh.somerton@gmail.com).



UK National Tree Seed Project

Andy Karran—Gwent Wildlife Trust Wildlife Sites Officer

For the past three years we have been assisting Kew with their UK National Tree Seed Project, which forms part of Kew's 'Millennium Seedbank'.

The aim of the project is to collect seeds from all the native tree and shrub species within the UK. This would be quite an undertaking in itself. However, preserving the regional genetic variation in trees within the UK is also an important consideration. To this end, separate collections of all the species native to the 24 geographic seed zones of the UK are being made with the collections further divided into uplands (above 300m) and lowlands (below 300m).

This project is very important as it will provide a source of material for research and a reserve of seed to allow future restocking of woodlands. This is particularly pertinent given the range of tree diseases that are threatening our native flora at present and uncertainty about what the future may bring.

In south-east Wales we fall within four different geographic seed zones (303, 404, 304 & 403) and we have been making collections in the first three of these.



Photos clockwise from top left: 1. Dogwood, 2. UKNTSP Tree Tag, 3. Gin drinkers back off! A full bag of Sloes ready for Kew, 4. Happy volunteers in spectacular wildlife country. Craig y Cilau NNR © Andy Karran

With so much tree planting having been undertaken across the UK it is difficult to know if any given tree is of local provenance, so to minimise the risk of collecting from inappropriate trees the collections were wherever possible limited to Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands of greater than 4ha in size (although we did venture into other semi-natural habitats, particularly to fulfil the upland collections). This meant we got to visit some great sites for wildlife that included a number of woodlands with the Wye Valley, Cadw's Llanmelin Hillfort, St. Julian's Park in Newport, our Silent Valley reserve near Ebbw Vale, Porthkerry Country Park and Craig y Cilau NNR near Crickhowell. We saw loads of fantastic stuff including many very rare Whitebeam (*Sorbus*) trees but the highlight was a pair of migrating Ring Ouzel sat right next to us at Craig y Cilau this autumn (we gladly let them share the berries we were collecting!).

At the time of writing we have made 27 seed collections with just a few more to go and these have covered 18 different species (Field Maple, Alder, Downy Birch, Silver Birch, Dogwood, Hawthorn, Holly, Crab Apple, Blackthorn, Elder, Rowan, Yew, Small-leaved Lime, Large-leaved Lime, Honeysuckle, Wild Raspberry, Wild Service Tree & Wych Elm). Each collection involves 10,000 seeds spread across at least 15 different trees at each site, relatively easy with birch but that is a lot of Sloes to collect and it is not easy to find 15 Large-leaved Limes! The seeds from each tree have been kept separate and each tree has been individually GPSed & tagged for future reference.

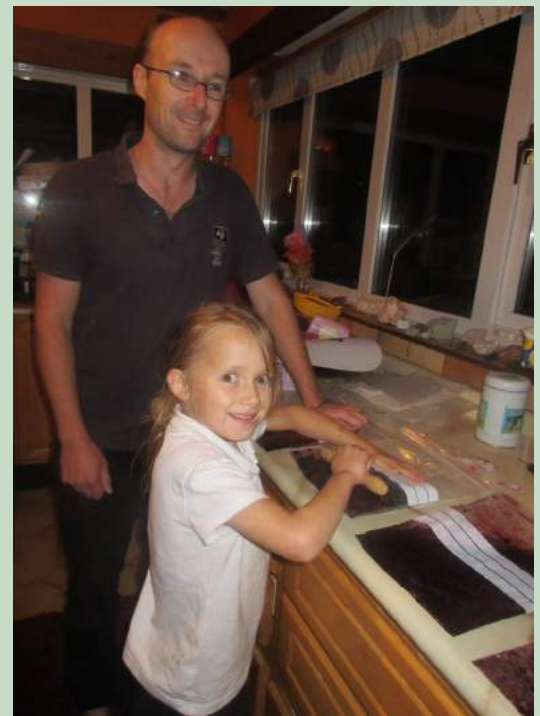
Getting the seeds out of the trees was challenging but fun and a combination of throwlines, shaking branches, dust sheets and telescopic pruners usually did the job. However, collecting the seeds and fruit was only part of the fun; we then had to extract the seeds. Elder was messy (just the job for a seven year old) but crab apples needed to be attacked with pliers (or stamping). A combination of squishing, water, a sieve and centrifugal force usually did the job.

The whole project gave a greater appreciation of our trees and shrubs. It is surprising how little seed actually sets in the depths of the woodland which illustrates the importance of rides and edge habitats for flowers, berries and seeds together with all the multitude of creatures that rely on these. It also highlighted the difficulty in conclusively identifying certain tree species that you might ordinarily take for granted. Separating Silver & Downy Birch was a real challenge, particularly with hybrids and the realisation that there is a third native birch species (*Betula celtiberica*) in Wales. Small and Large Leaved Lime were also not always as easy to

ID as you might think with again the potential for the hybrid between the two being present. Perhaps we should be grateful that somebody else was given the challenge of collecting the Whitebeams!

There are still species that need collecting and we are hoping to undertake more work next year, we have had volunteers ranging from 7 – 80 helping us and if you are interested in getting involved in this project, having a great day out in the woods and contributing to safeguarding our trees for the future then please contact Andy at Gwent Wildlife Trust – akarran@gwentwildlife.org.

In conclusion, seed collecting "Makes Yew Happy".



Squishing Elderberries © Trine Karran



Seed Collecting Makes Yew Happy © Andy Karran



Exciting plant finds in 2017

Stephanie J. Tyler (SJT) & Elsa Wood (EW) - V.C. Botanical Recorders for Gwent

The 2017 season has been very rewarding. We have entered over 12,000 records as of 28 Aug 2017 but have also found several species new to the county or species that are considered locally rare or uncommon in vice-county 35.

One excitement was the finding by SJT of about 60 plants of Narrow-leaved Water Dropwort *Oenanthe silaifolia* on a grassy fringe to the footpath by the River Monnow at Osbaston. This is not only a new species for the vice county of Monmouthshire but a new species for Wales. It lies in SO4912 extending into SO5012. Strangely, Corky-fruited Water Dropwort *O. pimpinelloides* grows on the other side of the river on Vauxhall meadows.

Another new species for Monmouthshire but probably established in the wild from a garden escape is Sand Leek *Allium scoroprasum* near White Castle, found in May by SJT who took a plant home to grow it on and flower. The rose-pink flowers and bulbils and wide leaves are diagnostic.

Then the more exciting third new species was Alpine clubmoss *Diphasiastrum alpinum* found by Steve Williams – 2 patches of ca 1m square on a vegetating coal tip at Pwll Du by the Blorenge where Fir Clubmoss *Huperzia selago* and Stagshorn Club Moss *Lycopodium clavatum* also grow.

During the early part of the year Adrian Wood and EW found a patch of wintergreen in a gully by the A449 between Llantrissant and Coldra and subsequent visits by Adrian Wood, EW, SJT and Shelley Cross showed it to be Round-leaved Wintergreen *Pyrola rotundifolia*, a rare plant in VC35. Previous records were in Lasgarn Quarry (Steve Williams) and at the old Alpha Steel works at Newport (SJT). Then in May when surveying around Bryn Bach Country Park with Phoebe Williams and Shelley Cross, SJT found another patch of wintergreen under low willows. On a return visit on 4 July it was showing flower buds and then when Phoebe Williams and Chris Reed went back again the flowers clearly showed it to be also *P. rotundifolia*. Unbelievably Steve Williams then found a third patch of Round-leaved Wintergreen, under willows at Cleppa Park, Duffryn, Newport in late July. Where else will this plant turn up? It was considered Rare in Trevor Evans' 2007 Rare Plant Register (up to 3 locations) but has now moved to being Locally Scarce (4-10 locations).

Photos: Left - Round-leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) © Gerard Siron
Right - Alpine clubmoss (*Diphasiastrum alpinum*) © Steve Williams



Tim Rich noted 100s of plants of Little Robin *Geranium purpureum*, a species akin to a diminutive Herb Robert *G. robertianum*, in early May at Newport Station, our second Monmouthshire record. On a very wet outing of the Monmouthshire Botany Group in mid-May SJT spotted Sea Fern Grass *Catapodium marinum* braving a stream of lorries by the side of the road in Chepstow Industrial Estate, yet another halophyte that is colonising our roadsides. Then in June EW found more Sea Fern Grass on Bigsweir Bridge. We noted Narrow-leaved Pepperwort *Lepidium ruderale* in a lay-by on the Raglan to Abergavenny dual carriageway near Bryngwyn in early July, the seventh post 2000 record for the vice-county. Then Heather Colls found two plants by the dual carriageway north of Dixton, Monmouth in August.

On a visit to Caerwent Quarry in June SJT, EW and Shelley Cross made a number of interesting finds such as Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularia* and Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* but were alarmed by the news that the owner proposes to infill a large area of the quarry floor to create a horse pasture. Further visits in July revealed lots of other calcicoles such as Marjoram *Origanum vulgare*, Gromwell *Lithospermum officinale*, Carline Thistle *Carlina vulgaris* and Ploughman's Spikenard *Inula conyzae* and in a small depression on the main quarry floor about 50 plants of Brookweed *Samolus valerandi*.

Other excitements were Lesser Centaury *Centaureum pulchellum* in several spots in Minnetts/Slade Woods and at the edge of a field near St Maughans and a new site for Marsh Valerian *Valeriana dioica*, the stonewort *Nitella opaca* and the pondweed *Potamogeton pusillus*, all near Trostrey, Bettws Newydd.

Sam Bosanquet and Chris Preston turned up some interesting aquatics in the lake and ponds at Dingestow Court including *Ceratophyllum submersum* in Green Pond, the first post-2000 record of this species. The stonewort *Chara globularis* that is rare in the county (its presence was also confirmed by EW this year in a reed on Bowleaze Common where it has been recorded since 1975) was also in the lake and the new alien duckweed *Lemna turionifera* in a pond and in the lake. Two other stoneworts were found by us in August - *Chara contraria* and *Nitella opaca* again in shallow water on Pwll Du coal tip.

Heather Colls found Keeled Cornsalad *Valerianella carinata* (considered to be extinct in Trevor Evan's Flora) and Water Bent *Polypogon viridis* on pavements and street edges in Monmouth. She also found abundant Shaggy Soldiers *Galinsoga quadriradiata* in a raised bed at Monmouth Cemetery. Water Bent continues to turn up in all sorts of urban sites – for example in we found it frequent in the vicinity of the Roman Amphitheatre in Caerleon in mid-August. Water Bent was also found during 2017 in Raglan, southwest Newport, Cwmbran, Llanbedr and St Arvans



On waste ground near the Caerleon Roman Amphitheatre we also found the non-native grass Cockspur *Echinochloa crus-galli* and a single Shaggy Soldiers. In late August Heather Colls found a single Cockspur amongst 'a sea' of mainly Common Orache *Atriplex patula* and Red Goosefoot *Chenopodium rubrum* in SO4912 to the west of Monmouth and EW and Adrian Wood found Cockspur in a field near St Pierre Pill together with Shaggy Soldiers. We found more Cockspur near Cross Ash and on the Levels. Another alien grass, from North America, Witch Grass *Panicum capillare* was found by us in profusion on the shores of Llandegfedd Reservoir on 30 August, only the second vice-county record.

Andy Karran found Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria* on Far Hill, Trellech and Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularia* near Magor at Upper Grange Farm.

A strange addition to the 2017 finds was Yellow Dodder *Cuscuta campestris* which turned up in Ian Rabjohn's garden at Penallt in late August. A previous record of this North American parasitic species was in a garden at St Maughans in September 2010.

We have been busy revising the Monmouthshire Vice-County 35 Rare Plant Register (RPR) which Trevor Evans produced in 2007; the revision is available on the [BSBI Wales website](#). Some species formerly considered rare have been removed from the revised RPR as more records have turned up whilst others have been added. Of particular concern is that certain species such as Nodding Bur-Marigold *Bidens cernua*, Wood Vetch *Vicia sylvatica*, Blue Water Speedwell *Veronica anagallis-aquatica* and Petty Whin *Genista anglica* seem to be fast disappearing from the vice-county. We and more especially Mike Ogden have been visiting many pre-2000 known sites for these species and almost invariably finding that the plant has disappeared. In the case of Wood Vetch many of the woodlands may now be too shady although Mike re-found it at two sites – Troy Orles Wood and Graig Wood just south of Monmouth where last seen in 1987 and 1994 respectively. Why has Petty Whin and Nodding Bur Marigold disappeared? Perhaps scrub, brambles and bracken have encroached on Petty Whin wet moorland habitats but there is plenty of good water's edge along the Monmouth & Brecon Canal for the bur-marigold. If you know of any extant sites for these plants or for any others in the RPR then please do contact us.

Stephanie Tyler steph_tyler2001@hotmail.com

Elsa Wood info@thenurtons.co.uk

Photos: Left - Yellow Dodder (*Cuscuta campestris*) © Ian Rabjohns
Right - Petty Whin (*Genista anglica*) © Graham Watkeys

Grassland Fungi: A Field Guide

Elsa Wood and Jon Dunkelman

The result of 2½ years surveying grassland sites in the Lower Wye Valley, Elsa Wood and Jon Dunkelman, together with photographers Malcolm Schuyf and Keith Moseley, and production editor Marilyn Dunkelman, proudly present "Grassland Fungi: a field guide".

It contains descriptions of 177 species with over 800 photographs, selected to illustrate the key identification points. There is an overview of the process of identifying fungi in the field, and while technical terms are kept to a minimum, those used are explained in the glossary. The format is A5, 336 pages.

Published by Monmouthshire Meadows Group, the book will be available for sale at MMG events at a special price (£10 to MMG members, £15 to non-members), but we are not able to post copies and other sales will be handled by [NHBS](#). A small number of copies may also be available for sale at the Gwent & Glamorgan Recorders' Forum in January, stocks allowing.

MMG would like to thank the funders who have made the publication possible: New Grove Trust; Martin Wills Wildlife Maintenance Trust; the Sustainable Development Fund, a Welsh Government initiative in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); and members of the Meadows Group in the Lower Wye Valley who have made personal donations. We are also grateful to all the landowners who gave us access to their land for the survey.

GRASSLAND FUNGI a field guide



Elsa Wood and Jon Dunkelman



Garden recording

Graham Watkeys

As the year winds down it's a good time to look back on the season's recording. I have managed to add 171 species to my garden list this year (to date) and I have met some very delightful creatures in the process.



Hairy Spider Weevil (*Barypeithes pellucidus*) © Graham Watkeys

My favourite (or at least one of them) has to be *Barypeithes pellucidus*. One reason for this blatant favouritism is because it's a Weevil and all Weevils are cool, but mainly because it's called the Hairy Spider Weevil which makes it doubly cool. I found it by hanging around the compost bins, a generally productive place to be as it turned out, as it also led me to find the Soldier flies *Sargus bipunctatus* (a first record for VC42) and *Microchrysa polita*.

The best "right place, right time" records were the Wool Carder Bee (*Anthidium manicatum*) and the Hummingbird Hawk Moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*), both of which were seen, photographed and gone in minutes.

Rarities included two Rust fungi, rare for two different reasons though. I found *Cronartium flaccidum* on Peony, one of its alternate hosts, which is genuinely rare and *Puccinia phragmitis* on Rhubarb, not a rare rust but on a very unusual host for a species usually found on Docks.

I also have to report on my Hoverflies. I managed to increase my garden list by 15 species bringing the total to 53. Highlights have to be *Chrysotoxum cautum*, *Chrysotoxum festivum* and *Ferdinandea cuprea*.

Photos: Left - *Chrysotoxum cautum*, Right top—*Sargus bipunctatus*, Right bottom - Hummingbird Hawk Moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*) © Graham Watkeys



Mary Gillham Archive Project.

Highlights from the past 6 months

Al Reeve—Project Officer

Since the last newsletter the project continues apace, we have a tremendous group of volunteers – both in the office and online – and they are working very hard to showcase the life of Mary Gillham.

Project students

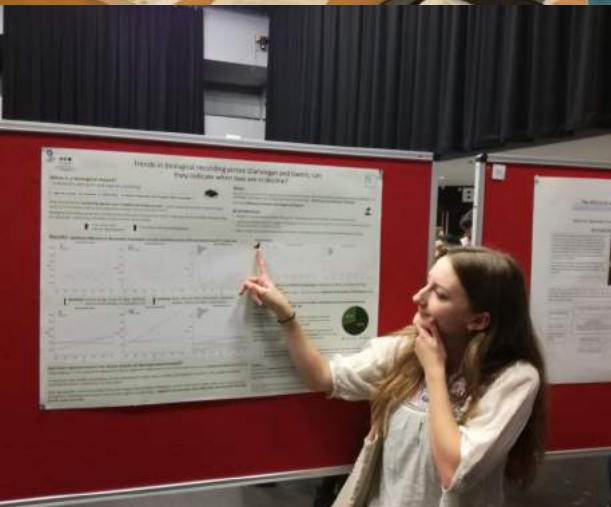
One of our volunteers, Lucy Haddock [photographed top], used the Mary Gillham archive as inspiration for her undergraduate thesis. She wrote a thesis on the thought process behind a museum display and then created one! You can see what she created [here](#)!

Natalie Christie [photographed 2nd from top], our first placement student has successfully written up and submitted the report she wrote while contributing to the Mary Gillham Archive Project. She also created a poster which was displayed in the Student Union building last week.

While Nat has gone, we have been joined by a new placement student, Cathy Bolton [photographed 3rd from top], who will be working on the archive until the new year and then supporting SEWBRc's work – welcome aboard!

Support from the Geologists' Association's Curry Fund

We have just received financial support from the Geologists' Association to take a look at some of Mary Gillham's notes from a geological point of view. Mary was a landscape-scale biologist and often referenced the geology and soil properties of a site due to its influence on the biological community present. We are using the money to pay one of our student volunteers, Archie Bunnay [photographed bottom], to go through Mary's folders and images to mine out the geologically important material.

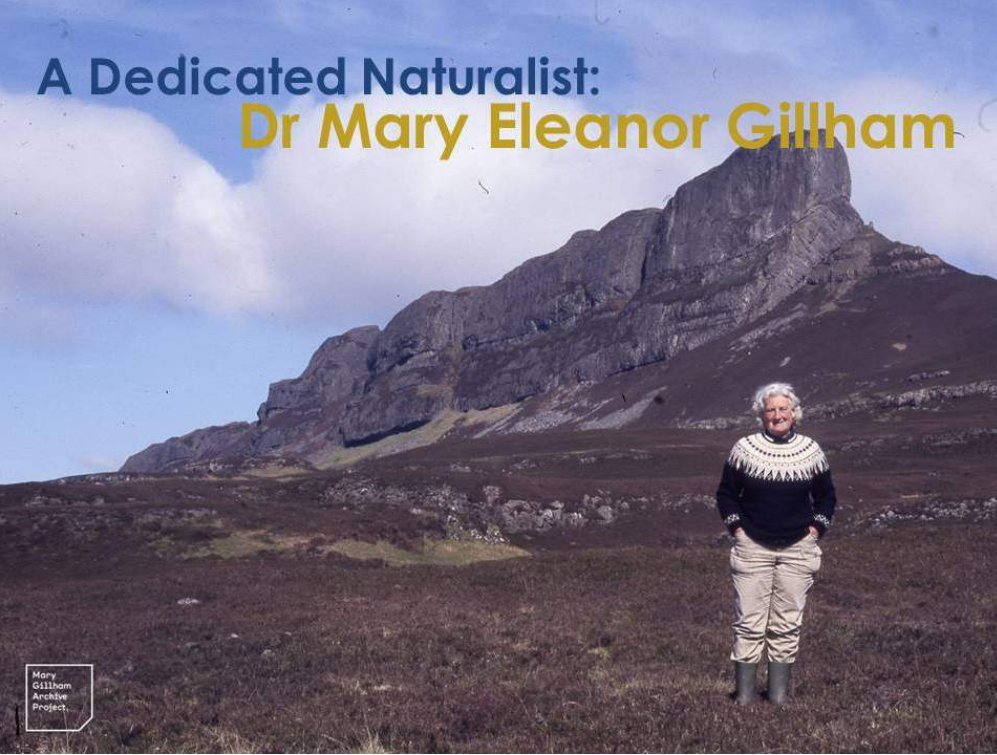


All photos: © Mary Gillham Archive Project



**LOTTERY FUNDED
ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI**

A Dedicated Naturalist: Dr Mary Eleanor Gillham



Mary Gillham Archive Project

Women in the History of Natural History conference

The Society for the History of Natural History organised a conference about Women in the History of Natural Sciences in June and the Mary Gillham Archive Project was invited to speak at the event. Split over two days between the University of Cumbria Ambleside Campus and the Freshwater Biological Association on the shores of Windermere, the meeting was an opportunity to recognise the historical contributions of women to the earth and life sciences.

There were wide ranging talks about the role played by women such as Beatrix Potter, Margaret Gatty, Rosemary Lowe-McConnell, Kathleen Carpenter, Katherine Sophia Baily, Margaret Cavendish Bentinck, Muriel Robertson and of course Mary Gillham, as well as subject themed talks about women as natural history artists and phycologists.

Final months

We are in the final few months of the project where we frantically try to digitise as much of the archive as we can before we have to step back. Volunteers continue to work in earnest transcribing slides, populating the website, entering data and much more – this is your last chance to get involved before the volunteering programme ceases at the end of the year.

Look out for our new website appearing soon, and a summation of the entire project at the combined Cardiff Naturalists' Society – Cardiff Wildlife Trust meeting on March 1st 2018. There will also be an exhibition at the Rhondda Heritage Park opening in Spring.

alan.reeve@sewbrec.org.uk



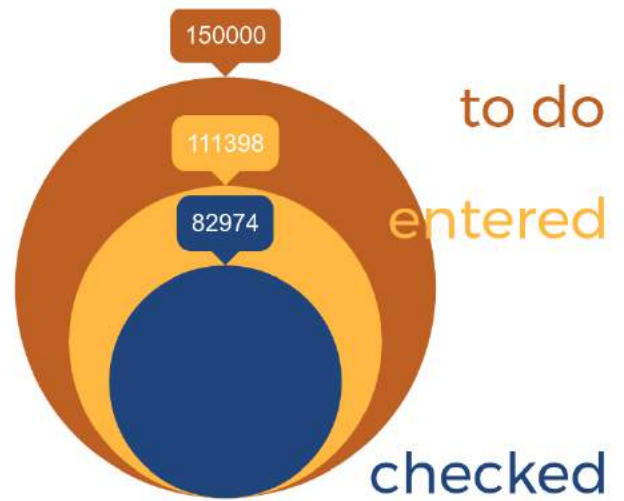
Mary Gillham Archive Project at 18 months

records

Of the estimated 150 000 wildlife records in Mary Gillham's archive, volunteers have entered over 110 000 and 75% of them have been checked

This data will be made publicly available through Aderyn and NBN Atlas

Sadly we won't manage to capture every record but the archive will be preserved at Glamorgan Archives for anyone wishing to research it

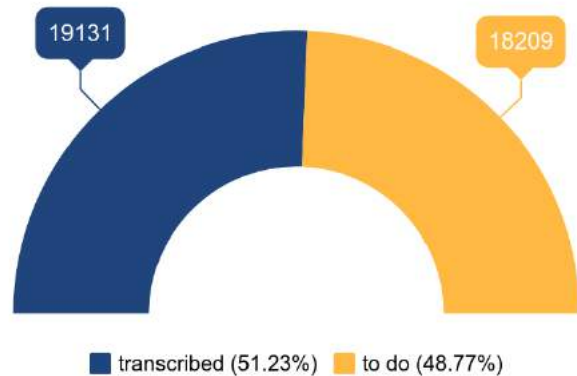


slides

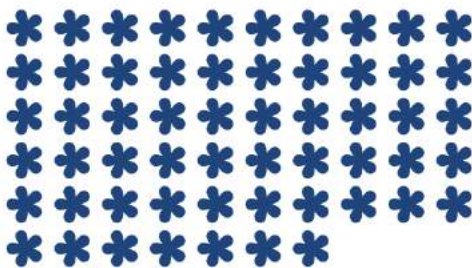
The project inherited 37 000 slides with Mary Gillham's archive spanning Wales, the rest of the British Isles plus Australasia, Africa, Europe and the Americas

All of the slides have been scanned and volunteers have transcribed over half of them

17 500 of these slides can be seen on here: [flickr.com/photos/marygillhamarchiveproject/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/marygillhamarchiveproject/albums)



volunteers



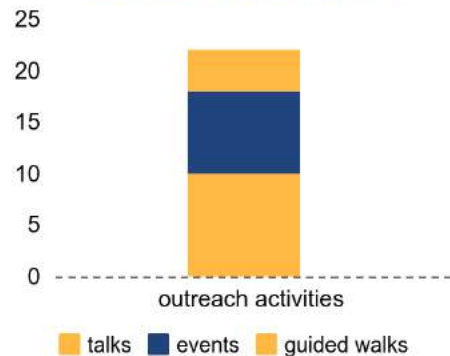
■ number of volunteers

The project has benefited hugely by the hard work of many volunteers

Volunteers work on the archive, create social media outputs, research history, transcribe slides, organise outreach activities and much more

Watch a video of the Mary Gillham volunteers in action: <http://tinyurl.com/yb48ecka>

outreach



You can find us on facebook, flickr, instagram, soundcloud, storify, twitter, wordpress, and youtube

We are populating our new website which will commemorate the life of Mary Gillham and tell some of the tales of her adventurous life

The project will culminate with an exhibition at the Rhondda Heritage Park in Spring 2018

The Dawn Chorus in Nant Llwynog Park, Upper Bedlinog

Jim Davies and Rob Thomas

I had to investigate it. I had no excuse, living right by the park entrance and in the daytime last year having heard or seen 65 bird species.

So at 3.15 am on Sunday May 14, in the complete silence and semi darkness, I sat on the bench by the big swamp at the far end of the park (location 1 - see opposite page) and just listened.

At 3.45 a Tawny Owl called twice, but not again. Then the swallows at the farm began twittering and continued so for half an hour. From the Common I heard the Curlew, while in the Oakwood the Woodpigeons, Carrion Crow and the Green Woodpecker began their calls.

Hardly a Dawn Chorus you might think? Then a Reed Bunting's strident double note from the swamp Sallows set the smaller birds into a burst of singing sustained for the next hour. Song Thrush, Robin, Wren and Blackbird began proceedings in full throat, but presently paused for the returnees from Africa, the Blackcap, Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff.

On May 19 I listened again at dawn at the Rugby pitch south east corner (location 2) and on May 21 at the little Round Pond and marsh beyond the soccer ground (location 3). So were there any big differences to the chorus?

No, but at locations 2 and 3 I heard the Redstart and at location 3 the Cuckoo. These summer migrants from Africa are by no means common in Britain and we must hope Nant Llwynog Park will continue to offer them shelter in the decades ahead.

Notes on the Dawn Chorus


- With the onset of spring male birds take up or renew a territory with suitable nesting and feeding habitat. They have by then developed melatonin and testosterone hormone levels such that they can sing well and alert females of their presence.
- The strength of their song is considered to influence their success in attracting a mate.
- Light initiates the day's chorus, and the skylark is first off in Britain (in the rain forest it is the tree top species).
- Dawn has still, cool air which maximises sound transmission and coincides with the late torpor of the invertebrate food supply.
- The strength of the chorus is in part due to a social stimulation among the various species.
- There is a more or less fixed order of species participation at any one station, and the Nant Llwynog examples are typical.
- A late chorus is also usual but lesser in vigour and length.
- In New Zealand the early colonists noted a splendid dawn chorus which has dwindled to nothing with the forest clearances.
- International Dawn Chorus Day is the first Sunday in May.

Nant Llwynog Park (Bedlinog)

Habitat Map


-  Grassland
-  Scrubland
-  Woodland
-  Wetland
-  Waterways
-  Park Boundary

100 metres



O.S. ref. SO 098 017 HASL 280M



 Listening locations



An island bioblitz and a new species for Britain

Amy Hicks—SEWBRc Biodiversity Information Officer

Inspired by Dr Mary Gillham's love of Welsh islands, we decided to add a slightly more unusual recording event to SEWBRc's 2017 calendar and visit Flat Holm Island in the Bristol Channel. Despite being a SSSI and only 5 miles from Cardiff, our knowledge of the species on Flat Holm was patchy. By the very nature of it being an island, expert recorders of many taxonomic groups had never visited. We simply had to go and have a look!

Flat Holm can only be accessed by certain types of boat, and only for a short window around each high tide, so late on a rainy Friday evening in August the first 20 of our willing wildlife recorders, Mary Gillham Archive Project volunteers and Flat Holm Society members stepped bravely into two RIBs and set off to "bioblitz" the island. We arrived half an hour later completely soaked and settled into the Flat Holm farmhouse for the night.



Thankfully by the time the remaining 10 of the team arrived at high tide the next morning (looking enviably dry) the conditions were looking much better for a full day of wildlife recording. In fact proceedings had already started at around 4am with a small group opting to drag themselves out of bed and get down to the sea shore for low tide.

Over the next 24 hours, no stone was left unturned. We botanised, netted and sucked up invertebrates, scraped lichen samples, hunted for fungi, checked reptile refugia, ringed birds, trapped moths and detected bats. We were rewarded in the evening with a glorious sunset, which for those visiting just for the day was viewed from the RIB ride back to Cardiff, followed by a beautifully clear night and a fantastic meteor shower.



Photos © SEWBRcC

Once back on the mainland, the hard work continued; identifying species, getting records verified and submitting them to SEWBRcC. The majority of the records have now been submitted and I'm pleased to report that so far an incredible 402 different species have been recorded including 143 species not previously known from the island! The majority of new species added were seashore invertebrates (it pays to get up early), plants, fungi and arachnids – with these last 2 groups including some very exciting finds!



***Kryptonesticus eremita*—a new species to Britain!** © Richard Gallon

Richard Gallon, who travelled down from Cofnod, the Records Centre for north Wales, for a chance to look at the under recorded spiders of Flat Holm, found a specimen of *Kryptonesticus eremita* in one of the island's tunnels– the first time this species has been found in Britain! *K. eremita* is usually found in caves and cellars and is native to mainland Europe. Could Flat Holm be the only place in Britain this species has expanded its range to, or is it going unnoticed in other places due to the under-recorded nature of underground-dwelling spiders?



***Paurocotylis pila* —a new species to Wales!** © Emma Williams

Another spider recorded on the trip by Richard Gallon, *Panamomops sulcifrons*, was the first of its kind to be found in Wales. A fungus, *Paurocotylis pila*, which was found by Gareth Farr and identified by Emma Williams of Glamorgan Fungus Group is also new to Wales! Both species had previously been found as close as Somerset, but had not been known to have crossed the border before.

The list of new species to the island is expected to grow once records of the lichens and bryophyte specimens that are still being laboriously worked through have been submitted. Both of these groups were very under-recorded prior to the visit. Once complete, all the records from the trip will be shared with Cardiff City Council and the Flat Holm Society so that they can be used to inform management of the island.

I'd like to give a huge thank you to everyone who came on the trip, especially those who generously shared their knowledge with others, whether of a taxonomic group, of biological recording, or of the island. A big thank you also to the Flat Holm Warden, Marianne Bony and to the Flat Holm Society members who helped to make it happen!



Flat Holm Trip – 12 August 2017: Vascular plants

David Barden—Glamorgan Botany Group

*Species with no Flat Holm records in the Flora of Glamorgan (1994) or the BSBI database (last records 2004) are noted by *.*

After an interesting historical tour of the island by Linda [Burnell, of the Flat Holm Society], a small group of us got to work recording at Coal Beach, which proved to be one of the best bits of habitat on the island, with over 60 species noted. As well as the typical species of rocky shores *Crithmum maritimum* (Rock Samphire), *Erodium maritimum* (Sea Storksbill), *Armeria maritima* (Thrift), *Limonium binervosum* agg. (Rock Sea-lavender) and *Silene uniflora* (Sea Campion) – all of which we found plenty later – there was some reasonable calcareous grassland on the steep slopes above. Here, close to the path, we found 1 square metre of *Cirsium acaule** (Ground Thistle), frequent *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Lesser Burnet Saxifrage), small quantities of *Lathyrus pratensis** (Meadow Vetchling) and *Leontodon hispidus* (Rough Hawkbit), and one rosette of *Knautia arvensis** (Field Scabious). Although these species can be common on the mainland, this was the only place we found them on the island. As in a couple of other places at this more sheltered end of the island, there was some 'good' *Centaurea debeauxii** (Chalk Knapweed) here, and to our surprise we found one patch of *Mentha x verticillata** (Whorled Mint), in the absence of both parents. *Teucrium scorodonia* (Wood Sage) was also seen here growing on limestone spoil, as indeed it was in many other places.

We then walked round the eastern side of the island, although we were mostly constrained to the cliff-tops, and the flora here was less diverse, although including *Beta vulgaris* (Sea Beet) on the rocks (later seen in a couple of places elsewhere). Walking past the foghorn station, we saw large quantities of the v.c.41 rarity *Carex divulsa* subsp. *leersii* (Leers' Sedge), which again we later found (although in smaller quantity) in several places.

We then headed down to the southern end of the island, which due to the gull colony contains large areas of disturbed, nutrient-enriched ground with often dominant *Brassica rapa* (Wild Turnip) and *Urtica dioica* (Nettle). In shorter vegetation such as around buildings and rocks, *Parietaria judaica* (Pellitory of the Wall) was common – indeed, we found this to be present in just about every habitat on the island. After lunch at the barracks, we headed down to the lighthouse, passing the large colonies of *Allium ampeloprasum* (Wild Leek) for which Flat Holm has long been famed. On the headland, we saw one plant of *Hyoscyamus niger* (Henbane) and good colonies of *Marrubium vulgare* (White Horehound) and *Anchusa arvensis* (Lesser Bugloss) – all uncommon in v.c. 41.

Moving clockwise round the coast, we encountered small quantities of *Malva neglecta** (Dwarf Mallow), *Asplenium marinum* (Sea Spleenwort) and *Spergularia marina** (Lesser Sea-spurrey), and one bush of *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-Briar) scrambling over a rocky gully. The latter species was last seen here in 1967, and it is possible this plant dates from that time, as it was clearly of some age.



After investigating West Beach and the military emplacements to the north, where we added *Carex caryophylla* (Spring Sedge) to our list, we turned inland to the old farmhouse, where *Echium vulgare* (Viper's Bugloss) and *Cynoglossum officinale* (Hound's-tongue) were seen, and *Fumaria capreolata* (White Ramping Fumitory) was a surprise find in the old garden.

Crossing the central grasslands, we found little of interest except for a small amount of *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell), looking rather out of place amongst the dominant *Arrhenatherum elatius* (False Oat Grass), and the alien *Campanula poscharskyana** (Trailing Bellflower) on the old radar station. Nearby, the grounds of the foghorn station were better, and we added to the list *Fumaria officinalis* subsp. *officinalis* (Common Fumitory, last seen pre-1960), *Buddleja davidii** (Buddleia) and *Conium maculatum* (Hemlock) – with the latter two notable only by their absence elsewhere.

After a stop for an evening snack, the grounds of the barracks were our next focus, and the short turf and areas of waste ground here proved quite productive, with over 50 species being noted, including abundant *Asplenium ruta-muraria* (Wall-rue) on an outbuilding, a few plants of *Inula conyza** (Ploughman's Spikenard), and a solitary specimen of *Asplenium trichomanes* (Maidenhair Spleenwort). From there, a walk back along the main track yielded *Veronica persica** (Common Field Speedwell) and two more rosettes of *Hyoscyamus niger*. Finally, while waiting for the boat back, we were able to list 35 species from the path down to the jetty, including a substantial amount of *Mercurialis annua* (Annual Mercury), and *Malva arborea* (Tree-mallow) on Castle Rock.

Overall, 387 individual records were made on the day, comprising 130 vascular plant species. Although on a single visit it is only possible to get a snapshot of a site's flora, it is probably fair to say this is not a particularly large tally given the size of the island – reflecting the limited extent of semi-natural habitats, the difficulty in species (re-)colonising from the mainland, and the absence of fresh water. Relatively few of the historic records were well-localised, but of those that were, we failed to find either *Carlina vulgaris* (Carlina Thistle) or *Blackstonia perfoliata* (Yellow-wort). These were both seen around the lighthouse in 2002, perhaps indicating that the habitat there might now be less favourable.

As well as summarising the species found, it is interesting to note those apparently absent – these included all ferns apart from the two *Asplenium* species noted above, all *Equisetum* (Horsetail) species, larger trees (for example, *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore) and *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn)), *Carex* species apart from the two noted above, and species requiring fresh water. Even *Epilobium* species, normally frequent in waste/disturbed habitats, were confined to a single plant of *E. ciliatum* (American Willowherb).

In summary, it was a very interesting place to visit, and an excellent day out – given the time of year, a return trip in the spring would certainly add substantially to the list. Thanks to those who helped with the recording, and of course Amy Hicks for all the organising!



LERC Wales Staff 2017 © West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre

SEWBReC Business Update

Adam Rowe - SEWBReC Manager

SEWBReC staff were involved in a joint event in Carmarthen on 14th July 2017 to celebrate **10 years** since the completion of the **Local Environmental Records Centres Wales network**. The event also marked the achievement of **10 million biological records** across Wales being publicly accessible via Aderyn (<http://aderyn.lercwales.org.uk/>). Guest speakers Andy Middleton (TYF Group /Natural Resources Wales board) and Ray Woods (lower plant and fungi specialist) gave excellent, thought-provoking presentations and six live showcase sessions were held to demonstrate key aspects of LERC Wales' information services. The event also marked the launch of the **partner access module of Aderyn**. This provides fast, secure access to the detailed biological data that is required by our organisational customers (e.g. Local Authorities, NRW, Wildlife Trusts) to ensure well-informed decisions are made.

In fact, a key theme of SEWBReC's current work is to try to ensure that the vast amount of data that is available from the LERCs in Wales is fully recognised and utilised as part of the **evidence-based decision-making** which is promised throughout the new raft of legislation and policies which are in place to protect and enhance the environment of Wales.

One aspect of this work is to ensure that the data LERCs hold is properly utilised in the planning process. To this end, we have been meeting with planning policy staff within Welsh Government, with local authority ecologists and with commercial environmental consultants, to learn more about the issues of biological data access and use from a range of perspectives. We are promoting best practice in accessing our data to assist public bodies in meeting the enhanced **biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty** established by the Environment Act (Wales) 2016, whilst ensuring that data is available via **NBN Atlas** or Aderyn is not used improperly for commercial purposes within the development control process.

We are also involved in a range of meetings to encourage the wider use of LERC Wales data as part of the national evidence base. This includes via the **Wales Nature Recovery Action Plan Implementation Group** (which will hopefully have an 'evidence' sub-group), via various workshops relating to the nascent NRW-led **Area Statements** process and during the forthcoming work on the second iteration of the **State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR II)**. We are also keen to see LERC Wales data utilised in work on green infrastructure and ecosystems services mapping, as well as in the forthcoming **Welsh Government integrated natural resources monitoring programme**.

We remain cautiously optimistic that 2017/18 will see a reversal in the recent decline of public sector income for SEWBReC. We are delighted to have secured a **temporary core funding grant from Welsh Government**, as well as establishing a new agreement which enables NRW to procure access to LERC Wales data. We are also still pursuing an equivalent arrangement to ensure key WG staff have access to the data they need. In addition, at the local level, we are still working hard with one local authority partner to establish a new Service Level Agreement which will help them to better meet their biodiversity duty.

Exciting times are looming for the SEWBReC team with the prospect of an **office move** in the near future. Although nothing is as yet official, we are in the process of negotiating a lease on an office in **Talbot Green** (near Llantrisant in Rhondda Cynon Taf) and hope to relocate early in 2018. Keep an eye on our email and social media communications for full details, as a move is likely before our next newsletter!

Although this is ostensibly a chance for me to give a business update, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the ongoing support our data providers, many of whom are of course volunteers. At every opportunity, whether speaking to our customers, or at national conferences, I reiterate that without the support of our recorders, there could be no SEWBReC. In the face of growing pressure to be more 'open' with data, I remind anyone who will listen that **access to volunteered data is not a right, but a privilege**. We will continue to stand up for and support our amazing local volunteer recording community, and are very grateful for your ongoing support in return.

SEWBReC Governance

We currently have three vacancies on the SEWBReC board. We are actively seeking new directors to fill these vacancies and currently have a particular emphasis on finding directors who are employed by public or private sector stakeholders or who bring business skills and experience to the board. Candidates should ideally be members of SEWBReC (see membership section below) and nominations for new directors should be with the Company Secretary before the start of the AGM, which will take place as part of the Recorders' Forum on 24/01/2018 (see page 30 for details of the Forum).

The current SEWBReC board of directors:

Steve Bolchover (Chair)
Alison Jones (Vice Chair)
Colin Cheesman (Secretary)
Sinead Lynch (Treasurer)
Martin Anthony
Roger James
Paul Seligman

SEWBReC Membership

SEWBReC is run as a not-for-profit company and is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors which is drawn from its membership. By becoming a member of SEWBReC you will be automatically invited to attend our Annual General Meetings and you will be eligible to stand for election to the Board of Directors.

Subject to Board approval, SEWBReC membership is open to anybody who:

Has read SEWBReC's Memorandum and Articles of Association* and supports the aims of the company;
Understands that as a Member of the Company they accept a liability not exceeding £1 if the Company should be wound up.

We are always keen to grow our membership and to this end we have included a copy of our membership application form with this newsletter mailing. Please consider joining and have your say in the future direction of SEWBReC – we need your expertise and enthusiasm!

** The membership form gives details of where to find the Memorandum and Articles of Association via our website. If you don't have access to the internet but are interested in joining, please get in touch and we will send you a copy.*



Photos © SEWBReC

SEWBReC Events 2017

Elaine Wright— SEWBReC Projects and Communications Officer

2017 definitely turned out to be a boom year for SEWBReC events, as we have been involved in / organised over 20 courses, field days and BioBlitzes during the last ten months. We have had opportunities to work with a wide variety of new partners, such as RSPB, RSPCA, Flat Holm Society and the National Trust, whilst also continuing to build on existing partnerships with organisations such as Wales Biodiversity Partnership, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and our sister LERCs in Wales.

We are well on the way with organising the 2018 forum (Saturday 20th January 2018, Park Inn Cardiff North); please get in touch if you would like to be involved with a presentation, short soapbox talk or a poster.

Elaine.wright@sewbrec.org.uk



Staff changes at SEWBReC

We're looking forward to welcoming back Becky Wright-Davies in January, after the birth of her daughter Nymue.

Sadly this also means that we'll be saying goodbye to Biodiversity Information Assistant Laura Parry in December, who has been helping us cover Becky's leave since finishing her LEMUR+ traineeship with SEWBReC last year.

We wish Laura all the best for the future.

A ditty in answer to the question "why do we need wildlife?"

Jim Davies

All the germs and all the worms,
Every slug and every bug
Create the soil to grow the plants,
That bring the bees to make the seeds,
And grow the fruits to feed the birds,
With plenty left for you and me.

Is the SEWBReC mailing list up to date?

If the email or postal address to which you prefer to receive communications from SEWBReC has changed, or is about to change, please can you let us know by emailing info@sewbrec.org.uk or calling us on **029 2064 1110**

BOOKING NOW OPEN!

GWENT-GLAMORGAN RECORDERS' FORUM 2018

SATURDAY 20TH JANUARY 2018 10AM - 4PM

PARK INN CARDIFF NORTH

Join SEWBReC and south Walian wildlife recorders at the annual conference to celebrate the wildlife recorders of Gwent and Glamorgan. Also including the SEWBReC AGM.

This event is free but booking is essential, please email info@sewbrec.org.uk or call 029 2064 1110 to secure a place. Conference programme will be available in due course.



SEWBReC

SOUTH EAST WALES BIODIVERSITY RECORDS CENTRE
CANOLFAN GOFNODION BIOAMRYWIAETH DE DDWYRAIN CYMRU



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