



Cambridgeshire Flora Group

Newsletter 2018

2nd Edition

Recording News

We have now completed the majority of Atlas 2020 and Fenland Flora coverage of the County. A few tetrads have a less than 70% re-find rate compared to pre-2000, and I (and the Flora Group) will complete these over the coming year. Further records for 2015 and 2016 have come in and their MapMate (local data entry and database software) totals now stand at 29988, and 30715 records respectively, whilst so far there are 26318 for 2017. The drop since the peak of 35070 in 2014, shows that the easy pickings of common species for Atlas recording are now almost exhausted. MapMate records of 1247 species were logged during 2017. August was the most popular month to record (4720 records) with December being the least (163) in part because Jonathan was in the Antarctic for most of the month. Overall in the vc database the most frequent species are *Urtica dioica* (664) tetrads out of the 665 in the vc), followed by *Galium aparine* (660) and *Dactylis glomerata* (658). We

have MapMate records for 2511 (2280 post 2000) different species, subspecies, hybrids or varieties and there are some additional ones in the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (BSBI) database (DDb).



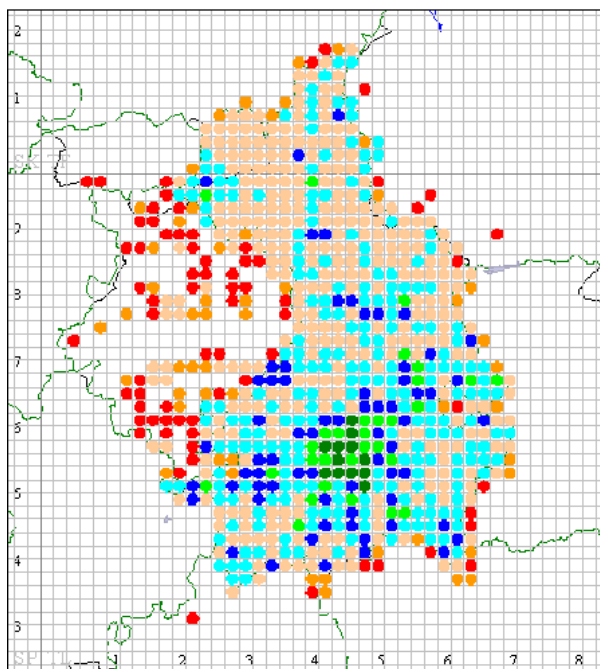
Ipomoea coccinea (lower half of picture) with leaves of *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* above.

The NatHistCam project lead by the Cambridge Natural History Society continues to survey the wildlife of the 64 monads of Cambridge. Jonathan has continued with the botanical surveying and the median number of species per monad in this area currently stands at 291, with a range from 163 to 660. Where possible I have introduced a 5-year cycle for monitoring change at regularly visited sites of special interest such as SSSIs, Local Nature Reserves or City or County Wildlife Sites. This return frequency was recommended at the BSBI Exhibition meeting in 2016 by David Roy. Thanks to the botanical recording for NatHistCam, and this re-recording, TL45 again set the record for the most species recorded in a hectad in Britain & Ireland during 2017 with

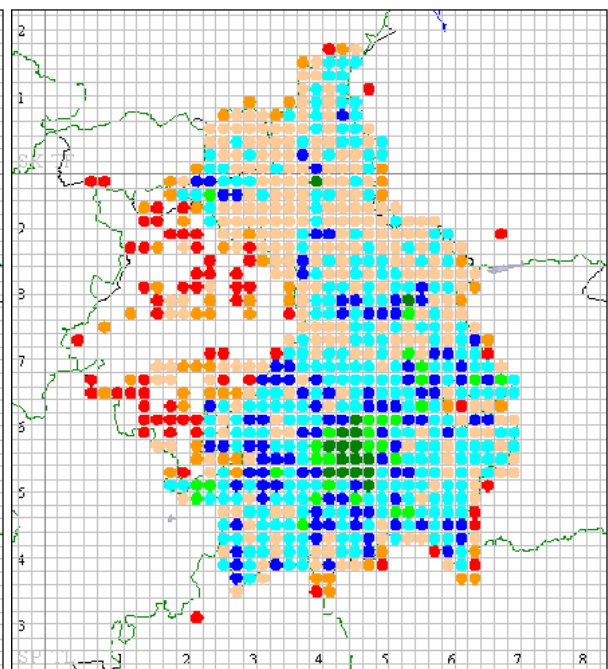
739. Tim Inskipp has also continued with detailed botanical recording around Ely, particularly in the Ely Wildspace area, creating another hotspot of activity; TL58 had 493 species coming in on the 2nd page of 47 listed pages of BSBI hectads.

Jonathan Shanklin has continued updating the Rare Plant Register, and there have been several re-finds of species that had not been seen for several decades. The companion Scarce Plant List has been renamed as the Register of Plants of Conservation Concern, as several species are actually still common in our county, even though their numbers are generally in decline. The list of those species not seen recently, which is subdivided into decades has been updated. All of these are on the web page. The decadal listing might help people to target specific species and perhaps re-discover them. Of the 675 species currently on the Scarce Plant List, 224 were seen in 2017, and 462 have been seen since 2010. Of the 281 species currently on the Rare Plant Register (which excludes the 128 probably extinct species), 90 were seen in 2017, and 231 have been seen since 2010. Currently 94% of the extant Rare Species and 78% of all the Scarce Species have been seen since the start of the Atlas 2020 period and there are good chances that some more will still be found in the county.

Cambridgeshire tetrad richness 2016 12



Cambridgeshire tetrad richness 2017 11



Recording progress in 2017 showing the increase in coverage between January 1 and December 1. There is an animation showing progress in monthly steps since 2013 November on the web page.

Some individual recorders have records that could be added to the MapMate and BSBI databases if only they would submit them. Please do send these in as soon as possible if you want them to be of use in the Atlas 2020. The records that are submitted often still require a lot of checking and editing, both for format and content and it would be a great help if all recorders would follow the recording guidelines! If you have a large number of records in manuscript it may be possible to get BSBI help to have them digitised. If you can digitise them yourself this is a great help, particularly if you can use a standard data entry system that does some quality control (eg consistent plant names) and formats your records. There are hints and

tips on format and recording on the county web page at <http://www.cnhs.org.uk/vc29%20recording.htm> There is a very helpful xls utility to input records which will create nicely formatted records at http://www.cnhs.org.uk/Species_Mapmate_vc29.xls

If you are not already a member of the BSBI do consider joining. The Society journal *BSBI News* comes out three times a year and has just been relaunched in an updated full-colour format, with Andrew Branson (former editor of *British Wildlife*) as editor.

Progress with the Flora

All the species accounts have now been completed and considerable time has been spent checking these over and dealing with the comments and queries from a number of readers of the draft, whose efforts have been deeply appreciated and very worthwhile! Unfortunately pressure of other commitments has resulted in slower progress with the remaining elements than anticipated, but 15 accounts of significant areas or localities within the county have been prepared, running from our maritime flora along the Nene, via the Nene and Ouse Washes, Wicken and



Gentianella amarella
West Pit LNR, Cherry Hinton

Chippenham Fens, the Gamlingay greensand, to the Cherry Hinton chalk-pits, the Roman Road, the south-eastern boulder clay woods and the eastern sands (and a few more). Thanks are due to David Barden, Jonathan Graham and Owen Mountford for having contributed some of these. Work is currently underway on preparing the bibliography and the general introduction. A further painting, this time of *Solanum x procurrens* (*S. nigrum* x *S. physalifolium*), was commissioned from the Iceni botanical artist Isobel Bartholemew. She has captured this sterile but floriferous hybrid very well, from a specimen on the waste ground by the new Cambridge North station. Thanks to Peter Leonard an increasing number of potential habitat shots have been accumulating during the year, during which we have learnt how hard it is to take meaningful pictures of flat land! Preliminary approaches have been made to possible editors and/or publishers.

Vascular Plant Records 2017

Full details of the notable records for the year will be published in *Nature in Cambridgeshire (NiC)*, which is due out in mid June. Here we give some highlights of the records, first from Alan then from Jonathan.



The anthers of *Alopecurus aequalis*
(Peter Leonard)

The year began well with our first report of the alien *Diplotaxis eruroides* as an arable margin weed in the far north of the Fens, a species which has been spreading just over our borders and had been expected in the county. This was soon followed by perhaps the most remarkable native plant record of the year in the form of several patches of *Carex strigosa* on Chippenham Fen, our first confirmed record of this species since the late eighteenth century and never recorded previously from the Fen. Later in the year we found a good population in an entirely new site for *Carex oederi* on the banks of a pond on East Fen Common at Soham: not quite such a rare sedge in the county but now very local indeed. The same pond held a good colony of an alien plant new to most of us – *Typha minima* – a very short, very narrow-leaved and early flowering reed-mace. *Alopecurus aequalis* was in good quantity on Quy Fen and in the water meadows at Ely, whilst *Bidens cernua* was refound at Isleham, one of only two sites in the county where this has been seen recently. Lawns continue to produce some

surprises, none more so than a lawn around new flats on the west side of the guided busway, just south of the Hills Road bridge in Cambridge. This was found to have quantities of both *Trifolium ornithopodioides* and *T. glomeratum*, whilst the turf of a campsite at Comberton also had a good deal of *T. resupinatum*. Other notable aliens reported during the year included *Rumex cristatus*, *Salix matsudana* 'Tortuosa' (as a self-sown plant), *Amaranthus blitoides*, *Gnaphalium pennsylvanicum*, *Allium paniculatum*, *Asarina procumbens*, *Guizotia scabra* and self-sown *Miscanthus sinensis* (the last in Roswell pits at Ely). However, perhaps the two most surprising new aliens were *Ipomoea coccinea* (a scarlet-flowered morning glory), which was on a rubble pile by the fishing lake by Barnwell Junction in Cambridge, and the grass *Leersia oryzoides*, which was in a new ditch in the Great Kneighton country park just to the south of the city. Details of all these and more will be in the next NiC.

For me (Jonathan) there were a few themes, in particular the appearance of some species from hotter climes. These included two *Amaranth* species: *A. blitum* and *A. blitoides*; the former appeared on a sewage sludge dump near Barrington and



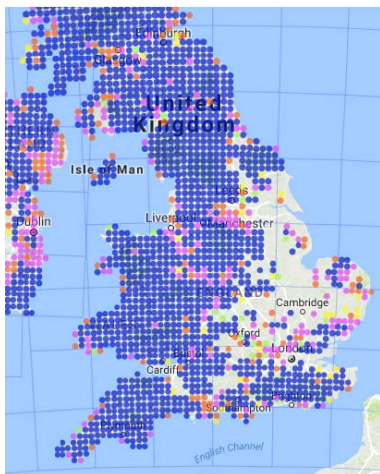
Amaranthus blitum at Barrington

also in a Cambridge street, whilst the latter was on a dump of grey fenland soil. Some other species are mentioned by Alan above. A slight surprise was that some apparently well-recorded tetrads, with a better than 70% re-find rate and well over 120 species recorded, could still offer 50 or more relatively common species. Often such tetrads included a site which had been well recorded, with the wider area ignored. One unusual crop was a field of *Glycine max* (Soya-bean), perhaps a sign of things to come. Cambridge City Council has planted “wildflower” beds, in several areas of the City. Although very colourful, most of the species that came up were not natives, and could escape into the wider area. They will be worth keeping an eye on. A report on the 2017 CNHS studies of the Coldham’s Common area will appear in the 2018 *Nature in Cambridgeshire*. It was evident that several areas in the Local Nature Reserves had declined, largely due to lack of grazing and the consequent increase in scrub. The most exciting find was the *Ipomoea* mentioned above by Alan, in company with *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* (Ragweed) and *Datura stramonium*. The only species with a national threat status that were re-found were common in our area. Quite a few others on the RPCC are still present, such as *Briza media*, *Ononis spinosa* and *Plantago media*.

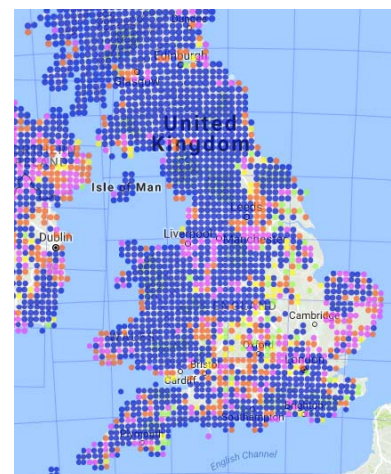
Cambridgeshire Rare Plants

For this issue I have chosen three plants that are rare in the county, but which are more common elsewhere in England. All three are common in more westerly locations, often on more acidic soils. The figures show their current distributions from the DDb.

Chrysosplenium oppositifolium



Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage is a perennial, stoloniferous herb found in boggy ground and seepages in woods, on streamsides, wet rocks and mountain ledges, usually in shade; also in grikes and sink-holes in limestone in the N. Pennines. It is generally found in more acidic habitats than *C. alternifolium*, but the two are often found together. (BRC Online Atlas) It was first recorded in the county in 1597 by Gerarde, who noted that it grew “in the Moores by Wisbich”, but it had gone from there by 1818. In the 20th century it was only found at two sites in the county: Ditton Park Wood and Woodbury Cinques. It is still present at the latter, but may have gone from the former. It also grew as an introduction in a garden off Wilberforce Road in Cambridge. By contrast it is widespread in much of Britain.

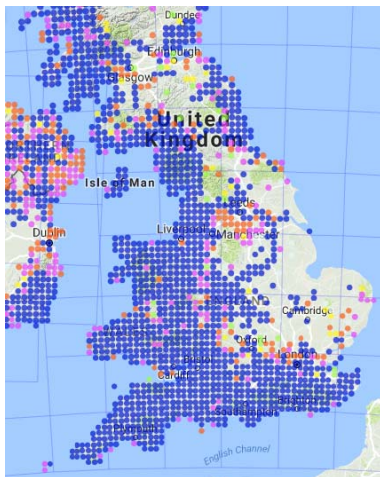


Galium saxatile

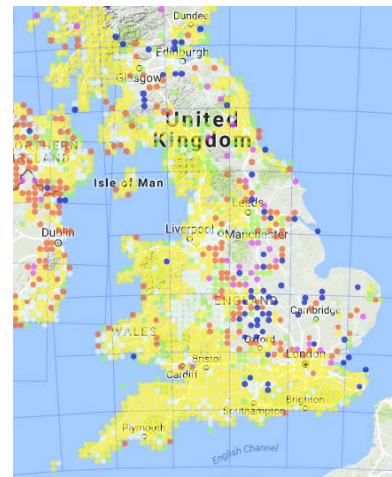
Heath Bedstraw is a low-growing perennial herb of infertile acidic soils, occurring in grassland, on heaths, in rocky places and open woods, and locally on disturbed

or derelict ground. The species remains abundant in upland areas, and is a useful indicator of unimproved hill grassland. However, it has declined locally in the lowlands as a result of habitat destruction. (BRC Online Atlas) It was first recorded in the county by Corbyn in 1656. Historically it was known from a few areas. It still grows in the Gamlingay area and on sandy ground near Chippenham. There are nineteenth century records from Hills Road, Six Mile Bottom, Isleham and Kennet and Peter Sell found it at Kentford Heath in 1954. It could possibly still grow in some of these and it might be worth asking local landowners for permission to look. An additional possibility is looking in some of the areas “made good” with sandy infill from elsewhere.

Oenanthe crocata



Hemlock Water-dropwort is a tuberous perennial herb of shallow water in ditches, the banks of streams, rivers, canals, lakes and ponds, roadside culverts, marshes and wet woodland, among boulders at the top of beaches and on dripping or flushed sea-cliffs. Reproduction is usually by seed, and it perhaps spreads when detached



tuberous roots are washed downstream. (BRC Online Atlas) It is a fairly new addition to the county flora and was first found by Alan Leslie at Swavesey in 2006, then the Flora Group found it at King’s Dyke Nature Reserve in 2010. Peter Kirby found it on the north bank of the Nene, west of Whittlesey, in 2014. It was introduced to the courtyard pond at the British Antarctic Survey as part of a planting (possibly not deliberately) and still grows there. Seeds from BAS were introduced to the Adam’s Road Bird Sanctuary, where it is still present but has not become well established. It is also grown in the Cambridge Botanic Garden. It is possibly spreading eastwards as the “first record on top” map shows, so it will be worth keeping an eye out along the Nene and Ouse washes.

Review of 2017 excursions

April 27: Stetchworth Woods. April was a dry month overall, and we had a fine morning, but showers arrived in the afternoon. The party of four began as before at the water tower in Ditton Green, and headed south to the Chitlings Woods. Our first “nice” plant was *Lamium galeobdolon* on the edge of Little Chitlings Wood, and we found a large patch of *Orchis mascula* in the south-west corner of the wood. Whilst crossing to Great Chitlings Wood, Steve spotted a frond of *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. We then headed to Basefield Wood, finding a few more species before lunch. We then headed briskly to Ten Wood, when had many county scarce species, including *Allium ursinum*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Paris quadrifolia*, *Geum rivale* amongst others. One odd find was the hybrid between *Arum maculatum* and *A. italicum*. The nearest known site for *A. italicum* in the county is Weston Colville, some 5km away.

From there we headed towards Ditton Park Wood, making one of the more exciting finds of the day en route. Jonathan noted "this is an interesting looking clover", and it was quickly identified as *Trifolium medium*, last seen in the area by Babington! We failed to re-find *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, probably because there was a lot of *Carex pendula* and this may have swamped it. Rain then started and enthusiasm began to wane, however a large-flowered *Crataegus* stopped us until we decided it was *C. x macrocarpa*. Several more species were added to the list, but the lure of home was calling.

May 13, Soham meadows

That the Soham commons exist today is largely due to a land dispute in the 17th century and a decision to retain them at the end of the Second World War. They make an interesting mosaic of ditches, ponds and wet meadows, with a somewhat patchy underlying geology, with superficial deposits of river terrace sands and gravels. One aim of this meeting was to help improve identification of grass species, and indeed many species were in flower.



A haze of *Orchis mascula*



The CFG admiring *Coeloglossum viride*

We started by exploring Qua Fen Common, where in addition to the expected grasses such as *Alopecurus geniculatus*, *Avenula pubescens* and *Anthoxanthemum odoratum*, there was *Puccinellia distans* on the road verge. We spent a little time discussing the *Ononis* on the common, eventually agreeing that it was *Ononis repens* var *horrida* on account of the teeth on the leaves despite the erect, spiny habit. We continued south to East Fen Common, where we had lunch by a pond cut into the gravel.

This proved a very interesting location, with *Carex oederi*, *Oenanthe fistulosa* and *Typha minima* amongst other species. Our next stop was the Wildlife Trust meadow on Soham Wet Horse Fen. The grass was relatively stunted, which made spotting the orchids much easier and we re-found two groups of *Coeloglossum viride* that hadn't been seen for several years. There were two other unusual orchid species present too: *Anacamptis morio* and *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *incarnata* and we located some nearly gone-over heads of *Taraxacum palustre*. We crossed over to the meadows on the other side of Soham Lode, and were delighted to find extensive *Saxifraga granulata* and a single plant of *Anthyllis vulneraria*, which may have been relict from the area, or have come in from sowing along the bypass. We had a target

of finding nearly 30 species of grasses that have been found in the Soham meadows, and at the end of the day we had recorded 17 species, along with nine sedges and four rushes.

June 18, Stow-cum-Quy Fen

We had a very hot day for this outing, with the temperature around 30°C, and the botanists were wilting by the time all had assembled at the lay-by on the Horningsea Road. The way in to the Fen was generally quite boring, until a pink flowered plant was spotted in the verge. *Phuopsis stylosa* (Caucasian Crosswort) was a surprising find in such a location. It was presumed to have been dumped there, although the stalwarts found some more aliens at the end of the day, along a nearby track where building rubble had been used to fill a ditch. *Rubus babingtonianus* delayed

us a little from entering the Fen proper, where we started at the northern end of the main coprolite pit. This long linear feature (where Jonathan S learned to skate), has an interesting range of water plants, and had *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Waterplantain), growing along its southern margins. In general we didn't find many members of the Asteraceae family, but there were some. First was some slightly odd looking *Leontodon saxatilis*, but it was clearly this species on account of the scales on the outer ring of achenes. A *Crepis* spotted after lunch provoked some discussion, but the stout achenes identified it as *C. biennis*, an addition to the Fen flora. Later we found *C. capillaris* and could contrast the auricles of the stem leaves with those seen on *C. biennis*. Having visited several of the ponds we concluded with the smaller ones at the northern end, and here we re-found *Alopecurus aequalis*, last seen here in 1963 and some more *Baldellia*. Some remaining members of the



The CFG studying *Baldellia ranunculoides* at the edge of the main coprolite pit (Peter Leonard)



Baldellia ranunculoides (Peter Leonard)

party attempted to refind *Ceratophyllum submersum* in the pond just outside the Fen, but the margin was hard to reach and there was no obvious sign of the plant. Three of the party were game for a little more, so returned to the Fen and did a short circuit of the western part in an attempt to refind *Potentilla erecta*. This wasn't successful, however a *Potentilla* with four petals and terminal leaves comprising of three leaflets seemed to be *P. x mixta*. On the way back the group walked along quite a weed rich margin of a barley field, though only *Galeopsis tetrahit* agg was an addition. As a postscript, we had actually found *Ceratophyllum*

submersum in one of the ponds in the Fen, but glossed over it at the time as *C. demersum*. Thanks go to Jonathan Graham for putting us straight!

July 15, Ely Wildspace

As part of the Ely Wildspace baseline survey of the pits and meadows around Ely, the Flora Group spent a day walking around them. Half the group travelled to Ely by train from Cambridge (stopping en route from the station when *Rapistrum rugosum* was spotted), with the rest meeting us in Ely. Although rain was forecast, we had a few spots when we met up, and some more during the afternoon, but not sufficient for the writer to put on waterproofs. We were lead around by Tim Inskip, who had already produced a comprehensive list of species for the



Lunchtime at Roswell Pit (Peter Leonard)

area. We managed to add a number of species to the list and also confirmed some of his tentative identifications. Several things were particularly notable. A patch of halophyte species on Kiln Road caught our eye, so what was the *Juncus*? Later identification showed it to be *J. compressus* which was scattered around the meadow south of the railway. A couple of sedges along a ditch running east-west in this meadow generated some discussion, with the outcome being records for *Carex acuta* and *C. nigra*. In the same ditch we found *Alopecurus aequalis*, last seen in TL58 by Babington in 1855. Docks in the meadow provided some interesting examples of hybrids, with *R. conglomeratus* x *maritimus*, *R. conglomeratus* x *crispus* and *R. obtusifolius* x *crispus* all present. Sadly a piece of *Potamogeton praelongus* had disappeared from where Tim had left it due to an illegally moored boat, however Chris Preston accepted the photographic record – it had last been seen in this section of the Ouse by Arthur Chater in 1955. Finally on the way back to the station Jonathan and Chris noted an odd Alder with deeply dissected leaves, which was later identified as *Alnus glutinosa* 'Laciniata', and a plant of *Datura stramonium* growing in a crack in the concrete of the promenade.

August 17: RSPB Fowlmere.

Some of the Met Office forecasts suggested that we might have rain all day, but in the event the front cleared as people were setting off and we had a largely warm and sunny day. A small group met early to investigate some meadows to the west of RSPB Fowlmere, which had been cropped some 20 years ago. One was in need of grazing, but the other two were largely in good condition. The two main highlights from this location were *Oenanthe lachenallii* and *Lythrum hyssopifolia*. The eastern meadow had 12 tetrad additions, which gives an idea of the range of plants that had come in. The group arrived back at the car-park promptly at 11am, where we were met by Doug Radford, the former warden, who had volunteered to lead us round the reserve. We began by heading south along the boardwalk, before heading into a grazing meadow to the west of the mere. There was a nice patch of grassland near the gate, and elsewhere we added *Chenopodium rubrum* and *Leontodon saxatilis* to the Reserve list. We lunched at the Spring hide, after which Alan left to continue



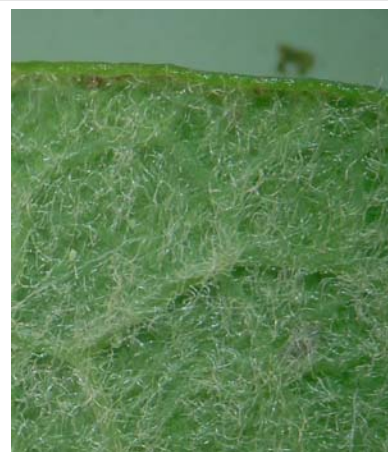
Checking a yellow composite, surrounded by
Campanula rotundifolia

dog-sitting at home. We did a short detour towards the Reedbed Hide to check on a Willow and confirmed Doug's identification of *Salix triandra*. At our next meadow, we spotted the tiny spikes of *Isolepis setacea*, found near the entrance the previous year by Richard Fowling. There was a small patch of *Anagalis tenella* by the central ditch, but there wasn't a great deal of bare habitat for it. A higher area was blue with *Campanula rotundifolia*, perhaps the largest concentration in Cambridgeshire seen by many. We

headed down to the southern watercress bed, but the sedge here proved to be more *Carex riparia*. Returning on the Melbourn side, we noted the fast flowing chalk stream with *Ranunculus penicillatus* subsp. *pseudofluitans*, but the *Callitriche* remained as agg. The circular meadow added *Silva silaus* and the two *Avenulas*, whilst the final meadow had *Clinopodium vulgare* and *Viola hirta* amongst others. Doug then led us through a reed bed, and said that somewhere near the scrub edge was a tussock sedge. Oli found the tussock and we agreed that it was a splendid example of *Carex elata*. Phil Ricketts had suggested a quick look at a recently felled Poplar plantation, and the final three stalwarts headed for it. It was mostly nettles, but there were a couple of plants of *Fumaria densiflora*. The arable margin adjacent to the track was perhaps more interesting, with *Chaenorhinum minus* and *Kickxia spuria* amongst others. There were also a few oddities such as *Silene coronaria* and *Nigella damascena*.

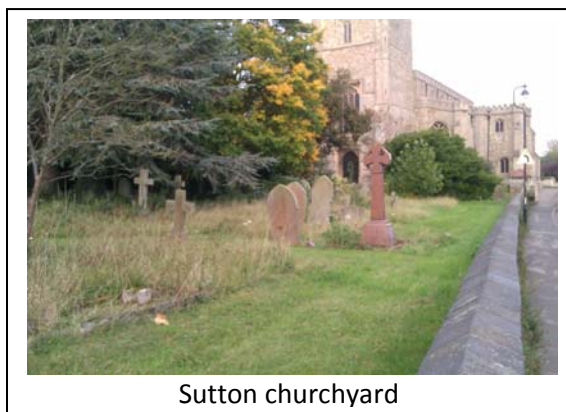
September 16: Chippenham Fen NNR.

Autumn came early this year, and it was a cold day requiring winter clothing. The morning was mostly dry, but a shower after lunch was followed by continuous rain as we finished the day. This meeting aimed to elucidate the *Salix* species in the Fen and we were delighted that the BSBI referee, Irina Belyaeva, was able to come and provide advice. Our first lesson was that what are usually thought of as the two sub-species of *S. cinerea* are actually species in their own right and so can hybridize. This is what the first of the slightly odd bushes that Alan Leslie had previously identified for study turned out to be, and this was followed by the hybrid of *S. atrocinerea* with *S. caprea* and *S. cinerea* with *S. caprea*. Next into the mix was *S. myrsinifolia*, which proved to be quite widespread in the Fen and which had hybridized with *S. atrocinerea* and *cinerea*. What we had thought might be *S. alba* turned out to be *S. x fragilis* (*S. alba* x *S. euxina*) forma *vitellina* and we saw saplings as well as the parent tree. Our



The underside of *Salix cinerea*
and *S. atrocinerea* leaves (Peter
Leonard)

final willow was probably *S. caprea* x *cinerea* x *myrsinifolia*, though for many of the bushes we will need to come back next spring to see them in flower. On the way back to the cars we stopped to see the X *Beruladium procurrens* and the Water Buffalo. The final few then went on to look at *Carex strigosa* which had been found by Alan Leslie in the spring. There had been one previous confirmed sighting in Hall Wood, Wood Ditton, where it had been seen by Relhan in 1820. It had also been reported from Hayley Wood in 2011, but without a precise location it has not been refound.



Sutton churchyard

October 14: Sutton-in-the-isle

This late season visit aimed to explore the village, business park, road verges and derelict land in TL47P. An Indian Summer had finally arrived, with several members of the party wearing t-shirts and shorts, although strengthening winds from hurricane Ophelia sometimes made it feel cooler. We began at the church, where we recorded 126 species in the churchyard, including *Rumex pulcher* which often seems to be associated with churchyards.

We then strolled down the lane to Stanker's Pond, which had an interesting mix of introduced and native species. Continuing down the lane we found *Conyza floribunda* on rough ground near the start of the New Cut Drain. The drain did not have much water in it, though it did support several aquatic species. Having reached the parish boundary we retraced our steps and took our lunch on its banks sheltered from the wind by a belt of elms and bramble. We followed the footpath south of the village and detoured off to inspect the allotments, where there was still *Erysimum cheiranthoides*, although *Anagallis arvensis* subsp. *foemina*, found there in 2013, was not seen. Further along the footpath we found a hybrid *Epilobium*, and also *E. obscurum*. The latter is now widely seen across the county, but is it increasing or are we just better at spotting it? We headed north, along the old road to see *Rumex cristatus*, which Alan had found earlier in the year in the neighbouring tetrad. We also found a yellow fruited *Solanum* (?*villosum*) and with a couple of plants of *Rumex sanguineus* var. *sanguineus* nearby. We turned back and crossed into derelict land near the Elean Business Park, where there were some puzzling *Rosa* and *Crataegus*, which were left for another visit. We found *Blackstonia perfoliata*, a rare plant in this central part of Cambridgeshire and *Lathyrus nissolia* at its most northerly recent location for us. As we headed back Alan found a patch of ground with *Guizotia abyssinica* and *Linum usitatissimum*, which had presumably come from scattered bird-seed. Although the tetrad was previously notionally well recorded with 261 species, we still managed to add a large number giving it a final tally of 346, including 27 new hectad records.



This blue flowered *Anagallis* was in the Cape Town Botanic Garden at Kirstenbosch!

Excursions 2018

Please take careful note that our excursions vary both in the day of the week on which they take place and in the time at which we meet on each occasion. Jonathan Shanklin will send out an email before each meeting reminding you of the details and of any changes, and they will also be posted on the web page. Participants are welcome to join us for all or part of any excursion. A packed lunch will be required for all meetings and we will generally finish towards the end of the afternoon. On occasion we will be walking over some distance over ground which may be rough. Please do read the BSBI advice to participants on field meetings, which is at <http://bsbi.org/download/6323/>. Meeting places have been chosen as having some parking space, but this can not be guaranteed. Several landowners specifically request no dogs, and it is BSBI policy not to have dogs (except guide dogs) at meetings, so if you have a dog, please leave it at home. Our meetings often produce some surprising and interesting records so do come along if you can. This year our outings focus on sites or species, particularly with a view to re-finding species not seen for some time.

Saturday, March 24, 10am, Magog Down (Site)

The Magog Trust are doing a re-survey of their site and this visit will aim to track down the early spring flowers. Parts of the Down are in four different monads, and we will record separately in each, with more interesting species being located to compartment level. Meet at the notice board by the cycle racks (there is also car-parking) at TL486532, which is just off the A1307 (Babraham Road) on the Stapleford Road (Haverhill Road).



Colin's Bank, Magog Down

Sunday, April 15, 11am, Buff Wood (Site/Species)

Buff Wood is generally well recorded, though we haven't been there recently. It is a site for *Helleboris viridis* (Rare in the County) and *Paris quadrifolia* (Scarce in the county and declining in England). We will look round the wood, then visit St Denis's churchyard and if there is time walk along some local footpaths to a few additional small woods. Meet by the village hall on Buff Lane at TL282509. There is parking space here.

Thursday, May 10, 10am, Chippenham Hall (Site)

Chippenham Hall and its Park were sites for some scarce species in the county before 1900 such as *Galium parisiense*, *Juncus bulbosus*, *Lythrum hyssopifolia*, *Phleum phleoides* (seen here in 1797 and last seen in the county in 2001) and *Filago pyramidata* (last seen here in 1958 and in the county in 2004). We will aim to make a complete list of plants from the grounds, and if possible re-find some of the rarities. We can park outside the Hall, entering the grounds at the sharp bend at the south end of the village at TL664696.

Sunday, May 13, 11am, Soham meadows (Grasses)

We will try and complete our recording of the Soham meadows that we started last year. This time we will visit Angle Common and South Horse Fen, but we will begin at the church at TL592732. If there is time at the end of the day we will visit North Horse Fen, for which there are no recent records.

Thursday, June 14, 10am, Sawston Hall (Site/Species)

Sawston Hall Fen was one of only a few sites in the country (all in Cambridgeshire) which supported *Selinum carvifolia*, though the last record for it there was 2006. We will attempt to re-find it and also record all other species in the Hall grounds. We'll begin by spending an hour in the churchyard, and then progress to the Hall. Meet at the church at TL487492. There is parking space along the road.

Thursday, June 21, 10am, Chippenham Fen NNR (Orchids)

This is a follow-up visit to the Fen to see if we can untangle the various orchid species that have been reported in the past. We may also look again at some of the Willows. Last time we found four willow species and nine hybrids, but there may be more. There is parking at the bottom of the lane adjacent to the fen at TL653690. We have been granted access, but you must drive up to the barrier slowly and then drive slowly along the track. The day will be a leisurely one, though over uneven and boggy terrain.



Viewing orchids at Chippenham Fen

Thursday, July 5, 10am, Wicken Fen (Site/tetrad)

Surprisingly the tetrad including Wicken is one of the few that is missing over 90 species seen before 2000. Full details will be sent by email.

Saturday, August 18, 11am, Lattersey Pits (Site/Atlas 2020)



Lattersey Pits (David Price, Wildlife Trust)

Lattersey Pits is a BCN Wildlife Trust reserve near Whittlesey and is in one of the few tetrads that is still slightly under-recorded when compared to pre-2000. We will aim to re-

find some of the historically noted species (there are 157 still to find), and perhaps find some new ones. We may also visit some other areas within the tetrad. Meet at the car park at TL281965.

Saturday, September 15, 11am, Walpole Marsh (vc29) (General)

Although Walpole Marsh is in Norfolk, the vice-county boundary includes part of the parish. We will walk down the footpath from TF470183 to vc29, and then record along a circular walk, possibly straying into Kindersley's Cut and the pumping station. If time permits we may look for *Spiranthes spiralis* at Foul Anchor. There appears to be some parking space at the meeting point at the above grid reference.

Saturday, October 6, 10am, Chatteris (Atlas 2020)

Only one hectad in the county is under-recorded when compared to pre-2000 records and this is TL38, which includes the western part of Chatteris. One reason for the under-recording is the loss of .Doddington Turf Fen, which was clearly a very interesting place. Sadly we won't find species such as *Tephroseris palustris*, however there are some from the 1990s that might be found. Meet by the barrier on the old road south of the roundabout at TL386856. We will make a circular walk southwards returning along Little Acre Drove and urban Chatteris.



Spiranthes spiralis

There is the possibility of one or two last minute additions to the programme if permissions come through or surveys are organised. In addition to the Flora Group meetings, many of the Cambridge Natural History Society field meetings have a botanical bias. This year the Society is carrying out a detailed survey of the monads TL4658, TL4758 and TL4459, focussing on the Ditton Meadows. There will also be further "Nature in my neighbourhood" visits to explore Cambridge streets, and visits to Wandlebury Country Park and Magog Down. Dates for all these will be included on the web page.



Jonathan Shanklin with a Dobson ozone spectrophotometer at Halley Research Station

This newsletter was largely completed at Halley Research Station, Antarctica, where Jonathan was working as a meteorologist over the British winter. The only wildlife seen at the station was one Adelie Penguin and a few snow and storm petrels.

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