



HERTS FLORA GROUP

Newsletter
No. 22: May 2012



In this issue:

- **Herts Flora Group website**
- **The Flora of London Project continues**
- **BSBI Threatened Plant Monitoring Species for 2012 monitoring**
- **A new update on Stace 3!**
- **Some botanical highlights in Hertfordshire from 2011**
- **Recording Forms**
- **Herts Flora Group meetings 2012**

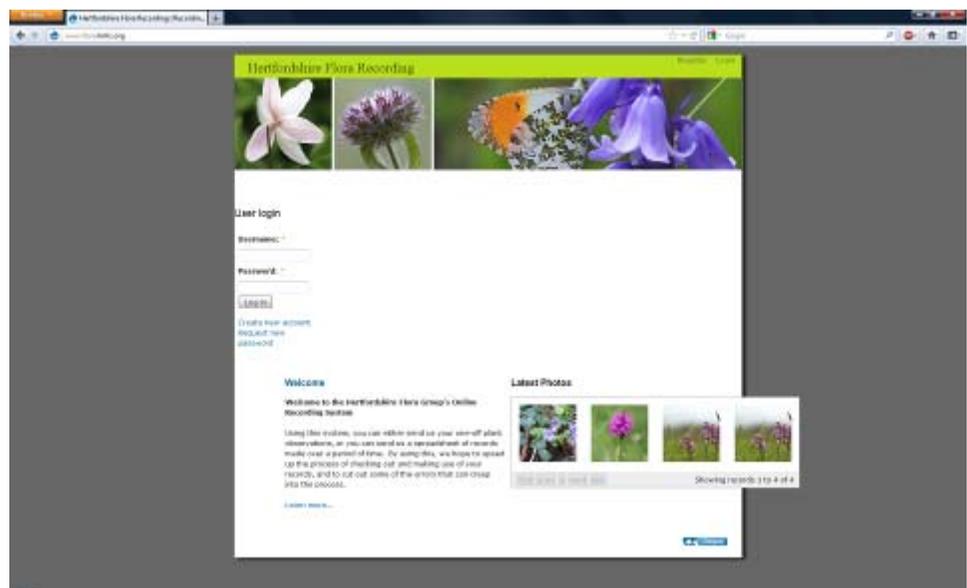
Herts Flora Group Website

I had hoped by now to have been able to announce to the world at large that the Herts Flora Group's very own website (already in outline at <http://www.hnhs.org/flora/>) had gone live with **on-line recording**, set up partly under the good offices of the National Biodiversity Network Trust (as well as some of my own input). However, things always take time, and so it will be a few weeks yet before we can launch the system properly.

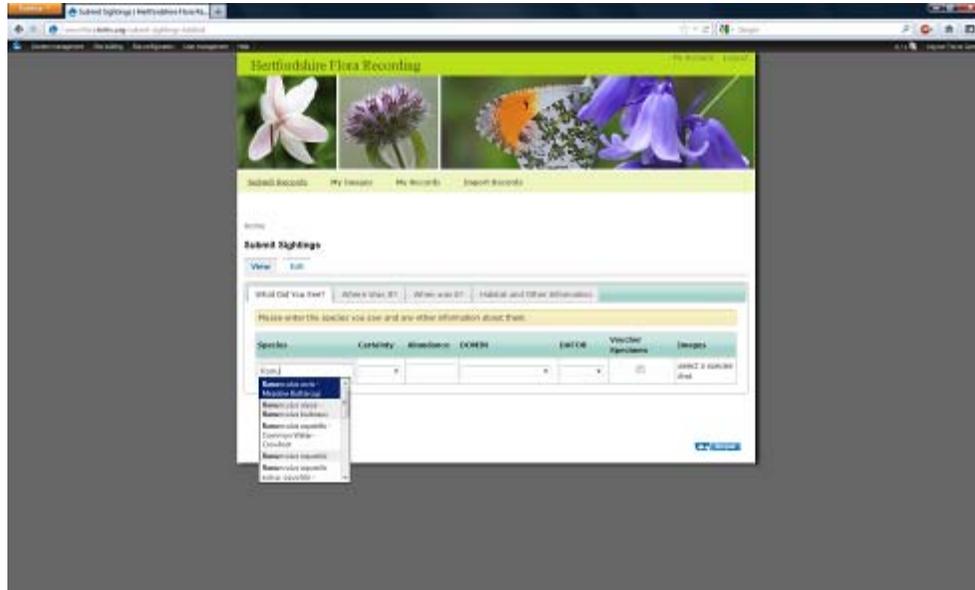
Just as a taster, here are a few screen shots of the 'in progress' system, to give you just a bit of an idea what it can do for us:

1. **The Online Recording Home Page** (with log-in boxes in the wrong place and a problem of photos not scrolling!)

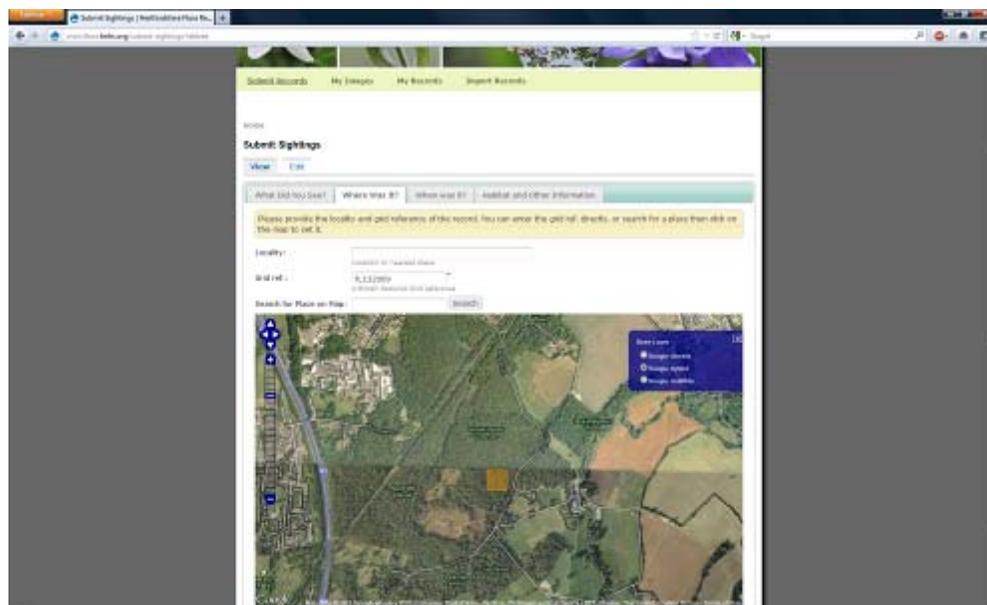
Here you will be asked to 'log in' or set up a new 'account', which will then be your own record system, as well as sending the records in to me (and to the BSBI generally).



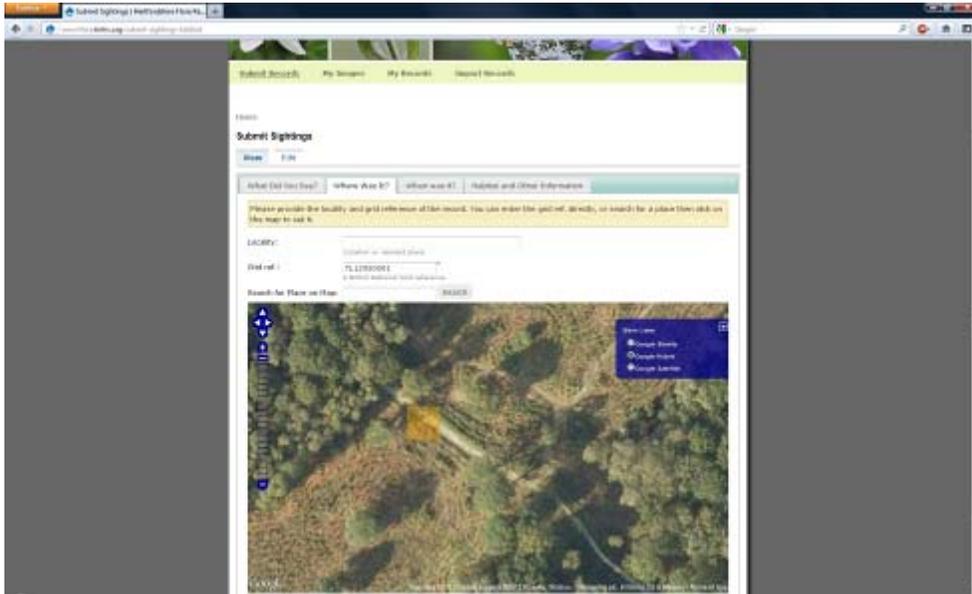
When you put a record in here, one of the best bits of the system is the name selector. It uses the standard Latin names from just the Herts Flora checklist - at the moment awaiting a few glitches to be sorted out - and gives you a set of options as you type, as shown here, so you don't have to worry about getting the spelling wrong:



When you get to the box asking 'where was it?', rather than you looking up a grid reference, you can point to it on a Google-Earth satellite view, or a Google Map (whichever you want). In this example I have pointed to a place on Bricket Wood Common, and clicked the computer mouse, and it has slotted in the 6-figure (100m) grid ref. in the box automatically, as well as indicated the scale the record is recorded at as a square on the map.



If you want a more detailed record (8-figure – 10m) all you have to do is zoom in:



As I said above – the aim is for this to develop into the main way that the Herts Flora Group will collate records in the future. With the capacity to upload (carefully tailored) spreadsheets of data, which can be typed up by any of you from a day's recording, it will obviate the need for the massive task for me (or others!) to enter data into the *Recorder* database that forms the basis of our records system. The data will now go to the Biological Records Centre at Wallingford first, pending checking (by me, or by others nominated by me, or by BSBI experts, as necessary). Having been checked off, a report is sent to the recorder, and the data are entered into the main database at the BRC. Copies of these data are then available for those that need them (and can be imported by me into *Recorder*), and will be fed to the NBN Gateway on a rolling programme of updates.

The system will also allow users to get reports from the NBN Gateway direct about uploaded data already out there, and I plan to have the Flora Group website enabled to show dynamic maps from the NBN for all species.

The Flora of London Project continues

Recording for the projected *Flora of London* continues, and this year, I have tried to make sure that ALL of our field visits can be focused on recording, as we have still so far not contributed all that much.

As I pointed out last year, the LNHS has decided to record by 1km squares, so we have to focus on filling out cards for each of these, even if we visit more than one square during a day! I know it's a pain, but at least it means our 'ticks' are at least a bit more clearly defined than they were for the *Flora of Herts*! However, can I also remind field recorders that we also need to focus on SITE records for our own benefit, and so, if you find anything uncommon, please fill in a separate site card for the locality, as well as general records on a 1km record

card? Many thanks (And remember – if your ‘site’ overlaps a 1km square boundary – we need two cards for the site as well!)

The London Flora Project ‘tick-list’ is attached to this Newsletter again, for you to print off as you need it. Again, please send in records to me, first, if they are from Herts, of course!)

BSBI Threatened Plant Monitoring

Species for 2012 monitoring

This is the last year of the current programme of recording ‘Threatened Plants’ for the BSBI.

This time, I have not specifically set up field meetings to carry out monitoring of any particular species, because I got the feeling that just focusing on these for a day was not necessarily exciting, especially if we don’t find them!

HOWEVER, we do need to keep our end up with the action, if at all possible, and so I am LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS to carry out some of the work.

Our species this year are a bit more varied than last year’s:

Anacamptis morio (Green-winged Orchid)
Fumaria parviflora (Small-flowered Fumitory)
Persicaria minor (Small Water-pepper)
Ranunculus arvensis (Corn Buttercup)
Tepfroseris integrifolia (Field Fleawort)
Vicia parviflora (Slender Tare)

The designated (and actual) sites for most of these are very limited:

Anacamptis morio

Caddington (TL051205). Strictly this is a Beds site, but in VC20.

Langley Meadow (TL221228). The main site in Herts., and this had a good show last year.

Other known sites that can also be ‘monitored’ include: Moor Hall Meadow, Ardeley (TL328266), Hunsdon Mead (south-east side) (TL420110).

The two designated sites need some urgent action, because of the lateness of this newsletter.

Fumaria parviflora

Bogmoor Road, Barkway (TL395368) [I will check this, as it was me that found it]

Dewmead Farm, Hinxworth (TL236403) [I will do this one as well]

[However, if you are visiting the Chalk at all during June-July, do keep a look out for it, especially south of Therfield Heath and around Barkway etc. If you find any, DO A MONITORING CARD, even if it’s not one of the designated sites]

Persicaria minor

Small pond on Berkhamsted Golf Course (TL004096) The ONLY known recent site in the County. There are 1960s records from Boxmoor (probably Harrison’s Moor) (TL041061), which also held *Blysmus compressus*, but Gerald Salisbury has not been able to re-find either recently. Worth a try though.

Ranunculus arvensis

Near King's Langley, by A41(M) (TL065022) [Probably unlikely]
Rothamsted: Broadbalk (TL122135) (our most regular site, with many plants)
Bank at Merryfield School, Borehamwood (TQ186976) (site found by Simon Smith)
Field by Hagsdell Road, Hertford (TL334112) (unlikely, but worth a shot).
Near Stortford Park: Mashbarns (TL471218) **[one of our East Herts people, please?]**
We found a miserable plant or two at Moor Hall Farm recently (TL323270), but very few recent records other than the Rothamsted site. KEEP AN EYE OPEN on the Boulder clay especially. Any site, please fill in a form!

Tephrosia integrifolia

The main site is Church Hill at Therfield Heath (TL332396) [I couldn't find it when I last went there, but I know it has been seen recently, so I will try again]
Telegraph Hill, Lilley (TL117288). This is the same bank where the *Astragalus danicus* once grew, and that we examined last year. Another look might be useful – VOLUNTEER, please, in June!

Vicia parviflora

Near Grange Estate, Letchworth (TL221352). [Grassy field bank/ditch by a track].
Of course, it also is known at Hexton Chalk Pit NR (TL106310) – N. end of the site, on the disturbed area. We managed to re-find it a couple of years ago, **but it could do with a good study, include a monitoring form being made out.**

Please - if you do find any of these, either the current year's plants, or those from former years, please carry out a monitoring exercise, using the forms.

I have attached a copy of the latest version of the Threatened Plant Recording form to this Newsletter which you can print off and send to me with your data!

A new update on Stace 3!

Just when you thought you were getting to grips with all the new names from Stace 3 itself, published in 2010, think again. (If you haven't yet gone out and got a copy of the new edition, then now you should – because you won't have to worry about what is written here! However, if you are still working with CTW or Stace ed. 1 (1991) – you will be years out of date!)

For those that are not members of the BSBI, I thought it might be useful if I re-printed the text of a summary of the changes that have recently (2011) been made to the names used in Stace 3 (2010) (in addition to a whole host of changes that Stace 3 implemented over the previous 1997 edition, Stace 2), in case anyone wants to annotate their copy. This shows the pages in Stace 3 (first printing) where changes have been implemented.

This listing, compiled by Clive Stace, was originally printed in *BSBI News*, 118:

Page 23 – English names provided:

Asplenium × *jacksonii* – Jackson's Spleenwort
Asplenium × *microdon* – Moore's Spleenwort
Asplenium × *confluens* – Confluent Spleenwort

Page 46 – *Picea omorika* Pančić instead of *P. omorika* Pancic

Page 144 – *Parthenocissus inserta* (A. Kern.) Fritsch instead of *P. vitacea* (Knerr) Hitchc.

Page 203 – *Sorbus* × *thuringiaca* (Nyman) Schönach instead of *S.* × *thuringiaca* (Ilse) Fritsch

Page 203 – *Sorbus proctoriana* T.C.G. Rich instead of *S. proctoris* T.C.G. Rich

Page 227 – *Cotoneaster calocarpus* (Rehder & E.H. Wilson) Flinck & B. Hylmö instead of *C. calocarpus* Rehder & E.H. Wilson

Page 323 – *Salix euxina* I.V. Belyaeva (*S. fragilis* auct. non L.) instead of *S. fragilis* L.

Page 323 – *Salix* × *fragilis* L. instead of *S.* × *rubens* Schrank

Page 323 – *Salix* × *fragilis* nothovar. *basfordiana* (Scaling ex Salter) Stace* instead of *Salix* × *rubens* nothovar. *basfordiana* (Scaling ex Salter) Meikle

Page 329 – *Salix cinerea* × *S. myrsinifolia* = *S.* × *puberula* Döll

Page 362 – *Ludwigia hexapetala* (Hook. & Arn.) Zardini, H.Y. Gu & P.H. Raven (*L. grandiflora* auct., *L. uruguayensis* auct.) instead of *L. grandiflora* (Michx.) Greuter & Burdet (*L. uruguayensis* (Cambess.) H. Hara)

Page 443 – Change English name: *Fallopia* × *bohemica* – Bohemian Knotweed instead of Conolly's Knotweed

Page 594 – *Chaenorhinum* (DC.) Rchb. Instead of *Chaenorhinum* (DC. ex Duby) Rchb.

Page 628 – *Thymus* 'Culinary Lemon' (*T.* × *citriodorus* auct.) instead of *T.* × *citriodorus* Pers.

Page 746 – Bilbao's Fleabane instead of Bilbao Fleabane

Page 782 – *Escallonia rubra* (Ruiz & Pav.) Pers. var. *macrantha* (Hook. & Arn.) Reiche instead of *E. macrantha* Hook. & Arn.

Page 821 – Under *Apium leptophyllum*: *CyclospERMUM* instead of *Ciclospermum*

Page 890 – *Crocus* × *luteus* Lam. Instead of *C.* × *stellaris* Haw.

Page 896 – AMARYLLIDACEAE (Daffodil family) instead of ALLIACEAE (Onion family)

Page 968 – add authority: *Carex viridula* Michx.

Page 1054 – Species name for × *Triticosecale*: ×*Triticosecale rimpai* Wittm. ex A. Camus

*The name *Salix* × *fragilis* nothovar. *basfordiana* (Scaling ex Salter) Stace, is a comb. nov., published in Stace 3 for the first time. The basionym (name from which this change is derived) is: *Salix* × *basfordiana* Scaling ex Salter, *Gard. Chron.*, n.s. 17: 298 (1882).

One thing that many botanists will find confusing is the change of Crack Willow to being a hybrid between *Salix alba* and an eastern species, now identified as *Salix euxina*, which itself used to be thought of as a subspecies of Crack Willow itself (so-called ssp. *decipiens*). Crack Willow is

therefore now being called *Salix x fragilis*, and subsumes plants we already thought of as hybrids *Salix x rubens*! In other words it is pretty variable.



(One of Andrew Harris' vignette drawings – so which *Viola* is it?!)

Some botanical highlights in Hertfordshire from 2011

***Chenopodium glaucum* (Oak-leaved Goosefoot)** Noted in some quantity from a drying pool on Kings Meads (31/G), July (by S. Knott), and shown to us on 6/8/11. A report later in the year from near the causeway across the Meads (31/L), by M. J. Crawley could not be re-found. It is interesting that these appeared in more 'natural' habitat than usual for this plant.

***Fumaria parviflora* (Small-flowered Fumitory)** Found at a new site at Radwell (23/H), 18/7/11. A site to add to the 'monitoring' for this year, to see if it has re-appeared.

***Helleborus viridis* (Green Hellebore)** Re-discovered by the old railway at Cole Green (21/V), 20/3/2011. A re-find of a colony thought lost. Another colony, on banks below Sawtrees Farm, Standon (31/Z), was also re-discovered on 10/7/2011.

***Clematis tangutica* (Orange-peel Clematis)** There was one very old record of this as an escape in the 19th century. Its appearance on 10/7/2011, in some quantity, in a rough field at Burleigh Common, Thundridge (31/Y), near an old gravel pit, well away from roads, is therefore extraordinary, even if it was mown off shortly after!

***Cerastium diffusum* (Sea Mouse-ear)** To add to the sense this must be under-recorded in the recent *Flora*, I found it in quantity on the disused settling beds at Ickleford sewage works (31/V), 12/4/2011.

***Rumex patientia* (Patient Dock)** As predicted in the *Flora*, this has now turned up – being first found at Northaw on a Flora Group meeting on 21/5/11. It subsequently appeared also at Little Heath (00/D) in July, found by Gerald Salisbury.

***Sorbus croceocarpa* (Orange-fruited Whitebeam)** An apparently self-sown tree of this was found on the roadside at Well Road, Northaw (20/R), 21/5/2011. A further tree of the species was then re-identified from 'Whitebeam' in Northaw Great Wood (20/X), which explained an erroneous record from the 1980s from there on very anachronistic soils. The source of these escapees is uncertain.

***Crataegus heterophyllus* (Various-leaved Hawthorn)** Having recently identified this as self-sown at Totteridge, and being aware of what it looks like, I realised that many of the large old hawthorns in clearings in Northaw Great Wood (20/S & X) are in fact this! Perhaps they were introduced a long time ago, when the wood was first enclosed as a private woodland in the 19th

century? They are spectacular though! Keep an eye open for *Crataegus laevigata* look-alikes, with large flowers, one stigma, and leaves of variable shape, some even simple.

***Viola tricolor* (Wild Pansy)** The true species turned up, alongside many hybrids with its cousin *V. arvensis*, by a field near Codicote (21/C), found first by R. Hogg in April. One of very few records in the County that have been substantiated, others often having turned out to be either complex hybrids derived from garden pansies, or the hybrid with field pansy, as also occurred here: *V. x contempta*.

***Hydrocotyle vulgaris* (Marsh Pennywort)** A find of a colony in a recently cleared area in Northaw Great Wood (20/X) 20/8/2011 was welcome, as it hadn't been seen in the wood for about 50 years!

***Verbascum pulverulentum* (Hoary Mullein)** A solitary plant, almost over, at an old pit by Ware Park Mill (31/L) 6/8/2011 turned out to be this rare species, which was actually a re-find, as it last occurred here in 1916!

***Filago pyramidata* (Broad-leaved Cudweed)** A few plants of this now nationally scarce plant, with vast quantities of *F. vulgaris*, were found by an old gravel pit at Burleigh Common, Thundridge (31/Y), 10/7/2011.

***Artemisia verlotiorum* (Chinese Mugwort)** This was confirmed as the identity of a colony reported in 2010 at Mardley Hill, Welwyn (21/N) by Raymond Uffen, where he has known it for many years! It just might go unnoticed elsewhere, so watch out for very late-flowering Mugwort!

***Potamogeton lucens* (Shining Pondweed)** It was good to find this in some quantity in Cheshunt Sailing Lake (30/R), 13/8/2011, as it has disappeared from most other areas. The thought crossed our minds that the presence of the boats keeps down the Canada Geese, and their droppings, thus making the water cleaner!

***Juncus foliosus* (Leafy Rush)** Only previously identified from one site (Purwell Ninesprings, where it may now be extinct), this has now turned up in wet derelict pasture by Dellsome Lane, Hatfield (20/H), 20/10/2011, found by Chris James. It is very rare indeed in East Anglia, but this new record shows it may occur more widely in permanently wet grassy places. Look out for a very leggy, large and 'leafy' form of 'Toad Rush', and collect a good specimen!

***Eriophorum angustifolium* (Common Cotton-grass)** This has been designated as extinct in Herts twice! So, it was with some pleasure that it was found not only to be thriving, but in greater quantity than ever, in the wet meadow by Moor Hall Great Wood (32/I), 11/7/2011. Evidently the drought had reduced the height of its competitors, and allowed it to flower!

***Carex canescens* (White Sedge)** The *Flora* notes a 19th century record from Totteridge that Dony dismissed as an error. M. S. Porter, the referee for sedges in the BSBI, has now named a specimen of mine from Hertford Heath (31/K), 13/5/2007 as this. During the Flora Group meeting at Northaw on 21/5/2011, I also collected what turned out to be this again in Well Wood (20/R)! It is rare, but obviously overlooked, in very heathy sites!

***Carex hostiana* (Tawny Sedge)** This has always been rare in the County, and Dony thought it was extinct. The *Flora* gives a couple of records. However, I re-found it in some quantity in the grazed areas at Oughton Head Common, Hitchin (13/Q), 18/5/11, the first time it had been seen here since the 1880s! This is a direct result of the re-introduction of cattle.

***Carex cespitosa* (Small Tufted-sedge)** No you won't find this in Stace 3! This has to be the highlight of the decade, not just the year, as it was the final establishment in the UK records of the true species *C. cespitosa* (as opposed to previous mis-named *Carex elata* or *C. nigra*). A colony at Braughing (32/X), originally thought to be *C. elata* and published in the *Flora*, has turned out to be this new species to the UK. An account of it is being published in the *Herts*

Naturalist, and a paper introducing it to the British Flora formally is in press in the *New Journal of Botany*.

***Poa humilis* (Spreading Meadow-grass)** This turned out to be one of the 'plants of the year', in that the drought in the Spring had the effect of making it stand out from other vegetation, with the result we got 'new' records from all over the place, not least our day at Moor Green and area on 15th May, when we found it in many places on road verges etc. where we had no previous records.

***Poa infirma* (Early Meadow-grass)** A second record of this turned up on the roadside at Rye House (30/E), on 3/4/2011.

***Agrostis curtisii* (Bristle Bent)** A most unlikely find, but this was confirmed from gravelly banks in the south pit at Mardley Heath (21/P), 17/9/2011. This is really a plant of the south-west, coming up to Berkshire. It just might have been accidentally introduced with Heather *Calluna vulgaris* seed, introduced, we think, from Thursley Common in Surrey in the 1990s.

***Scilla forbesii* (Glory-of-the-snow)** Newly added to the County list, from escapes along the old railway near Cole Green 20/3/2011.

One error from last year needs to be amended: *Ilex* × *koehneana* (*I. aquifolium* × *latifolium*) (a hybrid holly). This was reported from by Stockers Lake (09/L), 11/9/10. A specimen was sent to an expert at Kew, and it was lucky I did, because she thought it was more likely to be the more widespread hybrid *Ilex* × *altaclerensis*. A pity – but it demonstrates the need to keep voucher specimens!

Recording Forms

You can download and print BSBI Flora recording forms here.

Herts Flora Group meetings 2012

For all field meetings, please bring lunch and plenty to drink, as well as insect repellents, sun-hats, sun-cream etc. (or rain gear!). As mentioned in the Newsletter, meetings are almost all aimed this year at 1km square recording for the London flora, so again be prepared to come with identification books, hand lenses, collecting equipment etc., and to be stationary for lengths of time!

Saturday 19th May: Braughing.

Meet: at the ford in the village (TL394250), 10.00 a.m. Leader: Trevor James. **This is a chance to come and see Britain's newest sedge *Carex cespitosa*.** We will also do some other recording in the area.

Saturday 2nd June: Whippendell Wood & Jacotts Hill, Cassiobury

Meet at the car park in Rousebarn Lane (TQ073975), 10.00 a.m. Leader: Trevor James. This is a re-visit to record the area for the London Flora. Much will depend on what we find as to how far we get into Cassiobury Park area, which is very rich.

Saturday 30th June: Colney Heath & Tyttenhanger Pits.

Meet at Church Lane (TL197061), 10.00 a.m. Leader: Trevor James. We will re-examine the flora of this important common for the *London Flora*, and then re-visit Tyttenhanger Pits (east side), where we could do with filling in a London Flora record card.

Saturday 21st July: Bencroft & Wormley Woods.

Meet at the Bencroft Wood East Car-park (TL332065), 10.00 a.m. Leader: Laura Gravestock. The aim is to record the flora of Bencroft Wood first, then to examine at least the north-east sector of Wormley Wood again, with a possible visit to Foulwells spring, next door, where there are lots of rarities. Joint with Herts Branch BNA.

Saturday 25th August: Merry Hill, Bushey.

Meet: Haydon Hill, Bushey (TQ129949) (park carefully along road), 10.00 a.m. Leader: Trevor James. It is some time since we examined the flora of this re-forestation project since it was first created. A colony of (possibly introduced) *Mentha pulegium* (Pennyroyal) needs to be re-found.

Sunday 23rd September: Rye Meads area.

Meet: Rye House car park (TL386099), 10.00 a.m. Leader: Trevor James. The aim here is to re-visit the flora of this disturbed area of wetlands, former gravel pits, sewage works etc., possibly with a view to finding some interesting aliens, as well as late flowering species.

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