

The Botanical Society of the British Isles

- Traces its origins back to 1836
- Welcomes both professional and amateur members
- Is the biggest organisation devoted to the study of botany in the British Isles
- Has a very good website
- And a network of VC recorders

Milestones in plant recording in VC55

- 1747 Pulteney's manuscript
- 1850 1st Flora of Leicestershire
- 1933 H&G's Flora of L&R
- 1971 Flora of Rutland - with tetrad maps
- 1988 P&E's Flora of Leicestershire
- 1993 Vascular plant RDB
- 2000 1st Rare Plant Register

The Flora of VC55

- 1010 native species incl. 91 *Taraxacum*, 13 *Hieracium* and 69 *Rubus*
- 486 alien species!
- 115 native species possibly extinct
- No nationally rare species, 16 scarce
- 181 currently found at 10 or less sites
- 130+ new taxa recorded since P&E

The Pioneer

Pulteney, Dr. Richard (1730-1801)

Born at Mountsorrel and educated at Loughborough. Apprenticed to an apothecary at 15, in Loughborough, and stayed with him until ca 1752. Then worked briefly in Nottingham before setting up his own apothecary business in Leicester where he stayed until moving to Dorset in 1765. He was responsible for the first published record of over 600 plants within the county and wrote manuscript floras (1747, 1749 and 1752), a paper on rare plants observed in the county (1756) and a contribution to Nichols' history of the county (1795). He was the pioneer of Leicestershire botany. Fl. 1744-65. HG p.clxxxix.

Recorders by number

- In total 200+ since Pulteney
- 58 have contributed significantly
- 13 major contributors in 1970s
- 9 in 1980s
- 12 in 1990s
- 7 in 2000s

Where are the records?

- Horwood & Noel (1933) 10,000+
- Messenger (1971) 27,300 in card index
- Primavesi & Evans (1988) 160,000 on cards
- LERC parish paper files 30,000+
- New Atlas 25,000 on computer
- Post New Atlas, LAs, LNC, RNHS etc
- Total 300,000+

Where are the sites?

Abbey Park, Leicester SK 586056

Large City park.

Acresford Sand Pit Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe SK 302133

Disused sand pit, part filled with pulverised fuel ash.

***Addah Wood (R)** Clipsham SK 964175

Ancient woodland, planted with conifers; 14 ha.

***Allextan Wood** Allextan SP 821994

Ancient woodland; ash-maple/elm, W8 type; 26.75 ha; SSSI.

Key sites using RBD records

- Bradgate P'k & Charnwood Lodge – 13 spp
- Ketton Quarry - 10
- Bloody Oaks Quarry – 9
- Beacon Hill, Buddon Wood, Croft P'ure – 7
- Clipsham Quarry, Cropston Res, Groby Pool, Swithland Wood, Ulverscroft NR – 6
- All SSSIs, 5 LRWT NRs

Using plant records to rank ancient woodlands

Wood	Size (ha)	Flora score
Buddon Wood	(42)	151
Swithland Wood	70	147
Owston Woods	146	132
Burley Wood	156	125

Current activity

- Checklist
- Atlas update
- Habitat study repeats
- Axiophytes
- Rare Plant Register

The Rare Plant Register

<i>Agrimonia procera</i>	S	Herbert's Meadow	SK 49313	2005
<i>Fragrant Agrimony</i>		Launde Park Wood	SK 80303	2006
		Lea Meadows	SK 50811	2006
		Mountsorrel Quarry	SK 56514	2002
		Twenty Acre Piece	SK 64221	1996
<i>Agrostis canina</i>	S	Blackbrook Reservoir	SK 45817	1996
<i>Velvet Bent</i>		Charnwood Lodge	SK 46615	2005
		Lea Meadows	SK 50611	2006
		Loughborough Mead	SK 53821	1993
		Martinshaw Wood	SK 51007	1995
		Pasture Wood	SK 42421	1995
		Twenty Acre Piece	SK 64221	2006
		Ulverscroft NR	SK 49212	2005
<i>Agrostis vinealis</i>	R	Roecliffe Manor	SK 53112	2005
<i>Brown Bent</i>		Ulverscroft NR	SK 48713	2005

Who is recording now?

- BSBI members
- Local authorities
- Natural England
- The Wildlife Trust
- Natural History Societies
- Consultants
- The public

Problems in plant recording in VC55

- Good sites are few and far between
- The VC is well-recorded
- Few young field botanists now
- Record Centre not as strong as it was

But is it all downhill?

- Depends on how long you have been recording or studying VC55 plants
- In Pulteney's day there was no LRC
- We still have lots of recording activity
- There is scope for more challenging recording projects for those interested, e.g. site studies and critical groups