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0521627192 - British Plant Communities: Grasslands and Montane Communities, Volume 3

Edited by J. S. Rodwell

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British Plant Communities 3

British Plant Communities

VOLUME 3

GRASSLANDS AND MONTANE
COMMUNITIES

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U.K. Joint Nature Conservation Committee

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the appearance of this, the third of the five volumes of *British Plant Communities*, we are well past the half-way mark in the publication of the results of the National Vegetation Classification. Again, as coordinator of the project and editor of these books, it is my pleasure to record my own personal thanks to my colleagues John Birks, Andrew Malloch, Michael Proctor, David Shimwell, Jacqui Huntley, Elaine Radford, Martin Wigginton, Paul Wilkins and the co-chairmen of the research team, Donald Pigott and Derek Ratcliffe, for their sustained industry and inspiration; and to mark our gratitude to all those who contributed to the accounts of grassland and montane communities presented here.

As far as the mesotrophic grasslands were concerned, we were helped greatly by the happy concurrence with the project of Dr Martin Page's research at Exeter University. As well as providing us with large amounts of data, Martin undertook to provide preliminary accounts of the vegetation types he had defined from his samples and ours, and gave unstintingly of his expertise as I integrated his results with the rest of our work. We were also fortunate to have access to data from Dr Richard Jones, and from Dr Tim Bines and his team in the then Nature Conservancy Council England Field Unit, Drs Martin Alcock, Kevin Charman and Peter Welsh.

From the beginning, too, we were much encouraged and assisted by Mr Derek Wells, then of the NCC Chief Scientist Directorate, whose long experience of lowland grasslands informed both our sampling programme and the interpretation of results. In completing the community accounts, I have also benefited in many ways from discussions with his successor, Dr John Hopkins, and with Drs Paul Adam, James Grieg, Tony Hare, Alison McDonald, Caroline Sargeant, Michelina Skeffington, Bryan Wheeler, Miss Katherine Hearn and Messrs Johnny Stone and Ian Taylor.

With calcicolous grasslands, we were also fortunate in having the ready cooperation of many others. Among

our own team, of course, David Shimwell had a wide knowledge of these vegetation types and much existing data, and these were complemented by very numerous samples from southern Britain collected by and under the guidance of Mr Terry Wells of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, and converted into compatible computerised data by Dr Brian Huntley, working with John Birks and Jacqui Huntley at Cambridge. We were very grateful, too, for published and unpublished samples from Drs Margaret Atherden and Alison Jones, the Reverend Gordon Graham, Messrs Jack Lavin and Geoffrey Wilmore of the then West Yorkshire Biological Data Bank, as well as Donald Pigott and Derek Ratcliffe among our own number. Dr Ian Rotherham, then an undergraduate at Lancaster, gave sterling help with the sampling of neglected parts of the Yorkshire Dales.

For this section of our work, it fell to me to produce both preliminary accounts and final descriptions of the communities and, in this labour, my major debts are to Andrew Malloch in the data analysis, and to Donald Pigott, whose perceptive comments have greatly enriched the text. I also gained much from discussions with Michael Proctor, Professor Philip Grime, Drs Peter Grubb, Sue Hillier, John Hodgson, Jonathan Mitchley and Jo Willems, Miss Katherine Hearn, Messrs Stephen Evans, Stewart Lane, Simon Leach, Keith Payne, Chris Smith, Paul Toynton, Ray Woods, and Mr Tim Blackstock and his colleagues in the then NCC Wales Field Unit.

With the calcifugous grasslands and montane communities, too, there was a wealth of existing data for particular parts of Britain, notably from the Scottish Highlands where published and unpublished material from Drs Derek Ratcliffe and Donald McVean assisted our work enormously. Derek's presence on the team, together with John Birks, greatly informed our assembly and interpretation of the data, and we were especially fortunate in securing the services of Dr Hilary Birks to get to grips with the data processing. Hilary performed a

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prodigious task in very brisk order and made my own task of writing the community accounts much simpler.

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John Rodwell

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