

Introduction

The Flora of Glamorgan Committee was formed in 1969 with the aim of preparing a new *Flora* of the county. The existing Glamorgan Floras – A. H. Trow's *The Flora of Glamorgan*, which appeared in instalments from 1906 to 1911, and H. J. Riddelsdell's *A Flora of Glamorganshire*, printed as a supplement to the *Journal of Botany* in 1907 – were out of date and long out of print. Trow's *Flora* was never completed by the addition of an ecological section, as had originally been intended, although an ecological account of the flora of the county by R. C. McLean eventually appeared in Volume 1 of the *Victoria County History of Glamorgan*, published in 1936.

Glamorgan has been spared the wholesale destruction of rural habitats that has taken place in some English counties, and many of the localities that were described by Trow and Riddelsdell still exist. Others have, inevitably, been destroyed or changed radically by urban and industrial development and by new techniques in agriculture, forestry, and mining. Many species have changed in abundance, especially in the urban areas and lowlands of the county where a surprising number of species that were rare or absent from the county eighty years ago are now conspicuous and ecologically important, for example, *Buddleia davidii*, *Epilobium ciliatum*, *Reynoutria japonica* and *Senecio squalidus*. In the uplands afforestation and open-cast mining have led to great changes, with fewer gains.

By the late 1960s it was clear that a new *Flora* of the county was badly needed. The stimulus for the founding of the Flora of Glamorgan Committee came from two sources. One was the preparation of the first edition of the *Atlas of the British Flora*, published in 1962, which had involved an extensive collaborative survey co-ordinated by the Botanical Society of the British Isles. This both increased interest in plant distribution among botanists and led to increased awareness of the gaps in our knowledge of the flora of the county. The other source was the continuing tradition of botanical work in Glamorgan, stemming directly from Trow's group and maintained chiefly by the Cardiff Naturalists' Society and the National Museum of Wales. Eleanor Vachell, who had herself contributed many records to Trow's *Flora* and had continued active work and publication until after the Second World War, made a small bequest to the Society to support work toward the publication of a new *Flora of Glamorgan*. The Flora of Glamorgan Committee that was founded with the aid of this bequest, linked the Society with groups from the Botany Departments of the National Museum of Wales and the University College of Swansea who were already carrying out preparatory recording work for a new *Flora*. The records in this book are restricted to vice-county 41, corresponding to the old county of Glamorgan, excluding the parts of the modern counties of Mid-Glamorgan and South Glamorgan that are north or east of the old county boundary.

The idea of producing a new *Flora of Glamorgan* was first mooted in 1968 by R. G. Ellis and a Flora of Glamorgan Committee was set up to oversee the project. The Committee first met in May 1969 and fieldwork by members commenced in that year although the special recording cards, instructions to fieldworkers and keys to critical groups were not available until 1970.