Hugh Davies to Thomas Pennant, 5 December 1794

ID:	1312
From:	Hugh Davies
To:	Thomas Pennant
Date:	1794-12-05
Repository:	WCRO
Identifier:	WCRO CR2017 /TP20/1
Cite:	'Hugh Davies to Thomas Pennant, 5 December 1794 1794-12-05' in Curious Travellers Digital Editions [editions.curioustravellers.ac.uk/doc/1312]

Dear Sir,

I do not delay to let you know that I have survived the dressing I underwent on Wednesday; by the continual rain my hand is blistered in holding the bridle; the current of Water at Tal y Cafn was really frightful, and no line to conduct us across the river as usual!

A tremendous gale of wind, which continued about eight and forty hours, and came on the next day after I came to Downing, has caused great losses in this neighborhood, and in some part of Anglesea; many ricks of hay have been Entirely swept away; fruit & and the trees torn up; houses unroofed &c &c I thank God by the activity of my servants and kind neighbours my little stock of hay was with difficulty saved –
O! præclarum diem[1] &c is certainly an Ecphonesis or Exclamatio which are synonymous;
Concitat Ecphonesis et Exclamatio mentem,
Heu pietas![2] Salve læta dies![3] O, tempora![4] &c &c

I believe M[r]. Lightfoot has noticed no plant growing near Downing besides a variety of the Anemone nemorosa;[5] viz. foliis dorso punctatis,[6] the leaves of which from that singularity have been mistaken for a Fern. You have the chlora perfoliata[7] ^*Syst. Pl:* II 161 an Elegant and rather rare plant; and the following deserve notice as not common; Lithospermum arvense, ^*Syst.* I. 385 Anchusa sempervirens,[8] ^*Syst. Pl.* I. 389. Campanula latifolia,[9] ^*Syst Pl.* 458., Phellandrum aquaticum[10] ^*Syst. P.* I. 701. Trifolium fragiferum,[11] ^*Syst Pl.* III. 559, Tragopogon pratense[12] ^*Syst. Pl.* III 611., Erigeron acre,[13] ^*Syst Pl.* III, 781 Serapias palustris[14] ^*Syst. Pl.* IV.; and among the cryptogamous plants, with which your dingles certainly abound,[15] these clame particular notice, Polypodium oreopteris Lin. Soc. Trans. I. 181.[16] – Bryum Extinctorium;[17] Bryum callistomam;[18] *Dicks.* fascic. III. t. 7. f. 10. Iungermannia ciliaris;[19] Lichen concentricus, Lin . Soc .Trans. II. 284.[20] Lichen querneus,[21] *Dicks.* fascic. I. p. 9. Agaricus piperatus, & deliciosus;[22] Boletus suberosus[23] Helvella mitra;[24] Perira coccinea, *Tour in Wales* [authorial]? fig [authorial]?[25] &c– &c–

I beg my very respectable Compliments to M[rs] Pennant and am, Sir,

your most obliged & obed[t]. Serv[t].

Hugh Davies.
Aber
Dec[r]. 5[th]. 1794

Thomas Pennant Esq[r]

Editorial Notes

[1] 'Oh, what a beautiful day!' See Cicero, *Cato Maior de Senectute*, ed. by J. G. F. Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 90.

[2] 'An exclamatory phrase and exclamation excite the mind; Alas for piety!' Cf. 'Concitat Ecphoneses & Exclamatio mentem. | Heu pietas! ô spes falsas! prohvana [sic] voluptas!' etc. John Smith, *The Mystery of Rhetorick Unveiled* (10th edn., London: printed for R. Wilkin, B. Tooke, D. Midwinter et al, 1721), p. 104.

[3] 'Hail, happy day!'. Ovid, *Fasti*, book I, 65, line 23.

[4] 'Oh, what times!' quoting an oft-repeated phrase of Cicero ('O tempora o mores').

[5] 'Mr. Lightfoot ... discovered in my woods, in the month of May, a variety of the *anemone nemorosa*, Sp. Pl. 762, with the leaves dotted on the back, like the fructifications of a polypody, precisely corresponding with the figure of a supposed Fern, recorded in Mr. *Ray*'s Synopsis, 124, after N^{o} 24. and fig. I. tab. iii. at p. 128.' *A tour in Wales* (1784), I, p. 19. The 'Anemone nemorosa' is one of several species mentioned in this paragraph to which Pennant referred in *HPWaH*, pp. 152–3, citing the bibliographic source given by Davies in this letter in many cases.

[6] 'the back of the leaves speckled'. Cf. Pennant's description in n. 5, above.

[7] 'Chlora perfoliata', the 'Yellow Centaury', 'familiar ... in chalk countries, easily known by its eight yellow petals and perfoliate, or rather connate, leaves'. *OED* s.v. centaury, quoting a 1903 definition.

[8] 'Anchusa sempervirens', 'evergreen alkanet', a plant belonging to the genus Anchusa.

[9] 'Campanula latifolia', the giant bell-flower. *OED* s.v. bell-flower, citing an 1882 example.

[10] 'Phellandrium Aquaticum', given as name for 'waterwort' in an 1807 publication. See *OED* s.v. waterwort, n.

[11] 'Trifolium fragiferum', the 'strawberry trefoil'. *OED* s.v. strawberry, quoting a 1731 example. Ibid. s.v. strawberry-bearing trefoil, defines 'trifolium fragiferum as the 'strawberry clover', with a 1796 example.

[12] 'Tragopogon pratensis', one of two plants known as 'goat's beards'. The genus 'Tragopogon' in later usage signifies a class of herbaceous plants with yellow or purplish dandelion-like flowers. *OED*.

[13] 'Erigeron' is the Greek name of the Groundsel, 'because in the Spring it looketh hoarie, like an old gray beard'. *OED* s.v. erigeron, quoting a 1601 translation of Pliny's *Hist. World*. For specimens of the 'Erigeron acre' from the Linnean Collections, see here [accessed 12 August 2019].

[14] See *OED* s.v. marsh, n.1 for 'Serapias palustris'. The definition by Lightfoot, *Flora Scotica* (1777), I, p. 527, is quoted: 'Marsh Helleborine ... In rough boggy pastures and marshes, but not common'.

[15] Cf. Pennant on his own native Flintshire, in *HPWaH*, p. 153: 'The picturesque dingle Nant-y-bi abounds with what the botanists name the cryptogamous plants'.

[16] The 'polypodium' is a large genus of ferns of the family Polypodiaceae. *OED*. For the 'Polypodium Oreopteris', see J. Dickson, 'Observations on Polypodium Oreopteris, accompanied with a Specimen from Scotland', *Transactions of the Linnaean Society*, I (1791), 181–2. Lighfoot's failure properly to identify this fern is noted, as is its abundance in England and Scotland, particularly the latter.

[17] 'Bryum extinctorium', cited in a 1792 publication in *OED* s.v. burst.

[18] A member of the genus 'Bryum'.

[19] A member of the family Jungermanniaceæ, the Scale-mosses. *OED* s.v. jungermanniaceaous.

[20] For Hugh Davies's published observations on the 'Lichen Concentricus', an example of which he found in Whitford parish, Flintshire, see his 'Descriptions of Four New British Lichens', *Transactions of the Linnean Society*, II (1794), 283–285, esp. 284.

[21] 'Lichen querneus', oak lichen. Described as 'Lichen querneus of Dickson', noting that its place of growth is on the trunks of old oak trees, in T. F. Forster, *Flora Tonbrigensis; or, A catalogue of plants growing wild in the neighbourhood of Tonbridge Wells, arranged according to the Linnæan system, from Sir J. E. Smith's Flora Britannica* (London: printed and sold by Richard and Arthur Taylor, 1816), p. 149.

[22] 'Agaricus', a Latin form for 'agaric', originally the bracket fungus Fomitopsis officinalis. *OED* s.v. agaric, n. and adj..

[23] For Pennant's comments about the '*Boletus suberosus*. Cork boletus', 'sometimes cut and shaped by the country people, and used as corks for their bottles', see *HPWaH*, p. 155.

[24] 'Helvella mitra', the Bishop's Mitre mushroom. *OED* s.v. turban > turban-top.

[25] Various fungi bearing as their second name 'coccinea' are listed in *OED*. If 'Perinea coccinea' is the example linked with an illustration in Pennant's *A tour in Wales*, it may be the 'Scarlet Mushroom' illustrated by Moses Griffith in ibid. (2nd edn., 1784), II, plate II. Pennant describes it as 'a scarlet kind of mushroom, unnoticed by *Linnæus*; but described by Mr. *Ray*, p. 18, No 5. of his Synopsis of *British* Plants. Ibid., p. 19.