

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.curious-travellers.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 & 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 diem¹ &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 perfoliata⁷ ^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 aquaticum¹⁰ ^Syst. P. I. 701. Trifolium fragiferum,¹¹ ^Syst Pl. III. 559, Tragopogon pratense¹² ^Syst. Pl. III 611., Erigeron acre,¹³ ^Syst Pl. III, 781 Serapias palustris¹⁴ ^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 suberosus²³ 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. 5th. 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 Linnean Society*, I (1791), 181–2. Lightfoot's failure properly to identify this fern is noted, as is its abundance in England and Scotland, particularly the latter.

¹⁷ 'Bryum extincorium', cited in a 1792 publication in *OED* s.v. burst.

¹⁸ A member of the genus 'Bryum'.

¹⁹ A member of the family Jungermanniaceae, the Scale-mosses. *OED* s.v. jungermanniaceous.

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.