Hugh Davies to Thomas Pennant, 10 August 1795

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From:	Hugh Davies
To:	Thomas Pennant
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- List of Aug^{t}. 2^{d}.
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- rare{
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- not rare{
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- List – P.S. of Aug^{t}. 7th
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-
- he refers to Roth: Flor. Germ. 1. p. 314. and to no other author.

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- Cistus hirsutus
- Anthoxanthum odoratum
- Cynosurus cristatus
- Festuca ovina[1]
-
- Plantago lanceolata[2]
- Lotus corniculatus[3]
- Trifolium repens[4]
- Polygala vulgaris [5]
- Poterium sanguisorba[6]
-
- Agrostis canina[7]
- _____ stolonifera[8]
- Avena flavescens[9]
- Festuca duriuscula[10]
- Trifolium flexuosum – Gmel *Syst. Nat.* [11] p. 1142.
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As far as I can judge, all you can say of the above grasses is that M^{r}. Dickinson pointed those species out as chiefly constituting the herbage of your lofty commons, although I suspect it an imperfect list, and that there must be several other species of Grass, and, I doubt not some species of Juneus [12] and Carex [13] besides other plants.

Dear Sir,

I truly rejoice at the account you gave of yourself; I by no means intended you should yourself have taken any trouble about Ellis Richardson; and I wish he knew I should be sorry he should sell his Cow solely on my account; I had rather suffer a little myself than distress a fellow-creature, particularly at such a time as this –

I dined with M^{r}. Panton about ten days ago, he was in good spirits, and looked much better than, from report, I expected to have seen him.

I request you will not think me peevish, for I really am not; you will gain M^r^. Dickinson [14] no credit in saying that he pointed out to you as rare plants Anthoxanthum odoratum,[15] Cynosurus cristatus [16] & Festuca ovina;[17] they and the remainder of your list of Aug^t^. 2^d^, together with those contained in your P.S. of Aug^t^. 7^th^. are exceedingly common, and all of rather inferior rank in respect of utility: I shall indeed except Cistus hirsutus [18] and Trifol: flexuosum [19] as a plant I do not know. (See the other page)

Loth to put you to the expence of a double letter by transcrible both your lists; I shall however return your own memorandum, when I have an opportunity to inclose.

I beg my respects to M^rs^. Pennant and am

Dear Sir
your most obliged &
Obed^t^. Serv^t^.

Hugh Davies.
Aber
Aug^t^. 10^th^. 1795.

P.S.
A Catalogue of the Birds & Plants of Priestholm Isle is on your return. –

Stamp: (handstamp) BANGOR

Thomas Pennant Esq^r^.
Downing
Holywell
Flintshire

Editorial Notes

[1] For the 'Cistus hirsutus', 'Anthoxanthum odoratum', 'Cynosurus cristatus', and 'Festuca ovina', see the text of the main letter and accompanying notes.

[2] 'Plantago lanceolata', ribbed grass. *OED* s.v. ribbed grass.

[3] See T. Martyn, translating J.-J Rousseau (1785), where 'The wild species [=Lotus corniculatus]' is named 'common Bird's-foot Trefoil'. *OED* s.v. bird's-foot, bird-foot.

[4] 'Trifolium repens', white clover. *OED* s.v. honeysuckle.

[5] 'Polygala vulgaris', rogation flower or the common milkwort, which was 'formerly made into garlands and carried in processions on Rogation Days'. *OED* s.v. rogation.

[6] 'Poterium Sanguisorba', the common burnet or salad burnet, from its use in salads. *OED* s.v. salad, salad burnet.

[7] See *OED* s.v. bent, bent-grass, which quotes Lightfoot, *Flora Scotica* (1778) I, p. 93, '*Agrostis canina*, Brown Bent-grass'.

[8] 'Agrostis stolonifera', marsh bent-grass or creeping bent-grass, a variant of 'stolonifera' but much taller and not matting to form a turf. *OED* s.v. marsh, n.1, marsh bent.

[9] 'Avena flavescens', golden oat, or yellow oat-grass. *OED* s.v. yellow, yellow oat grass.

[10] For images of specimens of the 'Festuca duriuscula', several collected in Switzerland, see here, items 7–16 [accessed 12 August 2019].

[11] For the reference to 'Trifolium flexuosum', see Alberti Gvilielmi Rothii, *Tentamen florae Germanicae. Tomvs I.* (Lipsiae, I. G. Mülleriano, 1788), p. 314.

[12] 'Junius' is a species of rush. See *Atlas of Hawai'i* (3rd edn., Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), p. 113.

[13] 'Carex', a large genus of grassy-looking plants. *OED* s.v. carex.

[14] A list headed 'Plants collected by S. Dickinson July 21st. 1795' mentions several of the plants named in this letter from Hugh Davies to Pennant, including in a category deemed 'Rare', the 'Cistus hirsutus', underneath which Pennant has noted in pencil a location of its growth known to him, 'Pen y Gelli'. CR2017/TP213/5.

[15] 'Anthoxanthum odoratum', spring grass. *OED* s.v. spring grass.

[16] 'Cynosurus cristatus', dog's-tail grass. *OED* s.v. dog grass.

[17] 'Festuca ovina', listed as a 'social' plant on account of its growth in clumps, patches or masses with other members of its species. It has been identified with 'coquioule' and possibly 'haver-grasse' [haver grass]. *OED* s.v. social; cockle, *n.*1.

[18] For the 'Cistus hirsutus' see see here [accessed 12 August 2019]. Hugh Davies pointed out an example to Pennant on Din Sylwy in Anglesey. See *A tour in Wales 1770 [1773]* (1778), II, p. 254.

[19] For an essay on the 'Trifolium alpestre', which names the 'Trifol. flexuosum' as a discovery of Nikolaus Joseph von Jacquin, see Adam Afzelius, 'The Botanical History of Trifolium alpestre, medium, and pratense', *Transactions of the Linnean Society*, I (1790), 202–248, esp. 210.