

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 ovina¹
-
- Plantago lanceolata²
- Lotus corniculatus³
- Trifolium repens⁴
- Polygala vulgaris⁵
- Poterium sanguisorba⁶
-
- Agrostis canina⁷
- _____ stolonifera⁸
- Avena flavescens⁹
- Festuca duriuscula¹⁰
- 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 Juncus¹² and Carex¹³ 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. Dickinson¹⁴ no credit in saying that he pointed out to you as rare plants Anthoxanthum odoratum,¹⁵ Cynosurus cristatus¹⁶ & 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. 7th. are exceedingly common, and all of rather inferior rank in respect of utility: I shall indeed except Cistus hirsutus¹⁸ and Trifol: flexuosum¹⁹ as a plant I do not know. (See the other page)

Loth to put you to the expence of a double letter by transcribe 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. 10th. 1795.

P.S.

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

Stamp: (handstamp) BANGOR

Thomas Pennant Esq^t.
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', roagation flower or the common milkwort, which was 'formerly made into garlands and carried in processions on Rogation Days'. *OED* s.v. roagation.

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.