

An Exhibition of  
Paintings and Drawings by  
Mary Grierson



Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

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April 7 – September 26, 1975

Compiled by John V. Brindle



Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation  
Carnegie-Mellon University  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
1975



## Foreword



The Hunt Institute presents the works of an ongoing career in botanical illustration. Mary Grierson, recently retired as staff artist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, goes on doing the work she enjoys, freelance on special commission. Her life work exemplifies that happiest of arrangements whereby a hobby becomes a profession, and "retirement" is devoted to continuing the work that she has done since childhood.

This exhibition is organized into various categories representing types of projects carried out during the course of a busy career. Mary Grierson's work ranges from anatomical drawings for plant monographs to portrayals of plants in habitat groups issued as art color prints or calendar illustrations. If her career has been occupied with all phases of botanical illustration, it also embodies a particular direction: preservation of the earth's natural heritage. Indeed, plant preservation may be taken as the basic theme of her life work. Nearly everybody is aware that the Passenger Pigeon is irretrievably lost, and that the leopard is endangered; but many plants have also disappeared or are in a precarious condition. Miss Grierson has devoted her talent increasingly to the struggle to bring a wider public awareness to the cause of plant conservation.

Mary Grierson is a representative Briton: a grandmother was Scottish; she herself was born and schooled in Wales; she has worked in England and overseas. She credits childhood rambles over the mountains of Snowdonia in Wales for an early love of wild plants, and her grandmother's garden for familiarity with cultivated flowers. She has been drawing plants for as long as she can remember. It seems that nothing in her schooling and early work experience has been irrelevant to an ultimate career in botanical art. Her first job involved decoration

and flower arrangement for a quality confectioner. After World War II service as an aerial photography interpreter, she joined a cartographical firm and profited from the disciplined precision of making maps from aerial photographs. Meanwhile, she did free-lance plant illustration, and studied under the well known painter and illustrator John Nash. In 1960, she was appointed staff artist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and put her hobby onto a professional level in the service of that most professional and prestigious of institutions. Its collection of living plant specimens is perhaps the most famous in the world. Seeds, roots, bulbs and other propagules are received from all parts of the globe, are grown and studied by botanists, and recorded by staff artists. Accuracy is essential and the work is demanding. Ink drawings are usually done from dried herbarium specimens, but color work is nearly always from living plants. These were either brought to her work desk or, if the plant's size made this impossible, Miss Grierson would perch on a ladder in a greenhouse or on the grounds, to the astonishment and admiration of the public. Retirement from Kew occurred in 1972, but there was no slackening, rather, a broadening in the scope of her work. Though some of the conservation calendar illustrations were produced independently during the period at Kew, this type of work expanded as she accepted invitations to travel and record endangered plants in the service of conservation organizations (Cat. Nos. 76-112).

Book illustration projects have included approximately one hundred figures published in volumes of the famous *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* (founded in 1787, and still going strong), and handsome paintings for a sumptuous folio monograph of the orchid family (Cat. Nos. 39-53). The Hunt Institute is proud to present this exhibition of works representing a distinguished career.

This exhibition has been made possible through the generous cooperation of the artist, who lent examples of her work and assembled most of the works loaned by the institutions cited in the catalogue listing. She also furnished information about herself and her work. General Abraham Yoffe arranged for the loan of paintings by the Israeli Nature Reserves Authority. The Hunt Institute is grateful for the efforts of Miss Grierson and of General Yoffe, and for the generosity of the following institutions which have lent artworks: the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; the Bourton Press; the Frans Hals Museum; the Blandford Press; the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves; the National Trust; the World Wild Life Fund; and the Israeli Nature Reserves Authority.

Mrs. Sarah Secrist and Mrs. Ann Howard did essential work in the preparation of the exhibition and its catalogue.

John Brindle  
Art Curator



## Catalogue Listing

### Chronology:

- Born 27 September, 1912 in Bangor, North Wales.  
 Educated Bangor County School for Girls.  
 1940-45 Military service, Photographic Reconnaissance Unit.  
 1946 Cartographical draftsman at Hunting Surveys Ltd., London.  
 1960 Appointed Botanical Artist to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.  
 1967 Fellow of the Linnean Society of London.  
 Stamp designs of British Flora commissioned by General Post Office.  
 1969-75 Calendar illustrations and note cards commissioned by the Curwen Press in conjunction with the Society of the Promotion of Nature Reserves.  
 1970-71 Spent two seasons in Israel and the Sinai doing paintings of the protected plants of that area, for publication by the Israel Nature Reserves Authority.  
 1972 Retired from Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.  
 1973 Calendar illustrations commissioned by the National Trust of Great Britain. "The Wild Flowers of Ironbridge Gorge" commissioned by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust.  
 1973- Currently working on botanical drawings of rare and endangered plants throughout the world, for publication by the World Wildlife Fund.  
 1974 Spent first of two seasons in Holland doing watercolor drawings of species tulips, for publication by Mr. Michael Hoog of van Tubergen Nurseries.

### Exhibitions:

- London: The Royal Society, The Linnean Society, British Museum of Natural History, Royal Horticultural Society (Recipient of three Gold Medals awarded 1966/69/73), Chelsea Flower Show, Harrogate Festival, Design Centre.  
 International Exhibition of Botanical Art, Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, 1973.  
 Tulipomania, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, Netherlands.  
 Tel Aviv.  
 National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.  
 Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.  
 Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond.  
 The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Pittsburgh:  
 International Exhibition of Botanical Art and Illustration, 1968-69 and 1972-73. Artists from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1974.

### Publications:

- Huxley, Anthony J., *Mountain Flowers*, London, Blandford Press, 1967.  
 Bean, William J., *Trees and Shrubs of the British Isles*, London, John Murray, 1970-75.  
 Hunt, P. Francis, *Orchidaceae*, Bourton, The Bourton Press, 1974.  
 Numerous issues of *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, *Kew Bulletin*, *Journal of The Linnean Society*, *Hooker's Icones Plantarum*, *Flora of East Tropical Africa*, *Flora of Ceylon*, *Flora of Zambesiaca*, *Flora of Iraq*.  
 Calendar and stationery illustrations for the Council for Nature, the World Wildlife Fund, the National Trust of Great Britain, the Royal Horticultural Society, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, The Curwen Press, the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, the County Naturalist's Trusts of Great Britain, British Broadcasting Company.

Note: Dimensions are cited, height first, then width. They refer to openings in mats, or sheet sizes. Dates cited are dates of execution.

1. Wild Flowers of Ironbridge Gorge, Shropshire.  
 Watercolor 22½ x 17¾"  
 Painted for the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, and reproduced for sale to benefit the Trust. The bridge, built in 1779 by Abraham Darby, is famous as the first cast iron bridge in the world, an occasion commemorated by a special tankard, a modern reproduction of which is depicted here with autumn flowers found in the gorge.

Miscellaneous plant portraits, collection of Mary Grierson (Nos. 2-21).

2. *Paeonia suffruticosa*, Tree Peony.  
 Watercolor and ink 11¼ x 14½"
3. *Paeonia suffruticosa* x *montana*, Tree Peony. 1974  
 Watercolor and ink 11 x 13"
4. *Iris haleri*. 1973  
 Watercolor 18 x 11¾"
5. *Iris afghanica*. 1974  
 Watercolor 15 x 10¼"
6. *Eucalyptus ficifolius*, Scarlet-flowering Gum. 1974  
 Watercolor 18 x 12¾"
7. *Digitalis purpurea*, Foxglove. 1960  
 Watercolor 21½ x 12½"
8. *Sandersonia aurantiaca*. 1974  
 Watercolor 17¼ x 10¼"
9. *Galanthus nivalis*, Common Snowdrop. [Hunt Institute collection] 1972  
 Watercolor 8¾ x 5¾"
10. Collection of *Allium* species, Onions. 1960  
 Watercolor 21¼ x 12¼"
11. *Fritillaria imperialis*, Crown Imperial. 1973  
 Watercolor and ink 17 x 11⅞"





12. Collection of Fruiting Branches. 1959  
Watercolor 17 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
13. *Romneya coulteri*, Matilija Poppy. 1974  
Watercolor and ink 19 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
14. *Eccremocarpus scaber*, Glory Flower. 1970  
Watercolor and ink 15 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 11"
15. *Hoya carnosa*, Wax Vine. 1974  
Watercolor 18 x 13"
16. *Fragaria indica*, Indian or Mock Strawberry. 1973  
Watercolor 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
17. *Viscum album*, Mistletoe.  
Watercolor and ink 11 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 8"
18. *Iris foetidus*, Gladwin. 1971  
Watercolor and ink 9 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 7"
19. *Pyrola* spp., Shinleaf.  
Watercolor and ink 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 7"
20. *Tricyrtis formosana* var. *stolonifera*. 1973  
Watercolor 13 x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
21. Watercolor, ink, and pencil studies from field notebook.

For many species making up the extensive collection of living plants growing at Kew Gardens, dried herbarium specimens alone are unsatisfactory as visual records. The following selections (Nos. 22-34) were drawn from living plants by Miss Grierson during her twelve year employment as staff artist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

22. *Doryanthes palmeri*, Spear-Lily. 1966  
Watercolor and ink 19 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
23. *Ceropegia ballyana*. 1966  
Watercolor and ink 19 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
24. *Stapelia revoluta*. 1965  
Watercolor and ink 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 12 $\frac{7}{8}$ "
25. *Agave hookeri*. 1965  
Watercolor and ink 20 x 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ "
26. *Stapelia nobilis*. 1965  
Watercolor and ink 19 x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
27. *Dorstenia gigas*. 1967  
Watercolor and pencil 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
28. *Cadetia ceratostyloides*. 1967  
Watercolor and pencil 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
29. *Biarum platyspathum*. 1966  
Watercolor and pencil 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
30. *Biarum tenuifolium* var. *abbreviatum*. 1965  
Watercolor and pencil 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
31. *Biarum tenuifolium*. 1969  
Watercolor and pencil 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
32. *Pycnospatha arietina*. 1971  
Watercolor and pencil 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
33. *Iris iberica* ssp. *lycotis*. 1963  
Watercolor and pencil 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
34. *Iris* spp. 1965  
Watercolor and pencil 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "



Three illustrations for botanical studies published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Nos. 35-38).

35. *Raphia vinifera*; *R. palma-pinus*. 11 x 7 1/4"

36. Fruits of *Raphia* palms. 11 1/2 x 7 1/2"

Ink drawings prepared for T. A. Russell, "The *Raphia* of West Africa," *Kew Bulletin* 19(2). 1965

37. *Nymphaea belophylla*: plant details. 12 1/4 x 9 1/2"

Ink drawing prepared for Robert S. Triekett, "A new tropical American waterlily, *Nymphaea belophylla*," *Kew Bulletin* 26(1). 1971.

38. *Ulmus chumlia*: plant details. 12 x 9"

Ink drawing prepared for R. Melville and H. M. Heybroek, "The Elms of the Himalaya," *Kew Bulletin* 26(1). 1971.



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The following items (Nos. 39 to 59) were prepared for the folio monograph *Orchidaceae* by P. Francis Hunt (The Bourton Press, Bourton, England, 1973). Each orchid specimen is painted from a living plant, life-size, except for magnified details.

39. Composite plate: Pseudobulbs. 1970 Watercolor and ink 15 x 11 1/4"

40. Composite plate: Inflorescences. Watercolor 15 x 11 1/4"

41. *Odontioda* x *Fremar*. 1971 Watercolor and ink 15 1/4 x 11 3/4"

42. *Dendrobium densiflorum*. 1970 Watercolor 15 x 11 1/2"

43. *Vanilla planifolia*. 1970 Watercolor 14 1/4 x 11 1/4"

44. *Phalaenopsis schillerana*. 1970 Watercolor and ink 16 1/4 x 12"

45. *Aërangis rhodosticta*. 1970 Watercolor and ink 15 x 11"



46. *Polystachya bella*. 1970 Watercolor and ink 15 x 11"
47. *Stanhopea wardii*. 1970 Watercolor and ink 16¼ x 12"
48. *Orchis militaris*. 1970 Watercolor and ink 15¾ x 11¼"
49. *Vanda coerulea*. Watercolor 15½ x 11¾"
50. *Cattleya hybrid*. 1971 Watercolor 15½ x 12"
51. *Habenaria procera*. 1970 Watercolor 15¾ x 11¾"
52. *Epipactis leptochila*. 1970 Watercolor 15½ x 11"
53. *Angraecum sesquipedale*, pollinated by Hawk Moth, *Xanthopan morgani* var. *praedicta*. 1970 16 x 11½"
54. Diagram of terrestrial orchid. Ink and pencil 16½ x 10½"
55. Preliminary sketch for *Stanhopea wardii*. Watercolor and pencil 16 x 10"
56. *Phaius tancarvilleae*. Watercolor and pencil 16½ x 10½"
57. *Acineta superba*. Watercolor, pencil, and ink 16½ x 10½"
58. Seed capsules of orchids. Watercolor 16½ x 10½"
59. Seed capsules of orchids. Watercolor 16½ x 10½"



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Mary Grierson was invited to illustrate tulip species collected from Asia, Asia Minor and the Middle East by Messrs. J. M. C. Hoog and T. Hoog, Dutch bulb growers, who plan to publish a book on the background and history of the tulip. Nearly 100 paintings have been produced thus far and it is expected that there will be about twice that number when the series is completed. The selections shown (Nos. 63 to 71) were painted during the first growing season of the project.

60. *Tulipa fosteriana* (Aman-Kutan form). Watercolor 11½ x 8½"
61. *T. vvedenskyi* (low altitude form). Watercolor 11½ x 8½"
62. *T. tschimganica*. Watercolor 11½ x 8½"
63. *T. ferganica*. Watercolor and pencil 11½ x 8½"
64. *T. tubergeniana*. Watercolor and pencil 11½ x 8½"
65. *T. dubia*. Watercolor 11½ x 8½"
66. *T. vvedenskyi-bicolor* (high altitude form). Watercolor 11½ x 8½"
67. *T. aitchisonii* (Kashmir form). Watercolor 11½ x 8½"
68. *T. greigii*. Watercolor 11½ x 8½"
69. *T. praestans*. Watercolor 11½ x 8½"
70. Sketches of *T. vvedenskyi*. Watercolor and ink 10 x 7"
71. Sketches of *Tulipa* spp. Watercolor and ink 10 x 7"



Ink and watercolor drawings for Anthony Huxley, *Mountain Flowers in Colour*, Blandford Press, London, 1967. Sheet size, 11 x 8".

72. *Campanula* spp., Bellflower.      74. *Saxifraga* spp.  
73. *Campanula* spp., Bellflower.      75. *Saxifraga* spp.

As demands and pressures on land and other natural resources increase, so does the need for nature reserves to protect vanishing habitats, and to act as reservoirs for wild life. The Conservation Trusts and the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves now manage more than 800 nature reserves throughout Great Britain. Both organizations depend on voluntary support to protect and maintain miles of unspoiled coastlines, lakes, forests, moorlands, and islands—all of which are open to the public at all times, subject only to the needs of farming, forestry, and wild life protection. The artworks listed below (Nos. 76-112) were prepared for calendars and notecards to be sold in Trust Shops to raise funds for the conservation enterprises.

Curwen's British Wildlife and Wildflower Calendars, sponsored by the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, and depicting nature reserves under the management of the County Trusts for Nature Conservation. Watercolors, mat openings range from 7 x 13" to 12 x 8".

76. March, 1971: Bix Button, Oxfordshire.  
77. May, 1971: Downe Bank, Kent.  
78. July, 1971: Gower Cliffs, Glamorgan.  
79. September, 1971: Cors Goch, Anglesey.  
80. June, 1973: Westhay Moor, Somerset.  
81. September, 1973: Eades Meadow, Worcestershire.  
82. September, 1975: Alpine Plants.  
83. January, 1969: Dogwood twigs, Spurge Laurel, Green Hellebore, Common Snowdrop.  
84. February, 1969: Stinking Hellebore. (SEE COVER)  
85. March, 1969: Coltsfoot, Red Dead Nettle.  
86. April, 1969: Heartsease, Sand Sedge.  
87. May, 1969: Bluebells, Hairy Woodrush.  
88. June, 1969: Dog Rose, Black Bryony, Red Campion.  
89. July, 1969: Spearwort, Monkey Musk, Water Forget-me-not, Bur-reed, Pondweed.  
90. August, 1969: Carnation-grass, Creeping Willow, Pennywort, Grass of Parnassus, Seaside Wintergreen.

91. September, 1969: Yellow Wort, Centaury, Felworts, Clustered Bellflower.  
92. October, 1969: Bell Heather, Golden Rod, Toadstools.  
93. November, 1969: English Ivy.  
94. December, 1969: Male Fern, Navelwort.

1973 National Trust Calendar. Watercolors, average mat opening 12 x 10¼".

95. March: Mullion Cove, Cornwall.  
96. May: Cwn Idwal, Caernarvonshire.  
97. July: Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire.  
98. September: Watersmeet, North Devon.



The following 8 items were commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund for future exhibition and publication, and depict endangered plants from all over the world.

99. *Amherstia nobilis*.  
Watercolor and ink 17½ x 13½"  
100. *Ranunculus weberbaueri*.  
Watercolor and ink 17 x 12½"  
101. *Paphiopedilum philippinense*. 1972  
Watercolor 17½ x 13"  
102. *Primula palinuri*.  
Watercolor and ink 16¾ x 12½"





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103. *Medusagyne oppositifolia*. 1973  
Watercolor 16½ x 12¾"

104. *Tecomanthe dendrophylla*.  
Watercolor 18 x 13½"

105. *Strongylodon macrobotrys*, Jade Vine.  
Watercolor and ink 18 x 13½"

106. *Freycinetia baueri*.  
Watercolor and ink 18 x 13¾"

Watercolor and ink drawings for notecards, published by The Society  
for the Promotion of Nature Reserves. Average mat opening 9½ x 6½".

107. Marsh Gentian.

108. Stinking Hellebore.

109. Meadow Buttercup, Red Campion.

110. Common Vetch, Ox-eye Daisy.

111. Lords & Ladies, Ramsons.

112. Bluebell, Yellow Archangel.

Israel (excluding Sinai), though scarcely larger than Wales, includes the extreme point of distribution of many plant species; it contains up to 2,250 species, compared to about 1,700 in the whole of the British Isles. The Israeli Nature Reserves Authority protects this rich flora in its many nature reserves, where visitors may not pick flowers without permission. Miss Grierson spent the spring season of 1970 in Israel, and of 1971 in Sinai, continuing a project begun earlier of illustrating protected plants.

113. *Taveniera aegyptiaca*, Sharem el Sheikh. March 1971  
Watercolor and ink 14 x 10½"

114. *Atraphaxis spinosus*, Rabbah Monastery Garden. April 1971  
Watercolor 13½ x 10"

115. *Lavatera trimestris*, Tree Mallow; Rosh Pinna. May 1970  
Watercolor and ink 14½ x 10½"

116. *Echium judaeum*, Vipers Bugloss; Golan Heights. April 1970  
Watercolor and ink 14¾ x 10¾"

117. *Iris atrofusca*; Sde Boker. March 1970  
Watercolor 12½ x 8½"

118. *Cistanche lutea*; Revivim. March 1970  
Watercolor and ink 14½ x 10"

119. *Arum dioscoridis*; Rosh Pinna. April 1970  
Watercolor and ink 15 x 11¼"

120. *Helianthemum vesicarium*, Sun Rose; Sde Boker. March 1970  
Watercolor and ink 13¾ x 9½"

121. *Aristolochia semperviviens*, Birthwort; Golan Heights. April 1970  
Watercolor 15 x 10½"

122. *Tulipa ampliophila*; Sde Boker. March 1970  
Watercolor and ink 13 x 9¾"

123. *Rumex cyprium*, Dock or Sorrel. March 1970  
Watercolor and ink 14¼ x 10¾"

124. *Aristolochia mauraum*, Birthwort; Golan Heights. April 1970  
Watercolor and ink 14¼ x 10½"

125. *Convolvulus* sp., Bindweed. April 1970  
Watercolor 13 x 9"



126. *Astragalus spinosus*, Milk Vetch; Sde Boker. March 1970  
Watercolor and ink 14 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
127. *Convolvulus hystrix*, Bindweed; Sharem el Sheikh. March 1971  
Watercolor and ink 13 x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
128. *Scorzonera papposa*; Sde Boker. March 1970  
Watercolor 13 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
129. *Crataegus sinaicus*; Rabbah Monastery Garden, April 1971  
Watercolor and ink 13 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Miscellaneous

130. Ferns, leaf forms in embroidery.
131. Hand-cut goblet and pitcher.
132. Bookplate design for Dr. William T. Stearn.
133. British Flora postage stamps, issued 24 April 1967.



List of Lenders:

- Item 1: Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Shropshire.
- Items 2-8, 10-21, 54-59, 70-71: Miss Mary Grierson.
- Items 22-38: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.
- Items 39-53: The Bourton Press, Bourton, Berkshire.
- Items 60-69: The Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
- Items 72-75: The Blandford Press, London.
- Items 76-82, 87-112: Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, Lincoln.
- Items 83-86: National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, London.
- Items 99-106: World Wildlife Fund. (British National Appeal), London.
- Items 113-129: Israeli Nature Reserves Authority.



