

‘Caro Dottore’

Clarence Bicknell’s correspondence with Stefano Sommier 1903-1918

By Graham Avery

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Introduction

The Botanical Library of the University of Florence (*Biblioteca di scienze, sede Botanica, Università degli Studi di Firenze*) has in its archives a collection of letters and postcards sent by the British botanist Clarence Bicknell (1842-1918) to the Italian botanist Stefano Sommier (1848-1922).

Sommier, born in Florence of French parents, became involved in botany under the guidance of Filippo Parlatore (1816-1877), Professor of Botany and Director of the Museum of Natural History in Florence. An active traveller and collector of plants, Sommier visited Crimea, the Caucasus, the Urals, Siberia, Scandinavia, Scotland, Ireland, France, Switzerland, the Balkans, and islands of the Mediterranean, as well as Tuscany and other regions of Italy. He was a founder member of the *Società Botanica Italiana* in 1888, and President from 1902 to 1905. His numerous publications (172 books and articles) were mostly on botany, including floras of Siberia, the Caucasus, Malta, and the islands of Italy, but he also wrote on geography, ethnography and mountain-climbing. A catalogue of Sommier’s botanical correspondence (10,000 documents relating to 500 correspondents) is at



http://www.sba.unifi.it/upload/scienze/inventaripdf/Corrispondenza_Sommier.pdf.

Bicknell's correspondence with Sommier

In June 2016, with the kind assistance of Sig.na Cristina Scarcella and Sig. Renzo Nelli of the Botanical Library, I examined the correspondence. It consists of 31 documents (18 letters and 13 postcards) sent by Bicknell mostly from his home in Bordighera (but 2 from Val Casterino, 1 from Malta, 1 from England, 1 from Florence), mostly addressed to Sommier at his home in Florence (Lungarno Corsini 2) but some sent to him at the *Museo Storia Naturale* or the *Società Botanica Italiana* in Florence. It includes no correspondence from Sommier to Bicknell.

The earliest of the documents is dated 21 July 1903 and the latest 29 March 1918. All are written in Italian, except for two letters and two postcards written in English, or partly in English. In the archive the documents in the folder relating to Bicknell are not numbered and are not in chronological order. I have therefore numbered them in the format year-month-day (thus the letter of 21 July 1903 is identified as 1903-07-17). Six of the letters are inadequately dated (with indication only of day and month, not year) but analysis of the contents has allowed me to attribute years with a good degree of certainty.

In this note I have transcribed and translated all the documents, with the kind assistance of Sig. Annalisa Cecchi, my wife. Since I am mainly interested in Bicknell's life and ideas, I have not transcribed certain parts of documents that deal with botanical matters.

Summary

Although the main theme of the correspondence is botany, there are numerous references to Bicknell's other interests such as prehistoric archaeology, Esperanto, travel, and his views on social matters.

Friendship

The first letter (document 1903-07-20) resulted from a visit by Bicknell in 1903 to the island of Capraia, off the coast of Tuscany, where local people told him of an interesting flower discovered by Sommier, which he tried to find, but failed.

Bicknell, who had botanised in Italy for 25 years, and had published two botanical works, corresponded with many Italian botanists and probably knew already of Sommier's work. But the two men had not met or corresponded. Sommier's main interest was the flora of Tuscany and the islands, while Bicknell had worked on the flora of the Riviera and the Maritime Alps. Apparently it was Marchese Giacomo Doria, a mutual acquaintance, who told Bicknell that Sommier was writing a flora of the islands of Tuscany, and this prompted him to contact Sommier, offering to send him a list of the plants of Capraia as a contribution to the flora.

This first letter, in which Bicknell addressed Sommier as 'Egregio Signore' (Eminent Sir) and concluded 'Di Lei dev^{mo}' (Your most devoted servant) was rather formal. Subsequent letters were more informal, with the use of expressions such as 'Caro Dottore' and 'Suo affettuoso' (document 1904-07-01). However, in accordance with Italian convention, Bicknell always addressed Sommier in the third person as 'Lei'.

Bicknell evidently enjoyed visiting Sommier in Florence: after writing in 1904 ‘I have said so many times that I hope to come to Florence, and then not come, that I don’t dare say it again’ (document 1906-11-21), he did visit Florence several times.

Bordighera, where Bicknell lived, was international rather than Italian in character, while Florence offered a wider range of cultural and social contacts. It was (and still is) in many ways the intellectual capital of Italy, and it is no accident that the *Società Botanica Italiana* and other learned institutions originated in Florence, and remain there.

In 1907 Bicknell thanked Sommier for his ‘friendly welcome in Florence’ (document 1907-02-15), and in 1910 wrote ‘I’m sorry that you were away when I was in Florence’ (document 1910-06-04). In 1913 Bicknell was in Florence for a week over Christmas, and wrote about his experiences there, which included meeting Sommier’s niece and Conte Gigliucci, a member of a distinguished Anglo-Florentine family (document 1914-01-01).

Bicknell sent friendly greetings on Sommier’s name-day (1 January) in 1907 and 1914. The letter in which he included a sketch of Sommier’s name-flower (*Stephanotis*) is particularly endearing (document 1907-01-01). Although Bicknell several times invited Sommier to visit him in Bordighera, and at his summer home in the mountains, the offer does not seem to have been taken up (document 1908-02-28).

A sign of growing familiarity is the fact that, later in the correspondence, Bicknell wrote in English (or partly in English). Sommier, who had many international contacts, no doubt spoke several languages (his parents were French). Bicknell made errors in written Italian, about which he was charmingly frank: ‘Oh, this language! I can’t even write what I mean without lots of mistakes’ (document 1904-07-01).

Botany

Sommier was a leading member of the *Società Botanica Italiana*, and it was at his suggestion that Bicknell was admitted as a member in 1903 (document 1903-11-23). It was a compliment for Bicknell to join this prestigious Society, the Italian equivalent of London’s Linnean Society.

As a result, Bicknell’s name appeared in its publications several times. In 1904 the Society published an article by him on the flora of Sardinia (see document 1904-04-10); in 1904 it published an article by Sommier on *Centaurea hyalolepis* in which he thanked Bicknell for sending him specimens (document 1903-11-23); in 1907 it published a note by Sommier describing a specimen of *Pedicularis* collected by Bicknell, a new hybrid to which he gave the name *Pedicularis Bicknelli* (document 1907-01-24).

Sommier presented to Bicknell several of his botanical publications (see documents 1903-12-01, 1908-03-13, 1916-06-28) and Bicknell sent to Sommier his Flora of Bordighera and San Remo, describing it modestly as ‘my poor publication’ (see document 1903-11-23).

Throughout their friendship Bicknell remained modest about his own botanical knowledge, and respectful of Sommier’s expertise: he wrote ‘I hope that you (and not me) will write a few lines concerning the *Pedicularis* for the simple reason that you will do it better than me’ (document 1907-02-15).

Archaeology

It was in 1897 that Bicknell began his study of the prehistoric rock engravings in the Maritime Alps. The result was that archaeology replaced botany as his main activity, and his work on rock art later earned him world-wide recognition. However, Bicknell continued to pursue his botanical interests, as is shown by this correspondence with Sommier, and by his correspondence with the Swiss botanist Emile Burnat.

Bicknell told Sommier how busy he was with the rock art: in 1907 he wrote 'I now have a lot of work to do on the rock engravings of the Maritime Alps' (document 1907-02-15) and in 1908 'I spent last summer on the engraved rocks' (document 1908-02-28). He presented to Sommier some of his publications on the prehistoric rock engravings (documents 1908-02-28, 1914-01-01).

While it was botany that took Bicknell to the Maritime Alps, which inspired his work on prehistory, it was prehistory that took him to Sardinia in 1904. His aim there was to visit the ancient nuraghi, but naturally he did not ignore the botany, which inspired him to publish an article on the island's flora (see document 1904-04-10).

Esperanto

In Bicknell's correspondence with Sommier (photo in later life, right) there are several references to the international language Esperanto. Bicknell was Vice-President of the Italian Esperanto Society (*Itala Societo Esperanto*) and he attended the first World Esperanto Congress at Boulogne-sur-mer in 1905 as a representative of Italy.

Of particular interest is the postcard (printed in Esperanto with portraits of six leading Esperantists including Bicknell) on which he wrote in 1903 'I don't know if the Esperanto language is making progress in Florence, here I have never been able to find converts. Although I'm Vice-President of the Italian society for promoting it I know nothing since the others don't write to me' (document 1903-12-06).



By 1906 the situation had changed, for he wrote 'now that the language is making progress in our country I would like to get to know the 'faithful' in Rome and Florence' (document 1906-11-21). In 1910 he made an 'apostolic journey' to visit the Esperantists in Malta (documents 1909-12-10, 1910-02-05).

On the Esperanto language he commented ‘I regret that people don’t dedicate a week to learning it – it’s so easy and useful for every kind of correspondence’ (document 1903-12-06). Frustrated by his difficulties with Italian, he wrote ‘Esperanto is the only language that I can write well!’ (document 1904-07-01).

Travels

In his correspondence with Sommier Bicknell described journeys to several islands of the Mediterranean: Capraia in 1903 (document 1903-07-20), Sardinia in 1904 (document 1904-04-10) and Malta in 1910 (documents 1910-01-19, 1910-02-05). Since the Mediterranean islands were of special interest to Sommier, Bicknell reported in detail on his botanical finds there. By contrast, though Bicknell mentioned his journeys to England (document 1903-10-15), the Maritime Alps (document 1904-07-01), France (document 1907-02-15) and Ceylon (document 1908-02-28), he gave no botanical information about them.

Commenting on his journeys, Bicknell joked about the fleas in a hotel at Capraia (documents 1908-03-13, 1910-06-04), recounted a ‘splendid’ voyage past the islands of Tuscany (document 1908-03-13) and described his visits to prehistoric sites in Malta (document 1910-02-05).

Society

Bicknell’s account of his visit to Florence in 1914 reveals some of his views on social and cultural issues. Having served as an Anglican priest for many years, he abandoned the church soon after arriving in Bordighera in 1878. On Christmas Day 1910 he attended High Mass in Santa Maria Novella, one of Florence’s major churches, and after describing the service he wrote ‘Qua doctrines I am quite an agnostic but am always very much interested in all rites and liturgies and traditional beliefs and ceremonies’ (document 1914-01-01).

His liberal views are illustrated by his comment on the Tango, a new dance craze that he saw performed in Florence: ‘The figures I saw were all beautiful, much better than the stupid waltz and polka, and I wish everybody would learn the Tango’ (document 1914-01-01).

The Great War, which Italy entered in 1915, brought sadness. Bicknell wrote from the mountains in 1916 ‘so many of my young friends (cow-herds) are away, and two are killed or prisoners – who knows?’ (document 1916-06-28). Referring to a parcel sent to Malta in 1918 he wrote ‘Surely letters and postcards and parcels have not all been torpedoed & sunk!’ (document 1918-03-29).

Transcripts and translations

Transcribed here in chronological order are the documents sent by Clarence Bicknell to Stefano Sommier. They are published with the kind permission of the *Biblioteca di scienze, sede Botanica, Università degli Studi di Firenze* (<http://www.sba.unifi.it/>)

In the transcripts I have

- identified each document by date (thus the letter of 20 July 1903 is 1903-07-20)
- used underlining where Bicknell used it
- not tried to correct his errors of grammar and spelling (indicated in some cases by *sic*)
- indicated in square brackets [] the passages that I have not transcribed
- inserted a series of dots ... to indicate that text is omitted
- used *italics* for my own comments

In the translations I have

- used *italics* for botanical terms, instead of the underlining used by Bicknell
- often used a comma or full stop in place of the dash (-) frequently used by Bicknell
- simplified the formal phrases at the beginning and end of letters, e.g. by translating
 - Egregio ('Eminent') as 'Dear'
 - Da Lei devotissimo ('Your most devoted servant') as 'Yours'

1903-07-20 Letter, 4 pages

Bordighera 20 luglio 1903

Egregio Signore, Dopo il mio ritorno da un piccolo viaggio all'isola di Capraja, ove passai piacevolmente circa una settimana, ho sempre creduto di scrivere alla sua S.V. Perché là il direttore della Colonia Penale Agricola, come pure il Capo della Posta, mi dissero che Lei aveva fatto due visite botaniche all'isola: quest'ultimo però aggiunse che alla Cala del Zuchetto Lei aveva scoperto una pianta nuova ed assai interessante: quindi fece parecchie ricerche in quella regione ma non vide altro che le solite Linaria e Centaurea viste prima in altri luoghi. Voleva scriverLe nella speranza di poter avere una sua lista delle piante da Lei trovate in Capraja, e offrirLe la mia che contiene una 30-40 di piante non segnate da Moris. Poi sono stato indisposto a casa tutto Luglio, e finalmente ho [*illegible word, possibly error for saputo*] dal Marchese Doria di Genova che Lei sta scrivendo la flora dell'arcipelago toscano, e quindi io potrò ben aspettare. Però, se non troppo tardi, potrei mandarLe, se fosse di alcun'utilità, la mia piccola lista. Di Lei dev^{mo} Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Sir, Since returning from a little trip to the island of Capraia, where I passed a pleasant week or so, I have been meaning to write to Your Honour. This is because the Director of the Agricultural Penal Colony, and likewise the Head Postmaster, told me that you had made two botanical visits to the island; the latter added that at Cala del Zuchetto you had found a new and interesting plant; so I made a few searches in the area but saw only the usual Linaria and

Centaurea already seen in other places. I wanted to write to you in the hope of obtaining your list of the plants that you found on Capraia, and to offer you my list which includes 30-40 plants not mentioned by Moris. Then for all of July I was at home indisposed, and finally I [learned] from Marchese Doria of Genova that you are writing the flora of the Tuscan Archipelago, so I can easily wait. But, if it's not too late, I could send you, my own little list, if it's of any use. Yours sincerely, Clarence Bicknell

Capraia: island off the coast of Tuscany

Your Honour: Signoria Vostra (S.V.), an expression used in formal correspondence

Agricultural Penal Colony: founded in 1873 and closed in 1986, one of several 'open-air' prisons created on the islands of Tuscany in the 19th century. They remained in use in the 20th century during the Fascist period, and the open prison on Gorgona is still in use. On Capraia the Director's house is now the office of the local council, and the site of the prison is being restored and promoted for tourism.

Cala del Zucchetto: small cove in the south of the island.

Moris: Giuseppe Moris (1796-1879), politician and botanist, whose magnum opus was a three-volume Flora of Sardinia. Bicknell is probably referring here to his *Florula Caprariae* (Little Flora of Capraia) published in 1839.

Marchese Doria: Giacomo Doria (1840-1913), politician from a noble Genovese family, naturalist and botanist, who in 1893 founded a museum in Genova (now the *Museo di storia naturale Giacomo Doria*). He collected plants on the islands off Tuscany for his herbarium. In 1894 Sommier accompanied him on a cruise to Capraia and other islands.

Tuscan Archipelago: the chain of islands off the coast of Tuscany (Elba, Giglio, Capraia, Montecristo, Pianosa, Gorgona, Giannutri). Sommier botanised on the islands from 1880 to 1910, wrote articles on their flora; and in 1902 published an outline for a *Flora dell'Arcipelago toscano* which he never completed.

1903-07-21 Postcard

Bordighera 21 vii 1903

Egregio Signore, La ringrazio tanto tanto per la Sua lettera, come pure per l'ospusculo (*sic*). Pare che siano propriamente una risposta telepatica alla mia di ieri. Come fra poche ore sono di partenza per i monti, non posso scriverle a lungo oggi, ma fra pochi giorni risponderó. Con distinta stima di Lei dev. Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Sir, Many thanks for your letter, and also for the publication. You really seem to have replied telepathically to my letter of yesterday. Since I leave in a few hours for the mountains, I can't write at length today, but will reply in a few days. Yours with best regards, Clarence Bicknell

Publication: probably Sommier's article *Aggiunte alla Florula di Capraia* (Addendum to the Flora of Capraia) published in the *Nuovo giornale botanico italiano* in 1898

1903-10-15 Letter, 2 pages

15 ottobre (*probably 1903, see note below*)

Fairseat, Wrotham, Kent, Inghilterra

Egregio Signor Dottore, La ringrazio per la Sua. Domani partirò per l'Italia, e dentro la prossima settimana spero di poterle inviare le piante di Capraja e di rispondere più a lungo alla sua interessante lettera. Con cordiali saluti di Lei dev. Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, Thanks for your letter. Tomorrow I leave for Italy, and in the course of the next week I hope to be able to send you the plants from Capraia, and to reply at greater length to your interesting letter. Yours with best wishes, Clarence Bicknell

Fairseat: on 10 October 1903 Bicknell sent a letter from the same address to his friend Emile Burnat, so I attribute this letter to 1903

1903-11-23 Letter, 8 pages (written on long, narrow sheets of paper) plus envelope

Bordighera 23 Nov (*1903 indicated by the postmark*)

Egregio Caro Signore, La ringrazio per la formula di domanda d'ammissione alla S.B.I. che ho mandato al Prof. Arcangeli. (Mi perdoni questa carta, ma scrivo fuori di casa e non trovo altra oggi) e vorrei rispondere alla di Lei domanda colle piante del mio erbario sott'occhio. [*Not transcribed: 3 pages on Centaurea*]. Ma mi rincresce assai che Lei non ha la mia misera pubblicazione – ora gliene mando 2 esemplari, uno per Lei con alcune correzioni e l'aggiunta di circa 30 buone specie (non conto gli Hieracium) trovate dopo 1896. Vi sono degli errori tipografici a migliaia, e molti botanici conosciuti, e certamente altri non ancora scoperti. Ma pazienza! Ho fatto quello che ho potuto onestamente! Non ho corretto l'altra copia, che Lei può dare a chi vuole. Con ringraziamenti e cordiali saluti di Lei dev. C. Bicknell. Scriva pure altre domande - Lei mi farà tanto piacere si potrà correggere alcune delle mie determinazioni ecc. Aggiungo, per dire qualche cosa di buono di me stesso, che la carta topografica nel mio libro è buona; e più, che forse vi sono poche piccole regioni di uguale superficie del mondo che sono più esplorate che la mia da me! Però, ogni anno trovo qualche cosa, e la scorsa settimana ho potuto aggiungere Juniperus sabina

Translation

Dear Sir, Thank you for the application form for joining the S.B.I. (Società Botanica Italiana), which I have sent to Prof. Arcangeli (excuse me for this paper, I'm writing away from home and can't find anything else today) and I would like to reply to your questions with my herbarium plants in front of me. [*In the pages not transcribed Bicknell mentions a Centaurea collected by him in 1894 and sent for identification to Penzig and Briquet; he compares it with other specimens and other species, and provides sketches of parts of the plant*]. I'm very sorry that you don't have my poor publication – I will now send 2 copies of it, one for you with some corrections and the addition of 30 good species (not counting the *Hieracium*) that I have found since 1896. There are thousands of typographic errors, many botanical errors that I have noticed, and no doubt others that I haven't seen. But bear with me! I've done what I honestly could! I haven't corrected the other copy, which you can give to whoever you wish. Yours with thanks and best wishes, C. Bicknell. I also have other questions. It would give me much pleasure if you could correct some of my botanical

determinations etc. Let me add, to say something good of myself, that the map in my book is good, and moreover there are few small regions of the same size in the world that have been better explored than mine by me! Still, every year I find something new, and last week I added *Juniperus sabina*.

Società Botanica Italiana: Bicknell's admission to membership of the Society was accepted at its meeting in Florence on 13 December 1903

Arcangeli: Giovanni Arcangeli (1840-1921), Professor of Botany at Pisa 1865, Professor of Botany at Torino 1880, Director of Botanical Garden, Pisa 1882

Centaurea: Sommier published a note on *Centaurea hyalolepis* in the *Bullettino della Società Botanica Italiana* of 1904 (pages 114-126) in which he thanked Arcangeli and Bicknell for sending him specimens, and cited Bicknell's *Flora of Bordighera and San Remo*. See also document 1903-12-06

Penzig: Otto Penzig (1856-1929), German botanist who settled in Italy, Professor of Botany at Torino from 1886

Briquet: John Briquet (1870-1931), Curator and later Director of the Conservatoire Botanique, Geneva

My poor publication: Bicknell's *Flora of Bordighera and San Remo* published in 1896 by Pietro Gibelli of Bordighera. Bicknell remarked in the Preface of the book 'It would be difficult to find another region of equal size with a richer or more varied flora'. He had encountered problems with the printer, as he explained in a letter to Emile Burnat on 28 June 1896: 'J'ai presque fini à imprimer - quels nombreux fautes d'impression (outré aux erreurs de l'auteur!). Et ce pauvre Pietro n'a jamais assez de lettres (type anglais) donc il change toujours, moi j'oublie – et nous avons une mélange extraordinaire et très confusing'.

1903-12-01 Letter, 2 pages

Bordighera 1 Dec 1903

Egregio Signore, Lei ha avuto la gentilezza di mandarmi un bel regalo, che leggerò con vivo interesse. Sapevo già che Lei è stato [word illegible] al Caucaso, avendo letto il resoconto del viaggio botanico di S. Levier, ma glieli mando in segno di gratitudine. Con cordiali saluti, Suo dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Sir, You have had the kindness to send me a fine present, which I will read with much interest. I knew that you had been [...] to the Caucasus from reading the account of the botanical expedition by Signor Levier, but (*passage difficult to read*) I send you a sign of gratitude. Yours, with good wishes, C. Bicknell

A fine present: probably Sommier's book *Enumeratio plantarum anno 1890 in Caucaso lectarum* (List of plants collected in the Caucasus in 1890) published in 1900 by the Scientific Academy of St. Petersburg. This magnum opus of more than 600 pages, with introductory text in French and scientific text in botanical Latin, describes 1,818 plant species.

Levier: Emile Levier (1838-1911), Swiss medical doctor who settled in Florence. He made botanical excursions with Sommier in Italy and elsewhere, including their three-month expedition in the Caucasus in 1890 which resulted in the book *Enumeratio plantarum* of which he and Sommier were co-authors. The account of the expedition to which Bicknell refers was probably Levier's book *A travers le Caucase, notes et impressions d'un botaniste* published in 1894.

1903-12-06 Postcard

(The text printed on both sides of the postcard is in Esperanto: on the reverse side are portraits of six Italian Esperantists: Bicknell's message is written between their photos)

Address side:

(Printed) Esperanto, Itala Societo, Unuigo Poata Unversala, Postkarta, Al Sinjor

(Written) Dott S. Sommier, Museo Storia Naturale (*deleted*) Lungarno Corsini 2 (*added by another hand*) Firenze

Reverse side:

(Printed) ITALAI ESPERANTISTOI, Doktoro G. Cacciapuoti - Napoli - PREZIDANTO, Doktoro Marignoni - Crema - Honora Membro, Clarence Bicknell – Bordighera - [VIZ]PREZIDANTO, Givanni Germano – Torino - Direktoro de l'Esperantista', Grafo A. Gallois - Riolunato - Generala Sekretario, Eugenio Blanc – Roma - Membro de la Direktora Komitato

(Written) Bordighera 6 Dec 1903 Egregio e Caro Signore, Le mando la Centaurea. Ho trovato un esemplare doppio della Rosa sempervirens I. Capraja: questo ad aggiungere al suo erbario. Ecco il mio ritratto, poco buono. Io non so se la lingua Esperanto va avanti in Firenze, qui non ho mai potuto trovare proseliti. Quantunque V.P. della Società italiana per la Propaganda, non so nulla perché gli altri non mi scrivono. Mi rincresce che tutti non dedicano una settimana ad imparla – e così facile e comoda per la corrispondenza di qualunque genere. La ringrazia di cuore per l'opuscolo mandatomì, stavo leggendo della grande diversità di lingue nel Caucaso e quello mi spinse a parlare dell' Esperanto. Con saluti di Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Reverse side:

(Printed) ITALIAN ESPERANTISTS, Dr G. Cacciapuoti - Naples - PRESIDENT, Dr Marignoni - Crema - Honorary Member, Clarence Bicknell – Bordighera - VICE-PRESIDENT, Giovanni Germano – Turin - Director of 'The Esperantist', Count A. Gallois - Riolunato - General Secretary, Eugenio Blanc – Rome - Member of the Management Committee

(Written) Dear Sir, I am sending you the *Centaurea*. I have found a spare specimen of the *Rosa sempervirens* from the Isola di Capraia: that's for you add to your herbarium. Here's my portrait, it's not very good. I don't know if the Esperanto language is making progress in Florence, here I have never been able to find converts. Although I'm Vice-President of the Italian society for promoting it, I know nothing since the others don't write to me. I regret

that people don't dedicate a week to learning it – it's so easy and useful for every kind of correspondence. I thank you with all my heart for the publication that you sent me, I have been reading about the great variety of languages in the Caucasus, and that's what made me talk about Esperanto. Yours sincerely, C. Bicknell

Persons mentioned: on this postcard of the Italian Esperanto Society are portraits of six leading members. Clarence Bicknell is described as Vice-President, and the others depicted are Daniele Marignoni (author of the first Italian guide to Esperanto in 1890). Albert Gallois (a French count, married to an Italian, who founded the *Itala Societo por la Propagando de Esperanto* in 1902), Giovanni Cacciapuoti (who together with Gallois helped to found the review *L'Esperantista*) and Giovanni Germano (Director of the review)

1904-01-10 Postcard

Bordighera 10 1 1904

Caro Dott Sommier, Il bel pacco di piante e arrivato oggi, e gliene ringrazio tanto. Molte cose mi interessano assai – la piccola Silene di Capraja, la Ranunculus e la Fumaria. Le ringrazio pure per le mie piante mandate indietro. Ho dovuto per il momento rinunciare (*sic*) al mio viaggio a Napoli, ritornando via Firenze, ma spero di vederLa prima della fine dell'inverno. Con cordiali saluti di Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Dr Sommier, The nice packet of plants arrived today, thanks very much for it. Lots of things interest me – the small *Silene* from Capraia, the *Ranunculus* and the *Fumaria*. Thanks also for returning my plants to me. For the moment I have had to give up my trip to Naples with return via Florence. But I hope to see you before the end of the winter. Yours with best wishes, Cl. Bicknell

1904-04-10 Letter, 4 pages

Bordighera 10 Aprile (1904, *see note below*)

Egregio Caro Signore, Oggi sono tornato da un piccolo viaggio in Sardegna. Li (*sic*) 25 Marzo messi piedi a Porto Torres – poi andai a Sassari, Macomer, Cagliari ed Iglesias, e partii da Cagliari avant'ieri, Aprile 8. Lo scopo principale del mio viaggio era di vedere i nuraghi ma naturalmente tutti i giorni ho erbarizzato più o meno, e ho fatto una lista abbastanza completa di tutte le piante fiorite che ho osservate. Ma vorrei sapere se un breve racconto del viaggio, con lista di piante, più alcune osservazioni, avrebbe alcune (*sic*) interesse per il Bull. della S.B.I.? Ella mi ha consigliato di scrivere due righe sulla mia escursione a Capraja; questo non feci, temendo di non aver nulla da dire. Però mi pare che le indicazioni delle piante vedute in Sardegna in questi pochi giorni potrebbero avere qualche interesse ed essere utili per la futura Flora completa dell'isola. Ella mi dirà francamente si o no. Con stima e saluti cordiali da Lei dev. Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Sir, Today I have returned from a little trip to Sardinia. I landed at Porto Torres on 25 March, then went to Sassari, Macomer, Cagliari and Iglesias, and left from Cagliari the day before yesterday, 8 April. The main aim of my trip was to see the nuraghi but naturally I botanised more or less every day and made a fairly complete list of all the flowering plants

that I saw. I would like to know if a brief account of the trip, with a list of plants plus some observations, would have an interest for the *Bulletino della Società Botanica Italiana*? You advised me to write a few lines about my excursion to Capraia, which I didn't do, fearing that I had nothing to say. But I think that a description of the plants seen in Sardinia in these few days could have some interest, and be useful in future for the complete Flora of the island. Tell me frankly, yes or no. Yours with regards and best wishes, Clarence Bicknell`

Nuraghi: prehistoric stone structures found in Sardinia. Bicknell's visit was prompted by his work on the prehistoric rock art of the Maritime Alps.

Bulletino: as a result of this letter, an article by Bicknell entitled *Una Gita Primaveraile in Sardegna* ('A Visit to Sardinia in Springtime') was published in the *Bullettino della Società Botanica Italiana* of 1904 (pages 193-202). The article mentions the places (indicated in this letter) that Bicknell visited with his assistant Luigi Pollini, describes the flowering plants found in different parts of the island, and concludes with a complete list of plants that they saw (a total of 223 species or subspecies).

1904-04-30 Letter, 2 pages

Bordighera 30 Aprile 1904

Egregio Caro Dottore, Le mando oggi un breve racconto del mio viaggetto in Sardegna. Ella farà quello che vuole – stamparlo o metterlo nel fuoco! Tagliarlo, correggerlo (quale è necessario) ecc. Basteranno probabilmente i fogli 1-5 senza la lista completa. Non ho potuto determinare un piccolo *Orobancha* (*Phelipaea*) forse ? nana. Una *Spergularia* aveva mandato al S. Foucauld. Ohime! L'avrà ricevuto quando era moribundo. Ieri ho ricevuto le triste notizie di sua morte. Non lo conobbi, ma mi ha scritto molte volte, delle lettere così amichevoli ed interessanti, e mi duole assai questa catastrofe. Finora non ho potuto venire a Firenze, ma certamente non mancherò di venire a fare la Sua conoscenza, alla prima occasione. Sono di nuovo legato qui, per l'arrivo di amici ecc. Con stima da Lei dev. Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, I am sending you today a brief account of my little visit to Sardinia. Do what you want with it – print it or throw it in the fire! Cut it, correct it (as needed) etc. Probably pages 1-5 will be enough without the full list. I couldn't determine a small *Orobancha* (*Phelipaea*) perhaps *nana*. I had sent a *Spergularia* to M. Foucauld. Alas, he will have received it when he was dying. Yesterday I got the sad news of his death. I didn't know him personally, but he wrote to me many times, such friendly and interesting letters, and I'm very saddened by this disaster. Up to now I haven't been able to come to Florence, but I will definitely come to make your acquaintance on the first possible occasion. I'm tied up here again, with the arrival of friends etc. Yours with regards, Clarence Bicknell

Foucauld: Julien Foucaud (not Foucauld) French botanist (1847-1904). Sommier's archive in Florence has 4 letters from him.

1904-05-20 Postcard

Bordighera 20 v 1904

Egregio Dottore, Non ho l'indirizzo del Norris che conosce – disgraziatamente egli ha abbandonato non soltanto i studii entomologi e botanici ma moglie figlio e tutto, e fa una trista vita. Egli mi scrive una volta all'anno ed io rispondo, sempre nella speranza che egli tornerà ai primi amori – ma suo proprio indirizzo egli non mi da mai e certamente per ora non pensa più alla Società Botanica. Dell'Armitage non so nulla. Lei avrei risposto prima ma da una settimana sono stato un po' indisposto e non mi sentivo di scrivere lettere. Con saluti cordiali da Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, I don't have the address of Norris whom you know – disgracefully he has abandoned not only his study of entomology and botany but also his wife, son and everything, and he leads a sorry life. He writes to me once a year, and I reply, still hoping that he will return to his first loves – but he never gives me his proper address and I'm sure he no longer thinks of the Società Botanica. I know nothing of Armitage. I would have replied to you sooner but for the last week I have been rather indisposed and didn't feel up to writing letters. Yours with best wishes, C. Bicknell

Norris: I have not been able to identify this person. One possibility could be Thomas Norris, nephew of Thomas Norris (1765 –1852) a Lancashire businessman who made a fortune in textiles and then devoted himself to collecting old master paintings, rare coins, minerals, shells and insects; he was a member of the Entomological Society of London. He had no children, but after the death of his brother he took in his son Thomas, who became the principal beneficiary of his will. I have not been able to find more information on him.

Armitage: the Revd. Edward Armitage (1822-1906) took his M.A. degree at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1848, became a Fellow of the Linnaean Society, and was Rector of Croscombe, Somerset from 1858 to 1869. In 1853 he visited Natal and published a paper on its flora. In 1889 he published a paper on the flora of Malta in the *Nuovo Giornale Botanico Italiano*, which was probably the reason why Sommier knew him.

1904-05-25 Postcard

Bordighera 20 v 1904

Egregio Signore, oggi ho ricevuto, corretto e rimandato le bozze della gita in Sardegna. La ringrazio per il Suo tanto valido aiuto, ma mi rincresce di averLe dato tanto disturbo. RingraziandoLa caldamante da Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Sir, Today I have received, corrected, and returned to you the proofs of the trip to Sardinia. Thanks for your very useful help, but I'm sorry that I have given you so much trouble. Thanking you warmly, yours sincerely C. Bicknell

Proofs: Bicknell's *Una Gita Primaverale in Sardegna* was presented 'in part' ('data in parte lettura') at a meeting of the Society in Florence on 8 May, presumably on the basis of the manuscript that Bicknell sent to Sommier on 30 April (see document 1904-04-30). The printed text appeared in the 1904 volume of the *Bullettino* published in the following year.

1904-07-01 Letter, 2 pages

Val Casterino Tenda 1 Luglio (1904, see note below)

Caro Dottore, Qui in montagna la posta arriva di rado (anche la provvista!), ogni 5 o 6 giorni. Per buona fortuna l'abbiamo ricevuto ieri, colla sua lettera, e oggi scenderà il mulattiere: dunque posso senonché ringraziandoLa per le bozze, per le sue correzioni e suggerimenti, insomma per tutto! Quanto disturbo per Lei, mi maledice, sicuro. Ho aggiunto un breve elenco di altre piante oltre a quelle citate. Va bene così? Ho cancellato la frase delle violenze! Ho! Questa lingua – non posso nemmeno scrivere la mia senza tanti errori – Esperanto è l'unica che so scrivere bene! Con saluti cordiali e ringraziamenti di nuovo, suo affettuoso C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, Here in the mountains the post (even the official post!) arrives infrequently, every 5 or 6 days. By good luck we received it yesterday, with your letter, and today the muleteer goes down, so I can thank you nonetheless for the proofs, and for your corrections and suggestions, in fact for everything! What a lot of trouble I make, you must curse me, I'm sure. I have added a brief list of other plants in addition to those mentioned. Is that OK? I have deleted the sentence about the *violas*! Oh, this language! I can't even write what I mean without lots of mistakes – Esperanto is the only language that I can write well! Best wishes and thanks again, your friend C. Bicknell

Proofs: this must have been a second set of proofs of Bicknell's article on Sardinia, which has a list of plants at the end. So I attribute this letter to 1904.

1905-03-03 21 Letter, 3 pages

Bordighera 3 marzo 1905

Egregio Caro Dottore, Un mio amico qui, Sig. Townsend, il di cui nome certamente Ella conosce come un distinto botanico dilettante inglese – che ha scritto molto sopra le Euphrasiae – mi dice che un certo C.E. Salmon botanico che presentemente si occupa delle Statice, e che ha potuto vedere e studiare collezioni di quel genere da varie parte di Europa, ma non da Italia,. Egli ha scritto al Sr. T. e Sr. T. si rivolge a me. Io ho risposto che io stesso ho pochi esemplari di Statice italiani nel mio erbario, ma che probabilmente l'erbario di Firenze ne ha la più ricca collezione in Italia e la presterebbe al Sr. Salmon. Che cosa ne dice Lei? Crede che se Sr. S. scrive al Direttore dell'Orto Botanico, sua preghiera sarebbe accolta favorevolmente? Mi scusi questo disturbo. Io penso spesso a Firenze, ma sono sempre legato qui con moltissime occupazioni ed impegni. Con cordiali saluti da Lei dev. Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, A friend of mine here, Mr Townsend, whose name you must surely know, a distinguished English amateur botanist – who has written a lot on the *Euphrasiae* – tells me that a certain C.E. Salmon, a botanist who is working at present on the *Statice*, and who has been able to see and study collections of that genus in various parts of Europe, but not in Italy, he has written to Mr T. and Mr. T. has referred to me. I have replied that I myself have few specimens of *Statice* in my herbarium, but that probably the herbarium in Florence has the richest collection of them in Italy, and would make them available to Mr Salmon. What would you say? Do you think that if Mr. S. wrote to the Director of the Botanical garden, his request would be favourably received? Excuse me for troubling you with this. I often think of

Florence but I'm always tied up here with many responsibilities and tasks. Yours, with best wishes, Clarence Bicknell

Townsend: Frederick Townsend (1822-1905) took his B.A. degree at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1850; wishing to train as an artist, he travelled to Italy, and then from 1865 lived in Hampshire. In 1874 he inherited Honington Hall in Warwickshire, where he created a garden with plants collected on his travels in Europe, America and Canada. Townsend published many papers on botany, and a Flora of Hampshire in 1883. He was a Fellow of the Linnean Society and of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, and a member of the Société Botanique de France.

Salmon: Charles Edgar Salmon (1872-1930) practised as an architect in Surrey, and was a Fellow of the Linnean Society. He published many botanical papers, compiled a Flora of Surrey published in 1931, and collected with other botanists such as Harold Stuart Thompson (who visited Bicknell at his summer home in Val Casterino in 1907) and James Walter White (who visited Bicknell in 1911). Sommier's archive in Florence includes a postcard from Salmon in Reigate in 1913.

1905-03-22 Postcard

Bordighera 22 marzo (1905 indicated by the postmark)

Mille grazie per la Sua lettera, e per l'opuscolo del Dott. Salmon, il quale ho rispedito oggi, da Lei dev^{mo} [devotissimo] C. Bicknell

Translation

Many thanks for your letter, and for the publication of Dr Salmon, which I will send on today. Yours, C. Bicknell

1906-11-21 Letter, 4 pages

Bordighera 21 nov 1906

Egregio Dottore, Ho detto tante volte che spero di venire a Firenze, e poi non vengo, che non oso dirlo di nuovo. Però, forse avrò il piacere di far la Sua conoscenza prima di Natale, perché devo assolutamente andare a Roma e ritornare se possibile per la via di Firenze. Vorrei far la conoscenza dei soci dei Club Esperanto, perché da molti anni ho tanto lavorato per la propaganda di quella lingua, e due anni di seguito ho dovuto rappresentare l'Italia nei congressi di Boulogne e di Genève. Dunque ora che la lingua fa strada da noi, vorrei conoscere 'i fedeli' in Roma e in Firenze, e nel medesimo tempo far una visita ai miei bravi corrispondenti botanici, in primo luogo Lei e poi il Dott. Pampanini ed altri. A proposito di botanica, può dirmi se è conosciuto l'ibrido Pedicularis incarnata x rosea (var. Allionii) la quale ho trovato quest'anno nei nostri monti per la 1^a volta. Fiori non ne parla, e nella lista datami da Burnat delle P. dell'Alpi Marittime non c'è questa. Se fosse nuova la chiamerei P. Burnatiana, ma è poco probabile, perchè vi sono tanti ibridi Pedicularis. Con saluti cordiali di Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, I have said so many times that I hope to come to Florence, and then not come, that I don't dare say it again. But I may have the pleasure of making your acquaintance before

Christmas since I absolutely must go to Rome, and return if possible via Florence, I would like to make the acquaintance of members of the Esperanto Club, since for many years I have worked hard to promote the language, and in two successive years I have had to represent Italy at congresses in Boulogne and Geneva. So now that the language is making progress in our country I would like to get to know the 'faithful' in Rome and Florence, and at the same time visit my good botanical correspondents, beginning with yourself and then Dr. Pampanini and others. On the subject of botany, could you tell me if you know the hybrid *Pedicularis incarnata x rosea* (var. *Allionii*) that I found this year in our hills for the first time. Fiori doesn't mention it, and it isn't in the list that Burnat gave me of *Pedicularis* in the Maritime Alps. If it were to be a new hybrid, I would call it *P. Burnatiana*, but that's not very likely since there are so many hybrids of *Pedicularis*. Yours, with best wishes, C. Bicknell

Boulogne, Geneva: Bicknell had attended the first World Esperanto Congress in Boulogne in 1905, and the next Congress in Geneva in 1906; later he attended the Congresses in Cambridge (1907) and Paris (1914)

Pampanini: Renato Pampanini (1875-1949) Assistant at the Botanical Institute in Florence from 1903, one of the first Italian botanists to be interested in nature protection.

Pedicularis rosea subsp. Allionii: a subspecies of *Pedicularis* named after the Italian botanist Carlo Allioni (1725-1804). For more on Bicknell's specimen of *Pedicularis* see document 1907-01-24.

Fiori: Adriano Fiori (1865-1950) member of *Società Botanica Italiana*, co-author of *Flora analitica d'Italia* (1896-1904), Professor of Botany at Florence from 1913 to 1936. Bicknell met him in 1910, see document 1910-06-04

Burnatiana: botanical Latin for 'of Burnat'; the Swiss botanist Emile Burnat was a friend of Bicknell

1907-01-01 Letter, 2 pages

32 Lungarno Am. Vespucci, S^{to} Stefano (for the date, see the notes below)

Egregio e Caro Dottore, This is your onomastico, so I send you best wishes for many happy years. I suppose your patronal flower, if there be such a thing as a kind of protecting guardian-angel vegetable, is Stephanotis, but I cannot see any in the florists' windows or I would send you a crown. Indeed I cannot quite remember what it is like, but think it a long tubed white narcissus-like blossom with delicious perfume, is it not? (*a sketch of the flower is included here*). A domani. Con cordiali saluti Clarence Bicknell

Lungarno Amerigo Vespucci: street running along the River Arno in Florence; no. 32 may be the building now occupied by the Hotel Principe, whose main entrance is at no. 34.

Santo Stefano: the feast of St Stephen, 1 January.

Year: the letter was probably sent in 1907. In November 1906 Bicknell told Sommer that he hoped to visit Florence before Christmas (document 1906-11-21) and in February 1907 he thanked him for his welcome in Florence (document 1907-02-15). However, the fact that the letter is written in English may suggest a later date since Bicknell's other letters in English date from 1914, 1916 and 1918.

Onomastico: name-day. Santo Stefano was Stefano Sommier's name-day. The Italian tradition is to offer gifts on a person's name-day.

Stephanotis: a kind of jasmine with perfumed, waxy, tubular, white flowers, which can be made up into a floral crown. Its name is derived from the Greek word *stefanos* (crown).

1907-01-24 Letter, 5 pages

Bordighera 24 i 1907

Egregio Caro Dottore, Avendo ricevuto oggi tutti i fascicoli del Giornale e Bullettino Bot. Ital. per 1905 e 1906, i quali – non so perché – non mi furono spedite prima, ho potuto leggere un suo articolo nel Bullettino di dicembre 1905 sul Colchicum provinciale Loret. [*Not transcribed: three pages on Colchicum*]. Ora un'altra cosa. Vorrei mandarle per esaminazione il mio unico esemplare del supposto ibrido *Pedicularis rosea* (var. *Allionii*) x *incarnata* trovata l'anno scorso. In quanto che io abbia potuto sapere, è un ibrido nuovo, e Ella forse avrebbe la gentilezza di parlarne in un'adunanza della Società. Con cordiali saluti di Lei dev. Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, Having received today all the issues of the Giornale and the Bullettino of the Italian Botanical (*Society*) for 1905 and 1906, which hadn't been sent to me before (I don't know why), I have been able to read an article by you in the Bullettino of December 1905 on *Colchicum provinciale* Loret. [...]. Now another thing. I would like to send to you for examination my one and only specimen of the supposed hybrid *Pedicularis rosea* (var. *Allionii*) x *incarnata* that I found last year. As far as I can tell, it's a new hybrid, and perhaps you would have the kindness to talk about it at a session of the Society. Yours with best wishes, Clarence Bicknell

Pedicularis: in an article in the *Bullettino della Società Botanica Italiana* of 1907 (pages 38-9) Sommier reported that Bicknell had sent him a new hybrid of *Pedicularis*, and to this subspecies, a cross between *Pedicularis incarnata* and *Pedicularis Allionii*, Sommier gave the name *Pedicularis Bicknelli*. He wrote (in botanical Latin) 'In montibus Liguria occidentalis « sotto il Castello di Ciavraireu in val Fontanalba », circ. 1800 in., in prato montano inter parentes, unicum specimen legit Cl. Bicknell, 8 Julii 1906' ('this single specimen was collected by Cl. Bicknell on 8 July 1906 in the mountains of Western Liguria below Castello di Ciavraireu in Val Fontanalba, among related species in a mountain pasture at about 1800m.')

1907-02-15 Postcard

Bordighera 15 ii 1907

Egregio Caro Dottore, Ieri Le ho mandato un pacco colla famosa Pedicularis e i Colchicum di questa regione, dal mare sino ai nostri monti vicini. Certamente la collezione non è tanto buona – fiori senza foglie – o foglie senza frutta – e come dice Lei "qualchevolta 2 specie crescono insieme". [*Not transcribed: 10 lines on various species of Colchicum*]. Io spero che Lei (non io) scriverà due righe a riguardo alla Pedicularis per la semplice ragione che Lei lo farà meglio di me, ed anche perché ora ho un lavoro lungo da fare sulle incisioni rupestri dell'

Alp. Mar. Con stima e gratitudine per la sua amichevole accoglienza a Firenze, di Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, Yesterday I sent you a parcel with the famous *Pedicularis* and some *Colchicum* from this region, from the sea to our nearby hills. The collection is surely not much good – flowers without leaves – or leaves without flowers – and as you say yourself, ‘sometimes two species grow together’. [...]. I hope that you (and not me) will write a few lines concerning the *Pedicularis* for the simple reason that you will do it better than me, and also because I now have a lot of work to do on the rock engravings of the Maritime Alps. Yours with regards and gratitude for your friendly welcome in Florence, C. Bicknell

1907-03-10 Postcard

Bordighera 10 marzo (1907 is indicated by the postmark)

Caro Dottore, Sono appena tornato da una gita in Francia per visitare delle grotte nei Pirenei e nella Dordogne, con affreschi ecc. preistorici. Certamente mandi Lei la *Pedicularis* a Vienna, se non troppo tardi. La ringrazio pure per la gentile offerta di dedicarla a me. Scrivo in fretta. Ho dovuto andare ad una funzione in casa del Comm. Hanbury, che morì ieri, e non ho potuto guardare tutta la corrispondenza arrivata durante mia assenza. Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, I have just returned from a trip in France to visit caves in the Pyrenees and Dordogne with prehistoric cave-paintings etc. I will surely send the *Pedicularis* to you in Vienna, if it's not too late. Thanks for your kind offer to name it after me. I write this in haste. I had to go to a function at the house of Sir Thomas Hanbury, who died yesterday, and I haven't been able to look at all the correspondence that arrived during my absence. Yours, C. Bicknell

Caves: Bicknell's study of prehistoric rock art in the Maritime Alps prompted this visit to prehistoric cave art France. In the Pyrenees he may have visited Niaux (where the 'Salon Noir' was discovered in 1906) and in the Dordogne Les Eyzies (discovered in 1868).

Hanbury: Sir Thomas Hanbury (1832-1907), English businessman who created the Giardini Botanici Hanbury near Ventimiglia. He died on 9 March 1907.

1908-02-28 Letter, 4 pages

Bordighera 28 Feb 1908

Egregio Caro Signore, Eccomi di ritorno dopo mio viaggio all'isola incantevole di Ceylon; e trovo la sua del 18 corr. nella quale Ella domanda perdono per aver tenuto i miei Colchicum qualche mese. Ma io non ne aspettava il rinvio; Lei è stato troppo buono a me, e assai gentile di aver guardato quel pacco poco soddisfacente di *Colchicum*. Quando me li manda, potrà mandare anche l'ibride *Pedicularis*? ma forse quella è in Germania dove credo Lei l'ha spedito. L'anno scorso sono andato tante volte al luogo dove fu trovato, ma presso le *P. rosea* e *P. incarnata* non ne ho trovato alcun esemplare. [Not transcribed: a paragraph on *Colchicum*]. Non ho ricevuto propriamente da Lei la descrizione della Sua magnifica trovata in Malta, ma credo che il Bollettino della S.B. Ital. ne parla, e non possiedo "L'Isola del

Giglio". La ringrazio tanto tanto per l'offerta di questo. Vedrà dall'estratto che mando a Lei (poco interessante) che ho passato l'estate scorsa presso le rocce iscritte. Venga ai nostri monti in estate a vedermi – ma prima a Bordighera. Il tempo qui è splendido quest'anno, sempre sole da più di 2 mesi senza pioggia o freddo. Con cordiali saluti, suo dev.amico C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Sir, Here I am, back again after my trip to the enchanting island of Ceylon, and I find your letter of the 18th of this month in which you ask me to forgive you for having kept my *Colchicum* specimens for a few months. But I didn't expect you to return them; you are too good to me, and very kind to have kept this rather unsatisfactory package of *Colchicum*. When you send it to me, could you also send the hybrid *Pedicularis*? But perhaps it's in Germany, where I think you sent it. Last year I went many times to the place where it was found, but I didn't find any specimen of it near the *Pedicularis rosea* and *Pedicularis incarnata*. [...]. I haven't received directly from you the description of your great discovery in Malta, but I think the Bulletin of the Italian Botanical Society will have it, and I don't have *L'Isola del Giglio*. Thanks very much for the offer of it. You will see from the (not very interesting) offprint that I am sending to you that I spent last summer on the engraved rocks. Come to see me in the summer in the mountains – but first come to Bordighera. We have splendid weather here this year, non-stop sun for more than 2 months, with no rain or cold. With best wishes, your friend C. Bicknell

Great discovery: after visiting Malta in 1906 and 1907 Sommier published an article *Un gioiello della flora maltese* ('A jewel of Malta's flora') in the *Nuovo Giornale botanico italiano* in 1907 (pages 496-505) describing a new species that he found there, which he named *Melitella pusilla*. He published a flora of Malta in 1915 (see document 1909-12-21)

Giglio: an island off the coast of Tuscany. Sommier's flora of the island *L'isola del Giglio e la sua flora*, published in 1900, is considered to be one of his best publications.

Offprint: the Italian word 'estratto' suggests that this was an extract or offprint of an article published in a journal, and the context implies that it was an account of Bicknell's archaeological research in the summer of 1907. I have not been able to identify such a publication.

In the mountains: in 1905 Bicknell built a summer home, Casa Fontanalba, in Val Casterino in the Maritime Alps. Sommier did not take up this invitation to visit (his name does not appear in the Visitors Book of Casa Fontanalba) though Bicknell repeated it several times in following years (see documents 1910-06-04, 1914-01-01, 1916-06-28).

1908-03-13

Bordighera 13 Marzo 1908

Egregio Caro Dottore, Che bel regalo è il libro che Ella mi ha mandato! Non so come ringraziarLa. [*Not transcribed: 12 lines on Colchicum*]. Il mio ultimo viaggio da Napoli a Genova era splendido, ho potuto vedere così bene tutte le isole del suo archipelago (*sic*) ed ho pensato molto a Lei (anche alle pulci innumerevoli in Capraja!) Con cordiali saluti. Mi creda suo amico riconoscente C. Bicknell.

Translation

Dear Doctor, What a fine gift is the book that you have sent me! I don't know how to thank you. [...]. My last trip from Naples to Genova was splendid: I could see well all the islands of your archipelago, and I thought about you a lot (and about the numberless fleas on Capraia!) With best wishes from your grateful friend, C. Bicknell.

Book: presumably Sommier's Flora of Giglio, see document 1908-02-28. On his way from Naples to Genova Bicknell would have passed the islands of the Tuscan archipelago including Giglio and Capraia.

1908-11-15 Letter, 2 pages (the year is not indicated but is probably 1908, see note below)

Bordighera 15 Novembre

Caro Signore, Lei è molto gentile di avermi regalato suo nuovo lavoro, che non merito, non avendo io fatto nulla per le esplorazioni delle isole pelagie. Però è assai interessante il libro, e gliene ringrazio di cuore. Con saluti cordiali, Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Sir, It's very kind of you to send me your new work, which I don't deserve, I haven't done anything for the study of the Pelagian islands. But the book is very interesting, and I thank you from my heart for it. With best wishes, Clarence Bicknell

New work: presumably Sommier's flora of *Le Isole Pelagie*, published in 1908

Pelagian islands: Lampedusa, Linosa and Lampione, which lie between Sicily and Tunisia, are Italy's most Southern territory; the name derives from the Greek word *pelagos* (sea).

1909-12-10 Postcard

Bordighera 10 xi 09

Egregio Caro Dottore, ho grande speranza di poter andare a Malta il mese prossimo, dopo una visita a Tunisi; non tanto per lo scopo di erborizzare come per visitare gli 'Esperantistoj' (sarà una specie di viaggio apostolico, come fece S. Paolo – Tunisi, Malta, Palermo, ecc.). E poi Gennaio non è il migliore mese per i fiori e vostra Melitta non sarà visibile. Però troverò delle Fumaria, Calendula e cose comuni. C'è una Parietaria populifolia (e un'altra forse), non è vero? Non ho, se esiste, la florula di Malta, quantunque credo di averla veduta. Le sarei tanto grato se potrebbe darmi alcune indicazioni utili. Ma non vorrei darle gran disturbo, perché questa gita non è ancora decisa. Ogni anno cerco ma invano l'ibrido Pedicularis x rosea (allionii). Temo che non trovesi mai un'altro esemplare – dove una pianta comincia l'altra finisce. Non crede che io potrei scrivere a (non mi ricordo chi l'abbia) a pregarlo di mandarmi in dietro il mio prezioso e unico esemplare? Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, I have good hopes of going to Malta next month, after a visit to Tunis, not so much to botanise as to see the 'Esperantistoj' (it will be a kind of apostolic journey, like the one made by St. Paul – Tunisia, Malta, Palermo etc.). January isn't the best month for flowers, and your Melitta won't be visible. But I will find *Fumaria*, *Calendula* and common species. There's a *Parietaria populifolia* (and perhaps a similar species), isn't there? I don't

have the Flora of Malta, if it exists, although I think I have seen one. I would be very grateful if you could give me some useful tips. But I don't want to give you a lot of trouble, this trip isn't yet decided. Each year I search in vain for the hybrid *Pedicularis x rosea* (allionii). I fear that I won't find another specimen – where one plant begins, the other ends. Do you think I could write to (I don't remember who it is that has it) to ask him to return to me my precious one and only specimen? Yours, C. Bicknell

Esperantistoji: Esperanto word for 'Esperantists'. For Bicknell's role in the Esperanto movement see document 1903-12-06.

St Paul: the Apostle Paul made three missionary journeys in Asia Minor; later on his way to Rome he travelled via Malta (where he was shipwrecked) and Sicily (Syracuse).

Melitta: the flower *Melitella pusilla* that Sommier discovered in Malta, see document 1908-02-28

1909-12-21 Letter, 2 pages

Bordighera 21 Dec 1909

Caro Dottore, La ringrazio tanto tanto per la sua lettera, per i buoni consigli, e per avermi mandato al Sr. Caruana Gatto anche per le buone notizie che il *Pedicularis* è sana e salva in Italia. Questo può rimanere nelle sue mani sino a mio ritorno da Malta dove spero di essere nella seconda settimana di Gennaio, e dove certamente raccoglierò tutto che vedo. Se non passo per Firenze al mio ritorno, almeno La vedrò in Marzo, verso Pasqua. Con saluti cordiali e buoni auguri per l'anno nuovo, Lei dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, Many thanks for your letter, for the good advice, and for the introduction to Mr Caruana Gatto, also for the good news that the *Pedicularis* is safe and sound in Italy. It can stay in your care until my return from Malta, where I hope to be in the second week of January, and where I will surely collect whatever I see. If I don't pass through Florence on my return, at least I will see you in March, around Easter. Yours, with best wishes and New Year greetings, C. Bicknell

Caruana Gatto: Alfred Caruana Gatto, a noted lawyer, was secretary of the Malta Horticultural Society. Sommier made botanical excursions with him during his visit Malta in 1906 and 1907, and they were co-authors of *Flora melitensis nova* (New Flora of Malta) published in 1915. Sommier's archive in Florence has 84 documents from Caruana Gatto.

1910-01-19 Postcard

Valletta 19 1 1910

Caro Dottore, Ho passato una settimana assai piacevole nell'isola, e il C^{te} Caruana Gatto ed altri Signori Maltesi sono tutti assai cortesi ed amichevoli, ma di piante ne ho trovate pochissime fiorite. La fioritura è in ritardo. [Not transcribed: 5 lines on various species]. Probabilmente partirò domani notte per la via di Palermo per vedere un mio amico assai ammalato. Al mio ritorno a casa Le scriverò e manderò quello che ho raccolto. Con affettuosi saluti e ringraziamenti per avermi raccomandato al simpatico Conte, Clarence Bicknell. A rivederci a Firenze in Marzo

Translation

Dear Doctor, I have spent a very pleasant week on the island, and Count Caruana Gatto and other Maltese gentlemen are all very polite and friendly, but I have found few plants in bloom. Flowering is late. [...]. I will probably leave tomorrow night via Palermo to see one of my friends who is very sick. On my return home I will write to you and send what I have collected. With friendly greetings and thanks for introducing me to the charming Count, Clarence Bicknell. See you in Florence in March

1910-02-05 Letter, 6 pages

Bordighera 5 Feb 1910

Caro Dott. Sommier, Finalmente Le mando le poche piante raccolte in Malta, con alcune regalatemi dall'amico Conte Caruana Gatto. La ringrazio tanto tanto per la sua lettera al Conte. Che simpatica persona. Siamo andati insieme al Hagyar Kim, Zurieca, Wied Babu, dove ho veduto la famosa Centaurea in bottoni, la Periploca e la Triadenia ecc. [*Not transcribed: 50 lines on various plants from Malta*]. Mi rincresce assai che ero là troppo presto, ma non ho potuto partire più tardi perché ora ho amici e parenti da me. Almeno qualche cosa ho raccolto da Malta, non avendo nulla da quell'isola nel mio erbario. Avrei potuto far più escursioni ma gli amici Maltesi Esperantisti mi hanno condotto a colazione, te ecc.!! e poi era una disperazione in campagna: si camminava e camminava senza vedere nemmeno una *Fumaria* od altra 'cattiva erba' nei campi: solamente l'eterna *Oxalis*. [*Not transcribed: 15 lines on plants*]. Mi rincresce di non poterLe mandare una collezione più interessante. Con saluti cordiali da dev. C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Dr Sommier, At last I send you the few plants that I collected in Malta, together with some given to me by Count Caruana Gatto. Thanks so much for your letter to the Count. What a nice person. We visited Hagyar Kim, Zurieca and Wied Babu, where I saw the famous *Centaurea* in bud, *Periploca*, *Triadenia* etc. [...]. I'm very sorry that I was there too soon, but I couldn't leave later because I have friends and relatives with me here. At least I collected something in Malta – I don't have anything from the island in my herbarium. I could have made more excursions, but my Maltese Esperantist friends took me out to lunch, tea, etc.! and in the countryside it was dreadful, we walked and walked without seeing even a *Fumaria* or other 'weed', only endless *Oxalis*. [...]. Yours, with best wishes, C. Bicknell

Places visited: on the South coast of Malta: Hagyar Kim (Ħaġar Qim, remains of a megalithic temple), Zurieca (Żurrieq, Bronze Age ruins), Wied Babu (scenic costal valley).

1910-06-04 Postcard

Bordighera 4 Giugno (1910 indicated by postmark)

Egregio e caro Dottore, La ringrazio per il saluto di Capraia. L'isola fa un certo progresso avendo cartoline illustrate. Spero che ci siano meno pulci nell'Albergo di Paris! Mi ha rincresciuto che Lei era fuori quando io ero a Firenze, Ho veduto Prof. Fiori, nessun altro. Come va lo studio delle poche piante Maltesi? Io non ho potuto determinare dalle descrizioni quello Calendula suffruticosa. Partirei per la montagna, Val Casterino, Tenda (dove Lei dovrebbe venire a vedermi) verso le 14 del mese. Con saluti cordiali C. Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, thanks for your greetings from Capraia. It's a sign of progress that the island has picture postcards. I hope there are less fleas at the Hotel Paris! I'm sorry that you were away when I was in Florence, I saw Prof. Fiori, nobody else. How is your work going on my few plants from Malta? From the descriptions I haven't been able to determine the *Calendula suffruticosa*. Towards the 15th of the month I will leave for the mountains – Val Casterino, Tenda (where you must come to see me). With best wishes, Clarence Bicknell

Fiori: see note at document 1906-11-21

1910-06-19 Letter, 3 pages & envelope

Monte Verde, Bordighera, Italy 19 giugno (1910 indicated the postmark)

Caro Dottore, le piante sono arrivate ieri. [Not transcribed: 12 lines on plants]. Mercoledì andrò in montagna. È guarito il mio erisipela, ma non posso dormire qui per la nevralgia, ma credo che l'aria dei monti e la vista delle genziane ecc. mi guarirà. Con saluti cordiali ed affett. ringraziamanti Clarence Bicknell

Translation

Dear Doctor, the plants arrived yesterday. [...]. On Wednesday I go to the mountains. My erysipelas is better, but I can't sleep here for neuralgia, but I think the mountain air and the sight of the gentians etc. will make me better. With best wishes and friendly thanks, Clarence Bicknell

Monte Verde: Villa Monte Verde, home of Edward Berry, nephew of Clarence Bicknell

1914-01-01 Letter, 6 pages, partly in English

Bordighera 1 Genn. 1914

Dear Dr Sommier, Dopo il mio ritorno lunedì notte non ho potuto scriverLe. Ho avuto troppo da fare dopo un'assenza da 8 giorni. Ma non vorrei (*Translation: Since my return on Monday night I haven't been able to write to you. I have had too much to do after an absence of 8 days. But I wouldn't want*) to let the first day of the new year end without writing to you, to wish you and your niece a very happy n.y. (*new year*) and to thank you for your hospitable welcome – I do not know your niece's name, whether it is Sommier or not, and so I cannot write to her. Here it is freezing. 3° sotto zero la scorsa notte, e tante piante del mio giardino sono oggi nere. Il giardiniere aveva piantato fuori Cineraria, Primula ecc. un po' troppo presto. Ora addio a tutto. Ho coperto il Heliosperma: è l'unica cosa un po' delicata che posso salvare. Le rose nel mercato sono salate e saltate oggi fino a 80 lire il cento, e il garofani a 15-16 lire, e i nostri fioricoltori si rallegrano perché tanti hanno il loro latte (*sic*) gelato! [*Translation: 3 degrees below zero last night, and today many plants in my garden are black. The gardener planted Cineraria, Primula etc. outside a bit too early. Now it's goodbye to everything. I have covered the Heliosperma, it's the only delicate thing that I can save. The price of roses in the market has shot up to 80 lire a hundred, and carnations to 15-16 lire, and our flower-growers are glad that so many people have their milk frozen!*]. This is the spirit with which many begin the New Year, and sing 'In terra pax'. I do not know if the Conte Eigliucci - Gigliucci? whom I met at your house is the grandson of Clara Novello. I saw him again last Sunday, like me watching the Tango at the Grand Hotel. Even the bishops

with their vietato (*prohibition*) have done much to advertise the dance. The figures I saw were all beautiful, much better than the stupid waltz and polka, and I wish everybody would learn the Tango. If some figures are indecent (*indecent*), it is not necessary to learn them. I do not know if you are learned about church ceremonies, but I look up to you as a person who knows everything. I was much interested at the High Mass at S.M. (*Santa Maria*) Novella on Xmas day, seeing a little ceremony quite new to me. Before the reading of the gospel the two acolytes with their great candles went out and solemnly reconducted (*sic*) a banner or gonfalone ricamato (*embroidered*) which stood behind the gospel book [*a sketch of the banner is included here*] and afterwards for a long time in front of the altar, hiding the priests. Is that gonfalone of special value or beauty, just brought out as a mark of honour? So solemnly was it brought in, that more could hardly have been done to conduct a living bishop or the Pope himself. Qua doctrines I am quite an agnostic but am always very much interested in all rites and liturgies and traditional beliefs and ceremonies. I send you my last printed pages about the rock figures which you and your niece are coming to see next summer. You may have read it or you may not care to read it, but perhaps someone else may. With renewed good wishes, Y(ou)rs gratefully & sincerely, Clarence Bicknell

My return on Monday: since the letter was written on Friday 1 January, Bicknell must have returned from Florence on Monday 28 December; since he was away for 8 days, his visit to Florence would have been from 20 to 28 December.

Count Gigliucci: probably Donatello Gigliucci, member of a distinguished Anglo-Florentine family. His grandfather Count Giovanni Battista Gigliucci (1815-93) married in 1843 Clara Novello (1818-1908), a famous soprano singer born in London, daughter of the musician Vincent Novello whose father was Italian. Their sons Giovanni and Mario Gigliucci married the sisters Charlotte and Edith Mozley, born in Liverpool, daughters of a rich banker. In 1879 Mario and Edith moved to Florence, where their home Casa Rossa in Piazza Savonarola was frequented by English and Italian intellectuals such as the writer Vernon Lee (pseudonym of Violet Page) and the botanist Stefano Sommier. Their son Donatello (1883-1937) married in 1923 Dorothy Carey, born in Guernsey, daughter of an Anglican priest.

Tango: the dance which originated in Latin America took Paris by storm in 1912 and became a craze throughout Europe; in Italy the Catholic bishops denounced its sensuality.

Grand Hotel: this hotel, patronised by Queen Victoria and other European royalty, opened in Piazza Ognissanti in Florence in 1866 and is still there.

Santa Maria Novella: one of the major churches of Florence; I have not been able to identify the banner mentioned here.

Pages about the rock figures: this was probably Bicknell's book *A guide to the prehistoric rock engravings in the Italian Maritime Alps*, published in 1913

1916-06-28 Postcard in English

Val Casterino, Tenda 28 June 1916

Dear Dr Sommier, Your postcard came here 2 days ago, but I have not found anyone since to take down a reply to the post, as we are 4 hours from Tenda. However, we get letters pretty regularly this year as the Società [*illegible word commencing with N*] are damming the lakes everywhere for electric works (and alas! spoiling our quiet valleys) and there are workmen

everywhere. I wonder whether you will ever come up here. I should so like to see you and show you the figured rocks. Pampanini says he will come perhaps in the middle of July. I shall not have any spare rooms this summer as my nephew is with me, but I can always make a guest comfortable on a bed in the sitting-room. I am very grateful to you for your kind present of the Flora of Malta. I have heard it has reached Bordighera and my cook will bring it up on Saturday. It has been very cold here, and it will not rain, so that there are hardly any flowers and the grass is short, and our vegetables will not grow. It seems as if everything was in war. And so many of my malgari (*cow-herd*) young friends are away, and 2 are dispersi (*missing*), killed or prisoners – who knows? Yours sincerely and gratefully C. Bicknell

(Added in margins of postcard) I do not know where you go in the summer – probably to Switzerland – if so, it is very easy to come here from Turin. Leaving Turin at 9.10 you can be here at 4.30 pm. Not a word from C. Gatto

War: Italy entered the war against Austria and Germany in May 1915

Flora of Malta: the book *Flora melitensis nova* by Sommier and Caruana Gatto, published in 1915, see document 1909-12-2. Its introduction mentions that Bicknell visited Malta in January 1910 and collected plants, some of which are presented in the book.

Switzerland: Sommier lived in Vevey in 1916-18 and returned to Florence after the war.

1918-03-29 Postcard in English (*addressed to Sommier at 2 Lungarno Corsini, Firenze, re-addressed by another hand to Hotel au Lac, Vevey, Switzerland; stamped Verificato per Censura*)

Bordighera 29 March (*1918 indicated by postmark*)

Dear Dr Sommier, I know you are in continual correspondence with Count Caruana Gatto at Valletta. Will you kindly when you next write try to find out if he has received a postal parcel from me. I have written and can get no answer. Surely both letters and postcards and parcels have not all been silurati (*torpedoed*) & affondati (*sunk*]! I sent him a quantity of molluscs, and to me accustomed only to writing tickets for plants and packing them, the trouble and time taken over shells was very great, and it is annoying not to know if they have arrived, I always acknowledge things myself but I know that many people do not. I hope you are well. With kind regards, y(*ou*)rs sincerely C. Bicknell

A few months after writing this, Clarence Bicknell died peacefully at the age of 75 at his summer home Casa Fontanalba in Val Casterino on 17 July 1918.

19 April 2017

Graham Avery

Published on www.clarencebicknell.com in April 2017
info@clarencebicknell.com
www.clarencebicknell.com

Annex: letters in chronological order

No		Pages	Date	Year		Summary
6	Postcard	2	21-Jul	1903	Bordighera	I leave for mountains in a few hours
30	Letter & envelope	9	23-Nov	1903	Bordighera	List of plants dated 1894, sketches, mentions of Penzig, Briquet
5	Letter	2	01-Dec	1903	Bordighera	Thanks for gift
24	Postcard	2	06-Dec	1903	Bordighera	Esperanto postcard
23	Postcard	2	10-Jan	1904	Bordighera	Journey to Napoli, return via Firenze
27	Letter	4	10-Apr	1904	Bordighera	Just returned from Sardegna, list of places visited [as in article]. Would a brief report be useful for <i>Bullettino</i> ?
8	Letter	2	30-Apr	1904	Bordighera	Sends account of visit to Sardegna. Hope to come to FI to make your acquaintance. Tied up here by arrival of friends
25	Postcard	2	20-May	1904	Bordighera	Norris whom you know has abandoned his botanical studies & family, I know nothing of Armitage
7	Postcard	2	25-May	1904	Bordighera	Returns proofs of Sardegna article
21	Letter	3	03-Mar	1905	Bordighera	You must know my friend Townsend here, Botanist Salmon, Stalice. I think often of Florence
20	Postcard	2	22-Mar	1905	Bordighera	Thanks for your letter and for Salmon's publication
11	Letter	4	21-Nov	1906	Bordighera	Journey to Rome, return via Firenze. Wish to meet Esperantists there & in FI, and my botanist friends - you, Pampanini etc
12	Letter	5	24-Jan	1907	Bordighera	Asks for Sommier's article on <i>Colchicum</i> , would like to send hybrid <i>Pedicularis</i>
10	Postcard	2	15-Feb	1907	Bordighera	<i>Pedicularis</i> , <i>Colchicum</i> . Now I have a lot of work to do on the rock engravings of the A.M.
17	Postcard	2	10-Mar	1907	Bordighera	Just returned from visit to Pyrenees & Dordogne to see cave art. Will send <i>Pedicularis</i> to you in Vienna, Must rush to Hanbury function
13	Letter	4	28-Feb	1908	Bordighera	Just returned from Ceylon. Passed last summer on the rock engravings. Come to see them, come to Bordighera first
9	Letter	3	13-Mar	1908	Bordighera	Thanks for book. <i>Colchicum</i> . Couldn't visit Firenze, had splendid journey Napoli - Genova
19	Letter	2	15-Nov	1908	Bordighera	Thanks for sending me your new work. I've never been to the <i>Isole Pelagie</i>
4	Letter	4	20-Jul	1909	Bordighera	Visit to Capraia, Colonia Penale Agricola. I hear that you are writing flora of Tuscan archipelago
2	Postcard	2	10-Dec	1909	Bordighera	I hope to go next month to Malta, after Tunis. Also to see the Esperantists - an apostolic journey cf. St Paul. <i>Pedicularis</i>
14	Letter	2	21-Dec	1909	Bordighera	Thanks for letter & advice re Caruana Gatto. Malta in second week of Jan. If I don't come to FI on way back, then in March
15	Postcard	2	19-Jan	1910	Valletta	Had good week in Malta, C. Gatto and others were kind. Few flowers. Florence in March
3	Letter	6	05-Feb	1910	Bordighera	I have a cough. Praise of C. Gatto. Description of plants found in Malta. My Esperantist friends .. Tea .. Walks, saw no flowers
16	Postcard	2	04-Jun	1910	Bordighera	Thanks for greetings from Capraia. Sorry I missed you in FI, I saw only Fiori. To Casterino on 14th, you should come to see me
1	Letter & envelope	3	19-Jun	1910	Bordighera, Monte Verde	Flower seen with C. Gatto. On Wed I go to mountains. Can't sleep here for neuralgia.
18	Letter	6	01-Jan	1914	Bordighera	8 days absent (EN can't let today end without writing, Here it's freezing) Price of flowers. (EN New Year. Conte G. Tango. High Mass in SMN at Xmas. I send my book etc
31	Postcard	2	28-Jun	1916	Val Casterino, Tenda	EN Thanks for Flora of Malta. All at war here. <i>Malgari dispersi</i> , killed or prisoners
26	Postcard	2	29-Mar	1918	Bordighera	EN Ask C. Gatto if he received my parcel. of molluscs

32	Letter	2	18-Sep	1919	Leopoldo Jung, Villa Estella, Bordighera	Financial matters relating to the late CB - mention of '20 lire' (pounds?). Very difficult to decipher
29	Letter	2	01-Jan	?	32 Lungarno Am. Vespucci [Firenze]	Greetings on your name-day. Drawing of Stephanotis. A domani
22	Letter	2	01-Jul	?	Val Casterino, Tenda	Arrival of post here, Thanks for sketches etc. I enclose a list of my plants. My problems with Italian language, I can only write in Esperanto!
28	Letter	2	15-Oct	?	Fairseat, Wrotham. Kent. Inghilterra	Thanks for your letter. Tomorrow I leave for Italy, will reply at more length

end