

Anne Elizabeth Ball (1808 – 1872)

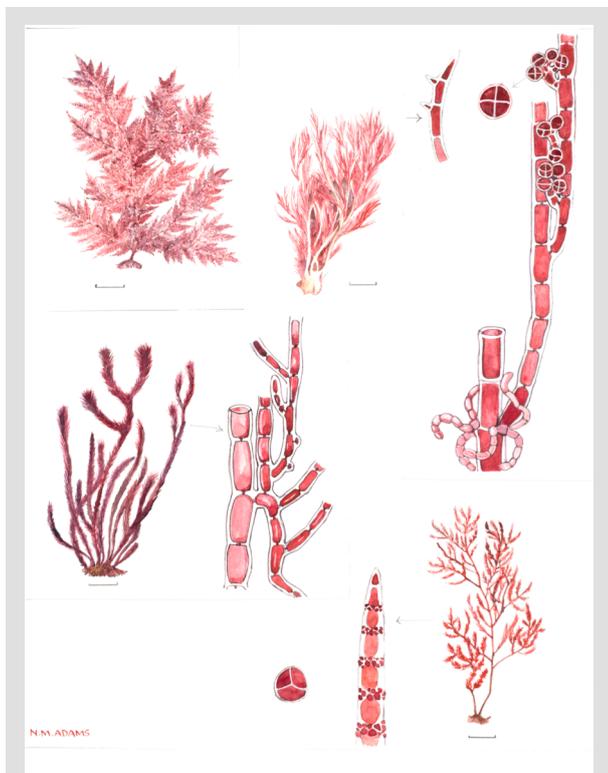
Anne Elizabeth Ball was born on 17 February 1808 in Cobh, County Cork, Ireland, a daughter of customs official Robert (Bob) Stawell Ball (1768-1841) and his wife Mary, née Green (1774-1861) of Youghal. Of their four children who survived early childhood, three shared their father's passion for natural history. The eldest, Robert, collected marine organisms and became father of mathematician and astronomer, Sir Charles Ball; Mary studied mainly pond life entomology and Anne became a competent phycologist and botanical illustrator. The Balls were comfortably well off, and their children were tutored (Mary and Anne probably at home) by the esteemed Quaker schoolmaster and naturalist James White of Ballitore.

Their father's poor health led to the family's return to Youghal in 1815. The girls, following their brother's example, collected seaweeds and shells along the shore and insects in the surrounding countryside, and in their twenties were already competent naturalists in their chosen fields.

In 1837 Anne moved with her father and sister to Dublin, where she continued collecting seaweeds, and although not a member of any scientific society, she established her reputation as an accomplished phycologist. Her scientific work could be published only by male naturalists, but William Henry Harvey (a friend of her brother) encouraged and supported her studies, and named a genus and a species in her honour. The generic name of the type species of the red alga *Ballia callitricha* was dedicated in 1840 to his friend Miss Anne E Ball, "a most zealous and successful Irish algologist who has added numerous species to the Irish flora". (*Ballia robertiana*, now a taxonomic synonym of *Ballia ballioides*, from the coast of Victoria, Australia, was named after her brother.) In 1843 Anne collected the original specimen of the green alga *Cladophora balliana* at Clontarf, a coastal suburb on the northern side of Dublin. She also assisted with Harvey's three-volume *Phycologia Britannica: a history of British seaweeds* (1846-51) and contributed illustrations of hydroids to volume four of William Thompson's *Natural History of Ireland* (1856).

After the death of their father in 1841, and their brother Robert in 1857, the sisters shared a house in Dublin, but did not get on well together. Neither did any further scientific work; instead they followed the trend of growing ferns (successfully) in the basement of their home. When they moved to another house, each had a separate garden.

Anne Elizabeth Ball died at home in Belmont Avenue, Dublin, on 3 October 1872, aged 64. Her collections, drawings and letters were later housed at University College, Cork; the Irish National Botanic Gardens (Glasnevin); the Ulster Museum and Kew Gardens. Mary died in 1898, when she was 86, outliving her sister by 26 years.



Ballia callitricha

Ballia is a southern hemisphere genus of red algae, with four species currently recognised, three of them recorded from New Zealand. *Ballia callitricha* (upper left) is widespread in cool to cold southern waters, including Australia, South Africa, Chile and the Falkland Islands (type locality) and is widely distributed in New Zealand. Growing on rock but more commonly as an epiphyte, often on the stipes of large grown algae on open coasts, it may be found in very low intertidal pools to depths of more than 40 m. The rosy-crimson plants are delicately branched into a flattened fan shape, usually about 10 cm high, attached by a disc holdfast of interwoven rhizoids.

IMAGE: Red seaweeds – *Ballia callitricha* (top left)
Nancy Adams, Te Papa