#### The Liverpool Botanical Society

**Parnassia**: Review of 2018 Field Meetings

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Foreword

Visit our website address, [www.livbotsoc.weebly.com](http://www.livbotsoc.weebly.com) to view the blogs and find out more about the society. Our facebook pages are at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/666270583430427/> . For members who do not have access to a home computer it is very likely that your local library has computers for public use.

Fuller accounts of our field meetings, along with photographs and plant species lists are available on the website blog pages, when available.

Field Meetings 2018

Including joint trips with various other societies (the MNA, WFS and BPS), 16 field meetings were listed in our programme for 2018, see below for a brief overview:

**Saturday 21st April: Cronton Colliery** Led byStephen Fletcher.

Eleven members met at Dacres Bridge Lane, off Cronton Road, to visit this former colliery site. As well as naturally re-vegetated colliery waste and restoration plantings there is also old fringe of woodland surviving from the former estate of Cronton Hall. Altogether 76 plant species were recorded during the visit, including typical Spring woodland plants such as Moschatel (Adoxa moscatellina), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and Wood Sedge (*Carex sylvatica*).

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**Saturday 28th April: Wepre Woods** Led byPeter Gateley.

16 members met up at the Wepre Park (Parc Gwepra) visitor centre on a sunny Saturday morning. There are extensive areas of old woodland and plantation as well as a watercourse and even the ruins of a castle (Ewloe Castle) in this diverse park. Typical groundflora plants noted here included Dog’s Mercury (Mercurialis perennis), Wood Sanicle (Sanicula europaea), and Moscatel (Adoxa moscatellina). Wetland species from the river valley bottom were also noted, along with some heathland species from the sandstone around the castle, adding to the total of 170 taxa recorded.

**Saturday 12th May: Crosby** Led by Steve Cross

This trip took 16 of us to a wide range of coastal and urban plants. Dry grassland at Waterloo Town Hall held Field Madder (Sherardia arvensis) and Parsley Piert (Apahanes arvensis). Coastal habitats included a small population of the very rare Dune Wormwood (Artemisia campestris ssp.maritima), starting to look a bit swamped by the surrounding "aliens" and much generally more-luxurious growth, however younger plants were seen showing that it is regenerating here. Isle of Man Cabbage (Coincya monensis), another scarce plant, was also in flower on the dunes to the north. (Steve Cross)

**Friday 18th May: Altcar Rifle Range** This regular evening trip from Hightown Station with Steve Cross.

It was a fine evening for our regular visit to the large population of Green-winged Orchid (*Anacamptis morio*) on the ranges. The orchids were in good flower, with a range of colour variants noted. Cowslips (*Primula veris*) and a good number of other species were also enjoyed on the ranges and adjacent dune areas, including Flat-sedge (*Blysmus compressus*), Twayblade (*Listera ovata*) and range of willow hybrids pointed out by Phil Smith.

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**Saturday 19th May: Coombes Valley RSPB**. Joint coach trip with the Merseyside Naturalists Association

See the MNA website <http://www.mnapage.info/naturalists-notebook/> .

**Saturday 9th June: Waitby Greenriggs** Coach tripled by Peter Gateley.

Although a 16 seat coach was booked only 8 members travelled to this wonderful Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve based on a railway cutting through limestone country. It was a fine day and highlights included flowering spikes of Fly Orchid, (*Ophrys insectifera*), Bird’s-eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*) and Globeflower (*Trollius europeaus*) among the around 130 plant species noted from the mix of grassland, wetland and woodland habitats along the linear reserve.

**Saturday 30th June: West Kirby saltmarsh, dunes and Red Rocks** Led by Robert Freeth.

On one of the very hot days of Summer 2018, 27 members were guided from the Dee Lane slipway down to the diverse saltmarsh habitat that has been developing along this section of the Dee shore. Two of the typical, but lesser known, saltmarsh plants, Long-bracted Sedge (*Carex extensa*) and Hard Grass (*Parapholis strigosa*) were showing well. Further landward there was plenty of Strawberry Clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*) to be seen in both flower and fruit and also some stands of Saltmarsh Flat-sedge (*Blysmus rufus*) looking good. There is also a strip of sand dune habitat here, with patches of the Wirral Horsetail (*Equisetum x meridionale*) growing in amongst Marram (*Ammophila arenaria*) and just inside the gold course edge Sand Leek (*Allium scorodoprasum*) was noted. Altogether around 190 taxa of vascular plants were noted from this narrow coastal strip.

**Saturday 7th July: Thurstaston Common** Led by John Crowder.

The vegetation on this sandstone outcropping site was much stressed by the prolonged hot and dry weather with much of the Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Western Gorse (*Ulex gallii*) looking dangerously dry. There were also small populations of Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*). As well as birch-dominated woodland there are also some areas of wetter heath, marked by bright green dense swards of Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*).

**Saturday 14th July: Conway Valley**. Joint coach trip with the Merseyside Naturalists Association

See the MNA website <http://www.mnapage.info/naturalists-notebook/> .

**Saturday 21st July: Ainsdale Green Beach,** Led by Steve Cross and Phil Smith.

It was a pretty wild and wet grey start but it dried out very quickly for the 16 members who assembled at Ainsdale Lido. Steve led us to Shore Road and onto the foreshore, from there we headed inland, noting the succession of plant colonisation, starting with isolated clumps of Saltmarsh Grass (*Puccinellia maritima*) and Sand Couch (*Elytrigia juncea*). As we moved inland the numbers of plants increased with many strandline species seen, including Grass-leaved Orache (*Atriplex littoralis*), Sea Saltwort (*Salsola kali*) and Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*). We turned to the north and entered a large area with a recently formed dune ridge to the West, this area is still actively colonising and currently the vegetation is a mix of saltmarsh and dune slack species including: Sea Clubrush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), Brookweed (*Samolus valerandi*), Sea Arrow-grass (*Triglochin maritimus*), Parsley Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe lachenalii*), Dwarf Centaury (*Centaurium pulchellum*) and some Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*). We then moved North into the diverse sand dunes of the Ainsdale/Birkdale local nature reserve.

**Saturday 4th August: Hale Village and Shore** Led by Dave Earl.

A recording session investigating some of the lesser visited grid squares in the area around Hale Village centre and along the Mersey shoreline.

**Saturday 11th August: Maghull/Netherton** Leader – Peter Gateley.

13 members met up at Maghull Station on a beautiful summer’s day and we made our way to the Leeds and Liverpool canal towpath and headed towards Liverpool. The canal waters were unusually undisturbed, due to a breach in Melling preventing any through boat traffic. The Yellow Fringed Waterlily (*Nymphoides peltatus*) was almost meeting across the whole width of the canal and we were lucky to see mass flowering of the Nuttall’s Pondweed (*Elodea nuttallii*). From just north of the M58 bridge we headed for Wood Hall Farm along footpaths through arable farmland. Around the recently cut hedge, mainly Hawthorn, but also with Ivy and some Holly we noticed 4 Holly Blues fluttering about, including a female laying eggs on Ivy flower buds. Following the path under the railway and across the A59, sampling abundant sweet ripe Blackberries all the way, we reached the banks of the Alt and went through the restored and tree-planted landfill of Sefton Meadows and then headed back into Maghull along the course of Whinny Brook, by the brook there was an unexpected clump of Rough Horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*) suspected to have crept under the adjacent garden wall. Recording was undertaken across the 7 monads traversed.

**Saturday August 18th Scutcher’s Acres, Local Nature Reserve, Burscough** Led by John Watt

Anything on this at all Wendy?

**Saturday 1st September: Moore Nature Reserve, Warrington** Led by Howard Harris.

Ten LBS members accompanied by Anne-Marie Belcher, Reserve Warden and Lee Lappin, local naturalist explored the paths and bird hides of Moore Nature Reserve and Moss Side. Moore Nature Reserve is situated between the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Mersey. The 186 acres site has been managed as a nature reserve since 1991 after a history of land use for farming and sand quarrying. Today the reserve is surrounded by woodland, meadows and wetlands which provide a rich biodiversity of habitats for birds, mammals, insects, plants, amphibians and fungi. On the day 180 species of wildflowers were recorded. (Howard Harris)

**Saturday 15th September: Birkenhead** Led by Eric Greenwood.

Eight members and friends met to explore the flora of former residential and industrial areas of Birkenhead North and parts of the reclaimed Bidston Tip. Recording started at Birkenhead North Station but soon moved on to explore the streets to the south of Beaufort Road adjacent to the station car park. The residential area was demolished some years ago and abandoned to nature. The party then moved to the other side of the road to record the abandoned dock railway. The day ended with an exploration of part of the reclaimed former Bidston Tip to the NW of Wallasey Bridge Road. A total of approximately 227 taxa were recorded from two monads but covering two 10 x 10 km squares. Of the total approximately 32% of the plants seen were introductions. (Eric Greenwood)

**Saturday 13th October: Eastham Fungal Foray** Led by Steve Cross

Seven members and friends ​braved the wind and rain for the fungi foray at Eastham. We found some 66 species of fungi and 1 slime mould. Only a few plants were still in flower including: Purple Toadflax (*Linaria purpurea*) Common Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*). Grey Squirrel were common and eight Stock Dove were seen and Jay, Nuthatch and Treecreeper were heard. (Steve Cross)

We look forward to you joining in with some of our field meetings from our 2019 programme