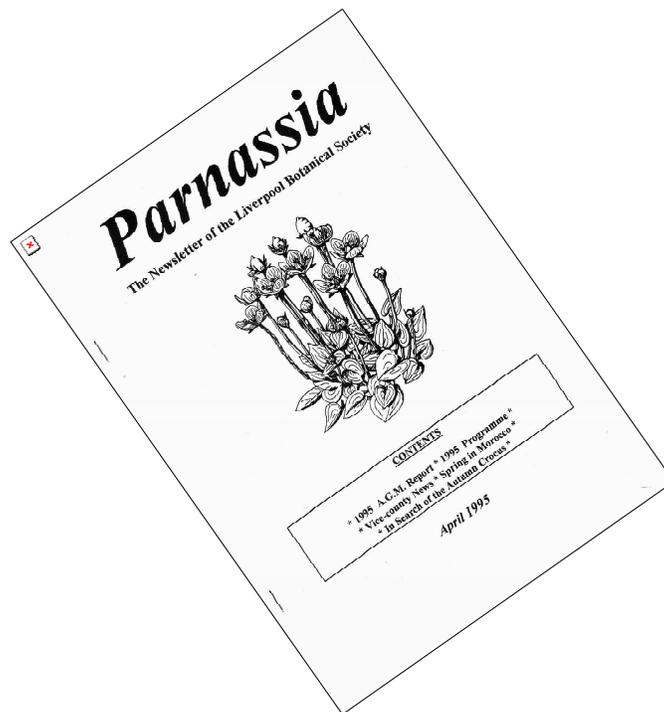


# *Parnassia*

The Newsletter of the Liverpool Botanical Society



The first Newsletter April 1995

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## Editorial

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Welcome to this **Parnassia**, which marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ever **Parnassia** in April 1995.

This current issue contains reports of the indoor meetings 2003/2004, field meetings 2004, indoor meetings 2004/2005 and the early field meetings in 2005. In addition, Rob Duffy sent me a report of the Ness Gardens meeting in May 2002 that was missing from the last issue.

Thanks for help with this issue go to the contributors: Wendy Atkinson, Rob Duffy, Dave Earl, John Edmondson, Maria Knowles, Pat Lockwood, Peter and Sheila Mason, Tony Parker and Susan Taylor.

Any contributions to the next issue will be very welcome. In the past **Parnassia** has included regular items such as Liverpool Museum News, Vice County News and News from Ness Gardens, and these would be welcome.

Finally, could I remind leaders of field meetings to write their reports as soon as possible after the walk, and send them to me for future issues of **Parnassia**.

*Keith Watson*

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## Field Meeting 2002

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### Ness Gardens

25<sup>th</sup> May 2002

Leader – Keith Hatton

Keith Hatton led the visit, later joined by Leander Wolstenholme, on a cool cloudy day, alleviated with bursts of sunshine. It was Vera's 84<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We descended through the gate to a flower bed to be shown a New Zealand alpine umbellifer, *Aciphylla* sp. that was, unusually, in flower. It was accompanied by *Erigeron microphylla*. We stopped further on at a *Buddleja fallownia* colony on the brow of a rise before descending to the *Sorbus* colonies. These were introduced by Hugh McAllister and included *Sorbus eminens*, a native of the Bristol Channel area, and *Sorbus graeca*, a non-native. Nearby were Roble Beech, *Nothofagus obliqua* and Antarctic Beech, *Nothofagus antarctica*. We had a good view here to Moel Famau.

For lunch we descended to the big pond. Here were fine specimens of Giant Rhubarb, *Gunnera manicata*, with its unbelievably large leaves. Trees of interest included the deciduous Swamp Cypress, *Taxodium distichum* from the South-Eastern USA, the Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* from China with its unusual boles, the translucent Norway Maple, *Acer platanoides* 'Drummondii' and a fine Atlas Cedar, *Cedrus atlantica*.

After lunch Keith took us through the woodland and in the background were some colourful rhododendrons. There



are formal avenues of rhododendrons and azaleas at Ness, but the latter had already faded. Thence we went onto an open common where there was a stand of Corncockle, *Agrostemma githago* not yet in flower (see reference 1).

We made the descent to the research bays where willows were being propagated under stressed conditions (see Reference 2), and where we found tanks containing Floating Waterplantain, *Luronium natans* (see References 3 and 4). We spotted a lovely Ceanothus in a nearby hedge before ascending to another plantation containing the rare conifers, Prince Albert's yew, *Saxe-gothea conspicua* (similar to Monkey Puzzle) and the attractive, 3-leaved Big-cone Pine, *Pinus coulteri*. Keith pointed out that garden plants such as Monkey Puzzle and Lawson's Cypress are becoming rare in the wild and that Ness has an important role as the cultivation base for the Edinburgh version of Kew's rare conifer collection. There, distinctively, was Red-barked Himalayan Birch, *Betula utilis*.

Orange-ball tree, *Buddleja globosa* with its pretty balls of flowers was followed by the sight of a Maize stand, here used in an experiment to determine the effectiveness of anaerobic digester liquor, or leachate, on soil fertility. A polytunnel nearby contained discarded plants of the delightful white-flowered Sage-leaved Rock-rose, *Cistus salviifolius*, which were once participants in a drought experiment. One of the party enquired if any of the plants were available and, much to the delight of all, we were allowed to help ourselves!

We subsequently entered another garden with the beautiful Wedding-cake tree, *Cornus controversa*, with perfect crown and so unlike our common Dogwood.

We were taken aback by the huge *Pieris formosa* and admired the purple cones of Veitch's Silver Fir, *Abies veitchii*, before proceeding into the picturesque Scot's Pine plantation with its Camellia understory.

Things were brought to a conclusion by heading into the glasshouse area where we saw plants of Balm-leaved Figwort, *Scrophularia scorodonia* and Limestone Woundwort, *Stachys alpina* (see Reference 5). Our final specimen was the rare Single-leaf Pinyon, *Pinus monophylla*.

After a visit to the Laburnum arch, the party dispersed in the main. However, a couple of us sneaked a tour of the climatic greenhouses with Keith and wife before the long overdue call to the café.

Thanks to Keith for arranging a fascinating behind the scenes tour.

*Rob Duffy*

#### References:

1. Hugh McAllister. Cornfield Flowers at Ness. **Parnassia** Spring 1999 pp. 19-20.
2. Keith Hatton. News from Ness Gardens. **Parnassia** Autumn 1998 p. 3.
3. Keith Hatton. *Luronium natans* at Ness. **Parnassia** Spring 2001 pp. 26-28.



4. Alan Atherton. News from Ness gardens. **Parnassia** Autumn 2001 pp.3-4.

5. Leander Wolstenholme. News from Ness Gardens. **Parnassia** Summer 2000 pp.3-5.

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## **Indoor Meeting Reports 2003/04**

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### **Holiday Exhibits 11<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

No report available.

### **Liverpool's First Botanical Garden 9<sup>th</sup> December 2003 John Edmondson**

In 1803 a group of shareholders led by William Roscoe opened Liverpool's first botanical garden. With an experienced Cumbria-born horticulturist, John Shepherd, as its first curator, and a site provided by the City Council close to the present-day University of Liverpool campus, the Botanic Garden soon acquired a major herbarium of cultivated plants as well as a botanical library founded by a gift of books from Sir Joseph Banks. A gift of specimens from Roscoe's friend Sir James Smith added greatly to the herbarium's scientific significance. The talk briefly touched on the history of other early botanic gardens in the British Isles: Oxford, Chelsea, Edinburgh, Glasnevin (Dublin) being the most noteworthy. Liverpool Botanic Garden became famous for its

collections of Monandrian Plants (gingers and related groups), and William Roscoe published a taxonomic monograph on the gingers in the 1820s. The later history of the botanic garden was described, with its move to Edge Lane in the 1830s, its destruction in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, and its sadly temporary rebirth at Calderstones & Harthill Park. In 1909 its herbarium was transferred to the World Museum Liverpool, and now amounts to more than 10,000 specimens. It includes the collections of J.R. & G. Forster from Captain Cook's second voyage to the Pacific, and a fine seaweed herbarium compiled by Thomas Velley.

*John Edmondson*

### **Decant, Recant, Decant – A Moving Experience 13<sup>th</sup> January 2004 Donna Young**

Donna's talk gave an insight into the work involved in moving the Liverpool Museum's Botany collections off site into a temporary store and their return to the Museum. As she said, it was 'an account of a unique experience and the challenges it provoked'. Her talk started from at the point at which NMGM learnt they had been successful in their bid for Heritage Lottery Funding. The option to keep the collections on-site was considered but the risk of damage from dust, vibration and changing environmental conditions were considered too high. Therefore, we had to move out.

In 1999, warehouse units on the Maritime Enterprise Park (or MEP) were chosen to be our off-site store and Unit 20 was to be 'home' for Botany for the next 6 months – or so we



thought at that time. However, building delays back at the museum meant that our move back was also delayed and one year on, we were still camped out at MEP. Then, it was all stations go as we were told we'd be moving back in Feb 2001. Massive packing of the collections ensued and what a mammoth task that was. We had no room to manoeuvre; the warehouse unit had hardly any bare floor space to start with. Everything, including the library, was packed into boxes, placed onto pallets, completely sealed in polythene and stored on pallet racking which was assembled in unit 20. A 40ft-long industrial trailer freezer was hired to freeze the collections in order to kill off any insect pests. The freezer itself posed many problems, actually getting it in to the unit caused a few headaches, even though we had been assured it wouldn't be a problem. The temperature inside the pallets took longer than expected to take down to  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$  and so the whole process extended from 9 weeks to 14 weeks. In the end, this didn't matter as we were told of another delay in moving back. This delay allowed us to manually go through our unincorporated collections and assess them. To our amazement we found that this collection alone, which had been scattered around the herbarium, amounted to nearly 30,000 specimens.

In winter 2001, we were given another moving back date. This time it was really happening! By now there were two and a half members of staff in Botany and we had additional help each day of between two and four people from the removal company, but even so the actual move of the Botany collections took 43 working days. By

spring 2002 we were happily installed in the museum in our brand new offices and collection areas. The move had been a colossal task with many delays and changes to overcome. As Donna says "it's difficult to put into words the 'high' and sense of achievement we all felt at seeing our collections back at the museum and accessible once again".

*Wendy Atkinson*

### **Annual General Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004**

The President Dr John Edmondson was in the chair and 15 members present.

Wendy Atkinson read out the minutes of the last AGM.

The Hon. Treasurer Mr Douglas Lockwood presented the balance sheet and summary of accounts. As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003 the society had made a profit of £136.06 giving a balance of £3959.60. Mr Lockwood thanked the auditors Miss Jean Bentley and Miss Joan Davis, and the typist Mrs. Patricia Lockwood. Adoption of the report was proposed by Vera Gordon and seconded by Tom Smale.

In the absence of Claire Sedgwick, John Edmondson read out the Hon. Librarian's report, in which she reported on work still required on the journals, and visitors to the library – most notably Susan Taylor. Unfortunately for the LBS, due to a change of jobs, Claire tendered her resignation as Hon. Librarian. Members thanked Claire for all her hard work that she has put into the library, most notably the cataloguing of the library and the securing of a 15-



year loan agreement for the library to be housed within the Museum. Adoption of the report was proposed by Wendy Atkinson and seconded by Tom Smale

The Hon. Secretary Wendy Atkinson presented her report summarising membership details and detailing meetings held during the year. Adoption of the report was proposed by Douglas Lockwood and seconded by Peter Tipping.

Election of officers followed:

After his 2-year term as President of the Society, John Edmondson stood down from his role. Keith Watson was proposed by Patricia Lockwood and seconded by Vera Gordon. The vice-Presidents Dr Angus Gunn and Mr Peter Gateley were re-elected en bloc; proposed by John Edmondson and seconded by Eric Greenwood. The Hon. Secretary Miss Wendy Atkinson was re-elected; proposed by Douglas Lockwood and seconded by Rob Duffy. The Hon. Treasurer Mr Douglas Lockwood was also re-elected; proposed by Wendy Atkinson and seconded by John Edmondson. John Edmondson was newly elected as Hon. Librarian; proposed by Wendy Atkinson and seconded by Vera Gordon.

President        Dr Keith Watson

Vice-            Dr Angus Gunn  
Presidents      Mr Peter Gateley

Hon.             Miss Wendy Atkinson  
Secretary

Hon.             Mr Douglas Lockwood  
Treasurer

Hon.             Dr John Edmondson  
Librarian

Election of council members:

Mr Eric Greenwood, Miss Jean Bentley, Miss Joan Davis, Miss Vera Gordon, Mrs Patricia Lockwood, Mr Tom Smale and Mr Peter Tipping were all re-elected en bloc; proposed by Wendy Atkinson and seconded by John Edmondson.

Two new members were elected as council members following the resignation of Doug Messenger and the election of Keith Watson to President. Miss Joan Vincent was proposed by Vera Gordon and seconded by Patricia Lockwood and Susan Taylor was proposed by Keith Watson and seconded by John Edmondson.

Miss Jean Bentley and Miss Joan Davis were re-elected as auditors, proposed by Pat Lockwood and seconded by Tom Smale.

Peter Tipping asked about the purchase of the 'Flora of Flintshire'. John Edmondson reported that it had not been bought yet but that he would look into it in his new role as Hon. Librarian.

Keith Watson reiterated his request for use of a digital projector for the next AGM.

Vera Gordon showed a number of slides from last year's field meetings. The bridge at Caergwrlle showing the Hornbeam, *Carpinus betulus*, Large



Bitter-cress, *Cardamine amara*, Marsh Valerian, *Valeriana dioica* and both the Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage, *C. alternifolium*. We also saw slides of the Common Dog-violet, *Viola riviniana* and the Early Dog-violet – *V. reichenbachiana*.

Wendy Atkinson

### Sunshine and Stingers: Mediterranean bees as pollinators

9<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Carl Clee

No report available

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## Field Meetings 2004

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### Caergwrle

24<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Leader – Guy Sloman

On a very warm sunny day we met at the station, and walked past the Hornbeam, *Carpinus betulus* by the river to the path through the woods to the Packhorse Bridge. Several Orange Tip butterflies were flying as we passed Butterbur, *Petasites hybridus* and Ramsons, *Allium ursinum* on the river bank. The Toothwort, *Lathraea squamaria* again was not found by the bridge. We continued up the Caer Estyn road and along the path towards Cefn-y-Bedd with Bitter-vetch, *Lathyrus linifolius*, Goldilocks Buttercup, *Ranunculus auricomus* and Yellow Archangel, *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*.

We had lunch, and then walked across the field towards the woods above the

Alyn. Some of the party descended to the bank of the Alyn, to search for and eventually find Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage, *Chrysosplenium alternifolium*. Other plants on the path included Crosswort, *Cruciata laevipes*, Wood Speedwell, *Veronica montana* and Moschatel, *Adoxa moschatellina*.

We walked through Cefn-y-Bedd and to the Plas Maen path to find Marsh Valerian, *Valeriana dioica* and fine Marsh-marigold, *Caltha palustris*. On the roadsides near Cymau we found Rough Chervil, *Chaerophyllum temulum*, Navelwort, *Umbilicus rupestris* and Early-purple Orchid, *Orchis mascula*. On the road back towards Caergwrle I saw my first-ever Holly Blue butterfly in a sunny hedgerow.



Yellow Archangel, *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* ssp. *montanum*

I would like to thank Guy Sloman for leading the meeting.

Keith Watson



## Anglican Cathedral 8<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Leader – Dave Earl

On what must have been one of the wettest and coldest days of 2004 a good number of members braved the elements to explore the grounds of the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and to record over 200 plant species in total. We greatly appreciated warm food and several pots of tea at the cathedral restaurant after the morning's recording before venturing out again to a somewhat drier afternoon.

One of our objectives was to do some general recording of bryophytes. Quite a few common mosses were found including:

*Polytrichum formosum*  
*Polytrichum piliferum*  
*Polytrichum juniperinum*  
*Atrichum undulatum*  
*Ceratodon purpureus*  
*Dicranella heteromalla*  
*Campylopus introflexus*  
*Fissidens taxifolius*  
*Tortula muralis*  
*Schistidium apocarpum*  
*Grimmia pulvinata*  
*Funaria hygrometrica*  
*Bryum argenteum*  
*Orthotrichum diaphanum*  
*Amblystegium serpens*  
*Calliargon cuspidatum*  
*Brachythecium albicans*  
*Brachythecium rutabulum*  
*Eurhynchium praelongum*  
*Hypnum cupressiforme*  
*Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*.

The only liverwort seen was *Lunularia cruciata*.

Ferns were often prolific on the old walls with Polypody, *Polypodium vulgare* agg. Black Spleenwort, *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*, Hard Fern, *Blechnum spicant* and Royal Fern, *Osmunda regalis* occurring. Shallow soils on the red sandstone support Annual Pearlwort, *Sagina apetala*, Creeping Willow, *Salix repens*, Common Whitlowgrass, *Erophila verna*, Annual Wall-rocket, *Diplotaxis muralis*, Heather, *Calluna vulgaris*, Biting Stonecrop, *Sedum acre*, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, *Lotus corniculatus* and Common Centaury, *Centaureum erythraea*. Meadow Vetchling, *Lathyrus pratensis*, Wild Carrot, *Daucus carota*, Honeysuckle, *Lonicera periclymenum* and Wild Teasel, *Dipsacus fullonum* occur along the terraces.

A number of garden species are established within the grounds and include Traveller's Joy, *Clematis vitalba*, Columbine, *Aquilegia vulgaris*, Darwin's Barberry, *Berberis darwinii*, Oregon Grape, *Mahonia aquifolium*, Welsh Poppy, *Meconopsis cambrica*, Tutsan, *Hypericum androsaemum*, Wallflower, *Erysimum cheiri*, Russell Lupin, *Lupinus arboreus* x *polyphyllus*, Butterfly-bush *Buddleja davidii*, Fodder Burnet, *Sanguisorba minor* ssp. *muricata*, Purple Toadflax, *Linaria purpurea* and Firethorn, *Pyracantha coccinea*. A tree thought to be *Crataegus laevigata* x *Mespilus germanica* has been planted. A single plant of Wild Marjoram, *Origanum vulgare* was found established by the boundary fencing above the quarry area.

A significant amount of wild flower sowing had been carried out with



Cornflower, *Centaurea cyanus* being recorded. Planting of wild flowers had also been carried out of plants such as Primrose, *Primula vulgaris*, Cowslip, *Primula veris*, Bugle, *Ajuga reptans* and perhaps even Common Dog-violet, *Viola riviniana*. Several of the flowerbeds supported a number of arable weeds including Small Nettle, *Urtica urens*, Cut-leaved Dead-nettle *Lamium hybridum* and Hen-bit, *Lamium amplexicaule*.



Henbit Dead-nettle, *Lamium amplexicaule*

Finally after our extensive exploration of the Cathedral grounds we made a historic tour in homage to William Roscoe on route back to Central Station, noting how much Prickly Lettuce, *Lactuca serriola* was becoming increasingly frequent on disturbed ground and as a pavement weed of the city streets.

Dave Earl

## National Wildflower Centre 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2004

Leader – Wendy Atkinson

No report available

## Treborth Botanic Gardens and Cors Bodeilio

5<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Leader – Nigel Brown

We met at the Museum in Liverpool, and then by car to Bangor. On arrival at the Treborth Gardens we were welcomed by Nigel, had coffee, and were shown plants of Oblong Woodsia, *Woodsia ilvensis* and the rare endemic form of Field Fleawort, *Tephrosia* (formerly *Senecio*) *integrifolia* ssp. *maritima*, a plant I have looked for but not yet found on Anglesey.

We toured the exotic orchid collection, including the Spider Orchid, *Brassia verrucosa*.

On a short visit to a local site we saw our first orchids of the day, Southern Marsh-orchid, *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, its probable hybrid with Northern Marsh-orchid, *D. x insignis*, and Bee Orchid, *Ophrys apifera*.

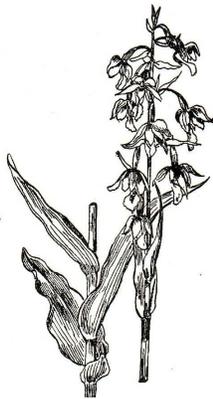
We had lunch at the gardens where Nigel showed us interesting plants such as Krauss's Clubmoss, *Selaginella kraussiana*, Adder's-tongue, *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and very large plants of Common Twayblade, *Listera ovata* in a flower bed.

We then drove to Cors Bodeilio, a NNR situated in a shallow valley between Pentraeth and Llangefni in



Anglesey. This is an important site as it has calcareous mire, very rare in the UK. The mire has a very rich flora, with many sedges, ferns and orchids.

Notable plants include Great Fensedge, *Cladium mariscus*, Black Bog-rush, *Schoenus nigricans*, Narrow Buckler-fern, *Dryopteris carthusiana* and Lesser Clubmoss, *Selaginella selaginoides*. The special orchids of the reserve, Fly Orchid, *Ophrys insectifera* and Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid, *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri* were found, but also other orchids such as Early Marsh-orchid, *Dactylorhiza incarnata* ssp. *incarnata* and *pulchella*, Fragrant Orchid, *Gymnadenia conopsea* and leaves of Marsh Helleborine, *Epipactis palustris*.



Marsh Helleborine, *Epipactis palustris*

Altogether on the day we saw 11 orchid species and subspecies, possibly a record for an LBS meeting?

I would like to thank Nigel for arranging such an interesting meeting, also Pat and Douglas for giving me a lift to the meeting.

Keith Watson

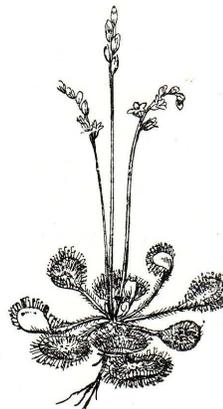
## Little Budworth Common 19<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Leader – Rob Duffy

The walk coincided with the beginning of the dank and dismal spells that bedevilled the summer. A small party gathered in torrential rain at Delamere station and were ushered down to Oulton Park through walls of gathering mist. The walk was a circular one passing through woodland ride and open heath.

The heath flora was dominated by Heather, *Calluna vulgaris* which in sections had been cleared, leaving patches for the lichen, *Cladonia portentosa* and Bell Heather, *Erica cinerea* to stake a claim. The heathers were initially confused by the party, but after several minutes clear differences were obvious.

The heathers were one highlight of the excursion because there was so little other colour of the day, but the other was, without doubt, the floating bog. Here, Cranberry, *Vaccinium oxycoccus* scrambled amongst the lilliputian Sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia* colonies.



Round-leaved Sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia*



There was some puzzlement at the inability to find Crowberry, *Empetrum nigrum* but at least none of the party was swallowed up.

The walk was rounded off by a meadow filled with Heath Speedwell, *Veronica officinalis*.

Other notable species:

- Sharp-flowered Rush, *Juncus acutiflorus*
- Heath Rush, *Juncus squarrosus*
- Purple Moor-grass, *Molinia caerulea*
- Heath Wood-rush, *Luzula multiflora*
- Common Cotton-grass, *Eriophorum angustifolium*
- Hairy Sedge, *Carex hirta*
- Sheep's Sorrel, *Rumex acetosella*
- Tormentil, *Potentilla erecta*
- Thyme-leaved Sandwort, *Arenaria serpyllifolia*
- Common Knapweed, *Centaurea nigra*
- Mouse-ear-hawkweed, *Pilosella officinarum*

Afterwards the author stopped off at Flaxmere on the way back. A well kept secret just off the huge car park opposite Hatchmere, this small floating bog had Bog-rosemary, *Andromeda polifolia* and Water Avens, *Geum rivale*, both completely absent from Little Budworth.

Rob Duffy

**Hilbre Island**  
**10<sup>th</sup> July 2004**

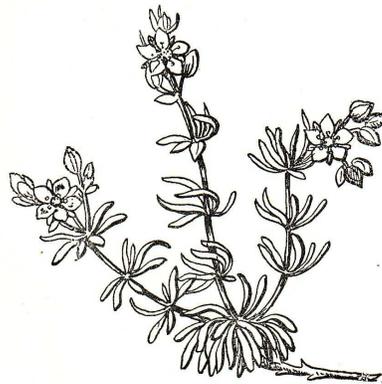
Leader – Keith Watson

On a quite bright but windy day a party of 12 set off from West Kirby across the sands to Little Eye. A few extra late members joined us there as we rested from the wind and looked at Ray's

Knotgrass, *Polygonum oxyspermum*, and the maritime form of Curled Dock, *Rumex crispus* ssp. *littoreus*.

Then towards Middle Eye, where the leader got a little lost and we had to scramble over the seaweed covered rocks, although the large Jellyfish on the beach were of some interest. Notable plants included Sea Campion, *Silene uniflora*, Heath Groundsel, *Senecio sylvaticus*, Sea Rush, *Juncus maritimus* and Wood Small-reed, *Calamagrostis epigejos*.

We had lunch in a very pleasant spot out of the wind, with some welcome sunshine, just at the entrance to Hilbre. A small plant of Hottentot-fig, *Carpobrotus edulis* was found on the cliff here, also noteworthy for festoons of Rock Sea-spurrey, *Spergularia rupicola* with a few late flowers.



Rock Sea-spurrey, *Spergularia rupicola*

I would like to thank Mike Wilcox for showing me the characteristic features of *Elytrigia* hybrids during the meeting. Sea Couch, *E. atherica* is now very uncommon, most of the plants on Wirral are *E. x oliveri* (*E. repens* x *atherica*). For more information see



Eric Greenwood's account in **BSBI News** 95, Jan 2004.

The special plant of Hilbre, Rock Sea-lavender, now *Limonium britannicum* ssp. *celticum* was found on the side of the road up onto Hilbre. Brookweed, *Samolus valerandi*, Sea Club-rush, *Bolboschoenus maritimus*, Saltmarsh Rush, *Juncus gerardii* and Marsh Pennywort, *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* were common at the pond on the way to the shelter and museum.

We were very fortunate that the museum was open, and the Warden very kindly showed us another place for the Rock Sea-lavender. As the weather worsened we made our way back. I was recording one of the Hilbre tetrads and found Bell Heather, *Erica cinerea*, Harebell, *Campanula rotundifolia* and Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium* on the way back. To me, Hilbre is an interesting place as it has a good number of unusual or rare plants, but some common plants such as the Buttercups, *Ranunculus repens* and *acris* and Black Medick, *Medicago lupulina* are absent, and we did not record Daisy, *Bellis perennis* all day.

We returned to West Kirby and a few members walked to the Red Rocks Dunes to see Mackay's Horsetail (*Equisetum x trachyodon*).

Keith Watson

## **Gowy Meadows** **31<sup>st</sup> July 2004**

Leader – Tony Parker

Gowy meadows is a large area of lowland grazing marsh which lies alongside the River Gowy north of Chester and south of the Stanlow

refinery. The site is owned by Shell UK Limited but has been leased to Cheshire Wildlife Trust since 2002, this being the largest reserve managed by the Trust.

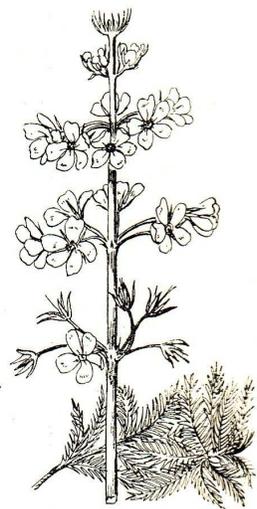
The site covers 165.8ha in total, comprising a number of small fields intersected by numerous ditches. The historic management of the site is little known, however it is thought that the Meadows were dyked and drained during the late Middle Ages. Because wet grassland as a habitat has seriously declined in area over the last century due to drainage for agriculture any remaining areas need to be conserved. A large part of the Gowy Meadows is now designated as a Grade A Site of Biological Interest due to the rich aquatic flora. The Site is also has a good selection of Butterflies and Dragonflies as well as a small population of Water Voles.

Plant species recorded during the visit included:

Meadow Buttercup, *Ranunculus acris*  
Creeping Buttercup, *Ranunculus repens*  
Celery-leaved Buttercup, *Ranunculus sceleratus*  
Common Water-crowfoot, *Ranunculus aquatilis*  
River Water-crowfoot *Ranunculus fluitans*  
Fat Hen, *Chenopodium album*  
Red Campion, *Silene dioica*  
Lesser Stitchwort, *Stellaria graminea*  
Common Mouse-ear, *Cerastium fontanum*  
Curled Dock, *Rumex crispus*  
Common Sorrel, *Rumex acetosa*  
Sheep's Sorrel, *Rumex acetosella*  
Broad-leaved Dock, *Rumex obtusifolius*



Redshank, *Persicaria maculosa*  
 Water-pepper, *Polygonum hydropiper*  
 Great Yellow-cress, *Rorippa amphibia*  
 Marsh Yellow-cress, *Rorippa palustris*  
 Hairy Bitter-cress, *Cardamine hirsuta*  
 Lesser Swine-cress, *Coronopus didymus*  
 Meadowsweet, *Filipendula ulmaria*  
 Creeping Cinquefoil, *Potentilla reptans*  
 Bird's-foot-trefoil, *Lotus corniculatus*  
 Lucerne, *Medicago sativa*  
 Black Medick, *Medicago lupulina*  
 Red Clover, *Trifolium pratense*  
 White Clover, *Trifolium repens*  
 Alsike Clover, *Trifolium hybridum*  
 Tufted Vetch, *Vicia cracca*  
 Great Willowherb, *Epilobium hirsutum*  
 Rosebay Willowherb, *Chamerion angustifolium*  
 Cut-leaved Crane's-bill, *Geranium dissectum*  
 Indian Balsam, *Impatiens glandulifera*  
 Hogweed, *Heracleum spondylium*  
 Wild Carrot, *Daucus carota*  
 Wild Angelica, *Angelica sylvestris*  
 Greater Water-parsnip, *Sium latifolium*  
 Water-violet, *Hottonia palustris*



Water-violet, *Hottonia palustris*

Hedge Bindweed, *Calystegia sepium*  
 Marsh Bedstraw, *Galium palustre*  
 Cleavers, *Galium aparine*  
 Field Forget-me-not, *Myosotis arvensis*  
 Tufted Forget-me-not, *Myosotis laxa*  
 Self-heal, *Prunella vulgaris*  
 Marsh Woundwort, *Stachys palustris*  
 Woody Nightshade, *Solanum dulcamara*  
 Greater Plantain, *Plantago major*  
 Daisy, *Bellis perennis*  
 Pineappleweed, *Matricaria discoidea*  
 Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*  
 Common Ragwort, *Senecio jacobea*  
 Marsh Ragwort, *Senecio aquaticus*  
 Carlina Thistle, *Carlina vulgaris*  
 Lesser Burdock, *Arctium minus*  
 Creeping Thistle, *Cirsium arvense*  
 Spear Thistle, *Cirsium vulgare*  
 Smooth Sow-thistle, *Sonchus oleraceus*  
 Perennial Sow-thistle, *Sonchus arvensis*  
 Nipplewort, *Lapsana communis*  
 Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinalis*  
 Cat's-ear, *Hypochaeris radicata*  
 Autumn Hawkbit, *Leontodon autumnalis*  
 Common Water-plantain, *Alisma plantago-aquatica*  
 Broad-leaved Pondweed, *Potamogeton natans*  
 Common Duckweed, *Lemna minor*  
 Ivy-leaved Duckweed, *Lemna trisulca*  
 Branched Bur-reed, *Sparganium erectum*  
 Soft Rush, *Juncus effusus*  
 False Fox-sedge, *Carex otrubae*  
 Perennial Rye-grass, *Lolium perenne*  
 Reed Sweet-grass, *Glyceria maxima*  
 Floating Sweet-grass, *Glyceria fluitans*  
 Crested Dog's-tail, *Cynosurus cristatus*  
 Creeping Soft-grass, *Holcus mollis*  
 Wavy Hair-grass, *Deschampsia flexuosa*  
 Creeping Bent, *Agrostis stolonifera*  
 Marsh Foxtail, *Alopecurus geniculatus*



Timothy, *Phleum pratense*  
Water Horsetail, *Equisetum fluviatile*

Tony Parker

## Leeds and Liverpool Canal

7<sup>th</sup> August 2004

Leader – Dave Earl

Meeting at Seaforth Station we admired the plants of Tree Lupin, *Lupinus arboreus* established on ballast, prior to descending to Princes Way to discover the casuals: Flax, *Linum usitatissimum*, Common Millet, *Panicum miliaceum*, Cockspur, *Echinochloa crus-galli*, Black-grass *Alopecurus myosuroides* and Hairy Finger-grass, *Digitaria sanguinalis* as pavement weeds.

Steve Cross led the way through Rimrose Valley Country Park where we soon encountered numerous planted trees and shrubs such as Garden Tree-mallow, *Lavatera thuringiaca*, Aspen, *Populus tremula*, Buckthorn, *Rhamnus cathartica*, Alder Buckthorn, *Frangula alnus*, and Stag's-horn Sumach, *Rhus typhina*. Mike Wilcox determined quite a few willows including *Salix fragilis* var. *russelliana*, *S. x rubens* (*alba x fragilis*), *S. x mollissima* nothovar. *undulata* (*triandra x viminalis*), *S. x sericans* (*viminalis x caprea*) and *S. x multinervis* (*cinerea x aurita*). A rose was considered to be *Rosa canina x rubiginosa* (*R. x nitidula*).

Exploring the ponds we were pleased to see Galingale, *Cyperus longus* and Greater Spearwort, *Ranunculus lingua*, as well as Purple-loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*, Lesser Water-parsnip, *Berula erecta* and good stands of the hybrid rush *Juncus acutiflorus x articulatus* (*J. x surrejanus*) which is often

misidentified as *J. acutiflorus*. Luxuriant plants of Water-cress, *Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum* graced the Rimrose Brook - a spring of living water within Crosby.

The path to the canal had recently been improved with a good number of plants occurring due to the sowing of a wild flower mixture and the disturbance of the ground. Nice finds here included Corncockle, *Agrostemma githago*, Wild Pansy, *Viola tricolor*, Field Pansy, *Viola arvensis*, Tall Rocket, *Sisymbrium altissimum*, Sweet Alison, *Lobularia maritima*, Lesser Swine-cress, *Coronopus didymus*, Hoary Mustard, *Hirschfeldia incana*, Bastard Cabbage, *Rapistrum rugosum*, Field Woundwort *Stachys arvensis*, Corn Mint, *Mentha arvensis*, Cornflower, *Centaurea cyanus*, Corn Marigold, *Chrysanthemum segetum*, Sunflower, *Helianthus annuus*, Shaggy Soldier, *Galinsoga quadriradiata* and Black Bent, *Agrostis gigantea*. The most outstanding find was a rare Lancashire casual Annual Dog's-mercury *Mercurialis annua* in relatively good numbers.



Annual Mercury, *Mercurialis annua*



On reaching the canal we found locally abundant Fringed Water-lily, *Nymphoides peltata* together with other aquatics such as Spiked Water-milfoil, *Myriophyllum spicatum*, Rigid Hornwort, *Ceratophyllum demersum*, Nuttall's Water-weed, *Elodea nuttallii* and Ivy-leaved Duckweed, *Lemna trisulca*. Lurking beneath the aquatics was a splendid pike, whilst Emperor Dragonfly, Brown Hawker and Azure Damselfly darted over the canal waters and through the marginal vegetation of Reed Sweet-grass, *Glyceria maxima*, Hybrid Reedmace, *Typha angustifolia* x *latifolia*, Skullcap, *Scutellaria galericulata*, Water Mint, *Mentha aquatica*, Marsh Woundwort, *Stachys palustris*, Gypsywort, *Lycopus europaeus* and Peppermint, *Mentha x piperita* (*aquatica* x *spicata*).

Along the canal towpath a few brambles were demonstrated to members including *Rubus lindleyanus*, *Rubus robiae*, *Rubus armeniacus*, *Rubus vestitus*, *Rubus wirralensis*, *Rubus subtercanens*, *Rubus eboracensis* and *Rubus tuberculatus*.

At this the northern point of our excursion we also found a few more exotic plantings such as Hornbeam, *Carpinus betulus*, Wild Service-tree, *Sorbus torminalis*, Willow-leaved Cotoneaster, *Cotoneaster salicifolius*, with Italian Alder, *Alnus cordata* increasing from seed.

We returned to the station via the grassland areas finding Red Bartsia, *Odontites vernus*, Wild Teasel, *Dipsacus fullonum*, Common Fleabane, *Pulicaria dysenterica*, Meadow Crane's-bill, *Geranium pratense*, Wild Mignonette, *Reseda lutea*,

Wild Parsnip, *Pastinaca sativa*, Common Centaury, *Centaurium erythraea*, Oxeye Daisy, *Leucanthemum vulgare*, Tall Fescue, *Festuca arundinacea*, Yellow Oat-grass, *Trisetum flavescens* and Hybrid Rye-grass, *Lolium x boucheanum*.

In the grassland Common Blue and Comma butterflies were in flight, whilst notable established plants included Perennial Wall-rocket, *Diplotaxis tenuifolia*, White Melilot, *Melilotus albus* and Broad-leaved Everlasting-pea, *Lathyrus latifolius*.

Dave Earl

## **Bee Identification, Norton Priory**

**14<sup>th</sup> August 2004**

Leaders – Carl Clee and Tony Parker

This Bumblebee workshop was to help us to understand this delightful group of insects and to be able to identify the more common species. We learned that most gardens are visited by a least one species, so they appear common. However, over the last seventy years the range of many species has declined, two species have become extinct and only six are common over most of the UK.

We were given useful information sheets, including the BBC Wildlife Bumblebee guide and a laminated card showing the colour bands of the queen, male and worker bees.

It was explained that to provide the perfect environment for bumblebees in our gardens it is important to ensure



that the flowering times of suitable plants cover the whole season from March to September. As a general guide they prefer old-fashioned cottage-garden varieties rather than the sterile modern hybrids. Carl said that anyone who finds a bumblebee nest in their garden should feel honoured. They do not swarm and are placid, although they can sting if they feel threatened.

After lunch we were shown around the large walled garden. This lovely sheltered spot had splendid herbaceous flowerbeds. Bumblebees were busily feeding and collecting nectar and pollen from the profusion of flowers. The sunshine was enjoyed by all of us.

Cuckoo bumblebees were pointed out to us. At first glance they looked very like true bumblebees, but they were less hairy, rather lethargic and had a softer buzz when in flight. Instead of founding their own colonies, Cuckoo bees invade the true bumblebee's nests and make their workers raise their eggs. There are no cuckoo workers, only males and females.

Before leaving for home we stopped to admire the recently created medieval-style herb garden. A wide variety of medicinal, culinary and strewing herbs were on display. Also present was a good variety of weeds, including Pale Persicaria, *Persicaria lapathifolia* and Black-bindweed, *Fallopia convolvulus*.

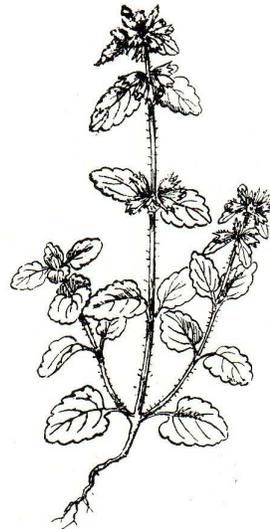
Many thanks to Carl, Tony and Peter for a very instructive and enjoyable meeting.

*Susan Taylor*

## Speke Hall 18<sup>th</sup> September 2004

Leader – Leander Wolstenholme

We met on a very wet morning in the car park of Speke Hall, and walked towards the coast across mainly waste ground, adjacent to Liverpool Airport. Some of the more interesting plants were Wild Radish, *Raphanus raphanistrum* ssp. *raphanistrum*, Lesser Swine-cress, *Coronopus didymus*, Bristly Oxtongue, *Picris echioides*, Sticky Groundsel, *Senecio viscosus* and Field Woundwort, *Stachys arvensis*.



Field Woundwort, *Stachys arvensis*

The salt marsh flora was quite good with Sea Club-rush, *Bolboschoenus maritimus*, Sea-milkwort, *Glaux maritima*, both Sea and Marsh Arrowgrass, *Triglochin maritimum* and *palustris* and Sea Aster, *Aster tripolium*.

We had lunch sitting on the base of the clay cliffs, with Garden Angelica,



*Angelica archangelica* nearby. Also present on the cliffs were Yellow-wort, *Blackstonia perfoliata*, Common Centaury, *Centaureum erythraea*, Wild Teasel, *Dipsacus fullonum* and Hoary Ragwort, *Senecio erucifolius*. We also found the pink form of Hedge Bindweed, *Calystegia sepium* ssp. *roseata*, first described in 1967 by R. K. Brummitt, a former LBS President.

After walking for a way along the shore towards Garston, we turned back towards Speke Hall ending the day in pleasant sunshine.

Keith Watson

## Freshfield

9<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Leader – Pat Lockwood

Although we didn't walk very far, the meeting was purely pleasurable. The day turned out to be mild and sunny – what more could we ask for? We looked on oak leaves for galls, the spangle being prevalent, although we did see a few button galls and marble galls, many of us calling the latter oak apples, but wrongly so. The trees were full of acorns – a bumper crop. On the underside of the oak leaves were unusual ladybirds, pale orange with 16 spots. I intended to go back to look for more, but didn't manage it owing to a severe cold. However, we've also seen the same species on our Copper beech tree. White Dead-nettle, *Lamium album* was in good flower, not really surprising as it over-winters. Red Campion, *Silene dioeca*, Harebell, *Campanula rotundifolia*, Yellow-wort, *Blackstonia perfoliata*, Common Centaury, *Centaureum erythraea*, Common Storks-bill, *Erodium cicutarium*, Portland Spurge,

*Euphorbia portlandica*, Red Clover, *Trifolium pratense* and climbing everywhere Large Bindweed, *Calystegia silvatica*.

At 12 noon we gathered together for a two minute silence in memory of Ken Bigley, murdered in Iraq.

There was fungus everywhere. Giant Puffball, *Langermannia gigantea* was found, but quite small compared with one we found at Whitegate, Cheshire a few years ago. Vera took a photo of me holding it. It was the size of a football!

Common Puffball, *Lycoperdon perlatum*, *Bovista plumbea*, Shaggy Ink Cap or Lawyer's Wig, *Coprinus comatus*, Fly Agaric, *Amanita muscaria*, some without their white spots, washed off by the rain, Plums and Custard, *Tricholomopsis rutilans*, Aniseed toadstool, *Clitocybe odora*, Greasy Tough-shank, *Collybia butyracea*, Blackening Wax Cap, *Hygrocybe nigrescens*, False Chanterelle, *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*, and Saffron Milk Cap, *Lactarius deliciosus*.

Russulas were everywhere, in so many colours, the most glorious the brightest reds. There lots of Boletes too. I love their spongy chunkiness, Slippery Jack, *Suillus luteus* being the commonest. The Birch Polypore or Razor Strop fungus, *Piptoporus betulinus* is very common in the area, also the tree covered with bracket fungi, was it Many-zoned polypore, *Coriolus versicolor*, Earthstar, *Geastrum triplex*, and lastly Stag's Horn or Candle Snuff fungus, *Xylaria hypoxylon*.



At No. 13 I gave a guided tour of the estate and growing on a log, Hairy Stereum, *Coriulus hirsutus*. I forgot to show you the Earthstars. Thanks to you all for a lovely day.

Pat Lockwood

## **Rubus Workshop 20<sup>th</sup> November 2004**

Leader – Dave Earl

The Rubus workshop was surprisingly well attended with 18 members and guests present. The objective was merely that of providing a basic introduction to a very difficult subject and to demonstrate that it is possible to note key differences between different bramble species.

The first stage of identification is that of placing a species in a Section or Series. This is not always easy, but we were able to make good progress by examining species of marked differing stem armature. To illustrate this we compared sheets of a species with a stem heavily armed with prickles, pricklets, hairs and glands *Rubus dasyphyllus* Series *Hystrices* with that of *Rubus lindleianus* Series *Sylvatici* where the prickles are far less numerous and confined to the angles of the stem.

We also compared species with Series *Sylvatici*. The characteristic cuneate terminal leaflets of *R. lindleianus* are quite constant, whilst the very dissected leaflets of the widely naturalised cut-leaved bramble *Rubus laciniatus* are very distinctive. Within Series *Rhamnifolii* the hairy tipped carpels of *R. incurvatus* were examined as well as the notable curved panicle prickles of

*R. nemoralis*. Within Series *Sprengeliani* we looked at the starry petals and the stamens shorter in length than the styles of *R. sprengelii*. Comparisons were also made of two members of Series *Discolores* characterised by the chalky-white undersurface to the leaflets. *R. ulmifolius* with rather small convex leaflets and the very large leaflets of *R. armeniacus* (Himalayan Giant).

By this stage we had ran out of time, which is not surprising as I found that it took a good five years of study before I gained a degree of self esteem with field *Rubus* identification.

Very special thanks are due to Wendy Atkinson for organising our venue and to the late JP Savidge whose *Rubus* notes in Travis's Flora encouraged me to study the local *Rubus* flora.

Dave Earl

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## **Indoor Meeting Reports 2004/05**

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### **Holiday Exhibits 9<sup>th</sup> November 2004**

With the aid of a digital projector, used for the first time at an LBS meeting, Keith Watson was able to show us a wealth of digital images of plants from the LBS field meetings in 2003. They were a real treat!

Susan Taylor brought in a very long rhizome of Sand Sedge and some “Downtown Pippins” apples – a cross between the Isle of Wight orange Pippin and the Golden Pippin. It was



grown by Thomas Andrew Knight of  
Downtown, Castle Ludlow.

*Maria Knowles*

**Plants of North-East Turkey  
and Georgia**  
**14<sup>th</sup> December 2004**  
**Vera Gordon**

The talk, based on a rambling holiday in August 1999, was mainly about Georgia. Slides were shown of the castle and cathedral in Tbilisi, including the large statue, the Mother of Tbilisi. The Caucasian mountains are a very unspoilt area, with a very wide variety of plants. Views of the mountains and lakes were shown.

The plants shown included, amongst many others, the Ghost Orchid, *Epipogium aphyllum*, the poppy, *Papaver paucifoliatum*, *Lilium ponticum*, *Dactylorhiza iberica*, *Geranium psilostemon*, *Silene compacta* and *Echinops ritro*.

*Keith Watson*

**Carex – Research and  
Conservation**  
**11<sup>th</sup> January 2005**  
**Colin Smith, Edge Hill College**

Research on the distinction between *Carex vulpina* (True Fox-sedge) and *C. otrubae* (False Fox-sedge) was described, with its importance for conservation and Biodiversity Action Plans. *C. vulpina* is a Red Data Book species (only 11 sites in England) and *C. otrubae* is frequent. However, separation in the field is not easy and several laboratory methods have been used to try to reliably distinguish them.

Research on the anatomy of leaf sections (see *Watsonia* 22, 431, 1999) initially suggested that the species could be reliably distinguished, but later work showed that the species were not so clearly differentiated. A programme of work involving collection and cultivation of the species from across their British range and examination of gross morphology, leaf anatomy, isozyme methodology and electron microscopy of nutlets has been carried out. Some of this work was supported by a small grant from the BSBI.

The results showed the difficulty of finding a simple method for accurate identification in the field. Differences in isozyme patterns and surface structure of the nutlets were found, but the most promising method is separation of the species on the basis of the stomatal length/width ratio, with significant ( $P < 0.001$ ) differences being found.

Future work is needed on further collections of the two species in Britain, and also Europe, to increase the amount of data on stomatal ratio and isozyme patterns.

*Keith Watson*

**Annual General Meeting**  
**8<sup>th</sup> February 2005**

The President, Keith Watson was in the chair and 14 members present.

The minutes of the last AGM were read by the Hon. Secretary, Wendy Atkinson, proposed by Pat Lockwood and seconded by Peter Tipping.



The Hon. Treasurer, Douglas Lockwood passed out the 'Summary of accounts and the Balance sheet of 31st December 2004'. He informed members that subscriptions and interest were both up and then itemised payments. He informed members that both auditors had suffered recent ill health. He and Joan Wilson thanked Pat Lockwood for typing the report. Adoption of the report was proposed by Wendy Atkinson and seconded by Tom Smale.

The Hon. Librarian, John Edmondson handed out a list of recent acquisitions to the LBS library, all donated by himself. He said the Flora of Cheshire had been lacking but was now in the library. He told members that the library was still in the same room in the Botany Department of the Museum and was accessible by appointment Monday to Friday by contacting himself or Wendy Atkinson. Members thanked John Edmondson for donating books from his personal collection.

He proposed that a bookplate be produced for the centenary, possibly with an illustration of Grass-of-Parnassus, to go in all books in the LBS library, and reminded members that some 'extinct' journals were available at the library. The Hon. Librarian's report was proposed by Pat Lockwood and seconded by Wendy Atkinson.

The Hon. Secretary, Wendy Atkinson informed members that there were 6 new members last year making the total membership 79 (+3 honorary members - Vera Gordon, John Savidge and Mrs Cullen). There had been 4 indoor meetings with an average attendance of 12 for council meeting and 15 for the

talks. There had been 11 field meetings and a Rubus workshop. Meetings took place in Merseyside, Anglesey and Cheshire and had included a bee identification day at Norton Priory. The secretary's report was proposed by Peter Tipping and seconded by Eric Greenwood.

Election of Officers:

President:

Keith Watson said he was happy to complete the second year of his two year presidency.

Vice Presidents:

Susan Taylor was proposed by Eric Greenwood and seconded by John Edmondson. Eric Greenwood was proposed by Pat Lockwood and seconded by Susan Taylor. John Edmondson suggested that the president write to the retiring Vice Presidents and thank them.

Hon. Secretary:

Wendy Atkinson said she was happy to continue as secretary with the help of a Minutes Secretary. She was proposed as secretary by Pat Lockwood and seconded by Susan Taylor.

Maria Knowles was proposed as Minutes Secretary by Wendy Atkinson and seconded by Peter Tipping.

The President thanked Maria for taking the minutes since December. Members thanked Wendy for continuing as secretary.

Hon. Treasurer

Douglas Lockwood said that he was happy to stand again and was proposed by Wendy Atkinson and seconded by Eric Greenwood. The president thanked Douglas for carrying on as treasurer.

Auditors

Douglas Lockwood proposed that Joan Davies and Jean Bentley remain as auditors and if unable to continue (due



to ill health) substitutes be appointed. This was supported by members and re-election of the auditors was proposed by Douglas Lockwood and seconded by Wendy Atkinson.

Hon. Librarian:

John Edmondson said he was prepared to be re-elected and was proposed by Douglas Lockwood and seconded by Susan Taylor.

Council members:

Three places were available on council due to the election of Susan Taylor and Eric Greenwood as Vice Presidents and Jean Bentley being ill.

Pat Lockwood proposed Joan Wilson who declined as she is not able to attend Tuesday meetings.

Other members were suggested in their absence. A discussion followed as to the necessity of filling the three spaces. John Edmondson proposed, and Tom Smale seconded that the remaining council members be re-elected en bloc with the provision to co-opt extra members later if necessary.

Current council members are therefore:

Vera Gordon, Patricia Lockwood, Tom Smale, Peter Tipping, Joan Davies, Joan Vincent.

Other business:

Joan Wilson recommended the book 'The Bible and its Plants' by Brian Dudley and also Norfolk Boating Holidays.

Wendy Atkinson proposed an informal vote on whether members would attend Saturday indoor meetings. The vote was unanimous and it was agreed to review this at the March meeting when more information was available.

Amanda Kaye said she was happy to set up and maintain the society website. Most members supported the idea of a website but some were unsure. Peter Tipping said a website would advertise

LBS to new members, but Tom Smale was worried numbers might increase too much. John Edmondson suggested back copies of *Parnassia* be made available online. Keith Watson said further discussions would take place at the March council meeting.

After the AGM meeting Keith Watson and Maria Knowles showed slides from the 2004 field meetings.

*Maria Knowles*

## **The Orchids of Chios** **8<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

The Aegean Island of Chios is situated eight or nine kilometres off Turkey, south of Lesbos, and is about the same size as the Isle of Man. It has a population of 30,000 and Homer is thought to have been born there. The geology of the island is varied, with a limestone ridge running down the centre and areas of metamorphosed sandstone, chalk and volcanic rocks.

Carl's talk detailed the important orchid species of Chios and their pollinators. The talk was accompanied by slides of Mike Taylor's photographs taken on a Nikon 950 digital camera.

Pollination of orchids is often by one specific insect, but some are pollinated by several different insect species. There are thirty known pollinators on Chios.

A typical example of how pollination takes place is demonstrated by the Bee Orchid, *Ophrys apifera* which bears two pollinia carrying pollen. The



orchid emits a scent similar to that produced by the female bee and the male, which emerges before the female, is attracted by the scent and tricked by the flower shape and markings into attempting to copulate with the orchid so picking up the pollinia. The orchid produces a liquid 'superglue' which firmly attaches the pollinia to the head of the bee.

Looking at specific orchids:

- *O. sicula* and *O. mammosa* are both pollinated by species of the *Andrena* genus of bees that collects the pollinia on the rear of its abdomen.
- *O. iricolor* is pollinated by *Andrena morio*, a black bee, and has a thick labellum covered by fine velvety hairs which the male bee sees as the female.
- *O. attica*, *O. umbilicata* and *O. tenthredinifera* var. *villosa* are all pollinated by long horned bees of the genus *Eucara*, which have long antennae with lots of sensory areas. The bee actually puts its head inside the orchid.
- *O. sitiaca* is pollinated by *Andrena nigroaenae*, a subspecies of which is common in the Ainsdale sand dunes.
- *O. phryganae* is pollinated by three different *Andrena* species.
- *O. blitopertha* is pollinated by a beetle that bears its name - *Blitopertha lineolata*.
- A leaf-cutter bee pollinates *O. ferrum-equinum*.
- *Orchis sancta* is unusual in that it produces nectar as a reward for the bee. In most cases the pollinating bee receives no reward for its frustration. Even female bees visit *O. sancta* for nectar and pick up pollinia. It has a long flowering season from April through to June and is visited by six bee genera.

Spring is the best time to visit Chios to see the 'wall to wall' flowers, which as well as the orchids, include acres of tulips and carpets of anemones. Chios has an ecofriendly tourism, with two small holiday complexes.

Although the flora and fauna are predominantly Turkish there are a number of endemic plants including a miniature cherry. There is no spraying with fertiliser as yet on Chios and the olive trees are not cleared. Mastic is produced commercially from a tree on the island. The exudate bleeds from wounds cut in the tree and is collected and exported for its medicinal properties. There are many other trees on the island including pine, oak, almond, cherry, citrus and eucalyptus.

Travelling to Chios is by direct flight from Manchester to Athens (5½ hours) plus a 45-minute local flight from Athens to the island. Green Tours arranges itineraries to Chios.

For further information about the wildlife of Chios see *The Natural History of Chios* by Mike Taylor available from the museum.

Carl's talk and Mike Taylor's photographs were very much appreciated by the audience of 17 members.

Carl is very keen to receive information about sightings of bees in this country, please send reports of any bees you see to Carl by email to:

[carl.clee@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](mailto:carl.clee@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)

*Maria Knowles*



## Field Meetings 2005

### Loggerheads

30<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Leader - Keith Watson

This was a notable meeting for me as it was almost exactly 30 years after my first ever LBS meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1975 at Loggerheads. That day was also the first time I met Vera, and I wished she could have been with us on this walk, the first time we have been to Loggerheads for some years.

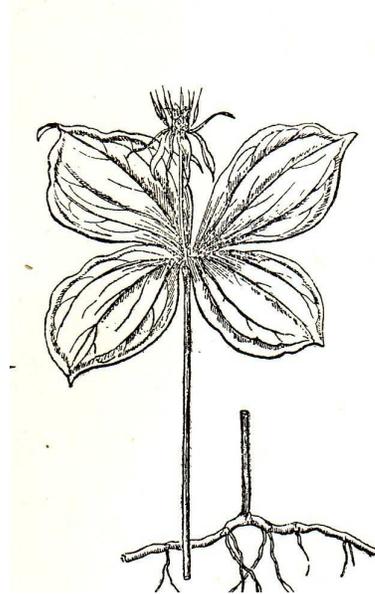
The party of ten members met at the Visitor Centre on a wet morning, but the weather improved during the day. Toothwort, *Lathraea squammaria* was found immediately in a hedgerow at the Centre and in several other places during the day. Marsh-marigold, *Caltha palustris* was in good flower near the bridge over the Alyn.

We walked along the path by the Alyn to the wall, marking the Flints/Denbs border, where Herb-Paris, *Paris quadrifolia* was almost in flower. Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage, *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* was much less common near the river than in the past, but Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage, *C. oppositifolium* was abundant.

Amongst the ferns found were Intermediate Polypody, *Polypodium interjectum*, Hard Shield-fern, *Polystichum aculeatum* and Hart's-tongue, *Phyllitis scolopendrium*.

Other notable plants as we walked along the Leet path included Three-nerved Sandwort, *Moehringia trinervia*, Goldilocks Buttercup,

*Ranunculus auricomus*, with Salad Burnet, *Sanguisorba minor* and Common Rock-rose, *Helianthemum nummularium* on the limestone.



Herb-Paris, *Paris quadrifolia*

At the end of the Leet path we walked up the road to the fields at Pantymwyn, to find Bulbous Buttercup, *Ranunculus bulbosus*, Cowslip, *Primula veris*, a very large plant of its hybrid with Primrose, *Primula x polyantha*, and Early-purple Orchid, *Orchis mascula*. In the past I have found Green-winged Orchid, *Orchis morio* here but we could not find it on this meeting.

Walking back down to the Leet path we found Brittle Bladder-fern, *Cystopteris fragilis* on a wall near to the entrance to the woods. Twayblade, *Listera ovata* used to occur in the woods here, but we did not find it this year.

We returned to the Visitor Centre for a rest and refreshments, and then Martin led some of us up the steep steps to the



cliff top, passing Spurge-laurel, *Daphne laureola* on the way. On the limestone we found leaves of Bloody Crane's-bill, *Geranium sanguineum*, Lesser Meadow-rue, *Thalictrum minus* and probably Hairy Violet, *Viola hirta*. Finally, on the way back he showed us a bush of the Fly Honeysuckle, *Lonicera xylosteum* in the woods.

I would like to thank Martin Stead for his help during the meeting, and for leading the extra extension to the walk.

*Keith Watson*

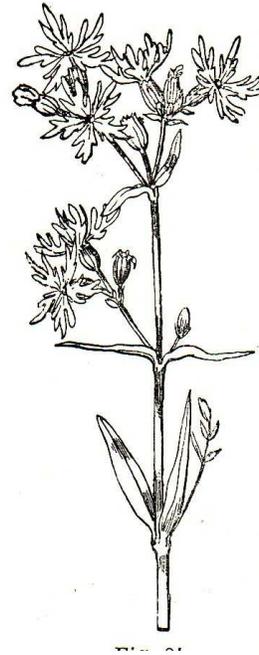
## **Runcorn, Murdishaw Valley** **28<sup>th</sup> May 2005**

Leader – Rob Duffy

A party of nine members gathered at Runcorn East station. We found a gall on the developing fruits of Blackthorn, *Prunus spinosa* that Pat Lockwood later identified as Bladder Bullace, caused by the fungus, *Ascomyces pruni*.

We then proceeded through the Murdishaw estate to the ancient woodland, where, due to the late May start, the considerable native Bluebell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* populations had faded. On reaching the embankment above the sports fields next to the woodland, it was obviously just the right time to investigate the emerging orchid populations.

The party proceeded down the meadow paralleling the M56, admiring the Ragged-Robin, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, before descending, once again, into the woodland.



Ragged Robin, *Lychnis flos-cuculi*

Crossing the bus lane, which cuts the nature reserve in two, the party followed the main footpath until they came to a wet meadow, containing an abundant orchid population. There was time, before lunch, to admire the stately beech perched on a ridge aslant the valley.

The second stage of the walk was along the Bridgewater canal from Preston Brook, where Pat's keen eye brought to the attention of the party the Hoary Cress, *Lepidium draba*, and some impressive Hemlock, *Conium maculatum* specimens. The countryside around had a hypnotic effect as the fields of barley swayed in the wind like waves at sea.

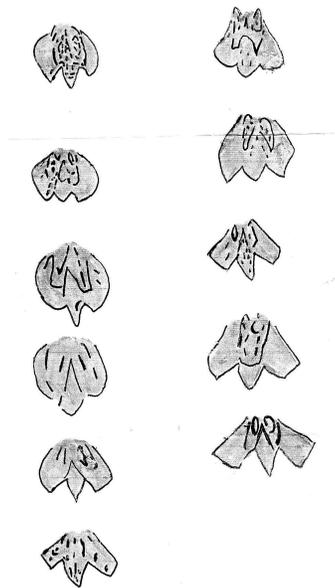


Finally we ascended to Daresbury Firs where the party gamely tried to identify the differences between the three main conifers, Lodgepole Pine, *Pinus contorta*, Corsican Pine, *Pinus nigra ssp. laricio* and Scots Pine, *Pinus sylvestris*. The view to the Mersey was obscured from the viewpoint and so the party headed back down to the canal.

Note on the orchid populations

Clearly there were hybrid populations present just below the main valley path. As the parent orchids present were the Common Spotted-orchid, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Southern Marsh-orchid, *D. praetermissa* it is very likely that they were *D. x grandis*.

Variation in leaf spotting and labellum shape and spotting was high and some idea of the patterning is shown below:



Labellum patterns of *Dactylorhiza* in Murdishaw valley

Other interesting species:

- Wood Speedwell, *Veronica montana*
- Thyme-leaved Speedwell, *V. serpyllifolia*
- Germander Speedwell, *V. chamaedrys*
- Slender Speedwell, *V. filiformis*
- Lords-and-Ladies, *Arum maculatum*
- Climbing Corydalis, *Ceratocarpus claviculata*
- Pignut, *Conopodium majus*
- Yellow Iris, *Iris pseudacorus*
- Water Dock, *Rumex hydrolapathum*
- Hemlock Water-dropwort, *Oenanthe crocata*
- Winter-cress, *Barbarea vulgaris*
- Common Figwort, *Scrophularia nodosa*
- Water Figwort, *S. auriculata*
- Greater Stitchwort, *Stellaria holostea*
- Water-soldier, *Stratiotes aloides*
- Foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*
- Remote Sedge, *Carex remota*
- Wood Avens, *Geum urbanum*
- Guelder-rose, *Viburnum opulus*
- Yellow Pimpernel, *Lysimachia nemorum*
- Three-nerved Sandwort, *Moehringia trinervia*
- Wetted Thistle, *Carduus crispus*
- Wood Millet, *Milium effusum*

Thanks to Sheila and Pat.

*Rob Duffy*

**Ainsdale**

**11<sup>th</sup> June 2005**

Leader – Pat Lockwood

The meeting was well attended, Ainsdale being a popular venue with members and we had good weather – maybe a little too warm. We parked our cars near to the Visitor Centre,

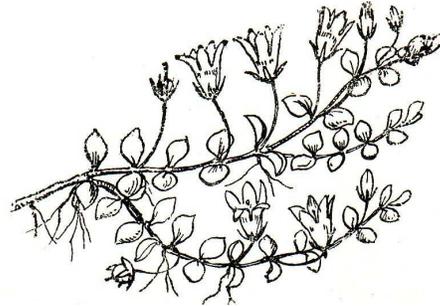


wandered along the road passing Pontins and onto the shore and then inland, mainly keeping to the paths. We had our lunch in the dunes and then doubled back on ourselves to the Visitor Centre. Finding our footpath we walked South passing wet slacks which are always of interest. In amongst some Creeping Willow, *Salix repens* large numbers of White Satin moths, *Leucoma salicis* were emerging, I'd never seen them before but Peter Gately had and his knowledge was invaluable.

A list of the plants worth a special mention:

Eastern Rocket, *Sisymbrium orientale*  
 Annual Wall-rocket, *Diplotaxis muralis*  
 Sea Rocket, *Cakile maritima*  
 Weld, *Reseda luteola*  
 Early Marsh-orchid, *Dactylorhiza incarnata*  
 Southern Marsh-orchid, *D. praetermissa*  
 Pyramidal Orchid, *Anacamptis pyramidalis*  
 Bee Orchid, *Ophrys apifera*  
 Round-leaved Wintergreen, *Pyrola rotundifolia*  
 Adder's-tongue, *Ophioglossum vulgatum*  
 Lesser Spearwort, *Ranunculus flammula*  
 Sea Spurge, *Euphorbia paralias*  
 Portland Spurge, *E. portlandica*  
 Heath Speedwell, *Veronica officinalis*  
 Wild Pansy, *Viola tricolor ssp. curtisii*  
 Brookweed, *Samolus valerandii*  
 Bog Pimpernel, *Anagallis tenella*  
 Blue Fleabane, *Erigeron acer*  
 Wild Strawberry, *Fragaria vesca*  
 Marsh Cinquefoil, *Potentilla palustris*  
 Bogbean, *Menyanthes trifoliata*

Common Cottongrass, *Eriophorum angustifolium*  
 Bay Willow, *Salix pentandra*  
 Sea Fern-grass, *Catapodium marinum*



Bog Pimpernel, *Anagallis tenella*

Many thanks to all of you for making the day so memorable, especially to Christine, Roger and Priscilla who very kindly went out of their way to help me to track down a book by William Condry. Also thanks to Douglas and Brian for accompanying me on the recce for which I was very grateful.

Pat Lockwood

## Hooton 9<sup>th</sup> July 2005

Leaders – Peter and Sheila Mason

Nine members met and set off belatedly (Merseyrail problems) along the Wirral Way from Hooton Station. An early find was a fine patch of Zigzag Clover, *Trifolium medium* which had escaped the weed-spraying along the route.

We strayed into an abandoned industrial site alongside the Wirral Way and spent perhaps a disproportionate



length of time discovering a wealth of garden escapes in the small waste heaps. Also on the site were Moth Mullein, *Verbascum blattaria*, Trailing St. John's-wort, *Hypericum humifusum*, seven species of Willowherb and a large clump of Common Centaury, *Centaureum erythraea*.



Zigzag Clover, *Trifolium medium*

One of the main aims of the walk was to look for the Broad-leaved Helleborine, *Epipactis helleborine* which had seemed to have decreased recently on the Wirral Way itself. Fortunately it was found to be quite vigorous on the nearby wasteland under groups of small trees and some plants were already in flower. *E. helleborine* is, according to the New Naturalist book 'Wild Orchids of Britain', one of the seven species forming the Eurasian Element Proper of the British orchid flora, being widespread, mainly in old woodlands, from Siberia and the Himalayas to Northern Africa. In Glasgow, however, it prefers suburban

sites, particularly owner-occupier gardens, and is referred to sometimes as a 'snob plant'! We found a good quantity of healthy plants, though none reached the five foot height which has been recorded for this species.

Three very fine specimens of Wall Lettuce, *Mycelis muralis* attracted attention, making a good display of flowers and small pentagonal pappus-filled seed heads. Before lunch we also noted Water Figwort, *Scrophularia auriculata*, Marsh Bedstraw, *Galium palustre* and Perforate and Imperforate St. John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* and *H. maculatum*. Not unexpected on this former railway was the Small Toadflax, *Chaenorhinum minus*, a frequenter of dry stony railway tracks.

We stopped for lunch at Heath Road by a newly made pond at the picnic site, and then backtracked to Hooton Station to use the available cars to take us to Hooton Woods and Grassland, an area of land sandwiched between the M53 and the Merseyrail line at Eastham Rake. The lush meadow yielded a large display of Common Spotted Orchid, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, mostly pale in colour but of a good size with flower-spikes up to 25cm. Marsh Woundwort, *Stachys palustris* was also in abundance on the bank of the M53 – a very elegant flower spike and the most effective 'wound herb' of the genus. A pond proved to be a haven for dragon- and damselflies on this exceptionally hot, sunny afternoon and we identified seven species. Plant life in the pond included Lesser Marshwort, *Apium inundatum*, Frogbit, *Hydrochaeris morsus-ranae* (though not in flower), Water-plantain, *Alisma plantago-aquatica* and the Amphibious Bistort,



*Persicaria amphibia*. We moved on to a small wood which was too shady to support much flora other than Wood Dock, *Rumex sanguineus*, Enchanter's Nightshade, *Circaea lutetiana* and some fine specimens of Broad Buckler Fern *Dryopteris dilatata* and Male Fern *Dryopteris felix-mas*. Broad-leaved Helleborine was recorded here some ten years ago, but we did not find any on this visit. Of particular interest was a very large Sweet Chestnut tree growing from a huge, almost circular fallen branch. A few feet away was another tree growing in the same way. There was some speculation about how this could have come about and whether there was any local knowledge of it.

During the day we collected some good specimens of grasses and sedges, including False Fox-sedge, *Carex otrubae*, Remote Sedge, *Carex remota* and Purple Moor-grass, *Molinia caerulea*.

#### Footnotes:

The Cheshire County Council (CCC) warden of the Wirral Way later explained that the route had been sprayed to control some of the woody growth, including Willow, Elm and Japanese Knotweed. The Borough Council had also undertaken some spraying.

CCC was aware of the habitat of the Broad Helleborine and was planning to protect it (along with the local glow-worms) now that planning applications had been received for the industrial site.

*Peter and Sheila Mason*

#### Editors Note:

I would like to thank Peter and Sheila for leading their first meeting. Also, they later found a single plant of Broad-leaved Helleborine, in the wood mentioned above, confirming my old record. They then later found three plants in a flower bed at Bromborough Station!

*Keith Watson*

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