#### The Liverpool Botanical Society

**Parnassia**: Review of 2017 Field Meetings

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Foreword

This is the fourth of the shortened format Parnassia summarising previous season’s LBS field meetings. Regular recording was carried out at field meetings during 2017 and records submitted to the Local Record Centres as appropriate and (patchily) made available on the blog accessed via our website. Our President, Steve Cross, has done sterling work on updating the website, unfortunately the rest of us have not kept him supplied with as much information, as we should have done.

As usual our website address, to view the blogs and find out more about the society, is given above. Our facebook pages are at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/666270583430427/> . For members without a home computer it’s likely that your local library has computers for public use.

Fuller accounts of our field meetings, along with photographs and plant species lists should be available on the website blog pages but we have some catching up to do.

Field Meetings 2017

In 2017, 17 field meetings were listed in our programme (including joint trips with the MNA, WFS and BPS), these are briefly reviewed below:

**Saturday 8th April: Carr Mill** Led byDavid Earl.

A well-attended meeting, with 18 members assembling at the Blackbrook visitor centre. Assisted by ranger, Dave Owen, David Earl led us upstream towards Carr Mill Dam, along the canal-side and brook course through varied grassland, scrub and woodland. This section was rich in ferns, both Soft and Hard Shield-fern, as well as a small clump of Ostrich Fern, by the upper canal. At the northern end of the Blackbrook valley Greater Burnet-saxifrage was quite frequent. Some of the party turned back at the base of the dam, the majority completed a circuit of Carr Mill Dam

**Saturday 22nd April: Loggerheads** Led by Peter Gateley

A bit of a shaky start due to severe traffic problems at Runcorn Bridge but 17 of us gathered at the car park for a most enjoyable day in this rich limestone woodland. Both the Herb Paris and Toothwort were flowering well and we were able to compare Opposite-leaved and Alternate-leaved Golden Saxifrage side by side. The Early Purple Orchid was showing well in the top woodlands and Spring Sedge, amongst many other typical limestone grassland species, was noted in the short rabbit-grazed grassland at the top of the crag.

**Friday 12th May: Altcar Rifle Range** Evening trip from Hightown Station led by Steve Cross.

It is an annual treat to be allowed into the normally out-of-bounds rifle ranges to see the masses of flowering Green-winged Orchids. We saw the usual range of colour forms of orchid as well as other local specialities such as Cowslips, Twayblades, various Creeping Willow hybrids and stands of Flat Sedge and Brown Sedge.

**Thursday 18th May: Recording in the lanes of Cheshire** Joint WFS meeting with Julie Clarke

Julie led a small mixed group of Wildflower Society and LBS members along lanes in the Northwich area, where the local soil types are diversified by lime and salt from past phases of the local chemical industries. All findings were submitted to the local BSBI vice-county recorder, Graeme Kay.

**Saturday 20th May: Lunt Meadows**. Led by Steve Cross

13 people set off, led by Steve, but it was very wet from the start and eventually it was wisely decided to cut short our visit. However, were able to enjoy the still luxuriant and abundant May blossom and we saw a wide range of local arable weeds flowering well despite the rain. Near the entrance a large stand of Beaked Hawksbeard was in full sunshine-yellow flower, but despite this the rain showed no signs of diminishing so we left the meadows to the ducks.

**Sunday 21st May: Malltraeth Marsh, Anglesey** Joint coach trip with MNA

A detailed account of what was seen on this Merseyside Naturalist’s Association visit to Anglesey is given at:

<http://naturalistsnotebook.mnapage.info/2017/05/22/mna-coach-trip-llanddwyn-island-anglesey-21st-may-2017/>

**Saturday 3rd June: Derbyshire Dales** Joint coach trip with MNA

For details of what was observed on this meeting please go to the MNA blog at:

<http://naturalistsnotebook.mnapage.info/2017/06/09/mna-coach-trip-dovedale-derbyshire-3rd-june-2017/>

**Saturday 10th June: West Kirby** Led by John Crowder.

Setting off from the station we went along the old rail route of the Wirral Way, with well-developed hedgerows backed by tree growth, into Ashton Park where we looked at various exotic trees and shrubs, with a range of arable weeds below. Then back onto the main path leading down to the edge of the Dee where the flora changed markedly, with Sea Beet, Rock Samphire and Sea Pink amongst a range of coastal species.

**Saturday 17th June: Court Hey Park**. Led by Ben Deed

Only about 10 members turned out on that hot sunny day, reaching 26c.  Altogether 104 species of flowers & trees; plus 3 ferns & 16 mosses & liverworts were listed by Robert Freeth. Ben Deed led on the bryophytes, finding and identifying a wide range for us. Rob Duffy was leading on finding and identifying the special trees of Court Hey Park.

**Saturday 1st July: Hilbre Island.** Led by Robert Freeth

12 members set off in a slight on-shore breeze, broken cloud & sunshine at times. We explored Little Eye for 15 minutes, then a rapid 25-minute walk to Middle Eye to see Sea Spleenwort. On Hilbre itself we had a more leisurely exploration, Eric Greenwood observed that the colony of Rock Sea-lavender, protected by an wall on the Welsh side of Hilbre, had spread significantly over the western side of the isle in the 12 years since the wall was built. Robert recorded a list of 81 coastal species, with help from Eric on problem identifications.

**Saturday 15th July: Sankey Valley Park** Led by Peter Gateley.

Around 20 joined the walk from Blackbrook Road to Havannah Flashes along the main footpath, with diversions to Sankey Brook and areas of unused farmland. From this very diverse area with a wide range of habitats a total of 222 plants was listed by Barbara Allen and Peter, with additions by Julie Clarke, Marion Chappell and Joshua Styles. Notable plants included Awned Canary-grass *(Phalaris paradoxa)* and Greater Chickweed *(Stellaria neglecta)* amongst a wide variety of interesting finds. Woody species include many specimens planted during the 1970s development of the linear park, including species not native to the area: Field Maple, Dogwood and Bird Cherry.

**Sunday 23rd July: Leighton Moss** Joint coach trip with MNA, led by David Bryant

<http://naturalistsnotebook.mnapage.info/2017/07/24/mna-coach-trip-rspb-leighton-moss-23rd-july-2017/>

**Saturday 5th August: Hall Road** Led by Steve Cross.

We met up at Hall Road Station and headed straight to the coast, to that interesting section with an artificial shingle bank of rubble from demolition for the second Mersey Tunnel, backed by sand dunes. We enjoyed the wide range of species in this diverse area, including Rock Samphire and Yellow Horned-poppy on the artificial shingle, to Isle of Man Cabbage in the bare sandy parts of the dune frontals in the South.

**Saturday 19th August: Crosby** Led by Pat Lockwood and Phil Smith

15 members set off from Mariners Road, with others arriving later.  The day was blighted by rain at the start, cloud throughout & a stiff breeze blowing the sand, so particularly difficult when high on the dunes near the front.  159 plant species were recorded in this diverse area, helped by Phil Smith when he took over from Pat in the afternoon and introduced us to many garden escapes/throw-outs along the road edges, afterwards he told us about the star plant of this site, the very rare *Artemisia campestris* ssp. *maritima* or Dune Wormwood, known only in the UK from here and the coast of Glamorgan.

**Saturday 26th August: Scutchers Acres** Joint BPS meeting, led by Alison Evans.

Scutchers Acres, in Burscough, is a conservation area with a good range of woodland plants; it also has around 100 species of trees, native and exotic, part of the site having previously been used as a tree nursery. An interesting find was *Polystichum munitum*, either a garden escape or an accidental import with the North American tree species planted nearby. *Polystichum setiferum* and *P. aculeatum* are also found in the wood, along with examples of the *Dryopteris affinis* complex. Apart from ferns, Common Wintergreenwas also seen.

**Saturday 9th September: Mersey Estuary/Hale shore** led by Howard Harris

The weather was cloudy & showery. Thankfully sunshine & becoming warmer after 2 pm. A list of 124 species was recorded by Robert Freeth, with assistance from the group of 8 other members. Starting from Hale Park the walk took us through a variety of habitats, including the boulder clay river cliffs (both wooded and open grassy), saltmarsh, reed bed and agricultural land.

**Saturday 7th October: Freshfield** led by Steve Cross

Yet another wet start, but an enthusiastic group of 10 set out from Freshfield station, following the railway line. Steve found us a really wide range of fungi in the birch, oak and pine woodland established over unmanaged areas of former dune heath before leading us into the LWT Freshfield Dune Heath reserve. Despite the main focus being the fungi we were pleased to see Orange Mullein growing along the verge towards the station and also a single plant, in fruit, of Thorn Apple.

A similar programme of trips to a variety of different habitats has been prepared, we look forward to you joining in with our range of field meetings in 2018.