

P.S.N.S. BOTANICAL SECTION

BULLETIN No.2

February, 1979.

Excursion Reports

Glen Girmaig, By Killiecrankie – 6 8.1978

This excursion was cancelled officially due to unavoidable unavailability of the two leaders. However, since access permission had already been obtained, three people, myself Dr. Topham and Miss Tulloch went independently and have been asked to contribute this report. We left our vehicles at entrance to the glen (GR NN 916639), entered the woodland which is largely birch with some oak. Descending to the river we crossed several grassy clearings with a good range of species — — — *Galium verum*, *Carex caryophylla*, *Helianthemum chammecistus*, *Sieglingia decumbens* and *Veronica chamaedrys*. The river forms a gorge at this point, unfortunately high water prevented exploration, other than the west side. Rocks and wet grassland in the gorge has a relatively rich flora with species such as *Alchemilla alpina*, *Briza media*, *Carex pallescens*, *Rubus saxatilis* and *Saxifraga aizoides*

Following the Allt Girmaig and its tributary, the Allt a' Mhagam, we crossed uniform *Nardus* and *Calluna* moorland to crags below Meall an Daimh, an outlier of Ben Vrackie. These produced *Asplenium viride*, *Botrychium lunaria*, *Cystopteris fragilis*, *Galium boreale*, *Polystichum lonchitis* and *Saxifraga oppositiflora*. Below the crags was a line of stony flushes with *Carex dioica*, *Eleocharis pauciflora*, *Saxifraga aizoides*, *Selaginella selaginoides*, *Tofieldia pusilla* and *Triglochin palustris*.

We then ascended to the col on the Ben Vrackie/Meall an Daimh ridge and on the south side, facing the col, found a small patch of calcareous rock with abundant *Astragalus alpinus* together with *Briza media*, *Empetrum nigrum* agg., *Galium boreale*, *G.verum*, *Helictrotrichum pratense*, *Linum catharticum*, *Polygonum viviparum*, *Saxifraga aizoides* and *oppositifolia*, *Veronica officinalis* and a white flowered *Gentianella* ? ssp. *Druceana*

Rosalind A.H. Smith

Earn at Forteviot (37/03-17-) - 9.8.78.

Four members attended this short evening visit to the banks of the river and to two small islands in the river. No difficulty was experienced in finding *Bidens tripartita* (Tripartite Bur-Marigold)* and *Limosella aquatica* (Mudwort)*, which were the star attractions. As the islands were on river gravel they carried a great variety of common plants from aquatic and shore habitats at the water level to dry-site plants such as Broom and Whin on top. Some Willows were found, one of which could possibly be *Salix triandra* but could not be positively identified.

W.F. French

*Dr. Rosalind Smith later sent me a list of 50 species for a Site Card. The Bur-Marigold is the rarer of the two native species and the Mudwort was recorded in Mid-Perth v.c. 88 for the first time in 1977. A.W.R.

Expedition to N.W. Nepal

I have just returned (Letter, 20 11.78) from a remote corner of N W Nepal, the Girja Himal There I was concerned with the collection of viable seed and the making of observations on the vegetation.

I concentrated primarily upon the collection of perennial herb seed from one particular mountain on the western flank of the Girga. This previously unclimbed peak, ran up to 18,500 feet, rather small by Himalayan standards. The seeds were for Branklyn Botanic Garden Perth. In addition I collected Gymnosperm seed for the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

During the first part of my sabbatical term from Trinity College, Glen almond, I also made seed collections from Turkey and Iran I shall be spending December in North Africa where I shall continue my collections and an extensive photographic record

M.C. Burns

Note from Mr. Fred French

I was asked to attend a meeting of Alyth District Council along with Mr. Brian Brookes and Dr. Rosalind Smith to discuss the possibility of a Nature Trail in Alyth Den. We gave what information we could, the Council later discussing the matter and putting it to the vote! The majority came out against it because it would be unlikely to attract more people to the Den My belief is that while the Den contains much of technical interest it has little of popular interest!

“Herbs in the City” (Apologies to Tanya Hill of ‘The Scotsman’ recent series for stealing her title)

Our excursions have generally been to places promising an interesting or varied flora and almost always to habitats in which the plant life constitutes climax or sub-climax communities where man’s influence is less obvious than in more disturbed areas Thus, although we have added enormously to records of natives and aliens in more or less natural habitats, the tendency has been to under-record colonisers of “waste” ground, usually regarded as weeds, which, of course also occur in cultivated ground, gardens, etc Our records for many common plants in such places are therefore somewhat scanty! This failure leads to misleading representation of distribution both in Floras and Mapping systems *

In every urban situation, be it village, town or city, nowadays where re development of one kind or another is practically a permanent feature an assemblage of species can be found for a space of time until develop

ment is completed, even so, there are always areas where wild plants desirable or otherwise, will utilise open ground, old walls, untended closes because these habitats are not "waste" substrata to them

This preamble partly intended to reawaken objective interest in them and their proper recording, may serve as a suitable introduction to two interesting new records. Two plants of **Oriental Mustard** (*Sisymbrium orientale*) were found amongst other "weeds" in the Scott Street Car Park in June last year by myself. I had their identification confirmed by Eric Clement, a BSBI expert in aliens. Although recorded for other parts of Scotland (scarce) this is a first for our home area. Miss Stewart has sent in a record for **Black Nightshade** (*Solanum nigrum*) from her garden in Methven and taken a photographic record of it. I hope we shall see this at the AGM in March. This relative of the Bittersweet (and the Potato and the Tomato) has only been recorded once (Perth Harbour 1961). appears to be mapped as an introduction in Scotland although undoubtedly native further south. It may, like the Mustard, be on the increase.

It is always possible to discover something new right on our doorstep, welcome or not. What a pity we did not do a survey of the gap-site at High Street/Mill Street last summer or the one before!

A.W. Robson

* See Note on the new Atlas of the British Flora

Atlas and Flora of the British Isles

Some members may be unaware that work has begun on a new series of Atlases to be published in parts over the next 10 years, which, when complete will constitute an up-to-date revision of the Atlas of the British Flora. All the records which have been made by our Section over the years since 1958 and by others in our area should be incorporated as dots on the 10 km. square maps. Except for the most recent records, these have been sent to the Biological Records Centre. The first of these has already been published - "The Atlas of Ferns". I have purchased a copy for our Section's library as part of my remit from the 1977 A.G.M.

This work is being done in close collaboration with the editors (BSBI) of a new Flora of Great Britain and Ireland, who will use the maps to illustrate distribution. It will contain much new information on varieties, hybrids, and aliens and biological data previously not brought together under one "roof" - - - I cannot say volume as it is planned to appear in parts like the Atlases. I hope to say more about this at our A G M on March 14th, 1979.

F. Buchanan White's Flora of Perthshire.

Another interesting item of news is the publication by EP Publishing Ltd, East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorkshire, of a complete copy of this long unavailable book last year. It costs £8 I managed to get one for the Section's library for £6.50. It is, of course, the only Flora of Perthshire ever produced as we have been unable, because of our limited resources and time, to produce an up-to-date Flora in spite of the enormous number of new records we have stored up and in my keeping at present. It is most attractively produced, although in a small type-face, with an appealing Art Nouveau style green jacket. It can be obtained at Melvin's Bookshop.

Note from the Chairman

Recently remarkable and significant improvements have been and continue to be made to the storage and cataloguing of the collections of Fungi, Lichens, Mosses, Ferns and Flowering Plants. Most of us have been aware of the large herbarium containing many 1000's of dried specimens and some of us may recall attempting to start this cataloguing process some years ago. The task, however, proved too great for the few members attending "working meetings" at the time.

Now, however, having met Mr Michael Taylor, Keeper of the Natural Sciences at the Museum, I was privileged and greatly encouraged to glimpse the progress at last being made in this long-overdue aspect of the Museum's function in our City. Some interesting discoveries have been made during the re-arrangements of the basement areas. I hope to say something about this work at the A G M, but, here and now I can say that Mr Taylor would welcome any voluntary assistance he can have in the work required to classify and file the data contained in these herbaria.

A.W. Robson

Subscriptions

Mr. French, Hon Treasurer, Linwood, Lintrose, Coupar Angus, Blairgowrie. PH13 9JF, would appreciate subscriptions due for the period November, 1977 - March, 1979, so that he can complete his Balance Sheet and also send any dues to the Parent body in time for its A.G.M. on 23rd March. It will be remembered that this was the main reason for changing our Business meeting from November to April.

To save postage Notice is given in this Bulletin of our A.G.M. which will be held on **Wednesday, 14th March, 1979 at 7.30 p.m.** in the Art Gallery and Museum, Perth.

The **Agenda** will be similar in pattern to previous occasions, viz. Minutes of the A G M. 1977, Matters arising, Reports by Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, followed by Election of Office-bearers for 1979/80, and Review of Subscription and Any Other Competent Business

After the business it is hoped to have a showing of Members' Slides. Members with slides are hereby invited to bring a breath of summertime to revive spirits somewhat depressed after this 'winter of discontent', and "cauld blasts".

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