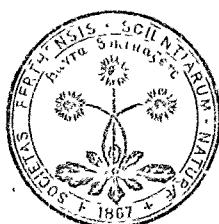


NOVEMBER 1979

P.S.N.S.

BOTANICAL SECTION



Bulletin Number 3

## INTRODUCTION

I feel I should introduce this bulletin with the main points arising from the A G M in March 1979. The position of Secretary has been combined with that of Chairman. I hope I can do justice to the Section in both capacities, but it would be nice to think there is someone in the 'wings' willing to take over either or both duties next March. Mr French and Mr Myles continue to be your Treasurer and Field Secretary respectively. Dr Topham who kindly minuted the meeting is Senior Committee member while Miss Fothergill was appointed Junior Committee member. Mr Michael Taylor was co-opted willingly and with the consent of the meeting as Perth Museum representative. We are most grateful to him and for his offer of help in the production of this and future Bulletins.

Mr and Mrs Burns showed slides comparing the vegetation and landscapes of Scotland and Nepal, stressing similarities of altitudinal zonation. The interesting subject and the high quality of the transparencies made this a most enjoyable close to the meeting. It was a pity that the attendance was so low!

A W Robson

## NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

*Handbook of Water Plants.* BURSCHE

*Welsh Ferns.* HYDE, WADE & HARRISON

*IDENTIFICATION of the Larger Fungi.* WATLING

*Wild Orchids of Britain.* SUMMERHAYES

*Atlas of Ferns of the British Isles.* BSBI/BPS

*The Taraxacum Flora of the British Isles.* RICHARDS

*Conifers in the British Isles.* MITCHELL, HMSO

These books may be taken out by Section members only, the only requirement is to enter the out/in details in the large book provided in the Library.

A number of good lay-interest books have appeared recently. I hope, perhaps, to add some of these to our Botanical library but if members will write to me of any books they

would like to be considered I will do my best to secure them. I still have a remit to spend about £15 of our bank balance.

A W Robson

While on the subject of books, Mr Taylor has written to say that the following, recently purchased by the Museum, would be available for consultation by members of the Section:

British Water Plants. HASLAM, SINCLAIR & WOLSELEY  
Key Works to the Flora and Fauna of the British Isles and North-West Europe. KERRICH, HAWKWORTH & SIMS  
British Mosses and Liverworts. E V WATSON  
Observers Book of Ferns. ROSE  
Observers Book of Lichens. ALVIN  
Concise British Flora in Colour. KEBLE-MARTIN  
List of British Vascular Plants. J E DANDY  
A Guide to the Contents of Herbarium of Manchester Museum. FRANKS

#### EXCURSION REPORTS

21 members attended the early outing to the *Isle of May*. Bill Scott officiated in place of Miss Fothergill who had organised it but was unable to be present. Mr French wrote that, except for Mr Brien he was the only botanist present and that the island did not appear to be outstanding botanically and that it was too early in the year (especially the 'Spring' of 1979). Quoting from his note: 'What did strike me was that there were carpets of Sea-Campion as big as a room probably because of the absence of competing vegetation. Thrift was present but not yet in flower.'

COMRIE (NN/95-50-) 13.6.79

This very pleasant evening excursion was ably led by John Rohrbach, Mr French and myself being the only members other than our leader, who joined our membership in 1978, present to see a type of meadowland becoming increasingly rare in these days of intensive farming.

anks to the owner who wishes to retain it with its relatively rich flora, it may survive for many years to come. It is grazed only by two donkeys and a horse at present which check the invasion of shrubs and trees apart from those by the river, mainly Alder and Willow sp. A total of 73 species were listed but, being early for grasses, rushes, sedges etc there are probably as many more again. It has been suggested that selective grazing and some winter flooding (the fields being only a few metres above the normal river level) might account for the extensive colonies of Square-stemmed St. John's Wort (*Hypericum tetrapetalum*). Another pleasant surprise was the amount of White Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*) in flower. The alien from America, *Tellima grandiflora* turned up in quantity by the river bank along with its 'co-patriot' *Claytonia sibirica* flowering beautifully pink under the trees.

The party were invited to a cup of 'special' tea and cake at Mr and Mrs Rohrbach's house afterwards which was a most enjoyable finish to the outing.

Dr. Smith, visiting the site on 26 July added a further 18 species to the list including a *Platanthera* sp. flower grazed off), the only orchid thus far recorded.

A W Robson

#### BALLINLUIG (NN/95-50-) 24.6.79

This joint meeting was attended by 6 members of BSSI/BSE and 6 of our own and, in very changeable weather conditions spent, apart from 20 minutes under *Salix cinerea* scrub (a most unsatisfactory 'umbrella'), and a rush car-wards at the end in a torrent, an interesting afternoon on Richard's Island. This is a considerable stretch of shingle-beds and associated habitats just opposite the confluence of the Tummel and the Tay. The area was well known to the leaders, Mr French and myself, having been visited in 1968 and 1970. To a long list was added 39 species not recorded before. The shingle habitats in Perthshire are always attractive to range over as plants can often be examined singly and bright colours contrasting with the clean stones are satisfying to the eye and the camera. Apart from the expected Sea-Campion, Lady's and Northern Bedstraws, Heath Violet,

Harebell and Thyme, etc the tiny *Teesdalia nudicaulis* and *Filago minima* were fairly common. A patch of Thrift, not in flower, a solitary but beautiful specimen of *Polygonum viviparum*, two uncommon grasses, *Koeleria gracilis* and *Poa subcaerulea*, two large bushes of *Berberis vulgaris*, and the alien *Tolmeia menziesii* (Pick-a-back) in the river added spice to an exciting day. A range of colours in a group of *Aquilegia vulgaris* suggested garden origin of these particular plants, but the species is certainly native, perhaps, simply returning to their native home in cultivated strains. Not so *Dianthus barbatus* (Sweet William), which surprised the party by being found established in a grassy area. A very pleasant find on the return journey was some flowering Wood Vetch *Vicia sylvatica* missed on the way out. Owing to the weather and lack of time the projected visit to Ballinluig Island upstream had to be cancelled - perhaps next season?

The leaders have to thank Mr J E Macmillan for arranging car parking and conducting by an easy route to the site and thereby avoiding the reconstruction work on the approach roads to the bridge.

A W Robson

THISTLEBRIG NR STANLEY (No/106320) 28.6.79

Botanical Section members were joined by 4 members of the Dundee Naturalists on this fine evening. All enjoyed the pleasant riverside walk with good views upstream and downstream of the Tay. Proceeding along the west bank many interesting species of riverside flora were encountered and listed.\* On stony banks *Geranium sanguineum* (Bloody Cranesbill) was rife and large colonies of *Eupatorium cannabinum* (Hemp Agrimony) were spread along the damp shady banks of the lade next to the path. Some time was spent looking for *Astragalus glycyphyllos* (Wild Liquorice) by the path where it formerly grew but this was found only on the return

journey as it seemed to have spread towards the river under thick herbage. In an area of sandy beach an *Iris* sp. (possibly either *spruia* or *versicolor*) appeared. As the plants were well past flowering, identification was difficult but it is hoped to verify the species next year. There is a rich flora in this area, and as might be expected sprays of *Astrantia major* were discovered in bloom.

Rhoda Fothergill

\* The final list totalled 161 including 11 aliens. A W R

#### NOTE FROM MR FRENCH

Hop (*Humulus lupulus*)

At the roadside, on a tall Beech hedge at Balgersho (OS Sheet 49 No/22384) under the crown of a large Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*) is growing a healthy specimen of the Wild Hop - possibly an escape but in its present south-facing site it has survived several hard winters, including the last.

The present owner, Mrs Munro Walker was not aware of the presence of the plant and knew nothing of its history. Male and female panicles of flowers are borne on the same plant, the fruiting stage having been reached but whether the fruit is viable is difficult to determine. The Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) grows near the same location.

#### A9 DUNKELD BYPASS - ROTMEL ISLAND SSSSI REHABILITATION

The account of the Section's involvement, promised in Bulletin No 1 (Oct 1979), is now to be published in the next Transactions of the Society under the Editorship of Dr Ian Sutherland. It is hoped that the new format and style of the Transactions will prove more acceptable and popular than previous issues.

Finally, please send me YOUR items of general botanical interest. Only by such contributions can a magazine, communicating to all members whether active in the field or not, be successful.

A W Robson

Produced by Perth Museum & Art Gallery