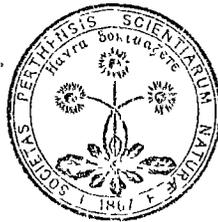


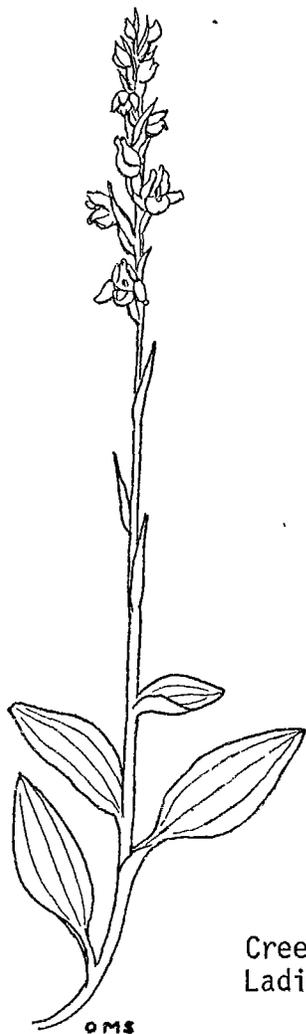
March 1981

**P.S.N.S.
BOTANICAL SECTION**



Bulletin Number 5

INTRODUCTION



As you will see from the reports on the excursions in 1980, we had an interesting and varied field season, and this was followed by several stimulating and informative talks including a talk on the "Botany and Geology of Perthshire" from Dr Rosalind Smith and a report on the Mountains of Corsica from Mr Burns and Mr Bassett. The year has however been marred by the death of our chairman Allan Robson.

The programme arranged for this season also promises to be varied and enjoyable and we hope many of you will take advantage of the outings. As usual we shall be visiting Haremyre and Stormont Loch to see Creeping Ladies Tresses together with the Twinflower. The visit to the Barytes Mine at Meal Tairneachan should also be particularly interesting as it will combine an opportunity to see the minerals associated with barytes in the mine and a chance to record the plants, some of which are alpine species, in the area which may be affected by mining operations.

Nick Stewart and Helen Stace

Creeping
Ladies Tresses

ALLAN ROBSON

It was with great sadness when we heard that Allan Robson had died on Wednesday 14th January 1981. Allan was always an active botanist and in 1957 encouraged the P.S.N.S. to inaugurate a botanical section, of which he was elected chairman. His work as Recorder for the Botanical Society of the British Isles gave him an intimate knowledge of the plants of Perthshire. This enabled him to direct the section to many interesting places and suggest valuable botanical projects.

Unfortunately his health in the last few years was not as good as he would have liked and he had to take a less active part in the section. However, he continued to provide help and advice until he died.

A letter of condolence has been sent to his wife and son offering our deepest sympathy and suggestions have been made for a more permanent memorial.

NOTES ON SESSILE OAK

Autumn 1980 was blessed with a mast year for Oak and it was therefore a good time to look out for Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*). The typical features of Sessile Oak are the stalked leaves and sessile acorns.

In the Coupar Angus - Meigle area the Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) is the most frequent and there are so few specimens of Sessile Oak that these occurrences are worth recording.

- 1) Longleys Grid Reference NO 273 437 on the west side of the secondary road and on the roadside edge of the wood. They are present here with Pedunculate Oak and appear to be of the same age + unfortunately no information is available concerning their origin.
- 2) Campmuir Grid Reference NO 220 379. One poor specimen probably of coppice origin.
- 3) Campmuir Grid Reference NO 219 377. In the remnant of an old oak wood there is one tree, possibly a slow growing maiden.

There is also a specimen of Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*) by the roadside near Pleasance Farm outside Coupar Angus. Approximate Grid Reference NO 22 39.

W F French

AMSINCKIAS IN PERTSHIRE

These North American plants are being increasingly recorded in the British Isles especially in East Anglia and have previously been recorded in three localities in East Perthshire. Last year I saw two new colonies of *Amsinckia* at :

- 1) Corner of barley field by the A873 at farm road end near Thornhill V.C.87 (West Perth). Grid reference NN/647007 14th June 1980. About 20 plants.
- 2) In woodland, possibly brought in by forestry work nearby. West side of Stormont Loch V.C.89 (East Perth). Grid reference NO/187420 21st June 1980. About 40 plants in two patches. (Specimen from both localities in Perth Museum)

I sent specimens from both localities to Mr Mark Hyde of Ipswich who sent me the following notes. The specimens fall under the aggregate name *Amsinckia intermedia*. This is a complicated group which has been tentatively divided in this country into three species - *A. intermedia*, *A. calycina* and *A. menziesii*, though it is by no means certain whether this is justified and on what characters the division should be made.

These Perthshire specimens are similar to plants found in East Lothian but apparently differ from East Anglian plants. Mr Hyde would like to receive seeds of any Scottish plants for cultivation. He also intends to come to Scotland this summer to study *Amsinckias* and would be interested to hear of any colonies or plants he could visit.

Nick Stewart

WHORLED SOLOMENS SEAL (*Polygonatum verticellatum*)

This rare plant was once recorded in several sites in Perthshire and in over 10 sites in Britain, but now seems to be increasingly rare. Dr Rosalind Smith knows of plants at Keltneyburn but would be interested to hear of any other sites for this plant. Any details of sites should be sent to her at Nature Conservancy Council, 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh.

NOTE ON BAY WILLOW (*Salix pentandra*)

In August 1980 Allan Robson confirmed that a roadside broad-leaved willow bush at Market Hill (Grid reference NO 229 393) was the Bay Willow and described it as one of Scotland's rarest willows.

W F French

Editors Note :

The nearest specimen to this is at Dunning Glen on the roadside south of Myrehaugh Farm. Francis Buchanan White and W Martin noted the Bay Willow at this site in 1888 when they recorded the occurrence of Downy Willow (*Salix lapponum*) growing mixed with it. The record for Downy Willow is interesting since this locality is at an altitude of 700 ft and Downy Willow does not normally grow below 2,000 ft - Clapham, Tutin and Warburg report the lowest altitude of this willow as 650 ft possibly on account of this very record.

We visited this site last Autumn, using directions written in Buchanan-White's notebook and though we found several healthy bushes of the Bay Willow, there was no sign of Downy Willow in the area. Unfortunately the area beyond the roadside has been planted with conifers since 1888 and this may have lead to the disappearance of this willow.

EXCURSION REPORTS 1980

BRANKLYN GARDENS 10th May 1980

The opening meeting of the 1980 programme was on Saturday 10th May. It was the first time for awhile that a visit was made to see a collection of plants in cultivation. This was at Branklyn Gardens, Dundee Road, Perth.

We were greeted by the Head Gardener, Mr Andrew Duncan, who very generously gave up the whole afternoon to conduct us round the collection. He coped with our many questions, both capably and with great enthusiasm.

The garden, which always seems to have something novel to admire, was in very good form, especially for so early in May. It is difficult to say which plants were of particular merit but besides the Rhododendrons, both dwarf and large, the following appealed particularly to me. The shrubs, *Magnolia sinensis* and *Viburnum*

tomentosum (var. *Mariesii*). The herbs, *Phlox subulata*, *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, *Meconopsis grandis* and standing literally head and shoulder above the others, *Megacarpaea polyandra*.

M C Burns

ARBROATH CLIFFS

18th May 1980

Approximately 15 members of the botanical and geological sections met on one of the few sunny days of last year to examine the cliffs to the north of Arbroath. This section of the coastline has a clifftop nature trail laid out by members of the Scottish Wildlife Trust but initially our attention was directed to the geological features of the beach and cliffs. Here the main feature is the unconformity between the Lower and Upper Old Red Sandstone above which lies a distinct basal conglomerate containing fragments of rocks from the highlands. Other structures seen included current bedding, faults, sea caves and arches, raised beaches, graded beds and channels. In the afternoon the party followed the route of the nature trail as far as The Three Sisters. Unfortunately it was rather early in the year to see the impressive flora of the clifftops but the Scurvy Grass, Thrift and Sea Campion were in flower and the Purple Milk Vetch (*Astragalus danicus*) was identified. The cliffs would certainly be worthy of a visit later in the season.

Michael Taylor

KEILLOUR GARDENS

13th June 1980

This was a parent body visit, ably led by Mrs Knox-Findlay who impressed us with her activity and interest despite her advancing years. Even in the dull weather all the plants appeared at their best and the garden was full of interest.

Starting in the early "Thirties" Mrs Findlay and her late husband created a garden making full use of the habitats available in this location. The deep sided valleys bounded sites where such plants as *Embothrium coccineum* flourished, producing a brilliant display of colour, and great ingenuity was used in transporting water to make bog gardens.

The collection of plants here covers a wide range of species, and is internationally known for its specialisation in *Nemocharis*,

Meconopsis, *Rhododendrons* and includes rare species of *Clematis*.

W F French

RIVER TAY

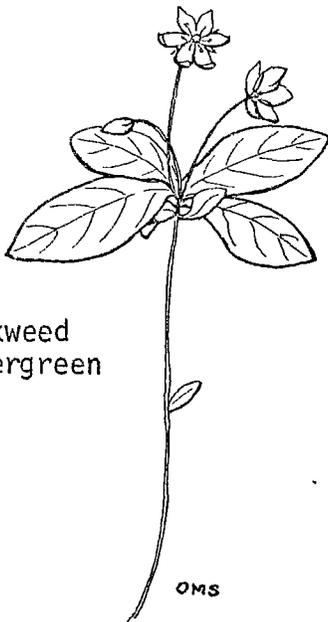
16th June 1980

On this damp June evening three members met outside Perth Museum for this meeting and it was decided to visit the east bank of the River Tay opposite Stanley. Unfortunately Miss Fothergill decided not to come with us and Mike Burns and myself proceeded to near Thistlebridge, where we descended to the bank of the Tay. Here the bank was quite sandy and overgrown but we found some nice grassy meadows with Nootka Lupin (*Lupinus nootkatensis*) and Wood Cranesbill (*Geranium sylvaticum*). We then walked upstream towards an outcrop of Limestone which occurs opposite Inchbervis Castle. On the grassy banks on the way we found many interesting plants including Viviparous Bistort (*Polygonum viviparum*), Melancholy Thistle (*Cirsium heterophyllum*) and Pink Masterwort (*Astrantia major*). On the Limestone we found yellow Mountain Saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*) and Sea Campion (*Silene maritima*). As light was failing we climbed up to the Perth - Blairgowrie road and after an interesting detour returned to the car. In all we recorded over 200 plants in four hours and had a very enjoyable evening.

Nick Stewart

LOCH MARLEE AND STORMONT LOCH

21st June 1980



Chickweed
Wintergreen

This was a joint meeting with the B.S.B.1 lead by Dr Rosalind Smith. In the morning we visited Loch Marlee, where we were joined by the owners of the site. Here the main interest was in a marshy area adjoining the Loch, where we looked at various species of *Carex*, particularly *Carex diandra* and *Carex disticha*. A specimen of the orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* also attracted a lot of attention and we were pleased to find *Carex aquatilis* growing nearby.

At Stormont Loch we skirted the water through an area of pine woodland where we

found many plants of Chickweed Wintergreen (*Trientalis europea*) and Creeping Ladies Tresses (*Goodyera repens*) and at various points around the Loch specimens of *Calamagrostis* were collected for research purposes. Other interesting plants found on this trip, including the beautiful Tufted Loosestrife (*Naumburgia thyrsofolia*) and specimens of *Amsinckia*, an alien recorded here for the first time, contributed in making this an enjoyable and fascinating day.

Helen Stace

BEN VRACKIE

6th July 1980

On the 6th July a visit was made to Ben Vrackie (952633) to see the upland plants of the mineral-rich mica-schist outcrops. We chose approximately the right time for the flowers, although they were beginning to go past their best. However, in exchange we were granted a perfect sunny day and we all decided this was a fair recompense.

At Loch a'Choire we were pleased to find Marestalk (*Hippuris vulgaris*) and Bladderwort (*Utricularia intermedia*). On the scree and loose cliffs to the south-east of the summit the following plants were recorded Purple Mountain Milk Vetch (*Oxytropis halleri*), Alpine Milk Vetch (*Astragalus alpinus*), Alpine Cinquefoil (*Potentilla crantzii*), Alpine Mouse Ear (*Cerastium alpinum*), and Moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*).

After climbing to the top at 2,760 ft we walked swiftly back to the vehicles, well satisfied with the trip.

M C Burns

ROTMEL ISLAND

9th August 1980

Rotmel Island, a gravel bank in the River Tay, north of Dunkeld, was altered when the course of the Tay was diverted during the extension of the A9.

The botanical section was asked to collect seeds from plants likely to be destroyed by the alteration. Seeds and some plants, including Nootka lupin (*Lupin nootkatensis*) and Sea Campion (*Silene maritima*) were gathered and returned to the new gravel banks in 1977 and this meeting was held to monitor their progress and the natural

regeneration of the banks.

The plant cover was quite good, although some seedlings proved quite difficult to identify. The Sea Campion was particularly prolific but there was not so much success with the lupin. Scrub was also growing strongly, particularly in areas adjacent to the river banks, and it may be feared that it may soon overwhelm the area.

The meeting was led by Allan Robson and we were all hopeful that he had made a good recovery from his illness. However, in January 1981 Allan died suddenly and the Botanical Section lost a valued leader and instructor.

Rhoda Fothergill

Note for further details of this project see Transactions of the PSNS
Vol XIII

MYLNEFIELD - SCOTTISH HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE 29th August 1980

The purpose of the visit was to look at fruit and vegetable research. Research into climatology, entomology and the provision of shelter, using potatoes grown in barrels, was demonstrated, but the main items seen were fruit trials, especially raspberries, Brambles and Hybrids.

Experiments in "berry" management included culling experiments on raspberry canes - clear culling of every second line of canes, every second year looked promising and in some cases had given 140% of the normal finite yield.

The Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosus*) trials were fascinating and we were privileged to sample the fruit - this is the American equivalent of our Scottish Blaeberry only larger. These plants were netted against birds and mulched with sawdust to keep down weeds and provide sufficiently acid conditions.

Despite an extremely cold evening this was a most fascinating visit and we felt this was a glimpse of future gardening. It ended after dark with a talk on the work of the Scottish Horticultural Research Institute.

W F French

We would like to thank all the people who contributed to this Bulletin, especially Mrs Olga Stewart for her drawings and to all the people who will be contributing to the next one ! (Articles for the next Bulletin should be sent to Mike Taylor at Perth Museum). Thanks also to the Museum for providing the facilities to produce the Bulletin, especially for the services of Muriel who translated our scrawls into the present Bulletin.

Produced by Perth Museum & Art Gallery