

1988

P.S.N.S.



BOTANICAL SECTION

12

Bulletin

PERTSHIRE SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCE - BOTANICAL SECTION

BULLETIN NO. 12

INTRODUCTION

I am happy to introduce the reports of a very successful field season. We did not always have fine weather, but we carried out all the surveys we had set ourselves under the Monitoring Scheme (see Richard Thomas' note in last year's Bulletin), and our 'fun' meetings turned out to be botanically interesting. We were delighted to welcome a number of newcomers to the Section. Turnouts were invariably very good, so that even when some of our regulars were unavailable, our field meetings were sociable, and we could split into two or more parties to cover the ground more effectively, without letting people stray off on their own, which would have been contrary to our Code of Conduct (as promulgated with the Syllabus of Summer Excursions).

After the first meet, Richard Thomas was again summoned to Malaysia, and had to forego his Tetrads. We are grateful to the substitute leaders, particularly to Jackie Muscott, a longstanding member of the Section, who lives in Edinburgh, and willingly came the extra miles to many of the excursions, and led the Rannoch outing (All this on top of her regular duty as Vice-County Recorder for West Lothain).

We are grateful to the landowners and occupiers who gave us permission to go on their land for all these excursions, for their help in guiding us to interesting spots, and for the interest they took in our findings. Without their co-operation we could not botanise effectively in the Perthshire countryside.

BILL GAULD

RANDOM NOTES

Freddy French, browsing through his copy of 'AMATEUR GARDENING', issue of 28 May 1988, came across an article entitled 'FOCUS ON ST KILDA'. The 'lens' was our stalwart and ever-young founder member Bob Brien, who is also an Honorary Member of the National Trust for Scotland's St Kilda Club. The article described the small, close-growing varieties of heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) Bob had collected as cuttings from Hirta (the main island of the St Kilda group). He found these heathers were not just stunted by the harsh island environment, but retained their dwarf characteristics when transferred to sheltered Pitcairngreen, so he developed them for the commercial market. There was a display of Bob's heathers at the Glasgow Garden Festival. He has given them appropriate names, such as Boreray, Hirta, Minty, Mullach Mor, Oestaval, Soay, and Emerald Jock (though the last sounds more like a salmon fly). 'Ordinary' heathers quickly become leggy, and need regular pruning, so varieties that naturally keep short are a boon to the lazy gardener! Very best wishes to Bob, and to our other surviving founder member, Miss Stewart.

We record with regret the death at the end of August of Harold Carter, and extend our sympathy to his widow. The Carters were long-standing and active members of the Section, but gave up some years ago when Mr Carter sustained a serious accident.

Freddy French attended the service of rededication of the Memorial to David Douglas which stands in the grounds of Scone Old Parish Church. Douglas (1799-1834) was born in Scone, went first to Glasgow Botanic Garden, then on the recommendation of the great W.J. Hooker was sent by the Royal Horticultural Society to collect plants in California and the Pacific Coast. He introduced to this country 50 species of tree, including the Douglas 'Fir' (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and nearly 200 herbaceous plants, including the very popular *Phlox douglasii*, of which there are now many varieties. Douglas was tragically killed in Hawaii, when he fell into a pit dug to trap wild bulls. The rededication service was followed by tea and an illustrated talk by the Chief Conservator of Forests, British Columbia, on the David Douglas Society of Vancouver, so he is not without honour across the Atlantic.

Talking of trees, a recent issue of "NEW SCIENTIST" reports that an electric power company in the United States, as a demonstration of its concern about the 'greenhouse effect', has put up the money to afforest 500 square kilometers of land in Central America, calculating that the annual increment of timber will absorb about as much CO₂ as will be released by the generation of their planned output of 180 Megawatts. In Scotland we use very roughly the equivalent of the output of 100 such stations, taking into account all fossil fuels, coal, gas, and oil, and electricity generated from them, for all purposes, domestic, industrial, and transport. The forest required to balance this would cover five-sixths of our countryside (outside the built-up areas), taking the timber-line to be 1500 feet. What would our newly green-fingered Government make of that?

This year's 'Hop' discovery was made by a horticulturist and his wife from Dunbar, on holiday in Crieff, who visited the Bennybeg Nature Trail on the Drummond Estate. They reported that they had seen a hop plant growing low down on the prominent quartz-dolerite dyke which forms the north leg of the Trail (at NN 863189). Your editor, and other local botanists, had passed it over many times!

Finally, *Sedum villosum* (see Chapelhill). Marion and Stan Shimeld, stalwart ornithologists, but also keen botanists, decided to check a site for Hairy Stonecrop known to them on the back of Turleum Hill (at NN 814200), to see whether it had survived the reafforestation of the area. The hill road, in the wet ruts of which it grew, had been made up but the Stonecrop still hung on - just one plant. In the Glascorrie Burn nearby they found Blue Water Speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*), which is, according to Buchanan White "Most common in Gowrie; here and there in the warmer parts of the other districts" [of Lowland Perthshire]. So that was a good find. *Sedum Villosum* was also reported on the southern edge of VC 88, among the Ochils.

CULDEES, MUTHILL (NN 8816)

18 MAY 88

Nine members met outside Culdees Castle, near Muthill, to collect records for the 'Flora'. The owner, Mr D. Maitland Gardner, kindly met us in front of the house, and recommended routes through the estate woodland, along the Machany Glen, and by the Falls of Ness. We are most grateful to him for permission to come, and for his guidance.

This being our first meet of the season, some of us needed our eyes retuned to identifying plants, but there was plenty to practice on. We passed from the stables, round which grew a typical flora of docks, sorrels and such-like, into the policy woods, which we guessed had been planted about 150 years ago. They now held a rich ground flora, with lots of Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*), mostly blue, but with a fair sprinkling of white. Among them we found Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), and some garden escapes, including Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum multiflorum*) and Monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*).

Having reached the Machany Water, we turned upstream for a short distance before returning to the stable block. We then took the cars along the south drive, where we parked them again and went back down into the Glen. Mr Maitland Gardner had warned us that his mother had sown and planted many garden flowers among the woods, and beside the estate roads and paths. We found them, but much else as well. The gorge above the waterfall proved too overgrown and steep to force our way through, so we walked upstream to a stone bridge and crossed there, and went down the south side of the Water to the ruined mill, where we had a good view of the waterfall. By the streamsides we made our best finds, including Brittle Bladder-fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), and some immature plants of Wintergreen (*Pyrola*). Darkness began to fall and it was time to go back to the cars and home. We had had an excellent evening, recording 132 species in all.

RICHARD THOMAS and BILL GAULD

CHAPELHILL (NO 03 TETRAD A - revisited)

22 JUNE 88

Fourteen members and friends met at Chapelhill on a fine evening, our purpose being to relocate the Hairy Stonecrop (*Sedum villosum*), which we had found there last year. We had failed to find it again on a return visit soon afterwards, although helped by Mr McGregor, the farmer at Shannoch, who had been present when it was first spotted. We didn't find it again this time either, in spite of an intensive search by the whole party. The cattle grazing the moor must have found it first!

In compensation, we found Lesser Twayblade (*Listera cordata*), Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Brown bent (*Agrostis canina*), Creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Quaking Grass (*Briza media*), and Ivy-leaved Crowfoot (*Ranunculus hederaceus*), as well as *Carex dioica* and *C. hostiana*.

We also revisited the marshland south of the farmstead, and found many more spikes of Lesser Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera bifolia*) than the twenty or so we had found there last year.

Our thanks to Mr McGregor for allowing us to visit two years running and also to mine host of the Chapelhill Inn for allowing us to park our cars there, and later slocken our drouth!

MARGARET MACDONALD

MEIKLE OBNEY (NO 03 TETRAD J)

2 JULY 88

Six hardy souls gathered in pouring rain at the farm of Meikle Obney, which interestingly was the subject some years ago of a study to produce a model conservation plan. After deriding us gently for going out on such a day Jim Paton, the farmer, very kindly gave us a lift in his Landrover to the top of the hill. From there two of us covered the northern end of the survey square. This ground was mainly wet and fairly acid moor with drier patches, on which grew the odd pine and clump of birch or rowan, with occasional rock outcrops. A rather boggy burn, with patches of willows, wandered down the far side towards Balchomish Farm, in Strath Braan, where Margaret Macdonald came round by car to collect us.

The rest of us waved goodbye to them through the swirling mist, and set off to cover the south end of the square, largely upland grassland and rushy mires, together with a small wooded gorge, recently fenced from grazing. A goodly range of plants was seen, the most notable being a spike of Lesser Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera bifolia*).

On our somewhat bedraggled return we were invited to Mr Paton's kitchen for a very welcome cup of hot coffee, his second major contribution towards the success and enjoyment of the day. We are most grateful.

BILL GAULD and ROS SMITH

TONGUEY FAULDS (NO 00 TETRAD J)

17 JULY 88

This was a strenuous half-day excursion to the southern boundary of VC 88 among the high Ochils, in Forestry Commission and private plantations. We were greeted on arrival at our rendezvous, Corb Bridge (NO 017081) by the owner of part of ground we were going to survey, Dr D.J. Macdonald, but he then left us to inspect another of his woods west of the road, where a rare fungus had been found. We were nine, enough to split into two parties.

Neale Taylor, with four, took the shorter, and more strenuous, route, following the course of the Water of May towards the northern boundary of the Tetrad and Ferny Braes. The gorge here has markedly contrasting slopes. The south-facing side is mostly dry grassland with outcrops of base-rich rock with a rich flora of such species as Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Thyme-leaved Sandwort (*Arenaria serpyllifolia*), Crested Hair-grass (*Koeleria macrantha*), Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Thyme (*Thymus praecox*), and Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*). Of particular interest was a thriving colony of Northern Brown Argus butterflies whose food plant is the rockrose. This species is very local nationally, and this is only the second colony at present known in the Ochils.

The north-facing slope is very different in character with woodland species such as Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), along with species more typical of upland cliff ledges, such as Mossy Saxifrage (*Saxifraga hypnoides*), Northern Bedstraw (*Galium boreale*), and Brittle Bladder-fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), on the

rocky outcrops. Also discovered were two clubmosses, Stagshorn Clubmoss (*Lycopodium clavatum*) and Fir Clubmoss (*Huperzia selago*), both species now being quite local in the Ochils.

Bill Gauld and three walked up to the Forestry Commission car park at the Fauld, then took the footpath along the ride that led due east from it. This soon joined the forest road from the south-west to the abandoned holding of Linn Hill. There was plenty to see along the ride and by the road-side, including specimens of Trailing St John's Wort (*Hypericum humifusum*) and Sand Spurrey (*Spergularia rubra*), both quite rare in the Ochils. The road wound round a bend overlooking the Back Burn to a quarry or borrow pit, from which material for the road had been taken. A wide apron of spoil lay below it, covered with Spignel (*Meum athamanticum*), roots enough to keep the old time Highlanders chewing happily for ever.

We looked over to the open ground at Knowehead, and decided it was too far for us that day, so we retraced our steps, crossed the Back and forced our way through the bushes to its junction with the Rashiehill Burn. We crossed the steep little gorge, with Ragged Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) at its boggy foot, and up to the fence, against which grew a bush the two foresters, Freddy French and Gunnar Godwin, instantly identified as Swedish Whitebeam (*Sorbus intermedia*), clearly self-seeded. We were told specimens had been planted not very far away on the other side of the hill.

We struggled uphill to a pine plantation, probably an old agricultural shelterbelt, but time was getting on, and we decided to turn back, the way we had come. It was nearly 6 pm, not far now, but we were distinctly leg-weary. A fern caught the eye, and was keyed out at Soft Shield-fern (*Polystichum setiferum*), except that NT was not quite satisfied with the obtuseness of the angle at the base of the pinnules. The question was serious, for Buchanan White has a note that *Aspidium angulare*, as this fern was then called, "has been reported from Invermay and Glen Farg, but apparently does not occur in either of these places." We had been given a chance to confirm these century old reports, so a frond was sent off to the BSBI referee for *Polystichum*, whose verdict is awaited.

NEALE TAYLOR and BILL GAULD

UPPER GLENALMOND (NN 73 TETRAD W)

24 JULY 88

After meeting at the Sma' Glen car park we transferred to the minimum number of cars for the drive up the private road to Auchnafree as far as the edge of Tetrad W. We then split into two parties, one making for a promising burn on the north side and the other for one on the south side of the glen. At this point the faint-hearted among were tempted to turn back as the heavens opened with thunder and lightning. But we had our cagoules, and once the storm had passed the day became quite pleasant.

The southern party made their way up the Larachlaura Burn. They had to work hard for their 110 odd species, for most of the interest lay on the craggy gorge sides, with occasional base-rich wet scree slope higher up. Amongst the more notable species were Green Spleenwort (*Asplenium viride*), Pale Sedge (*Carex pallescens*), Mountain Melick (*Melica nutans*),

Hard Shield-fern (*Polystichum aculeatum*), and Stone Bramble (*Rubus saxatilis*) on the rock ledges, and Three-flowered Rush (*Juncus triglumis*) and Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) in the flushes. Plant of the day was probably a rather sickly specimen of Hart's-tongue Fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) found under a rock not far up the burn. This is a distinctly local species in Perthshire, and it was particularly pleasing not to find it growing suspiciously on a wall! Elsewhere on the hill the vegetation was dull, *Nardus - Vaccinium myrtillus* grassland with not a hint of a base-rich flush. Several flowering clumps of Purple Saxifrage (*Sax. oppositifolia*) were located on one of the low cliffs further up the hill. In due course we reached the Almond at the western end of our Tetrad, and walked back along its banks to our starting point, adding the occasional new item to our list.

The northern party scored about evenly, their best finds being Field Gentian (*Gentianella campestris*) and Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*), but it was happiness enough to explore this remote area and enjoy the views, although one enthusiast thought it a pity we had not brought golf-clubs, to finish off the day with a round among the sheep grazing the 'Course' on the riverside haugh!

NEALE TAYLOR and ROS SMITH

RANNOCH (NN 46 TETRAD A)

7 AUG 88

The weather was none too promising when we foregathered at Rannoch Station for the two mile walk along the railway to our Tetrad, but by the end of the day the threat of rain had been replaced by brilliant sunshine, which in the absence of midges and clegs made conditions well-nigh idyllic, though we still had the burden of our foul-weather clothing.

A dozen people turned up, so a separate party could be assigned to each one km square, and once safely through the snow tunnel (no trains of course on a Sunday), we went our different ways. Rannoch Moor is pretty boring once you've noted Purple Moorgrass (*Molinia caerulea*), Deergrass (*Trichophum cespitosum*), Bog Myrtle (*Myrica gale*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), and a few common grasses and sedges. It takes a long time to score a century at that rate!

The main body of water, *Lochan a' Chladheimh*, was disappointing but some of the smaller pools and marshier bits had a more interesting flora. Here were found Slender Sedge (*Carex lasiocarpa*), Mud Sedge (*C. limosa*), and Few-flowered Sedge (*C. pauciflora*), with White Water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*), Oblong-leaved Sundew (*Drosera intermedia*), Floating Bur-reed (*Sparganium angustifolium*), and a Bladderwort. I was quite happy to record the bit I found as *intermedia* until I made the mistake of reading Tim Rich's new 'PLANT CRIB', and am now inclined to *stygia* or *ochroleuca*! Fortunately Neale Taylor undertook to take the specimens back to work out at leisure. But the nicest find of the day was a new site for Rannoch Rush (*Scheuchzeria palustris*), discovered by Ros Smith.

Slightly higher, drier ground produced Petty Whin (*Genista anglica*), Stagshorn Clubmoss (*Lycopodium clavatum*), and Dwarf Birch (*Betula nana*), with Ling and other usual heath plants, while burnsidcs provided a blessed oasis for some common grasses and herbs, including Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*), Wood Anemone, Common Valerian, and Devil's Bit Scabious. The first buttercup of the day was a matter of great excitement! There too a few alpine and base-loving plants put in a one-off appearance - Alpine Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla alpina*), Mountain Everlasting (*Antennaria dioica*), Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), and Lesser Clubmoss (*Selaginella selaginoides*).

Our list would still have been short, however, had it not been for the ballast along the railway line. Rarely can weeds, such as Ragwort, Shepherd's Purse, or Common Nettle, which appeared to have been introduced with some recently dumped soil (but they counted just the same), have been seized on with such delight! They appeared to have been introduced with some recently dumped soil, but they counted just the same as the genuine locals, though one wondered how many Rannoch winters Common Toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*) would survive!.

The day ended with a visit to see the Rannoch Rush at one of its better-known sites. It seemed to be doing well, with plenty of green inflated fruit spikes which look extremely distinctive at this time of year. I hope I have better luck with my slides this time: the developers lost the last lot, hard won in the face of an unpleasant onslaught by biting insects - happily absent this time. Instead two dragonflies, the Common Hawker (*Aeshna juncea*) and the Black Darter (*Sympetrum danae*) were on the wing, and grasshoppers serenaded each other in the heather.

Rannoch Rush is now confined in Britain to Rannoch Moor, although one hundred years ago it was known in several locations in England as well as Scotland. The reasons for its decline are quite unknown, but fortunately the Rannoch colonies look very healthy.

JACKIE MUSCOTT, with some comments by ROS SMITH

GLEN QUEICH (NO 00)

13 AUG 88

This was a joint BSBI/PSNS occasion, a neighbourly visit to Kinross, under the general direction of George Ballantyne, Recorder for Fife and Kinross (VC 85), though as will be seen two of the parties entered home ground (VC88).

Ten of us met, in heavy rain, at the motorway service station west of Kinross, and were allocated various objectives. Neale Taylor, with three companions, went to explore Glen Queich itself, from Easter Fossoway to Myrehaugh, up to the edge of the Forestry Commission ground we had visited from Tonguey Faulds. The four of us were joined by Malcolm Smith from Carnbo who kindly acted as our guide. In many ways the flora of this glen is similar to that of Tonguey Faulds, though there is not such a contrast between the valley sides, perhaps because the glen is oriented NW to SE rather than E to W.

Near Easter Fossoway there are small areas of unimproved scrubby grassland where reputedly both Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) and Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) occur, though we could only locate a few dried heads of what we assumed to be the former.

From Kalesquy Linn to the Fisher's Stone the glen narrows to a very attractive gorge. On both sides are crags with fragments of hazel, elm, and birch woodland with, as at Tonguey, Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Brittle Bladder-fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), Mossy Saxifrage (*Sax. hypnoides*), and many other typical woodland species. Smooth-stalked Sedge (*Carex laevigata*), quite a local species, occurs here by the burn at its only site in Kinross. Other local species on the crags on the north side were Bearded Couch (*Elymus* - formerly *Agropyron* - *caninus*), and Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*). Shining Crane's-bill (*Geranium lucidum*), not seen in Kinross since 1863, until found again this year two months previously at this very spot, by NT, was not relocated, but then it had been in flower.

The boundary between Vice-Counties 85 and 87 follows the burn down the glen, which meant that rather tedious recording in both VCs was required. This considerably slowed our progress and we were unable to do justice to the section above the Fisher's Stone where there are areas of calcareous grassland, and we hurried on to see the Parsley fern (*Cryptogramma crispa*) at its only known Kinross locality, on a small patch of scree perched high on the glen side.

On the way down a patch of Chickweed Willow-herb (*Epilobium alsinifolium*), a nationally scarce species which like Mossy Saxifrage is usually found at higher elevations, was discovered on the banks of a small burn. Spignel (*Meum athamanticum*) occurred on the roadside near Myrehaugh, but the Globeflower (*Trollius europaeus*) which had been recorded in a ditch here was not located.

Our sincere thanks are due to Brian Rowley who very kindly met us at the top of the glen, and having checked the parsley fern site with us (He informed us that there were now several more patches than when he had last visited the site) took the drivers back to their cars at Easter Fossoway.

The rest of us went north to Stronachie Farm (NO 069085), some with George to explore round Cairnavain Reservoir and the burns leading to it, Ros and I to follow the Chapel Burn to the Vice-County boundary, cross into VC 88, and climb Bauk Hill and along to Dochrie Hill, before turning west to get back to our starting point. George had asked us to look out specially for Cowberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) and Alpine Bistort (*Polygonum viviparum*). We found many interesting plants in the burn, though inevitably it was slow going, and we also recorded what we could see in the adjoining pastures, before stopping for lunch on a grassy bank. Crossing to 'our own' side meant noting again much that we had already seen, and this required mental discipline, particularly with the common or garden species. A steep little pull got us up to the open moor aiming for an aged shelter belt on the brow of Bauk. A good flush gave us our only patch of Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*), and shortly afterwards

we found the day's first Daisy (*Bellis perennis*)! We had hopes of sedges in the flushes between Baulk and Dochrie, but they proved disappointing.

So we did our neighbourly duty, and also recorded in a remoter corner of our home ground. A good day, for which thanks are due to George Ballantyne.

NEALE TAYLOR AND BILL GAULD

TAYMOUNT (NO 1234)

22 AUG 88

Nine people, including one junior associate, assembled at 6.30 pm in the square, Stanley, for a 'fun' visit (ie outside the BSBI monitoring programme) to the banks of the river Tay at Taymount, and to inspect Campsie Linn from the west.

We found a suitable car park on the flat east of the canoeing centre at Burnmouth, and headed straight for the river, intending just to have a quick look before going along to Bellymore Island and the Linn. But the vegetation was rather different from that of the uplands we'd been seeing so much of, and Ros, who had unanimously been elected plant referee and scribe, was soon complaining of writer's cramp. Restharrow (*Ononis repens*) was only one of a goodly number of low-ground plants we found. We got away eventually and waded across the channel to the first wooded island, where we found Wood Stitchwort (*Stellaria nemorum*), Wood Small-reed (*Calamagrostis epigejos*), and many other interesting plants, including an escaped Masterwort (*Astrantia*) among the bushes at the point of the island. Sadly, when we got to the other side, we found the channel separating us from Bellymore Island too full to wade. We retreated and went round the field-edge to the lodge, and then along the drive leading to Taymount House. Our attention was divided between the roadside plants, among which Great Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) was outstanding, and the views of the broken rocks forming the Linn. Dusk began to fall, and plant spotting became difficult, so we called it a day, promising to come back again, for an afternoon at least, if not a full day, next year when the river was low enough to permit us to get over to Bellymore. Margaret Macdonald was deputed to keep an eye on water levels accordingly.

BILL GAULD

NEWBURGH, FIFE (NO 21)

10 SEPT 88

This afternoon excursion was outside the Monitoring Scheme, and also involved a visit over the border to VC 85, our plan being to walk the shore from Newburgh to Earn Mouth, by courtesy of the owners concerned. Unfortunately George Ballantyne, who had been billed as leader, and another Fifer whom we had hoped would come, could not in the event join us.

Even so eleven of us met in the car park of the public park at the west end of Newburgh. A walk across the grass, among pied wagtails and low-flying swallows, led to a gate in the shore wall. The tide, and the river were high, so there was little foreshore exposed (but little grows

on the mud thereabouts anyway, so we did not miss much). Ros, there with her friend Nicky from Salisbury, was in holiday mood, but entered with her usual spirit into the debates on the identity of the unfamiliar coastal species and garden escapes that confronted us.

We reported our findings for VC 85 (103 species on the 'card') to George, who replied: "I was interested to compare your sightings with lists I made in 1976 and 1985. In particular, I am glad you found *Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush); this was reported from there in the early '80s, but I hadn't seen it myself. This is only the second known site for VC 85. The *Oenanthe* I'm pretty sure is *fistulosa* [ie Tubular Water-dropwort] - I saw it in '76 but not in '85. In this instance it is the only VC 85 site. Another uncommon Fife plant is *Senecio aquaticus* (Marsh Ragwort), as is *Eleocharis uniglumis* (Slender Spike-rush). As you say, there are a lot of escapes present. I see *Alchemilla conjuncta* (the garden 'Alpine Lady's-mantle') is still holding on. Where *Allium carinatum* (Keeled Garlic) came from I don't know, but it certainly thrives on the banks of the Tay. I hadn't come across the viviparous form of *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed Canary-grass), although I do recall finding an odd grass which I couldn't make much of. Perhaps that was it." So I reckon our visit to Fife was well justified.

The path along the shore got ever more overgrown, and the water higher, and by the time we reached the Vice-County boundary and entered VC 88 we were glad to hop over the wall and finish our walk through a little bit of woodland, which contained *Carex remota* (Distant Sedge), and inside the fields. Looking over the wall we could see little except the reeds, but arable weeds, if not what we had come out for, kept us happily busy until the time came to turn inland and make for the cars we had providently parked beforehand beside the Carpow ferry pier. By then VC 88 had given 97 species.

For the benefit of those who felt it was a long trudge - the measured distance from the 'hole in the wall' at Newburgh to the point where we turned inland is almost exactly two miles, with another mile to and from the cars.

BILL GAULD

THE FLORA OF PERTSHIRE

Nick Stewart has now produced a draft check-list of the flora of Perthshire, and we hope to finalise this to the point at which it could be published, with annotations on the distribution of species, by the end of 1989. In support of this exercise, we are planning to include in next summer's programme a number of visits to some under-recorded 'squares' in Perthshire.

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