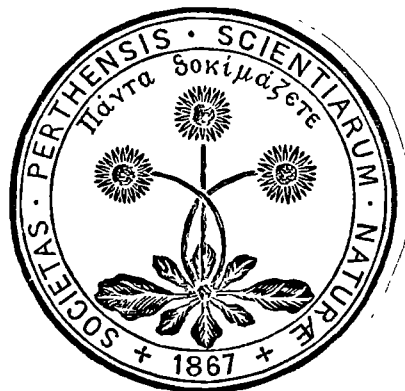


1990

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**BOTANICAL SECTION**

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**Bulletin**

PERTSHIRE SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCE

BOTANICAL SECTION

BULLETIN No.14 - 1990

INTRODUCTION

I am grateful to leaders for letting me have reports on the field meetings, as usual with very little 'whipping in' being required. "'Twere well it were done quickly" applies to the writing of reports as well as to the murder of kings. It not only eases an editor's task to receive his material in good time, but reports are best written when an event is fresh in the mind, and the Bulletin can be circulated to members before the season has been quite forgotten.

BILL GAULD

(1) MONCRIEFFE HILL (NO 13 20)

1 JUNE 90

This was an evening excursion arranged by the Parent Body to an area of Moncrieffe Hill not previously visited by the Section.

The land and its standing crop of trees had been sold by the Forestry Commission to the Woodland Trust, and the object of the visit was to see the work done by the Trust. Their general objective is ultimately to replace exotic tree species by native ones. Some felling had been done and the felled area replanted with broadleaved native species, including gean and rowan, and with sycamore. The soil is fertile but extremely shallow. It has carried tree crops in the past so it is reasonable to assume that it will do so again - this time not as a commercial enterprise.

The highlight of the evening was the discovery of Centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*). A list of the plants found has been passed to the VC Recorder for record.

W. F. FRENCH

(Neale Taylor has been doing research into botanical records for Moncrieffe Hill, the results of which I hope will be published in the Society's *Journal* in due course.- Ed)

(2) TENTSMUIR (NO 49 24)

16 JUNE 90

This was a joint meeting with the Perth Branch of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, with a starting point at Kinshaldy Beach car park (NO 498242) in Tentsmuir Forest, Fife. Sixteen people attended.

The route northwards was taken, following the edge of the coniferous forest on a path through the birch and willow woodland. As well as the usual variety of woodland plants, the sharp-eyed spotted a number of interesting plants. These included Early Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*), Coralroot Orchid (*Corallorhiza trifida*), Creeping Ladies Tresses (*Goodyera repens*), Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), Greater Twayblade (*Listera ovata*), Heath Woodrush (*Luzula multiflora*), and Little Mouse-ear (*Cerastium semidecandrum*)

Progress was not very fast so we did not carry on to the end of the path but branched off towards the seashore. In the dune-slack area a plant of note was Purple Milk-vetch (*Astragalus danicus*). The Powie Burn area, just behind the sand dunes, was a fascinating sun (and plant) trap, with, among others, Sand Sedge (*Carex arenaria*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), and Water-crowfoot, possibly the Thread-leaved species (*Ranunculus trichophyllus*).

After the obligatory tea-stop, a bracing walk back down the beach to the car park made a pleasant end to the day. En route we admired the Sea Buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) planted in 1925, and at that time said to have been only 12 feet from high water mark.

Joan Thomson was determined to find Yellow Bird's-nest (*Monotropa hypopitys* - *Monotropaceae*), which she had seen before in this area. After the rest of us had left she finally found some plants to the south of the car park. I hope she put up a signpost, so that we can find them more easily next time!

Unfortunately we did not have time to inspect the ice house, or the pond area, both of which would have been worth examining. Nevertheless, we had a very worthwhile visit to Tentsmuir.

LESLEY LIND and W. F. FRENCH

#### A NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF TENTSMUIR

About 10,000 years ago the area on which Tentsmuir Forest now stands was under the sea. The sand which now covers the area is said to have been produced in the Tay Valley, carried downstream, and washed out to sea. It was then swept back to where it now lies. In the early stages of accretion there were dunes which were islands at high tide. The process is continuing in the Abertay Sands.

The first people to come to the area are believed to have come over from Jutland, either walking along the marshy edge of 'Dogger Bank Land', now under the North Sea, or coasting it in dugouts. They lived in temporary shelters on the dune-islands, probably as seasonal occupants, taking advantage of the seafood available on the shoreline, then moving inland to hunt game.

By the time the area was acquired by the Forestry Commission it had been colonised by vegetation and it had become a rabbit warren. There were salmon fishings with fixed nets on the coast (Hence the provision of an ice house).

Planting started in 1925. Maritime Pine (*Pinus pinaster*) was tried but was not successful. The Corsican Pine (*P. nigra*) beside the car park are the same age. Most of the first crop is however Scots Pine. Some of the second rotation plantings also contain Spruce.

W. F. FRENCH

(3) HOLE OF CLIEN (NO 20 23)

23 JUNE 90

Ten members met at the disused quarry (NO 203234) at the end of the first bend on the Glendoick-Craiglochie Road. No leader had been designated on the syllabus, so the proceedings were informal, but Les Smith, the Field Secretary, knew exactly where we had permission to go, and a route was quickly agreed. Les, Anne, and I undertook to record findings and produce a joint list.

The landowner, Mr Peter Cox, had indicated he might join us, so we first investigated the quarry itself in case he came a few minutes late. This was reasonably productive, though without anything specially interesting, so we walked up the road scanning the hedgerows on both sides. These proved to be full of exotics, including Flowering Nutmeg (*Leycesteria formosa*). This plant is listed as a garden escape, along with many other introduced plants, in Marjorie Blamey's *The Illustrated Flora of Britain and Northern Europe* (This can be consulted in the Museum library), and it will be interesting to see whether it survives here. We then moved on to a service road which led past a pond on which we saw Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*), Water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*), and also a Waterhen. The fields and shelter belts we walked through proved very disappointing. The pine and spruce were close planted and the ground beneath them was carpeted with needles, with occasional clumps of nettle or chickweed. All the field edges had been treated with herbicide, the victims being mainly field thistle and nettle. Some rough paddocks with scattered trees, which had clearly been heavily infested with rabbits, were newly fenced and wire-netted, and the ground inside eaten quite bare, full of burrows and dusty. It was really only when we got to the top of the hill, and in sight of Over Durdie (NO 205248), that we began to see a greater variety of plants, and then only common ones. Freddie French pointed out that it was an under-recorded square, and negative findings were still worth recording, but one has to concede that they are less exciting to the perspiring field botanist. Nevertheless we got 139 species, including the exotics.

After reaching Over Durdie we walked back round by the road, and the first down very kindly came back up with their cars and picked up the laggards.

Thanks are due to Mr Cox for permitting us access to his land.

W. W. GAULD

(4) PERTH MUSEUM - WORKSHOP ON SEDGES

7 JULY 1990

This was a new feature and was well attended. Fresh sedge and rush specimens had been obtained (common species only) and the Museum provided material from the herbarium. Because only a morning session was possible, this was very much an introduction to this difficult group, and we concentrated on getting used to the excellent key in the BSBI Sedge Handbook, and the jargon therein. This was much appreciated, and was extremely educational for myself at least, because I had forgotten how variable specimens can be (even when using fresh mature material), and that, despite its excellence, the key can be misleading.

It is to be hoped that all participants have been assiduously practising their sedges all summer, since on one matter there is absolutely no doubt, that only by getting to know the common species well, can the group as a whole be properly understood.

N. TAYLOR

(4)

(I noticed next day in Glenalmond a new readiness among members to have a go at identifying the sedges we came across, so some of it did appear to have stuck! - Ed.)

(5) GLENALMOND (NN 83 SE)

8 JULY 1990

Thirteen of us, including Jackie Muscott and John Winham from Edinburgh, foregathered at Newton Bridge (NN 890313). There was a strong wind blowing down the glen, promising showers, which came, but luckily not drenchings.

We had permission from Abercairney and West Glenalmond Estates to explore both sides of the glen including the Sma' Glen itself, up to the crest, though the game keepers did not want us to stravaig over the moors beyond, for fear of our disturbing the young grouse. Richard Thomas, the vice-county recorder, who had been billed to lead us, was not able to be present himself, but had indicated that NN 83 SE and NN 83 SW were both under-recorded. The sides of the Sma' Glen looked steep, craggy, and rather dry. It seemed best therefore for the party to split into two and investigate both sides of the upper glen, concentrating on the lower ground and watercourses, with no more than the occasional look at the open hillsides, which we knew from previous visits to be fairly dull and uniform.

The ground provided a variety of habitats, river banks, reseeded land, rough pasture, scrub, gullies and rocky outcrops, and for those on the north side a deserted settlement. Altogether we noted more than 200 species, the prize being Neale Taylor's finding, low down in a gully on the north side, Wilson's Filmy Fern (*Hymenophyllum wilsonii*), the rediscovery of a Buchanan White record. Parsley Fern (*Cryptogramma crista*) was found in the deserted settlement. Many of the birches (*Betula pubescens*) high up on the south side of the glen were distinctly pyramidal in form, looking rather like larches from a distance. In wet ground under birches there were quite a few bright yellow toadstools, later identified as *Russula claroflava*.

A mysterious shrub, with leaves like a guelder rose and seed-pods like an aquilegia, was found on an island in the Almond about two miles west of Newton Bridge. On the Dalcrue outing the following week we found another specimen beside the Pitcairngreen Hotel car-park. It was later identified for us as Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolia*), a native of North America. (It also occurs at Caputh and in Methven Wood, and it was subsequently found beside the new forest walk at Weem - recommended as worth a visit.- Ed.)

A good day in spite of the showers. Our thanks to the Estates for letting us explore their ground.

W. W. GAULD

(6) DALCRUE (NO 02 NW)

11 JULY 1990

Two bites of the cherry were required to complete this particular mid-week excursion. Continuous rain and high winds did not prevent some of the keener folk from turning up at the rendezvous on 6th June, but common sense prevailed and we went to Ros' for a cup of tea. When the rain stopped and blue sky appeared, out we rushed - only to get soaking wet in the fading light. Well, it was the first meet of the season.

We were treated better on the second attempt, on 11th July. We walked upstream from Dalcrue Bridge (NO 044279) along the south bank of the Almond past some ferocious guard dogs. We had been assured by the farmer that they could not get at us, but the plants were probably not well recorded in this section. We then came to what was described on the OS map as a saw-mill, but looked more like a car graveyard. In the woodland we found Giant Bellflower (*Campanula latifolia*) and Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), and down by the river Wood Stitchwort (*Stellaria nemorum*) and Bearded Couch-grass (*Elymus caninus*). The river bank was, however, generally disappointing. In the fields beyond, a small wet area, well trampled by cattle, yielded Ivy-leaved Crowfoot (*Ranunculus hederaceus*). A mysterious sandwort found above the footbridge turned out to be a garden escape, Mossy Sandwort (*Arenaria balearica*) - a new addition to the Perthshire post-1970 checklist. Surprisingly, the road verges on the way back proved to be the most interesting, with one site for the locally rare sedge *Carex muricata* ssp *lamprocarpa*, Square-stalked St John's-wort (*Hypericum tetrapterum*) and Red Bartsia (*Odontitis verna*). A verge on the track to the first of the MOD store sheds above the bridge had Great Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), and Hairy St John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*).

We again spotted Ninebark (see report of the Glenalmond outing), this time beside the Pitcairngreen Hotel car-park.

When we called at Ros's for another cuppa, we found that she had just missed us at the rendezvous, and had tried unsuccessfully to catch up. In the circumstances it was rather good of her to give us tea on our second venture to Dalcrue.

Our thanks to Lord Mansfield and the tenant of Dalcrue farm for permission to visit their land.

N. TAYLOR

(7) LOCH DAIMH & STUCHD AN LOCHAIN (NN 44, VC 88)

21 JULY 90

Twenty-six enthusiastic members and friends assembled at the dam of the enlarged Loch Daimh (Hydro-Board) off Glen Lyon (NN 509463) on a superb warm and sunny day. The meeting had been organised jointly by the Botanical Society of the British Isles and the Botanical Section of the PSNS, and its objective was to record on a quadrant basis for a new Flora of Perthshire along a route south of the Loch and then ascending Stuchd an Lochain, one of the less well-known hills of the Breadalbane Range.

Near the dam we found sheets of Yellow Mountain Saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*) and some Field Gentians (*Gentianella campestris*) in full flower. Flushes nearby held a range of sedges, including *Carex pauciflora*, *C. hostiana*, and its hybrid with *C. lepidocarpa*. We soon left the lochside and ascended Creag an Fheadain by a steepish gully. Although this top is barely 650m in altitude we saw several arctic-alpines here, including *Bartsia alpina*. We looked briefly at Lochan nan Cat and then spread out over the steep crags below the mountain summit; these proved to be rich and held more *Bartsia*, *Dryas octopetala*, *Salix arbuscula* and *S. reticulata*, *Carex atrata* and *C. vaginata*, together with other species characteristic of mica-schist rock. In total 222 species were recorded.

At the conclusion 20 of us stood on the summit at 960m, with excellent visibility to beyond Ben Nevis. I guess our ages spanned 60 years!

We thank the proprietors of the Lochs, Cashlie and Invermearan Estates for giving us permission to visit their lands.

R. E. THOMAS

(8) BAMFF ESTATE (NO 25 SW)

4 AUGUST 90

Eleven of us met at 2 pm at the Den of Alyth car park (NO 236487). We left some of the cars there, and drove to the entrance of the drive to Bamff House where we were greeted by Mr Paul Ramsay, the laird.

We then all walked down the road towards Alyth Den, botanising as we went, as far as the Estate boundary. There were plenty of plants, on the roadside verge (worth mention was Trailing St John's-wort (*Hypericum humifusum*)), in the adjoining woods, and on a dry knove in which rabbits had burrowed; this held some fine clumps of Wild Pansy (*Viola tricolor*) which attracted the photographers. We then walked up the drive towards the house, spotting a Twayblade (*Listera ovata*) in an open space, then turned off to visit a lochan among the plantations, from which we went down a ride to a glade which had once been a pond, but was now an interesting mixture of mini-examples of raised bog, incipient heather moorland, and *Nardus* grassland. Two inconspicuous plants of Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*) raised this patch above the ordinary.

Finally we made our way to the house, passing a fine stand in full bloom of *Alstroemeria aurea* which had gone native. We were then entertained to tea by Mr and Mrs Ramsay, for which and for a good afternoon's botanising, we are most grateful to them.

Altogether we found 159 species, and so filled in another corner of Perthshire, close to the Angus march.

W. W. GAULD

(9) LOCH ORDIE (NO 04 NW)

19 AUGUST 90

I never cease to be amazed by the optimism of PSNS botanists. The weather forecast was appalling, but the morning was fine and there was a good turnout at our rendezvous, the craft shop at Dowally (NO 002482). After 'knocking off' various weeds, we made our way up the track to the south of the Dowally Burn. In some rough grassland we found *Carex muricata* ssp *lamprocarpa* (surely grossly under-recorded - see report of the Dalcrue meeting). Further up, beside a small sand quarry, both Marsh Cudweed (*Gnaphalium uliginosum*) and Heath Cudweed (*Gnaphalium sylvaticum*), were growing within inches of each other, the latter having been chewed by a deer or a rabbit, and looking very odd. It is probably another under-recorded species. The Dowally Burn has unfortunately been heavily coniferised, but a quick look revealed Brittle Bladder-fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*) and Bearded Couch (*Elymus caninus*) close to the burn itself. This suggests that a closer inspection may be worthwhile. Further on Trailing St John's-wort (*Hypericum humifusum*) was found near the track.

Most of the land between Raor Lodge and Loch Ordie was once conifer plantation, felled early in this century. The ground is not as botanically rich as might be expected, and little of interest was found except in some of the flushes and other mires. Under an alder clump we found two Large Emerald moths (*Geometra papilionaria*), the larvae of which feed on birch (or elsewhere on hazel or beech).

The loch itself proved to be the most interesting habitat with Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dortmanna*), Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*), and Quillwort (*Isoetes lacustris*) - the last found washed up round the edge. On the way back Slender Rush (*Juncus tenuis*), introduced from North America, was found in several places along the track - this was rather disturbing, as it was the same track we had just walked up on, and it definitely (?) had not been there then. At this point the weather finally caught up with us - luckily about ten hours late!

Thanks to Atholl estate for permission to wander over their ground.

N. TAYLOR

(10) FUNGUS FORAY - KILLIECRANKIE RSPB RESERVE (NN 90 62) 15 SEPTEMBER 90

Eleven members of the Section were met at Balrobbie Farm (NN 905628) by the voluntary warden, Helen Brown, a third year medical student from Dundee.

After inspecting some fine pre-identified specimens of Verdigris Fungus (*Stropharia aeruginosa*) conveniently growing on grass beside the steading, we set off up the road and quickly found more fungi. Our progress was slow as we tried to identify each specimen we found from the key in the Collins book, with further help from the pictures in Roger Phillips' excellent Pan. When it became obvious we would not have time to go up towards the crags we crossed a pasture field (containing just a few wax-caps) and then came back along the path through the lower woods, adding one or two more fungi to our list.

I think everyone was pleased with the day. We hadn't gone far, or amassed a large total, but we had endeavoured to learn something about the interesting third 'Kingdom' (as it is now considered) of living things, neither Plants nor Animals, but Fungi.

We are grateful to Martin Robinson, the RSPB Warden, who gave us permission to explore the Reserve, and to Helen, our keen and helpful guide.

A list of identified specimens is available on request. This has been arranged as set out in the Collins New Generation Guide, *Fungi of Britain and Europe* (1989), by Dr Stephan Buczacki (of Gardeners' Question Time - Sundays at 2 pm. as you should all know). Dr Roy Watling, RBG Edinburgh, was consultant and the book is authoritative, if a trifle condensed. For instance, critical characteristics are identified, as eg shape, colour, etc, but not always described, and so have to be deduced from the illustrations, which are quite small. At £8-95 however it is very good value.

W. W. GAULD



NOTES FROM NCC, CLEEVE COTTAGE

These are our last notes from Cleeve Cottage, since we have been given notice to quit next April. The search for a new office goes on, but our next notes could well be from 'The Portakabin', The Field, Cleeve Gardens, etc!

These are also the last notes from the Nature Conservancy Council. In terms of the Environmental Protection Act, which received Royal Assent in autumn 1990, an entirely separate NCC for Scotland will be formed in April 1991. Legislation at present before Parliament seeks to merge NCC(S) with the Countryside Commission for Scotland to form 'Scotland's Natural Heritage' (SNH), so it is all change, although we expect (and hope!) that the Section will not notice much difference. (Amen.- Ed.)

ROS SMITH and N. TAYLOR

PERTSHIRE CHECKLIST OF VASCULAR PLANTS

Progress is at last being made with the new Checklist which is being produced by Ros, Nick (Stewart), Neale, and Richard. We now have a draft typescript which has been assiduously produced by Nick. This has been referred to various experts for their comments. There is still a lot to do, but we hope we may have something in print next year. We now have to tackle questions such as where to publish, how many copies to produce, how much to charge, etc, etc.

ROS

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