



PERTHSHIRE SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCE
BOTANICAL SECTION
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Reports from 2009 Field Meetings

1. River Tay Banks from Murthly to Birnam

Sunday, 19th April

The intention of this excursion was to look at an adjoining section of the River Tay, south of the area explored the year before, to look at the rich flora I had seen at Murthly and to examine the areas in between. Seven of us set off from Birnam by car to Murthly to return to Birnam on foot along the river bank, on a day that turned out to be filled with glorious sunshine and warmth.

Our first interesting encounter was a single specimen of *Polystichum setiferum* (Soft Shield-fern), which I had previously determined by Heather McHaffie. There is a record for this species in the *New Atlas*, its location is at the start of Birnam Glen and is accorded the status of ‘alien’. The nearest mapped native populations are between the Clyde and Forth, and the Kincardineshire coast. The Murthly specimen is growing in woodland among other fern species and looks quite natural, with no suggestion of having been planted or dumped there. However, being on its own, it is not part of a self-sustaining population, but I wonder if it has arisen from naturally spread spores, albeit from what might be a planted source.

The walls on the western approach road to Murthly Castle supported some fine specimens of *Phyllitis scolopendrium* (Hart’s-tongue). The planned landscape of the castle and grounds are fascinating, and include a crossing in mock classical style known as the “Roman Bridge”. To the east there are fine views from a prominence perched over the Tay beside old specimens of *Abies alba* (European Silver-fir) and to the west the double row of *Cedrus libani* (Cedar-of-Lebanon) and one *Cedrus deodara* (Deodar) can also be seen from the A9.

The planned landscape feature is framed by *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas Fir); seed was used from the original planting to populate other estates, and we also found the results of another David Douglas introduction, *Ribes sanguineum* (Flowering Currant). Towards the end of our excursion we found a five-needled pine in a more recent plantation, which I thought might be *Pinus wallichiana* (Bhutan Pine), but this turned out to be *Pinus peuce* (Macedonian Pine), an unusual find nonetheless.

Les Tucker provided an informative lesson in identifying a native taxon, *Salix* × *smithiana* (*S. cinerea* × *viminalis*). This more closely resembles the Osier parent, having long uninterrupted shoots, but its leaves are broader, but still long. Having stripped the bark off one shoot, Les showed us the striae underneath, the raised lines of tissue that could only have been contributed by the Grey Willow parent.

The river banks did not disappoint, and we found many spring-flowering plants and plants typical of the habitat. Three species of *Alchemilla* were recorded: *A. filicaulis* subsp. *filicaulis*, *A. glabra* (Smooth Lady’s-mantle) and *A. xanthochlora* (Intermediate Lady’s-mantle). *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* (Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage) was growing on the top of a raised bank, distinguishable at a distance by its larger flowers from *C. oppositifolium* (Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage), which was growing farther down in the run-off.

Myriophyllum alterniflorum (Alternate Water-milfoil) and *Elodea canadensis* (Canadian Waterweed) were seen from this point as wafting mats of vegetation in the current of the river, distinguishable from each other by their colour and texture of leaves, as was an

aquatic member of one of the buttercup family growing next to them, most likely *R. penicillatus* subsp. *pseudofluitans* var. *pseudofluitans* (Stream Water-crowfoot).

Primula vulgaris (Primrose) and *Primula* × *polyantha* (*P. veris* × *vulgaris*) (False Oxlip) were seen, but the *P. veris* (Cowslip) parent was not yet apparent. *Sanicula europaea* (Sanicle) was widespread, *Circaea* × *intermedia* (*C. alpina* × *lutetiana*) (Upland Enchanter's-nightshade) was another open woodland species, the variously-shaped leaves of *Cirsium heterophyllum* (Melancholy Thistle) lived up to the specific epithet, the multi-whorled unopened leaves on the expanding shoots of *Equisetum sylvaticum* (Wood Horsetail) made a fine display, and a record of *Vicia sylvatica* (Wood Vetch) made a fine addition to the day's tally.

Alistair Godfrey

2. Forth shore, Culross

Sunday, 17th May

After a week of cold winds and squally showers, a very good turnout of PSNS botanists met at the east car park in Culross and were rewarded by a lovely spring day and warm sunshine in the afternoon. We started by looking for *Stellaria pallida* (Lesser Chickweed) in the grass at the edge of the car park. Liz and Paul Stanley had found it there in March but no signs were left after some zealous grass-cutting. Later in the day the scruffy remains of this very early-flowering stitchwort were shown to a few interested folk on the cobbles in the middle of the village; it is perhaps the most uninteresting 'rarity' I have ever seen.

George Ballantyne had given us a list of rare species to re-find in Culross, and our aim was to record and relocate as many of these as possible. The first plant of note was *Rosa arvensis* (Field Rose), identified by Alistair Godfrey, naturalized beside the railway line. We found several more plants on George's list. First we spent some time recording in an area of muddy, sulphurous salt marsh on the inland side of the railway to the east of the car park, finding *Plantago maritima* (Sea Plantain), *Aster tripolium* (Sea Aster), *Triglochin maritima* (Sea Arrowgrass), *Juncus gerardii* (Saltmarsh Rush), a few plants of *Salicornia europaea* agg. (Glasswort) and *Calamagrostis epigejos* (Wood Small-reed), also found in several other places along the shore on waste ground. A strategically placed pile of garden rubbish helped us scramble, inelegantly on my part, over a high wall at the far end. We walked back along the main road where we found two sites for *Convolvulus arvensis* (Field Bindweed), uncommon in Scotland, and a plant of *Conium maculatum* (Hemlock) on the verge with some *Pentaglottis sempervirens* (Green Alkanet) nearby, also found on a road verge on the west side of the village. Whilst eating our lunch in the east car park Bill Hay spied *Vulpia bromoides* (Squirreltail Fescue), *Poa humilis* (Spreading Meadow-grass) with *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup) on a wall. *Hedera helix* ssp. *hibernica* (Atlantic Ivy) had been planted in the car park and was also found growing in the grounds of Dunimarle Castle to the west of the village.

After lunch we moved to the car park on the west side of the village and were very pleased to be joined by George and Eileen Ballantyne. George's knowledge of the area is exceptional, and while he was with us we found *Erinus alpinus* (Fairy Foxglove) with *Valerianella locusta* (Corn salad) growing on a wall, *Erysimum cheiri* (Wall-flower) naturalized on another wall, some plants of *Geranium pusillum* (Small-flowered Crane's-bill) – a first post-1970 record for VC87, with the commoner *Geranium molle* (Dove's-foot Crane's-bill) near the toilet block, *Pseudofumaria lutea* (Yellow Corydalis) beside the Town House in middle of the village, *Cerastium diffusum* (Sea Mouse-ear) and *Centranthus ruber* (Red Valerian) in the west car park. Perhaps the prettiest find of the day was *Anagallis arvensis* (Scarlet Pimpernel), a very rare weed in most of Scotland, on the wall of the old ice house. Several interesting woodland plants were recorded beside the road near Dunimarle

Castle including *Melissa officinalis* (Lemon Balm). A total of 205 species were recorded. Later, in August Paul and I discovered a very tall plant of *Scrophularia umbrosa* (Green Figwort) on the road verge between Dunimarle and Blair Castles; Green Figwort is a species which is probably moving northwards along rivers and has never been recorded in VC87.

Liz Lavery

3. Ballinluig, Tummel Shingle Islands

Sunday, 31st May

This site has been thoroughly botanised in the past, but I did not have an up-to-date checklist, nor was there any detail for the distribution of the older records on the island. This excursion was intended to help provide an up-to-date checklist using a 1 km x 1 km recording format and GPS readings to make grid references.

The island shingle is well-drained and the soil has been constantly irrigated by floods containing a replenishing supply of silts derived from schists and limestone upstream. This provides a rich habitat, and the following species were recorded there:

<i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Sandwort	<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	Common Milkwort
<i>Arabis hirsuta</i>	Hairy Rock-cress	<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking-grass	<i>Sagina subulata</i>	Heath Pearlwort
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Field Mouse-ear	<i>Teesdalia nudicaulis</i>	Shepherd's Cress
<i>Helictotrichon pratense</i>	Meadow Oat-grass	<i>Thalictrum minus</i>	Lesser Meadow-rue
<i>Lepidium heterophyllum</i>	Smith's Pepperwort	<i>Thymus polytrichus</i>	Wild Thyme
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Fairy Flax	<i>Trifolium medium</i>	Zigzag Clover
<i>Ononis repens</i>	Common Restharrow	<i>Viola canina</i>	Heath Dog-violet
<i>Pimpinella saxifraga</i>	Burnet-saxifrage		

Sedges ranged from free-draining soils to the silty bottoms of the waterlogged hollows in the following order: *Carex caryophylla*, (Spring Sedge), *C. pallescens*, (Pale Sedge), *C. flacca* (Glaucous Sedge), *C. nigra* Common Sedge) and *C. vesicaria* (Bladder Sedge).

Plants of the wet margins included *Glyceria fluitans* (Floating Sweet-grass) *Lycopus europaeus* (Gypsywort), *Myosotis laxa* and *M. scorpioides* (Tufted and Water Forget-me-not) and *Veronica scutellata* (Marsh Speedwell). In the water *Sparganium angustifolium* (Floating Bur-reed) and *Potamogeton natans* (Broad-leaved Pondweed) were seen and *Elodea canadensis* (Canadian waterweed) and the narrower-leaved *E. nuttallii* (Nuttall's Waterweed).

The island has been colonized by a number of trees and shrubs including a number of willows: *Salix cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia* (Rusty Willow), *S. myrsinifolia* (Dark-leaved Willow), *S. purpurea* (Purple Willow), *S. repens* (Creeping Willow), *S. viminalis* (Osier) and *S. × reichardtii* (*S. caprea* × *S. cinerea*).

An unexpected find was *Melica nutans* (Mountain Melick), which would have been washed down from its upland habitat; the species is present on higher ground a little farther upstream. Another arrival from elsewhere was *Sinacalia tangutica* (Chinese Ragwort). This species is new to the island, because we did not find it on the last visit of the PSNS in 2001; the species is also new to Mid-Perthshire, where it can also be seen established at the remains of the walled garden next to the car park for Weem Wood.

In 2001, Joanna Thomas made the wonderful discovery of *Dianthus deltoides* (Maiden Pink), and I searched for it later in the year knowing the spot, but I couldn't find it, neither could I find the species on Tomdachoille Island; I checked both places as part of the BSBI Threatened Plants Project. This species is an elusive flowerer, but the islands also change quickly, either eroded by floods or vegetation quickly changing from sparse or short turf to rough grassland and scrub.

Alistair Godfrey

4. Errol Station Yard, Port Allen Orchard and seafield Wednesday, 10th June

The group met around 6.00 pm in the yard of the old station, about 1 km north of Errol. Before leaving, a few fading flower heads of *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh-orchid) were spotted in a damp corner under the encroaching scrub, brambles, *Chamerion angustifolium* (Rosebay Willowherb), *Hypericum perforatum* (Perforate St. John's-wort), &c. However, the main surfacing material here, cinder and gravel, held little plant interest; so we moved off south-west through the village, down to the Tay shore, about 5 km away.

At Port Allen our host, Mike Stockley, welcomed us into his yard and proudly pointed out the main features of the renovated mill and steadings, with ancient orchard strip alongside. The recently-cleared bare ground, well mixed with builders rubble, provided a few common ruderals for us to identify, such as: *Poa annua* (Annual meadow-grass), *Capsella bursa-pastoris* (Shepherd's Purse), *Papaver somniferum* (Opium Poppy). Under the fruit trees the closely-grazed and mown sward seemed to consist mainly of *Alopecurus pratensis* (Meadow Foxtail) and *Dactylis glomerata* (Cock's-foot).

Moving down to the Tay shore, where the Errol Pow drains out through the massively constructed stone walls of the old bridge and port embankments onto the shallow muddy estuary, growth appeared amazingly luxuriant. Martin speculated that, with the formerly pumped-out seafields behind the embankments now being allowed to form shallow freshwater lagoons, the waterfowl's guano was enriching the edges and encouraging the rapid establishment of some previously unrecorded species. Of particular note were: *Salix viminalis* (Osier), *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup), *Dactylorhiza* × *venusta* (*D. fuchsii* × *purpurella*), *Hypericum hirsutum* (Hairy St. John's-wort), *Rumex sanguineus* (Wood dock), *Juncus* × *kern-reichgeltii* (*J. effusus* × *conglomeratus*), *Alopecurus geniculatus* (Marsh Foxtail), *Catabrosa aquatica* (Whorl-grass), *Glyceria fluitans* (Floating Sweet-grass) and *G. maxima* (Reed Sweet-grass). Further developments can be expected here, and should be interesting to monitor.

Les Tucker

5. Brig o' Turk and Lenny Flushes Saturday, 20th June

This was not an official PSNS Field Meeting but was organised by a breakaway group from Stirlingshire and points west, who have done a lot of recording in VC87 during 2009. I would like to take this opportunity to report on some of the most interesting records made during an extremely enjoyable days botanising. At Brig o' Turk Roy Sexton showed us a fine display of 12 *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid) on a grassy bank in the middle of the village. On Brig o' Turk SSSI Paul Taylor took us to a very good population of *Carex magellanica* (Tall Bog-sedge) in sphagnum bog with several plants of the beautiful, liver red, *Dactylorhiza incarnata* (Early Marsh-orchid) nearby.

However the find of the day was made by Pam Murdoch at Lenny Flushes where she discovered 17 spikes of *Corallorhiza trifida* (Coralroot Orchid) under birch in tussocky *Molinia caerulea* (Purple Moor-grass) beside the pylon wayleave. This is a truly magnificent find as there appear to be no previous records from VC87 for this very elusive and probably under-recorded, tiny green orchid.

Liz Lavery

6. Weem Meadow, Aberfeldy Wednesday, 24th June

This small but perfectly formed meadow is a delight. We were soon absorbed by the amazing display of orchids in full flower, which was soon preserved on a myriad of

megapixels: *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh-orchid), *D. fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid) – over 500 were in flower – and *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid) – 22 in flower. Martin Robinson had a careful look at the forms of the orchids and thought he might have found a hybrid: the upper five segments of the flowers were not clearly differentiated and appeared to be united into a hood. A photograph (see [Photos](#)) was sent to Richard Bateman, who determined that the specimen was an aberrant form of *D. fuchsii*.

There was an amazing stand of robust *Equisetum sylvaticum* (Wood Horsetail) around the edge of part of the site, close to which were two plants of *Meum athamanticum* (Spiguel). *Hypericum maculatum* subsp. *obtusiusculum* (Imperforate St John's-wort) and *Hypericum perforatum* (Imperforate St John's-wort) were present, and the hybrid *Hypericum* × *desetangsii* (*H. maculatum* × *perforatum*). The hybrid back-crosses with the *H. maculatum* parent and the offspring are difficult to distinguish as the pure species or hybrid.

I made two subsequent visits, and on 5th July I discovered *Crepis mollis* (Northern Hawk's-beard) which Kevin Walker confirmed for me. This was a target species in 2008 for the BSBI Threatened Plants Project. I had only a vague reference for the Aberfeldy area, and I was pleased to be able to locate the species, which hadn't been recorded for many years. Another interesting subsequent find was *Raphanus raphanistrum* subsp. *raphanistrum* (Wild Radish), which was growing at the edge of a nearby field. When in flower this species resembles *Sinapis alba* (White Mustard), but the valveless fruit of *Raphanus* is quite distinct later in the season. I also found this species at Meikleour. Having a second look through the composites and crucifers of similar habitats in other places is likely to yield more records of both species.

Alistair Godfrey

7. Braeleny Braes, Bracklinn, Callander

Sunday, 28th June

The Braes of Braeleny to the west of the single track road to Braeleny Farm were explored, from the path to Red Well to the open hill, Druim Mòr, beyond the woodland strip leading to Callander Craig. East met west as ten PSNS members and friends from Fife to Milngavie met in Bracklinn Fall's car park on an overcast morning. Roy Sexton and Sarah Longrigg set out to record the number of *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid) and *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Fragrant Orchid) along the road verge and on the open hill, using a GPS to mark their locations. Most Greater Butterfly-orchids were found near the road. John Snodin recorded more than 100 *Listera ovata* (Common Twayblade) on the open hill near Red Well; many more were seen in flushes above the road beyond Callander Craig wood.

The rest of us concentrated on recording. There were many flushes. Wet flushes with blue *Carex* species where we found *Triglochin palustris* (Marsh Arrowgrass), *Eleocharis quinqueflora* (Few-flowered Spike-rush), *Carex dioica* (Dioecious Sedge) and *C. hostiana* (Tawny Sedge); and drier herb-rich flushes with *Linum catharticum* (Fairy Flax), *Briza media* (Quaking Grass) and *Geranium sylvaticum* (Wood Crane's-bill); both flush types had numerous *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Fragrant Orchid). Near Red Well in tall *Juncus acutiflorus* (Sharp-flowered rush) we found *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge) with the first plants of *Listera ovata*; nearby was a lone bush of *Juniperus communis* (Common Juniper). The remains of *Trollius europaeus* (Globe-flower) were scattered all over the hill. In woodland by the path was a small patch of *Phegopteris connectilis* (Beech Fern) and as we emerged from the wood after lunch there was a lovely clump of nodding *Cirsium heterophyllum* (Melancholy Thistle). Bill Hay identified two grasses of note, *Festuca filiformis* (Fine-leaved Sheep's-fescue) and *Glyceria declinata* (Small Sweet-grass). At the top of an orchid-rich flush below a patch of bracken was a small area with about 100 plants of the unusual *Equisetum pratense* (Shady Horsetail). Other orchid species common on the hill were hundreds of *Dactylorhiza maculata*

(Heath Spotted-orchid), *D. purpurella* (Northern Marsh-orchid) and *D. fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid), and Roy and Les identified several hybrids.

This area has been recognised by Roy and John as an exceptional area for orchids for some time. They took me there in May to count and map plants of *Orchis mascula* (Early-purple Orchid) and *Trollius europaeus* (Globe Flower). We recorded more than 200 Early-purple Orchids in flushes on both sides of the road, hundreds of clumps of *Trollius*, and an outstanding marshy area carpeted with *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks). The Braes are grazed by a herd of cows and, judging by the abundance of orchids, grazing levels are ideal for the plant communities present.

The beautiful Braes of Braeleny have some wonderful plant communities with high numbers of several rare species. I have never seen so many Globeflower over such a big area, such a mass of Goldilocks in one marsh, while the numbers of Early-purple Orchids are spectacular. The display of primroses and anemones on the open hill in spring time is dazzling. We recorded a total of 200 species during our two visits. While writing this Roy reminded me that much of the hill and river valley is yet to be explored. He also sent me the following plant numbers for 2009: *Orchis mascula* 273, *Gymnadenia conopsea* 346, *Listera ovata* 297, *Platanthera chlorantha* 425, *Trollius europaeus* 396, and *Parnassia palustris* (Grass-of-Parnassus) 436 counted later in the season.

Liz Lavery

8. Bamff, Alyth

Wednesday, 8th July

Seven of us met at 6.00 pm outside the main house by arrangement with the owner, Mr Paul Ramsay, for what was to be an evening excursion with a difference. We started by doing some recording back along the drive as far as the main beaver loch. The picturesque loch, situated in mature *Picea abies* (Norway Spruce) woodland, was shallow and muddy, with *Menyanthes trifoliata* (Bogbean), *Hippuris vulgaris* (Mare's-tail), *Alisma plantago-aquatica* (Water-plantain) and *Potamogeton natans* (Broad-leaved Pondweed). It was sheltered along the northern edge and some interest and photographic opportunities were provided by a resting *Coenagrion puella* (Azure Damselfly). *Enallagma cyathigerum* (Common Blue Damselfly) and *Lestes sponsa* (Emerald Damselfly) were also there.

Back at the house we met Paul and returned with him to the south end of the loch, which we approached through the wooded enclosure. A large wild boar came purposefully straight towards us and lay down at our feet to have its back scratched, to the consternation of Joanna's dog Jeanie, whose evening ended there. We settled down quietly on the side of the loch and within minutes an adult beaver swam along the far side and disappeared. It was then about a half-hour wait until another one, probably one of last year's young, swam past about 25 metres in front of us. A bit later it was heard gnawing but was never seen again. We continued our peaceful vigil, listening to the sounds of dusk as crows went to roost and swallows and sand martins were replaced by bats, all of this occasionally punctuated by the abrupt comments of mallard, moorhen and dabchick. It was easy to imagine ourselves in Scandinavia, as the non-intervention management policy that Paul employs here creates a genuine feeling of wildness that is quite special. Our thanks go to him for creating this little bit of magic for us on a calm summer's evening. (For more details, see the Bamff Estate website www.bamff.co.uk/wildlife.)

Botanising had formed a comparatively small part of the excursion but we did make some useful records for this under-recorded tetrad and I returned a couple of days later to do some more further back down the drive, where willow scrub was developing in a tall-herb, damp coarse grassland.

Martin Robinson

9. Ben Lui**Sunday, 12th July**

This was an excursion organised by the BSBI, but many PSNS members attended it. We split into three groups; Jim McIntosh took one group into Coire Gaothach, Carl Farmer took a group to the crags of Ciochan Beinn Laoigh towards his own vice county of Mainland Argyll (VC98) and I took a group to the crags between the burn flowing out of the corrie and Carl's group. The weather was absolutely foul, and we were rained on all day; thankfully we were taken to and from the start by three Land Rovers and their worthy drivers. I got split up from some of my group as I tried to find an easier route across a swollen burn, the Allt an Rund, and I have to thank our indefatigable shepherdess, Joanna Thomas, for restoring my flock. Despite the weather, we had many interesting finds, and a list of our highlights and plants typical of the habitat follows.

<i>Alchemilla wichurae</i>		<i>Polystichum lonchitis</i>	Holly-fern
<i>Arabis petraea</i>	Northern Rock-cress	<i>Potentilla crantzii</i>	Alpine Cinquefoil
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Thrift	<i>Pyrola rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved Wintergreen
<i>Asplenium viride</i>	Green Spleenwort	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle
<i>Bartsia alpina</i>	Alpine Bartsia	<i>Rubus saxatilis</i>	Stone Bramble
<i>Carex atrata</i>	Black Alpine-sedge	<i>Sagina saginoides</i>	Alpine Pearlwort
<i>C. capillaris</i>	Hair Sedge	<i>Salix arbuscula</i>	Mountain Willow
<i>C. vaginata</i>	Sheathed Sedge	<i>Saussurea alpina</i>	Alpine Saw-wort
<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Frog Orchid	<i>Saxifraga aizoides</i>	Yellow Saxifrage
<i>Draba incana</i>	Hoary Whitlowgrass	<i>S. hypnoides</i>	Mossy Saxifrage
<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	Mountain Avens	<i>S. oppositifolia</i>	Purple Saxifrage
<i>Equisetum variegatum</i>	Variegated Horsetail	<i>S. stellaris</i>	Starry Saxifrage
<i>Galium boreale</i>	Northern Bedstraw	<i>Sedum rosea</i>	Roseroot
<i>Geranium sylvaticum</i>	Wood Crane's-bill	<i>Selaginella selaginoides</i>	Lesser Clubmoss
<i>Geum rivale</i>	Water Avens	<i>Silene acaulis</i>	Moss Campion
<i>Helictotrichon pratense</i>	Meadow Oat-grass	<i>Thalictrum alpinum</i>	Alpine Meadow-rue
<i>Hymenophyllum wilsonii</i>	Wilson's Filmy-fern	<i>Thymus polytrichus</i>	Wild Thyme
<i>Juncus triglumis</i>	Three-flowered Rush	<i>Tofieldia pusilla</i>	Scottish Asphodel
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Fairy Flax	<i>Triglochin palustre</i>	Marsh Arrowgrass
<i>Oxyria digyna</i>	Mountain Sorrel	<i>Trollius europaeus</i>	Globeflower
<i>Parnassia palustris</i>	Grass-of-Parnassus	<i>Vaccinium uliginosum</i>	Bog Bilberry
<i>Plantago maritima</i>	Sea Plantain		

Alistair Godfrey

10. Inverlochlarig and Beinn Tulaichean**Saturday, 25th July**

On a perfect mountain day, no flies and mostly midgeless, Liz, perhaps a little late, met Sarah, Hilary, Joanna and Les in a very full car park at Inverlochlarig; the tarmac road from Balquhider village stops here. In the woods, in very boggy ground under alder trees before setting off along the open hill track, Liz spied a tall, pampas-like grass waving in the breeze and emerged triumphantly clutching it. Everyone was anxious to get going and not very interested in this peculiar grass. Les Tucker had already disappeared, and that was the last we saw of him until he phoned me that evening to tell me he had found *Carex canescens* (White sedge), old name *C. curta*, near the summit of Beinn Tulaichean and one bush of the rare mountain willow, *Salix lapponum* (Downy Willow) near one of the high waterfalls at approximately 550 metres on his way down off the hill, a real find in a new location for

VC87. Les also recorded *S. phylicifolia* (Tea-leaved willow) at the car park and *S. aurita* (Eared Willow) beside the Inverlochlarig burn.

Our first find in a field of friendly horses, was a tiny plant of yellow *Mimulus moschatus* (Musk), miraculously surviving multiple hooves; this species is very rare in Perthshire, only known from near Braco in VC87. We wandered on, recording all the time until we left the track and stopped for lunch; nearby was a giant erratic boulder split with *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan) growing out of the top. After lunch we began a steady diagonal climb up the east flank of Beinn Tulaichean towards a line of waterfalls high on the hillside. The hillside was mainly acid grassland with bracken and wet flushes until we came to some steep rocky outcrops at about 430–475 m. We knew we were on better ground, basic rock, when we found a gully with *Thymus polytrichus* (Wild Thyme) and *Linum catharticum* (Fairly Flax) and we began to pick up some interesting mountain plants – *Saxifraga stellaris* (Starry Saxifrage) in little wet flushes and *Saxifraga aizoides* (Yellow Saxifrage) on wet rocks, *Solidago virgaurea* (Goldenrod), small patches of *Saxifraga oppositifolia* (Purple saxifrage), *Alchemilla alpina* (Alpine Lady's-mantle), *Huperzia selago* (Fir Clubmoss) and *Persicaria vivipara* (Alpine Bistort).

We never reached the waterfalls where Les found downy willow, but on the way down came upon wet grassland with a magnificent stand of very tall *Cirsium palustre* (Marsh Thistle), all pure white. In flushes lower down we found a few scattered plants of *Parnassia palustris* (Grass-of-Parnassus) and one clump of *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge). Sarah showed us about 25 plants of *Carum verticillatum* (Whorled Caraway) beside the track above the Inverlochlarig burn; this plant is much commoner farther west. My peculiar grass turned out to be *Calamagrostis purpurea* (Purple Small-reed), confirmed by Mike Porter but still awaiting the verdict of the other *Calamagrostis* referees; a new Scottish site and a first for VC87.

Back home I discovered that the only record for *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) in VC87 was from Inverlochlarig in 1999 by Neale Taylor. Sarah Longrigg on hearing this went back to look for it with her husband, Fred, and after 3 hours searching found 8 plants in a sphagnum bog about 80 m south-west of the huge boulder near our lunch-spot. They also recorded *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry) while searching for the tiny, green Bog-orchid. A total of 175 species were recorded from the glen and hill.

Liz Lavery

11. Craig Varr, Kinloch Rannoch

Sunday, 9th August

David Merrie and I were the only two on this excursion. One of our searches was for *Vicia orobus*, a target species for 2009's BSBI Threatened Plants Project. Kinloch Rannoch was not a site we had been asked to look at, but the species was recorded at this location in the *Flora of Perthshire* (1898) at roadside level. We did not spend much time looking here, but we searched alternative habitats at Craig Varr and in the rocky woodland of the Allt Mòr, but without success. This species was also recorded for the Tummel Bridge area, but I suspect the species is extinct in both areas due to changes in land management, but I will be delighted if someone proves me wrong!

The flora of the higher crags of the Craig Varr area reflect lime-rich soils, which are irrigated from higher ground immediately above. There is an open stand of larch here, the branches have been shaped by strong westerly winds, some trees have fallen and have remained rooted; their branches ascending and shaped again. The crags' flora included:

<i>Aira caryophyllea</i>	Silver Hair-grass	<i>Filago minima</i>	Small Cudweed
<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>	Kidney Vetch	<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	Shining Crane's-bill

<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black Spleenwort	<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	Common Rock-rose
<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue	<i>Populus tremula</i>	Aspen
<i>Asplenium viride</i>	Green Spleenwort	<i>Lychnis viscaria</i>	Sticky Catchfly
<i>Botrychium lunaria</i>	Moonwort	<i>Helictotrichon pratense</i>	Meadow Oat-grass
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Field Mouse-ear	<i>Koeleria macrantha sensu lato</i>	Crested Hair-grass
<i>Cerastium diffusum</i>	Sea Mouse-ear		

Although we were not particularly high, we encountered three species of saxifrage; *Saxifraga aizoides* (Yellow Saxifrage), *S. hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage) and *S. stellaris* (Starry Saxifrage). In a flush by the Allt Mòr we saw *Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass), and a hybrid of the Field and Water Horsetails nearby, which I had confirmed by Heather McHaffie and Chris Page: *Equisetum* × *litorale* [Shore Horsetail (*E. arvense* × *fluviatile*)].

We found four rose hybrids, the female × male cross of *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy Rose) × *R. caesia* subsp. *glauca* and the corresponding male × female cross of the same species. *R. caesia* subsp. *caesia* × *R. canina* (Dog Rose) was also present and *R. mollis* (Soft Downy Rose) × *R. caesia sensu lato* (*Rosa* × *glaucoides*). *R. caesia* has two subspecies; subsp. *caesia* is the Hairy Dog-rose, and subsp. *glauca* is the Glaucous Dog-rose. The former is hairy on the undersides of the leaves the latter not, and in hybrids the parent subspecies is not always obvious, hence only *R. caesia sensu lato* above.

Alistair Godfrey

12. Aberfoyle

Sunday, 16th August

Seven people gathered at the David Marshall Lodge, situated above Aberfoyle with attractive views over the Forth Valley and the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. Unfortunately, Liz Lavery who was to be our leader for the day had sprained her ankle the previous evening so had to call off. We parked our cars close to an old *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horse Chestnut) which are not found in great numbers in the local area and started recording once we were to the east of the visitor centre.

We followed a small path down through birch woodland and comment was made on the *Acaena novae-zelandiae* (Pirri-pirri-bur) thriving at the edge of the track. It is becoming very common in such places locally and has taken over a disused quarry near Stirling. Here a company wishes to start extracting stone once again but has not considered the impact the spread of the invasive non-native *A. novae-zelandiae* might have on the destinations of the stone. As we were not that far from the village of Aberfoyle it was not surprising that other introductions or garden escapes were found during the day, such as *Cotoneaster* sp. (Cotoneaster), *Epilobium ciliatum* (American Willowherb), *E. hirsutum* (Great Willowherb), *Spiraea* sp. (Bridewort) and *Lamium galeobdolon* ssp. *argentatum* (Yellow Archangel). The birch wood gradually changed to mature even-aged oak and conifers as we slowly made our way towards Dounans Outdoor Education Centre. We had our lunch on the edge of the forest, finding a sheltered spot in the sun, a rare occurrence in the latter part of the summer. We then continued our meanders to a small area of mire belonging to the Forestry Commission, which had been revealing new species every time it had been visited this year. This day was no exception, with Sarah Longrigg discovering an *Utricularia* sp. (Bladderwort). This was later confirmed to be *U. Minor* (Lesser Bladderwort) when the hairs in the bladders were examined under a microscope. Other species which have been found are *Carex magellanica* (Tall Bog-sedge), *C. limosa* (Bog-sedge), *Rhynchospora alba* (White Beak-sedge), and *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry). This was the definite climax of the day

and several people hope to come back in 2010 to explore further. From here we slowly retraced our steps back to the cars, having found almost 180 species.

Jane Jones

13. Balnaguard Glen SWT Reserve

Sunday, 13th September

The planned excursion was a return visit to Ballinluig Shingle Islands and to use vegetative characteristics to identify some of the plants seen on our earlier visit. However, the vegetation by mid-September was so rank that instead I decided to follow up earlier visits I had made with Faith Anstey and Stuart Downie to compile an up-to-date checklist of vascular plants for Balnaguard SWT Reserve.

There are a variety of habitats within the reserve and a wide range of plants: two are unfamiliar in Highland Perthshire, *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Agrimony) and *Echium vulgare* (Viper's-bugloss). I also found the same hybrid horsetail as at Kinloch Rannoch *Equisetum* × *litorale* [Shore Horsetail (*E. arvense* × *fluviatile*)], which Heather McHaffie also determined for me. Hybrid horsetails are likely to be commoner than we imagine and any horsetail is worth a second look.

The final leg of our excursion was a descent down the sodden edges of the narrowest part of the gorge. Just before we made this descent we came upon an apple, which was not in fruit, but due to its hairless leaves and spiny shoots we decided it was *Malus sylvestris* (Crab Apple). Not long after we found *Pyrola minor* (Common Wintergreen), and then on a dripping rock-face *Asplenium viride* (Green Spleenwort) with *Festuca altissima* (Wood Fescue), which was flourishing all the way down the damp, narrow chasm of the gorge.

Alistair Godfrey

14. Twenty Shilling Wood, Comrie

Sunday, 4th October

By the time of our excursion the weather had turned very dry, and although we were in very good habitat, the number of fruiting bodies we found was small. A list of our finds follows, and there was a species of *Inocybe* we could not identify and a species of *Mycena*, a genus the novice passes off with complete conviction as “one of these little brown jobs”. Our experience made us decide on a more flexible arrangement for a fungal foray in 2010 to fit into a damp spell. An unexpected delight was a find of 17 spikes of *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid), the largest number in one place I had ever seen.

<i>Armillaria mellea</i>	Honey Fungus	<i>Lactarius vellereus</i>	Fleecy Milkcap
<i>Bisporella citrina</i>		<i>Lentinellus cochleatus</i>	Aniseed Cockleshell
<i>Bjerkandera adusta</i>	Smoky Bracket	<i>Neobulgaria pura</i>	Beech Jellydisc
<i>Boletus [Xerocomus] badius</i>	Bay Bolete	<i>Oudemansiella mucida</i>	Porcelain Fungus
<i>Calocera viscosa</i>	Yellow Stagshorn	<i>Panellus stipticus</i>	
<i>Cantharellus cibarius</i>	Chanterelle	<i>Paxillus involutus</i>	Brown Rollrim
<i>Collybia butyracea</i>	Butter Cap	<i>Piptoporus betulinus</i>	Birch Polypore
<i>Coprinus comatus</i>	Shaggy Inkcap	<i>Russula fellea</i>	Geranium Brittlelegill
<i>Daedalea quercina</i>	Oak Mazegill	<i>Russula mairei</i>	Beechwood Sickener
<i>Exidia glandulosa</i>	Witch's Butter	<i>Russula nigricans</i>	Blackening Brittlelegill
<i>Fomes fomentarius</i>	Hoof Fungus	<i>Russula ochroleuca</i>	
<i>Ganoderma applanatum</i>	Southern Bracket	<i>Scleroderma citrinum</i>	Common Earthball
<i>Collybia peronata</i>	Wood Woollyfoot	<i>Spongipellis spumeus</i>	
<i>Heterobasidion annosum</i>	Root Rot	<i>Stereum hirsutum</i>	Hairy Curtain Crust

<i>Hydnum repandum</i>	Wood Hedgehog	<i>Trametes versicolor</i>	Turkeytail
<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	Sulphur Tuft	<i>Tricholoma virgatum</i>	Ashen Knight
<i>Hypoxylon fragiforme</i>	Beech Woodwart	<i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>	Candlesnuff Fungus
<i>Lactarius blennius</i>	Beech Milkcap	<i>Xylaria longipes</i>	Dead Man's Fingers

Alistair Godfrey

News and updates

The report in Bulletin 31 that *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's Tongue) might now be restricted in our area to a single site at Tullygarth brickworks proved unduly pessimistic – Roy Sexton has found a very good site for this species on a bank beside the road at Lecropt west of Bridge of Allan, about 300 plants.

The last Bulletin mentioned the activities of *PLANT, Plant Local Area NeTwork*, in the Forth catchment. The group has now been invited to write up some of the findings reported in its annual newsletter for wider circulation in *The Forth Naturalist and Historian*, and the first of these appear in Volume 32 (2009), including phenological comparisons with records from 1849 and 1881, observations on mistletoe, toothwort and bird's-nest orchids, and other notes and records, including some from the 2008 PSNS excursions in vice county 87. Hopefully this will be the first of a regular annual report bringing botanical recording to a wider audience. See www.fnh.stir.ac.uk for details of how to obtain copies.

One of our committee members, Faith Anstey, has a new book, *Flowers in the Field – How to find, identify and enjoy wild flowers*, to be published soon by Whittet Books. It is not a field guide, but a new approach that takes the general reader at an easy pace from the basic characteristics of flowers through various techniques for identifying them. It explains why plants have different habits and grow in different places. Along the way, it looks at how the plant kingdom is organised, the use of botanical keys, ways wild plants can be protected, stories of individual species, and plenty more. The book is copiously illustrated with photographs and diagrams throughout. Most of the photographs are by Polly Pullar, the well-known Perthshire wildlife photographer. The book will be launched at Aberfeldy Watermill on Friday 4 June at 7.00 pm, where the author and photographer will be signing copies. Any members of the PSNS are very welcome to attend (see www.aberfeldywatermill.com for directions). For more information about the book, see the Whittet website www.whittetbooks.com/books.php?level=2&id=1073 or the flyer enclosed.

Our thanks to Keith Cohen for his expert guidance and identification during the year.

Bulletin Editor: Colin R. McLeod

Photos



Aberrant *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, Weem Meadow, 15 June 2009
© Martin Robinson.



Crepis mollis, Weem Meadow revisit, 5 July 2009
© Alistair Godfrey.



Pyrola rotundifolia, Ben Lui, 12 July 2009
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Lunch at Balnaguard, 13 September 2009
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