

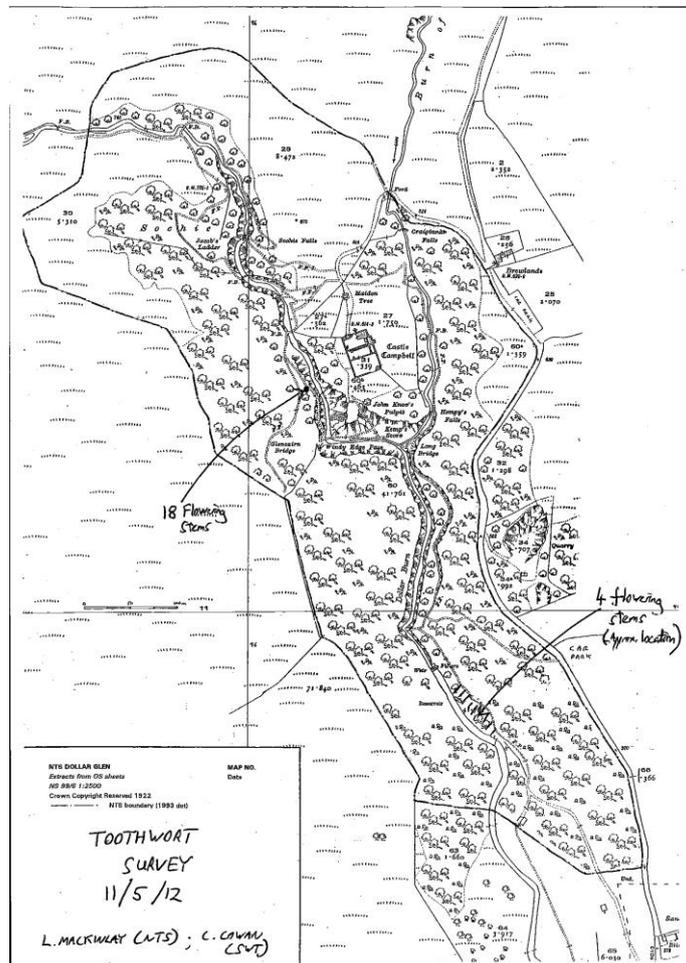
PERTHSHIRE SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCE
BOTANICAL SECTION
BULLETIN No. 36 – 2013

Reports from 2013 Field Meetings

1. Dollar Glen

Wednesday, 24th April

On a cool, overcast April evening, welcomed by chiff-chaffing birdsong, six of us walked down the steep zigzag path from the Castle car park to Dollar Burn. A very late spring, the oak wood on either side of the glen was still leafless and the carpeting bluebells in tight green bud. The main object of our excursion was to search for *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort). Having not been seen for very many years it was thought to have disappeared from the Glen until two sites for it were discovered by National Trust for Scotland ecologists in May 2012.



Once down on the glen path, Roy Sexton spotted it almost immediately just downstream of the junction, NS 96271 98854. About 27 pink, fleshy, flowering spikes of this leafless parasite were pushing through a jumble of dead leaves under *Corylus avellana* (Hazel) on the east side of the track in an area 3m x 3m with a few tussocks of *Luzula sylvatica* (Great Wood-rush), *Brachypodium sylvaticum* (False-brome), *Oxalis acetosella* (Wood-sorrel) and the pretty golden flowers of *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* (Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage). Just over 100 metres further down the path, again on the east side, NS 9627 98854, we were thrilled to find more. Over 100 plants under Hazel and *Acer pseudoplatanus*

(Sycamore) were growing amongst dead leaves including oak in a small area, 3m x 3m, with *Ficaria verna* (Lesser Celandine), a few green leaves of *Arum maculatum* (Lords-and-Ladies), *Galanthus nivalis* (Snowdrop) and nearby *Blechnum spicant* (Hard-fern), *Allium ursinum* (Ramsons) and Golden Saxifrage (see [Photos](#)). Only 4 flowering spikes had been found by NTS in this general area in 2012.

We walked down to the bridge and then up the west side of the burn to Castle Campbell, making a few records as we went. We searched diligently without any success for Toothwort at its second 2012 site, on the right of a short gorge path which stops at a dead end near Glencairn Bridge, NS 9607 9922. *Festuca altissima* (Wood Fescue) grows on the rocky outcrop here beside the path, recorded in August 2012 but not identifiable in spring.

Two introduced species of note were seen growing beside a small artificial pond on the eastern approach to the castle, NS 96124 99356. The increasingly common *Lysichiton americanus* (American Skunk-cabbage) is fast becoming another worrying invasive non-native species and NTS rangers are going to remove this rather showy plant (see [Photos](#)). *Petasites albus* (White Butterbur) is locally common in the area especially beside the A92 road near Pools o' Muckhart. A total of 42 species was recorded during a very enjoyable evening amble.

Liz Lavery

2. Den of Riechip, Butterstone

Saturday, 25th May

This was a most glorious late-spring day, with wall-to-wall blue sky. The wooded den looked magnificent with the sun shining through the fresh leaves and all was right with the world. The six of us parked at Butterstone Village Hall and walked up past the cabins, starting to record everything once we entered the tetrad NO04T. 200 metres farther on we entered the wood and followed the path, which keeps quite close to the Buckny Burn. Our unhurried pace meant that we got only about half-way up the den, so did not reach the *Polygonatum verticillatum* (Whorled Solomon's-seal) sites, but nobody was complaining. We found two large colonies of *Adoxa moschatellina* (Moschatel), some *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* (Alternate-leaved Golden Saxifrage) among the much more common *C. oppositifolium* (Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage) and a new colony of *Carex laevigata* (Smooth-stalked Sedge), which was previously only known near the top of the Den. This is the only area in Vice-County 89 (East Perthshire) where the species is recorded, and any new site is a good find. At the northern extremity of our walk we crossed the burn and found four spikes of *Orchis mascula* (Early-purple Orchid).

Some of the more enjoyed woodland species were *Moehringia trinervia* (Three-nerved Sandwort), *Carex remota* (Remote Sedge) and *Schedonorus giganteus* (= *Festuca gigantea*) (Giant Fescue), but particularly notable was a small group of *Taraxacum luteum* (a Dandelion) beside the path. In the *Celticum* section, this is one of the few that is easily recognised, by virtue of having no coloured stripe on the outside of the flowers, which are completely yellow. Photos were sent to the national expert, John Richards, and the identification was confirmed. Other species of Dandelion included the more common *T. duplidentifrons* and *T. euryphyllum*.

The spring sunshine had brought out several Orange-tip butterflies, whilst a Redstart was seen and heard singing in the top of a tree.

Martin Robinson

3. Black Devon, Alloa

Wednesday, 29th May

Sandy Edwards and I were the only two to rendezvous at Riverside View, the starting point for our walk to Pond Wood and along the banks of the River Black Devon towards the River Forth. We were sad to hear later that Joanna had tried to come but failed to find us.

Sandy identified our first unusual find using his Stace app on his phone; this was *Prunus cerasifera* (Cherry Plum) planted as a hedge at the entrance lane off Riverside View. Pond Wood is a mature deciduous woodland with a wide range of trees. *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash), *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore) with *Ulmus glabra* (Wych Elm) and *Betula pubescens* (Downy Birch) are most common with *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech), *Quercus robur* (Pedunculate Oak) and occasional conifers, *Corylus avellana* (Hazel) and *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly) in the understory. *Alnus glutinosa* (Alder) occurs beside the river. The wood has a well-developed ground flora which might indicate ancient status with *Mercurialis perennis* (Dog's Mercury), *Anemone nemorosa* (Wood Anemone) and *Allium ursinum* (Ramsons) as well as the ubiquitous *Ficaria verna* (Lesser Celandine). However, we decided the patches of bluebells were nearly all hybrids, *Hyacinthoides x massartiana* (Hybrid Bluebell, *H. non-scripta x hispanica*). The less common *Stellaria nemorum* (Wood Stitchwort) occurred in the wood near the river. Unusually there were several clumps of *Milium effusum* (Wood Millet) scattered through the wood. Clumps of *Glyceria maxima* (Reed Sweet-grass) were present on the edge of the river. Here we also found a clump of *Carex pendula* (Pendulous Sedge).

The best find of the evening was an emergent patch *Rumex hydrolapathum* (Water Dock) at NS 89493 91817 in the River Black Devon; we had a record from 1994 from this area but no precise grid reference. It was very good to confirm its existence. We walked west along the river bank to where there are some pools and the Black Devon becomes brackish near its junction with the tidal River Forth. Here we came across some maritime plants – *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (Sea Club-rush), *Carex otrubae* (False Fox-sedge) and on muddy banks *Puccinellia maritima* (Common Saltmarsh-grass). *Oenanthe crocata* (Hemlock Water-dropwort) was present in several places on the river bank, often with the large dark pink flowers of *Epilobium hirsutum* (Great Willowherb). One patch of the very unwelcome *Heracleum mantegazzianum* (Giant Hogweed) was found in Pond Wood beside the river at NS 89504 91825. Together we recorded a total of 106 species.

Liz Lavery

4. Loch Tay Marshes, Killin

Saturday, 1st June

Five of us enjoyed a fine day passing through varied habitats between Killin and the shore of Loch Tay. Before the invention of modern drainage, this area where the River Lochay and River Dochart meet at Loch Tay must have been covered by marshes, swamps, pools, bogs, fens, river meanders and wet woodland. By the middle of the 19th Century this area had been transformed into much how it looks now. Vestiges of these former habitats remain and the area is covered partly by a SSSI.

This area provided the second Scottish record – not the first as claimed in the *Flora of Perthshire* – for *Calamagrostis stricta* (Narrow Small-reed), discovered by G.C. Druce in 1888, near Finlarig on the north side of the loch. This site was lost, another population was found about a mile away, but this species has not been seen reliably in this area since 1917. The species was also known from Loch Tummel, but the site was lost to the enlargement of the loch under the hydro-scheme. This species would not be known currently from Perthshire were it not for its discovery near Amulree by a PSNS excursion in 2001!

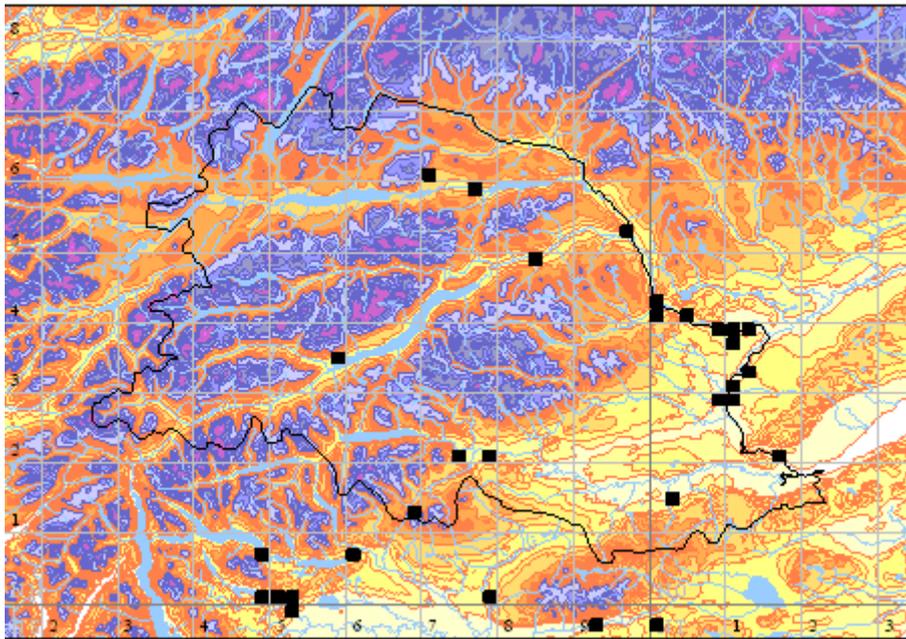
We started our excursion at an alder/willow carr that appeared to be part of a former river channel. In the wetter area and margins we found *Carex vesicaria* (Bladder sedge), *Equisetum fluviatile* (Water Horsetail) and *E. sylvaticum* (Wood Horsetail). A large moss was

present, and was conspicuous from quite a distance: *Calliergon cordifolium* (Heart-leaved Spear-moss).

Our excursion continued into woodland which indicated a period of continuous cover for some time and from there we explored the attractive wooded margins of the loch. *Melica uniflora* (Wood Melick), *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks Buttercup) and *Sanicula europaea* (Sanicle) were recorded from this area and *Galium boreale* (Northern Bedstraw) at the loch margin. An unexpected find in a marshy area under some alders was *Lysimachia nummularia* (Creeping-Jenny).

This species is often cited as being of garden origin in Scotland. The species is found on the margins of water bodies in Mid-Perthshire, and conceivably plants or seed could be washed down to colonise new places. But there was nothing to suggest that this population, surrounded only by native plants, was not native. The species is recorded for Scotland in Lightfoot's *Flora Scotica* (1777) and Hooker's *Flora Scotica* (1821) without comment on status: the *Flora of Perthshire* (1898) is uncertain about a native status. I find there is nothing to suggest this species is not native in Mid-Perthshire and I think the mapping in the Plant Atlas is misleading.

Beyond the trees the shoreline is very open and yields a different range of species. Species seen on dry, calcareous soils were *Ranunculus bulbosus* (Bulbous Buttercup), *Thymus polytrichus* (Thyme) and *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet Saxifrage). Species from the aquatic zones included *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* (Marsh Pennywort) and *Veronica scutellata* (Marsh Speedwell).



Distribution of *Lysimachia nummularia* (Creeping-Jenny) in Perthshire (showing VC88 boundary).

Alistair Godfrey

5. Auchtermuchty Common

Wednesday, 19th June

This evening visit drew a good turnout of nearly 20, including about ten PSNS members, local people and members of the Pitcairn Society from Glenrothes, for a guided tour led by Clare Reaney. This area of meadow is managed by the Macduff Trust, most of the members being local and active in its maintenance.

We were shown how the grazing and clearance was managed, and had time to record the plants. We were given a demonstration of how scything was effective against a lot of

tough scrub and we had a chance to have a go at it! We were shown where excess *Chamerion angustifolium* (Rosebay Willowherb) was successfully eradicated by the SWT's 'flying flock' of sheep which eat the young shoots. The Macduff Trust members showing us the area admitted that some parts were overgrazed; this was mostly in an area which had been dense with *Filipendula ulmaria* (Meadowsweet), which had all gone from the damp grazed area but left a layer of *Alchemilla glabra* (Smooth Lady's-mantle). Some *Filipendula* remained in a corner of another damper area and certainly was very dense. However, most of the meadow looked in good condition and the Trust has impressive records of butterflies, moths and mammals.

In all, 88 species of vascular plants were recorded – nothing rare or not already on the list for VC85 (Fife), but a few of interest, including: *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Agrimony), locally common; *Barbarea intermedia* (Medium-flowered Winter-cress), uncommon but increasing; *Helianthemum nummularium* (Common Rock-rose) on a rocky area; *Lathyrus linifolius* (Bitter-vetch); *L. pratensis* (Meadow Vetchling); *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet Saxifrage), local; *Rhinanthus minor* (Yellow-rattle), always a good sign in meadows; *Rosa caesia* (Hairy Dog-rose), *R. canina* (Dog-rose), *R. spinosissima* (Burnet Rose), all locally common. *Carex hirta* (Hairy Sedge) was the only sedge recorded.

The evening finished with tea and buns provided by our hosts! Excellent information about this area, its history and development is on the Macduff Trust website at: www.auchtermuchty.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=12. Photos of the event were posted on the Auchtermuchty Common Facebook page www.facebook.com/pages/Auchtermuchty-Common/430964593611076.

Sandy Edwards

6. Fearnan Cow Park

Saturday, 22nd June

A grey, damp morning greeted six of us on arrival in the village of Fearnan. The Cow Park is managed by a partnership and it has been designated as a SSSI for its neutral and calcareous grassland communities and its fen of marsh and rushes.

We limbered up on our identification by seeing what we could find on sheep pasture and then explored flushes. These were colourful with many plants in flower, including *Myosotis secunda* (Creeping Forget-me-not) and *Silene flos-cuculi* (Ragged-Robin). Also seen during the day were *Trollius europaeus* (Globeflower), *Hypericum tetrapterum* (Square-stalked St John's-wort) and *Comarum palustre* (= *Potentilla palustris*) (Marsh Cinquefoil). There was a solitary tussock of *Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush) that was looking decidedly out of place under a tree in the marsh, and caused a slight consternation before being identified. Several sedge species, *Carex* spp., were present; 12 in all in different habitats during the day.

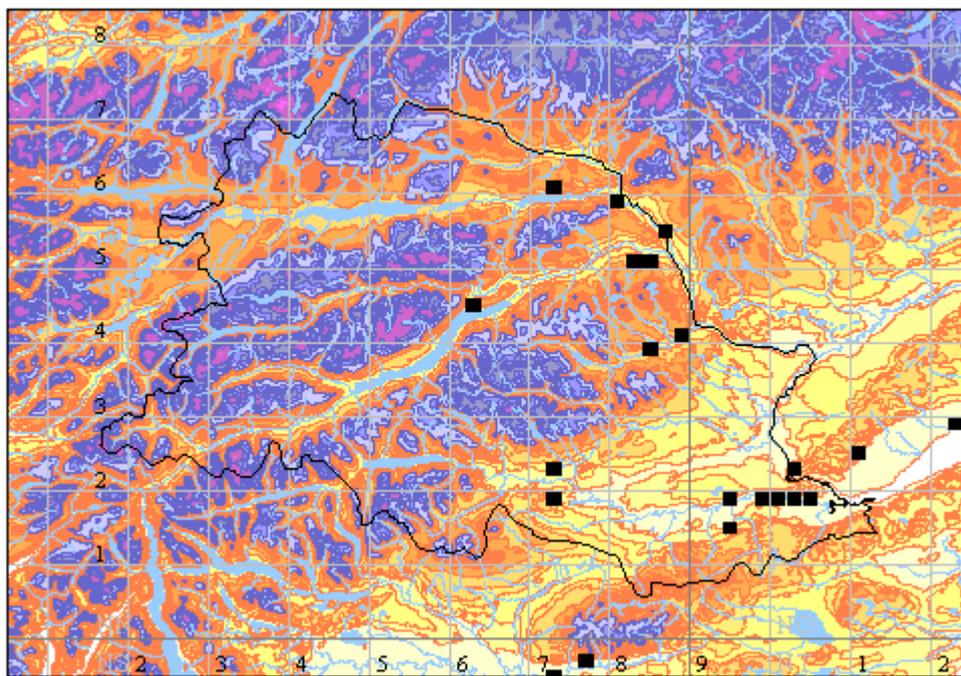
We graduated from the wet to the dry in a corner of the field where drumlin-like mounds are located. The free draining, fairly calcareous soil provided a good show: *Carex caryophylla* (Spring-sedge), *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet-saxifrage), *Gymnadenia conopsea sensu lato* (Fragrant Orchid), 47 plants of *Meum athamanticum* (Spiguel), and a solitary *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort). A late-flowering *Erophila verna sensu lato* (Common Whitlowgrass) found pride of place on an anthill.

We then tracked over the middle of the site where the soil is shallow and rock is exposed. This area provided an interesting community of *Alchemilla alpina* (Alpine Lady's-mantle), *Helianthemum nummularium* (Common Rock-rose), *Thymus polytrichus* (Wild Thyme) and *Polygala vulgaris* (Common Milkwort). Other Alchemillas on the site were *A. filicaulis* subsp. *vestita* (Common Lady's mantle), *A. glabra* (Smooth Lady's-mantle) and *A. xanthochlora* (Intermediate Lady's-mantle).

The south side of the site has more tree and shrub cover than the north side. Two closely related roses present were *Rosa caesia* subsp. *vosagiaca* (Glaucous Dog-rose) which was in flower, and *R. caesia* subsp. *caesia* (Hairy Dog-rose). They are spreading types of roses with multiple stems from the base, bearing broadly-based, strongly-hooked prickles. They are sometimes referred to as Northern Dog-rose: the leaves of both are glabrous, except subsp. *caesia* is hairy on the underside; ‘*caesia*’ refers to the bluish-grey hue of the leaves. In fruit they have large elliptically-shaped hips, often partly obscured by the large bracts and on the ends of the hips there are strongly-lobed sepals. While there may be glands on the margins of the bracts, there are none on the hips.

We found a large, mature elm in fruit; very few trees of this size have escaped Dutch Elm Disease. It looked unusual and I thought it may have been a hybrid, but having seen my photographs, Dr Max Coleman at the RBGE told me it was *Ulmus glabra* (Wych Elm).

From the shade we entered into bright sunshine. The sward before us was closely-grazed, and to my pleasant surprise and in perfect condition were over 40 plants of *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Agrimony) in this area and the adjacent flush. The yellow flowers of the plants were still in bud. This species has an interesting distribution in Perthshire. Records held by the vice-county recorders are mapped below, showing the boundary of VC88 Mid-Perthshire, with records for the two other vice-counties showing in the south-east and south-west. The Fearnan population is the one farthest to the north-west.



Distribution of *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Agrimony) in Perthshire (showing VC88 boundary).

Alistair Godfrey

7. Charlestown

Wednesday, 3rd July

One of the attractions for going to look at the Charlestown and Limekilns area was that there were likely to be spoil heaps of limestone waste and therefore the possibility of some lime-loving plants. Five of us turned out on a sunny evening and started from the car park by the shore, where some *Aster tripolium* (Sea Aster) and *Atriplex littoralis* (Grass-leaved Orache) grew. Beside the pavement on the main street were clumps of *Vulpia myuros* (Rat's-tail Fescue), an increasing casual, and *Vulpia bromoides* (Squirrel-tail Fescue) (see [Photos](#)).

The roadside had been planted with wildflower mixture but up the steep cliffside by the path was some *Trisetum flavescens* (Yellow Oat-grass) and a spread of Sweet Pea which was probably *Lathyrus grandiflorus* (Two-flowered Everlasting Pea) (see [Photos](#)). Exploring the area near the limekilns and waste ground did not, however, reveal any particular change in habitat to lime-loving species. A clump of *Calamagrostis epigejos* (Wood Small-reed) was on the edge of the wood by the path, along with *Lunaria annua* (Honesty) and various common woodland plants.

Joanna and Sandy abandoned the others and went to explore the area behind, that is, to the north of the urban area. This had a wet meadow, a large area of old quarry and a very deep ravine filled with water. The wet area had *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid) and *D. purpurella* (Northern Marsh-orchid). The nearby wood had a specimen of *Alnus incana* (Grey Alder), no doubt planted recently. The area of the quarry floor had more *Dactylorhiza* spp. and also a few *Orchis mascula* (Early Purple-orchid) (see [Photos](#)). The higher and drier ground had some specimens of *Centaureum erythraea* (Common Centaury) which is usually a coastal species. There were a few clumps of *Listera ovata* (Common Twayblade), *Malva moschata* (Musk-mallow), *Scutellaria galericulata* (Skullcap) and *Schedonorus* (= *Festuca*) *arundinaceus* (Tall Fescue).

In all, 144 species of vascular plants were recorded. This area would be well worth a visit earlier in the season just to look for Orchid species alone.

Sandy Edwards

8. Gartwhinzean Meadow

Wednesday, 10th July

Seven of us gathered at Powmill Milk Bar on a beautiful summer's evening. From here we went in two cars. Mrs Carolyn Pleass, the grazier, had met Liz the previous afternoon to show her round the site and where we could park on the Pitfar road. A short walk across two fields being grazed by sheep took us to a gate leading into the little meadow. Mrs Pleass had kindly moved the three ponies grazing the field so that we could survey it undisturbed.

The meadow, 1.7 hectares, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of its species-rich unimproved grassland, in particular for the presence of the locally rare species *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid). It had been neglected, the pasture ungrazed with patches of brambles and wild raspberry until Mrs Pleass took over the grazing about four years ago. She has been managing the site under agreement with Scottish Natural Heritage to benefit the grassland. It has been lightly grazed by ponies during the summer and more heavily grazed by sheep that have access from the adjacent fields in autumn and spring. Invading raspberries and brambles have been treated and the pasture is now in very good condition without any grass mat build-up.

The meadow has a northerly aspect, sloping from south to north down to the fence along the A977 road. Predominantly herb-rich pasture where most of the orchids grow, there are also wet rush areas in the upper field which drain down towards the road and a small area of rough hummocks with a more heath-like vegetation along the eastern boundary. There are scattered hawthorn bushes across the site and a small willow wood along the bottom of the field beside the A977.

The main purpose of our visit was to survey Greater Butterfly-orchids; we also made a species list for the site. We spread out into a line and walked transects up and down the field from west to east. We counted a magnificent 251 Greater Butterfly-orchids, widely scattered over the site, but most were found on the grassy slope in the middle of the field. The table below shows other counts in past years. The figures confirm the success of the present grazing regime. When surveyed in 2002 the field had been ungrazed for several years and orchids were growing through tall, dense tussocky grass. Now the sward is less than 10 cm.

Counts of *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid) at Gartwhinzean Meadow 2002–2013.

Year	Number of <i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	Recorder
2002	64	Liz Lavery
2010	23	Roy Sexton
2012	49	Roy Sexton
2013	251	PSNS and Liz Lavery

We also recorded 56 *Neottia ovata* (Common Twayblade), 46 of these in 4 square metres at NT 00474 97568. There were 100-500 *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid) scattered throughout the field. The ponies had left most of the orchids intact; however flowering of small herbs such as *Lotus corniculatus* (Common Bird's-foot-trefoil), *Galium uliginosum* (Fen Bedstraw) and *Potentilla erecta* (Tormentil) was reduced and *Conopodium majus* (Pignut), present in 2002, was not recorded. A short summer rest from grazing might improve the diversity of small herbs in the pasture.

Other species of note recorded were *Triglochin palustris* (Marsh Arrowgrass) in two wet areas, *Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell) with *Vaccinium myrtillus* (Bilberry) in the heathy area on the east side and *Galium verum* (Lady's Bedstraw) in the pasture. Blue carices, *Carex flacca* (Glaucous Sedge) and *Carex panicea* (Carnation Sedge) were locally frequent but usually grazed short and not in flower.

A total of 77 species was recorded on the SSSI. A report of our visit has been sent to SNH. Our grateful thanks go to Mrs Pleass for all her help.

Liz Lavery

9. Maddy Moss, Ochil Hills

Saturday, 10th August

This excursion was postponed to 2014 owing to a family emergency. I was helping my daughter in Fort William; she had broken her leg.

Liz Lavery

10. Portmoak Moss

Wednesday, 21st August

Portmoak Moss is an old raised peat bog near Loch Leven. It was used as a supply of peat from the 17th–20th centuries. This has left a wall of peat which can be up to 2.5 metres high around the edge of the site; this results in a 'dome' of raised peat bog.

Thanks to the Woodland Trust work is underway to restore and rehabilitate this rare habitat. Many non-native tree species have been carefully removed and ditches blocked with dams. This will help to raise the water level and encourage the plants and animals that are specially adapted to boggy environments, further increasing the wildlife diversity of the area (see [Photos](#)).

Six of us spent the evening exploring the area. In a shaded area beside the path was a good clump of *Equisetum x littorale*, well recorded in the past by George Ballantyne who was with us for the visit. It is a hybrid of *E. arvense* x *E. fluviatile* and somewhat uncommon. In a nearby ditch George pointed out a good mass of *Catabrosa aquatica* (Water Whorl-grass) which could easily be mistaken for a *Poa* at first glance. The raised bog itself was rather dry due to the lack of rain over the summer but the dams are blocking off the drainage channels well enough to help retain some water.

I should imagine that the trees that were previously there let water drain out through the iron pan, but now with them gone it should eventually establish itself and the bog will improve.

There was *Callitriche stagnalis* (Common Water-starwort), *Deschampsia caespitosa* (Tufted Hair-grass), *D. flexuosa* (Wavy Hair-grass), *Lemna minor* (Common Duckweed), *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed Canary-grass), *Typha latifolia* (Bulrush), and the usual heathland plant population.

Sandy Edwards

11. Garry & Tummel Woods fungus foray

Saturday, 28th September

The party of six amateur mycologists began their excursion in the car park next to the bridge over the River Garry at the start of the Road to the Isles. Without having an experienced mycologist we made the best of our identification and we were careful not to identify anything we were not sure of. I would not have been able to write this article without the assistance of Liz Holden, who looked at photographs of some of the fungi we tried to identify and the ones we could not. Liz provided identifications and corrected others. I became aware that the non-specialist identification books do not always cover the range of species that might be encountered.



There was one species in the car park that was identified by Liz with reasonable confidence that I had erred on. There are two species of *Lactarius* that I am aware of now that have a downy cap. This genus, also called Milkcaps, produces a white liquid from the gills and cap if cut or bruised. *Lactarius torminosus* (Woolly Milkcap) is marked by concentric brown rings on the cap; *L. pubescens* (Bearded Milkcap), our species, is much paler, which is shown in the photograph.

Two species of fungi could not be identified near the Milkcap; all three were under the canopy of planted *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* (Himalayan Birch), the paper-bark kind.

From the car park we headed along the Tenandry road to reach the woodland behind, which is mostly oak with some conifers. On the verge beside the road we were delighted to find a large Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*) which was very obliging to all the cameras present.



The woodland was not particularly rich in fungi and many were past their best. The extended period of dry weather was probably responsible for this. Species of interest included *Lepista flaccida* (Tawny Funnel), *L. Nuda* (Wood Blewit), *Laccaria amethystina* (Amethyst Deceiver), and *Cantharellus tubaeformis* (Trumpet Chanterelle). The latter is related to *C. cibarius* (Chanterelle) which we found in the afternoon, but unrelated to *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca* (False Chanterelle) which we also found later. These last three species have gills which extend down on to the upper part of the stipe.

Barbara Hogarth announced Plums and Custard as we approached lunch time, which is the aptly-named fungus with the scientific name *Tricholomopsis rutilans*. That may have sounded like an appetiser, but how about Dog-vomit Slime Mould or Scrambled Egg Slime?

These are names applied to the yellow Slime Mould in the Class *Myxomycetes*, which was found on the return to the car park. Readers will be reassured to know this species is inedible.

In the afternoon we explored woods between the River Garry and River Tummel. On our way we passed a gathering of the species *Homo sapiens* (Wise Man/ Human) under the Garry Bridge. Some were looking on, others were wearing harnesses and one was tethered on to the end of a long length of rubber band. Did Linnaeus really take account of the entire behavioural range of this species before naming it?

We increased our list of bracket fungi for the day growing from the boles of dead and dying trees. Not all could be identified to specific level, but they included *Piptoporus betulinus* (Birch Polypore/Razorstrop Fungus), *Fomes fomentarius* (Hoof Fungus/Tinder Bracket), *Stereum hirsutum* (Hairy Curtain Crust), *Daedalea quercina* (Oak Mazegill), and a species of *Ischnoderma*. I took a specimen of this home and photographed it not knowing what it was. I had not taken notes of its host, but Liz Holden identified the genus and provided the following note: “bruising dark brown underneath, as shown in the photo, is characteristic. There are two species which can be determined reasonably well from host, thus if on conifer (most common in UK) then *I. benzoinum*, if on broadleaf then *I. resinosum*”.



Two other species growing from the boles of trees were *Fistulina hepatica* (Beefsteak Fungus), a large decaying specimen still oozing its characteristic red liquid, and *Oudemansiella mucida* (Porcelain Fungus), which is not a bracket fungus; its caps are like upside-down glazed white saucers.

Two small but very photogenic fungi were *Hypholoma marginatum* (Snakeskin Brownie) and *Mycena inclinata* (Clustered Bonnet). The first was photographed against the fruits of *Veronica officinalis* (Heath Speedwell) and the second in the fork of a dead oak.



Alistair Godfrey

A hill-bagger goes plant-hunting

My interest in mountain flowers began in 1995, thirty years after my first solo forays into high places. The revelation day came as I descended the south flanks of Ben Lawers, well away from any normal line of passage. I followed a burn, and soon realised the range of colour on display, although I could identify very few of the plants. What was awakened was the wealth of colour which could improve my photographs. I was using colour negative film then, but early attempts when printed were disappointing. I then found the book *Wild flowers of Perthshire* by Peter and Margaret Cramb, and I realised the sort of excellent images which could be achieved. The pictures in the book set a standard which to this day I feel I have yet to meet.

Despite my growing enthusiasm for flower photography, I remain firstly a hill walker, indeed a hill bagger. My hill walking agenda is entirely based on ticking off lists, and I make no apology for this approach as it has served me well in seeking out not only unfrequented hills, but also unfrequented corners of the popular hills. This in itself presents a problem during the shooting season when I do not feel free to wander as I may, in case I disturb the deer.

The coming of digital cameras made a huge difference to my approach, but all the while, I concentrated on the walking, with an eye out for the common plants. I did however seek out locations where a plant could offer foreground interest to a fine mountain scene. Swivel-backed cameras made a big difference in this respect, where the camera could be placed on the ground, and I could still compose easily without contortion. My first camera however produced many poorly-focused shots. Even on the macro setting, the background vegetation tended to be sharp, and not the plant. My more recent cameras are more dependable, if not foolproof. If I were more patient, I would examine each shot on the rear screen, and use the magnifying facility to check focus, but usually I am itching to reach my next hill top. Only when I bring the photos up on the PC, do I realise my failures. My single lens reflex with the angle viewer is the answer to that problem, but it is a bit of a monster, and resides in my rucksack, too big for external carrying.

Most of my early efforts which gave a level of satisfaction were found in the thrift fields high on the hills of the west. These plants stand up well and offer good foreground subjects. The downside is that the majority of these are at plateau level where views are somewhat distant and below eye level, two aspects which I find unsatisfactory. Gradually though, I was starting to speak to people and ask about plants which were common, yet unrecognised. Plants such as Eyebright, Lousewort and Butterwort could provide excellent colourful shots provided they were well-sited. Purple Saxifrage was found when I learned where to look, and although they rarely afford a good foreground location, they remain a firm favourite.

From 2000 on, I made real efforts to learn more, but only when my library of plant books expanded did I take an interest in the rare plants. When I realised that some are indeed local, if seemed churlish to ignore these and dwell on “non ticking hill days” as being wasted. This change of attitude resulted in days spent on Lawers, Glen Isla, Corrie Fee and Glen Doll. Although largely successful in terms of rare plants found, these days do remain with an aftertaste of underachievement, very much like a day of skiing, good fun, but without the glow of satisfaction which a hard hill day produces. After two failed searches, success with Alpine Catchfly from Glen Doll translated into a return visit via Canness Glen. After that, Caenlochan on a dull day was a lesson in disappointment, although Kidney Vetch and Alpine Cinquefoil were rewarding.

Thereafter, I have gone back to the old ways of ticking my hill lists, and taking whatever plants come my way. My most recent find was Blue Heath *Phyllodoce caerulea* on the Sow of Atholl. Only one plant was found. After reaching the site using a ten-figure grid reference, I traversed the steep slope up to the top and down again with no other sightings. In

June 2013, on Fraoch Bheinn above Glen Finnan I found *Diapensia lapponica*, but I was a week late. A return visit is certainly planned despite the fact that it will be my fifth visit to the hill; the other visits were part of my Corbett-bagging!

Bert Barnett

(A selection of Bert's photos can be seen online at www.flickr.com/photos/baggerbert – Ed.)

The Society's emblem

It's particularly appropriate for the Botanical Section that the PSNS emblem, which appears at the head of this Bulletin, depicts a plant. In a county famed for its rare alpine plants, however, the choice of species might seem surprising: it is a stylised Daisy, perhaps our most widespread plant, recorded from almost every 10x10 km square in the British Isles. The reason it was chosen lies in the scientific name *Bellis perennis*, 'everlasting beauty'. When choosing the emblem, the Society's founders expected everyone to know what it was, what it was called, and what its name meant!

The rest of the emblem also makes demands on the reader's education. The circular border carries the name of the Society in Latin 'Societas Perthensis Scientiarum Naturæ', with the year of the Society's foundation, 1867, while the central roundel is crowned by the Society's Greek motto 'Πάντα δοκιμάζετε' – '*Panta dokimazete [ton kalon katekete]*' – 'Prove all things [hold fast that which is good]' (St Paul, 1 Thessalonians 5:21). Sharp-eyed attendees at our Section meetings may have noticed that the stained-glass window in the



Museum Library is not the same as the 'official' version – the glazier having been unable to replicate the original Greek lettering! In fact, evolutionary divergence seems to have happened when the building was extended in the 1930s, as the Society's older publications carry a much scraggier, if somewhat more botanically accurate, specimen (pictured here). Despite a belief that it was based on an actual specimen, nothing in the Perthshire Herbarium collection much resembles the drawing. This version survived in print on the Society's journals and syllabuses until shortly after the turn of the millennium, when it finally died out (or was given a dose of fertiliser), leaving the striking, colourful version that we are now familiar with.

If the Society was choosing a logo today, we would probably pick a simpler, more easily reproducible design, and certainly one that did not require knowledge of Classics and the Bible in addition to plant identification and nomenclature, but it is nice to know that it celebrates the beauty of nature, as well as being a reminder of the importance of scientific rigour.

Thanks to David Bowler for translating and interpreting the motto, and to Mark Simmons for checking the drawing against the dozen or so specimens of *Bellis perennis* in Perth Museum's herbarium.

Colin McLeod

Early Ben Lawers botanists

PSNS members who heard Dan Watson of NTS lecture on 'Pioneering botanists of Ben Lawers' in November 2011 may like to know that his researches have now been published in a recent paper in the *Forth Naturalist & Historian*, Volume 36, 'The history of botanical discoveries around Ben Lawers'. See www.fnh.stir.ac.uk/journal for details of where to obtain copies.

BSBI Annual Summer Meeting 2014

The big botanical event of 2014 as far as Perthshire is concerned, is the BSBI Annual Summer Meeting, AGM and field excursions, being held at Birnam on 4-7 June. In addition to the indoor sessions at Birnam Arts & Conference Centre, the Friday and Saturday will have lots of field excursions to choose from, most of them led by PSNS members. Any PSNS member, whether or not they are a member of BSBI, is welcome to attend the excursions. Details and booking forms for the conference are available at www.bsbi.org.uk/scotland.html.

Flora of the Cairngorms National Park – Rare Plant Register

No fewer than nine vice counties overlap the Cairngorms National Park, with Mid and East Perthshire VC88 and VC89 together making up 15.7% of the Park's area. Andy Amphlett produced a Checklist of the vascular plants of the CNP in 2012, listing 1699 unique taxa, plus 34 aggregate taxa. This has been followed in 2013 by the *Cairngorms Rare Plant Register*, containing 19,724 records of 763 taxa (distilled from a starting dataset of over 283,000 records), available to download free as a report and spreadsheet from the BSBI website www.bsbi.org.uk/site_floras.html. The checklist is also available at www.bsbi.org.uk/The_Flora_of_the_Cairngorms_National_Park_-_Checklist_-_April_2012.pdf.

The *East Perthshire Rare Plant Register* by our own Martin Robinson was also updated in 2013, and is likewise free to download from www.bsbi.org.uk/rare_plants.html.

More publications appear online...

Jim McIntosh has added the complete run of scanned *BSBI Scottish Newsletters* since the first issue in 1979 to the BSBI digital archive, where they join *BSBI News*, the journal *Watsonia*, and a growing library of other valuable material. The Newsletters can be found at <http://archive.bsbi.org.uk/scotland.html>.

Promoting the Section's activities

In addition to printing copies of the Bulletin for all Botanical Section members, we always produce some spares to give to new members or prospective members. Over the last two or three years, spare back issues have been made available at various events, including the BSBI Scottish Annual Meeting, Tayside Biodiversity Seminar, Tayside Recorders' Day, Forth Naturalist & Historian Conference, a talk by Alistair Godfrey given to West Stormont Historical Society, and the launch of Faith Anstey's book *Flowers in the Field*. They will also be available to attendees at the BSBI's 2014 Annual Summer Meeting at Birnam. If you are planning to attend any meetings that are likely to be of interest to botanists in the area, please try to take a few Bulletins along. The venue need not be strictly local – we have members in Angus, Dundee, Fife, Stirling and beyond, as well as Perthshire!

Contributions for the Bulletin are welcome – preferably by email, but any format accepted. They can be submitted at any time during the year, but material that arrives too shortly before the Section AGM when the Bulletin is issued may be held over to the next year's issue – so the earlier, the better!

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Photos



Lathraea squamaria (Toothwort), Dollar Glen, 24 April 2013
© Liz Lavery.



Lysichiton americanus (American Skunk-cabbage), Dollar Glen, 24 April 2013
© Liz Lavery.



Tea and buns at Auchtermuchty Common, 19 June 2013
© Sandy Edwards.



Bank above Promenade, Limekilns, 3 July 2013
© Sandy Edwards.



Orchid-rich wet area north of Charlestown, 3 July 2013
© Sandy Edwards.



Vulpia myuros (Rat's-tail Fescue), Main Road, Charlestown, 3 July 2013
© Sandy Edwards.



Liz Lavery photographing probable *Lathyrus grandiflorus* (Two-flowered Everlasting Pea) on cliff-slope, Charlestown, 3 July 2013
© Sandy Edwards.



Portmoak Moss: **Left:** *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather) colonising the drier edges of ditches and *Sphagnum magellanicum* (Magellanic Bog-moss) colonising the bottoms of ditches dug for tree-planting in the peat, the trees now removed. **Right:** Plastic sheeting stemming the flow of water in drainage ditches has allowed other *Sphagnum* species to colonise; *S. cuspidatum* (Feathery Bog-moss) in the wettest hollows and *S. fimbriatum* (Fringed Bog-moss) around the sheeting.
© Alistair Godfrey.



IDENTIFYING WILD FLOWER FAMILIES

**SUNDAY
27 APRIL 2014**

Glasgow
Botanic Gardens

**SUNDAY
4 MAY 2014**

St Andrews
Botanic Garden

**SUNDAY
18 MAY 2014**

Holyrood Park
Edinburgh

10.00am – 4.30pm

*Learn how to identify wild flowers by studying the families they belong to. Improve your confidence in using wild flower keys. BSBI has joined forces with **Plantlife** to offer this fascinating one-day workshop led by **Dr Faith Anstey**.*

**Participant Fee £15
Full-time students £10**

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL



Plantlife

For booking/information on workshops visit bsbiscotland.org.uk
or contact Jenny Farrar 07929 830765 or jenny.farrar@bsbi.org