

PERTSHIRE SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCE

BOTANICAL SECTION

BULLETIN No. 27 - 2004

Editorial

Those of you who were at the Section's winter meeting last week will know that there will be a proposal to raise the Society's annual subscription at next week's AGM. The chief reason for the rise is the recommendation from the Society's insurers that, in view of the alleged increasing trend for the public to make claims following personal accident and injury, the Society should consider having insurance cover for summer outings: a quote for £1m Trustee Indemnity insurance cover at a premium of £578 per year has been received.

The extent of successful claims of anything like this magnitude against bodies like ours could certainly be challenged, especially since facts are hard to come by because of settlements out-of-court. Clearly summer outings are a main (if not the main) *raison d'être* of our Section, so we must be concerned at the litigious culture, a recent and unattractive American import which threatens to displace the 2000-year old Roman principle of *volenti non fit injuria* ('to a willing person no wrong is done') which has been the guiding British legal principle hitherto. The effect of this culture has led to such absurdities as a Scottish Local Authority this week forbidding school football matches on the grounds that there was no insurance to cover the school headmaster and staff being sued if an accident were to occur - even a road traffic accident.

I have done a quick calculation. Taking only PSNS, BSBI and SWT botanical outings into account, I reckon that in the 31 years that I have been in Scotland I have been on 500 outings; if an average of 10 people came on each, that would make 5000 individuals at risk. Yes, there have been a few (very few) bumps, cuts and scrapes, but on only one outing was there a worrying incident to one individual - a small fall off a rock face - and on this occasion a doctor was by chance in the group and was able to administer totally sufficient first-aid. So while doubtless the hazard, which is the potential damage, is considerable, the risk, which is hazard multiplied by its probability, is extremely small. The discrepancy between the risk and the much higher insurance premium is of course how insurance companies make their profits, but it sticks in the throat that premiums could threaten the finances and the existence of a small (and charitable) society as ours.

Fortunately there seems to be the beginning of a reaction. The UK Secretary of Education has expressed concern and initiated a study which could lead to a declaration and law that schools unless grossly negligent could not be sued for sports injuries. The Occupational Safety Adviser for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents writing in the Times (1st March) argued that "there is now excessive risk aversion due to poor safety and risk literacy among professionals. UK safety law does not require all activities and environments to be risk-free; there is no such thing as absolute safety. Safety is all about balancing risks, costs and *benefits*" (my italics).

For adults at least, there is individual responsibility, backed up by individual personal

and public liability insurance. 'The reaction cannot come soon enough.

[NB these are the editor's own views which do not necessarily represent those of the Section or parent body]

At the moment of going to press, the sad news has just been received of the death on March 10th of Mr Freddie French, a former Section member who will have been known to most of us. There will be a brief obituary in the next Bulletin.

I should like to thank sincerely all the contributors of Field Meeting reports - without you the Bulletin would not exist. Finally, I have deliberately left in one spelling slip which amused me - I wonder who will spot it first? (That is not to say there are no others which I have caused but overlooked!).

16.3.05

Richard Thomas - Editor

Reports from 2004 Field meetings together with two reports outstanding from 2003

A. Cortachy, Glen Moy

Sunday July 6th 2003

Of the 9 Angus tetrads surveyed for the BSBI Monitoring Scheme in 1986/7 NO36W looked to have the most potential as a venue for a field meeting. The hope was that I could fulfil the ambitions for the rerun of the scheme and get people other than myself involved and provide a potentially interesting field meeting. Unfortunately the date conflicted with other events and the weather forecast wasn't brilliant so it was a select group of three that set off from Crossbog Farm to the banks of the River South Esk

Recording started with the customary trackside 'weeds' but it was not long before ditches and flushed slopes were providing a good hunting ground. After this the range of habitats along the mile or so of the river included scrub and trees, tall grassy meadows, dry grassy hummocks, marshy hollows, flushes and, of course, the riverbanks.

The success of the meeting must be attributed to Bill Hay and his knowledge of this part of Angus. Needless to say sedges were well recorded - 14 in a total that included *Carex aquatilis* (Water Sedge) in its lowland form, *Carex laevigata* (Smooth-stalked Sedge), *Carex remota* (Remote Sedge) and *Carex vesicaria* (Bladder Sedge). The highlight of my day was finding a small stand of *Scirpus sylvaticus* (Wood Club-rush) on the riverbank - we even stopped for lunch at this point to allow time to admire this and the tall sedges with their feet in the river.

Groups of majestic *Cirsium heterophyllum* (Melancholy Thistle) were at their peak of flowering whereas *Meum athamanticum* (Spignel) had only its feathery, aromatic leaves to offer. A few spikes of *Festuca gigantea* (Giant Fescue) were fortuitously spotted by sharp eyes as we waded through tall grasses. At intervals the stretches of tall grasses gave way to short, tussocky grassland and in one such area we found *Helianthemum nummularium* (Common Rock-rose) and *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet-saxifrage).

A short foray along the Burn of Moy provided a few more records and led to a large patch of the introduced *Peucedanum ostruthium* (Masterwort). As we retraced our steps along the track to the anglers' car park we noticed less familiar forms within a stand of horsetails and on closer inspection these proved to be the hybrid *Equisetum x mildeanum* (*E. sylvaticum* x *E. pratense*).

During the field meeting we recorded 206 species most of which have been recorded recently but there were a number which will require an update entry in the 'Checklist of the Flowering Plants and Ferns of Angus'.

Barbara Hogarth

B. Easthaven

Wednesday 9th July 2003

Since the first report of *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Orchid) by Les Tucker in 1998 I regularly visit this Angus site in mid-July to confirm its continued existence. This year a group of six set off from the car park at Easthaven and headed northwards along the shore. Shortly before we reached the meadow (a strip of unimproved dune grassland) Les appeared and accompanied us to what has become his orchid site

This year the colony consisted of about 20 flowering plants although the individuals appeared to be smaller than in previous years. Other noteworthy species in flower that evening were *Coeloglossum viride* (Frog Orchid) and *Scabiosa columbaria* (Small Scabious). We were not tempted to linger in this moderately species-rich locality as the area was beset by a particularly unpleasant smell (whether this came from the waste water treatment plant or decaying seaweed it was none-the-less an unexpected phenomenon).

Having established the continued presence of *Anacamptis* we headed southwards to the strip of coast designated as an SSSI on the strength of a population of *Rhinanthus angustifolius* (Greater Yellow-rattle). This species is classified as a neophyte in the 'New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' so it will be interesting to see whether SNH continue to strive to enhance its opportunities to survive. There was little evidence of any efforts in 2003 - the roadside strip where it was known to occur had been closely mown and it proved difficult to find elsewhere as the vegetation was very lush. A few straggly plants were eventually located but none were particularly impressive. Worthwhile finds noted during the search for *Rhinanthus* were *Allium oleraceum* (Field Garlic) and *Trisetum flavescens* (Yellow Oat-grass) both of which enabled me to update older records for the 10 k square NO 53.

(My apologies again for mislaying these reports - Ed)

Barbara Hogarth

1. Moss identification, Kindrogan Woods and at Kindrogan Field Centre, Enochdhu.

Saturday 27th March 2004

Eight of us met at Kindrogan Field Centre to enjoy the world of mosses and liverworts, and the new dimension that they bring to botanising. The Centre was ideal for this, with its combination of lab facilities and the wonderful supply of common bryophytes on the doorstep. All the main woodland species of the area can be found in great quantity along the riverside path. Having inspected them in situ and collected

samples in the morning we then looked at them under the microscope, which opened eyes to the beauty and diversity of these common plants. Samples were chosen which well illustrated important glossary terms, such as acrocarpous and pleurocarpous, papillose, succubous and incubous, sub-dendroid, complanate etc. Without a grounding in this new language identification is impossible.

Everyone enjoyed going back to basics and we hardly even got wet, despite the threatening sky. The joint challenge of putting names to mosses and of getting Ros's wheelchair into places it wasn't designed for made an interesting excursion.

Martin Robinson

2. River Tay, Cambus Michael to Stormontfield Sunday pm April 18th

Despite rain during the previous night that continued into the morning, we had a dry and bright afternoon. We started off fourteen strong, and the promise of rich habitats to explore with many eyes led me expectantly to find a lot of interest.

The abandoned churchyard at Cambus Michael yielded a large expanse of the leaves of *Saxifraga granulata* (Meadow Saxifrage). *Primula vulgaris* (Primrose) was present in small numbers and flowering, and *Adoxa moschatellina* (Moschatel) was seen near by. As we re-traced our steps out of the churchyard, Lynne Farrell drew our attention to the small rosettes of a plant with many pinnate leaves; "Flixweed", she exclaimed, which is an uncommon crucifer of disturbed ground. To compile this report I consulted the Perthshire Plant Checklist, and found that *Descurainia sophia* is not listed for Vice-county 89, so congratulations Lynne on a first.

We passed through woodland habitat next, with *Stellaria nemorum* (Wood Stitchwort) coming into flower. The bright green, shiny leaves of *Veronica montana* (Wood Speedwell) were also present; I associate this plant with damp shaded conditions in contrast to more open conditions where the hairier, more toothed and duller-coloured leaves of *V. chamaedrys* (Germander Speedwell) may be found.

The riverside offered up plants that had been transported downstream as seed or as vegetative propagules. *Trollius europaea* (Globeflower) was present as only one plant, but a welcome sight. Less welcoming for some was *Tolmeia menziesii* (Pick a back Plant), the garden escapee from the American wilderness.

Towards the end of our walk we found *Primula veris* (Cowslip) and in between our start and finish we found the hybrid *P. x polyantha* between this species and Primrose, known as the False Oxlip. *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* (Alternate-leaved Golden Saxifrage) was flowering and *Alchemilla xanthochlora* (Meadow Lady's Mantle) was starting to flower; Barbara Hogarth was able to distinguish this from the similar *A. filicaulis* ssp. *vestita* (Hairy Lady's Mantle) - the former is paler, larger and more erect in habit and I find this is the earliest flowering Lady's Mantle; grassland by rivers appears to be a favoured habitat. Barbara's comments show how the use of field characters can make a useful start to identification.

We hoped to find *Gagea lutea* (Yellow Star of Bethlehem) and we were not disappointed. We found a few scattered plants still in flower along the riverside and a healthy colony near the end of our walk. Here too we found *Galium mollugo* (Hedge Bedstraw). I know this plant from the other side of the Tay at Luncarty; it is not a

common plant in Perthshire and is absent from most of Scotland, though widespread across much of England. It appears to be declining here.

Alistair Godfrey

3. Scone Palace, Pinetum

Tuesday evening 25th May

Thirteen members enjoyed a sunny evening on this excursion. We were met and capably led around the palace grounds by Crawford Taylor, Mansfield Estate's Head Forester. Crawford described how Lord Mansfield's ancestor, Sir David Murray, received lands and title from King James VI in gratitude for his rescue from the conspiratorial Earl of Gowrie in 1603.

The pinetum was established in 1847; four tall, wide-girthed *Picea sitchensis* (Sitka spruce) and a fine avenue of *Tsuga heterophylla* (Western Hemlock) remain from that time. Many other conifers have been added to the collection since, and Crawford explained how difficult establishing and maintaining trees can be. Disease, in particular blister rust, ground conditions, roe deer and weather all take their toll. A mature, healthy *Cedrus atlantica* (Atlas Cedar) had died some weeks before for no apparent reason, and was having to be felled for public safety

New species are being added to the collection as space becomes available. The challenge is to find unusual species, rather than replace specimens with the same kind that are now quite common in collections. In its day, Sitka spruce was something of a novelty, although that is hard to imagine now.

The oldest conifer in the collection, but not in the pinetum, is a *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas Fir). This tree was grown in 1826 from seed collected by David Douglas in North America. Douglas had been an apprentice gardener at Scone Palace and some of the seed he collected during his later plant hunting expeditions was sent to his places of former employment. The parent Douglas Fir stands next to the buried remains of the old village of Scone. Douglas's father had been a mason and may have been involved in the building of the re-located village of New Scone.

David Douglas also sent seed of another of his discoveries *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine) to Britain. Crawford is trying to establish this species in the pinetum, but with great difficulty. We saw one young specimen that has received the unwanted attention of a roe deer. Monterey Pine is grown around the world; it grows vigorously and is much more important as a forest crop than Sitka Spruce. Monterey Pine has three needles, unlike our native *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots Pine) which has its needles in pairs. Ewan Cameron was quick to point out that Scots Pine is not represented in the collection!

There is much of interest to see in the Pinetum and each tree is clearly labelled with common and botanical names and a place of origin. The trees command a reverential respect; they rise above the mown grass like the mighty columns of a cathedral above a flag stone floor and light penetrates the dark recesses in places, like the scattering of light through stained-glass windows. Altogether, this is a very special place.

Alistair Godfrey

4. Alva Glen

Sunday 13th June, 2004

On an overcast but dry day, a small band spent a very pleasant few hours wandering up the public footpath through the lower wooded gorge of Alva Glen and on to the open upper glen, recording in two different squares, NS88 97 and NS88 98. Lynne Farrell made a comprehensive list of the species we found and my thanks go to her for providing most of the details in this report. Our junior member, Margaret, led the way scrambling with great agility up the more interesting parts of the trail.

Of most interest in the woodland of the lower Glen were some shade loving plants *Rumex sanguineus* (Wood Dock), *Brachypodium sylvaticum* (False Brome) and *Circaea lutetiana* (Enchanter's nightshade). A patch of *Saxifraga x urbium* (London Pride) was growing with *Festuca gigantea* (Giant Fescue) and *Bromopsis ramosa* (Hairy Brome). Also in NS88 97 were *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet Saxifrage) and *Origanum vulgare* (Wild Marjoram) growing with *Helictotrichon pubescens* (Downy Oat Grass) at NS88 97.

In the upper square, NS88 98, *Helianthemum nummularia* (Common Rock-rose), *Melica uniflora* (Wood Melick), *Bromopsis ramosa* (Hairy Brome) and the lovely little fern *Cystopteris fragilis* (Brittle Bladder Fern) were found in the woodland section. A few plants of *Senecio sylvaticus* (Heath Groundsel) were spotted on a steep bracken slope. Despite very diligent searching by Alistair Godfrey and Jim McIntosh in the impressive gorge below the top waterfall we failed to refind an old record for *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* (Wilson's Filmy-fern).

In the open reaches of the upper glen, NS88 98, several interesting plants were found; the rare *Sedum villosum* (Hairy Stonecrop) which is quite common in the Ochills, *Linum catharticum* (Fairy Flax), *Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage) and *Helictotrichon pratense* (Meadow Oat Grass) all indicative of base rich outcrops. Lynne pointed out a wonderfully luxuriant patch of almost fluorescent cream *Galium sternerii* (Limestone Bedstraw), another calcicole, beside the steep, zig-zag path leading up around the waterfall, a plant new to me and quite different here from its close relative, the common *Galium saxatile* (Heath Bedstraw) found on acid soils.

The find of the day was a single clump of a greenish mystery sedge (most sedges are mysterious to me) beside the path in the wooded part of the Glen in NS88 97. Lynne sent a specimen to David Pearman, the BSBI specialist, who thought it was probably *Carex spicata* (Spiked Sedge) but needs more material to be sure (rhizomes and mature fruits). This would be a first for VC87 and is at the limit of its northern and eastern range here. I sent a specimen to Bill Hay; he believes it to be *Carex muricata* subsp. *lamprocarpa* (Prickly sedge) from the shape of the utricles and other characters, commoner in the east but also near its northern limit here. The two species are very closely related and difficult to tell apart and this merits another visit in 2005.

A total of 136 species was found in square NS88 97 and 142 species in NS88 98.

Liz Lavery.

5. BSBI meeting to Loch Katrine (VC 87)

Saturday 26th June

Local Change monitoring of tetrads. A write-up of this BSBI meeting will appear in BSBI news (or might have already).

Neale Taylor

6, 9 & 10. BSBI Local Change, mid-Perthshire VC 88

June 27th, July 11th, 17th & 18th

The BSBI Local Change project concluded this year in revisiting tetrads covered by the BSBI Monitoring Scheme in 1987 & 1988. Three tetrads (2km x 2km) within a hectad (10km x 10km) from a selection of hectads throughout the UK were re-visited in an attempt to re-locate as many of the previously recorded taxa as possible. The overall aim of the project was to identify gains and losses identifiable as common trends throughout the UK. Many of the previous visits in Perthshire were made on PSNS outings, with some re-visits being made by members last year.

Our first tetrad visit, NN73W, was to Glen Almond beyond Auchnafree (NN 78 32). Bill Hay and Jim McIntosh went up on the north side of the glen and Les Tucker and I went up the south side. Much of the ground was uniform heath and grassland, but water enriched the soils and increased our tally of species. On the ascent of the south side we found a solitary *Listera cordata* (Lesser Twayblade) on slightly flushed ground. The boundary of the tetrad lay on the north-east shoulder of Ben Chonzie, and here we found *Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage), our fourth saxifrage species of the day and *Oxyria digyna* (Mountain Sorrel). On our descent we found *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* (Black Spleenwort), a fern which is attractive for the fine tracery and shininess of its fronds.

On the last day of our July week-end I took some of our visiting botanists to a tetrad at the other end of Glen Almond at Tullichglass, NN73J (NN 72 38). The soils here were much richer, and the flora quite different from the other Glen Almond tetrad. I was pleased to be able to share the enjoyment of our Perthshire flora - as well as the spectacular view across Loch Tay to the Breadalbanes - with our visitors from other parts of the UK. Highlights of our excursion were: *Galium boreale* (Northern Bedstraw), *Helianthemum nummularium* (Common Rock-rose), *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet-saxifrage), *Trollius europaeus* (Globeflower) and *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly Orchid).

The third tetrad NN73A (NN 7030) in this hectad was visited by Les Tucker, Jim McIntosh and others on the same day. They visited the higher ground to the north-east of Loch Lednock and their results were again different, with a distinctly montane character: *Polystichum lonchitis* (Holly Fern), *Potentilla crantzii* (Alpine Cinquefoil), *Salix arbuscula* (Mountain Willow), *Sibbaldia procumbens*, *Thalictrum alpinum* (Alpine Meadow-rue) and *Veronica serpyllifolia* subsp. *humifusa* (the montane form of Thyme-leaved Speedwell). Rather tantalisingly, many of the richest crags seemed to be just outside the tetrad boundary below the summit of Creag Uchdag, definitely an area for future exploration.

The Saturday of the July week-end found some of us to the south of Dalnacardoch Lodge, NN76J (NN 72 68), at Meall Reamhar to the south of Glen Errochty, NN76W (NN 78 62) and Lynne Farrell and Ian Green led excursions to the north of Chapelhill NO03A (NO 00 30) and the Obney Hills NO03J (NO 02 38). Faith Anstey, Alison Wilson and I were *fair drookit* by the end of the morning after our ramblings over the open moorland. In the sphagnum pools we found *Carex*

pauciflora (Few-flowered Sedge) and *Sparganium natans* (Least Bur-reed). A little lower down remnant woodland yielded *Populus tremula* (Aspen) and *Juniperus communis* (Juniper). The sun greeted us in the afternoon and we were treated to a fine display of plants in the rich flushes above and along the edges of the River Garry. *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Fragrant Orchid), *Gentianella campestris* (Field Gentian), and *Tofieldia pusilla* (Scottish Asphodel) were added to our list.

On the same day six kilometres to the south-east, Jim McIntosh and others were busy in tetrad NN76W. This tetrad includes a short length of the banks of the Errochty Water, a small area of wet heath and moorland just to the north of Meall Reamhar, and large tracts of forestry plantation in between. Light drizzle and midgies added to the botanising experience. Most of the interesting finds were on the wet heath where *Carex limosa* (Bog Sedge), *Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass), *Drosera intermedia* (Oblong-leaved Sundew) and *Tofieldia pusilla* (Scottish Asphodel) were noted. However, even the forest yielded the odd pleasant surprise such as extensive *Lycopodium annotinum* (Interrupted Clubmoss), a single tussock of *Melica nutans* (Mountain Melick) and a population of *Orthilia secunda* (Serrated Wintergreen) growing on a moorland 'island' at the forest's southern edge.

The excursion in early July found Les Tucker, Jim McIntosh and myself on the eastern slopes of Beinn Heasgarnich, NN43J (NN 42 38) among lochans, burns and rocky outcrops. We were later joined in the day by Richard Thomas, who may have been checking up on the novice vice-county recorders to find out if they were doing things properly! (*he wasn't, he just wanted to get out into the hills!* - Ed). We had rich pickings that day and our highlights included: *Armeria maritima* (Thrift), *Asplenium viride* (Green Spleenwort), *Athyrium distentifolium* (Alpine Lady Fern), *Bartsia alpina* (Alpine Bartsia), *Carex atrata* (Black Alpine Sedge), *Carex limosa* (Bog Sedge), *Cerastium alpinum* (Alpine Mouse-ear), *Dryopteris expansa* (Northern Buckler Fern), *Dryopteris oreades* (Mountain Male Fern), *Juncus castaneus* (Chestnut Rush), *Juncus trifidus* (Three-leaved Rush), *Juncus triglumis* (Three-flowered Rush), *Loiseleuria procumbens* (Trailing azalea), *Minuartia sedoides* (Mossy Cyphal), and *Silene acaulis* (Moss Campion).

All in all I think we had a very interesting time on these excursions with many interesting discoveries. Jim McIntosh and I are now sorting out the real gains and losses. The project acknowledged from the start that not all of the taxa previously recorded would be re-found, and many or all of the losses from 2004/5 will have been due to the difficulty in covering the tetrad. Similarly, most or all of the gains will be due to the same reason, and most or all of these taxa would have been present in 1987/88. However, many new records have been made and they have added to our knowledge of Perthshire's flora.. Jim and I would like to thank all of the members who supported us on these excursions. Without your help we would not have been able to cover all of the tetrads we were asked to

Losses, gains and totals for taxa in each tetrad.

Losses	39	32	26	11	14	30	23	76
Gains	65	67	75	110	119	35	69	31
Refound	160	147	103	107	127	163	152	176
Total	264	246	204	228	260	228	244	283

NO03A NO03J NN43J NN73A NN73J NN73W NN76J NN76W

Alistair Godfrey and Jim McIntosh

7. Delvine, River Tay near Meiklour

Tuesday evening June 29th

Once again an evening walk produced a good turn-out, with ten members meeting at Spittalfield, distilling themselves into three car-loads and driving on down to the Tay at Delvine. The bank of the river here has extensive banks of vegetated shingle, where you feel almost anything might turn up. Characteristic specialities were *Teesdalia nudicaulis* (Shepherd's Cress), *Lepidium heterophyllum* (Smith's Pepperwort) and *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed), whilst *Silene uniflora* (Sea Campion), *Persicaria hydropiper* (Water Pepper), *Phleum bertolinii* (Smaller Catstail), *Cerastium arvense* (Field Mouse Ear) and *Origanum vulgare* (Wild Marjoram) were common. *Dianthus deltoides* (Maiden Pink) was found in a couple of places, though one patch was so deeply coloured that its origins must be in doubt. *Sedum anglicum* (English Stonecrop) shone among the *S. acre* (Wall Pepper or Biting Stonecrop) and the yellow sheets of *Cruciata laevipes* (Crosswort) and the ivory-coloured clumps of *Galium boreale* (Northern Bedstraw) also drew comment.

Several tree and shrub species were optimistically but vainly trying to establish themselves in this environment, which is friendly most of the time but utterly hostile at others. Among these were willows for Les, including hybrids of species such as *S. viminalis* (Osier), *S. purpurea* (Purple Willow), *S. cinerea* (Grey Willow) and *S. myrsinifolia* (Dark-leaved Willow). The word "probably" featured strongly and inevitably. There was clearly some *S. cinerea* subsp. *cinerea*, not common in our area.

The target area of a shallow pool in the grassland behind the riverbank was finally reached. The water had withdrawn to about 50% of the area, the rest being mud. The green zone of mud at the water's edge was mostly *Lythrum portula* (Water Purslane) and *Callitriche* spp. (Water Starwort), but plants of *Limosella aquatica* (Mudwort) were quite common. *Ranunculus peltatus* (Pond Water Crowfoot) and *R. aquatilis* (Common Water Crowfoot) were stranded on the mud. Fine stands of *Carex vesicaria* (Bladder Sedge) were around the edge of the pool, one of which had an interesting form at its edge that looked quite different but proved to be the same. A nice tit-bit in the short grassland at the edge was *Potentilla argentea* (Hoary Cinquefoil) – very rare in Perthshire –Ed, and to round proceedings off a fine *Gymnadenia x Dactylorhiza* hybrid was admired on the way back to the cars.

The weather was kind and the midges had taken an evening off, so there was nothing to spoil this very enjoyable little excursion. Terns, swifts and sand martins overhead provided that extra something and the amount of yellow shell moths around the shingle plants was quite astonishing.

Martin Robinson

8. Ben Earb, Spittal of Glenshee, Dalmunzie. Saturday 3rd July

On a cool morning a small party met at Dalmunzie above the Spittal of Glenshee to explore Coire a Ghearnaig of Ben Earb. By the Glen Lochsie burn there were some interesting willows including *Salix phylicifolia* (Tea-leaved Willow) or its hybrid with *Salix myrsinifolia* (Dark-leaved Willow). On the lower slopes of the hill there was much *Oreopteris limbosperma* (Lemon-scented Fern), *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh Orchid) and *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted Orchid) but thereafter the pull up to the corrie was rather dull. The corrie was, however, more base-rich and *Eleocharis quinqueflora* (Few-flowered Spike Rush) and *Carex dioica* (Dioecious Sedge) were quickly found. Eventually *Kobresia simpliciuscula* (False Sedge) was discovered; it had first been seen here in 2003 in its easternmost locality in Scotland.

A sharp shower had us sheltering under rocks where a few days later *Potentilla crantzii* (Alpine Cinquefoil) was found. We did not, in spite of a deal of searching, re-find *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* (Wilson's Filmy Fern) that had been seen in 2003. A pair of ravens and a peregrine flew over and cattle were grazing surprisingly high on the slopes above Glen Fernate.

Les Tucker diverged north to a colony of *Saxifraga nivalis* (Alpine Saxifrage) that was just coming into flower and then, lower down, found a second site for the *Kobresia* about 700 m NW from the earlier one. In some scree runnels just above the Dalmunzie golf course there were some spikes of a hybrid which turned out to be *X Dactylodema varia*, the hybrid between *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Fragrant Orchid) and *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh Orchid) – *very rare in UK, only 3 VCs and not in Perthshire according to the 2003 Census. was this a first record?* –Ed

Bill Hay

11. Barry Buddon Sunday 8th August 2004

Barry Buddon Nature Open Day has become an annual event and is always well attended. It is a day when military activity gives way to nature study, the firing ranges are quiet and interested groups can enjoy the plants, butterflies and birds.

Most folk seem to be remarkably gregarious but it is easy to leave the crowds and seek out areas of interest. Bill Hay, Liz Lavery and I headed straight for a part of site known to support a good population of willows. That was the easy part!

We spent much of the day in a relatively small area trying to unravel the complexities of the species and the many hybrid forms of willows in dune-slacks and ditches. Bill was in his element and was a great asset when it came to identifying the make-up of the numerous hybrids.

On the way out of the site we took a quick look at what is presently a thriving colony of *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia) growing in a sand pit at the edge of the golf course. The yellow flowers of this non-native are very striking.

The day was somewhat overcast but we still saw quite a few butterflies, moths, dragonflies and damselflies. Barry Buddon is well worth a visit and I would recommend taking the opportunity of being able to spend time there on the Nature Open Days.

Barbara Hogarth.

12. Loch Watston SSSI

Sunday 22nd August

A small party gathered on one of the few warm days of the summer at Kilmadock Cemetery near Doune and walked through estate woodlands to Loch Watston and back along the edge of fields. The purpose of the trip was to record for the BSBI Local Change project tetrad NN70A but the Loch is a well known location for macrophytes. As with most recording of this nature a big effort was made to record everything and somewhat more time was spent looking at garden throw-outs than usual - but rules is rules! However this approach often turns up records which might otherwise have been overlooked or not bothered with. *Rumex sanguineus var viridis* (Wood dock), an uncommon species outwith the Clackmannan area, was picked up in the policies and later our resident *Fumaria* expert (Liz Lavery - having just been on a weeds workshop at the RBGE) confirmed *Fumaria muralis* (Common Ramping Fumitory) for us in the edge of a field.

Loch Watston SSSI itself was interesting without being spectacular. It is a very shallow loch and it was possible to wade out a reasonable distance even in wellies, treading carefully on the water lily rhizomes. *Carex disticha* (Brown Sedge) was relocated in two places, but the highlight for those interested in small green wet slimy plants was *Elatine hydropiper* (Eight-stamened Waterwort), a Red Data Book species which was very frequent in the shallows of the loch.

There are plenty of willows and poplars around the loch but the former proved very difficult and in most cases "oh it's probably a so-and-so hybrid" was as far as we got. Still it was a pleasant day and, thanks to Liz's unerring ability to find bridges in dense undergrowth, not as exhausting as it might have been.

NealeTaylor

13. Fungus Foray, Methven Wood.

Sunday, 26th September

Ed. writes: The leader, Keith Cohen, led a sizeable group of enthusiasts on a very pleasant autumn afternoon to visit this wonderful ancient woodland where fungi are abundant. He has provided an Excel spreadsheet of the Latin and English names of 65 fungi species that we saw in two main areas, North Lodge drive at Almondbank and Methven Wood itself, including a note of the habitat of each species. He has also sent an excellent photograph of an unidentified fascinating yellow earth tongue fungus from another locality as a .jpg file.

Regrettably the bulletin doesn't have the facility for reproducing a colour picture, and also I felt that the full species list would unbalance it. So if anyone would like to receive either or both items by email, please email a request to me at ret1@stir.ac.uk. Finally the book by Courtecuisse and Duhem was recommended as a good identification guide for fungi.