

LIVERPOOL BOTANICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN 101

JANUARY 1995

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INDOOR MEETINGS 1995/96

These are held at the Museum, William Brown Street at 19.30. Council meetings are at 19.00.

FEBRUARY 14th 1995 Dr J. Edmondson - Serpentine Flora.
MARCH 14th Miss V. Gordon - Spring Flowers of Western Australia.
OCTOBER 10th Mr G. Roberts - A Late Holocene Safari at Formby Point.
NOVEMBER 14th Holiday Exhibits 1995 - All members are invited to contribute.
DECEMBER 12th Dr P. Smith - The Origin of the Sefton Coastal Dune Flora.
JANUARY 9th 1996 Annual General Meeting and Résumé of 1995 Field Meetings. All members are invited to participate. Please contribute photographs, specimens or notes.
FEBRUARY 13th Prof R. Marrs - Heathlands - Future and Conservation.

FIELD MEETINGS 1995

APRIL 29th 1995 Gwersyllt. Leader: Miss V. Gordon.
09.11 train from Liverpool Central to West Kirby, alight at Bidston for the 09.32 train to Wrexham. Alight at Gwersyllt.
MAY 20th Ainsdale & Birkdale. Leader: Mr P. Rooney.
An N.W.N.U. Meeting. Meet at Ainsdale Station at 10.00.
JUNE 10th Risley Moss. Leader: Mr P. Gateley.
09.28 train from Liverpool Lime Street to Birchwood.
JULY 1st Leasowe/Wallasey. Leader: Dr K. Watson.
09.36 train from Liverpool Central to New Brighton. Alight at Grove Road.
JULY 22nd Hale to Speke/Garston. Leader: Miss J. Davis.
H26 bus from Hood Street Gyratory at 09.25. Alight at Hale Village.
AUGUST 12th Newton-le-Willows. Leader: Mrs P. Lockwood.
No. 34 bus from Liverpool Central Bus Station at 09.03 to Lowton Bulls Head.
AUGUST 26th Blackburn - Cherry Tree - Pleasington.
Leader: Miss M. Wilson.
08.50 train from Liverpool Lime Street, arrive Preston 09.48 for 10.12 train to Blackburn.
SEPTEMBER 16th Garston Docks area. Leader: Mr P. Gateley.
Meet at Garston Station at 10.00.
OCTOBER 7th Formby & Freshfield. Leader: Dr A. Gunn.
Meet at Formby Station (west side) at 10.00.

N.B. Members should please note that bus and train times for all the field trips should be verified on current time tables. Winter times only are available at the time of publication.
Food should be carried on field meetings.

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 1995 are due in January and should please send them to the Hon. Treasurer, otherwise it will be assumed that the membership is terminated.

Annual subscription rate: £1.50.

REPORTS OF FIELD MEETINGS 1994

APRIL 9th. LOGGERHEADS. Leader: Miss V. Gordon.

Despite last minute cancellation of the train connection for the Mold bus, 19 members eventually set off from Loggerheads along the Leete walk. Daphne laureola and Toothwort were seen in flower and spikes of Herb Paris were identified although the leaves were still unrolled. More widespread species included Wood Sorrel, Wood Anemone, Moschatel (Adoxa) and Wood Violets (Viola riviniana and V. reichenbachiana). It was curious to find a crustose lichen growing on the metalwork of an abandoned car.

MAY 7th. AINSDALE DUNES. Leader: Mrs P. Lockwood.

27 members enjoyed a lovely day in this good area. A wet slack proved breath-taking, having hundreds of Bogbean flowers (Menyanthes trifoliata). The following are a selection which were also worth noting: Stellaria pallida, Cerastium semidecandrum & C. diffusum, Vicia lathyroides, Listera ovata, Teesdalia nudicaulis, Myosotis ramosissima, Carlina vulgaris, Centaureum littorale, Pyrola rotundifolia, Saxifraga tridactylites, Juncus subnodulosus and the sedges, Carex acutiformis, C. flacca, C. disticha and C. arenaria.

MAY 21st. PARBOLD TO APPELEY BRIDGE. Leader: Mrs E.M. Stephenson.

From Parbold 13 members took field paths to Hunter's Hill, where the abandoned quarry yielded Salix repens, Epilobium brunnescens and Polytrichum juniperinum. At Harrock Hill we stopped for a windswept lunch, whilst admiring Ceratocarpus claviculata (Corydalis to most of us!) and Vaccinium myrtillus. In the distance we were just able to pick out "The Big One" overtopping Blackpool Tower, before we descended via Derry House and Boar's Den to Fairy Glen. Here we somehow missed Carex pendula but saw Saxifraga hirsuta flowering happily at the head of the waterfall. Whilst not condoning such introductions, one must admit the culprit chose a good spot where the plant has naturalised well. The flower of the day was one of the commonest - Hawthorn - brightening many of the hedgerows with its profuse blossoms.

JUNE 4th. MORETON TO WEST KIRBY. Leader: Dr K. Watson.

A large party walked from Moreton Station, where introduced Meadow Saxifrage (Saxifraga granulata) was found, past Hedgerow Cranesbill (Geranium pyrenaicum) to the pools at Leasowe Common, where Buttonweed (Cotula coronopifolia) was difficult to find this year. Pepper Saxifrage (Silaum silaus) was found, but the clovers were notable in the new sand pit on the common. Knotted Clover (Trifolium striatum), Slender Clover (T. micranthum), T. ornithopodioides and Bird's-foot (Ornithopus perpusillus) were present, although a search for the reported Subterranean Clover (T. subterraneum) was not successful. At the Meols

end of the common Hound's-tongue (Cynoglossum officinale), Sea Spurge (Euphorbia paralias) and Slender Thistle (Carduus tenuiflorus) were notable. After a longish walk along Meols promenade where a likely hybrid Ragwort (Senecio cineraria x jacobaea = S. x albescens) was found, the party proceeded to the Red Rocks reserve. The hybrid Horsetail (Equisetum hyemale x variegatum = E. x trachyodon) was flourishing along the boardwalk and Star-of-Bethlehem (Ornithogalum angustifolium), escaped Oriental Poppy (Papaver orientale), Portland Spurge (Euphorbia portlandica) and a Virginia-creeper were notable as the party continued to West Kirby at the end of a fine day.

JUNE 18th. BACKFORD Leader: Miss J. Bentley.

12 members walked the footpath from the old Mollington railway station site towards Capenhurst. The path was bright with Oxeye Daisies (Leucanthemum vulgare) and there were fine Teasels (Dipsacus fullonum). A very good scattering of Common Spotted Orchid (Dactylorhiza fuchsii) was noted, as also was evidence of Cowslips. Near the end Dyer's Greenweed (Genista tinctoria) and Hedgerow Cranesbill (Geranium pyrenaicum) had established well; and where limestone chippings had been laid, we found Purging Flax (Linum catharticum).

Returning towards Backford, the pond area produced Bog Stitchwort (Stellaria uliginosa), Marsh Thistle (Cirsium palustre) and Common Water Plantain (Alisma plantago-aquatica). Field pansy (Viola arvensis), Corn Spurrey (Spergula arvensis), Crosswort (Cruciata laevipes) and Scented Mayweed (Matricaria recutita) were also seen.

At the final location on the Shropshire Union Canal, dredging spoil had been thrown on to the bank and had given rise to a superabundance of Celery-leaved Buttercup (Ranunculus sceleratus). Marsh Yellowcress (Rorippa palustris), Brooklime (Veronica beccabunga), Hemlock Water Dropwort (Oenanthe crocata) and Great Water Dock (Rumex hydrolapathum) also appeared, and a pleasing sight in the meadows alongside was a successful emergence of Ragged Robin (Lychnis flos-cuculi).

JULY 2nd. FIDDLERS FERRY. Leader: Mr P. Gateley.

11 people gathered in the rain at the power station gates but once inside it stopped and the party proceeded along the eastern fenceline particularly noting the Yellow Vetchling (Lathyrus aphaca) and Salsify (Tragopogon porrifolius) in the disturbed vegetation. Rich aquatic and marginal vegetation along the canal and sparse ruderals along the railway were glimpsed from the bridge over to the settling lagoons. Little remains of the flora of the former Cuerdley Marsh, though some estuarine influence is still detectable with Saltmarsh Rush (Juncus gerardii), Sea Mayweed (Tripleurospermum maritimum) and Wild Celery (Apium graveolens) being noted. Four large settling lagoons now occupy the former saltmarsh, they were seen to be in various stages, from open water, wet slurry, completely full and dried-out and the dry PFA (pulverised fuel ash) partially excavated for re-use. There is very little marginal vegetation, though various wetland and ruderal species establish sparse communities once the settling process is complete. By contrast the high banks and the flat strips between the banks and along the railway/canal corridor held dense and diverse vegetation. Along the low flat area following the route of the Vyrnwy aquaduct colonies of three species of Marsh-Orchids were noted (Dactylorhiza incarnata, D. fuchsii, D. praetermissa), along with hybrids and Bee Orchids (Ophrys apifera) in fine flower. Along the rail edge Fragrant Orchid (Gymnadenia conopsea) is frequent and Creeping Willow (Salix repens) has become established. The party retraced steps to the entrance area but turned east towards the new visitor centre set in grassland with tree-planting and a pond well-stocked with many water plants and marginals. Thanks are due to John Hirst for arranging access into this secure site.

JULY 27th. DEE SHORE & NESS GARDENS. Leader: Miss M. Wilson.

From Neston we crossed the meadows down to the Dee Shore where the usual saltmarsh species were seen and the Wild Celery (Apium graveolens) was in flower. Uphill to Ness Gardens Geranium pyrenaicum was abundant in the hedge banks and in one place we saw Geranium rotundifolium (a rare species in our area) where it was first recorded over 100 years ago. A ramble around Ness Gardens, as always, produced much of interest.

AUGUST 13th. LITTLEBOROUGH. Leaders: Miss A. Franks & Miss P. Tolfree.

A cancelled train delayed the start of this meeting but eventually 17 members met in warm sunshine to follow the Ealees Brook down the valley towards Hollingworth Lake. A brief stop was made at a small reservoir to see Bogbean (Menyanthes trifoliata). Along the lanes and by the brook were Early Goldenrod (Solidago gigantea), Meadow Cranesbill (Geranium pratense), Monkeyflower (Mimulus guttatus), Skullcap (Scutellaria galericulata) and Wood Horsetail (Equisetum sylvaticum). Lesser Bulrush (Typha angustifolia), White Water-lily (Nymphaea alba) and Water Mint (Mentha aquatica) grew in a pond near the picnic site. From the lake the party walked across the fields to the Rochdale Canal, seeing on the way Slender St. John's Wort (Hypericum pulchrum), Pink Purslane (Claytonia sibirica) and Bay Willow (Salix pentandra). In recent years the canal has been "tidied" but still has Arrowhead (Sagittaria sagittifolia) near Clegg Hall Bridge. The area around Hollingworth Lake is a Country Park and there has been some planting of non-native trees and shrubs here and there. Two alien brambles were most striking: the white-stemmed Rubus cockburnianus and the scarlet-fruited R. tricolor, the latter planted for ground-cover - a job it does all too well.

SEPTEMBER 3rd. RIBBLE MARSHES. Leader: Mr P. Gateley.

Apart from taller vegetation along the very edge of Crossens Pool, below the pumping station, lush green grazed sward characterised the vegetation for the first part of the meeting. The cattle-grazed marsh stretches far to the north east, along the southern banks of the Ribble estuary. The most noticeable species in the short sward was the Field Mushroom (Agaricus campestris), many of which were collected. The green Rye Grass (Lolium perenne)-dominated carpet is relieved in places with damper hollows supporting species such as Spear-leaved Orache (Atriplex prostrata) and Sea Aster (Aster tripolium). Along the bank rounded clumps of Spiny Restharrow (Ononis spinosa) were found surviving the grazing regime. Further north still large areas of the marsh are fenced-off and very different vegetation communities are found, here various species such as Sea Aster, Sea Clubrush (Bolboschoenus maritimus), Sea Plantain (Plantago maritima) and Sea Arrowgrass (Triglochin maritimum) form dense stands in a diverse taller sward. After lunch in this area the differences between Purple Glasswort (Salicornia ramosissima) and Long-spiked Glasswort (S. dolichostachya) were demonstrated. Over the banks the flat reclaimed marsh is intensively farmed arable land with various species of field weeds, notably fine stands of Corn marigold (Chrysanthemum segetum). The party headed south along the disturbed verges of the coast road up to the sand-winning plant, from here the lorry track was followed out towards the sea. Here the saltmarsh community has become established much more recently and is an open ungrazed sward dominated by Sea Aster over much of the area but with many other species including Common Cord-grass (Spartina anglica), Saltmarsh Grass (Puccinellia maritima) and Glassworts.

OCTOBER 12th. CAERGWRLE. Leader: Mrs P. Lockwood.

12 members braved the wet weather and overcame travelling difficulties on the railway to meet at Caergwrle. Near the river we saw Festuca gigantea and Elymus caninus. Going up the hill towards the woods were Linaria repens and Tanacetum parthenium in good flower. Lunch was taken in a clearing by the woods, the rain easing off for us. Numerous fungi were seen: Honey Fungus (Armillaria mellea), Fly Agaric (Amanita muscaria), Brown Roll-rim (Paxillus involutus), Oyster Mushroom (Pleurotus ostreatus), Yellow Russula (Russula ochroleuca), Parasol Mushroom (Lepiota procera), Ugly Milk-cap (Lactarius turpis), Tawny Grisette (Amanita fulva), The Blusher (Amanita rubescens), Jew's Ear (Auricularia auricula-judae), Amethyst Deceiver (Laccaria amethystea), Bonnet Mycena (Mycena galericulata), Candle-snuff Fungus (Xylaria hypoxylon) and small Puffballs. Other flowers noted were Climbing Corydalis (Ceratocarpus claviculata), Common Cow-wheat (Melampyrum pratense) and Hedgerow Cranesbill (Geranium pyrenaicum). Many members nearing the end of the walk gathered blackberries and damsons which were in profusion.

REPORTS OF INDOOR MEETINGS 1994.

JANUARY. The A.G.M. was followed by a résumé of 1993 field meetings when slides recalled the places visited and plants seen.

FEBRUARY. Mr Douglas Lockwood gave a talk on the environmental work of the Merseyside Development Council. He gave the history of the organisation followed by slides illustrating various projects. These included The 1984 International Garden Festival, Albert and Brunswick Dock Developments and more recent work at Birkenhead and New Brighton.

MARCH. In the absence of the lecturer and at very short notice Dr John Edmondson showed slides taken during his visit to Japan for the Botanical Congress when extra time enabled him to visit Nature Reserves in the Northern Island of Hokkaido. Mr Peter Gateley showed a selection of slides which included local, highland and southern species.

OCTOBER. Dr Angus Gunn led a tour of the Museum's Botany Department collections and library. Many historical herbarium specimens were displayed including Rubus chamaemorus collected by Linnaeus. Rare books from the library and some of the 3,000 prints and drawings were also shown.

NOVEMBER. Holiday Exhibits. Mr Gateley's slides were taken at Loggerheads, Ness Gardens, Ben Lawers, Coire Fee and Wixall Moss. Miss Gordon's photographs were taken in Cyprus in March and Teneriffe in April.

DECEMBER. Miss Vera Gordon gave a talk on Spring Flowers in Morocco based on two trips there of 10 days each in 1992 and 1993 from Marrakesh to Agadir via the Atlas Mountains and desert areas.
