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**Contributions for the next issue by the end of March please!**

Contributions are welcomed as e-mail attachments to [patricia.francis@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.francis@bolton.gov.uk), or on disk, in most PC word processing formats (with a second file in rich text format \*.rtf) or in typescript from contributors who do not have a PC. Illustrations should, ideally, be produced on A4 paper with a margin of at least 2.5cm all round with 'oversized' lettering (14pt normal/body text, if typed) to allow for it to be photographically reduced to A5 (approx 70% reduction) and still be readable.

# BIOBLITZ IN CUERDEN VALLEY PARK

**David Beattie, Friends of Cuerden Valley Park**

On August 7, 2010, TV Naturalist Bill Oddie paid a visit to Cuerden Valley Park in Bamber Bridge to launch the Lancashire BioBlitz. Rochdale-born Bill was so happy with what he found he asked organisers to book him on a later train so he could stay a couple of hours longer!

What Bill found was a new phenomenon which swept the country and propagated an interest in biodiversity and, in particular, environmental recording in 2010. A Bioblitz is a 24-hour survey of biodiversity in a specific area, generally parks and nature reserves close to urban centres.

Over spring and summer BioBlitzes were held in Lancashire, West Lancashire, Manchester, London's Alexandra Palace Park, Bristol, Devon, East Devon, Plymbridge, Dorset, Cornwall, the New Forest, the Isle of Wight, Brighton, Kent, Cambridge, Leicester, Derby, Lincolnshire, Nottingham, Northumberland, the Cairngorms, Dundee, Fife, North Ayrshire, Swansea and Flintshire. The universities of Manchester, Exeter, East Anglia, London, West of England and Canterbury Christ Church also held events.

The Lancashire event was certainly one of the most successful with 70 naturalists and some 1,000 members of the public recording an astonishing total of 1,005 species of plants and animals.

The Lancashire Moth Group set traps on Friday, August 6, starting the ball rolling with more than 100 species ready to be recorded as the BioBlitz opened to the public at 10am on Saturday. Early discoveries included Mother of Pearl (*Pleuroptya ruralis*), Rosy Rustic (*Hydraecia micacea*), Common Lutestring (*Ochropacha duplaris*) and Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*).

Cuerden Valley Park was split into two main hubs for activities – The Barn and a specially erected BioVillage, in the picnic area. Cuerden Valley Park volunteers and rangers arrived early in the morning to set up the 14 gazebos for the BioVillage.

As soon as the gazebos were up local groups and organisations began to arrive to man their stalls – A Rocha UK, Butterfly Conservation, Chorley Natural History Society, GeoLancashire, Lancashire Badger Group, Lancashire Moth Group, North West Fungus Group, The Lancashire Wildlife Trust, The Environment Agency OPAL and the RSPB. St John Ambulance stood by for any emergencies and Sainsbury's provided food for volunteers.

Talks were held at the Barn where experts were also collating records and studying some of the specimens. However the BioVillage was the centre for involving children and parents in the hunt for species. At any one time groups of youngsters could be seen with nets in bushes and the River Lostock helping experts to seek out wildlife.

County Butterfly Recorder Laura Sivell took out groups on walks of exploration and came back with records including Green-Veined White (*Pieris napi*), Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*), Peacock (*Inachis io*) and Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas subsp. eleus*).

Jennifer Newton found Tent Spiders (*Pisaura mirabilis*) and Garden Orb-Web Spiders (*Araneus diadematus*) among others and botanists stood side-by-side with fungi and lichen experts.

Minibeasts, bugs and birds were the main targets for the BioVillage teams with Bill Oddie identifying a Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) for one enthusiastic youngster, to add to the RSPB list. Mini pond dips, face painting, a display by the Earthworm Research Group and a talk by GeoLancashire kept spirits high during rainy downpours.

The BioBlitz deliberately coincided with a survey at the park by the Cheshire Small Mammal Group adding Bank Voles (*Clethrionomys glareolus*), Field Voles (*Microtus agrestis*) and a Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) to the total which by 6pm stood at 700 species.

West Lancashire Bat Group's Charlie Liggett led a bat walk in the evening meeting South Lancashire Bat Group and their harp trap along the way. They detected Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), 45 Khz Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus 45kHz*) and 55 Khz Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus 55kHz*).

Five hardy souls stayed up throughout the night to continue recording and by 6am their numbers had increased as many naturalists returned for the final push. There was exciting news! Evidence of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) had been found in the north end of the park.

By 10am the species total stood at 805 species. Naturalists continued to hand in their records over the following week and the final tally was 1,005.

The initial aim of the Lancashire BioBlitz was to launch the Lancashire Environment Record Network, the local environmental records centre for the county, but there were many more benefits. It helped to get young people and their parents involved in the environment. It was a chance for them to get their hands dirty as they searched for mini-beasts and bugs and, while there is an educational message, these events help to take the fear out of science.

Mixing naturalists with young people is a good thing but the BioBlitz stressed the importance of local groups. There was a lot of activity around the various stalls and, hopefully, with similar events group memberships will increase with aspiring recorders of the future.

The BioBlitz provided valuable records for LERN and for Cuerden Valley Park helping to make comparisons with past records.

It was also great fun.

*The Lancashire Environment Record Network is seeking to share records through Partnership Agreements with local groups. It is the first local record centre for the county of Lancashire its main partners are the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Lancashire County Council, Natural England, the Environment Agency and GeoLancashire. Its website is [www.lancspartners.org/lern](http://www.lancspartners.org/lern) and it can be contacted at [lern@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:lern@lancashire.gov.uk)*

# SOCIETY DIARY

Please note that members of the Northwestern Naturalists' Union are welcome to attend the meetings of all the affiliated societies.

## ACCRINGTON NATURALISTS' AND ANTIQUARIANS' SOCIETY

Meetings start at 2.30 pm at Antley Methodists' Church Hall, Blackburn Road, Accrington. Enquiries 01254 381236 or 236076. Non-members welcome - £1.00 minimum lecture fee.

### **Sunday 20 February : Travel in the Great Rift Valley (Tanzania)**

Joan Vincent

### **Sunday 6 March : Exploring Antarctica by Boat, Ski and Dog-sleigh**

Neil Aitkenhead

### **Sunday 20 March : AGM and refreshments**

### **Sunday 10 April : Watching over the Regions Weather**

Alan Goodman (Met Office Advisor)

## ALTRINGHAM AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Except where otherwise stated, all meetings will be held at Bowdon Parish Centre, Stamford Road, Bowdon and will be timed approximately as follows : 7.30 pm informal gathering, 7.45pm lecture, 9.15 tea and chat.

All excursions leave from the public car-park, Cecil Road, Hale (behind supermarket) at the times indicated. If you intend to join the excursion please give three days notice to the leader. Food and drink for the day and suitable footwear are advisable.

### **Tuesday 8 February : Phil Newton Memorial Lecture: 'Butterflies of Manchester**

Peter Hardy

### **Tuesday 22 February : Illustrated lecture: 'Manx Natural History'**

Mike Taylor

### **Tuesday 8 March : Illustrated lecture: 'Wildflowers of Oregon & Northern California' - Sheena Hesketh**

### **Tuesday 22 March : ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**

With a short slide show to conclude the evening. Exhibits of Natural History are welcome. The supplementary Spring/Summer programme will be available at this meeting.

### **Tuesday 12 April : Illustrated lecture: 'A Ribble Estuary year'**

A film by Peter Guy. Please note that this event will start at the earlier time of 7:30pm

## LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are at 7.30pm, unless indicated and are at Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham

## **BLACKBURN & DISTRICT BIRD CLUB**

Indoor meetings are usually held on the first Monday of the month at St. Silas's Church Hall, Preston New Road, Blackburn at 7.30 pm. Outdoor meetings are held to observe and study birds in the field, and are usually led by a member of the committee.

## **CHESHIRE ACTIVE NATURALISTS**

Please note these events, and others listed on the website, are 'members only'.

Details of membership can be found on the web site at <http://www.cheshireactivenaturalists.org.uk/>

## **CHEADLE HULME & BRAMHALL NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Indoor meeting venue is at St. Michael's Church Hall, St. Michael's Avenue, Bramhall, Stockport, SK7 2PG at 7.30pm

**Thursday 17 February: AGM (7.15PM) Antipodean Adventures**

George Beaumont

**Thursday 3 March: Hot Pot Supper**

**Thursday 17 March : A World of Insects**

Tony Pioli

**Thursday 21 April : Hedges & Conservation**

Richard Parker

## **DERYSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

### **GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL RECORD CENTRE**

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Ryecroft Hall, Manchester Road, Audenshaw, Manchester, M34 5. Any queries contact: Suzanne Waymont on 0161 371 5834  
Email: [suzanne.waymont@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:suzanne.waymont@tameside.gov.uk)

## **LIVERPOOL BOTANICAL SOCIETY**

Indoor meetings are held in the Clore Natural History Centre, World Museum, Liverpool, starting at 11.00am.

**Saturday 12 February : AGM**

Followed by a resume of the 2010 field season

**Tuesday 15 March : A visit to the Botanical Material in the Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool**

2-4 pm Limit of 20 people, must book - Steve Cross (0151 478 4854)

**(Continued on page 14)**

# NWNU VASCULAR PLANT SECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2010

David Earl

The main activity during 2010 was the recording of vascular plants for the new BSBI data class 2010–2019. All of the 10km squares that are within vc59 were visited on at least one occasion and it proved possible to find over 25% of the previously recorded species total within each 10m square (see facing page - underlines are for ease of reading only).

The 60% threshold was exceeded for several 10km squares and for the very limited portion of SD53 that occurs within vc59 at Salmesbury over 70% of the previously recorded species total was exceeded. Note also that a number of new 10km records were obtained with 73 new records from the Clitheroe area SD74 where Sheila Wynne, Mike Wilcox, Sarah Gorman, Pete Bowdler and myself having carried out a significant amount of recording during 2010.

As is to be expected the Southport 10km square has the highest total for 2010 with 900 species having been recorded. Note also the high total of 628 species for SD52 to the south of Preston. This high total for SD52 was a result of a major event of 24 hour biological recording in August – **The Lancashire Bioblitz** held at Cuerden Country Park. The event was organised by Alan Wright of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and launched by one of Britain's best loved naturalists, Bill Oddie. The Lancashire Environmental Records Network **LERN** was also launched at this event. At the close of the Bioblitz over 1000 different types of plants and animals had been found within the Country Park. Videos of the event can be viewed on U Tube.

A further Bioblitz was also carried out by the **West Lancashire Wildlife Group at Edge Hill University** with the recording activity also contributing to the total of 504 vascular plants species for SD40 with finds that included Harebell (probably introduced) and *Hypericum humifusum* Trailing St. John's-wort.

The recording activity for 2010 also produced some exciting finds which include the first record since 1987 of *Scleranthus annuus* Annual Knawel in vc59. The Annual Knawel plants were discovered at Birkdale Common by Phil Smith. Another good find was that of *Monotropa hypopitys* Yellow Bird's-nest at Alkington Country Park, Middleton by Pete Bowdler where plants occur beneath willow scrub along the banks of the River Irk. There have also been some good finds by ecologists monitoring Biological Heritage Sites in Lancashire with Rebecca Stevens and Sarah Gorman finding a population of *Andromeda polifolia* Bog Rosemary on a mossland near Skelmersdale where the last record I have traced dates back in 1907.

This year the BSBI requested a Corn Marigold survey for an arable field site by Sniggery Wood, Little Crosby that was known to one of our former Liverpool Botanical Society recorders Sue Taylor. Plants of Corn Marigold still occur in the corner of the field by the woodland with several additional smaller populations occurring along the field margins between the woodland and Little Crosby village.

<b>10km</b>	<b>2010 Total</b>	<b>2009 Total</b>	<b>% pre 2010</b>	<b>Full Total</b>	<b>New</b>	<b>Quad</b>	<b>%</b>
SD31	900	1548	58.1	1593	45	NW	>50%
SD52	628	1089	57.7	1131	42	NW	>50%
SJ39	556	1388	40.1	1421	33	SW	>40%
SD41	529	1144	46.2	1161	17	NW	>40%
SJ48	527	1113	47.3	1154	41	SW	>40%
SD74	527	869	60.6	942	73	NE	>60%
SD30	516	1260	41.0	1276	16	NW	>40%
SD20	510	1263	40.4	1289	26	NW	>40%
SD40	504	1051	48.0	1093	42	NW	>40%
SJ69	478	1013	47.2	1038	25	SE	>40%
SD51	460	974	47.2	992	18	NW	>40%
SJ49	440	1071	41.1	1100	29	SW	>40%
SD50	429	1013	42.3	1026	13	NW	>40%
SD32	425	691	61.5	731	40	NW	>60%
SD42	424	866	49.0	902	36	NW	>40%
SJ59	423	1034	40.9	1054	20	SW	>40%
SD60	423	1096	38.6	1124	28	NE	>33%
SD73	384	988	38.9	1018	30	NE	>33%
SJ38	383	864	44.3	907	43	SW	>40%
SD62	380	1249	30.4	1266	17	NE	>25%
SJ58	377	822	45.9	846	24	SW	>40%
SD61	365	997	36.6	1019	22	NE	>33%
SD84	358	719	49.8	753	34	NE	>40%
SD94	341	492	69.3	544	52	NE	>60%
SD93	337	561	60.1	591	30	NE	>60%
SD72	330	968	34.1	981	13	NE	>33%
SJ89	319	1191	26.8	1206	15	SE	>25%
SD91	319	759	42.0	791	32	NE	>40%
SD83	306	958	31.9	966	8	NE	>25%
SD70	304	1175	25.9	1185	10	NE	>25%
SD63	294	766	38.4	777	11	NE	>33%
SD81	291	880	33.1	891	11	NE	>25%
SD80	291	1076	27.0	1085	9	NE	>25%
SD71	289	1043	27.7	1065	22	NE	>25%
SJ99	280	813	34.4	836	23	SE	>25%
SJ88	275	476	57.8	504	28	SE	>50%
SD90	273	868	31.5	880	12	NE	>25%
SJ79	270	928	29.1	939	11	SE	>25%
SD21	263	590	44.6	603	13	NW	>40%
SD82	261	871	30.0	891	20	NE	>25%
SJ68	258	698	37.0	719	21	SE	>33%
SD53	252	358	70.4	412	54	NW	>70%
SD92	250	511	48.9	537	26	NE	>40%

There has also been a considerable amount of activity linked to Biological Record Centres with large quantities of data having been validated for LERN and Biobank. Of particular note are the 20,000 + records of vascular plants donated to Biobank by Phil Smith.

The data held by the NWNNU, Biobank, LERN and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit is or will be used to develop list of local BAP species with assistance being provided by several of our knowledgeable local naturalists including Eric Greenwood and Peter Jepson.

Another initiative is that of the development of the Records@home project, based on the BSBI Herbarium@home project it is hoped that volunteers will be recruited to enter sets of data such as phase 1 target notes or digitally scanned species lists for sites or administration districts. Volunteers may be interested in a particular 10km square or administration area. This kind of activity is not new with the late Eric Kearns having carried out such work at Bolton Museum in the 1990's but nowadays the activity can be carried out at leisure within ones home.

The main activity for vc59 at the end of the year is that of updating the distribution maps for the electronic archive copy of the Flora. This was a major task for 2010 with the new recording data class having been introduced by the BSBI. Although our standard recording unit was that of the tetrad for the 1995-2005 flora with modern technology 1km records can be superimposed upon an underlying set of tetrad records. The latest set of maps follow that of the BSBI 10km mapping scheme with the exception of an additional date class from 1987 – 1994 (orange in colour) created to illustrate records made prior to the 1995-2005 flora. Examples of 1987 – 1994 records include the Phase Target Notes data and records for the Flora of Salford 1991-1992.

An example of the new distribution maps is presented opposite. Note also the underlying 10km square records which will assist with future recording/data entry activity for example can *Lycopus europaeus* be found in SD82 or can any historic records be traced?

Finally a task to be carried out before the 2010 version of the vc59 flora is archived is that of arranging the flora to the taxonomy of the New Flora of the British Isles Stace 3rd Ed. The 3rd Edition includes a great number of major revisions and we will have to consider whether we should incorporate such revisions to the South Lancashire Flora (1995-2005) at our next flora committee meeting.

## **IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR**

### **II**

**Please Read This!**

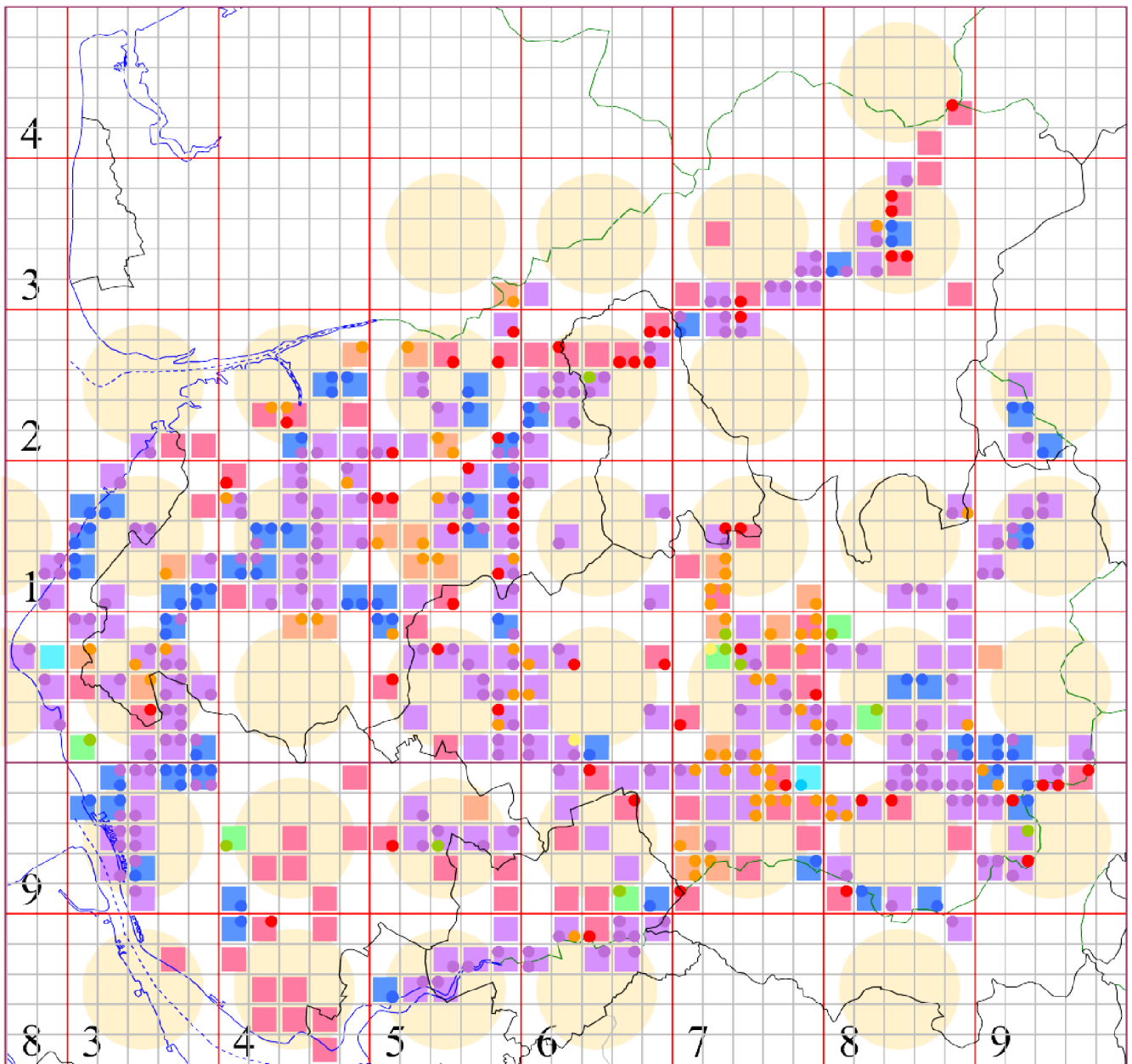
I can now pass on my new work contact details which are also to be found, as usual, on the inside front cover of this issue. If you wish to contact me during office hours please contact me at **Gallery Oldham, Greaves Street, OLDHAM, OL1 1AL**

**patricia.francis@oldham.gov.uk**

**Tel: 0161 770 4863**



## Lycopus europaeus (Gipsywort)



### **NOTICE FROM THE TREASURER**

**I will be resigning at the A.G.M. on 5 March 2011.**

**There are two aspects to the office: managing the finances of the Union and managing the insurance scheme which, without a replacement will cease to operate..**

**It is, therefore, essential that a successor is appointed.**

**If any member of the Union or of an affiliated society is prepared to volunteer for the office, please contact the Secretary (see inside front cover).**

# BRYOPHYTE & LICHEN SECTION REPORT 2010

Des Callaghan

**20 February 2010, Sankey Valley, South Lancashire** (SJ555952), John Lowell

In this visit to an ex-industrial area, now a “country park”, we did not expect to see a great many species or any particular rarities, but the area proved to be quite interesting thanks to two particular habitats. There were a range of epiphytes on stands of mature willows on wet ground, including *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Frullania dilatata*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum*, *Radula complanata*, *Metzgeria furcata* and *M. fruticulosa*. An old alkali tip, “Mucky Mountain”, though largely overgrown with tall herbs had many remaining sparsely vegetated areas in which we found a number of interesting calcicoles such as *Campyliadelphus chrysophyllus*, *Leiocolea turbinata* and a small patch of *Preissia quadrata*. Many tiny *Bryum*- and *Didymodon*-like plants were unidentified and we were overtaken by failing light; further species are undoubtedly there to be found.

**13 March 2010, Ruff Wood Biological Heritage Site, South Lancashire** (SD427074), Des Callaghan

The site is a small block of dry, acid, lowland mixed woodland, but an old quarry in the north of the wood provides some reasonable bryophyte habitat, where *Tetraphis pellucida*, *Calypogeia muelleriana*, *Orthodontium lineare* and *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans* were noticeably abundant on the sandstone exposures. Indeed, *Tetraphis* was seen in all of its pleasant states, including with gemmae cups, four-toothed sporophytes and spherical protonemal leaves (the

latter not often noticed in the field). The most significant difference between our day list for the wood (40 species) and that collected by John Lowell twelve years earlier (22 species) was the increase in epiphytes, with eleven additions (e.g. *Cololejeunea minutissima*, *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum* and *Zygodon conoideus*). After lunch we paid a brief visit to an adjacent stubble field across Ruff Lane and found a typical acidic ruderal flora, with species such as *Bryum rubens*, *Dicranella staphylina*, *Riccia sorocarpa*, *Ditrichum cylindricum* and *Tortula truncata*. The tarmac paths along Ruff Lane provided the most interesting finds of the day, with *Didymodon nicholsonii* and sizeable colonies of *Syntrichia latifolia*, both species naturally belonging to river-side habitat. The day total came to 57 species, of which seven were new for the SD40 hectad (*Cololejeunea minutissima*, *Didymodon nicholsonii*, *Isothecium myosuroides*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum*, *Schistidium crassipilum*, *Ulota bruchii* and *Zygodon conoideus*); not too bad for the barren agricultural lowlands of the Lancashire Plain.

**3 April 2010, Longshaw Estate, Derbyshire** (SK266800), Joan Egan

Nine members met at Fox House. The original intention had been to visit Burbage Moor along the Green Drive but a previous investigation of the area had revealed it to be devoid of bryological interest so it was decided to look at the Longshaw Estate. Leaving the road we ambled along a main track where we quickly recorded the expected species to be found growing in mixed acid woodland. The gritstone wall produced fertile *Homalothecium sericeum*, *Encalypta streptocarpa* and fertile *Tortula muralis* indicating the presence of some mortar in this dry stone wall or the more

alkaline composition of the gritstone. A tributary of Burbage Brook provided further species amongst which were *Hygrohypnum luridum*, *H. ochraceum*, *Racomitrium aciculare*, *R. affine* and *R. heterostichum* s.s (the latter two species being confirmed microscopically). *Sphagnum palustre*, *S. fimbriatum*, *S. subnitens* and *S. denticulatum* were recorded in a wet area together with *Aulacomnium palustre*. Epiphytic species were not well represented and were limited to *Dicranum tauricum*, *Orthotrichum affine*, *O. diaphanum*, *O. pulchellum* and *Metzgeria fruticulosa*. The total for the day was 67 species.

#### **8 May 2010, Township Plantation, Cumbria, Wendy Nelson.**

This surprisingly large site offered an interesting range of habitats, including mixed woodland, scrub, limestone pavement, calcareous grassland and some marshy hollows. The first hour or so was spent finding misplaced spray bottles and recording species that were encountered frequently throughout the day, such as *Eurhynchium crassinervium*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Fissidens dubius*, *Homalothecium sericeum*, *Neckera complanata*, *Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus* and *Schistidium crassipilum*. Some scrappy *Entodon concinnus* beside a dry track showed how easy it is to confuse this species with *Calliergonella cuspidata* when it is not growing at its full potential. A small patch of rabbit-grazed calcareous grassland provided *Dicranum bonjeanii*, *Rhytidium rugosum*, *Anomobryum concinatum* and a very northern outpost for *Pleurochaete squarrosa*. Somewhat surprisingly, an anthill within this area supported a couple of mosses usually encountered in more acidic conditions (*Archidium alternifolium* and *Ceratodon purpureus*). Later on in an old quarried area, a few shoots of a small *Bryum* that

looked like *B. elegans* (but without an excurrent nerve) was found in a limestone crevice, but the material was poor and was impossible to name satisfactorily. Nearby, some good cushions of *Tortella inclinata* were seen growing on thin skeletal soil and a *Schistidium* with very short hair-points and bright ferruginous leaves looked like something interesting, but proved only to be an odd form of the impressively variable *S. crassipilum*. Epiphytes were not impressive, though *Microlejeunea ulicina* was seen frequently. One of the more interesting finds of the day was only located in the final hour, when a patch of *Amblystegium confervoides* was discovered on shaded limestone pavement. This was only the second modern record for vc69 following its discovery at another site across the Lyth Valley earlier that day. In total, an impressive 93 species were recorded, including five that are nationally scarce (*Amblystegium confervoides*, *Anomobryum concinatum*, *Pleurochaete squarrosa*, *Rhytidium rugosum* and *Tortella inclinata*).

#### **5 June 2010, Sunnyhurst Wood and Earnsdale Reservoir, Lancashire, Martha Newton.**

A glorious summer day accompanied us during our recording in this woodland and wetland habitat on the western outskirts of The Pennines. As usual, it took some time to venture far from the carpark, during which we recorded many of the common species within the area plus a few less frequently encountered during the rest of the day (e.g. the epiphytes *Cryphaea heteromalla* and *Orthotrichum pulchellum*). A very dry gritstone wall along an unsurfaced track leading to the reservoir provided a fine-looking colony of *Racomitrium sudeticum* (only the fourth ever record from vc59) and some calci-

coles looking rather out-of-place, including patches of *Ctenidium molluscum* and *Encalypta streptocarpa*. After lunch we admired some good colonies of *Climacium dendroides* and *Sanionia uncinata* growing on the top of a grit-stone wall, before we ventured into the heat of the mid-day sun and inspected the exposed mud along the margin of Earnsdale Reservoir. A *Schistidium* growing on the concrete wall of the reservoir outflow looked interesting and proved to be *S. apocarpum* s.str., which appears to be a thinly distributed species in vc59. Abundant patches of ephemerals were present on the reservoir mud, much of which was frustratingly infertile. However, some fertile material was found, including *Aphanorhegma patens*, *Phascum cuspidatum*, *Pseudephemerum nitidum* and, the star find of the day, *Physcomitrium sphaericum*. This is a new site for the latter, which is a nationally scarce species of sporadic occurrence. The rest of the afternoon was spent recording through the valley of Sunnyhurst Wood, which didn't produce much of note. Just before departing for the carpark, a huge colony of *Microlejeunea ulicina* was found on the side of a Sycamore within the valley bottom. In total, 95 mosses and liverworts were recorded of which 10 were new for the SD62 hectad (*Aphanorhegma patens*, *Bryum pallens*, *Climacium dendroides*, *Cololejeunea minutissima*, *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Physcomitrium sphaericum*, *Racomitrium sudecticum*, *Sanionia uncinata*, *Schistidium apocarpum* s.str. and *Tortula acaulon* var. *acaulon*).

**17 July 2010, Yarrow Valley, Lancashire.**  
Leader: John Lowell.

An intermittently wet day was spent in this country park on the outskirts of Chorley. The site had been visited by John Lowell in 1998, when he recorded 48 species and

nothing of great note. We managed 79 species, but again nothing particularly special. *Conocephalum salebrosum* was found as was *Cololejeunea minutissima*, both being species with rather few records in the vice-county as yet. A small area of acidic wet woodland harboured a fine display of *Sphagnum squarrosum* carpets, along with *S. fallax*, *S. fimbriatum* and *S. subnitens* var. *subnitens*. A population of *Homalia trichomanoides* was also discovered, which appears to be a rather localised species in the vice-county. Five species were new for the SD51 hectad (*Cololejeunea minutissima*, *Conocephalum salebrosum*, *Homalia trichomanoides*, *Radula complanata* and *Zygodon conoideus*).

**7 August 2010, Rixton Clay Pits, Lancashire,** Des Callaghan.

A relatively large group of folk were drawn to this interesting site on the southern outskirts of the Lancashire Plain. Some recording of bryophytes had been undertaken previously by John Lowell (in 1997) and Audrey Locksley (in 1997 and 2000). Those surveys produced a combined list of 70 species from the site. Our day provided a list of 62 species, including 18 species new for the site. The morning was spent surveying an area of predominantly wet calcareous grassland and marsh that has developed at the base of a former quarry area, from where the last clay was extracted in 1965. *Calliergonella cuspidata* was present in luxuriant abundance, cloaking the ground over extensive areas to the expense of virtually any other bryophyte, with the notable exception of some strong colonies of *Climacium dendroides*. The afternoon included inspection of some areas of deciduous woodland on higher ground, where the now common-place *Orthotrichum pulchellum* was found along with various acidophiles typical of such

woodland (e.g. *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans*). A brief foray was made into a more recently active quarry, where the most unusual find of the day was *Aloina aloides*. This is a genuinely scarce species in vc59 and was found growing on calcareous spoil around SJ6879190547. Two species were new for the SJ69 hectad (*Brachythecium mildeanum* and *Aloina aloides*).

#### **4 September 2010, Upper Bradford Dale, Derbyshire, Martha Newton.**

We enjoyed a very nice day in this lovely little valley in the Dales, where a good range of calcicoles were found. One of the first mosses we came across was *Scleropodium cespitans* (the form that until recently was known as '*Brachythecium appleyardiae*'), which grew at the base of the shaded limestone cliffs as we entered the valley from Middleton village (around SK197632). *Fissidens gracilifolius*, with its wonderfully elongate perichaetial leaves, was common on the dry limestone rock, and a small colony of the Nationally Scarce *Amblystegium confervoides* was found on a shaded limestone boulder towards the valley bottom (at SK1989263350). Some good fruiting colonies of the tiny liverwort *Cephaloziella divaricata* were also found on a wall. The water levels of the pools in the valley were very low, where the exposed-mud supported a profusion of *Aphanorhegma patens* but no other mud-specialists of particular note. Some good colonies of *Fissidens crassipes* were found in the depths of an old stone sluice and plenty of *Schistidium crassipilum* was about, but it's much rarer close cousin *S. elegantulum* appeared to be absent. A careful search for the rare *Homomallium incurvatum* also proved fruitless, though one colony of *Amblystegium serpens* made a good impersonation of the plant on a limestone rock. The day ended

high up the valley side near to Moatlow Knob, where the beautiful *Nowellia curvifolia* lightened up an old rotten trunk. A total of 71 species were recorded in all.

#### **2 October 2010, Salthill Quarry, Clitheroe, John Lowell.**

The site is a group of disused quarries, a Lancashire Wildlife Trust reserve, with extensive areas of limestone grassland, rocky outcrops and woodland. The quarry floor had a variety of basophiles such as *Eurhynchium crassinervium*, *Fissidens dubius*, *Trichostomum crispulum* and *Campyliadelphus chrysophyllus*, plus quantities of the scarce *Didymodon acutus*, a new plant for most of us. As expected there was much *Ctenidium molluscum* and it was good to see abundant *Aloina aloides* on bare patches of banks. Epiphytes were a little restricted; there was abundant *Orthotrichum affine* and *Cryphaea heteromalla* but species such as *Orthotrichum pulchellum* and *Metzgeria violacea* which have become common in many areas were scarce. On the other hand, *Leskea polycarpa* was frequent on trees, perhaps reflecting ongoing quarrying activity nearby. The star find of the day was *Schistidium robustum* (new for vc59) from a limestone boulder near to the reserve entrance, followed closely by *Ditrichum flexicaule* (only one previous record for vc59, from 1865!). Five species were new for the SD74 hectad (*Cololejeunea minutissima*, *Ditrichum flexicaule*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum*, *Schistidium robustum* and *Zygodon conoideus*).

#### **6 November 2010, Healey Dell, Rochdale.**

A total of 64 species recorded, including *Colura calyptrifolia*.

#### **4 December 2010, Tom Wood, Charlesworth.**

Meeting postponed to 2011 due to snow and ice.

## **MANCHESTER FIELD CLUB**

Indoor Meetings are held at Sale United Reformed Church Hall, Montague Road, Sale, M33 3BU, near Sale Metro station, commencing 7.00pm. Free to members, visitors £2.00.

Walk organiser: Alan Hill, 15 Merston Drive, East Didsbury, M20 5NT. Tel: 0161 445 1535 Website: [www.manchesterfieldclub.org.uk](http://www.manchesterfieldclub.org.uk)

## **MANCHESTER MICROSCOPICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

All meetings are held in the Stopford Building (Medical School) University of Manchester M13 9PT, corner of Oxford Road and Aker Street (next to the Holy Name Church), Manchester, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. All are welcome – feel free to bring a friend or two. Non-members and members of other Societies are welcome. The Society's library will be available at all Stopford meetings and includes copies of our Newsletters and literature on microscopic history, as well as many books on microscopy and Natural History.

See also our Internet site at <http://www.manchestermicroscopical.org.uk>

## **NELSON NATURALIST SOCIETY**

All meetings are held at Christ Church, Carr Road, Nelson and start at 7.30pm.  
Enquiries: David Nelson 01282 863012

## **NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION - BRYOPHYTE AND LICHEN SECTION**

All meetings on Saturdays, starting at 10.30 am. Bring food and clothing adequate for a full day in rough country and bad weather. Please check with section secretary a day or so before the meeting, in case of cancellation or changes.

“Beginners” are welcome at ANY meeting.

## **PRESTON BIRD WATCHING AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Meetings at St. Mary's Church Hall, Cop Lane, Penwortham.

Further details from Steve Halliwell 01772 705468, [www.prestonsociety.co.uk](http://www.prestonsociety.co.uk)

## **ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY**

[www.rochdalefieldnaturalistssociety.co.uk](http://www.rochdalefieldnaturalistssociety.co.uk)

Indoor Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, September to April, at Cutgate Baptist Church, Edenfield Road, Rochdale. Enquiries: 01706 630707 and 814884. Charges: Members £1.00, Non-members £2.00.

All Excursions depart from the cul-de-sac at Manchester Road, Rochdale. Time: Coaches 0900hrs, Cars 1000hrs. Coaches return at 1700hrs except during the months of November, December, January and February when return is at 1600hrs.

Queries: Field excursions – contact Barbara Waddington on 01706 658260 / Coach bookings – contact Fred Royle on 01706 644394 Coach Price: Members £12, Non-members £14.

**Saturday 12 February : Leighton Moss RSPB Reserve, Silverdale – Coach Trip**  
P. & B. Waddington (Entrance fee)

**Saturday 26 February : Tandle Hill, Thornham – Car Trip**  
R. & P. Maddock

**Thursday, 10 March : Thomas Beaumont – Nature Photographer**  
An illustrated lecture by Michael Newton

**Saturday 12 March : Blacktoft Sands RSPB Reserve, Goole – Coach Trip**  
J. Taylor (Entrance fee)

**Saturday 26 March : Anglezarke, Chorley – Car Trip**  
F. Royle

**Thursday 14 April : Members Night (A selection of members' slides)**  
All welcome.

**Saturday 16 April : Brimham Rocks, Pateley Bridge, Yorks – Coach Trip**  
S. Allen and M. Colley

**Saturday 30 April : Elton Reservoir, Bury – Car Trip**  
P. Jackson

### **SADDLEWORTH NATURALISTS**

All events listed are indoor meetings held at 7.30pm at the Brownhill Visitors' Centre at Dobcross.

**Wednesday 9 February : The Rochdale Hedgehog Rescue Society**  
Sue Lewis

**Wednesday 9 March : My Wildest Dreams**  
Jane Downall

**Wednesday 13 April : Annual General Meeting**  
Plus members' digital pictures and light refreshments.

### **MANCHESTER AND NORTH MIDLANDS FERN GROUP**

Contact: Yvonne Golding, 7 Grange Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6NH  
01298 24588 Secretary@eBPS.org.uk

**Saturday & Sunday 5 - 6 March : *Polypodium* workshop** (Joint with Yorks Group)  
Malham Cove and University of Manchester. See all 3 *Polypodium* species and their hybrids! Bring your specimens for further examination in the lab. : Leader Bruce Brown (Malham) /Yvonne Golding (Manchester) Please book.

**Saturday 9 April : AGM and Indoor Spring Meeting**  
Hylands Hotel, Coventry : Leader: Matt Busby

**Saturday 21 May or 28 May : Wolfscote Dale**  
*Asplenium ceterach* monitoring and other limestone ferns and flowers : Leader Yvonne Golding

# MANCHESTER & NORTH MIDLANDS FERN & LYCOPHYTE SECTION REPORT 2010

Yvonne Golding

Members of the British Pteridological Society have been fern hunting in Britain since 1891 and although the Manchester Group has only been formed for just over a year it has been a very productive. Our first field meeting in late May to Chorlton Water Park, Manchester was led by local botanist Dave Bishop. We found 24 species of ferns and lycophytes on a two mile walk between Chorlton and Stretford. This is amazingly species rich and equals any fern-rich site in Britain. Of particular note is the healthy colony of Adder's tongue fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) on Chorlton Ees first reported from this area by Richard Buxton in his flora of 1849 and by Leo Grindon in his flora of 1859, and was then thought to have been lost until it was re-found by Dave in 1995. Another surprising find is a fine stand of Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) tucked away in a damp birch/willow copse. This stand, which has been monitored for the last 25 years, is threatened by the proposed extension of the metro-link. In another area of very dense and damp birch woodland we found Broad buckler fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*) and Narrow buckler fern (*Dryopteris carthusiana*) growing in close proximity; a plan for the future is to look for the hybrid *D. x deweveri*. Finally I cannot leave this site without mentioning that there are 4 horsetail species to be found here so another challenge will be to look for *Equisetum* hybrids.

In June we visited the magnificent Plantlife reserve of Deepdale in Derbyshire where we admired many of the limestone ferns including the beautiful limestone oak fern (*Gymnocarpium robertianum*) growing through a stand of lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*) and after a steep climb we found the last remaining plants of that strange fern moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*) growing amongst the mountain pansy (*Viola lutea*) and spring sandwort (*Minuartia rubella*). In the afternoon we walked up to Hob's House and searched for the rustyback fern (*Asplenium ceterach*) a single plant that had been found at this site a few years back but this was unsuccessful.

Rigid buckler fern (*D. mindshelkensis* = *Dryopteris submontana*) is a limestone rarity mostly confined to areas of limestone pavement in south Cumbria but it does occur at two sites in Derbyshire. One of our tasks in July 2010 was to monitor one of the sites on the Tissington Trail near Biggin. We were delighted to find that since the site was last monitored by the BPS in 1997 the numbers had increased from 11 to 16 plants or clumps. On our way back we were pleased to see a lovely stand of very tall twayblade (*Listera ovata*) which somehow we had overlooked. In the afternoon we explored little-known Bradford Dale finding 3 plants of soft shield fern (*Polystichum setiferum*) which is a new record, growing amongst a large stand of hard shield fern (*Polystichum aculeatum*) and the most magnificent specimens of hart's tongue ferns (*Asplenium scolopendrium*). We also stopped off to see the new record (found by Alan Willmot) of *Asplenium viride* (green spleenwort) in Cow Dale. We would urge all botanists to look out for this tiny fern which is on the edge of its range in Derbyshire.