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

Please do not throw your envelope away

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Contributions are welcomed as e-mail attachments (to 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.

The Life and Times of some Early Lancashire Botanists

A script edited by Wendy Atkinson of a talk by Eric Greenwood,
given to Liverpool Botanical Society

This article first appeared in *Parnassia* (2004), the newsletter of Liverpool Botanical Society and is reprinted with the author's permission.

The following is a discussion of the life and times of a group of north Lancashire botanists who contributed or should have contributed records of the Lancashire flora during the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Amongst the earliest botanists was Thomas Lawson (1630-1691), a Cumbrian schoolmaster.

In the first half of the 18th century there was little botanical activity in northern England except for the work of Richard Richardson (1663 - 1743) in Bradford. He was a correspondent of Lawson but had a wide circle of friends and correspondents. There is no doubt that this circle influenced the life of Dr John Fothergill (1712-1780), the well known medic and botanist who practiced in London but who maintained close connections with his family in Warrington.

James Jenkinson (1738-1808) who published *Generic and Specific Descriptions of British Plants* in 1775 was also a Quaker. He came from Yealand Conyers but went to London between 1764 and 1768. Here he would have met Dr John Fothergill and it was whilst he was in London that he made his first botanical records. His book

includes many records from the Yealand area made on his return from London.

James Jenkinson also knew the Crosfields from Kendal. He attended the same meetings as George Crosfield (1754 - 1820) at Lancaster, who, it is believed, took over (in partnership) Samuel (brother of Dr John) Fothergill's shop in Warrington. He may have met John Fothergill but it is known that he took an interest in the cultural life of the town. His business interests took him to Liverpool and back to Lancaster where he ran a sugar refinery. His son, George (1785 - 1847) followed his father in the family business but eventually moved to Liverpool. The Crosfield family were prominent in industry, commerce and public life. Both Crosfields contributed a few but valuable records from the Lancaster area through their herbarium specimens now at the Natural History Museum, London. The son also contributed many records for the Warrington area.

Most of the 18th and early 19th century records were made by Quakers and their circle (friends, relatives and business associates) and possible routes by which an interest in plants had passed along the generations was suggested. Most if not all were descended from yeomen farmers. Similarly another group of Lancashire yeomen were to

contribute significantly to an understanding of the Lancashire flora in the 1830s.

Samuel Simpson (1802 - 1881) made all his records in a short period around the 1830s. At that time he was secretary of the Lancaster Literary, Scientific and Natural History Society; local secretary of the Botanical Society of London and member of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh. His family were prominent Lancaster merchants (and amongst other things imported sugar probably for the Crosfields' refinery). He was well connected, as was his wife, Ann Atkinson. He was trained in Liverpool as a solicitor but from 1828 to 1844 practiced in Lancaster. In 1844 his father died, he got married and built a fine house, The Greaves, then on the outskirts of the city. He then changed career and became a vicar in the Isle of Man. Apart from two letters written on behalf of parishioners to Sir W.J. Hooker, Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew there is no further reference to botany. Some of his plants are at Oxford University and others are scattered in various herbaria but a more substantial number are in the Watson herbarium at Kew and substantiate records in *Topographical Botany*.

Samuel Simpson had a brother, Richard Salisbury Simpson (1810 - 1888) who had a distinguished army career in India and who sent plants to Kew. His sister, Mary Maria Simpson (1804 - 1895), was also a botanist and trained as a botanical artist in Liverpool. There she met her husband, Henry Borron Fielding (1805 - 1851) then training to be a solicitor.

There were complex legacies, partnerships and family relationships that gave rise to the calico printing firm, Henry Fielding Brothers at Catterall. The family originated as yeomen farmers in the Blackburn - Church area of Lancashire and under Henry Fielding the company prospered. He died in 1816 and when his only son came of age he inherited his father's wealth. In 1826 following his mother's death in 1824 he left the family home in Winckley Square, Preston, gave up training to be a solicitor and with his wife settled at Stodday Lodge south of Lancaster. Here they spent many years studying natural history living off the income from their estates. Stodday Lodge was however owned by Lawson Whalley, a prominent Lancaster doctor and Quaker related to the Crosfields. In a manuscript memoir of H.B. Fielding at Oxford University it is said that when he was shown a herbarium by a friend (was this George Crosfield?) he decided to make one of his own. At some stage he was introduced to the then Professor Hooker and spent a holiday with his family at his home in Glasgow in 1835. This friendship was probably important to Fielding who went on to form a large private collection. However a major project whilst at Stodday was the compilation of a manuscript English Flora. This consists of six volumes of paintings by Mrs Fielding with commentary by her husband. It makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Lancashire flora, especially around Lancaster, but only came to light recently and was purchased by the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

On her husband's wishes Mrs Fielding donated his herbarium to Oxford University where it forms part of the Fielding - Druce Herbarium. On her death in 1895 she left a legacy to the University of Oxford to be invested and the income to be used to pay part of the stipend of a curator for ever.

Finally there were the artisan naturalists of Preston who left no records but who may have used the Richard Shepherd Library that was also important to H.B. Fielding in his education.

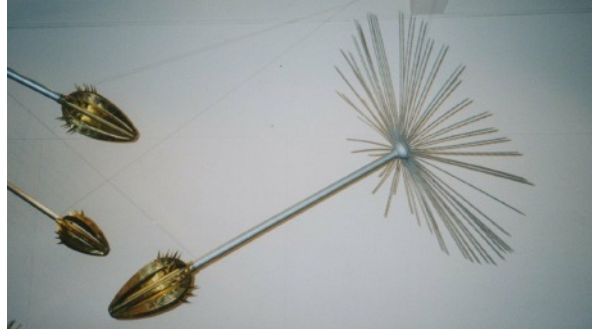
As with the Quakers the Simpsons and Fieldings had complex family and business relationships at a key time in British history and the development of the industrial revolution. It was a time when fortunes were lost as well as made. H.B. Fielding had no interest in the family firm and its bankruptcy in 1831 had no financial implications for him. Interestingly his interests and those of the Quakers coincided in Lancaster in the 1830s, a city that was a venue for several botanists from all over the country at that time.

Adventurous Wild Flowers

**Diana Downing, 33 Westhoughton
Road, Adlington, Chorley, PR7 4EU**

We all meet them — Chickweed on the way to the shops, Buddleia at Railway stations, Ivy-leaved Toadflax struggling by Hanging Ditch. In 2003 and 2004 these and nine other weeds were touring Art Galleries (of all places) thanks to Gallery Oldham and five artists demonstrating their Art and Sci-

ence. After enjoying the exhibition in Bolton (not least the metal sculptures of seed heads – see photograph), I followed up the research installation on one notable alien.



Dandelion seedhead by Ruth Moilliet

Dr. Alicia Prowse kindly sent details of recent research articles and her PhD on “Ecological effects of the invasion of native plant communities by the alien Himalayan Balsam.” This can be consulted at Bolton University and Manchester University libraries (check in advance the library rules). Of interest for north-western naturalists, the fieldwork was undertaken in the late 1990’s in the Bolton area, especially the Jumbles. The conclusions and guidelines for site managers include discussions of available evidence and comparison of effects on woodland and riparian habitats.

A reasoned approach rather than wholesale bashing?

Untold Treasures: The Manchester Museum Herbarium

Suzanne Grieve, The Herbarium, Manchester Museum

Located in the attics at the top of the museum, the Herbarium at The Manchester Museum is home to one of the largest and richest collections of plant specimens in the country. The collection comprises of approximately one million specimens and encompasses species from all around the world, a significant proportion of which are of cultivated origin. The collection is extraordinarily rich and of great historical and scientific interest. There are specimens collected by Charles Darwin during the voyage of the Beagle; specimens collected by Admiral Franklin's expeditions in search of the North West Passage and collections of the great Swedish naturalist Linnaeus. In particular, the 16,500 Richard Spruce (1817-1893) items (mostly Amazon and Andes hepatics) have a value far in excess of their number.

The Herbarium itself was founded in 1860 by the coalition of several major individual and corporate collections, in particular the two nineteenth century Manchester businessmen and amateur naturalists, Charles Bailey (1838-1924) and Cosmo Melvill (1845-1929). They were inspired by the original and substantial collections of the Manchester Natural History Society, and collaborated to collect and buy plant material from around the world, and arranged

for their final deposition at the Museum. Bailey and Melvill alone provided a wide range of plant collections unequalled by any but a few major national museums.

The museum also acquired a very special collection of plants, many cultivated, assembled by Leo Grindon (1818-1904). The Grindon collection is unique among herbaria as, filed alongside the plant specimens are huge numbers of newspaper cuttings, journal articles, botanical illustrations and pages from early horticultural books (some dating back to 1542). Grindon used this material to teach botany to the people of Manchester and the surrounding areas, and also to research his many books.



Leo Grindon

All of our specimens are pressed, dried and mounted on herbarium sheets and stored in special boxes. Each sheet is labelled with details as to when and where the item was collected and the name of the collector. The label also contains the name of the plant however, as many of the specimens are quite old, this information sometimes requires updating. The museum has recently embarked on a huge project to record all of this information onto an electronic database, linked to the museum's web site. This will make our collection not only more accessible and easier to use to but will allow us to supply valuable information to conservation and environmental agencies.

We feel that, at the moment, the collection is not as well known as it deserves to be and is not used as much as it could be. We would welcome and accommodate anybody with an interest in botany who would like to access our collection out of general interest or for research purposes. In addition, we appreciate that the members of North West Naturalists' Union have a great wealth of botanical knowledge and expertise, and would welcome any input into our collections from members, whether it be identifying, conserving or cataloguing our collection.

For further information or to arrange a visit please contact Leander Wolstenholme, Curator of Botany at:

leander.wolstenholme@manchester.ac.uk

or telephone 0161 275 2671

Urban Rabbits

**Patricia Francis, Bolton Museum,
Le Mans Crescent, Bolton, BL1 1SE**

In the last couple of years I have observed increasing numbers of wild rabbits just on the edge of Bolton Town Centre.

On work days I regularly park my car in a car-park on the edge of a small industrial estate (SD 723093) just east of the town centre and the Parish Church of St Peter's. One evening last summer (2004) a little later than normal I was walking across the tarmac of a by then rather quiet car park when an adult rabbit sped in front of me and then disappeared into thick municipal planting of cotoneaster. From then on I kept an eye out looking for others. A few days later I noticed rabbit droppings on the pavement outside the pub across the road from the car-park.

Some weeks later I had found the car-park full and had to park on the roadside a few hundred yards away beside a high fenced, locked compound (the former site of Haulgh School for anybody who knows Bolton) where new cars are stored prior to sale. Returning that evening on peering through the railings I was amazed to see a young rabbit hopping about and grazing under these cars.

I have seen rabbits on several occasions again this year (2005) with an even further extended range. They are now right across the industrial estate and I have seen a pair hopping across the tarmac parking for an MOT testing cen-

tre and into another high-fenced storage compound. They seem to be taking advantage of both the small areas of municipal grassland for feeding and using the dense shrubby areas for cover when disturbed. The later I leave work then the more likely I am to see them, obviously they are disturbed by the coming and going of people and traffic. The Blackburn to Bolton railway cuts across the town centre just above the car park and I surmise the rabbits have spread on to the car-park and industrial estate from there.

However on the evening of 13 March 2004 returning home at about 10.00 pm, not from work this time I hasten to add, I saw a small moving silhouette in my head-lights at our garden gate. It was a young rabbit munching the weeds by the fence. I presumed he was an escapee pet and decided to capture him for his own safety which I did (eventually) with the assistance of a redundant guinea-pig run. I popped him into an old hutch with a dish of muesli - the closest thing I had to rabbit food. I know all our neighbours very well and nobody had a rabbit so the next day I made an advertisement for our local supermarket's notice-board in the hope that somebody might claim him. Nobody did. I didn't make any immediate connection but he has the pelt of a wild rabbit. Later one evening at dusk that following summer my son observed two "wild rabbits" "playing" in the back street a few hundred yards away from our house which is on the east side of suburban Bolton but relatively close to the green belt between Bury and

Bolton. Were these some of "Peter's" relatives ? We have had our rabbit as a pet for almost two years now. The incidence of inter-breeding of wild rabbits with escaped pet rabbits is well known and probably also an issue to be considered in this case.

We all know how well the urban fox has fared but has anybody else observed urban rabbits ?

NORTH WESTERN
NATURALISTS UNION

Saturday 4 March 2006, 2.00pm
Annual General Meeting
World Museum, Liverpool.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2006 are now due. If you look at your current address label, you will note that the year for which you last paid follows your name. (Please ignore the figure in brackets, which indicates the number of copies that are sent to you.) If the figure on the current label is less than 2006 then would you please send the appropriate subscription to the Treasurer (see inside front cover) - e.g. if the figure is 2005, please send £5; if it is 2004, please send £10 etc.

Gift Aid

Please see page 12

SOCIETY DIARY

ACCRINGTON NATURALISTS AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Meetings start at 2.30 pm at Antley Methodists Church Hall, Blackburn Road, Accrington. Non-members welcome - £1.00 minimum lecture fee.

Sunday 5 February : The Magic of Swans

David Cummings

Sunday 18 February : New Zealand in Brief

Tom Barkley

Sunday 5 March : The Lost Gardens of Heligan

Donald Metcalf

Sunday 19 March : 50th Anniversary of Osprey at Loch Garten

Stewart Taylor (RSPB Loch Garten)

Sunday 2 April : From Birth to Death – Plant Names and Lore

Jack Smith

Sunday 23 April : Annual General Meeting

Slides and Exhibits welcome - refreshments

BOLTON FIELD NATURALISTS SOCIETY

Meetings are held in the Dido Suite, Albert Halls Complex, Civic Centre, Bolton from 7.15pm. Non-members welcome - £1.50 admission

Monday 6 February : Britain's Wildlife

Steve Garland

Monday 6 March : AGM and Members Evening

Monday 3 April : Bird Habitats of the Pennines and Scotland – sponsored by

Doris Critchley

Gordon Yates

NORTH WESTERN NATURALISTS UNION

Saturday 4 March 2006 : Annual General Meeting

2.00pm World Museum, Liverpool.

FYLDE NATURALISTS SOCIETY

Lectures are usually fortnightly from September to March and start at 7.30 pm at the Fylde Coast Alive Church Hall, Raikes Parade, Blackpool

Wednesday 8 February Farmers – A Strange Breed

Lorna Tyson

Wednesday 22 February : AGM and talk – South Africa part 2

Gerry Stephen

Saturday 25 February : Longridge Circular Coach Trip

Alan Hunter £5.50

Wednesday 8 March : Swifts in the Tower

Chris Hawkins

Saturday 11 March : Garstang Coach Trip

Lois Tetlow £4.50

Wednesday 22 March : Travels in China – plant hunting in the footsteps of Farrer and Wilson

Dr. Brian Barnes

Saturday 25 March : Silverdale Coach Trip

Gerry and Melody Stephen £5.50

Friday 12 May : 60th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

Stanley Park Café 7.00pm for 7.30pm

SADDLEWORTH NATURALISTS

Indoor meetings are at Brownhill Visitor Centre starting at 7.30 pm

Wednesday 8 February 2006 : Impressions of Equador

Peter Hill

Wednesday 8 March 2006 : Hedgehogs

Sue and Ken Lewis

Wednesday 12 April 2006 : Annual General Meeting

Election of officers, subscriptions due, light refreshments, raffle

NORTH WESTERN NATURALISTS UNION – BRYOPHYTE & LICHEN SECTION

(A list of meetings for the latter part of the year will be included in the next newsletter)

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

Section secretary : John Lowell tel. 0161 485 6892.

Saturday 18 February: Castlefield

Meet Castle St. (near Deansgate/Gmex stations in Manchester). A short meeting in city centre to be followed by a visit to the Bridgewater canal to see *Tortula freibergii*. Those coming by car may wish to park near Brooklands Metro Station (which is near the Tortula site) and travel to and from GMEX station by Metro. Leader Audrey Locksley.

Saturday 18 March:

Lindow Common & Saltersley Moss. Meet: car park opposite pub; SJ833814
Leader: Tony Smith.

Saturday 15 April: Musbury Brook.

Meet car park of Helmshore textile museum (on B6235) at SD778215.
Leaders A&N Bamforth.

Saturday 13 May: Brown Robin Reserve Grange.

Meet Cumbria Grand Hotel SD41707882 (drive entry is at SD41617833).
Leaders Jim Adams and Wendy Nelson. **MEET AT 11 am.**

ALTRINCHAM AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Tues 14 February: Mongolia - a land without fences

Illustrated lecture by Margaret Ledger

Tues 28 February: Ethiopian Highlands

Illustrated lecture by Mike Pettipher

Tues 14 March: A Night on the Tiles

Hilarious illustrated lecture by Jeff Clarke

Tues 28 March: AGM

With a short slide show to conclude the evening. Natural history exhibits welcomed. The supplementary programme of Tuesday evening walks will be issued at the meeting.

Tues 25 April: The Tittesworth Trail - a living landscape

Illustrated lecture by the Ranger, Chris Fry

Sat 6 May: Consall Nature Park, Staffordshire

A full day excursion to this beautiful River Churnet Valley leaving Cecil Road Car Park at 9.15 a.m. Contact Anne Mason 0161 980 8645. A moderate walk with some steps to climb and, hopefully, a ride on The Churnet Valley Railway

Tues 9 May: The Moral Dilemmas of a Tree Contractor

A thought provoking illustrated lecture by Chris Frankland

Sat 17 June: The Sefton Coast, Lancashire

A full day excursion in search of the plants of the sand dunes leaving Cecil Road Car Park at 9.15 a.m. Contact Mike Pettipher 0161 865 0118. An easy walk in an area of rich flora and fauna.

ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS SOCIETY

All excursions depart from the cul-de-sac at Manchester Road, coaches 9am, cars 10am. Coaches start the return journey at 5pm during BST, otherwise 4pm.

Saturday 11 February : Winterset Reservoir coach-trip

Sheila Carr & Bob Newing

Saturday 25 February : to be announced

Saturday 11 March : Loggerhead Valley coach-trip

Eileen & Derek Clutterbuck

Saturday 25 March : Barley car-trip

Fred Royle

Saturday 15 April : Levens coach-trip

Barbara & Pat Waddington

Saturday 29 April : Wigan Flashes car-trip

Jim Taylor

Saturday 13 May : Birches Valley, Rugeley coach-trip

Jim Taylor

Saturday 27 May : Norden car-trip

Kate Sutton & David Winnard

Saturday 10 June : YWT Potteric Carr coach-trip

Allan Cross

Saturday 24 June : Stannally Stones, Todmorden car-trip

Charles Flynn

NEW MILLS NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are at Sett Valley House starting at 7.30 pm

Outdoor meetings require a packed lunch unless a pub lunch is indicated. Unless indicated all field meetings start at 10.00 am at the Town Hall. Meetings graded * have at least part of the outing suitable for the less able, ** indicate an intermediate grade and *** indicate a walk requiring reasonable fitness..

Saturday 4 February : Ribble Estuary &*(birds)**

Mark Higginbottom

Friday 17 February : AGM and The Flora of Staffordshire

John Hawksford

Wednesday 22 February : TBA***

Mary Andrews

Thursday 16 March : Swine Sty***

Ron and Mary Weston

Friday 17 March : tba

Friday 21 April : Nature Conservation in Derbyshire

Steve Knell

Gift Aid

If you qualify (see page 16 of the last Newsletter), it will increase the Union's income if you complete the Gift Aid form that was sent to you or, if it is no longer available, if you send a note containing your full name and address and the statement "*I want all donations that I have made since 5 March 2005 and all donations in the future to be Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise.*"

For the avoidance of doubt, the Union does not, at any time have access to your tax records nor to information about your income if you complete a Gift Aid declaration.

