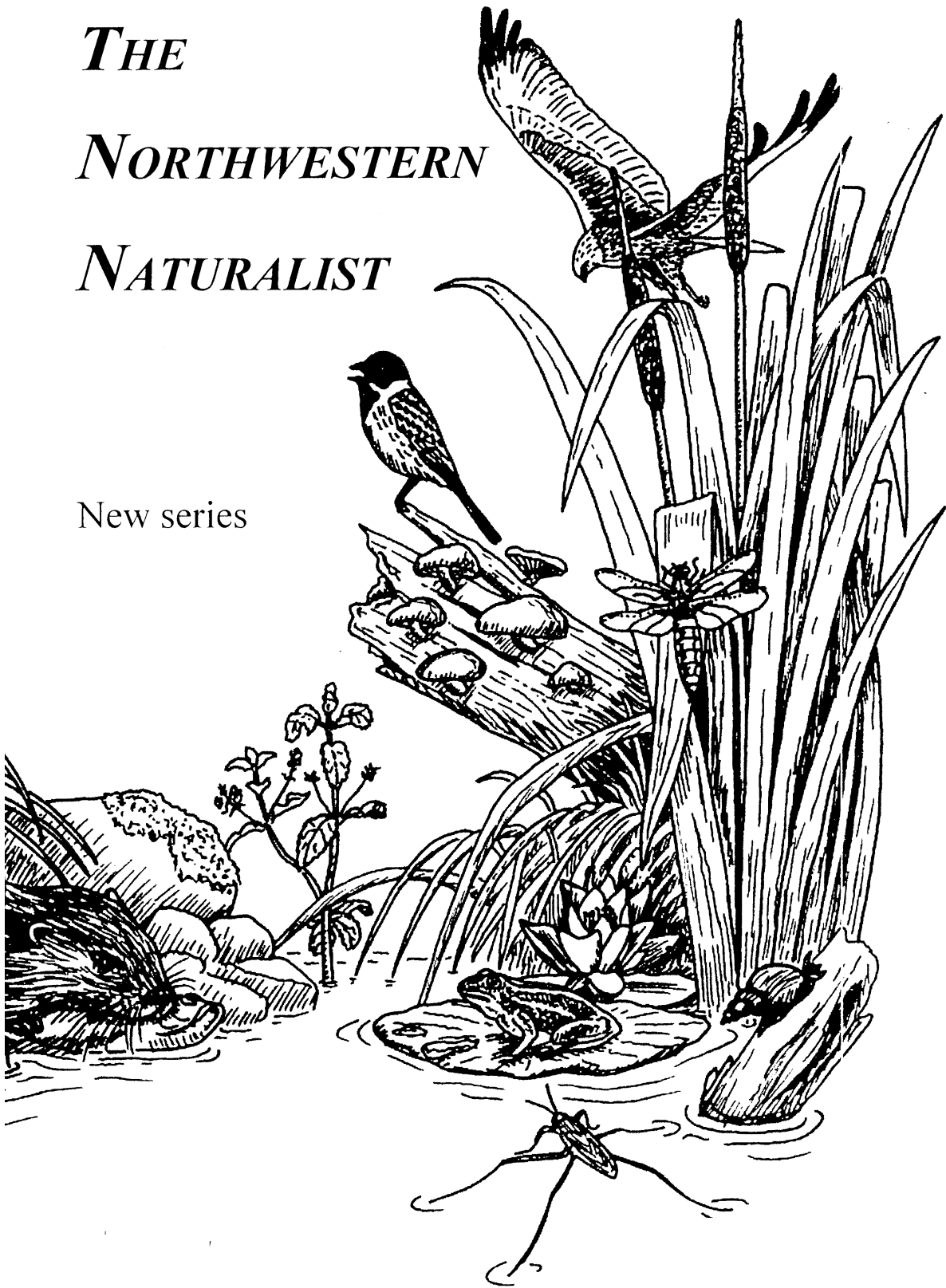


*THE  
NORTHWESTERN  
NATURALIST*

New series



Volume 21 No. 2 2020

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

## NORTH WESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION SAFETY CODE

The N.W.N.U. holds third party public liability insurance, which covers members and visitors attending official meetings of the N.W.N.U. and/or meetings of those Affiliated Societies which subscribe to the insurance scheme. The purpose of this code is to assist everyone in ensuring their own safety as well as that of others during meetings. In addition, leaders will draw the attention of members to known hazards of a site, and to this safety code.

### **Participation in meetings.**

1. Ensure that you are adequately clothed and equipped.
2. Never leave the main party without telling the leader of your plans.
3. Be alert to the hazards of the site and their potential danger, both to yourself and to others. For example, take care not to dislodge loose stones or boulders.
4. Do not rock-climb without experience and proper equipment.
5. Do not damage walls, fences, hedges, gates, *etc.*.

6. Leave gates open/shut as the party finds them.
7. Take care not to start a fire.
8. Familiarize yourself with the procedure to follow in the event of an accident in the field.

### **Clothing and equipment.**

Always carry wind- and water-proof outer clothing, and wear suitable footwear, *e.g.* walking boots or, in certain circumstances, wellingtons. All clothing should be suitable for the terrain and the worst potential weather. Carry sufficient food and drink for the excursion, with some extra in case of emergency. A first aid kit is also recommended. In exposed and/or high altitude areas, the following are necessary.

1. Spare layers in the form of warm sweaters.
2. Properly fitting walking or climbing boots with stout soles and with good grip, worn over comfortable, warm socks. Footwear should be waterproof, but wellingtons should not be worn in rocky terrain.
3. A small rucksack to carry spare clothing, including waterproofs.
4. A whistle, compass, maps, torch, first-aid kit. A hand-held GPS (global positioning system receiver) can be helpful, but is not a complete substitute for a compass in many types of terrain.
5. A survival bag or emergency blanket.

### **Procedure in the event of an accident in the field.**

First aid must be rendered at once, and medical and relief help should be sought if necessary. Prevention of exposure is almost always possible, through adequate clothing, equipment and procedure, but if a case is suspected, the initial treatment is additional warm clothing and a wind-proof and water-proof outer garment, plus ingestion of a source of rapidly absorbed food, such as sugar or glucose in solid or liquid form, but preferably hot liquid.

### **Ticks and Lyme Disease**

Please be aware that ticks in this area may be vectors for Lyme disease.

Help and information is available from the National Health Service

### **International distress code in mountains.**

SIX long light-flashes/blasts/shouts/waves in succession, repeated at one minute intervals

## **North West Naturalists' Union A.G.M**

**2.00 pm on Saturday 7 March 2020**

**Green Room, Bolton Library,**

**Le Mans Crescent, Bolton, BL1 1SE**

**After the AGM there will be a talk given by David Earl:**

**'A Tribute to some Contributors to the S. Lancs Flora Project (1995-2020)'**

# North Western Naturalists' Union: Bryophyte and Lichen Section Annual Report 2019

## Saturday 23rd February : Roddlesworth

Six members attended, meeting at the Ryal Fold visitor centre in excellent weather. We walked to the west through mixed woodland, finding good acid woodland communities: in particular large patches of *Plagiothecium undulatum* as well as *Atrichum undulatum*, *Mnium hornum*, *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans* etc. Epiphytes were not luxurious but we recorded *Orthotrichum affine*, *O. stramineum*, *Ulota bruchii*, *U. crispa* sl., *U. phyllantha*, *Zygodon conoidius*, *Frullania dilatata* and *Radula complanata*. *Nowellia curvifolia* was present in abundance on old logs, accompanied at times by *Cephalozia bicuspidata* and *Tetraxis pellucida*. One colony of *Tetraxis* was in early fruit, with mitriform calyptrae reminiscent of *Racomitrium* spp. The lanceolate leaves (as opposed to shortly ovate) were novel to all of us and the plants were not at first recognised. We also had problems with a clump of *Polytichum* on account of the quite variable leaf bases but later sections definitively indicated *P. commune*. Rocky streams harboured *Dichodontium pellucidum*, *Scapania undulata*, *Chiloscyphus polyanthos* and *Brachythecium plumosum*. We were particularly pleased to see *Discelium nudum* abundant on a clay bank near the reservoir, sixty-nine species were recorded. JL.

## Saturday 14th September : Eaves Wood, Silverdale

On a dry, sunny day, Clare Shaw led this meeting which was also attended by John Lowell and Phil James.

Eaves Wood is a fellside woodland within the National Trust's "Arnside and Silverdale" estate. The wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is situated north of Silverdale and occupies a Carboniferous limestone hill with numerous outcrops and some areas of limestone pavement. The limestone reaches a height of 84 metres, its shallow soils supporting a lime-loving vegetation. The wood consists mainly of hazel-ash woodland with some small areas of upland sessile oak woodland and sessile oak-ash-lime woodland. The site is noted for the richness and diversity of its rare and uncommon herbaceous plants.

Recording was conducted within monad SD4676, a short walk from the car park. After a period of dry weather, it was clear that the bryophytes would be in a desiccated state. For instance, the abundant *Thamnobryum alopecurum*, which clothes much of the outcropping limestone, did not exhibit its dendritic shape until sprayed.

A shaded limestone outcrop with a good growth of *Marchesinia mackaii* was particularly pleasing, as was a verdant dry-stone wall festooned with numerous species including *Plagiomnium undulatum*, *Neckera complanata*, *Neckera crispa* and *Fissidens* species.

A good list of 52 species was compiled, of which 43 were mosses and 9 were liverworts. Determined by John Lowell, the uncommon *Tortella inclinata* was a notable find. Given the reasonably diverse nature of the woodland, it was surprising that no *Orthotrichum* species were recorded. Also, a small patch of *Ulota bruchii* was the only example of that genus.

Recording ended just over the county border in Westmorland, vc69, in an area of limestone pavement where the attractively prostrate *Homalothecium lutescens* shone brightly in the afternoon sun.

Thanks are due to Clare for her local knowledge and her kind, careful and able leadership and to John Lowell for travelling so far to lend his valuable and appreciated expertise.

### **Saturday 19th October : Mytholm Mill, Dobcross**

Members met at the Newbank Garden Centre at Dobcross, near Uppermill, Saddleworth. The word Mytholm conveys the convergence of rivers and indeed the now demolished mill stood at the confluence of the River Tame and Diggle Brook, the humid environment being further enhanced by the Huddersfield Narrow Canal passing beside Diggle Brook. Members attending were Norman Bamforth, Mike Canaway (leader), Ken Gartside, Gordon Haycock and John Lowell. We first inspected the area between the River Tame and the stone buttresses of the disused railway line above, which had impressive colonies of bryophytes, including a massive colony of *Fissidens* on one of the buttresses. We explored the area around the old mill and the adjacent river and our timing coincided with the production of the fruiting bodies of a number of interesting fungi which were duly photographed by Ken. We then crossed over the bridge to briefly view the Huddersfield Narrow Canal picking up a few more species such as *Grimmia pulvinata* on the wall and whilst there spotted numerous Black Spleenwort plants growing on the wall beside the canal towpath. Returning across the canal we headed up to Ladcastle Road where there were further large banks of mosses along the roadside, leading up to the bridge above the road for the disused Delph Donkey railway line, now converted into a bridleway and popular with walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers. The Delph Donkey was so-named because in the early days it did not have a steam locomotive and the first trains there were pulled by horses. Entering the old railway line we continued our recording with occasional forays into woodland and a streamside copse to investigate promising areas. The habitat either side of the disused railway track is mainly secondary woodland with a good development of both epiphytic and terrestrial bryophytes. Eventually we reached a point where we felt we should turn back and, rather than retracing all of our route, descended a flight of stone steps to return via Ladcastle Road which had interesting walls mainly shaded by trees where there was a good growth of bryophytes, including a nice colony of *Racomitrium fasciculare* just before reaching the entrance to the Delph Donkey again, and then returning to the car park. Thanks to John Lowell for his meticulous recording and the production of the list for the day of 64 mosses and liverworts.

### **Saturday 9th November : Cosh Beck and Foxup Beck, Littondale**

Despite the dire weather forecast the weather on the day was not bad at all and it turned out to be a good recording day. Concentrating in the remote, under-recorded tetrads with few records a total of 132 new bryophyte records were collected. A number of species were confirmed microscopically afterwards. This is a fascinating location geologically speaking with limestone crags, swallow holes and flushes and becks regularly sinking underground and issuing forth in unexpected places. In addition there is plenty of

gritstone, acid flushes and blanket bog, so plenty of habitat variety. With the exception of two small conifer plantations, trees are notably scarce which limits opportunity for epiphytes. Seven species of *Sphagnum* were recorded, including *S. papillosum* cheek by jowl with strict calcicoles such as *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Scorpidium cossonii* and *Scapania aspera*. Both *Mnium stellare* and *M. thomsonii* were recorded along with the enigmatic fuzzy liverwort *Apometzgeria pubescens*. Finishing in the gathering gloom of a November afternoon, the day proved to be a valuable day of recording plugging a gap in our knowledge of Littondale's bryophytes.

**Norman Bamforth**

## Edinburgh Excursions

After reading the article in the last issue of the *Northwestern Naturalist* (21.1) about Nantwich Natural History Society written by Bob Anderson, Sarah Adamson of the Edinburgh Natural History felt inspired enough to get in contact and make an offer to our membership:

The members of Edinburgh Natural History Society would be delighted to see members of The North Western Naturalists' Union at any of their indoor or outdoor events which can be found on our website [www.edinburghnaturalhistorysociety.org.uk](http://www.edinburghnaturalhistorysociety.org.uk)

## North Western Naturalists' Union Manchester and North Midlands Fern Group Section Report 2019

The fern group held six meetings in 2019: (1) Gallery Oldham; (2) Broadbottom Fernery; (3) Deepdale, White Peak; (4) Greenfield, Saddleworth; (5) Tissington trail; (6) Jodrell Bank.

### (1) Gallery Oldham, Wednesday 6 March

Patricia Francis had kindly invited the group to view the collection of herbarium material of ferns, horsetails and clubmosses collected by Oldham naturalists as well as other exhibits e.g. fossil ferns. Some of this material had been collected locally while others were from botanical hotspots such as Ben Lawers and one collection from as far away as New Zealand. Members spent an interesting morning going through all these before adjourning to the excellent café and viewing the art exhibition in progress at the time. Many thanks to Patricia.

### (2) Broadbottom Fernery, Wednesday 22 May

This was a re-visit to Broadbottom Fernery, details of which were given in last year's report. Alison Evans was the leader and wrote: an enormous amount of work has gone on at the fernery since our visit last September. The area beyond the first part of the fernery has been cleared and landscaped, creating many new planting areas. A new retaining wall on the river side of the plot already looks like it has been there for years,

and has some small wall ferns in it. After a tour of the site and some discussion as to what ferns would do well in each section, Henry and Alison got to work planting – the easy part really! We were delighted to see John and Anne Grue, who came for a tour of the fernery and a chat with the volunteers, before joining us in the garden centre café for lunch. After lunch, we planted the remaining ferns, but there are still plenty of spaces to fill. I think we'll be going back.

### **(3) Deepdale, Saturday 8 June**

Led by Henry Folkard with the forecast of bad weather Henry deferred the meeting start time to pub-opening i.e. 11 a.m. We duly met at the Cock and Pullet at Sheldon village and went in for a drink – I wish all field meetings started like this – I should add the drinks were mostly hot ones. After duly being warmed up Henry led us to a footpath leading from the village towards Great Shacklow Wood and thence towards Deepdale. The woodland contained many indigenous ferns including the limestone-loving Hard Shield-fern (*Polystichum aculeatum*) and Brittle Bladder-fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*). Eventually scaling one of the steep sides of the Dale we returned to the village along another footpath. Overall it was a good use of an unpromising day as far as the weather was concerned.

### **(4) Greenfield, Saddleworth, Saturday 6 July**

Greenfield is particularly well endowed with ferns and this was slotted as a training day for anyone who wanted to improve their identification skills for ferns and horsetails. Initially concentrating on the area around Friezland Riding arena where there is a good range of native ferns and no fewer than 3 species of horsetails providing good comparisons for identification purposes. Then taking a footpath up near Dacres for a few more ferns including Lemon-scented fern (*Oreopteris limbosperma*). After returning to Manchester Road we headed down the bridleway towards Mossley for further ferns including a nice colony of Black Spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*) on the walls of the disused railway.

### **(5) Tissington Trail, Derbyshire, *Dryopteris submontana* monitoring, Saturday 27 July**

*Dryopteris submontana* (Rigid Buckler-fern) is almost completely confined, in Britain, to limestone habitats in the Yorkshire Dales and South Cumbria where it can, on occasion, reach a dominant status. However, there are small outlying populations in Wales and Derbyshire. One of these populations lies on the Tissington trail which follows the line of a disused railway that runs for 13 miles from Parsley Hay in the North to Ashbourne at its southern point. Some of the cuttings provide ideal habitats for fern growth and it is in one of these that there is a small *D. submontana* population. In view of its local rarity and small population size one of the aims of the group is to monitor this periodically. Meeting at the layby-style parking area at SK156563 on the A515 Buxton Road, south of Newhaven, leader Alison Evans gave an introduction to the day before we crossed the busy road to the entrance of the Tissington trail, nearly opposite, and headed in a north-westerly direction. First of all, we noticed many plants of Male-fern (*D. filix-mas*) scattered along the trail and on adjacent limestone cliffs and shortly after this

it began to rain heavily and with dense, low cloud and cliffs both sides our GPS readings become inaccurate and notebooks got wet. That said we reached the *D. submontana* population with a good plant in a limestone crack and two new plants nearby. One plant on the opposite side that had been recorded previously had become overgrown with ivy. However, we did see Borrer's Male-fern (*D. borneri*) and Rustyback (*Asplenium ceterach*), as a new record for the site. After spending some time looking for any further plants we returned to the starting point, now drenched, and went to a pub for refreshments only to find that we had coincided with a massive charity walk which meant progress of any sort was exceedingly slow. Hopefully we can re-visit in better weather conditions.

#### **(6) Fern planting at Jodrell Bank, Cheshire, Wednesday 25 September**

Leader Yvonne Golding had initiated the group's connection with Jodrell Bank back in 2012. She writes: at the invitation of Head Gardener, Becky Burns, along with Jodrell volunteer gardeners, we started a small fern garden with spare ferns that BPS (British Pteridological Society) members donated. In 2017 we visited again and expanded the fern bed using ferns purchased with a small BPS grant from Neil Timm's fern nursery. On our third visit in 2019 we assessed our original planting to see what had survived and what had done well. Being open daily and with occasional concerts we found that the areas next to the path was heavily trampled but the ferns on the small stumperies we had built and near the back of the border had stood up better. So, our next plan of action was to plant very large robust specimens including native *Polystichum* and *Dryopteris*, which were rescued from a now defunct bed at Thwaite Botanic Garden, near to the back of the border. Keeping the path area clear, we planted other ferns in groups and added suitable smaller ferns to the stumpery. We will return next year to see how this has worked. Becky has organised a permanent display board (which has survived well) about the fern bed on the site advertising the contribution from the BPS.

In addition to the stumpery bed we also helped to clear a good area on the banks of a nearby pond. This also involved the removal of a small tree! On our last visit we had noticed that a large Royal Fern (*Osmunda*) was well established by this pond. Coincidentally Matt Busby had kindly donated some large Royal Ferns for planting at Thwaite. These were split and some were planted on our cleared bank at Jodrell. They looked really good in their new home and will be admired everyday by visitors passing on a nearby path. To protect the new planting (and to stop folk jumping in the pond!) a 'dead hedge' was constructed using the dead tree and all the vegetation we stripped from the pond side. Many thanks go to BPS members Alison Evans; Henry Folkard; Mike Canaway and Roland Ennos; Becky and Phil from Jodrell plus their team of volunteers and to Matt for this generous gift. This was a most satisfying and rewarding day.

**Mike Canaway**



# North Western Naturalists' Union

## Vascular Plant Section Annual Report 2019

2019 was the last year of recording for the South Lancashire Flora and for the BSBI Atlas 2020 project and some effort was made attempting to find species that have not been recorded within 10km squares since 2000. In general, there has been a significant decline of vulnerable native species and often a rapid increase of invasive species.

The most noteworthy find was probably Moonwort (growing with Adder's-tongue) during a Bioblitz at Holcombe. This may be the only site for Moonwort in Greater Manchester, plants were known at Blackstone Edge and there are sites close by to Greater Manchester at Belmont, Lancashire and Raworth, Derbyshire. We have also been informed that Moonwort still occurs at Warton Crag.

Two invasive plants that have spread rapidly along the canal systems are Floating Pennywort and Orange Balsam. A considerable effort was made to record these two species during 2019 and the results can be seen by viewing the distributions maps on the BSBI website and several images can also be seen on iNaturalist.

Now that the majority of vascular plant records have been provided to the BSBI for Atlas 2020 much work was carried out in the winter of 2019 verifying the associated records as well as records held by the local environmental record centres, iRecord and iNaturalist. Such work will continue during 2020.

Do have a look at the iNaturalist website where numerous records often with associated images from throughout the world can be viewed. During April 2019 there were City Nature Challenges with records submitted for the Liverpool and Manchester areas and there have been Green Space projects running throughout the year covering numerous parks especially about Liverpool. Recently several projects have been added to iNaturalist including the Lancashire City Nature Challenge (for 2020), Lancashire Invasive Non-native Species and Lancashire Key Species (developed by Nik Bruce, Steve McWilliam and David Earl) as well as a project covering Rubus of Britain and Ireland (developed by Steve McWilliam and David Earl).

Sadly two of our local botanists Alan Bamforth and Pete Bowdler passed away during 2019. A tribute to Alan, Pete and a number of botanists who contributed to the South Lancashire Flora Project will be the theme of the illustrated talk at our March 2020 AGM.

**David Earl**

# 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. Non-members welcome - £2.00 minimum lecture fee.

## **ALTRINCHAM AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

The indoor meetings are held at Jubilee Community Centre, The Firs, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 2TQ at 7.30pm. Excursions leave from the Jubilee Centre car park at 6.30pm, or meet at the venue itself. Entrance charges: £2.00 members, £3.50 guests. Please contact us at least 3 days in advance if you wish to attend any of the excursions.

<http://www.altnats.org.uk>, [info@altnats.org.uk](mailto:info@altnats.org.uk), 0161 865 0118

## **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**

To find out more information about how to join Cheshire Active Naturalists visit [www.cheshireactivenaturalists.org.uk](http://www.cheshireactivenaturalists.org.uk) or email Martyn at [Martyn@czd.org.uk](mailto:Martyn@czd.org.uk)

## **CHORLEY AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Meetings September - April St Mary's Parish Centre Chorley.

See [www.chorleynats.org.uk](http://www.chorleynats.org.uk) for details or contact Paul Brennan, 14 Merton Grove, Chorley, PR6 8UR

## **GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL RECORD CENTRE**

Any queries contact: Steve Atkins. Local Record Centre Development Officer  
email: [Stephen.atkins@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.atkins@tameside.gov.uk) mobile 07792 041 528

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Council Offices, Clarence Arcade, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside, OL6 7PT Tel: 0161 342 4409

## **DERYSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

## **LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

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

### **LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST : CROAL-IRWELL GROUP**

Indoor meetings are at the Creative Living Centre, 1A Rectory Lane, Prestwich, M25 1BP (on the opposite side of the car park from Prestwich Library) on the first Wednesday of the month, at 7.30pm. Admission and refreshments by £4 donation. Monthly field trips on Sundays start at 10.30 am. Details of these at the indoor meetings or from listed telephone numbers. Programme may be subject to change; please check before setting out. Stephen Harris Mob: 07831 627208, Work: 0845 458 6680

### **LEIGH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Indoor meetings are in the Derby Room at Leigh Library. There is ample free parking in the car park next to the Library (but please note that you do park at your own risk). Meetings are on Fridays at 7:15pm for a 7:30pm start. Everyone is welcome free of charge but a small donation to our funds from non-members would be gratefully accepted. A varied programme of speakers and slideshows on wildlife subjects is organised, commencing in September running through to May each year.

For all up-to-date information visit our website [www.leighos.org.uk](http://www.leighos.org.uk).

### **MACCLESFIELD & DISTRICT FIELD CLUB**

Indoor meetings commence at 7.30pm at the Salvation Army Hall, Roe Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6PH, [maccfieldclub.org.uk](http://maccfieldclub.org.uk).

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

All meetings at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

Field meetings organiser : Mike Canaway [mikecanaway@gmail.com](mailto:mikecanaway@gmail.com)

### **LIVERPOOL BOTANICAL SOCIETY**

Indoor meetings are held in the Clore Natural History Centre, World Museum, Liverpool, starting at 11.00am. Unless otherwise stated field meetings begin at 10.30am.

**Saturday 14 March : Urban plants of Waterloo - Steve Cross**

### **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. Members £1.00, visitors £2.00.

Chair: Alan Hill, 24 Kingsfield Drive, Didsbury, M20 6JA; : [awhill@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:awhill@globalnet.co.uk)

Tel: 0161 215 0971; mobile 07719 659 689.

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

## **MARPLE NATURALISTS**

Meetings commence at 8.00 pm at United Reform Church, Hibbert Lane, Marple, SK6 7NN. *Visitors welcome: £4 for individual meetings, Children free.* For further information:

Jane Michael 07917 434598 or Derek Clifford 427 4611 or Marple Naturalists Community page on [www.marple-uk.com](http://www.marple-uk.com) or [www.facebook.com/marplenaturalists](http://www.facebook.com/marplenaturalists)

\*Outdoor meetings - arranged separately and announced at meetings.

## **MERSEYSIDE NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION**

Full programme listings are on our website [www.mnapage.info](http://www.mnapage.info) and reports of previous trips on our blog at [www.NaturalistsNotebook.mnapage.info](http://www.NaturalistsNotebook.mnapage.info)

## **NELSON NATURALISTS' SOCIETY**

All meetings are held at Christ Church, Carr Road, Nelson BB9 7JX and start at 7.30pm.

Enquiries and requests for copies of East Lancashire Butterfly Report contact David Nelson 01282 863012 [davidnelson@btinternet.com](mailto:davidnelson@btinternet.com) Visitors welcome £2.50

### **Wednesday 19 February : Wildlife Encounters**

Brian Rafferty

### **Wednesday 4 March : Scottish Wildlife**

Jeremy Malloy-Smith

**Wednesday 18 March : tbc** Summer trips announced at this meeting

## **NORTH WEST ENGLAND FERN GROUP**

Field meetings organised with an indoor meeting in October at Holehird, Windermere.

Contact: Robert Sykes [r.sykes56@gmail.com](mailto:r.sykes56@gmail.com)

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

All meetings on Saturdays (apart from February and March), and will go ahead whatever the weather. 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 any **ANY** meeting and there will always be a more experienced field bryologist present who will be more than happy to name and talk through the identification features of species encountered. There will not always be a Lichenologist present.

Section Secretary: Norman Bamforth, 1 Corporation Road, Audenshaw, Manchester. M34 5LY (0161 336 3914)

### **Sunday 23 February : Manchester City Centre:**

Meet at 10.00 a.m. at the main entrance of Manchester Oxford Road railway station, on the steps by the metal tube sculpture which looks a bit like organ pipes.

Joint with Warrington Plant Group. Leader Gail Quartly-Bishop.

**Sunday 22 March : Pickmere. (Date to be confirmed)**

Meet at 10.00 a.m. at the small car park off Jacob's Way, Pickmere (SJ687770). If this is full, find street parking in the village – please park considerately.  
Joint with Warrington Plant Group. Leader Gail Quartly-Bishop.

**Saturday 18 April : near Marple.**

Meet at 10.30 a.m. in village car-park, Goddard Lane. (SK011891) Marked on 25 and 50,000 OS maps.  
Leader Norman Bamforth.

**Saturday 9 May : Shillito Wood.**

Meet at 10.30am in car park on Fox Lane (SK295749) Leaders Joan Egan and Norman Bamforth.

**Saturday 6 June : Ogden Reservoir.**

Meet at 10 30am in car park. SD952122. Off A640 Milnrow to Denshaw road.  
Leader John Lowell.

**NORTH WEST FUNGUS GROUP**

Forays start at 10.30am and are planned so that they can continue into the afternoon. Please bring food and drink. Please contact the foray leader to confirm you attendance and for possible last minute details.

Beginners always welcome at all forays. Forays are not suitable for small children. No dogs.

<http://fungus.org.uk/nwfg.htm>

**OLDHAM MICROSCOPICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Meetings at Werneth Centre, Oldham, at 7.30 pm.

For more information call Phil Whiteman

01612900722, philipwhiteman333@hotmail.com or

<http://www.oldham-wildlife-link.org.uk/micro/>

**PRESTON BIRD WATCHING AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

The meetings are at St. Mary's Church, Church Avenue, Penwortham, PR1 0AH. All enquiries should be made to the Secretary, Kayleigh Roebuck, who can be contacted on [prestonwildlife@gmail.com](mailto:prestonwildlife@gmail.com) or on 07713 975321. [www.prestonsociety.co.uk](http://www.prestonsociety.co.uk). There is a charge of £3.00 on the door for any visitors.

**ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY**

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

Indoor Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, September to April at Cutgate Baptist Church, Edenfield Road, Rochdale. Start 7.30pm.

Enquiries: 01706 630707 and 814884. Charges: Members £2.00, Non-members £3.00.

All Excursions depart from the cul-de-sac at Manchester Road, Rochdale.:

Queries: Field excursions – Joan Carter Secretary 01706 524255

[/secretary@rochdalefieldnaturalists.co.uk](mailto:/secretary@rochdalefieldnaturalists.co.uk)

Coach bookings – contact Ruth Hardcastle on 07970 948175 Coach Price: £15.

The Conservation & Education events meet at 10.00am same rendezvous as excursions above.

### **NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION – VASCULAR PLANT SECTION**

Contact: David Earl -david.earl@talktalk.net

### **SADDLEWORTH NATURALISTS**

Indoor meetings are held at 7.30 pm at Saddleworth Conservative Club, 75 High Street, Uppermill OL3 6AP.

To assist with venue costs and speakers' expenses a small collection will be made - suggested donations: £2.00 for members, £2.50 for non-members. Guests are welcome - please introduce yourself at the start of the meeting.

More details at <http://www.oldham-wildlife-link.org.uk/saddleworth/>

### **SOUTH EAST CHESHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Indoor Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month from September to April, starting at 7.30pm. Tea, coffee and biscuits are available at the end of indoor meetings. We meet at Ettiley Heath Church Community Centre; Elton Road, Ettiley Heath, Sandbach, CW11 3NE. Visitors are charged £3 and are welcome at any indoor meeting.

Field trips are held on one Sunday a month from September through to June and a long weekend meeting in March is very popular. More local field meetings are also held on the first Tuesday of each month and local evening walks in the summer. Bookings for the trips are made at the indoor meetings. Further information is available at [www.secos.org.uk](http://www.secos.org.uk) or by telephone from 01270 582642. Chairman Colin Lythgoe 01270 582642

**Friday 14 February : Fantastic Farnes**

Jeff Clarke

**Sunday 16 February : North Wales Field Trip**

**Tuesday 3 March : Moore NR Field Trip**

**Friday 13 March : Burton Mere Wetlands and the Dee estuary**

Graham Jones

**Saturday 15 March : RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands Field Trip**

**Tuesday 7 April : Tatton Park Field Trip**

**Friday 17 April : AGM and Members' Evening**

**Friday April 24 – 27 : Dorset - Long Weekend Field Trip**

**Tuesday 5 May : Goyt Valley Field Trip**

**Sunday 17 May : Anglesey Field Trip**

**Sunday 14 June – 15 : Lincolnshire - Short Weekend Field Trip**

## **WEST LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE**

Meetings are held in Room B003 in the Business School Building , Edge Hill University, St Helen's Road, Ormskirk, L39 4QP. Please note that you can park in the car parks A & B in front of the main university buildings, and walk to the Business School Building. Please arrive by 19.15 for a prompt 19.30 start. Admission charge (including refreshments): £1.50 members, £2.50 non-members.

More details at [www.westlancswildlife.org.uk](http://www.westlancswildlife.org.uk) or contact 01704 83538. Membership Secretary: Hilary Bedford 01772 519090

## **WILMSLOW GUILD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Indoor meetings are held at Wilmslow Guild, 1 Bourne Street, Wilmslow, SK9 5HD at 7:30 p.m. from Sept to Apr and field trips Feb to Oct. Visitors welcome to indoor meetings (£4) and field trips (free)

Contact Steve Osborne on 01625 879087 [steve.osborne42@googlemail.com](mailto:steve.osborne42@googlemail.com)

**Thursday 19 March : Gardening for Butterflies - Jan Miller**

**April: Styal Woods Field Trip**

**Thursday 16 April : AGM & Hedgehogs - Barbara Roberts**

**May : Hedge Row, Pott Shrigley (evening) Field Trip**

**May : Tideslow Rake Field Trip**

**June : Joint Field Trip with Grange-over-Sands group**

**July : Eyarth Rocks, Ruthin Field Trip**

**September : The Roaches Field Trip**

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## **A Note About Tree-Planting**

May I request to everybody who plants trees and who recommends others to plant trees is to please check WHERE they are planting them. Think about how large they will be in ten years time and CHECK if they will be shading out valuable meadow with flowers. LOOK which way the sun moves round and make sure any shading will be where it least shades out flowering plants.

Our insects - especially butterflies - need flowering plants in the sunshine so that they can move around and gather nectar. We know we have lost an immense number of trees in this country... BUT we have also lost - if not more - a great many meadows and flowering plants and remember that even weeds have flowers that insects use. I feel distressed to see that people are plonking small trees right in the middle of an open field without a thought to how much shade this will cast in the summer ten or twenty or fifty years hence. Think would it be better planted at the edge of the open space? And which edge... well... the edge where it will not shade the meadow/grassland would be best.

If you can plant a tree... then you can easily plant a wildflower too. Remember also, that there are some of our butterflies whose life-cycle is totally dependent upon grasses, our native grasses, not 'amenity grassland'. They lay their eggs in it, their caterpillars live in it, and only as grown butterflies do they use flowers (in sunshine) to nectar upon.

**Sonia Allen, Rochdale Field Naturalists**





## **Alan Bamforth**

Alan was born in Ashton on 29th September 1943 and lived at 1 Corporation Road, Audenshaw all his life. He went to Poplar Street Junior School and was one of the first pupils at Egerton Park Secondary School, Denton where he became top of the class in his fourth year and continued for fifth year and went on to obtain ONC Electrical Engineering at Ashton Technical College.

On leaving school in 1960 he joined the railway and worked in the Signalling and Telegraph Department at Guide Bridge where he maintained and installed them until he took early retirement at the age of 52 when staff were offered various packages before the privatisation. He went to various locations included Millers Dale, where he worked for a few years and had to walk from Dove Holes every day and still got back to Guide Bridge at 4.30pm.

As children we started train spotting and liked going to Guide Bridge before the electrics when one of the regular engines was "Flying Scotsman." At the end of steam we went on many steam specials and when we could afford it, we went to Leeds to catch the 6.40 ex Birmingham to Glasgow to Carlisle via the Settle to Carlisle line, one of the last scheduled steam trains in 1967.



As steam ended on British Rail I read about the NCB lines at “Wogdin” (Walkden) and made a visit and it became our Saturday morning destination. We went down on the tracks and when the first light engine came down the bank a voice would shout “Ah Custer,” Alan’s name because of his long blonde hair, and would come to a stand for us to jump on and spend the morning going from Astley Green – Mosley Common – Walkden – Linnyslaw and Kearsley. The bank at Walkden was so steep that it took four locos to get the trains up the hill. One day we finished up in charge of a light engine and managed to get it into the shed!

Our trips on BR gradually waned but we did enjoy Ffestiniog Railway Societies “Day trips.” These were to Wick, Kyle of Lochalsh, Oban and Mallaig. Allowing a couple of hours botanising on Skye.

Jumping back to 1968, mum got a copy of Collins Pocket Guide to Wild Flowers from the library and we were hooked and I later bought a copy when on holiday in Dumfries. We continued on our own for a number of years, then mum joined British Naturalists Association in 1977 and we joined the following year. BNA became Manchester Field Club in 1982 and we became joint secretaries. I ducked out about 1986 but Alan continued until a couple of years ago. We learned a lot from BNA and it led to us joining other societies like North Western Naturalists’ Union which had Bryophyte and Mycological sections at the time which we took part in.

Alan had a “patch” which he went to after work at the “Belgians,” Apethorn and when he was heeling in some trees a gentleman came up to him and said he has forming a Voluntary Warden Service and did he want to join. That was 1976 and the gentleman was Duncan McIlroy. Alan became a Warden, then a Ranger until his death. In 1979 Duncan started public guided walks and asked us to lead a “Flora Walk” on the 22nd July. This was the first of over 300 which we have done in the last 40 years. Unfortunately, Alan had to stop a couple of years ago.

When Alan retired 1995 with a good pension he never looked back although he was asked as an expert on signals by both the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway and Ffestiniog Railway to help them install traditional signalling, he turned both down. He got involved in many projects around Tameside and Oldham as well as the VC59 Flora (South Lancashire) where we looked at Lichens. We had three years to do this and hardly knew a dozen lichens and did not get west of Skelmersdale. We also recorded for the Greater Manchester Biological Record Centre where we both became significant recorders.

Alan died in Tameside Hospital on 29 October 2019.

**Norman Bamforth**