

*THE
NORTHWESTERN
NATURALIST*

New series



Volume 27 No. 1 2025

CONTENTS

The Shropshire Botanical Society – Looking Back

Sue Dancey -.....3

Society Diary

Calendars of Meetings of Affiliated Societies.....6

The Herbarium of Thomas Velley (1748 - 1806);

Illustration from the NorthWestern Naturalist Old Series.....12

A New Staffordshire Bramble;

Illustration from the NorthWestern Naturalist Old Series.....13

Contributions for the next issue by the beginning of December please!

Bryophyte Collections

Update from Gallery Oldham (OLDM)

Please note that the following herbarium collections
from North Western Naturalists' Union Bryophyte & Lichen Section members
are now in Oldham:

Dr Martha Elizabeth Newton (2025.6)

Dr John Lowell (2025.12)

It will be some time before these collections are fully catalogued.
OLDM is currently seeking funding to help with this task.

A.G.M. - 7 March 2026

Venue to be confirmed

The Shropshire Botanical Society – Looking Back

Sue Dancey - Shropshire Botanical Society



Like all good things, our small society started through a vision. An initial Flora Project was convened by Charles Sinker back in 1975 as he recognised the need for botanical records from across the county. Charles was then the Director of Preston Montford, where Field Studies Council headquarters became located. He was a recognised natural historian with particular skills in botany. His accounts of the Shropshire Flora, particularly the development of our meres and mosses are a joy to read. I recommend that you have a look at this free download from 1962.

<https://fsj.field-studies-council.org/browse-by-field-centre/preston-montford.aspx>.

Shropshire is a rather unusual county. Although distinctly agricultural, the varied geology and topography has led to the formation of many varied habitats. Many clubs formed to visit and study sites of natural history and archaeological interest. These include the Naturalists Field Club, The Archaeology Society, the Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club and the Oswestry Institute. The Shropshire Flora project developed from those beginnings to explore a huge diversity of the lakes, meres, fens, mosses, bogs, swaps, meadows marshes scrub and woodlands. The botanical explorations have taken us across the flat areas of the Shropshire-Cheshire plain and the high ground of the Oswestry Uplands and the Church Stretton Hills and all the places in between.

The book the Ecological Flora of Shropshire Region was written collaboratively with five other authors. It was furbished with accurate records collected by volunteers across the county and collated on record cards from the Flora Project. These were housed at Preston Montford and although the materials were largely relocated to the Shropshire Wildlife Trust in the 1980s - I could still find the odd card lodged in the welly store in the cellar when I started my role as Warden in 1994!

First Flora

In 1984, David J. Bellamy said of this book "It is an important work of scholarship - geology, botany, geography, ecology and history all in one - a Domesday Book for Shropshire against which all future change will be measured."

The following 10 years continued to research the flora. The Project continued and Charles updated the publication in 1991. This included a preface that (the authors) "...hope that early in the 21st century there will be a third Shropshire Flora based on the new 'time-slice'."

The Flora Group ran 1994 to 1999 when it became constituted and renamed as The Shropshire Botanical Society now over 25 years ago. This continued the coordination of the voluntary group of amateur and professional botanists grouped together to research

the distribution and ecology of the plants and vegetation of our county. The intention was to publish findings in books and atlases.

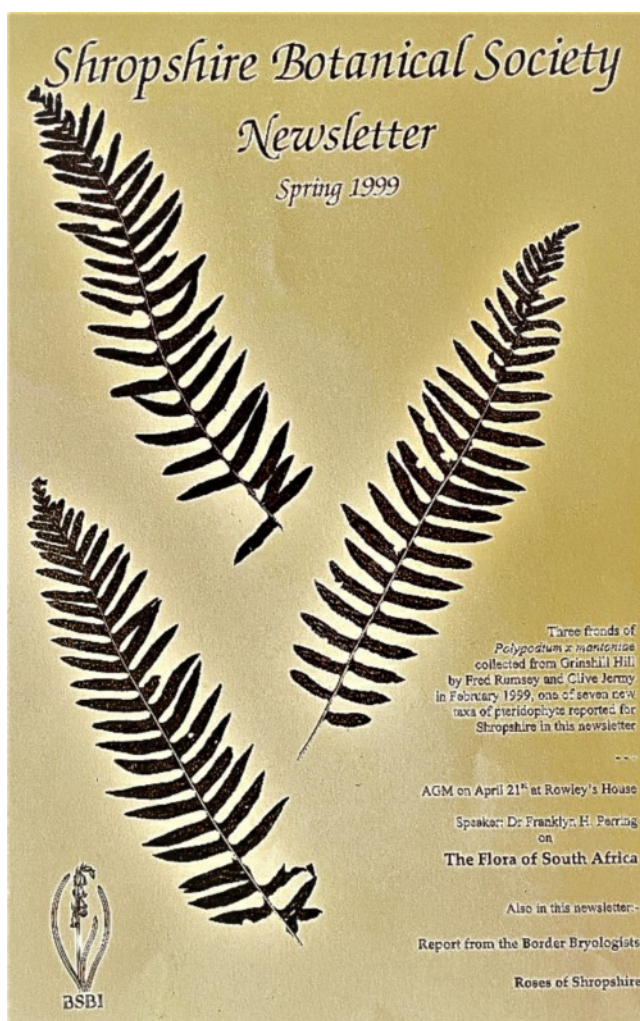
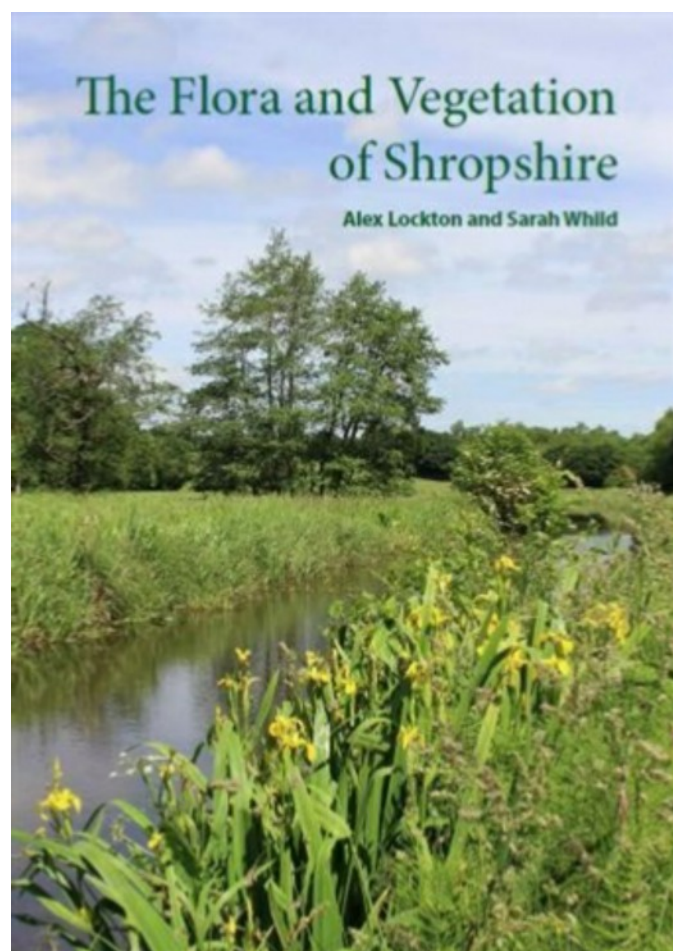
A binding activity in our society has always been the field excursions. These may have had a strict recording function such as 'square bashing' or hunting to update an old record, or potentially just for the simple joy of being at a lovely site with like minded botanists. This is where our wonderful committee has played to its strengths - with a natural group of field leaders who often called on others to develop a programme of trips each year to suit all tastes.

The Shropshire Botanical Society newsletter was produced with keen eyed botanists in mind. First records eg *Setaria pulmilla* SJ41, Rob Stokes (1994) and amendments to the red data list eg for *Alisma lanceolatum* put us firmly on the map of serious botanists.

Have a look at the first newsletter which is digitised and available alongside all the newsletters via this link

<https://issuu.com/shropshirebotany>.

This leads me to the pièce de resistance of our Society. Led by Sarah Whild, there was indeed the publication of a 21st century Shropshire flora.

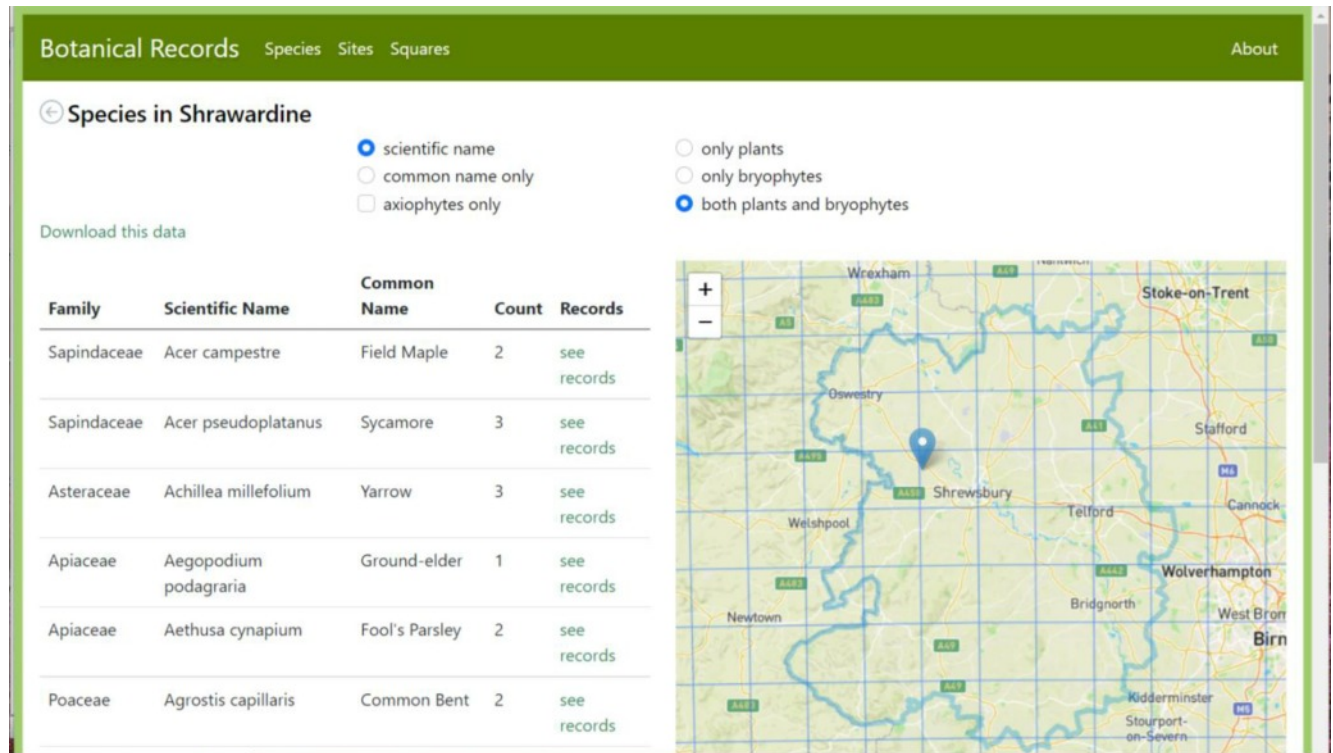


This fulfilled Sinker's wish that a third flora would be produced using a new 'time slice' This book does indeed update the doomsday book to which Bellamy referred. The Flora and Vegetation of Shropshire is a large format, colour printed exploration of our sites and plants by Whild, SJ., and Lockton A (2015). It was published at that time, on an innovative print on demand system. We then uploaded it onto our

website some years later for open access - it enables more and more of us to be able to access the collation of the painstaking work of the authors.

New Flora

We have taken our recording a stage further and now have an online database.



Publishing our findings through enabling our records to be found and the production of floras and newsletters has been great to reach out to both members and newcomers alike. Field meetings remain wonderful for enabling further communication - but perhaps in a local context the indoor meetings are also a key to our continued successes. We have arranged to meet as a society twice a year - a winter meeting and a mid-season meeting including the AGM. Our meetings are traditionally now held at Preston Montford bringing our history full circle. Here members plus invited guests gather to organise cakes, quizzes, book sales, raffles and even cookery competitions using plant families identified in the ingredients!

Of course, it is the PEOPLE that join who make this a vibrant society that is moving forward. There are over 100 members - many of whom sign up three years at a time and some of whom are from out of county - supporting us from afar. Thanks to all of us who have made it happen so well for so long.

SOCIETY DIARY

Please check the details and visit websites and Facebook pages where they are given for further information.

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

ALTRINCHAM AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The indoor meetings are held at Jubilee Community Centre, The Firs, Bowdon, Altrincham, WA14 2TQ at 7.30pm. Excursions leave from the Jubilee Centre car park at 6.30 pm 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, 0161 865 0118

BLACKBURN BIRD CLUB

Indoor meetings are usually held on the first Monday of the month at Feniscowles Methodist Church, Preston Old Road, Blackburn, BB2 5ER 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.

BUXTON FIELD CLUB

We offer a programme of field visits (May-October), talks (October to March) and volunteering opportunities throughout the year. Talks with refreshments start at 7pm at Buxton Methodist Church Hall, Chapel Street, Buxton, SK17 6HX. Attendance for non-members is £3. For details of our programme, how to join and information about local fauna and flora visit: <https://buxtonfieldclub.org.uk/>

CHORLEY AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

See www.chorleynats.org.uk for details or contact Paul Brennan, 14 Merton Grove, Chorley, PR6 8UR

CROAL-IRWELL LOCAL GROUP

We are a local Wildlife Trust group in the North Manchester, Bury and Bolton areas, who have been supporting the Lancashire Wildlife Trust for over 30 years. As volunteers, we manage a nature reserve in Summerseat, enjoy monthly field trips to seasonally interesting sites, and run monthly indoor meetings with a speaker. All are welcome!

Indoor meetings are usually on the first Tuesday of each month, at 7.30pm, and take place at the Cottage, Our Lady of Grace, Highfield Road, Prestwich M251AS. Admission and refreshments by £5 donation. Please bring your own cup! To check/confirm details please message 07377 539882.

GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL RECORD CENTRE

Any queries contact: Stuart Fraser, Local Record Centre Development Officer
Stuart.fraser@tameside.gov.uk

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

JOY OF WILDLIFE

The group gets together weekly at sites around Shropshire to record the wildlife that we can find and identify. Outings are on a Wednesday, starting at 10.30am and finishing around 3.30pm. We meet as a group of friends out for the day together doing something we all enjoy. Everyone welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult,

For further details contact Keith Fowler (vc40joyofwildlife@gmail.com). Follow our exploits at <https://wrekinforestvolunteers.blogspot.com/>.

LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

We meet twice per year – Spring and Autumn at World Museum for an afternoon of talks. Meetings are free to attend and membership of the society is currently free.

Contact: Honorary Secretary: Gary Hedges gary.hedges@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

LCES also have a page on the northwest invertebrates site:
<https://www.northwestinvertebrates.org.uk/entomological-societies/lancashire-cheshire-entomological-society>

LEIGH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are in the Derby Room at Leigh Library. There is ample free car 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. A warm welcome is guaranteed at any of our meetings.

LIVERPOOL BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are held in the Weston Centre, World Museum, Liverpool, starting at 11.00am. Unless otherwise stated field meetings begin at 10.30am. Please check the website for details.

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>

MARPLE NATURALISTS

Meetings commence at 8.00 pm at United Reform Church, Hibbert Lane, Marple, SK6 7NN. Visitors welcome: £5 for individual meetings, Children free. For further information:

Jane Michael 07917 434598 gmicsch@gmail.com or Deb Cavanagh 07810 450764 or <https://www.marple.website/community/community-groups-in-marple/marple-naturalists.html> or 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 and reports of previous trips on our blog at www.NaturalistsNotebook.mnapage.info

NELSON NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

All meetings are held at NELSON NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are held at Higherford Methodist Church Hall BB9 6JZ and start at 7.30pm. Autumn meeting dates: 26 Oct. 9, 23 Nov. 7 Dec.

Enquiries and requests for copies of East Lancashire Butterfly Report and enquires contact David Nelson 01282 863012 davidnelson@btinternet.com Visitors welcome £4.

NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION - BRYOPHYTE & LICHEN SECTION

All meetings on Saturdays, starting at 10.30 am and will commence 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.

Contact: Phillip James - epiphyte17@gmail.com

NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION – FERN & LYCOPHYTE SECTION

Contact: Mike Canaway – mikecanaway@gmail.com

NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION – VASCULAR PLANT SECTION

Contact: David Earl - dpearlbsbi@gmail.com

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 your 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

Lifelong Learning 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/>

THE PRESTON SOCIETY: BIRD WATCHING AND NATURAL HISTORY

The meetings are at St. Mary's Church, Church Avenue, Penwortham, PR1 0AH. Enquiries should be made by e-mail to prestonwildlife@gmail.com, through our website www.prestonsociety.co.uk, or by phone on 07565 497065.

There is a charge of £3.00 on the door for visitors.

ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month from September to April at 7-30p.m. at Cutgate Baptist Church, Edenfield Road, Rochdale, OL11 5AQ. Coach trips and local walks are held each month. Details of all these events are on our website www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk and our Facebook page.

If you would like more information about events or RFNS in general, please email our Secretary (Ian Short) at rfns_enquiries@btinternet.com

SOUTH EAST CHESHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

SECOS is a welcoming society open to birders of all levels, from novices to experts. Our field trips and events provide a wonderful opportunity to connect with like-minded people, explore beautiful natural settings, and share the joy of birdwatching. Whether you're looking to learn more about bird identification or simply enjoy the camaraderie of group birding, you'll find plenty to love at SECOS.

We host monthly indoor meetings from September to April, held on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7.30 pm at Ettiley Heath Church Community Centre near Sandbach. These engaging talks are delivered by experienced birders, conservationists, and photographers, covering topics ranging from local species to global birding adventures. Visitors welcome £5 charge. Occasionally, we host talks via Zoom.

From October to May, we organise excursions to local reserves and birding hotspots on the first Tuesday of each month. Additionally, from September to May, we host Sunday trips to more distant locations. Please check our website for membership details: www.secos.org.uk.

We'd love to welcome you to the SECOS community and look forward to meeting you at one of our events.

WILMSLOW NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are held at Wilmslow Guild, 1 Bourne Street, Wilmslow, SK9 5HD

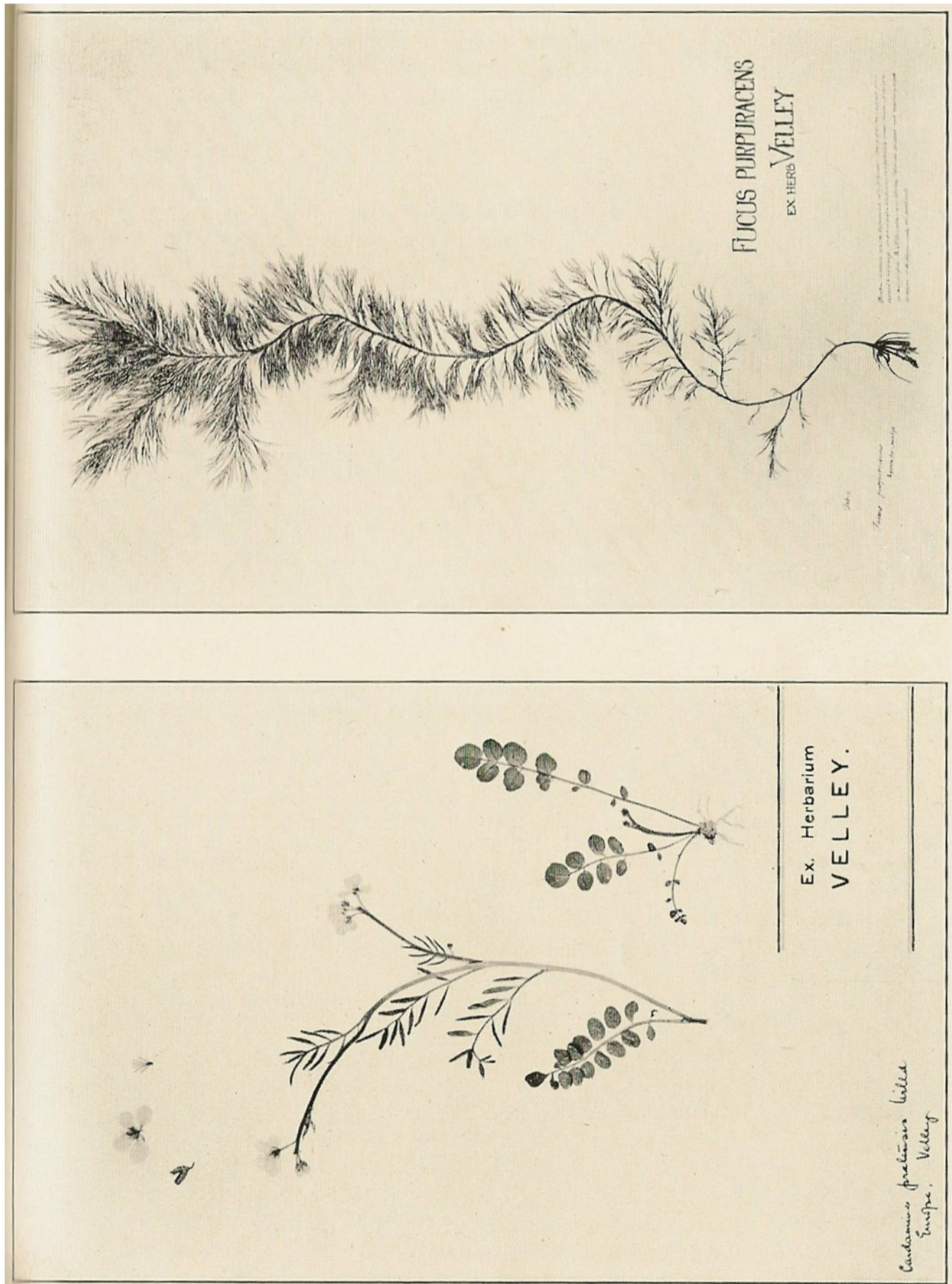
Monthly on Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. from September to April and field trips September to the following August. Visitors welcome to indoor meetings (£6) and field trips (£6)

Contact Steve Osborne on 01625 879087 steve.osborne42@gmail.com

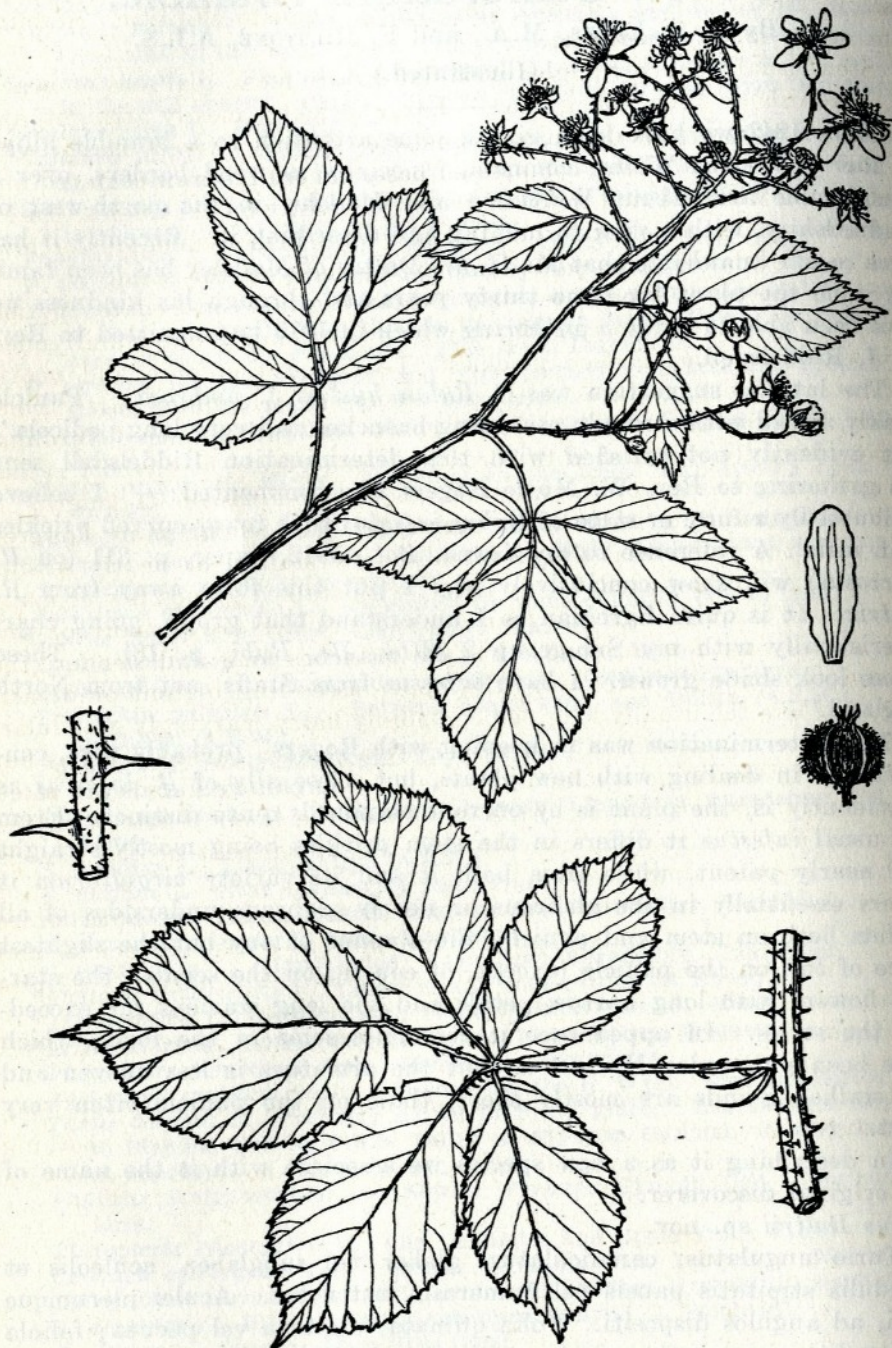
WORLD MUSEUM LIVERPOOL

Part of the Tanyptera Project/North-West Invertebrates. This is a regional project aimed at promoting the study and conservation of insects and other invertebrates. Contact www.northwestinvertebrates.org.uk/events for information on fees and booking instructions.

Friday 10th October: Assassin Bugs & Damsel Bugs
Jim Flanagan at World Museum



The Herbarium of Thomas Velley (1748 - 1806), by Helen Blackler -
 North Western Naturalist Old Series -
 See https://northwesternnaturalistsunion.org.uk/?page_id=966
 Page No. 12



RUBUS DALTRII Edees & Rilst., with enlarged drawings of bud, petal and portion of pedicel.

A New Staffordshire Bramble by E S Edees & F Rilstone 1945 -
North Western Naturalist Old Series -
See https://northwesternnaturalistsunion.org.uk/?page_id=966