



New Flora of the Isle of Man Newsletter

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Welcome to this New-Year's edition to our irregular flora newsletter series. 2011 turned out to be another cracker of a year for wildflower recording with new first records for the Island, the rediscovery of a few species feared lost and many records of rare and unusual plants.

The survey is now coming together with the South (south of the Onchan/Kirk Michael line) and Northern Plain 75% complete, though the Northern Uplands still have much more work to go.

The survey is still short of cornfield annual records such as the northern deadnettle (pictured Below). If you pass a weedy field this coming season do make a note of the species and site and send them to me. Happy plant hunting in 2012.

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Dates for your Diary

Sunday 13th May 12.30pm A Wildflower Picnic at Foxdale School playing field. A picnic on this good species and orchid rich grassland followed by an afternoon stroll down the old railway line looking for early summer flowers. Bring your own picnic. Contact Andree for further information.

Friday 22nd June, 2.00 – 3.30pm: A Natural History Tour of Peel Castle. Kate Hawkins will lead an exploration of the wildlife and geology of St Patrick's Isle. This is part of Manx National Heritage's summer events programme. For tickets and further details, please contact Kate at MNH (tel. 648022/648000; email: kate.hawkins@gov.im)

Saturday 14th July: Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society Flora Recording Session at Druidale, starting at Sartfell Plantation greenway, SC342866, 2.00pm. Kate Hawkins is nominally leading this, but any botanical assistance or moral support from the Flora group would be very welcome. Please contact Kate (details above) for further information.

Oak/Hazel Woodlands Survey

An inventory of the Island's most important woodlands, the sites with relic oak and hazel trees, will soon be available to download from the Manx Wildlife Trust's website (in the Wildflowers of Mann pages).

The report highlights eight sites of conservation importance, including Ballure Glen (pictured right), Glen Roy and Dhoon Glen. The report is based upon a survey of the sites which revealed populations of rare woodland species such as marsh hawksbeard and pale sedge.



'The Ancient woodlands of Ramsey' a talk by Andree Dubbeldam to the Manx Wildlife Trust's Northern Group will take place on Thursday 9th Feb 7pm at Ramsey Town Hall. Entrance is £2.50.

Port Erin Passes 500

In the last edition of this newsletter Port Erin, Sandygate and Ramsey all looked as though they could pass the 500 recorded species mark by the end of the survey.

No new records came in for Ramsey in 2011, Sandygate crept up to 493 records and some super new surveys in the Ballaugh Curragh brought its tally soaring to a tantalising 496, but Port Erin leapt past the post with an astonishing 523 records so far.

Some of the new records were predictably just casual garden escapees, with agave-leaf sea holly (*Eryngium agavifolium*) perhaps the most exotic of the lot, seeding in from a municipal flower border, into a pavement crack next to the town's shoe shop. Doubtless it will be sprayed by herbicides in due course.

Most of the new records however are of native species,

from common species previously overlooked such as changing forget-me not and trailing St John's wort to some genuine rarities.



Changing Forget-Me-Not

Above the Brooghs the municipal grassland revealed the common, but much overlooked bulbous buttercup and the rather rarer yellow oat-grass a species that is only easily identifiable for about a fortnight a year when it is in full flower.



Yellow Oat-Grass

The best site however was a small field on Mull Hill, just within the tetrad that contained 10 sedge species including flea sedge and tawny sedge. Better still was the finding of a small population of the tiny lesser skullcap, the first record for the South.



Lesser Skullcap

The find of the year in Port Erin was for chaffweed one of Europe's smallest flowering plants and a species declining throughout its range.

'Why are there so many wildflowers in Port Erin?' is the title of a talk by Andree Dubbeldam to the Manx Wildlife Trust's Southern Group on Friday 16th March, 7.30pm at Mount Tabor, Port St Mary. Entrance is £2.50.

Open Orchids

This year the Manx Wildlife Trust will expand its usual orchid week activities from Close Sartfield Nature Reserve to the whole Island as a 'Festival of Orchids'.

Plans at this stage should see an 'Open Orchid' event on Saturday 16th June where the public will be able to visit orchid meadows and sites around the Island. To make this work we need lots of orchid sites where landowners are willing to open their gates to let in the public.

If you know of any interesting sites and think you can persuade the owners to take part, please let me know and we will see if we can include it in our 'Open Orchids' day.

Contact Andree on 844432.

2011 Finds

Another year and another clutch of great records.

Near Bride, Jessie Tregale and John Harris found a single burnet saxifrage plant. Once common in this part of the Island this native species was thought lost— it nearly is!

A visit by the RSPB to the Ayres gravel-pits saw one eagle-eyed ecologist spot a hairy birds-foot trefoil, a species more commonly found in the South-west of the British Isles. Is it native here? Who knows, but it is difficult to find an alternative explanation for its presence.

Lastly, the wallaby enclosure at the Wildlife Park in Ballaugh is now home to one more rarity; Northern yellow cress. Probably spread by feral geese, this species is becoming more common on the Island.



Above: Burnet Saxifrage
Below: Hairy Birds-foot Trefoil



The Disappeared

Since David Allen's flora was published 28 years ago in 1984 many species are now thought extinct, but every year of this flora survey we have been able to re-find one or two. The list below is of the 44 native species that we believe are now extinct, but are still worth looking out for. The decade of their last record is included. Agrimony, highlighted in yellow, is subject to a reintroduction scheme, the sedges marked in green have not been actively looked for in their remaining sites, and the species marked in pink still have cultivated forms found in the wild.

Agrimony	<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	2000's	Lesser Clubmoss	<i>Selaginella selaginoides</i>	1990's
Alpine Clubmoss	<i>Dipasiastrum alpinum</i>	1920's	Mountain Pansy	<i>Viola lutea</i>	1940's
Autumn lady's-tresses	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i>	2000's	Mousetail	<i>Myosurus minimus</i>	1800's
Bladder Sedge	<i>Carex vesicaria</i>	1990's	Pale heath-violet	<i>Viola lactea</i>	1880's
Carline Thistle	<i>Carlina vulgaris</i>	1990's	Perforate Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton perfoliatus</i>	1930's
Common Dodder	<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	1990's	Pillwort	<i>Pilularia globulifera</i>	1800's
Common Wintergreen	<i>Pyrola minor</i>	1990's	Reddish Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton alpinus</i>	1930's
Cowbane	<i>Circuta virosa</i>	1800's	Rock Sea-lavender	<i>Limonium binervosum</i>	1990's
Crab Apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	1970's	Rue-leaved Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga tridactylites</i>	1800's
Dense-flowered Orchid	<i>Neotinea maculata</i>	1980's	Small-flowered Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus parviflorus</i>	1940's
Dioecious sedge	<i>Carex dioica</i>	1970's	Stone Bramble	<i>Rubus saxatilis</i>	1930's
Field Rose	<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	1930's	Three-nerved Sandwort	<i>Moehringia trinervia</i>	2000's
Floating Bur-reed	<i>Sparganium angustifolium</i>	1970's	Variegated Horsetail	<i>Equisetum variegatum</i>	1800's
Fragrant Orchid	<i>Gymnadenia conopsea</i>	1990's	Vipers Bugloss	<i>Echium vulgare</i>	1920's
Frog Orchid	<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	1960's	Viviporous fescue	<i>Festuca vivipara</i>	1800's
Great Broomrape	<i>Orobancha repum-genistae</i>	1950's	White Sedge	<i>Carex curta</i>	1990's
Greater Bladderwort	<i>Utricularia vulgaris</i>	1990's	White Waterlily	<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	1980's
Hairy Brome	<i>Bromus ramosa</i>	2000's	Whorled Water-milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum verticillatum</i>	1970's
Horned Pondweed	<i>Zannichellia palustris</i>	1980's	Wood Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria nemorum</i>	1800's
Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	1940's	Yellow Loosestrife	<i>Lysimachia vulgaris</i>	1990's
Lesser Bladderwort	<i>Utricularia minor</i>	1990's	Yellow Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga aizoides</i>	1800's
Lesser Butterfly-orchid	<i>Plantanthera bifolia</i>	1990's	Yellow Vetch	<i>Vicia lutea</i>	1960's

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The Appeared

In the past 28 years many native (or possibly native) species have also been discovered, or on occasion a species has been promoted from sub-species status (marked in orange).

<i>Alcopecurus aequalis</i>	Orange Foxtail	M. Devereau	1987	Widespread in the North
<i>Brachypodium rupestre</i>	Tor Grass	Andree Dubbeldam	2009	Possibly native/Jurby
<i>Dryopteris cambrensis</i>	Narrow Buckler-fern	British Pteridological Society	2011	Ballaugh Curragh
<i>Carex acuta hybrid</i>	Hybrid Tufted Sedge	Jessie Tregale	2010	Ayres
<i>Erophila glabrescens</i>	Glabrous Whitlow Grass	Jessie Tregale and John Harris	2010	Jurby Dunes
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	Jessie Tregale et al	1990	Santon Gorge
<i>Hottonia palustris</i>	Water Violet	M. Devereau	1988	Not refound since 1993
<i>Juncus compressus</i>	Round-fruited Rush	Eric Greenwood/BSBI	2007	Fort Island and Cornaa
<i>Juncus subnodulosus</i>	Blunt-flowered Rush	Jessie Tregale and John Harris	2009	Jurby Area
<i>Lotus subbiflorus</i>	Hairy Birdsfoot Trefoil	RSPB	2011	Ayres Gravel pits
<i>Orobancha hederæ</i>	Ivy Broomrape	Doris Harris	2009	Regaby
<i>Polygonum borale</i>	Northern Knotgrass	FH Jerring	2000	Not Confirmed
<i>Potamogeton obtusifolius</i>	Blunt-flowered Pondweed	Jessie Tregale	1999	Bishops Dub
<i>Senecio viscosus</i>	Sticky Groundsel	Unknown	1990's	Has been found since
<i>Stellaria neglecta</i>	Greater Chickweed	Jessie Tregale and John Harris	1990's	Ayres
<i>Stellaria pallida</i>	Lesser Chickweed	Jessie Tregale and John Harris	1990's	Widespread in the North
<i>Trifolium micranthum</i>	Slender Trefoil	RD Hawkins	1989	Widespread in the South
<i>Trifolium subterraneum</i>	Subterranean Clover	M. Devereau	1993	Mooragh
<i>Trifolium suffocatum</i>	Suffocated Clover	M. Devereau	1993	Mooragh
<i>Vulpia fasciculata</i>	Dune Fescue	BSBI Field Meeting	1987	North Coast

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BSBI Threatened Plants Project 2012

Every year the Botanical Society of the British Isles produces a hit-list of declining plants to look out for so they have up-to-date information on some of the most important species for conservation. This year Three of the ten listed species are or have been found on the Island.

Small water-pepper (*Persicaria minor*) has been recorded once at Rushen Abbey.

Smooth Cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*) is still found around the Cronk, up to Jurby. While much like the common cat's-ear this species differs by being completely hairless and smaller and only opening to flower in sunshine. It grows in drier areas, particularly in scrappy sandy waste areas such as gateways and around rabbit burrows.

Corn Buttercup (*Ranunculus arvensis*) has only been found once in the past century so the chance of finding this cornfield annual is slight, but look out for this species in fields around the South East of the Island.

If you spot any of these species in 2012, e-mail me or the Island's BSBI recorder, Linda Moore (ecotype@manx.net) and we will send you an official recording form.

For more information about the Threatened Plants Project : <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/tpp.html>

The British Pteridological Society Visit

The end of September saw the arrival of the British Pteridological Society to the Island. Among them were some of the foremost British experts on ferns, to see the best we have to offer and help out with our local fern identification skills.

The visit had so many highlights, both botanical and social, with 38 species, subspecies and hybrids of fern, horsetail and clubmoss recorded in five days.

The best records included:

- Banks of beech fern (pictured right) at Cornaa, showing the species still has healthy Island populations.
- Confirming Southern polypody in Glen Maye.
- Re-finding Wilson's filmy-fern at Colden.
- Re-finding narrow buckler-fern at Stoney Mountain.
- Finding the recently separated, (it used to be a subspecies of golden male-fern), narrow male-fern in the Ballaugh Curragh.



The society saw the Island at its steepest, sunniest and wettest; they were fed upon by midges and ticks while maintaining tireless good cheer and a joyful willingness to share their knowledge with those of us fortunate enough to join them on their forays into the Island's countryside. Indeed even getting the minibus stuck in Cornaa's gravel beach (pictured below) followed by getting cut off by a spring high tides did nothing to dampen spirits.

Thanks particularly go to Erica Spencer for towing the minibus out of the gravel.



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