

# Field Botany in Dunbartonshire

Newsletter - Autumn 2022

## Progress

What a joy it is to have so much botanical fieldwork going on in Dunbartonshire!

We've been to many wonderful places this year, with 20 programmed group outings supported by lots of individual work and spontaneous get-togethers. As a result, we've recorded 923 species across 246 monads and achieved thorough records for a further 63 monads - meaning that we're ahead of target to cover the entire vice-county afresh by 2030.



Team photo at Rhu on the final outing of the season

Our main priorities these last two years have been:

(a) To record plants in areas never recorded before

Of the 108 previously 'blank' monads, we now have good records for 45.

(b) To deepen the record in areas where very few species had been previously noted.

Of the 111 monads with fewer than 10 species previously noted, we now have good records for 53.

We are also keeping on top of monitoring change in areas which were previously very well recorded, checking how many species remain present and adding new records wherever possible.

(For more statistical facts and figures, see our running 'Totaliser' at the end of this Newsletter.)

## **Brambles**

One of many sub-projects we are engaged with is building identification skills for the different Bramble microspecies and repeating as much as possible of the extensive Bramble record assembled by Allan Stirling in Dunbartonshire some 30 or 40 years ago.

Since the start of 2021, we have made over 340 records, including 22 different species. Over 120 of these records are re-finds of records by Allan Stirling, while over 200 are New Monad Records.

The most interesting Bramble this year was *Rubus hylocharis* (Patent-pedicelled Bramble), which was found in July in Shore Wood near Gartocharn and identified by Angus Hannah from a specimen. This species had never been noted in Dunbartonshire before.

Angus Hannah (Vice-County Recorder, Clyde Islands) runs a small Workshop each year on Bramble identification.

This year's Bramble Workshop was held in Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire, and this photo shows the commitment of several Vice-County Recorders to building skills in this genus.

Angus is nearest the camera, with Carol Crawford (Ayrshire), Keith Watson (Renfrewshire) and Michael Philip (Dunbartonshire and Lanarkshire), supported by Anne Middleton from Northumbria who is reading from Angus's new Key.



Further work on Brambles will be integral to our recording in the coming years. Stan Campbell attended the Bramble Workshop for the first time this year: if anyone else is interested, please get in touch. The Bramble Workshop weekend for 2023 will take place in July in Maybole, Ayrshire.

(We will also be continuing photographic recording of Dandelions next April - full details nearer the time.)

### **Quotes of the Year**

In response to the question, "With all the early starts and walking you do, aren't you exhausted?", **Stan Campbell** replied, "I can sleep in the winter."

**Lucy Hollingworth**: "I feel a bit awkward walking across a public park carrying a two-headed dinosaur." [You'll have to ask her about that one . . .]

**Fiona Merrilees**: "Yesterday I learned the Korean for Clover." [ . . . as you do . . . ]

When asked to describe the best places to look for *Saxifraga tridactylites* (Rue-leaved Saxifrage), **Malcolm Macneill** said, "The sort of place you wouldn't take your Granny."

**Some recent finds** (Grahame visited an unrecorded monad in the Burncrooks area in the Kilpatricks)



Upper left: *Rorippa palustris* (Marsh Yellow-cress)

Lower left: *Lythrum portula* (Water-purslane)

Upper right: *Sedum villosum* (Hairy Stonecrop)

Lower right: *Littorella uniflora* (Shoreweed)

## Two uncommon ferns



*Cryptogramma crispera* (Parsley Fern)



*Gymnocarpium dryopteris* (Oak Fern)

## Looking ahead

With the 2022 season now behind us, we can spend the winter months building up our plant knowledge and contemplating how best we can each contribute to botanical activity next year.

The Winter Study Groups which we trialled successfully last autumn are not running this time around. However, the BSBI offers a fabulous array of resources. Visit the website and have a 'clickabout':

<https://bsbi.org/identification>

<https://bsbi.org/videos>

You may like to subscribe to the BSBI YouTube channel, where there's a huge collection of helpful videos :

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BotanicalSocietyofBritainandIreland>

For users of Twitter, there's the popular 'Wildflower Hour':

<https://bsbi.org/wildflower-hour>

Or why not pick a title or two from Summerfield Books that people could give you for Christmas?

<https://www.summerfieldbooks.com/product-category/life-science/botany/>



## **Special thanks**

Over 30 people have joined us in fieldwork this year, but several key individuals deserve a special mention:

**Malcolm Macneill** has carried out further detailed work in many urban monads, typically expanding the species record by around 40%. This gives us an ever-clearer picture of the richness of the urban flora. (Malcolm is engaged in similar urban recording in Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire.)

**Stan Campbell** has visited remote hill country around Loch Sloy and in the far north-east of the vice-county, providing initial lists for areas never visited before by field botanists.

**Lucy Hollingworth** has led group outings, and is currently working on a dataset which will produce the first Rare Plant Register for Dunbartonshire.

**Grahame Jarvis** has done valuable recording in several previously unrecorded monads in the remote Burncrooks area of the Kilpatrick Hills.

**Cathy McVean** has also been at work in the Kilpatricks, building records where little was known before.

**Alison Rutherford** has been constantly encouraging and her vigilance in Helensburgh has ensured a small but steady inflow of records: Helensburgh has the first monad to record 300 species since the start of 2021!



Stan at the Lily Loch, on the north side of Duncolm

. . . and finally . . .

Huge congratulations to Fiona Merrilees for her successful run in the Loch Ness Marathon on 2nd October. Not only did she complete the course looking full of running, but she raised over £1,200 for MND Scotland.

Fiona says: "I think I was overjoyed to see the finish line. Shortly after crossing it my legs stopped working!"



Fiona approaching the finish line by the River Ness (looking as if she could just turn round and run all the way back again!)

## Totaliser

	<u>2022</u>	<u>Project total</u>
Total monad records made	15,287	34,687
Monads visited, with at least one record made	246	456 (65%)
Monads visited, with no previous record at all	16	46
Monad with highest species count	NS4970 (278) (Clydebank)	NS2982 (300) (Helensburgh)
Monads regarded as 'well-recorded'	63	146 (20.7%)
Total species recorded	923	1,077
Number of people joining 'Team 99' network	10	60

(correct as at 19th October, 2022)

### Keep in touch

Please keep the emails (or letters, phone calls or texts) coming - especially if you're reporting plants you have found. I'm also glad to receive photos for identification, or suggestions of contacts or future outings.

During the winter, challenge yourself to a bit of study (see above for some of the resources available). And next season, please take part in one of our outings - especially if you have never done so before!

Michael Philip (BSBI Recorder, vc99)

email: [botany@opus44.co.uk](mailto:botany@opus44.co.uk)

### **Photo credits\*:**

The Team at Rhu	Grahame Jarvis, Rhu, 1st October 2022
Bramble Workshop	Jim Blackwood, Lochwinnoch, 30th July 2022
Some recent finds (all 4)	Grahame Jarvis, Burncrooks, 2nd September 2022
<i>Cryptogramma crispera</i>	Michael Philip, above High Craigton, 12th June 2022
<i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i>	Grahame Jarvis, Burncrooks, 2nd September 2022
Stan at the Lily Loch	Grahame Jarvis, Duncolm, 16th July 2022
Fiona running the Marathon	(photo supplied by Fiona Merrilees), 2nd October 2022

\* Remember you're always welcome to send in photos, either for potential inclusion in the Newsletter or the webpage, or to request help in identifying a plant.