

Lanarkshire Botany

Summer 2022



Progress

Since the Lanarkshire Botany Network was formed in late 2016, much progress has been made in recording our wild plants. In particular, we have explored areas never visited by field botanists before; we have been able to achieve greater precision by recording in single 1km map squares (monads) rather than the 2km, 5km or even 10km squares often used previously; we have focussed special effort on urban recording; and our network model has been successfully adopted in other counties.



View towards Lanark and Tinto from the village hall at Kilncadzow (pronounced 'Kilkeggie')

We have recorded wild plants in **1,139** monads (**46%** of our vice-county), including **464** monads where no recording had ever been done before. In **700** monads we have seen, just since the start of 2017, more plant species than were on record there previously.

We have noted over **1,300** different species in all, i.e. **62%** of all species ever recorded in Lanarkshire.

Urban botanical recording has historically been a focus, since Lanarkshire has extensive areas of urban environments. Our participation in the Botanical Society of Scotland's 'Urban Flora Project' has involved fresh, intensive work in our towns and cities. We have contributed good data-sets from Glasgow, Cambuslang, East Kilbride, Motherwell, Hamilton, Uddingston, Coatbridge and Airdrie - with Shotts, Lanark and Strathaven to be added in the coming weeks.

And our influence has spread well beyond our boundaries: news of our network approach has featured in BSBI conferences and committees and has engendered interest in various parts of Britain and Ireland. More specifically, we have triggered the start of sister networks in Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire and these now have sufficient strength and momentum to stand as successes in their own right.

Falls of Clyde

Earlier this year we were approached by Clare Toner, Clyde Valley Ranger for the Scottish Wildlife Trust, to collaborate in a fresh botanical survey of the SWT Falls of Clyde Reserve.

Over the 2022 and 2023 seasons steady work will be undertaken: this year we are building a big core list of plants, and next year will focus on hunting for the rarer and more elusive species previously noted on the site. Sometime next year there will be a special operation to get botanists down on ropes into the gorge, where some of the rare plants are expected to be found!

The site is divided into ten Compartments, and the plan is to compile a plant list for each one.

Across the Reserve, we have already gathered **568** records, including **182** species.



Looking upstream in the gorge from one of the viewpoints



Saxifraga granulata (Meadow Saxifrage)



Ranunculus auricomus (Goldilocks Buttercup)

Anyone is welcome to be involved, whether alone, in ones and twos, or in the occasional group outings we now have planned. The Falls of Clyde Reserve is a wonderful place, but there are some protocols to be followed. Full information on request: if this survey is something you would like to assist with, please contact Michael.

A tiny treasure

In March this year, Malcolm Macneill reported finding *Cardamine corymbosa* (New Zealand Bittercress) in small cracks in tarmac in a courtyard in Bearsden. He has since discovered that it is frequent in similar urban nooks and crannies all over western Glasgow. Coincidentally, it was reported in Edinburgh by the Botanical Society of Scotland at around the same time.



Cardamine corymbosa (New Zealand Bittercress)

This tiny plant has presumably been lurking unnoticed under our noses for a while. It lies flat on the ground, sending up leafless flowering shoots, each bearing a single flower. The flowers often have fewer than the normal 4 petals (sometimes even just a single petal) and seem disproportionately large because the whole plant is so tiny. As in the more familiar Bittercresses, the leaves are pinnate, but the terminal lobe has a distinctive shape: almost an equilateral triangle with rounded corners.

Keep your eyes peeled!

Training (you can help)

Requests are increasingly coming in from Parks, Schools, Community Woodlands, Urban Conservation Projects and Visitor Centres for someone to come and provide beginner-level botany experiences.

Many readers of this Newsletter have more than enough capability to be involved in this, whether alone or with others. The training and mentorship chain extends in both directions, and we should all remember that, as well as seeking input for our own development, we should take opportunities to offer it in turn to others. At a time when public concern for the natural world is growing rapidly, there is a real need for some basic input for beginner botanists.

Please get in touch if you'd like to help in this - the more of us who pass on our enthusiasm for botany to others, the more people will start to get interested.

Some Lanarkshire finds



Rubus spectabilis (Salmonberry)



Erophila verna s.s. (Common Whitlowgrass)
(note the very deeply-split petals)



Erodium cicutarium (Common Stork's-bill)



Chelidonium majus (Greater Celandine)

QUIZ ANSWERS

Here are the translations of the Three-Letter Acronyms in our recent quiz.

Partner organisations and initiatives:

- BRC** Biological Records Centre(s)
- BSS** Botanical Society of Scotland
- GPS** Global Positioning System
- LNR** Local Nature Reserve
- NBN** National Biodiversity Network
- NTS** National Trust for Scotland
- NVC** National Vegetation Classification
- SNH** Scottish Natural Heritage - now operating as NatureScot
- SWT** Scottish Wildlife Trust

BSBI jargon:

- AEM** Annual Exhibition Meeting (the BSBI's big annual get-together)
- DDb** Distribution Database
- RPR** Rare Plant Register
- SBC** Scottish Botanists' Conference (held annually in November - highly recommended!)
- UFP** Urban Flora Project (an initiative of the BSS)
- VCR** Vice-County Recorder

Plant abbreviations (sometimes used informally when making notes):

- BFT** Bird's-foot Trefoil
- RLS** Rue-leaved Saxifrage
- SVG** Sweet Vernal-grass

Our own jargon:

- WOB** 'Walk On By' - often uttered e.g. when someone asks what Willow that is . . . !
- WSG** Winter Study Groups
- PSW** Initials of our very own Peter Wiggins - as seen in his email address, and on his car registration plate

Readers' comments

"I love the litter pick idea and think the litter problem is a national disgrace."
(Sinclair Dyer)

"I particularly enjoyed the imagery conjured up by Botany on Bike!"
(Kerry Thomson)

Hamilton Natural History Society

The sad news has come to us that, after 62 years of fostering and promoting local interest in all aspects of natural history, the Hamilton Natural History Society (HNHS) has very reluctantly accepted that it cannot continue. The Society was officially wound up at a recent meeting called for the purpose.

Our botany network received much encouragement from HNHS and we undertook some joint activities. We therefore share a sense both of gratitude for the partnership we enjoyed and of sadness that there was no alternative but to bring the Society to a dignified end.

Keep in touch

Please keep your emails, photos, texts, comments and ideas coming: your enthusiasm and communication are what our network is all about. If you are willing to assist with any aspect of our work, such as planning our programme, handling our data, or indeed producing this newsletter - please say so! And do join our outings whenever you can - especially if you have never done so before. There's no better way to learn plants than to spend time with others who share your interest.

The Lanarkshire page on the BSBI website has been recently updated: that's the place to read past issues of this Newsletter, and our Outings Programme appears there after being circulated to everyone personally.

Michael Philip (BSBI Joint Recorder, vc77)

email: botany@opus44.co.uk

Peter Wiggins (BSBI Joint Recorder, vc77)

email: pswiggins@gmail.com

Photo credits*:

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| Lanarkshire view | Michael Philip, Kilincadzow, 6th June 2022 |
| Falls of Clyde gorge | Michael Philip, Falls of Clyde Reserve, 6th May 2022 |
| <i>Saxifraga granulata</i> (telephoto) | (ditto - viewed from a distance on Bonnington Island) |
| <i>Ranunculus auricomus</i> | (ditto - by riverside boardwalk) |
| <i>Cardamine corymbosa</i> | Michael Philip, Maryhill, 4th April 2022 |
| <i>Rubus spectabilis</i> | Michael Philip, near Kaimend, 1st May 2022 |
| <i>Erophila verna s.s.</i> | Davina Gray, Carluke, 18th March 2022 |
| <i>Erodium cicutarium</i> | Peter Wiggins, Glasgow (east end), 14th June 2019 |
| <i>Chelidonium majus</i> | Jim Blackwood, Glasgow (west end), 3rd May 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.