

Lanarkshire Botany

Summer update, May 2018



VERY IMPORTANT!

Data Protection

It is really important that everyone on the Lanarkshire Botany network takes a moment to 'opt in' afresh. New Data Protection legislation comes into force on 25th May. This means that all your contact details held by our network must be deleted by that date unless you get in touch to state specifically that you wish to be part of it. After that date no further reminder can be sent - because your details will have been deleted!

So please take a moment to send us an email. You could simply copy and paste this sentence:

"I wish to be part of the Lanarkshire Botany email list, to receive newsletters, outings programmes, and occasional correspondence related to field botany in Lanarkshire."

Send it, with your name clearly stated in the text of the email, to: botany@opus44.co.uk

Even if you have been in email contact recently or frequently, it is still necessary to send us your fresh 'opt-in'. However, should you happen to miss the deadline, we can easily be found and re-contacted via the BSBI website and its Lanarkshire page (see below).

Thank you.

New Web Page

The Lanarkshire page of the BSBI website has recently been updated.

You can go to the BSBI homepage www.bsbi.org and click the Lanarkshire county-shape on the map of the British Isles; or click the link below:

<https://bsbi.org/lanarkshire-v-c-77>

On the Lanarkshire page you can now find the current outings programme and back-numbers of this newsletter - as well as more general information about field botany in the vice-county.

Saxifraga tridactylites

In the previous newsletter we mentioned some intensive work carried out in the early part of this year to establish the range and population size of *Saxifraga tridactylites* (Rue-leaved Saxifrage) in the greater Glasgow and Motherwell area. We have found literally hundreds of thousands of these plants!

Genetic analysis is currently being carried out at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, but preliminary results make it clear (a) that the Glasgow and Motherwell populations are very closely related, and (b) that they are genetically different from examples of the species from some other populations elsewhere in Scotland and beyond. This is most exciting - although the plant is a British native, our lot would appear to be 'aliens' which have arrived independently from some other part of the world!

Full results will be made available in due course, once the analysis has been completed.

Special thanks to Malcolm Macneill for sparking off this detective story with his extensive hunt for the plant across Glasgow, mainly in February and March.

Cochlearia danica

Anyone driving around on Lanarkshire's road network in the spring will doubtless have noticed a fuzz of low pinkish-white flowers on verges and central reservations.

This is *Cochlearia danica* (Danish Scurvygrass), which is now very common in such habitats. It is usually described as a halophyte - a plant which favours salty conditions and colonises bare margins of roads which are salted in winter.



Last year at around this time, the idea occurred of recording the range of this plant from a moving car. Although not normally a good way of doing field botany, this method is appropriate for noting the monads (single map squares) in which this particular plant is present. The flowering season is relatively short, so there has been a lot of driving going on in recent weeks!

The vice-county of Lanarkshire, can be described in a nutshell as "Braehead to Beattock". *Cochlearia danica* grows on the motorway almost continuously between those two places!

Before this season, the species had been recorded in 53 monads in Lanarkshire. In April and May of this year alone, it has so far been recorded in 276 monads.

Glasgow Botanic Gardens



Saturday 19th May was the Royal Wedding. It was also the FA Cup Final and the Scottish Cup Final.

But for those with botany on their minds there was a bigger attraction, namely a recording visit to the Glasgow Botanic Gardens to begin to compile a 2018 list to place alongside a list compiled in 1998.

136 plants were recorded on the day, including 101 from the 1998 list. A second visit is planned for Sunday, 12th August.

A separate visit will be made to check the tree inventory.

The Kibble Palace on that sunny morning

Dandelions

Have a look at this photo of a Dandelion:



Now, look again more closely for the following details:

- the underside of the ligules (think 'petals') has a brownish-grey stripe
- the stripe stops just short of the tip, so the teeth at the end are in fact yellow
- the outer bracts are strongly recurved (rolled back) and have no margins of a different colour
- the outer bracts are dark green beneath and a lighter colour above, with pinkish tinges

These are some of the kind of details which enable a precise identification to be made. Others include:

- the diameter of the fully-open flower
- whether pollen is present or not
- the exact width of the bracts
- the colour and shape of the leaves, and the number and shape of the leaf lobes
- the colour of the petiole (leaf stalk), and whether it is winged or not
- the hairiness of the plant
- the colour of the seeds
- the habitat in which the plant is growing

In the past few weeks we have gathered detailed information and photographs of 24 Dandelion specimens and are in a process of dialogue with John Richards (the foremost UK authority on Dandelions, author of the Dandelion Handbook, and the BSBI Referee for the genus). So far four out of the eleven specimens examined have been rejected - but the other seven have been identified!

The one in the photograph above is *Taraxacum cophocentrum*.

(The others so far are: *T. atactum*; *T. exsertiforme*; *T. incisum*; *T. lepidum*; *T. lunare*; *T. pseudoretroflexum*)

Special thanks to Peter Wiggins for his painstaking work on this: an array of 'proper' Dandelion records is a sign of seriousness in any botanical list!

Shotts 'bing'

In the recent BSBI News (No.138, April 2018, p.5) reference was made to the discovery in 2007 of *Lycopodium annotinum* (Interrupted Clubmoss) on the large 'bing' at Shotts. The article mentions that four different Clubmosses can be found here, all growing together within a few metres of each other.

As it happened, we already had an outing planned for that location on 13th May - so we followed detailed directions and duly found all four species as described.

It is extremely unusual to find four Clubmosses together in the same place, and *Lycopodium annotinum* is mostly found much farther north.



Lycopodium clavatum (Stagshorn Clubmoss)



Diaphasiastrum alpinum (Alpine Clubmoss)



Lycopodium annotinum (Interrupted Clubmoss)



Huperzia selago (Fir Clubmoss)

Atlas 2020

You will recall that our primary focus this year and next is to ensure that 75% of our Lanarkshire species have been seen (i.e. re-found or newly-found) this century.

By the start of the year, 16 of our 35 hectads (10km x 10km squares) had already reached this data threshold and our hope was to add 12 more in 2018. Steady progress is being made and, although no further hectads have reached the level as yet, the percentages are creeping up as things are found.

It is a rewarding and fascinating activity - like a grand treasure-hunt across nearly 3,000 sq. km.

We are particularly pleased that hectad **NS56** (western Glasgow) has improved from 55% to 58% already. This is our most challenging area, with some 1,246 species on the all-time list. In other words, 12 further species need to be re-found in order to gain a single percentage point!

Photo Project

Do please remember to send us your very best photos of wild plants taken within the Lanarkshire boundary. We have received many excellent contributions and in due course these will be assembled into a new website to celebrate, and to help identify, Lanarkshire's flora.

For this photo project, your contact person is Peter Wiggins: pswiggins@gmail.com

Keep in touch

I'm always glad to receive emails on any botanical matters. I may not be able to answer everything myself, but this is a network so there will be an answer!

If you know of anyone else who would be interested in receiving the programme of events and occasional newsletters, please ask them to get in touch.

I look forward to seeing you in the field whenever you can join us - you'll be made most welcome.

And please remember to send us an email to 'opt in' to our mailing list. In fact, why not just do it now?

Michael Philip (BSBI recorder, vc77) email: botany@opus44.co.uk

Picture credits

<i>Cochlearia danica</i>	Ashgill, near Larkhall, 23rd April, 2016 (Michael Philip)
Kibble Palace	Glasgow Botanic Gardens, 19th May, 2018 (Michael Philip)
<i>Taraxacum cophocentrum</i>	Yorkhill, Glasgow, 20th April 2018 (Peter Wiggins)
<i>Lycopodium clavatum</i>	Shotts 'bing', 13th May, 2018 (Peter Wiggins)
<i>Diphasiastrum alpinum</i>	Shotts 'bing', 13th May, 2018 (Peter Wiggins)
<i>Lycopodium annotinum</i>	Shotts 'bing', 13th May, 2018 (Peter Wiggins)
<i>Huperzia selago</i>	Shotts 'bing', 13th May, 2018 (Peter Wiggins)