



**Edinburgh Natural History Society**

# 2024 JOURNAL

A record of activities throughout the year





# Edinburgh Natural History Society

## Council October 2024-25

<i>President</i>	Vacancy
<i>Vice President</i>	Vacancy
<i>Secretary</i>	Joan McNaughton
<i>Treasurer</i>	David Adamson

## Ordinary Council Members

Jane Dey, Dorothy Lyle, Ellie Mayhew, David Oates and Rob Wallace

## Non-Council roles within the Society

<i>Events Committee</i>	David Adamson, Sarah Adamson, Wilma Harper Jean Long, Gillian Steele and Lynn Youngs
<i>Website &amp; Social Media</i>	Sarah Adamson and Wilma Harper
<i>Links with other Groups</i>	Sarah Adamson and Wilma Harper
<i>Journal</i>	Dorothy Lyle and David Oates

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The aim of the Journal is to give a snapshot of the Edinburgh Natural History Society in 2024.

A PDF copy of the Journal is available.

Thanks to members who made contributions and helped produce Journal 2024, especially to Jean Long for her meticulous proof-reading (*Nomina latina excepta*).

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*Rhagium bifasciatum* (DO)

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#### PHOTOGRAPHS / ILLUSTRATIONS

Thanks to the following who kindly supplied photographs: Erica Bright (EB), Jane Dey (JD), Susan Falconer (SF), Dorothy Lyle (DL), David Oates (DO), Joanie McNaughton (JMcN), Lynn Youngs (LY). All rights reserved. Photographs remain the property of the photographer and may not be reproduced without permission.

Cover photograph (JMcN): Great White Egret *Ardea alba*  
 Back cover photograph (DL): Garden Tiger Moth caterpillar *Arctia caja*

Illustrations: Eric Perry (EP), Jackie Muscott (JM), David Oates (DO).

## Editorial

Are we as Nats doing enough to promote biodiversity? Like many big issues it often feels as though any individual contribution will make little difference and is hardly worth the effort. However, we cannot afford to be complacent about our environment.

I'm sure many of you noticed wildlife of almost every kind was less evident last summer. Even allowing for the dismal weather conditions it seemed significant. Then Butterfly Conservation confirmed suspicions when they announced a Butterfly Emergency. Following the results of their annual Big Butterfly Count they concluded that the combined effect of habitat loss and climate change meant that butterflies and moths were in severe decline across the UK. It seems reasonable to assume that if butterflies and moths are in severe decline those contributing factors are adversely affecting a wide range of species. The response of Butterfly Conservation was to call on everyone to create more wild spaces. Creating more wild spaces will help to improve biodiversity in even the most unpromising of habitats.

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/discover-and-learn/activities-and-resources/create-a-wild-space>

As Nats we should be aiming to set an example practising and promoting this goal. If you have already created a wild area, well done. Perhaps you could make it a little bigger and we could all encourage friends and neighbours to follow suit. There is plenty of assistance out there to point people in the right direction, get them started and help them maintain a wild space. The RHS provides excellent advice on meadow maintenance - how and when to mow and what needs to be encouraged and what controlled. Even a small patch qualifies as a meadow!

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/lawns/wildflower-meadow-maintenance>

Times have changed when the RHS is actually asking people to consider participating in Plantlife's annual "No Mow May" campaign. "No Mow May" is a great starting point and as people begin to see the odd flower appear in the lawn some may even be persuaded to prolong the period. Unfortunately, there are still many more whose reaction will be to rush for the lawnmower. It will be hard to persuade this "Keep it short and tidy" brigade to change. I discovered this myself when trying to encourage my neighbours to include more wild spaces in our communal garden. We now have a very small wild area which I'm hoping I will be allowed to increase – gradually!

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/>

And don't forget that in the tidier areas of the garden pollinator friendly planting will be a great help to many of our insects. In a hidden spot, growing some caterpillar food would be a great idea. This does not need to be the odd cabbage - Large Whites are also partial to Nasturtiums. Some of the caterpillars will live to swell the butterfly numbers and others provide food for hungry nestlings. A patch of nettles may attract several different butterflies and moths to lay their eggs there. Some wildflower "weeds" are a wonderful source of nectar and those much-maligned dandelions provide lots of valuable spring nectar and a nice splash of colour too.

<https://www.nature.scot/doc/pollinator-strategy-scotland-2017-2027>

Finally, do avoid weedkillers, pesticides and slug pellets, all of which are harmful to far more wildlife than the targeted species. Try not to be too tidy in the garden - leaving areas undisturbed particularly in the winter months will allow invertebrates to overwinter successfully. If this sounds like a good excuse to be lazy well let it be a good reason to start wild gardening and do your bit for biodiversity. As they say in the ad "Every little helps!"

*Dorothy Lyle*

## Obituaries

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### **Steuart Ferguson**

Steuart's first ENHS field trip was when Kevin Ingleby showed us around at Toxside. At one point, whilst most people were oohing and aahing at the Crossbills, I stood with Steuart quietly watching a Coal Tit shuttle in and out of its nest with food for the chicks.

Steuart was well-known for his love of the big outdoors and would happily tell us about his adventures and on Members' Nights take us on his journeys to the Scottish Islands. Ever the optimist, on one of my last hospital visits he talked about his plans to get back to what he enjoyed and holidays on the islands. Steuart had worked in a camera shop and had a down-to-earth and inventive approach to his successful photography. Many of his lovely bird photographs have featured in past Journals.

Steuart's main interest was in birds and he was an active member of the local RSPB and SOC groups. As a bus driver he had a 'bus list' - a tally of birds seen whilst on his bus. His regular route, bus number 26, terminated at Seton Sands and an opportunity to inspect his favourite habitat for any interesting birds. For a time, he conducted the WeBS survey of wetland birds for the BTO.

Steuart had been a member of the RSPB Edinburgh Group for many years when he joined us. He was bit of a double agent, he would expand our knowledge of birds and take his new found knowledge, often insects, and share it with the RSPB group. This would often be in the form of pictures shared on the back of his camera. The RSPB group have set up a Steuart Ferguson photographer award, a beautiful sculpture of a golden eagle. It was first presented in 2024 by Steuart's family.

His interest in other areas of natural history expanded as he became active in the ENHS. He was observant, friendly and had a quiet manner helping people learn, particularly about birds. He joined the Events Committee and planned and led many fieldtrips.

What will we miss? Humility and the fact that he always managed to be weatherproof! I think there were many sides to Steuart and we may all miss something different. He certainly had many more ideas for field trips.

*Sarah Adamson*

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### **Dr Ian Schoolar**

Ian Schoolar, who died on 16 August 2022, will be remembered as a quiet, rather private individual who gave a lot to the society from 2013 to 2019. Ian's PhD was in Plant Physiology and a great contrast to his high-flying career in marketing and communication.

I think Ian's first outing was to Hopes Reservoir and his last one was a walk by the River Ettrick and throughout his period of membership he was a "regular" at meetings. Ian led us at Dollar Glen, when it rained as we returned from the Castle, at Blairadam Forest, Fala Moor and from Ellemford to Abbey St Bathans. I think he chose some of these locations because he was fascinated by their names rather than for any other reason. Ian seemed to like the Cleish Hills area of West Fife and I

remember helping Ian recce the vicinity of a fishing loch in that area. Unfortunately, it proved to be unsuitable as a venue so we reverted to Blairadam Forest.

Whilst a Council Member Ian had pondered the idea of making the image of ENHS more appealing. He talked about 'Our Shopfront' being more inviting and giving more of an indication of what we did. In his working life he created NatWest the working name for The National Westminster Bank.

Having hoped to spend his retirement exploring botanical life Ian realised his health was failing. He found winter weather unpleasant and increasingly spent time in Spain with its warmer climate.

*David and Sarah Adamson*

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## **Helen Slater**

I first got to know Helen after she moved to St Alban's Road. The following year (2001) she joined ENHS. She was an outdoor person walking almost every morning and afternoon and this continued up to the months just before her death on October 25th 2024, when she was 93yrs old.

I enjoyed her company on many nature walks in our local area, especially in the Astley Ainslie grounds. In her rucksack she would pack some pocket guides and take a notebook to jot down what we saw as Helen was very observant.

She came on many Nats outings, appreciating lifts from Mary and Joanie. The 5 day summer excursions took her to new places, Janet driving her to Arnside in 2014 and Joanie giving her a lift to Rothbury in 2017.

Helen loved flowers, both wild and garden ones. Flower arranging was one of her talents, so when she worked at Gleneagles Hotel and here in The Balmoral that was part of her job. She also attended art classes and was a good watercolour artist. Visiting exhibitions and going to lunchtime concerts and organ recitals were favourite pastimes.

Birdwatching was another of her hobbies and she attended RSPB conferences in York and Norfolk. With Mollie she went on guided birdwatching days led by Mike Phillips and they also did some of his holidays including one to Minorca.

Joanie recalls that if on a Nats outing she was asked what she was interested in, Helen's reply was "Anything with wings" and birds certainly fit into that category. However, she liked the natural world in general and her time spent with us added to her knowledge and enjoyment. Those of us who knew Helen will miss her company – I certainly will.

*Jean Long*

## Nature Notes

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### HOLYROOD PARK'S FIRST KNOWN WHITE-LETTER HAIRSTREAK

There was great excitement amongst the Edinburgh butterfly-watchers in July – a White-letter Hairstreak (*Satyrium w-album*) had been spotted on Saturday 27 July in Holyrood Park, along the eastern boundary wall beneath Dunsapie Crag. The person who saw it, Richard Wells, a transect recorder in the Park, could not quite believe his eyes as these butterflies were not known to occur in Edinburgh, or indeed the Lothians, at that stage. He sent his photos to Iain Cowe at Butterfly Conservation's East Scottish Butterflies (BC ESB) Facebook Group, who verified its ID. Richard went back the following day and saw two, a male and a female, thus the question remains – have White-letter Hairstreaks been living in Holyrood Park for some time, years maybe, and gone unrecorded? I said earlier, "... at that stage". Richard subsequently learned of one other Lothians record in 2024, that being in Haddington, East Lothian on 12 July which was seen by George Hogg. Prior to that they were only known to occur in the Borders, as far as Scotland is concerned.



Naturally I had to go and look for this butterfly myself! On Monday 30 July I set off up the killer steps from Duddingston Village and down the path alongside the boundary wall heading north to the spot where it had been seen. There were about 6 of us standing about, waiting patiently and watching the Bramble bushes, with frequent "There it is. Oh no, sorry, not it". I waited there in the warm sunshine for two hours, with not a single sighting. However, I wasn't disappointed because I spotted a first for me, a male Banded General (*Stratiomys potamida*). My sighting was confirmed by Ian Andrews on UK Diptera Facebook Group, and my record was verified by Martin C Harvey on iRecord. Subsequently looking at the records, I noted only one other Banded General sighting in Midlothian, a female, in Roslin Glen on 04/07/2021, recorded by Keith Bland and verified on iRecord by the same Verifier as my sighting.



*Stratiomys potamida* (JMcN)  
*Satyrium w-album* (JMcN)

I still desperately wanted to see this White-letter Hairstreak so I went back to the boundary wall the following day. This time I was rewarded with the most superb views, but before it showed up I counted five other butterfly species: Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*), Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*), Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*), Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) and Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*). Whilst watching and photographing the Holly Blue, I saw something move out of the corner of my eye. I lowered my camera and looked closely at where I saw this unexpected movement. And there it was nectaring on Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), a little gem of brown with a wee bit of orange and streaks of white! I watched it at eye level for all of five minutes. I could barely hold my camera steady I was so excited.

I posted my photos of the W-1 Hairstreak on the BC ESB FB page and Iain Cowe confirmed it as a female. He also said that, having seen other people's photos, that made 3 individuals, 2 males and a female, seen at this site. Quelle excitement and great news for Holyrood Park.

Finally, I should add that the Bramble patch where Richard Wells first saw it will be forever known as Wells Wall. I wonder when it will show as that on the OS map!

Joanie McNaughton

## TAME BLACKBIRDS

In July this year I was kept busy feeding a pair of tame Blackbirds. Every time I went into the back garden I would find a bird standing a few feet away and just looking at me, and I got into the habit of taking bread and cheese with me whenever I went out. I had already seen young Blackbirds around, so they must have been having a second brood and finding food more difficult to get. This went on for a good fortnight, the young becoming scattered towards the end. The female was the more demanding and actually chased away young from the first brood. Then one day they weren't there anymore. They had had enough and probably needed to moult.

Later I cut back some overgrown hedging, which revealed one of their nests. Unfortunately, the site will be too exposed for use next year. So sorry birds!

Jackie Muscott

*Exidiopsis effusa* (David Long)

## HAIR ICE

On January 6<sup>th</sup> I was walking in the Penicuik Estate going N.E. from the Low Pond, following the River North Esk. It had been very cold overnight and there was frost on the ground, but in places I noticed there were strips which were much whiter. At first glance one could have wrongly thought it was snow, but closer inspection revealed that it was in fact hair ice which is somewhat uncommon. I had come across it in the past and knew what I was looking at. It can be found on moist rotting wood from deciduous trees, but it requires certain conditions to form. The temperature has to be slightly under 0° C and the air needs to be humid.



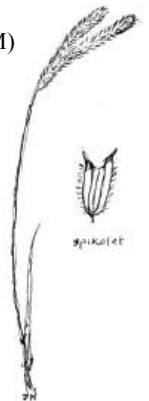
Scientists had known about hair ice as far back as 1918, but it wasn't until 2015 that German and Swiss scientists identified a fungus, *Exidiopsis effusa*, as being the key to the formation of hair ice. This fungus shapes the ice into fine silky hairs which are brittle taking the form of curls and waves. Once you have seen hair ice and examined it closely you will marvel at the beauty of nature and if you are lucky enough to see it again you will know exactly what you are looking at.

Jean Long

*Phleum bertolonii* (JM)

## A FALSE CLUBMOSS

Could that really be a fruiting branch of Stag's-horn Clubmoss poking out of the grass on Midmar Meadow? Sadly no. It turned out to be a stalk of Smaller Cat's-tail (*Phleum bertolonii*) bearing conjoined twin flower heads. I had visited on a sunny day on 26th June hoping to see Ringlet butterflies, having missed them last year. I was pleased to see good numbers together with a couple of Meadow Browns and Chimney Sweeper moths (there's quite a lot of Pignut, the larval food plant for the latter). At my later visit in July 2023 I had seen a lot of Meadow Browns and also Skippers but no Ringlets.



Jackie Muscott

## MY PATCH

Most of us have a patch be it our garden or a nearby wild area that we regularly scan for signs of interesting wildlife. An opening bud, a visiting insect or some elusive bird call are all things that lift our spirits and can make our day. These patches help to keep us in touch with nature despite the ever-encroaching urban surroundings in which many of us live. Recently there has been a move to improve the biodiversity of many urban sites and happily this is creating more interesting patches - my patch is one of these.

In 2021 Ashleigh Whiffin, Curator of Entomology at the National Museum of Scotland, with the help of Anthony McClusky of Butterfly Conservation set about improving the biodiversity of the grounds of the museum collection centre in Granton.

During spring and summer the grasses and wildflowers are now given the space to flourish. Borders and pathways are mown twice a month to maintain access which also provides a nice mix of vegetation heights, helping to support a diversity of species. Yellow Rattle, often referred to as the 'meadow maker' has also been introduced, to help reduce the dominant grasses. The meadow areas aren't cut until late September/early October, and about 20% of it is left standing, to provide much needed overwintering sites.

At first sight this patch still does not appear very inspiring in terms of biodiversity. However, there are now breeding populations of several butterflies and moths and probably lots of other species too with which I am less familiar. The areas of longer grass provide for Narrow-bordered 5-spot Burnets and Small Skippers, the Docks and Dandelions Garden Tigers and the Ragwort Cinnabars. Painted Lady caterpillars have been found on the Meadow Thistle, and we even suspect one of the scrubby willows is home to Lunar Hornet moths having found one on site and seen what look like exit holes on the trunk. There are several species of bee nesting and bee-flies on their predatory trail were regularly seen last spring. Nymphs of several species of ladybird and shieldbug including the newly arrived Green Shieldbug have been recorded.



I moth trap there during the summer months and though catches are disappointingly low - probably on account of the high light pollution from security lighting - we have had some interesting moths. We have also had some interest in the moth traps from a family of foxes who regularly mark the white sheets on which they sit and, possibly attracted by the flying insects, have nearly demolished a Robinson trap on several occasions.

Over two hundred Orchids have appeared in the uncut areas, mainly Northern Marsh Orchid but also Common Spotted and Broad-leaved Helleborine. The plant species count has risen to 163. Each season there are a few more newcomers to be found. I can see that there are more bryophytes and fungi species too but will need to ask an expert to identify these! A visit from an expert would be very welcome so do contact me or Ashleigh Whiffin if you would like to help.

Admittedly we do not have beautiful chocolate box meadow, but we do have areas of much more species-rich grassland to replace the monoculture sward that existed previously. The whole area is gradually being recolonised by its rightful inhabitants and for me it is a great pleasure to try to spy out the latest new arrivals and watch others become more established in this increasingly interesting patch.

*Dorothy Lyle*

### **DAMSELFLY MATING**

The mating process in damselflies is quite elaborate. The sexual organs of both sexes are at the end of the tail. However, when a male is ready to mate he curls round and deposits his sperm into a kind of pocket on his chest. Then he goes in search of a mate, and if he finds a likely female he grasps her round the neck with claspers at his back end. At this point the pair hang in a straight line and are said to be 'in tandem'. Presently the female bends to collect sperm from her mate's 'breast pocket'. The pair are then in 'wheel formation' – as in the photograph. When mating is complete the male may release the female to lay her eggs on a suitable water plant. More often the pair remain in tandem while egg-laying thus keeping other males away.

*Enallagma cyathigerum* (JM)



*Jackie Muscott*

**GRASS OF PARNASSUS**

Grass of Parnassus, *Parnassia palustris*, has an unusual way of reproduction. When the flowers open they have 5 immature stamens and 5 crescents of shiny false stamens surrounding a large ovary. The stamens mature one by one. Each in turn, grows and lays its anther on top of the ovary where the pollen is available to visiting insects (attracted by the false stamens). Once the pollen is shed the stamen bends back to make way for the next one. Only after all have taken their turn does the stigma (female organ) on top of the ovary mature and accept pollen. This arrangement prevents self-fertilisation. The stigmas mature in either a clockwise or anticlockwise direction depending on the plant, and the one in the photograph is anti-clockwise: three stamens have bent back, one is atop the ovary, and the last one is waiting its turn. It's a beautiful flower, well worth having a closer look at what it's up to.



*Parnassia palustris* (LY)

Jackie Muscott

**LISTENING TO BEES**

If you visit RBGE on a sunny spring day you might see Alixandra Prybyla and her assistants catching and marking bees. Alix is a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh Zoology Department. If you see her she is likely to be dancing around a patch of *Pulmonaria* to catch, mark and track Hairy-footed Flower Bees (*Anthophora plumipes*). She is recording sound and analysing buzz frequency to investigate aspects of bee life. She also studies the buzzes of other more familiar bumblebees around the gardens and in selected locations further afield.

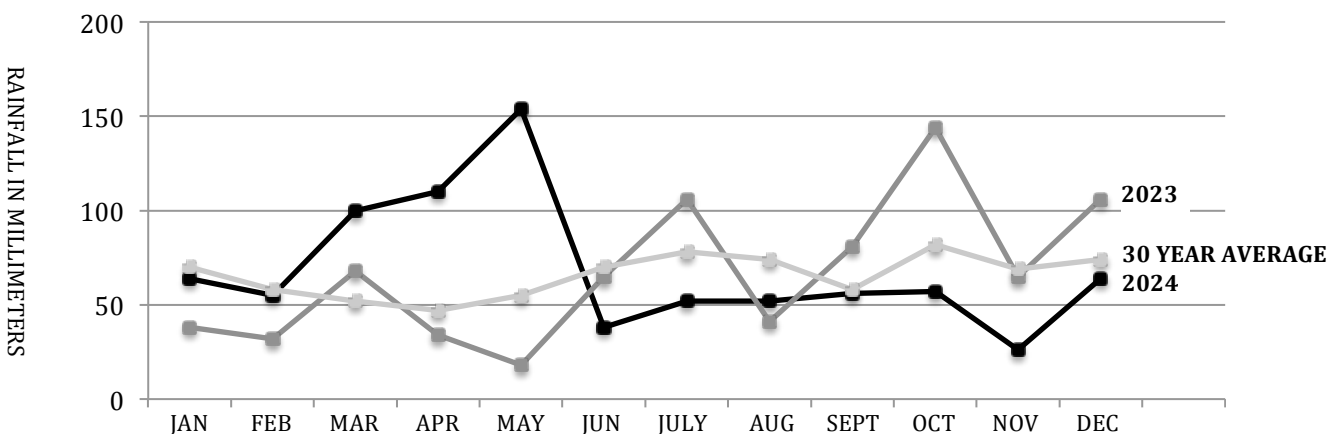
Sarah Adamson

[https://edwebcontent.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/prybylaa.\\_-davis\\_fund\\_blog\\_2022.pdf](https://edwebcontent.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/prybylaa._-davis_fund_blog_2022.pdf)

**Rainfall in Corstorphine 2024.** As can be seen from the 30 year average, March, April and May are usually the driest months of the year but in 2024 they were unusually wet, whereas from June onwards the months were drier than average. The March and May readings were the highest rainfall recorded for those months, in this station in Corstorphine, in nearly 60 years of measuring rainfall.

Frances Dunn

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
<b>2024</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>828</b>
2023	38	32	68	34	18	65	106	41	81	144	65	106	798
1991-2020 30 Year Average	70	58	52	47	55	70	78	74	58	82	69	74	787



## Excursion Reports 2024

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**RIVER ESK, MUSSELBURGH** 14 January 2024  
Leader: Vladimir Krivtsov

Nine members set off from the Riverside car park near Tesco towards St Michael's Churchyard, Inveresk, from which we were able to view Fife and beyond. However, a snell north-west wind encouraged us to keep moving. Below the flight of steps leading to the church Simon found the leaves of a crucifer, probably Lesser Swinecress (*Lepidium didymium*), and there were a few Snowdrops (*Galanthus sp*) coming into flower on the wooded south-facing slope below the church. We spent some time in the churchyard, perhaps motivated by Per Smiseth's recent talk on Cemetery Wildlife Watch, but apart from a tiny moss with a long name, *Pseudocrossidium revolutum*, there was not much wildlife to watch in this cemetery.



Out of the wind and enjoying the slight warmth of the January sunshine Ian and I watched a flock of Long-tailed Tits (*Aegithalos caudatus*), accompanied by Goldcrests (*Regulus regulus*) and at least two Nuthatches (*Sitta europaea*), foraging among the ivy-clad trees. The mycologists debated the identities of fungi while I explored the silty banks of the River Esk where, a few years ago, I recalled seeing a Mink (*Mustelidae sp*) climbing in a tree. David was on the lookout for winter gnats and other insects, but apart from a few bluebottle-like flies there was little to be seen. Even the river appeared devoid of birdlife, but one sign of the advancing season was a patch of Purple Toothwort (*Lathraea clandestine*) in flower, with pale non-flowering shoots appearing on the other side of the path.

Needing to warm up after lunch I set off upstream at a faster pace and was rewarded with sightings of a Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) and Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*) and hearing a Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) in full song. A local told me that Jays preyed on small birds in the same way as Magpies (*Pica pica*), but the Jay is forgiven for its colourful plumage and relative scarcity. The foregoing may suggest that this was a general outing but there was an emphasis on fungi. Many thanks to Vladimir for leading this event.

David Adamson



**SLATEFORD to BALERNO** 3 February 2024  
Leaders: Sarah & David Adamson

After improving the finances of the Water of Leith Centre by purchasing drinks and walking guides, 14 of us crossed Lanark Road into Craiglockhart Dell at the start of a walk of 5.7 miles which should take 1 hour and 55 minutes. However, the guidance in the Water of Leith Centre applies to those following the Walkway and maintaining a reasonable pace, whereas our route deviated from the straight and narrow and involved plenty of pauses. The first of these stops was to admire a plant of Stinking Hellebore (*Helleborus foetidissimus*) in an ash wood by Redhall Walled Garden. The leaves were not fragrant, so this may, in fact, have been *H. viridis*. Also in the wood was a patch of a large-flowered Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*).

Following the river upstream past Kate's Mill Cottage and across the repaired bridge at the weir in Colinton Dell, we looked across the river to the ice-house in the mature woodland of Merchiston Castle School, formerly Colinton House. Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*) had been calling here on a recent Lothians Bryophyte Group meeting, and today Douglas saw at least three of these relative newcomers. Apart from Dippers (*Cinclus cinclus*) and some Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), we didn't notice much birdlife on the river itself, and the Orange Ladybirds (*Halzia sedecimguttata*), seen here in their hundreds in previous years, were all but absent.

Once through the colourful Colinton Tunnel, with murals on the theme of Robert Louis Stevenson, we lunched in the sunshine in Spylaw Park before continuing our journey along the resurfaced Water of Leith Walkway. The botanical rearguard found plenty to record and dropped behind the main group. Thanks to the miracle of mobile phones our fragmentary party kept in touch and reunited in Balerno. Jean and others saw Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*) in flower but the presence of most plants was only disclosed by their leaves. Sue, Margaret and Douglas found *Arum maculatum* and *A. italicum* as well as *Sanicula europaea* plus other native plants and garden escapes.

We left the Walkway at Currie to take the higher, and much chillier, path past Lymphoy. Taking shelter from the wind in a thick hedge, and making as much noise as the earlier Nuthatches, were Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*), Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) and Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*). We eventually took some welcome shelter behind the Yew trees (*Taxus sp.*), outside Malleny before completing the journey by walking to a bus stop where we boarded the number 44. Some of us left the bus at the Water of Leith Centre where we further boosted their finances.

David Adamson



#### ABERLADY BAY to GULLANE 2 March 2024

Leaders: Lynn Youngs and Jean Long.



Eighteen members gathered at the main entrance to the Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve beside the timber bridge on a bright day with a cold breeze.

Some time was initially spent exploring the salt marsh adjacent to the bridge and we found tiny Tubeworms (*Spirobia spirobia*) clinging to seaweed. Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) in full flower were both growing nearby. We crossed the bridge and spotted Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) feeding in the low water channel. A Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) was hovering over the salt marsh at the far end of the bridge.

Whilst walking along the path to the Marl Loch we admired the brightly coloured Common Orange Lichen (*Xanthoria parietina*) growing on the numerous Hawthorn bushes (*Crataegus monogyna*). Notable plants along this stretch of the walk included Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and the lovely patterned leaves of Rough Chervil (*Chaerophyllum temulum*). As we approached the Marl Loch we saw the first of thousands of Springbeauty (*Claytonia perfoliata*) leaves that would be seen throughout the day. Thanks to Carolyn's fungi knowledge we also found Sea Buckthorn Bracket fungus (*Fomitiporia hippophaeicola*) that only grows on Sea Buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*).

Lesser Water Parsnip (*Berula erecta*) was seen submerged in the Marl Loch and a large display of last year's Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) was growing nearby. A foray into the marshy area beyond the loch proved to be very productive with Lesser Clubmoss (*Selaginella selaginoides*), Bristly Stonewort (*Chara hispida*) and Fen Pondweed (*Potamogeton coloratus*) all being found. Our route continued towards the sand dunes and on this stretch we spotted Colt's-foot (*Tussilago farfara*) in full flower, old spikes on Northern Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*) and a lovely stand of Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*) growing at the edge of a small pool of water. Next up was our lunch stop in the lee of the dunes so that we had some shelter from the cold breeze and as we

approached the dunes a small flock of Common Skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*) flew overhead. Another thank you to Carolyn for finding the very delicate Winter Stalkball Fungus (*Tulostoma brumale*) - a sand specialist fungus which was found close to our lunch stop and one of the highlights of the day. After lunch we enjoyed a very bracing walk along the coast towards Gullane but unfortunately there was no sign of the Sanderlings (*Calidris alba*) seen on the recce a few days earlier.

On reaching Gullane Point a number of new plants were added to our day's list. There were many basal rosettes of Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), and leaves of Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*) and Buck's-horn plantain (*Plantago coronopus*). Common Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia officinalis*) was almost in flower and Marion pointed out two coastal grasses *Koeleria macranthes* and Sea Fern-grass (*Catapodium marinum*). Our route continued along the coast towards Gullane but birds were proving elusive – a few male Common Eider Ducks (*Somateria mollissima*) and Great Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) were spotted but overall it was a relatively quiet day for birdlife.

Before arriving at Gullane new plant species spotted included Common Whitlowgrass (*Erophila verna*), Thyme-leaved Sandwort (*Arenaria serpyllifolia*), the greenish yellow basal rosettes of Sticky Mouse-ear (*Cerastium glomeratum*) and the beautiful Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) which was in full flower. Just before we reached the car park at Gullane and the end of our walk Marion pointed out a large bush of a hybrid Holly "Golden King" (*Ilex x altaclerensis*) which is non-native but often seen planted in coastal locations. A number of bryophytes were also seen during the day including *Racomitrium canascens* and *Trichostomum brachydontium*.

Some of the group enjoyed coffee and cake in Gullane before we headed for the bus to travel back to Edinburgh (for the "Green" contingent) or to waiting cars at Aberlady. All in all a very pleasant and enjoyable outing in a highly diverse, species rich coastal area.

Lynn Youngs



**BARA LOCH, near GIFFORD 12 March 2024**

Leader: David Adamson Guest expert: Pauline King

Nine people travelled from Haddington in two cars to the roadside verge near Baro Farm where parking is limited. The cold east wind and grey skies remained with us all day but there was plenty of interest to take our minds off the weather. Bara Loch is artificial, having been created as a landscape feature by the Younger family in the 1930s. It has an extensive reedbed at its west end and a dam and outflow at the east end.

Sue and Douglas recorded spring plants, a few of which were in flower. Much of the woodland floor was carpeted in Snowdrops (*Galanthus sp*), now going over, but there were leaves of Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*) and Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*), as well as the introduced Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*) and the stumps of a *Gunnera* plant.

Neil saw a Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*), and we all heard a Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*) calling and drumming, but today's most unexpected bird was probably a Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*). The birds on Bara Loch itself included Teal (*Anas crecca*) and Dabchick (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*). There was also a Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) which saw off a Greylag (*Anser anser*) which had come too close. At both ends of the loch were Tussock Sedge (*Carex paniculata*).



When not finding fungi, Carolyn managed to spot a Bronze Shieldbug (*Troilus luridus*) and a newly emerged Brindled Pug Moth (*Eupicethia abbreviate*). In addition to all this there were over 50 bryophyte species in the two monads visited today; the moss species on the acidic slopes south of the Loch were very different from those in the woodland. Lichen included the Pepper-pot Lichen (*Pertusaria pertusa*) growing on trees near the Loch.

Many thanks to Pauline for guiding us round Bara Loch.

*David Adamson*



**PRESTONGRANGE** 6 April 2024  
Leaders: Sarah & David Adamson

The Nats have often been to Prestongrange in recent years. There is usually a lot to see on this excellent brownfield site. However, this was the first trip that I can remember taking place at the start of Spring. Happily, the cold, wet, North Sea weather of the last couple of weeks had been blown away by a strong southerly wind that brought warmth, sunshine and, most importantly, some invertebrate life.

Five of us met near the Prestongrange Museum and crossed the main road near the landlocked harbour of Morrison's Haven. We then ambled along the shore until almost reaching Prestonpans. There were Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), Long-tailed Ducks, (*Clangula hyemalis*), Mergansers (*Mergus merganser*) and a Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) on the Forth, and Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) and Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) singing inland. Two species of scurvy-grass, *Cochlearia danica* and *C. officinalis* were in flower, the latter visited by a *Syrphus* hoverfly. *Cladonia* lichens were colonising the bank of coal waste where the sea had washed away the soil.

Returning through the scrub to Prestongrange we stopped to look for oak gall wasps but only found last year's galls. However, we did see fasciation on a stem of Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*). Crossing the road brought us to a path lined with wooden fenceposts under trees. As there were at least five Ladybird species, snails, weevils and spiders on the fenceposts and barbed wire, our progress ground to a halt, speeding up again as we made for the café and lunch. Here there were some classic car enthusiasts whom Erica befriended.

The wind continued to increase in strength so most of the remainder of the meeting was spent in the shelter of the woods. One hoverfly species, *Platycheirus albimanus* was feeding on Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*) while a second species *Melangyna lasiophthalma* basked in the sun on tree trunks. Some Orange Ladybirds (*Halictia sedecimguttata*) were still in their overwintering clusters on trees. Today's only butterfly species was the Peacock (*Aglais io*) of which there were several - very active as if making up for lost time.

As we parted, the strong wind blew away some wood that had covered a window high up on the Pithead Baths building - time to call it a day.

*David Adamson*



**BAWSINCH NATURE RESERVE** 13 April 2024  
Leader: Joanie McNaughton

The day started out well enough weatherwise for April - dry, cool and no sun. 16 of us (17 after lunch) gathered in the layby beside Duddingston Loch and first we visited the public area of the

reserve called Cavalry. The name comes from the days of the Battle of Prestonpans when Bonnie Prince Charlie's cavalry camped there prior to the battle. There were two finds of note: a healthy number of most likely Scarlet Elfcup (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*), "most likely" because these require microscope examination to determine species; and the extraordinary-looking (and named!) Dead Moll's Fingers (*Xylaria longipes*).

I hadn't planned the field trip to be specifically fungus-orientated but this is what it turned out to be. The first mushroom of the day was Haw Goblet (*Monilinia johnsonii*) which has an interesting life cycle. A strong flowery perfume from dead-looking leaves of Hawthorn (*Crataegus sp*) mimics the tree's flowers and thus attracts insects to the leaves which then carry away conidia to disperse the fungus. The common name for this white "mould" is Hawthorn Leaf Blight (with the same scientific name as the mushroom) and is the anamorphic (asexual) form of the stalked cups which then grow on old haws amongst leaf litter under the Hawthorn. We also found another small brown mushroom associated with Hawthorn, Hawthorn Twiglet (*Tubaria dispersa*) which is also said to grow from haws, but by the time the mushroom's fruiting body is visible, the haws have long since degraded. The next fungus of note was Semifree Morel (*Morchella semilibera*) which I had seen in exactly the same spot the previous year. We were to find it later growing in large numbers in two other places. We reached a stand of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) where I noticed Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*) pellets on the path. Overturning a log we discovered a nest of Palmate Newts (*Lissotriton helveticus*) with adults, one female looking gravid, and many efts.

Lunch time came and we sat beside the Gunn Pond plaque which bears the inscription "Peter and Agnes Gunn 1984" with the plaque set in a large boulder. Peter and Agnes were members of the Nats, and Peter a past President. They, along with other members (Mary Clarkson, Jackie Muscott, Frances and Munro Dunn and Elizabeth Farquharson to name a few), dug out the pond from scratch.

After lunch we continued along the path past more ponds, where a fallen Ash tree lies across one of the ponds. This trunk has long been host to King Alfred's Cakes (*Daldinia concentrica*), a rare fungus in Scotland. At first brown in colour it turns black and can be seen all year round. When cut in half you realise why it is named 'concentrica'. The common name arises from the days of King Alfred when reputedly he took refuge from the Vikings in a peasant's home. His host asked him to watch over some cakes baking on the hearth. He forgot and was scolded when they burnt. They do I suppose resemble burnt cakes!



*Daldinia concentrica* (JMcN)

This year's spring and summer were the coldest and wettest ever experienced in this country and that day lived up to it. The temperature dropped and the heavens opened so we quickly moved onto a woodland path. Here we finally found some invertebrate interest. On a Scot's Pine felled in a recent gale Rob found a Large Pine Weevil (*Hylobius abietis*). Despite its common name it is associated with a number of coniferous trees and is known generally as the most destructive pest of conifer plantations throughout most of Europe, including the UK. Looking under scattered logs, we found Devil's Coach-horse Beetle (*Ocypus olens*) and a flat-backed millipede *Polydesmidae* species.

Then we went briefly back to fungi when a member's visiting sister found Eyelash (*Scutellinia sp*), another fungus that needs microscope examination to determine it to species. Finally on our way out at the gate we saw the rust *Puccinia aegopodii* on Ground Elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*) - perhaps a fitting reference to the heavy rain!

Joanie McNaughton



## LONGNIDDRY BENTS 20th April 2024

Leader: Marion Moir

It turned out to be a lovely sunny Spring day after such a cold spell. 12 members met at Longniddry CP3. Ian Moir showed a sample of *Potentilla verna* in flower which he had collected on a verge outside a house in Longniddry; the leaves are shiny with distinct teeth on the tip of the leaf, whilst *Potentilla reptans* has a complete tip, is bigger and flowers later. *Potentilla reptans* also grows in the area so, to show the difference, we wanted to look at *Potentilla verna* in flower. There are old records for Longniddry Bents, near CP2, at CP1 and at Seton Sands, and the intention was to refind them with the group.

David found a few plants immediately on short grass opposite the toilets and a Grid Reference was taken. We looked at tiny plants of *Cerastium diffusum* (Sea Mouse-ear) with its sepals longer than its petals. *Cerastium semidecandrum* (also a Sea Mouse-ear) has 5 stamens and silvery edges to its sepals. Both have 4 or 5 petals.

We headed east to an old concrete slab where *Potentilla verna* has had recent positive identification to show everyone. On the way, we passed *Primula veris* (Cowslip), *Rosa rubiginosa* which has a lovely smell of apples and *Glechoma hederacea* (Ground Ivy). At the slab, we studied *Potentilla verna*, and then, growing alongside, were more early plants - *Viola hirta* (Hairy Violet) was around, *Saxifraga tridactylites* (Rue-leaved Saxifrage), *Aphanes arvensis* (Parsley Piert) and several *Cerastium glomeratum* (Sticky Mouse-ear). Moving a short distance further east to a fairly stony area, we found the tiny, brilliant blue flowers of *Myosotis ramosissima* (Early Forget-me-not). We decided to gather into cars and drove first to CP2. The coffee shop was much appreciated, and after failing to refind the *Potentilla verna*, we moved to look at coastal plants. We discussed the differences between *Cochlearia officinalis* (Scurvy Grass) and *Cochlearia danica* (Danish Scurvy Grass) which has spread along the roadside verges, the colour of the flower and shape of the leaves. *Juncus gerardii* (Saltmarsh Rush) was growing in short green spikes in the mud, and we studied the difference in the leaves of *Plantago maritima* (Sea Plantain) and *Arenaria maritima* (Thrift) - botany by leaf rather than easy identification with the flower. The fungus of Sea Mat (*Membranipora membranacea*) on a dried piece of seaweed was fascinating looked at through a lens showing a honeycomb pattern. We were told that it was prehistoric and that each cell contained an animal. Looking out to sea, there was a gathering of Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*) and two Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) who were making their way along the coast from Seton Sands.



*Piezodorus lituratus* (DL)

We continued onwards to CP1 and lunched on a grassy bank. Still no finds of *Potentilla verna* but we looked at *Hyoscyamus niger* (Henbane) plants which have grown up in disturbed ground and which are poisonous, but have no protection from children and dogs. Rob pointed out a mass of Gorse Shieldbugs (*Piezodorus lituratus*), green in colour. Heather found a Harlequin Ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*) which resembled a Cream-streaked (*Harmonia quadripunctata*). Carolyn showed us a small yellow fungus growing on earth at the edge of the carpark - *Bolbitius titubans* (Yellow Fieldcap). Neil told us some history of how one of the flat topped dunes used to be a golf tee - they played to a green where CP1 is now found, then hit across the road to the existing Longniddry golf course and onwards.

The habitat of short grass has changed over the years to deep Marram grass where the *Potentilla verna* struggles to survive. Having searched for it at Seton Sands, our fourth and last site, and again failed to find anything, we finished the day with some members taking the bus and some walking back enjoying the sunshine. It was a lovely day with a wonderful mixture of Natural History.

Marion Moir



## CITY NATURE CHALLENGE 2024 – Greater Edinburgh 26-29 April 2024

This is an annual global event run through iNaturalist. It takes place over the weekend straddling April/May for four days – this year from 26-29<sup>th</sup> April. Participants record via the App or desktop and spend the following couple of weeks looking at and agreeing fellow participant’s records.

One of the aims is to increase the knowledge of the distribution of our nature. Of course, a rarity may be recorded, but many more common species will be recorded. Several ENHS members took part and three in particular appeared to think it was a competition. For our city, Greater Edinburgh, the observing area is broad covering the Lothians and Fife and a bit more. The event has run in this city for four years and is generally organised by the staff of RSPB. The statistics for those years are as shown:

Year	Observations
2021	1291
2022	995
2023	1293
2024	1608

My first records were on Friday morning at 5am - sound recordings of Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) whilst still in bed. I thought I had finished on Monday evening, only to discover a moth on the bathroom wall.

*Sarah Adamson*



### YESTER ESTATE 4 May 2024

Leader: Lesley Fairweather

The gathering of 19 enthusiastic walkers at the Lime-tree Avenue in Gifford were ready for Spring surprises. The avenue itself stretches to the gates of Yester House and is made up of 50 common Lime trees (*Tilia x europaea*) planted in 1680, one of the oldest of its kind in Scotland. This particular tree is a hybrid of Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*) and Large-leaved Lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*) and gives an ornamental effect. It often leads to stately homes such as Yester House. The woodland walk took in many “giant” trees, especially conifers, as well as wildflowers and fungi. A field was passed with Highland Cattle and two large Ancient Oaks (well protected) and this led to the river through patches of Water Avens (*Geum rivale*).

Many species of Forget-me-not were noted on the walk, especially *Myosotis sylvatica*, and by the river path there were two species of Butterbur - Common (*Petasites hybridus*) with rounder leaves and pink flowers and the unusual White Butterbur (*Petasites albus*), unfortunately not in flower. Common and Tuberous Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale* & *S.tuberosum*) were found by the river, the former having either purple or yellow flowers and the latter having only yellowish – cream flowers. Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis sp*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) indicated ancient woodland.



*Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (SF)

A picnic lunch by the boundary wall with Castle Park golf course was enjoyed by all. The Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) were in flower along with Wood Anemones and the fallen Beech (*Fagus*) trees gave good seating areas. The crossing of the golf course was speedy as it was very much in use and the ruins of Yester Castle were interesting to explore. The subterranean chamber, the “Goblin Ha” was entered by several of the group and with the help of a torch was admired for its intact vaulted ceiling - alas - no bats. On the base rich soil and rocks were the bryophytes *Homalia trichomanoides*, *Porella platyphylla* and *Microeurhynchium pumilum* with *Pulviger a lyellii* surprisingly common on old trees. After returning to the river path the group gathered round a fine specimen of Toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*). It is a parasitic plant like the Broomrape species with scales rather than leaves and a one-sided spike of pink flowers.

As ever, the knowledge of many of the ENHS members was astonishing and their sharing of information, as always, generous. The Nuthatch greeted us at the start and end of the walk and many Ladybirds, Beetles and Bumblebees were found on the way.

*Lesley Fairweather*



**HOLYROOD PARK** 12th May 2024

Leader: Sue Jury

22 of us met at the Commonwealth Pool car park on what was the first warm weekend of the year, though thunder was forecast for later in the day. The first plant we hoped to see in the car park was a rare plant for the vice county *Lepidium ruderale* (Narrow-leaved Pepperwort). It has been there for several years but there was no sign of it - probably destroyed by weed killer.

We hastily made our way to the start of the walk to look at the rocky outcrops of Echo Rocks where there were some spring delights to be found - *Aira praecox*, *Trifolium arvense*, the leaves only seen, *Myosotis ramosissima* (Early Forget-me-not), *Rumex acetosa* (Sheep's Sorrel) in full flower and *Lotus corniculatus* (Bird's-foot Trefoil), commonly known as Eggs and Bacon.

From here we progressed up Queens Drive to find some of the rarer species of Holyrood Park - *Silene viscaria* (Sticky Catchfly), *Asplenium septentrionale* (Forked Spleenwort), *Helianthemum nummularium* (Common Rockrose) and *Geranium sanguineum* (Bloody Cranesbill), all growing abundantly on the rock face. *Anthriscus cacaulis* (Bur Chervil) was hidden well under gorse at the edge of the road. *Arenaria serpyllifolia* (Thyme-leaved Sandwort) was abundant and in full flower and a delight to see. Leaves of *Allium vineale* (Crow Garlic) could be clearly seen. Progress was slow as each plant was identified as we went up one side of the road and down the other.

We were entertained by birdsong, Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus colybita*) and Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*) singing above the squawks of Carrion Crows (*Corvus corone*) and Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula*). A Raven (*Corvus corax*) broke our downward gaze from the plants to an upward gaze where it sat on a low protrusion of rock dominating the bird world in size and voice. Our downward gaze was also broken by a pair of Bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*).



*Ophioglossum vulgatum* (EB)

Our lunch stop was taken in the sun sitting on the rocks overlooking the view north. David A. brought us the insect of the day, a sawfly with a green abdomen *Euura clitellata* in a specimen jar. The dominant insects of the day were the St Mark's Flies (*Bibio marci*) - a tasty meal for the Jackdaws. Several butterflies were seen, namely Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*), Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*) and a Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*).

Hunter's Bog was a great chance to see some of the sedges coming into flower - *Carex hirta* (Hairy Sedge), *Carex disticha* (Brown Sedge) and *Carex flacca* (Glaucous Sedge), together with Horsetails, *Equisetum fluviatile* and *E. arvense* (Water and Field Horsetail). The leaves of *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup) and *Mentha aquatica* (Water Mint) were seen. The highlight of the day was finding some fine specimens of the *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's Tongue). Single specimens of the leaves of *Neottia ovata* (Common Twayblade) and

*Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted Orchid) were seen.

The day ended on Haggis Knowe, with cloud gathering and a few drops of rain, to see the leaves of *Astragalus danicus* (Purple Milk Vetch) and *Spergularia rubra* (Sand Spurrey). *Dianthus deltoides* grows on Haggis Knowe but this was not the time of year to see it. It was a well-timed walk allowing us all to make a dash home before the heavy rains started.

*Sue Jury*



**CALTON HILL** 20th May 2024

Leader: Erica bright and Jean Long

Calton Hill has always been an important cultural and wild open space right in the centre of the city and is a great asset. In recent years it has become increasingly a magnet for visitors, due to its prominence and accessibility, and cultural and historical interest, besides being a valuable haven for wildlife. With rising footfall and additional official events taking place there, more facilities have been successively provided in order to enhance the experience, and to deal with the consequent problems of litter and wear and tear to the terrain.

On a sunny 20 May, a group of Nats made a worthwhile visit to Calton Hill, during which Wall Brown (*Lasiommata megera*) butterflies were spotted along the extensive dry south-facing slope, and Holly Blues (*Celastrina argiolus*) on the eastern side. Carolyn even found an Adonis Ladybird (*Hippodamia variegata*). Various garden escapes, together with some 'rogue plantings' made after the destructive Calton Hill fire in June 2022, provided a cheerful and colourful display among the south-facing rocks, attracting many insects. It was interesting to observe the new vegetation that has appeared on this fire-ravaged area. Canadian Fleabane (*Erigeron canadensis*) seems increasingly to dominate.

The Calton Hill area contains some parts which are inaccessible due to steep rocky slopes with undergrowth, as well as varied habitats eg shady damp towards the east (adjacent to the enclosed private 12-acre site of Regent, Royal and Carlton Terrace Gardens with its wealth of mature trees) and exposed rocky dry area to the south. The central remaining sward, edged by rough grass/bushes, contains a specific area of delicate Harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*), which are a joy to behold. My photo was taken in 2020, after which the numbers diminished annually. They depend on being protected from over-mowing etc. CEC Parks Dept have the coordinates so fingers crossed that in future the Harebells will be numerous.



*Campanula rotundifolia* (EB)

*Erica Bright*



**BAWSINCH NATURE RESERVE** 25 May 2024

Leader: Joanie McNaughton

I hadn't quite done my homework properly, and so did not realise that the EMF 10k race took the route along Duddingston Road West on this date. Hence the four in the group met in a traffic queue at Forckenford while waiting for the traffic cones to be moved! The cone-collecting vehicle then stopped in the layby, so we had to park in the church hall car park up the road. When we finally got to the Reserve itself, fortunately, we hadn't lost that much time.

Compared to the Bawsinch outing in April, which was mostly about fungi, this field trip very quickly became all about invertebrates, particularly as it was a warm sunny day. On Juniper

(*Juniperus communis*) at the edge of Goose Green we found a pair of mating Juniper Shieldbugs (*Cyphostethus tristriatus*) and on Buttercup (*Ranunculus*) in the wildflower meadow, a first for me, the hoverfly *Cheilosia albitarsis* sl, identified by Chris Sellen on Hoverflies UK FB group. Nearby we looked at Juniper Rust (*Gymnosporangium clavariiforme*) on its alternate host Hawthorn (*Crataegus*).

We spent over an hour looking mostly at Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) that bordered the southern edge of Goose Green. There was a plethora of bugs and beetles. We saw three species of Weevil - Common Leaf (*Phyllobius pyri*), Green Nettle (*Phyllobius pomaceus*) and Clay-coloured (*Otiorhynchus singularis*). It was clearly a good year for the first two as there were so many. We found three Shieldbugs - Birch (*Elasmotherus interstinctus*), Hawthorn (*Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*) and Parent Bug (*Elasmucha grisea*) - all of which over-winter as adults. Two species of Ladybird - 2-spot (*Adalia bipunctata*), both *f. typica* and *f. quadrimaculata*, and Cream-spot (*Calvia quatuordecimguttata*) were seen and a gravid Green Dock Beetle (*Gastrophysa viridula*) plus some eggs laid on the underside of a Dock (*Rumex*) leaf, its larval foodplant. Click beetles and soldier beetles were plentiful, mainly *Athous haemorrhoidalis* and *Cantharis decipiens*.

We found several species of micro-moths. White-line Pollen-moth (*Micropterix aruncella*) which feeds on Hawthorn pollen and two female Green Longhorn (*Adela reaumurella*) the caterpillars of which feed on leaf litter. These two are day-flying moths. We saw Silver-ground Carpet (*Xanthorhoe montanata*) which can easily be seen in the daytime resting on leaves, although they are night-flyers. We found a rolled Nettle leaf in which Mother of Pearl (*Pleuroptya ruralis*) larvae feed, pupating in June when the adult flies at dusk. Their larvae over-winter as cocoons on the ground. I was disappointed not to see many butterflies. In particular, Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) was notably absent. The only two seen were Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) and Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*).



We had lunch by the Gunn Pond then walked along the vehicle track towards Forkenford. Much of the Reserve was under water after weeks of torrential rain and I had advised people to wear wellies. Because the paths through the Sanctuary area were under a foot of water, we kept to the drier parts, however, even the Forkenford track, normally only muddy at worst, lay under about 10cm of water - so off we waded! We came to some Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), not native to Scotland, these bushes being planted in the

early days of SWT management. On my recce I noticed flowering was well over and on reaching the second of two we saw it was covered in caterpillars in their silky webs. Spindle is the food plant of the Spindle Ermine Moth (*Yponomeuta cagnagella*) and on a subsequent visit I noticed the bush had been completely defoliated. I have yet to find an adult moth! Here we also spotted an ichneumon wasp but weren't able to identify it. Only at the time of writing did I get its ID confirmed as *Baranisobas ridibundus*, a female (short ovipositor). There is only one other record on iRecord in the Lothians, on 06/06/2023 in Holyrood Park.

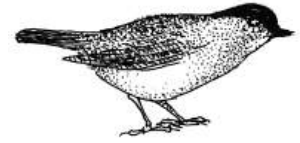
Last but not least, at Goose Green, we watched a pair of Blue-tailed Damselflies (*Ischnura elegans*) in tandem. We left them alone after a good few minutes, so didn't see if he attained in cop, not for the lack of trying!

Joanie McNaughton



## PENCAITLAND RAILWAY WALK 1 June 2024

Leader: Stan da Prato



We met at Puddle Bridge car park at what used to be Ormiston Station to walk the west section of the seven-mile route at an earlier hour than usual.

The main theme of the outing was identifying birds from their songs and the earlier the start the better our chances of hearing some of the songsters. When the railway closed in 1965, as part of the Beeching cuts, East Lothian Council took over this track, as well as the Haddington to Longniddry line, as public footpaths. The surface has been improved and information boards erected. As our group of six walked slowly westwards, enjoying some shade on a warm summer morning, we met dog walkers, cyclists, horse riders and runners, so the path is well used. However, as is often the case, we were the only people who appeared to be taking an interest in the environment.

With the trees in full leaf, and as some similar species can most reliably be identified from their song, we did not use binoculars very much, Stan having described his as an ornament. Some birds are very vocal and easily recognised, Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus colybita*), being obvious examples. Others, such as Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), can be confused with related species. In the case of Blackcap the confusion species is Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*) and we paused to listen to one or other of these in what Stan described as “sub song”, a quieter version of their more familiar notes. Blackcaps are increasing in Scotland while Garden Warblers are now much scarcer. This is linked to their migration strategies. Many Blackcaps winter around the Mediterranean, allowing a shorter journey, while Garden Warblers cross the Sahara Desert. Blackcaps often visit bird feeders in winter, but ringing has shown that these are not the birds that breed in Scotland but migrants from eastern Europe - evolution in action in response to warmer winters. Incidentally Garden Warblers are rarely seen in gardens, preferring tall scrub as along the railway walk. Similarly, the short distance migrant Chiffchaff has increased in recent years and is now about as common in our area as the African-wintering Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), though the latter is still the most numerous summer migrant to northern Europe. Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler look fairly similar, and their songs are unmistakable - their plaintive “weet, weet” contact calls are almost identical. We identified Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), Great Tit (*Parus major*), Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*), Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) and Common Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*) from their songs. We later heard Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) calling from Hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp) scrub.

Two uncommon warblers known to be present along the walk are Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*), on the edge of its European range in Scotland, and Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*). Gillian had a birdsong app on her phone and played the songs of both these birds at promising locations without any response. Perhaps these birds had stopped singing for the day or even for the summer. Some birds cease singing once they have paired up. This is particularly likely when the species is at low density as there is less competition. However, there was plenty of birdsong at the marshy west end of the walk where Sedge Warblers (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) were present in numbers as were Reed Buntings (*Emberiza schoeniclus*). As with many predominantly seed eating passerines the bunting song is simpler than the more insectivorous warblers. At this point Stan, Gillian and Vladimir returned to Puddle Bridge car park in Stan’s van, while Jane, Sarah and I stopped for lunch before retracing our steps.

The depleted pedestrian party enjoyed good views of Reed Buntings and Yellowhammers but, as much of the birdsong had died down, spent time looking at insects and blethering. By the marsh were the hoverflies *Anasimyia contracta* and a *Parhelophilus* species, both fairly uncommon, but my insect highlight was the beetle *Denticollis linearis*, a new species to me and which I initially took to be a *Cantharis*. Returning to ornithology, there appeared to be more Willow Warblers

singing in the afternoon than in the morning. We added one bird species to the day's list - a Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) which flapped silently overhead.

Thanks to Stan for leading today and for sharing his very substantial ornithological knowledge.

*David Adamson, with ornithological information by Stan da Prato*



**FALKLAND ESTATE** 8 June 2024

Leader: Susan Falconer

There had been a great deal of cold and wet weather preceding the planned Nats visit to Falkland Estate on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and I was concerned that we might not find much of interest. However, as always, the keen eyes and ears of the participants didn't disappoint, and we hadn't left the car park when Figwort Weevils (*Cionus scrophulariae*) were found on the plants growing alongside a ditch. We made our way up through the plantation woodland towards the Tyndall Bruce Monument that overlooks the village of Falkland. Ferns were a feature and Male (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), Lady (*Athyrium filix-femina*), Hard (*Blechnum spicant*) and Lemon-scented Fern (*Oreopteris limbosperma*) were all seen along with Golden Scale Male Fern (*Dryopteris affinis*). Other plant highlights were Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Chickweed Wintergreen (*Lysimachia europaea*), New Zealand Willowherb (*Epilobium brunnescens*), Bird's foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) and Cutleaf Geranium (*Geranium dissectum*).

Invertebrates were an interesting mix - Red-legged (*Pentatoma rufipes*) and Hairy Shieldbugs (*Dolycoris baccarum*), Snail-hunter (*Cychnus caraboides*) and Black Clock Beetles (*Pterostichus madidus*) as well as Red-necked Footman Moth (*Atolmis rubricollis*) and the tiny larva of Orange-tip Butterfly (*Anthocharis cardamines*) nestling on a stem of Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). Hoverflies were also seen including the large *Chrysoxum arcuatum* and *Myathropa florea*, *Xylota jakutorum* and *Sericomyia silentis*. *Rhagium bifasciatum* longhorn beetles joined us for lunch.



*Atolmis rubricollis* (DO)

We paused at the ruined Temple of Decision with its inscription carved on one of the dressed stones and admired the extensive panorama.

I had an enjoyable day in excellent company and needn't have been concerned at all that there wouldn't be anything of note - the Nats were on top form.

*Susan Falconer*



**SKATERAW** 15 June 2024

Leaders: David Adamson & Iain Dixon

Low tide at Skateraw, by Torness, was around 16:30, and Iain Dixon of Seasearch had arranged to join us two hours before this to explore the intertidal zone. Therefore, we had around four hours to enjoy the birds, plants, and insects made more active by the unexpected warm sunshine of this June morning. Limestone dominates this part of the coast. An old lime kiln overlooks the car park and Nature has responded with a range of species, some rare, which are in tune with this habitat.

We set off north with the ambition of reaching Barns Ness. In the event we did not even get halfway - there was simply too much to see and hear. Pauline's attention was often directed towards the Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) and Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), near the shore. The background song of Skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*) seemed ever present, and when we reached a small burn there were many Sand Martins (*Riparia riparia*), House Martins (*Delichon urbicum*) and Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*). Linnets (*Linaria cannabina*) flitted between Gorse bushes (*Ulex sp*), and we heard the unmistakable song of a Yellowhammer (*Emberzia citrinella*). Rob assured us that we would see "the Snake" on our detour to Skateraw Dean. This turned out to be a snake's head, sculpted by a local man during lockdown, which juts out of rock above the burn. On the way back Rob almost stood on a Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*) which had been keeping its head down in long grass.



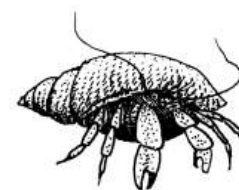
*Emberzia citrinella* (JD)

Our turning point was a large base-rich area enclosure dotted with Gorse thickets and with the flowers of Milk Vetch (*Astragalus danicus*), Thyme (*Thymus praecox*) and Rockrose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) colouring the open areas. An unexpected find was a small patch of Tall Rocket (*Sisymbrium altissimum*). We also found some unusual insects such as a robber-fly, *Leptogaster sp*, a female Hill Cuckoo Bumblebee (*Bombus rupestris*) and several Orchid Beetles (*Dascillus cervinus*). As we returned to the car park to meet Iain a patch of Brambles, (*Rubus sp*) provided another couple of impressive insects - a Stocky Mason Wasp (*Ancistrocerus oviventris*) and a Sharp-tailed Bee (*Coelioxys sp*).

For some of us the attraction was to explore the shore with Iain, a marine biologist, volunteering with SeaSearch. We walked through the characteristic seaweeds of the intertidal zones seeing green, red and brown seaweeds in bands where the requirements were optimal for their life. Iain helped us to establish the answer to the question – what are seaweeds? The answer can be summarised as 'seaweeds' are protists, eukaryotic organisms that cannot be classified as a plant, animal, or fungus. We were looking at macroalgae, visible to the naked eye, and benthic, attached to the seabed.

Nothing is simple because not only are seaweeds not plants they have the ubiquitous habit of changing names as we develop tools to help us increase our understanding. We took some small samples to examine at the end of the adventure.

Adults regress to childhood when they get into rock pools. The sense of curiosity awakens and joins a willingness to look into the water for movements and anything unfamiliar. We were soon annoying hermit crabs (*Paguroidea*) and watching how they behave within their adopted homes. Lifting small stones revealed chitons (*Polyplacophora*), shelled molluscs and tiny brittle stars (*Ophiuroidea*). There was a wonderful sight of many pink crusting algae and corallinas lurking under the floating green and brown algae. Some red algae were flashing blue as their cover was moved aside. On pieces of detached Kelp (*Laminariales sp*), a hairy attachment revealed itself as *Obelia*, a colonial hydroid. These were talked about and seen in books in school biology and now we are able to photograph them underwater with small digital cameras.



Out of the pools the brown algae, *Fucus sp*, were lying exposed on the rock surrounding patches of barnacles (*Cirripedia*) and limpets (*Patella sp*). The barnacles were a mixture of empty cases and newly settled individuals. Iain drew our attention to the scarp faces characteristic of this shore. The steep cliff was inhabited by animals, almost exclusively barnacles, limpets and Dog Whelks (*Nucella lapillus*).

At our endpoint, low tide, we turned and wandered back up the shore asking questions and looking at the rocks under foot.

The picnic table made an outdoor classroom, where we looked at our findings before rewilding them. Between us there was a host of shore information books covering a long period of publication. The feeling was a general appreciation of the habitats we had visited that day and that there is an active phase of knowledge accumulation. There are many more questions to answer.

*Sarah Adamson*



**VOGRIE COUNTRY PARK** 23 June 2024

Leader: Vladimir Krivtsov

On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, a group of five met by the pond in Vogrie Country Park. It was a hot, sunny day and therefore, very busy – with ball games, family picnics, barbecues and a Girl Guides' camp. Finding fungi in summer months can be challenging but the foray started off well with Grey Puffball (*Bovista plumbea*) found *en route* from the car park. By the pond Ali and Carolyn were puzzling to name a leafy plant with trailing, soft white flowers which had caught their attention – it was Goat's Beard (*Aruncus dioicus*). Several pond insects were of interest and some were kept for photographs and ID.



*Volucella pellucens* (DO)

We set off towards Vogrie House, spotting Macro Mushroom (*Agaricus urinascens*) and Yellow Stainer (*Agaricus xanthodermus*) in the lawn. The group headed away from the noisy crowds, crossing a small bridge leading to the former golf course, where the sunshine and long grass attracts insects. With several keen entomologists in the group the outing consequently became largely devoted to looking at insects. Many were identified including - *Cantharis flavilabris*, *Volucella pellucens*, *Malthodes minimus* and *Cantharis livida*. Moths included Clouded Border (*Lomaspilis marginata*), and micro moths

*Eupteryx florida* and *Pammene aurana*. The gall *Cryptomyzus ribis* was also seen.

Dry warm weather is certainly not ideal for fungi. The best option is to look in shaded areas, under trees, on fallen branches in the undergrowth, rotting tree stumps and interesting logs. We were not disappointed – a small very rotten tree stump had Dead Moll's Fingers (*Xylaria longipes*), Pale Stagshorn (*Calocera pallidospathulata*) and further sticks gave us Cinnamon Porecrust (*Phelinus ferreus*), *Peniophora limitata*, *Chaetosphaerella phyostroma* and Elder Whitewash (*Lyomyces sambuci*), to name but a few. Our only slime mould of the day was the gorgeous delicate *Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa*. Lunch under a large Beech tree was a good place to look for and find Beechmast Candysnuff (*Xylaria carpophila*). Further specimens of fallen branches were taken and examined later under the microscope to obtain a few more IDs.

Marion Moir, Botanical recorder for East Lothian, had kindly provided a Grid Reference for Herb-Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*). Several members had never previously seen this rather "rare for Lothian" flower, but were keen to do so. Therefore, after lunch a short detour off the main path and along a muddy "deer track", took us to the location. Approximately fifty plants were seen, in fruit – a splendid sight.

We returned towards the main house, finding a quiet spot, where a fallen tree provided a nice seat, plus some rather dried up fungi: Turkeytail (*Trametes versicolor*), Beech Woodwort (*Hypoxylon fragiforme*) and Hairy Curtain Crust (*Stereum hirsutum*) were added to the list. On an upright dead

tree Dorothy found a rotting Dryad's Saddle (*Polyporus squamosus*). There was Brittle Cinder (*Kretzschmaria deusta*) and evidence of Honey Fungus (*Armillaria mellea*) in the form of black "bootlace fungi". Collared Parachute (*Marasmius rotula*) was found by a Hawthorn tree which also had some brown dead leaves which smelled sweet when crushed revealing the presence of *Monolinia johnsonii*. The entomologists were very happy with what was later identified as a female Rhinoceros Beetle (*Sinodendron cylindricum*) also found in that area.

On the walk back to the car park were several interesting trees including Oregon Plane (*Acer Macrophyllum*) – its hairy fruits can give quite a sting! Thanks to everyone for good company and shared expertise. Over all Dorothy summed it up as "A great day and a great site" suggesting that a revisit later in the summer would be good. Thanks again to Vladimir for leading the outing.

*Carolyn Hargest*



**KILMAGAD WOOD, SCOTLANDWELL 29 June 2024**  
with **Edinburgh & Lothians Fungus Enthusiasts**

Leaders: Cameron Diekonigen and Sarah Adamson

This was a joint field trip to what is generally a quiet backwater near Kinross. The day was sunny and windy. We all parked in Portmoak Hall car park and departed into the wood by the orchard. Fortunately, we were aware of the imminent wedding but unaware of the number of cars that would descend on the area, until we returned to the car park.

I heard a Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*), just once, but apparently they are a regular feature of the wood. Our aim was to walk uphill to an area of short turf in a sheep field. Being a natural history field trip our progress was very slow with numerous stops to inspect sticks and flowers and looking under trees. Several people found Brown Puffballs (*Bovista nigrescens*) of various ages, ranging from white to very dark brown. A number of Orange Ladybirds (*Halyzia sedecimguttata*) were found on Oak trees (*Quercus* sp). This species is known to feed on powdery mildew. More typically, they are seen on Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) as part of a system including aphids (*Aphidoidea*). Finally, we entered a sheep field with many rises and dips and were exposed to the brisk breeze. By one rise were several Frog Orchid (*Dactylorhiza viridis*), Rockrose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) and Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*). Lunching in one of the dips Cameron pointed out Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and the link with *Puccinia suavolens* and its strategy for distributing spores.

After lunch David pointed out a cuckoo bumblebee *Bombus sylvestris* with a yellow tail on Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*). Our descent was faster than the ascent. It was evident that some were acknowledging the habitat types and interactions rather than purely looking at species in isolation.

Once our cars became unboxed a few of us drove to Cameron's house for an inspection of his lovely garden, and tea and cakes.

*Sarah Adamson*



**CALAIS MUIR WOODS Saturday 6 July 2024**  
Leaders: Jean Long and Jane Dey

The Nats last visited this long-established woodland in 2017, when it was noted as being a "hidden gem" amongst encroaching new housing and business development. Since then, the pressures on it have only increased, but on an overcast day 8 enthusiastic members set out to explore and record,

and the outing proved very fruitful. The woods remain a green lung within a sea of concrete. This report will highlight some of the findings but cannot include them all. The focus will be on the distinct habitats within the overall area.

There are well-marked paths throughout the woodland thanks to a project commissioned by Fife Coast and Countryside Trust in 2015, which saw landscape architects Urban Pioneers try to maintain the unique character of the place and its mystical historic properties, whilst dealing with the acute rise of new users. A series of educational and art interventions are there to be found by all ages and to engage the public in looking at the nature around.

The carvings of roe deer at the entrance led walkers along the “Enchanted Walk”, where the trees are predominantly Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). Jean pointed out a fine example of a Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) along this path and referred to a book she had been reading about David Douglas, who collected seeds from Western Canada and introduced the tree to Britain in 1872. It was, however, another Scotsman, Archibald Menzies, who had discovered the tree in 1793. Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*) was much in evidence, and we heard Coal Tit (*Periparus ater*), Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) and the drumming of a Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*), though the dense leaf cover hid them from view.

There was some amusement finding a giant’s footprints amongst the animal tracks carved into a series of benches in an area clearly designed for children, with a fairy house made from Yew (*Taxus*). There were posts explaining the presence of fairies, hags and those aforementioned giants. A special find here was a Bronze Alder (*Argyresthia goedartella*).

As we progressed to our second distinct habitat Parent Shieldbug (*Elasmucha grisea*), Birch Shieldbug (*Elasmotethus interstinctus*) and Red-legged Shieldbug (*Pentotoma rufipes*) were discovered by sharp-eyed observers. The boggy “ride” under the Scottish Power pylon route was an ideal habitat for mosses, including the Haircap Moss (*Polytrichum* sp), some with capsules and Sphagnum Moss (*Sphagnum* sp). There were rushes, eg Juncus, a variety of grasses, Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*) and carpets of Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*). A bright yellow slime mould was identified by Joanie as Flowers of Tan or Scrambled Egg Slime Mould (*Fuligo septica*). A specimen of a fern or bracken gall (possibly *Chirosia betuleti*), causing distortion of the growing tips, was collected for confirmation later. Common Frogs (*Rana temporaria*) were visible hopping round this damp area.

As we had lunch in the woods at the side of the ride, Dorothy collected a specimen of an ichneumon wasp for identification, and a Common White Wave (*Cabera pusaria*). Later, as we moved to the next area, known as the “Blue Lagoon”, we saw a Clouded Border moth (*Lomaspilis marginata*), a True Lover’s Knot moth (*Lycophotia porphyrea*) and several Speckled Wood butterflies (*Pararge aegeria*). We also heard Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*), a Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and a Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*). Examples of plants in the area around the pond were Enchanter’s Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), indicative of ancient woodland, and Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*). On a bank beyond the old lime kiln there was a freshly emerged Shaggy Inkcap or Lawyer’s Wig (*Coprinus comatus*) and several Puffballs (*Lycoperdon* sp) at various stages. I discovered a dead branch that was covered with Split Porecrust (*Schizopora paradoxa*) and another one that had evidence of Green Elfcup (*Chlorociboria aeruginascens*).

*Lycophotia porphyrea* (DL)



Adjacent to the woods proper is an area of meadowland, rich in many varieties of grasses, flowering plants and mature trees with a border of mixed hedgerows. Here a splendid fly was spotted on an umbellifer; it was identified as *Phasia hemiptera*. There were many other flies, beetles, moths and micro moths, and

someone found the delicate latticed casings of larvae of the Dock Hyper Weevil (*Hypera rumicis*). Unfortunately, this species rich habitat is earmarked for housing. It was here that we were encouraged by Jean to collect examples of as many different grasses as possible for identification. The collection was enthusiastically undertaken, but the ID exercise had to be postponed until a little later due to the arrival of a torrential downpour.

As the rain eased, we made our return on a path through yet another different habitat, this time of mixed conifers, where we found a convenient spot to lay out the grasses on a groundsheet provided by Jean. Vlad proved to be a very informative grass taxonomist, and these are some of those he was able to identify, viz Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), Wavy Hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Other finds before we exited the woods were a cleg, the Common Horse Fly (*Haematopota pluvialis*) and a Cucumber Green Spider (*Araniella cucurbitina*). Joanie identified a Grey-spotted Amanita (*Amanita excelsa*).

If you're wondering about the connection that this woodland has to France, there isn't one! After extensive research, Joanie found the information that Calais is from the Gaelic 'coille' with suffix 'us' meaning a place of woodland. It is pronounced Kayliss.

Jane Dey



#### **GIFFORD COMMUNITY WOOD** 13 July 2024

Leader: Dorothy Lyle

As on previous occasions the outing began with coffee and a moth trap opening in my brother's garden close to the community woods. There were no particularly notable moths in the trap but a nice selection of common moths. This included Brimstone (*Opisthagraptis lueolata*), Burnished Brass (*Diachrysia chrysitis*), Large Yellow Underwing (*Noctua pronuba*), Mottled Beauty (*Alcis repandata*), Poplar Hawk Moth (*Laothoe populi*), Snout (*Hypena proboscidalis*) and Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix (*Pandemis cerasana*).

*Opisthagraptis lueolata* (DL)



Seven members then set off for the woods in dull damp conditions. This was unfortunate as I had hoped to lure a Lunar Hornet Moth (*Sesia apiformis*) on a Willow (*Salix sp*) close to the path. I had borrowed a pheromone lure from Katty Baird and had had instant success earlier in the week. Alas that day had been warm and sunny - not so the day of the outing. Unsurprisingly there was no response to the pheromones and the elusive moth did not appear.

*Ochlodes sylvanus* (DL)



Unfortunately, also because of the conditions, we did not see any butterflies or moths on the wing (other than round my trap) that day. This was another blow as only the previous day there had been several Large Skippers (*Ochlodes sylvanus*) about - only very recently recorded in this area. While looking forlornly at the site where they should have been we did see something of interest - a few unusual white Marsh Thistles (*Cirsium palustre*). Later we spotted a somewhat bedraggled Mottled Beauty (*Alcis repandata*) and a lovely Clouded Border (*Lomaspilis marginata*) hiding away and taking shelter in the undergrowth. There was other wildlife to be seen however with most of the interest coming from beetles and galls. There was much evidence of Birch Leaf Roller weevils (*Deporaus betulae*) with some of the young birch looking almost like Christmas

Trees with their rolled leaves hanging down like baubles. The birch gall *Acalitus calycophthirus* was also spotted.

On many of the Beech (*Fagus sp*) there was much leafmining to be seen with the tentiform mines of *Phyllonorycter maestingella* and botch mines of the Beech Leaf-mining Weevil (*Orchestes fagi*) on many of the leaves. Joanie also spotted the fungus Beech Woodwart (*Hypoxylon fragiforme*) on Beech. On an Oak (*Quercus*) we spotted the small soldier beetle *Malthodes marginatus* and evidence of various leafminers, though these could not easily be identified.

We noted galls on Meadowsweet caused by the larvae of the gall midge *Dasineura ulmaria*. There was fasciation on brambles and elder near the path but this may have been caused by weed killing on the path. A fine specimen of longhorn beetle *Leptura fasciata* was found on bramble and an early instar of Hawthorn Shieldbug (*Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*). There were quite a few harvestmen about and I drew attention to small red phoretic mites that are often seen on them. Near the end of our walk Sarah pointed out Figwort Weevil pupae (*Cionus scrophulariae*) which were so well camouflaged on the plant to look like ripening fruits.

The Community Wood always provides something of interest, but it was unfortunate that we hadn't seen either of the planned highlights. Despite this there seemed to be plenty of interest and there was a welcome cuppa at my brother's home at the end of the day.

*Dorothy Lyle*



**ELIBURN & PEEL PARK** 20 July 2024

Leader: David Adamson

Five members met at Livingston North Station just after 10.30 and set off westward along the Railway Path until reaching Nell Burn, one of the many small burns which eventually feed into the River Almond. The Nell Burn path took us under Houston Road to Eliburn Park - in Livingston it is easy to walk for miles without being beside a road.

Adjacent to Eliburn Park is a large meadow with some small trees and a circular path. Kathy found a well camouflaged Burnished Brass Moth (*Diachrysia chrysitis*) which we stopped to photograph. Beyond a Pyramid Cairn is the 32acre Barracks Farm Field, a similar meadow to that which we had just left. Here we met Diane Scotland, a mainstay of the Friends of Barracks Farm Field. The Friends are responsible for planting over 500 trees and for looking after the wildlife in the field and have an active Facebook group. We had already seen abundant Small Skipper Butterflies (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) and Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet Moths (*Zygaena lonicerae*) and, at the north end of Barracks Farm Field, the flowers on two Greater Butterfly Orchids (*Platanthera chlorantha*) and Twayblade Orchids (*Neottia ovata*). Diane was pleased to meet a group enjoying the wildlife that she has worked hard to protect.

Barracks Farm Field was shown on General Roy's map in the 1750s. It had been a farm and then a golf course. It is now owned by the company Shin Etsu who have a nearby factory. Like several of us Diane records her natural history sightings on iNaturalist. We exchanged business cards and will be visiting the Friends' Facebook site.

After lunch we followed the Longshot Burn path towards the centre of Livingston, leaving the burn to cross to Peel Park where we stopped at the site of the former Peel House. In the seventeenth century there was a physic garden here. On the death of Lord Murray, the collection of plants was transferred to Edinburgh where it became part of the basis of the Royal Botanic Garden. The

Murray family was originally from Elibank, near Innerleithen, and Georgina told us that the name Eliburn derives from there.

The rain was starting as we boarded a very busy train back to Edinburgh. However, some Rangers football supporters going to Tynecastle very willingly gave up their seats to allow some of us to travel in comfort.

*David Adamson*



**PRESTONGRANGE** 27 July 2024

Leader: David Adamson

Our morning walk was a circuit of the fenced area west of Prestongrange Industrial Heritage Museum, landscaped 2-3 years ago to create habitats for invertebrates. Neil told us that a marsh had been planned for the central hollow, but the inflow of water had instead created a shallow pond where we could see Lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*) and a Heron (*Ardea cinerea*). The stony embankments overlooking the pond, intended to be bare, dry slopes, had been largely covered by thistles and the dominant yellow Melilot (*Melilotus officinalis*). Good intentions “aft gang agley”.



*Scaeva pyrastris* (DO)

An unusual plant by the perimeter path was Common Cudweed (*Filago germanica*) and Neil later, near the sea wall, found Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*) - Vladimir checked that the seed pods were glabrous. However, our attention was diverted to the 20-30 Common Seals (*Phoca vitulina*) most of which were on some offshore rocks. The seal pups could be easily heard above the cries of the Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) - confirmed by Pauline - and gulls. Many Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*) were in eclipse plumage and a family of Pied Wagtails (*Motacilla alba*) flitted between the sea wall and the path.

After lunch our focus switched from vertebrates to invertebrates as we explored the museum's grounds. A large migrant hoverfly, *Scaeva pyrastris*, was feeding on Welled Thistle (*Carduus crispus*) beside the long Hoffman Brick Kiln. On the far side of the kiln is a mound of power station ash. Neil told us that this was once used as a trial site to identify plants that might thrive in the ash of the former Musselburgh Lagoons. The plants now dominating this mound are Large-flowered Evening Primrose (*Oenothera glazioviana*) and White Melilot (*Melilotus albus*). A Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) briefly posed on a fencepost but didn't want to be photographed. However, a Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) was less camera-shy.

As we slowly progressed round the site more and more insects responded to the sunshine. Kostya and Han found a slender black bug with long antennae, *Heterotoma planicornis*. We had earlier found nymphs of Birch Shieldbug (*Elasmotethus interstinctus*) and now found those of Parent Bug (*Elasmucha grisea*) on a Birch catkin (*Betula sp*). Our only adult shieldbugs were two Hairy Shieldbugs (*Dolycoris baccarum*). I was delighted to see males of three species of cuckoo bumblebees, all feeding on thistles in the space of a few feet. I had found my first ever Hill Cuckoo Bumblebee (*Bombus rupestris*) at the same place last year. Like some butterflies this species is a recent arrival in Scotland. Today we found these on Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and Nodding Thistle (*Carduus nutans*). Also on these flowers were Southern Cuckoo Bumblebees (*Bombus vestalis*) and Field Cuckoo Bumblebees (*Bombus campestris*).



*Bombus vestalis* (DO)

Before depleting the café's stock of ice cream, we photographed some jumping spiders on the wall of the old Bath House. We saw at least two species: the Downy Jumping Spider (*Attulus pubescens*) and the more familiar Zebra Jumping Spider (*Salticus scenicus*). Prestongrange deserves to be visited at least annually, and any development should take account of the very rich natural history of this exceptional brownfield site.

David Adamson



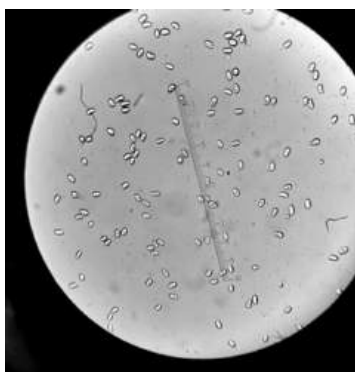
## ARNISTON PLAYING FIELDS and GORE GLEN 4 August 2024

Leaders: Sue Jury and Vladimir Krivtsov

This was an impromptu ENHS walk, setting off from Gore Glen Woodland Car Park. We were setting out to see the newly found site of *Hypopitys monotropa*. Three spikes were seen at the site of the Old Emily Pit. This is similar to the other known site at Millerhill, with the species growing under Birch and *Salix caprea* (Goat Willow). We progressed from there to see the *Pyrola minor* (Common Wintergreen), which is also growing in abundance nearby. Here we met the original finder and recorder of the species, Ian Edwards. This is Ian's usual haunt for dog walking. He was pleased to see us and joined us for the rest of the day.

We made our way up Engine Road, doing a little botanising as we went and then on to the Arniston Playing Fields. These were extremely busy, as there were various matches being played. This did not bother us. It was the rich edges of short turf along the perimeter we were interested in. We continued to the far end. The notable species we found were the Base Rich loving plants *Centaureum erythraea* (Common Centaury), *Linum catharticum* (Fairy Flax), *Sagina nodosa* (Knotted Pearlwort), *Isolepis setacea* (Bristle Club-rush) and *Leontodon saxatilis* (Lesser Hawkbit). These were mixed up with acid loving plants such as *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather), *Potentilla erecta* (Tormentil) and *Juncus articulatus* (Jointed Rush). Also, *Rhinanthus minor* (Yellow Rattle) was abundant. *Tragopogon pratensis* was seen too, in the longer grass, together with *Daucus carota* (Wild Carrot) and *Trifolium pratense* (Red Clover). *Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush) was found growing in swathes along the north bank of the playing fields.

The other important plant we set out to find was *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort). The single plant was still there. Originally four were seen. This plant is a small fern, its closest relative being *Ophioglossum* (Adder's-tongue), which had been seen earlier in the year on an ENHS walk in Holyrood Park. *Botrychium lunaria* can remain dormant in the ground for many years before emerging. Ian took us into the woods behind the playing fields to see a wonderful patch of *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Agrimony), with its lovely yellow flowers and extraordinarily beautiful yet easily dismissed fruits. Since the walk I have found there are 2 Wintergreens growing together *Pyrola minor* and *Pyrola rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Wintergreen), which is rare in Midlothian.



*Hygrocybe persistens*

Interesting fungal finds included *Russula exalbicans* and the waxcaps *Hygrocybe persistens*. The figures below include an image of its relatively big (11-14 microns) spores characteristic of the section Macrosporae. Overall appearance of the specimens, and the evidence of 2-spored basidia, together with the highly gelatinised cap cuticle surface fitted very well with the description in 'Fungi of Switzerland' and other sources. It should be noted that the newer books call it '*H autoconica*', but the old name is more intuitive as the fungus tends to dry out and persist for a relatively long time.

The afternoon was spent in Gore Glen itself. The most interesting plants there were *Melica uniflora* and *Scrophularia umbrosa*. There was also a plethora of fungi, all

diligently recorded by Carolyn. However, one of the target species, a tiny *Pluteus* which was found there previously, proved to be elusive on this occasion. We intend to keep coming back for it though, as it appeared to have a confusing mix of characteristics of 2 different rare species.

Sue Jury & Vladimir Krivstov



**COBBINSHAW RESERVOIR** 10 August 2024.

Leader: Lynn Youngs

A group of 9 gathered in the small car park at the western end of Cobbinshaw Reservoir after car sharing from Hermiston P&R. Everyone immediately donned waterproof clothing as the weather looked decidedly unpromising with squally showers and a strong breeze.

Cobbinshaw Reservoir is located 5 kilometres south of West Calder. The 310-acre site is a SSSI and it has the largest area of fen wetlands in West Lothian. It is of regional significance for over-wintering birds, and it is an important area for its plants. The walk initially headed in a southerly direction following the water's edge and aquatic plants spotted included a large swathe of Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) which was still in flower and Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*). The beautiful Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*) was growing in a number of places with Meadow Sweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) and Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*). Along the way we saw the remains of Melancholy Thistle (*Cirsium heterophyllum*) with its large leaves and a lovely display of Large Yellow Loosestrife (*Lysimachia punctata*). Other plants spotted in this area were Common Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and Old Man's Beard (*Clematis vitalba*).

We arrived at the causeway and explored the very wet marshy area at the north end where we found Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), and Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) with its hollow stem. Walking across the causeway added Hard Shield Fern (*Polystichum aculeatum*), Floating Sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and large patches of the delicate Thyme-leaved Sandwort (*Arenaria serpyllifolia*). By now the sun was beginning to shine and the showers had petered out. A huge swathe of Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*) was seen bobbing on the water which was a lovely sight as the bright pink flowers reflected the sun's rays. Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) and Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*) butterflies flew past as we walked to the second causeway where we paused to look at an area of the reservoir where Reed Canary Grass (*Phalarus arundinaceae*) and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) were abundant. Along the edge of the water numerous spikes of Common Maretail (*Hippuris vulgaris*) were close enough to see the plant well and take photographs.

We sat having lunch in sunshine beside Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) trees overlooking the reservoir and David, Vlad and Rob were very pleased with the insects seen. These included hoverflies *Anasimyia lineata*, *Eristalinus sepulchralis* and *Lejogaster metallina*, a sawfly *Tenthredo olivacea* and the superb Haworth's Minor Moth (*Celaena haworthii*). Numerous small Toads (*Bufo bufo*) were also spotted jumping around close to the lunch spot.

From the second causeway our walk continued across acidic moorland to a track and a number of new sedges were added to our list – Oval Sedge (*Carex leporina*), Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*), Spring Sedge (*Carex caryophyllea*) and Star Sedge (*Carex echinata*). Large clumps of Purple Moor Grass (*Mollinia caerulea*) and Mat Grass (*Nardus stricta*) were also seen along this



*Clavaria fragilis* (DO)

stretch. One of the day's highlights was finding a beautiful Fairy Spindle (*Clavaria fragilis*) fungus growing in the grass.

Along the track an abundance of Marsh Cinquefoil (*Comarum palustre*) was growing with some plants still in flower. We carried on past some old mine workings where we spotted a lovely patch of Corn Spurrey (*Spegula arvensis*). After crossing a railway bridge, we headed back to the car park along the "Fairy Path" which ran adjacent to an area of raised bog. The bog was very productive and a number of new species were added to our list: Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) which is not frequently seen and a highlight of the day for me, Heath Milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Bog Bean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*), Heath Wood-rush (*Luzula multiflora*), Sharp-flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*) and Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatis*). Overall, it was a quiet day for birds with just a few sightings of European Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) and European Curlew (*Numenius arquata*).

In conclusion, it was a successful day's outing in an area new to the ENHS and one which should definitely be repeated at a different time of year.

Lynn Youngs



**MERCHISTON CASTLE SCHOOL** 21 August 2024

Leader: David Adamson

Having noticed the variety of trees in the school grounds during a January visit with the Lothians Bryophyte Group, a follow-up visit by the Nats to look at the trees in leaf seemed a good idea. Come the day, my idea did not seem so clever. I was unable to find a guide to the trees on the internet, and did not really know how I would interest a group of ten for two hours. I was rescued by the School Chaplain, Nick Blair, whom we happened to meet as we reported to Reception. Nick kindly offered to show us around the grounds, an offer that I immediately accepted.

The school grounds occupy the estate of Colinton Castle, a 15<sup>th</sup> century keep which Cromwell's troops damaged in 1650 and which was further damaged to create a more "romantic" ruin in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The remains of the L-shaped keep are now partly covered by Rosebay Willowherb and surrounded by a fence. A blank plaque probably originally said "Keep Out".

After showing us a stunted Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) planted in the 1930s by the Duchess of York, later Queen when her husband became George VI, Nick took us to the old walled garden, over two acres in extent and with an exceptionally high wall. This garden dates from around 1806 when Colinton House itself was built. The House is now renamed Gibson House and is the school's science block. Nothing is left of the hothouses or vinery in the walled garden, but a single Cedar (*Cedrus libani*) remains from a group of three, grown from seed collected in Lebanon. Outside the walled garden is a lane hedged with Holly (*Ilex sp*) some of which may be descended from a Holly hedge planted there in the 1640s.

Some of the oldest trees are the Sycamores around the Castle, but perhaps the most impressive trees are outside Gibson House. These include a massive, spreading Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and a very tall White Willow (*Salix alba*) both probably over two hundred years old. Douglas did not recall seeing a larger specimen of the latter in Scotland.

We then visited some steps outside the swimming pool. Here, on stones taken from the Castle, are initials and names of some former pupils, all incised with precision and dating from the 1890s. Nearby, Douglas pointed out a mature Hungarian Oak (*Quercus frainetto*) its leaves with short

stalks and deeply divided lobes. A smaller tree was a Tibetan Cherry (*Prunus serrula*) with glossy peeling bark.

After showing us two canine gravestones resting against his house Nick said farewell to a much better-informed group. Douglas had heard mention of a pond in the outdoor biology grounds, so we spent our remaining time looking at the plants in and around this pond. These included Reedmace (*Typha latifolia*) and Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). Insects feeding on Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) and Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) included the cuckoo bumblebees *Bombus sylvestris* and *B. campestris*. However the real interest today was in the history and the trees of Merchiston Castle School, and I am grateful to the School for permission to visit and to Nick for our excellent guided tour.

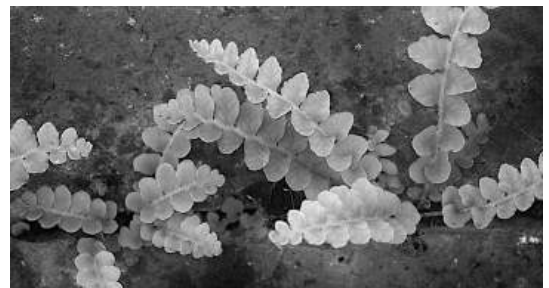
David Adamson



## BLACK MOSS, ARMADALE 31 August 2024

Leader: David Adamson

Black Moss is a raised bog on the edge of Armadale, the eastern half of which is a local nature reserve. By blocking drainage channels and removing conifers, Green Action Trust, on behalf of West Lothian Council, attempts to restore this part of the bog to its original condition. In perfect summer weather our group of eight met at Upper Bathville and walked around the boundary of the raised bog, mainly on good paths but with some diversions into the Moss in pursuit of insects. Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and Ling (*Calluna vulgaris*) dominate Black Moss in late summer and feed the many bees and flies which were the main theme of our meeting.



*Asplenium ceterach* (DO)

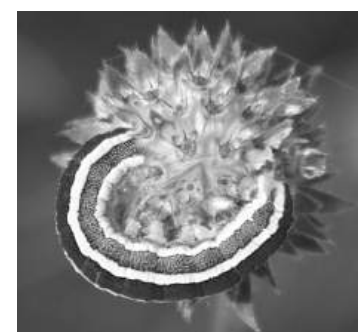
On the north face of a brick garden wall off South Street is probably West Lothian's only population of Rustyback Fern (*Asplenium ceterach*), which we visited before entering the nature reserve. We then paused at a spot where conifers have been removed and native trees planted; on a tree trunk was a lace-hopper *Cixius nervosus* and nearby, Dyer's Polypore (*Phaeolus schweinitzii*) growing from a buried conifer stump.

Despite litter and abandoned seats the old Curling Pond was alive with invertebrate life including Pond Skaters (*Gerris sp.*), many Emerald Damselflies (*Lestes sponsa*), Common and Black Darters (*Sympetrum sp.*) and at least three individual Hawkers (*Aeshna sp.*).



*Lestes sponsa* (DO)

Leaving the nature reserve to enter the western part of Black Moss, the boundary path led us across the bog towards the school on the northern side. Aisling identified a caterpillar as Broom Moth (*Ceramica pisi*) and Vladimir confirmed that an orb-web spider in the heather was *Araneus quadratus*. I was pleased to find the Broken-belted Bumblebee (*Bombus soroensis*), a rarity outside the Scottish Highlands, and Zoe found one of two Hieroglyphic ladybirds (*Coccinella hieroglyphica*).



*Ceramica pisi* (DO)

Other notable species seen were *Chalcosyrphus nemorum*, a hoverfly which is totally new to me, a Small Copper butterfly (*Lycaena phlaeas*), and a pink caterpillar which may be that of a pug moth (*Eupithecia sp.*).

Before catching the train back to Edinburgh Lynn and I visited another area of Scabious where we admired a large sprawling patch of Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*).

David Adamson



### OAK GALLS at CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE PARK 7 September 2024

Leaders: Chang-Ti Tang and Sarah Adamson

This was our third and as always different oak gall hunt. A damp start turned into a dry and grey afternoon which attracted a small slow-moving group of people. It was good to welcome three new people who joined in with the hunt. The relaxed format for the day allowed plenty of time to ask questions about the biology of the galls and their causers. Gall Week 2024 had started on iNaturalist adding to the purposes for this field trip.



There were generally fewer oak galls than last year, however, Chang-Ti found *Andricus gemmeus* on trunks. With our 'eyes in' they turned up on small twigs and on the trunks. Over the next few weeks many were to be found and perhaps reflected the period for finding the galls was later on.

As we wandered, we noticed signs of life on the wet vegetation. Characteristic of the season several families of newly-emerged Red-legged Shieldbug (*Pentatoma rufipes*) ventured across oak leaves. As the session ended a large flock of Long-tailed Tits (*Aegithalos caudatus*) surrounded us, perhaps after the bounty of the young bugs. Chang-Ti suggested that our next hunt may be

for gall causers early in spring.

Sarah Adamson



Later, in mid-October during a trip to Carlisle I saw a cloud of small insects round an Oak tree. There were lots of them emerging from *Cynips divisa* galls. From then on it was common to see the galls changing after the wasps had emerged.



### GILMERTON HOUSE and GROUNDS 21 September 2024

Leaders: Lynn Youngs and Jean Long

Eleven members gathered in the grounds of Gilmerton House on a very overcast dull day but with a forecast promising sunshine by late morning. The parking area was adjacent to a thousand tons of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) wood piled high along the estate road. The Estate Office had confirmed earlier that this was the result of trees felled due to the fungus Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) and it was a devastating sight.

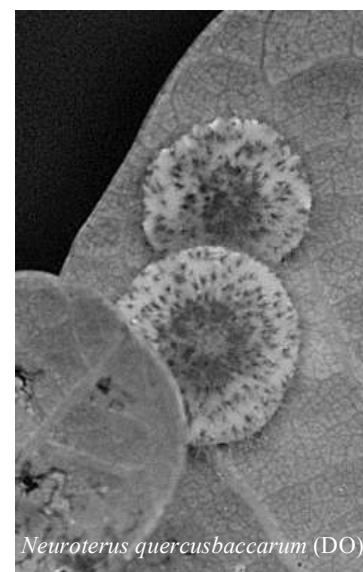
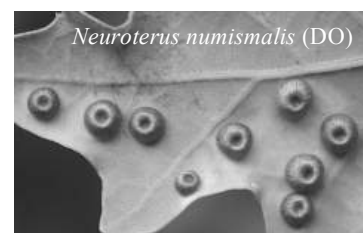
Our route followed tracks and we soon passed a large swathe of the very striking Summer Ragwort (*Ligularia dentata*), a small number of the plants showing the remains of their large bright orange-yellow flowers. This is a plant native to China and Japan and is planted for ornamental reasons. We continued to an open area where we spotted one of the plant highlights of the day – large displays of Intermediate Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea x intermedia*) in full flower. This plant is a hybrid of Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*) seen growing nearby and Alpine Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea alpina*) and interestingly it often grows in the absence of one or both parents. The open area had a rich, diverse flora and other plants seen here included Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Tuberous Comfrey

(*Symphytum tuberosum*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) and a profusion of Common Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*). Numerous Common Carder-bees (*Bombus pascuorum*) were buzzing around the Common Figwort to the exclusion of any other plant which made for an interesting sighting of the day. In this area two Eurasian Nuthatches (*Sitta europaea*) were spotted on a nearby tree.

Our route continued towards Gilmerton House passing Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*), Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) and a lovely display of Honey Fungus (*Armillaria mellea*). We reached a clearing which gave a superb view of Gilmerton House where Jean gave an overview of the house explaining that it is a Georgian mansion and has been the seat of the Kinloch family since the 17th century. The house dates principally from 1750 and during the 1980s it underwent a massive restoration to restore the property to its former glory. We had lunch nearby beside a stand of Pedunculate Oaks (*Quercus robur*) and spotted three Oak Galls – Cola-Nut Gall (*Andricus lignicolus*), Silk-button Spangle Gall (*Neuroterus numismalis*) and Common Spangle Gall (*Neuroterus quercusbaccarum*).

Soon after lunch, in two separate places we noticed horse chestnuts (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) littered across the ground that had been chewed but curiously it did not look like any part of the chestnuts had been eaten. We decided that this was possibly the work of a Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) but no-one in the party had seen this type of behaviour before.

We were now heading back to the car park and notable sightings included a very old Sweet Chestnut tree (*Castanea sativa*), Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), White Poplar (*Populus alba*), Large-leaved Lime (*Tilia platyphylla*) and Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). Fungi spotted included Hare's Foot Inkcap (*Coprinopsis lagopus*), Artist's Bracket, (*Ganoderma applanatum*), Giant Polypore (*Meripilus giganteus*), Hen of the Woods (*Grifola frondosa*) and Weeping Widow (*Lacrymaria lacrymabunda*). We also passed a splendid hedge which comprised no less than ten tree species – species of Beech (*Fagus*), Yew (*Taxus*), Privet (*Ligustrum*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Holly (*Ilex*), Birch (*Betula*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus*), Ivy (*Hedera*) and Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*). Our final fungi of the day adjacent to the parking area was a terrific specimen of Lawyer's Wig (*Coprinus comatus*) and thanks to Maggie for spotting this hidden behind a tractor!



The forecasted sun did not materialise but it remained dry and everyone seemed very pleased with their sightings. All in all a successful day in one of the most attractive parts of East Lothian. Our thanks go to Di and Brian from the Estate Office for their help in making the visit possible and for arranging access to suitable parking within the grounds.

Lynn Youngs



## MUSSELBURGH SEA WALL & SCRAPES

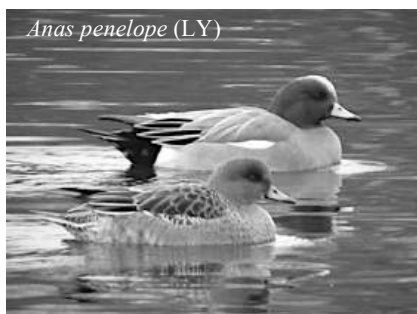
19 October 2024 Leader: Stan da Prato

Seven of us met at the customary Goose Green site on a mild and sunny morning to enjoy the birdlife at the mouth of the Esk and on the two sets of Scrapes created in the former Musselburgh Lagoons. It was low tide and some birds on the mudflats were quite distant, but Stan's telescope allowed everyone good views of the gulls, waders and ducks near the mouth of the Esk. Pauline and

Sarah saw a Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and then two others flew past us from the river towards the New Scrapes. As we moved east along the curve of the sea wall, following in the wake of another group of birdwatchers, more mudflats and more bird species appeared. A raft of seventeen swans had drifted from the river mouth until they were easily visible as Whooper Swans (*Cygnus cygnus*), all adults, while some juvenile Gannets (*Morus bassanus*), presumably from the Bass Rock, flew in the opposite direction. On the mudflats were Curlews (*Numenius arquata*), Redshanks (*Tringa totanus*), Oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus*) and five gull species, with Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*) and Wigeons (*Anas penelope*) mainly on the tideline or offshore. Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*) flew past and both Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) and Shags (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*) fished near the sea wall.



*Bucephala clangula* (LY)



*Anas penelope* (LY)

As we approached the Old Scrapes a large flock of Lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*) took to the air, flying in unison. In the Boating Pond a solitary female Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) and a Dabchick (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) tolerated the disturbance of dogs and canoes. The Old Scrapes rarely disappoint, and the sunshine highlighted the colours of birds' plumage, particularly the Lapwings, also known as Green Plovers. There was a tight-packed flock of Knot (*Calidris canutus*), a few Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) busily feeding, many Lapwing and Wigeon resting, with Teal (*Anas crecca*) swimming in the shallow water. A Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and a male Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*), one of three, were preening themselves.

The New Scrapes had a different mix of bird species including Greylag Geese (*Anser anser*), Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*), Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) and a female Pintail (*Anas acuta*) very actively feeding and drinking. The green speculum of the male

Teal was particularly colourful in the afternoon sunshine. A big skein of Pink-footed Geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) flew over, their calls markedly different from the Greylags in front of us. Like the Knot and Lapwings at the Old Scrapes a flock of Bar-tailed Godwits (*Limosa lapponica*) flew as one body, their barred-tails showing well.

As we returned to the vicinity of the Air Cadets Hall at Goose Green, Jane and I photographed some of the invertebrates on the fenceposts. These included nursery-web spiders (*Pisaura mirabilis*) and crab spiders (*Xysticus sp.*). However, the most unexpected find of the day was kept for the end - a very tame Hawaiian Goose (or Nene) (*Branta sandvicensis*) among the Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) on the Esk in Musselburgh. Apparently, this presumed escape from someone's collection has been present for some weeks.

Thanks to Stan for sharing his expertise with us and for providing such good weather.

*David Adamson, with ornithological information by Stan da Prato*



**SWANSTON FORAY**, a joint outing with ELFE 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024  
Leader: Carolyn Hargest

On Sunday 27 October a group of Edinburgh Natural History Society members and Edinburgh and Lothian Fungi Enthusiasts (18 in total) met in the car park at Swanston for a joint foray in the Pentland Hills. As is often the case the car park provided some good initial sightings – Horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*), perhaps linked to kitchen waste from the nearby Swanston Brasserie, and

Holly Parachute (*Marasmius hudsonii*) in impressive numbers. It is a tiny, delicate fungus which feeds on dead holly leaves, and sports spiky hairs on both its cap and stipe.

Progress was inevitably slow – but only because there was rather a lot to be seen! So, we were easily found by latecomers – Heather (from ELFE) and some family members including her young nephew, William. It was great to be able to show him some fungi, especially some with seasonally creepy Halloween-themed names such as Dead Moll’s Fingers (*Xylaria longipes*), Candlesnuff Fungus (*Xylaria hypoxylon*) and Deceptive Earthtongue (*Geoglossum fallax*). William also enjoyed helping to “re-wild” the specimens after examination. He enjoyed his first foray but left early to have lunch.

Hare’s Ear Fungus (*Otedea onotica*) and a nice group of Freckled Dapperling (*Echinoderma [Lepiota] asperum*) were seen. Also by the main path was a patch of Striated Earthstar (*Geastrum striatum*) beside a Yew (*Taxus sp.*). Earthstars are often found under Yew in churchyards. These are beautiful sculptural fungi with a distinct neck and beak. They look prehistoric and amazing!



The wind was cold and as we progressed along the track there was a small group of planted trees with labels, unfortunately planted rather too close together and some labelled incorrectly. Walking on we were greeted at the first gateway by a Highland Cow. We climbed into a field hoping for lots of colourful waxcaps – fungi of unimproved grassland. Smoky Spindles (*Clavaria fumosa*) were a real treat, and there were several types of waxcaps including Parrot Waxcap (*Hygrocybe psittacine*), Meadow Waxcap (*Cuphophyllus pratensis*), Butter Waxcap (*Hygrocybe ceracea*) and Blackening Waxcap (*Hygrocybe conica*) plus some fungi which unfortunately we weren’t able to ID with confidence. We were pleased to see Earthy Powdercap (*Cystoderma amianthinum*). There were also Bells (*Galerina*), Mottlegills (*Panaeolina*) and Pinkgills (*Entoloma*) - all species which enjoy this habitat - alongside Roundheads (*Stropharia*) and even Liberty Caps (*Psilocybe semilanceata*).

Heading further up the track towards Allermuir Hill there was a drystone seat providing some welcome shelter and a good lunch spot with panoramic views of Swanston Golf Club and the City of Edinburgh. We examined some of the specimens we had collected. It is acceptable to collect fungi specimens, particularly if closer inspection or investigation is required, though not lone specimens or protected species. Sniffing fungi can provide an important pointer to ID. Some of our specimens had developed a nice smell of honey, not previously detected when they were first picked – the aptly named Honey Wax Cap (*Hygrocybe reidii*). It also has a crenulated edge to its cap. Other species may also smell of honey such as the Splendid Wax Cap (*Hygrocybe splendidissima*).

I was able to show the group the spot where the beautiful and rare Violet Coral (*Clavaria zollingeri*) had been seen growing last year. Unfortunately, there was no sign of it this year. Fungi may appear each year at the same spot or just disappear and even return years later. Fingers crossed we may find it again on future forays. Slimy Waxcap (*Gliophorus irrigates*) however was a nice find - very slimy, with a stipe which resembles a worm.

Whilst a few members of the group needed to leave after lunch, ten hardy souls continued and were rewarded with Gorse Cramp Balls (*Daldinia fissa*), on burnt Gorse (*Ulex*) and Yellow Brain (*Tremella mesenterica*) plus the fungi which it parasitises, Rosy Crust Fungus (*Peniophora incarnata*). We followed the track down, running parallel to the Swanston Burn, and found several more species on fallen trees and a hollow dead tree.

Overall, we had a good day out and a nice variety of fungi were seen. Thanks to everyone who helped to find and ID our specimens. Some needed microscopy or closer examination afterwards. As always, we enjoyed good company and, despite cold weather, had a great time exploring outdoors. Thanks to Jamie for making a list of the fungi species seen and to Vlad and Simon for help with ID.

*Carolyn Hargest*



**RSPB LOCH LEVEN** 30 November 2024  
Leader: Joanie McNaughton

Twelve Nats met in the car park, with one of the group all the way from Singapore, spending time here studying. We walked towards the visitor centre, passing hanging feeders hosting 5 Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) and 2 Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*). We also noted Cowslip (*Primula veris*) unusually in flower for this time of year, in a planter in the courtyard.

Descending the steps and through the underpass, I remarked on pre-underpass days when we had to walk across the busy road. I decided to start at the furthest hide and work back to the Gillman Hide as it is bigger with more room to have lunch. Along the path to the Carden Hide I pointed out a very fresh Mole (*Talpa europaea*) hill. I had seen this on the recce two days earlier and was surprised as the ground was frozen. Perhaps because of the recent freeze there wasn't much to see from the hide. However, Jane spotted a nice, albeit distant, male Stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*) sitting atop Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*). On the water we watched male Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) as well as Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and Teal (*Anas crecca*). A mating pair of Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) caused comment! Vlad pointed out a micro moth flying up and down from a clump of rushes. I suggested a Tortrix (*Tortricidae*) sp, which I had seen earlier in November, and was very active then. Circa 200 Pink-footed Geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) were seen flying in the distance, then landing and then up again, possibly caused by human or raptor disturbance.

My target species was Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*) which I noticed on the sightings board on the recce. So I was pretty pleased when Vlad called out "Egret" and we were treated to super views for almost ten minutes as it waded through a pond before flying off. These birds were occasional visitors to the UK from continental Europe, but over recent years they have bred in England. This expansion to the UK echoes increasing populations across Europe. It is believed their first known breeding attempt in Scotland occurred at Loch of Strathbeg when they fledged three young this August. These birds were once persecuted for their white breeding plumage used in the fashion industry and this increase in the UK has particular resonance for the RSPB, as the Society was originally founded to campaign against this plumage trade.

After the excitement died down we went to the Waterston Hide from where we watched Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) feeding in a field, Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) and a distant Pintail (*Anas acuta*) spotted by Susan. There wasn't much else to see, however we all noticed the spikes on nearby high fencing and on fence posts. The ranger subsequently told me that fencing spikes are an attempt to deter foxes from getting inside a fenced area, placed where they have identified a potential entry point. Hopefully this will protect ground-nesting birds from mammalian predation in the breeding season. Nesting bird protection is the aim of the fence post spikes too, to prevent Corvids using the posts as vantage points from where they scan for nests.

From the Gillman Hide, where we had lunch, we saw Whooper (*Cygnus cygnus*) and Mute (*Cygnus olor*) Swans, also Goosander (*Mergus merganser*) and more Goldeneye. On the windows were caddisfly, Cinnamon Sedge (*Limnephilus lunatus*) and a very active ichneumon wasp *Tromatobia*

*lineatoria*. Thanks to eagle-eyed members for spotting these and calling me over and to respective Facebook Groups for confirming their identity.

After lunch we took the Loch Leven trail eastwards. Along the way Vlad found Bluish Veilwort (*Metzgeria violacea* formerly *M. fruticulosa*). To identify this Liverwort correctly, we noted the gemmae on the nerve of the end of the thallus as well as on the thallus margins. Another identification feature is that it turns blue when dry – thanks to Dave Long for this information! On the recce I spotted a small bracket fungus and Jean noticed it while we were poring over the Liverwort. I sent a sample to Cameron Diekonigin who confirmed it as uncommon Cinnamon Bracket (*Hapalopilus nidulans*) by using Potassium hydroxide (KOH) which turns violet. Fenceposts are always good for inverts, and Susan found us a nice Nut Leaf Weevil (*Strophosoma melanogrammmum*). We reached the loch shore and found freshwater mussels and some black ‘blobs’ on stones. Suggestion was they might be algae, and member Pauline King later suggested on Facebook that it could be *Nostoc commune* var. *sphaeroides*. Finally, Sue found *Chara*, an alga that superficially resembles an aquatic flowering plant.

Finally we adjourned to the café for tea/coffee and cake!

Joanie McNaughton



*Limnephilus lunatus* (DO)



#### **INVERLEITH BIRDS** 14 December 2024 Leader: David Adamson

Six of us met at the East Gate entrance to the Royal Botanic Gardens on a chilly but bright mid-December morning. The theme was birdwatching without becoming too cold (and therefore keeping moving). At the meeting place were Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) and Robins (*Erithacus rubecula*), and the first arrivals at the large pond were lucky to glimpse a Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*). I think everyone saw it when we moved to the west end of the pond. There were many Moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*) and Woodpigeons (*Columba palumbus*) on the grass around the pond. On the water were Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and a Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), attracted by the prospect of being fed - they were disappointed. Nearby we heard and saw Bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Coal Tits (*Periparus ater*) and Blue Tits (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) on the bare trees, and the ubiquitous Magpie (*Pica pica*).

There was nothing new on the pond in the Chinese Garden, but we did see a Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) and a single Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*) at the Pear Lawn. A Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) was on the path near the John Hope Gateway.

The playing fields of Inverleith Park were mainly given over to dogs, but Carrion Crows (*Corvus corone*) didn't seem to be deterred by the canine legions. A single Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) stood on the tiny island in Inverleith Pond, surrounded by the bread-fed gulls and ducks which seem to spend winter on this artificial water body. When food appeared, there was a scene reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's film *The Birds* as a family of ducks fought their way through a cloud of Black-headed Gulls (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) and Feral Pigeons (*Columba livia domestica*), closely followed by Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) and Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*). The Tufted Ducks (*Aythya fuligila*) seemed indifferent to all this activity, diving to find their own food beneath the water.



*Erithacus rubecula* (DO)

In contrast to Inverleith Park, the Raeburn Place playing fields were undisturbed. As a result, we saw a large number of Oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus*), as well as Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula*), a single Common Gull (*Larus canus*) and Curlew (*Numenius Arquata*). A flock of Goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) on the higher branches of an Alder (*Alnus sp*) with green catkins were noticeable when they flew and all but invisible when they settled. We all had a good view of a Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*) on the trunk of the same Alder.

In the trees of Rocheid Path, by the Water of Leith, was a mixed flock which included Great Tits (*Parus major*), with a Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) in the undergrowth, and Georgina pointed out a large family group of Long-tailed Tits (*Aegithalos caudatus*). Finally, as we were about to leave the river at Canonmills, a Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) obligingly flew upstream from Warriston and landed on a rock so that we could all watch it. Having seen 31 bird species in two hours it was good to escape from the cold into one of the local cafes.

David Adamson



### **CHRISTMAS WALK – Lauriston Farm to Cramond foreshore 27 December 2024** Leader: Frances Dunn

A good number of Nats, about 18 I think, gathered in the Toby Carvery car park on a dry if somewhat dull day. Right from the start we managed to split into groups going at different paces, seeing different things, but miraculously we all managed to meet for lunch more or less on time!

Several people saw Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), one hovering over the restaurant and another one sitting on a fence. Along the path male and female Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) were seen and a flock of Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*). Along the shore we noticed a solitary drake Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) on the water and wondered where its pals were. On the way back up the hill we saw a Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) perched at eye level in a tree, allowing us to walk past it to get a better view without it flying off. We reached a very lush green field with a roosting flock of 50+ Curlew (*Numenius arquata*). Other small birds seen were Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) and Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*).

I remembered last year seeing a very early Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) female flower and hoped to find it again. Success, although on a different tree, with wee red anemone-like flowers alongside the male flowers. Throughout the walk we noted two more flowering plants - Snowdrop (*Galanthus*) and White Dead-nettle (*Lamium album*). The botany ‘splinter’ group found two



*Corylus avellana* (JMcN)

species of Ragwort - Marsh Ragwort (*Jacobaea aquatica*) and an abundance of Broad-leaved Ragwort (*Senecio sarracenicus*) around the Cramond car park. One of this group, Lynn, said: “For me, the other plant of great interest was *Carex hirta* (Hairy Sedge) – it was a new plant for me. Although it was in a “winter state” we could still see the large male and female spikes with their dense covering of fine hairs, which could be seen with the naked eye but were much more obvious with a hand lens.”

I had noticed a few mature trees with small plaques on them and Pauline had been photographing these plaques. Over 11,500 trees have been planted across Lauriston Farm in recent years with the history of the older ones being recorded by the Cramond Association. One massive Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) was dated “c 1650”.

Last year a few of us studied a very dead tree trunk beside the shore road, possibly Sycamore, but difficult to say for sure. We stopped at it again to see what was new. We saw the same bootlace traces of Honey Fungus (*Armillaria*) and somewhat elderly Smoky Bracket (*Bjerkandera adusta*). But there was a different fungus on the top of the trunk, very old and blackened and I took a bit of it to show Vlad at lunchtime. Initially we thought it might have been one of the ‘saddle’ (*Helvella*) fungi from its shape but looking closer we noticed it had wrinkled veins rather than true gills which pointed to Chanterelle (*Cantharellus*). A Rust on Wall Rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*) was identified as *Milesina murariae*. UK Fungi Forum states “*Milesina* rusts on ferns are not rusty”! We then noticed a lot of excavated holes with fresh frass lying in minute pellet-like clumps. It was later agreed beetle frass was likely. Other inverts found included two Flat-backed Millipedes (*Polydesmus angustus*) and Susan found a small beetle on a fence post, possibly a flea beetle, *Psylliodes chrysocephala* with red legs and antennae and swollen thigh. ID unconfirmed at time of writing.

Everyone got together again for lunch at 1.30pm. A few on the outing didn’t stay, and some who had not been on the walk arrived for lunch. A great end to the year and a massive thankyou to Frances for organising the day. Thanks also to all those who submitted records and comments.

*Joanie McNaughton*

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## **Indoor Meetings**

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### **CRIMES BEHIND THE NATURE RESERVE**

**Stan da Prato** 25 September 2024

Stan’s highly entertaining talk touched on very many subjects, including Donald Trump’s hair, a Brazilian footballer, the death of David Douglas and DDT, but the underlying thread tying all these together was natural history and particularly botany. David Douglas was an explorer and plant collector whose body was found in a pit for trapping wild cattle in Hawaii. Whether there was a crime committed will never be known but it seems improbable that he would have fallen into such a trap without a gentle shove. The Brazilian footballer was Socrates whose Athenian namesake was forced to take poisonous Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) as punishment for his supposed crimes 2,400 years ago. DDT was a wonderful mosquito repellent which was subsequently found to destroy much more than just a troublesome insect. Stan showed a photograph of swimmers in a pool being happily sprayed with this toxic stuff. Trump’s hair resembles the Southern Flannel Moth caterpillar and, slightly less obviously, the crest of the Golden Pheasant. The humourless ex-President of the United States would be unimpressed by either comparison.

We were told about the tea plants sent out of China by the Scottish plant collector Robert Fortune, poppy and the Opium Wars of the 1840s, the unpleasant characteristics of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and the fact that the engine oil’s name “Castrol” was derived from Castor Oil, once a popular laxative.

All in all Stan provided a great deal of information and much amusement at the same time.

*David Adamson*

## **ALPINE FLOWERS OF THE SWISS ALPS**

**Lynn Youngs** 23 October 2024 following the AGM

Lynn presented on the Alpine Flowers of Switzerland based on a Naturetrek holiday to Wengen that she had been on in June 2023. Wengen is an alpine resort in the heart of the Swiss Bernese Oberland, lying at an altitude of 1163m and surrounded by magnificent scenery with the famous peaks of the Jungfrau, Monch and Eiger dominating the skyline to the south. Travel to Wengen from Zurich airport had been via 4 trains and throughout the week all local travel to the botanical sites was entirely by train.

The first day was spent at the summit area of the local mountain Mannlichen at 2343m and the botanical discoveries included Trumpet Gentian (*Gentiana acaulis*), Alpine Snowbell (*Soldanella alpina*) and the pale yellow Alpine Pasqueflower (*Pulsatilla alpina*). Mountain Avens (*Dryas octopetala*) was flowering in profusion and this is a plant that can be seen growing at a number of locations in the North West Highlands of Scotland.

The range and variety of alpine flowers was outstanding, and Lynn highlighted a number of plants seen growing in spectacular displays that are very rare in Scotland – these included Alpine Blue-sowthistle (*Cicerbita alpina*), Yellow Oxytropis (*Oxytropis campestris*), Alpine Rock-cress (*Arabis alpina*) and Spring Gentian (*Gentiana verna*). Other highlights during the week included the large blue flowers of Alpine Columbine (*Aquilegia alpina*), a very large display of Lady's-slipper Orchid (*Cypripedium calceolus*) and four splendid Rock-jasmines from the Primulaceae family.

The last day's site at the Eigergletscher (2320m) involved walking on moraines and screes looking at pioneer plants that colonise this harsh environment. Further down the moraine exquisite specimens of Glacier Crowfoot (*Ranunculus glacialis*), Mountain Milk-vetch (*Oxytropis jacquinii*) and swathes of Narcissus-flowered Anemone (*Anemonastrum narcissiflorum*) rounded off an excellent holiday.

*Lynn Youngs*

## **EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY OF PLANTS**

**Dr Andy Griffiths** 20 November 2024

Dr Andy Griffiths is an ecology and evolutionary biologist, currently working at RBGE. Andy is an academic field work specialist. As he talked you could see that he is happiest out in habitats, especially those at higher altitudes.

Although he spoke about his trips to Peru for his PhD, he appeared to have an attraction to Scottish mountain landscapes. He introduced several evolution terms such as phylogeny to help us understand the link between tree diversity and altitude, and whether tropical montane forests are vulnerable to losses under environmental changes, such as rising temperatures or an upward shift of the cloud-base.

Earlier in his career he held ranger posts in Highland Scotland and his current work often results in inspiring the next generation to engage themselves in field work.

*Sarah Adamson*

## **EELS**

**Jack Wootton** 23 January 2024

Jack, a PhD researcher at Hull University's International Fisheries Institute, spoke about several projects he has taken part in, mostly about the European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*). When people talk about eels the word enigmatic often comes into the conversation. Jack talked about their life cycles and behaviour, often mentioning ecological plasticity whereby they can quickly migrate between habitats, such as between freshwater and seawater. In spite of this there has been a dramatic loss of these eels since the 1980s. His PhD research is looking at eel requirements and barriers to successful life. Barriers may be physical such as weirs or additions to the water such as sewage, farming chemicals and road run-off. His lab work takes place in Hull using eels from the River Parrett, Somerset.

Biological methods, such as studying environmental DNA, have the potential to revolutionise the study of waterborne organisms and have been used in some of Jack's other activities. He outlined the legal and illegal trade in already endangered eels supplying the demand in Japan where *Aguilla japonica* is endangered and traditionally an important part of food culture. I think that Jack would have happily talked about his other projects for longer whilst an Atlantic Storm blew outside.

Please have a look:

Shoal Conservation Lost Fishes Project <https://shoalconservation.org/search-for-lost-fishes/> 10 Most Wanted Fish

Forth Rivers Trust <https://forthriverstrust.org/>

Galloway Fisheries Trust Saving the Sparling <https://gallowayfisheriestrust.org/save-the-sparling.php>

*Sarah Adamson*

## **SOUTH OF SCOTLAND GOLDEN EAGLE PROJECT**

**Philip Munro** 20 February 2024

In 2008, when the project began, there were only three pairs of Golden Eagles in the South of Scotland, although the area had sufficient food and habitat to support 14-16 pairs. In 2018 custom-built aviaries in the Moffat Hills were stocked with nestlings taken from Highland eyries where there were two healthy young, one being taken for the project. The 3 male birds were reared in these pens, their contact with the keepers who fed them being kept to a minimum. After two months, once the eagles had fledged, they were released but would return to a feeding station. Unfortunately, two of the newly released males were killed by a female eagle which was unwilling to share the food, but the third male later paired with this same female.

Further releases took place in subsequent years, including some sub-adult eagles. Satellite-tagging has shown that these birds tended to return to the Highlands whereas the released nestlings remained in the South of Scotland. Although the number of eagles in the region has built up over the past five years only 1-3 young birds have fledged each year. It is hoped that the population will become self-sustaining, the main threat being the persecution which had kept Golden Eagle numbers so low before the project started. Police Scotland is currently investigating one apparent case of illegal killing of an eagle. The Project hopes that the threat of withdrawal of their licences will stop the killing of birds of prey on shooting estates.

The Project has involved local schools, businesses and community groups. Primary school children name the young eagles, one being called Speckled Jim after the pigeon in Blackadder Goes Forth. Well-known naturalists and authors appear at the Moffat Golden Eagle Festival.

Find out more at [www.goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk](http://www.goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk)

*David Adamson*

**RZSS and CONSERVATION**  
**Dr Helen Taylor** 19 March 2024

Dr Taylor is Conservation Programme Manager at the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and previously worked in conservation in New Zealand. The Society works with partnership organisations to conserve species in Uganda, Brazil, Central Asia and closer to home in the UK. Among its higher profile projects are those to protect the European Beaver and Wildcat in Scotland but Helen's conservation work is directed towards four invertebrate species: Pine Hoverfly (*Blera fallax*), Dark Bordered Beauty Moth (*Epione vespertaria*), Medicinal Leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*) and Pond Mud Snail (*Omphiscola glabra*). All have very restricted populations in Scotland. Her team collects eggs or larvae from the wild and uses captive breeding to produce adults which can be released into areas of suitable habitat. The aim is to create self-sustaining populations which no longer require input from captive breeding.

The Pine Hoverfly project began in 2019 with the collection of 25 larvae from the one remaining Scottish population on Speyside. The larvae develop in jam jars filled with damp sawdust to mimic their natural habitat of rot-holes in pine trees. After pupation the adults are released into captive flight enclosures where they breed. In 2021 over 8,000 larvae hatched, and 3,000 larvae were then released into suitable habitat. Since then, larvae have been found in other rot-holes which confirms that the Pine Hoverflies are breeding in the wild. As this is a species found at higher latitudes, any future releases are more likely to be in the north of Scotland as climate change would make southern Scotland unsuitable for the species.

The Dark Bordered Beauty Moth, which relies on Aspen suckers, is found in only two locations in Scotland and one in England. This project is similar to that of the Pine Hoverfly and the first releases into the wild took place in 2023. Medicinal Leeches were known from two lochs in the west of Scotland and have recently been found in a third loch in Dumfries and Galloway. Again, there is a conservation breeding programme. The facilities for captive breeding of the previous species are all at the Highland Wildlife Park. However, the Pond Mud Snail is bred in Edinburgh Zoo. This is a widespread but declining species. The resident population at Red Moss in the Pentland Hills has been boosted by captive-bred introductions from the Zoo and, despite its small size, hand-sifting of mud from the Red Moss Pond has found that the snails are present which indicates that the project is succeeding.

None of these are short term projects and all depend upon continuing funding and help from partner organisations. These include Buglife, Rare Invertebrates of the Cairngorms, RSPB, Cairngorms National Park, Butterfly Conservation and NatureScot.

*David Adamson*

## MEMBERS' OBSERVATIONS

DL - Dorothy Lyle JL - Jean Long  
JMN - Joanie McNaughton

### JANUARY 2024

- 10-Jan First female winter visitor Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) now visiting the garden JMN  
14-Jan By the R Esk near Eskmills, one Dame's Violet (*Hesperis matronalis*) in flower and also Purple Toothwort (*Lathraea clandestina*) around the base of Willow (*Salix* sp) JL  
27-Jan From our garden I watched a pair of Bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) on feeders in a neighbouring garden. This was the first time I had seen any there. JL
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### FEBRUARY 24

- 01-Feb There was Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) in a wood north of Pencaitland - carpets of leaves but very few flowers. JL  
03-Feb Saw my first Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna*) in flower this year on a Nats outing along the Water of Leith. JL  
07-Feb Along the Innocent Railway there was Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) in flower. JL  
09-Feb Male winter visitor Blackcap now visiting garden JMN  
13-Feb On a recce for an excursion to Calais Muir Woodland (Dunfermline) I noticed a few European Larch (*Larix decidua*) had green buds showing. JL  
18-Feb Winter-visiting and resident Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) numbers seem down in comparison to previous years. Maximum this winter 6 but used to be a dozen or so. JMN  
18-Feb Saw my first ever flightless female moth, a Dotted Border (*Agriopsis marginaria*) on a gravestone in Grange Cemetery. JMN  
20-Feb Found a flightless female March Moth (*Alsophila aescularia*) at NMCC (National Museum Collection Centre) Granton, in the process of egg laying. On a tree trunk its camouflage was amazing. DL  
21-Feb A garden first, Collared Earthstar (*Geastrum triplex*), under Acer JMN  
22-Feb While walking along beside Heriot Row Gardens I spotted Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) flowering among the trees. JL  
27-Feb On a recce for our excursion to Aberlady on 2nd March, Lynn and I heard a Skylark (*Alauda avensis*) singing, my first for the year. Then as we had our lunch there were six on the ground. Colt's-foot (*Tussilago farfara*) was flowering. JL  
29-Feb Visited Blackford Pond to see the female Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*), first reported in Nov 2023. Still there and male Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) were taking an interest in her - she not so much in them! JMN  
29-Feb Blackford Hill population of Navelwort (*Umbilicus rupestris*) has spread since my last visit in June 2020. It was not in flower obviously but the rock and tree roots were covered with its succulent green leaves. With mainly a western distribution, Nats member and then Vice County Recorder, Jackie Muscott discovered the species in 2009 at this first eastern site in Scotland. It has spread further on Blackford Hill to the transmitter track and to near Scout Bridge (update Warren Maguire). There is also a small population on Calton Hill. JMN
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### MARCH 24

- 19-Mar The female Shoveler was still present on Blackford Pond and many mating Toads (*Bufo bufo*). I took part in a Toad Patrol at Little France at night. Over a thousand Toads and Frogs (*Rana temporaria*) were rescued from roads and sivers. We collected them in buckets handling them with non-latex, non-powdered gloves and relocating them to nearby ponds. JMN  
20-Mar There was much Common Toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*) in the natural woodland at RGE. DL  
30-Mar Visit to Argaty to see Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*), Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) and the recently created Beaver (*Castor fiber*) site. Under NatureScot licence, a Beaver family, which would otherwise have been culled, had been relocated from Tayside in 2021 and was well settled. Despite heavy downpours we saw everything we wanted to see. From the Red Kite viewing hide I was delighted to watch a pair of Tree Sparrows (*Passer montanus*) inspecting a nestbox placed on a fence post. JMN

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## APRIL 24

- 01-Apr The first Bee-fly (*Bombylius major*) I had seen this year and two Kidney-spot Ladybirds (*Chilocorus renepustulatus*) in Gifford Wood. DL
- 05-Apr Last sighting of the year of male Blackcap, seen on garden feeder in the pouring rain. JMN
- 06-Apr Best specimens of Juniper Rust (*Gymnosporangium clavariiforme*) I have seen at Bawsinch NR. First appearance of the season of Semifree Morel (*Morchella semilibera*) found in exactly the same spot as last year. JMN
- 11-Apr Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) male and female present in the Rock Trap Pond at Bawsinch NR. JMN
- 11-Apr Around Gilmerton House Common Dog Violet (*Viola riviniana*) was in flower. A morel (*Morchella* sp), Hawthorn Shieldbug (*Acanthomosa haemorrhoidale*), Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urtica*) and Peacock (*Aglais io*) were also seen JL
- 13-Apr Cherry (*Prunus* sp) trees in flower outside Newington Trinity Church. JL
- 14-Apr A Peacock Butterfly in our garden - the first I had seen there this year. JL
- 20-Apr My first of the year male Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) and a Comma (*Polygonia c-album*) the latter being the only one I saw at Bawsinch all year. JMN
- 20-Apr After the Nats outing at Longniddry I walked in Seton Dean, saw my first Orange-tip for 2024. JL
- 21-Apr Sand Martins (*Riparia riparia*) were flying by the R Tyne near East Linton. JL
- 23-Apr First Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) of the season and lots of mating St Mark's Flies (*Bibio marci*) at NMCC. DL
- 30-Apr First male Orange-tip was flying around our garden. JL

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## MAY 24

- 09-May Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*) against a brilliant yellow Gorse (*Ulex* sp) made a beautiful sight at Castlelaw. The Blaeberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) in the enclosure was in flower but I didn't see any Hairstreaks on it. Mating St Mark's Flies were on the Gorse, as were two mating pairs of Gorse Shieldbugs (*Piezodorus lituratus*). Heather beetle (*Lochmaea suturalis*) was on the railings at Castlelaw Fort and Mountain Pansy (*Viola lutea*) was in flower. JMN
- 10-May Spectacular views of aurora borealis from our house in Edinburgh, lasting 3/4 of an hour. Before this, around sunset, the clouds looked like mini tornadoes with a waxing crescent moon. JMN
- 11-May In our garden I saw a Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*). JL
- 17-May At Cullaloe Nature Reserve saw Hawthorn Leaf Beetle (*Lochmaea crataegi*), lots of Cocksfoot Moth (*Glyphipterix simplicella*), a male hoverfly *Rhingia campestris* and Downlooker Snipefly (*Rhagio scolopaceus*). JMN
- 18-May Delighted to watch Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) perform aerial displays over their breeding territories on the Isle of May, particularly after their hugely disappointing complete failure to breed there in 2023. I watched the island's first hatched Eider Duck (*Somateria mollissima*) and around a dozen Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) who were gathering mud to build nests. JMN
- 25-May Swifts (*Apus apus*) seen above the gardens close by JL
- 30-May Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) in our garden JL

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## JUNE 24

- 03-Jun Along the path east of the scrapes at Musselburgh we saw Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*) and Hairy Shieldbug (*Dolycoris baccarum*). On the scrapes there were two Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*). The hope at the time was that they might stay in the Lothians to breed. JMN
- 22-Jun Found several Jewel Leaf Beetles (*Plateumaris sericea*), ID confirmed, with such a variety of colour forms, on Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) and Variable Damselfly (*Coenagrion pulchellum*), ID confirmed, at Loch Seil, south of Oban. Also on Common Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*) were both *Cionus tuberculosus* (ID confirmed by Mark Gurney) and Figwort Weevil (*Cionus scrophulariae*). JMN
- 24-Jun At Moss of Achnacree damselflies were emerging all around me and I had a brief glimpse of a White-faced Darter (*Leucorrhinia dubia*) which I had gone specifically to find. We will need to go back next year on a sunnier day. JMN

- 25-Jun I watched a female Orchid Beetle (*Dascillus cervinus*) on a metal gate in the lower reaches of Glen Lonan. These are uncommon in Scotland but are now spreading north and recordings are more common north of the Borders. Higher up, in the river's watershed, I watched two newly emerged male Beautiful Damselfly (*Calopteryx virgo*). JMN
- 27-Jun Saw a Large Skipper (*Ochlodes venata*) at Gifford which was the first time it had been recorded there I think. Subsequently found quite a number on a second visit. DL
- 30-Jun At East Fortune Airfield saw large number of Robin's Pin Cushion (*Diplolepis rosae*) on wild rose bushes (*Rosa* sp) round some of the buildings. Also found a green caterpillar on nettle which I reared and subsequently turned out to be a Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*). DL

#### JULY 24

- 08-Jul Using a lure on loan from Katty Baird I had instant success in luring a Lunar Hornet Moth (*Sesia apiformis*) on Willow in Fawnwood, Gifford. I was delighted as we had previously tried it at NMCC, where one was seen last year, but without success. DL
- 21-Jul So good to see so many butterflies at Kinshaldy, Fife, after a poor season so far in Lothians. Great views of Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*), Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) and Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*). Also visited St Andrews to see the reported Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*). Difficult to spot amongst the seaweed but hawk-eyed Susan Falconer (pun not intended!) found it for us. Also watched Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sahvicensis*), sitting on rocks as the tide came in, and two Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) nests on the cliffs, both with chicks. JMN
- 30-Jul A butterfly "twitch" to Holyrood Park to see the White-letter Hairstreak (*Satyrion w-album*) which had been seen the previous day. This was a first for the Park and for the Lothians it having not been seen north of the Borders before. I was unsuccessful but I did spot a male Banded General (*Stratiomys potamida*). This soldier fly had not been recorded in the Park before and its ID was confirmed by Ian Andrews on UK Diptera Facebook Group - a first for me too. JMN
- 31-Jul Success - super views of the White-letter Hairstreak in Holyrood Park JMN

#### AUGUST 24

- 03-Aug At Cullaloe Nature Reserve near Aberdour found a Swallow Prominent (*Pheosia tremula*) caterpillar on an Alder (*Alnus*), a tortoise beetle (*Cassidinae* sp) larva on Meadow Thistle (*Cirsium dissectum*) and the carrion beetle *Nicrophorus investigator* on a Mole (*Talpa europaea*) carcass. DL
- 11-Aug Found some bright yellow slime mould *Fuligo septica* v *flava* on a birch stump in Gifford. It looked exactly like polystyrene filler! DL
- 24-Aug Swifts (*Apus apus*) still around, seen in Eyemouth JMN
- 25-Aug Snorkelling at Green Ends Gully, Nestends (east of Eyemouth harbour), where there were beautiful contrasting colours of the old red sandstone and the green of the greywacke. JMN
- 27-Aug On our recce for the September outing to Gilmerton House, Lyn and I saw Swifts. JL

#### SEPTEMBER 24

- 09-Sep Found 13 young adult Parent Bugs (*Elasmucha grisea*) huddled together on a birch leaf at NMCC - unusual to see the adults still together in that number. DL
- 15-Sep Went to see the Steppe Grey Shrike (*Lanius exubitor pallidirostris*), a first winter bird which had been blown from Central Asia into the golf course area at Dunbar. It stayed for about two weeks and gave much pleasure to birders, photographers and golfers alike! This is a sub-species of *Lanius meridionalis*. JMN
- 15-Sep Found the gall *Mikiola fagi* at RBGE - the first time it had been recorded there. DL
- 16-Sep Found a Birch Sawfly (*Cimbex femoratus*) larva at NMCC which I tried, but unfortunately failed, to rear. DL
- 21-Sep Went with Katty Baird to open her traps at Binning Wood and saw three beautiful Clifton Nonpareil (*Catocala fraxini*). This large moth, which is also known as the Blue Underwing because of the unusual blue colouring of its underwings, is a rare migrant only reported in Scotland in the past few years. DL

- 22-Sep On a fungi weekend staying at Nethy Bridge found many fungi species along the Loch Garten to Loch Mallachie path. My favourites were Angel Wings (*Pleurocybella porrigens*) - and there was lots of it - a huge growth of Toothed Jelly Fungus (*Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*) and Wood Hedgehog (*Hydnum repandum*). JMN
- 24-Sep More toothed fungi at Culbin Forest, neither of which I had seen before - Scaly Tooth (*Sarcodon squamosus*) and Devil's Tooth (*Hydnum peckii*). We also saw a massive Pine Bolete (*Boletus pinophilus*) and Yellow False Truffle (*Rhizopogon luteolus*) literally littering the path for a short distance. All these are associated with Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), the trees at Culbin having been transported from Loch Garten pine woods and bringing with them their fungi. JMN
- 25-Sep Found two very attractive Dot Moth (*Melanchra persicariae*) caterpillars on Sea Buckthorn (*Hippophae* sp) at NMCC. DL
- 27-Sep Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*) at RSPB Loch of Strathbeg. A pair successfully nested for the first time in Scotland and fledged three chicks in August. This is the most northerly breeding record in Britain. Also a herd of Konik ponies, first introduced on the reserve in 2011, which graze the rushes to provide better habitat for the winter waders and ducks and to encourage more delicate plants. These ponies are descended from the Tarpan horse which roamed Britain in prehistoric times. JMN
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#### OCTOBER 24

- 04-Oct Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) in our garden JMN
- 05-Oct Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) caterpillars living up to their name and still devouring my brother's brassicas in Gifford particularly the Kale (*Brassica oleracea*) which he grows for his chickens! DL
- 10-Oct Aurora borealis visible in Edinburgh five months to the day from the show in May. We didn't see them by eye as we did on 10th May, but good views through the iPhone camera. A bonus was a skein of Pink-footed Geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) flying overhead, not visible but contact calling as they passed. Magic! JMN
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#### NOVEMBER 24

- 01-Nov Visit to Newbattle Abbey and Lord Ancrum's Wood. Porcelain Fungus (*Oudemansiella mucida*) on Beech (*Fagus*) and Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) feeding on the River South Esk. Met Riverfly on the Esk, a volunteer group who meet monthly in winter to monitor the water. The water samples we saw included larvae of caddisfly (*Trichoptera*), stonefly (*Plecoptera*), flat-bodied upwing (*Ecdyonurus*) and mayfly (*Ephemeroptera*). Also seen were freshwater shrimps (*Gammarus*). JMN
- 20-Nov Visit to Dean Cemetery to find Mistletoe (*Viscum album*) growing here on Lime (*Tilia*). I was told of it growing in the grounds of nearby museums, and found it there also. As reported in the Journal last year, the only other populations in Edinburgh (that I am aware of) are near me, in the Edinburgh EH9 area. JMN
- 27-Nov Great to watch a female Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) at Duddingston Loch. It perched on and fished from a branch above two drake Teal (*Anas crecca*) that were snoozing, oblivious to what was going on above their heads. JMN
- 30-Nov Great White Egret at RSPB Loch Leven, seen on ENHS field trip. Also an uncommon fungus, Cinnamon Bracket (*Hapalopilus nidulans*) - see field trip note. JMN
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#### DECEMBER 24

- 06-Dec Superb, clear view of female Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) at Duddingston Loch. It sat on a branch overhanging the water for at least 10 minutes, until a Magpie (*Pica pica*) mobbed it. JMN
- 19-Dec Earliest I have ever seen Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) female flowers, at Bawsinch NR. JMN
- 22-Dec My third sighting of Great White Egret since September, this one at Bavelaw Marsh,. JMN
- 26-Dec At the Hirsell (Coldstream) I was delighted to see two Otters (*Lutra lutra*) in the lake. Five Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) in flower outside Spottiswoode House. JL
- 28-Dec First visit this winter on garden feeder from a male Blackcap JMN
- 28-Dec Female flowers on Hazel in Craigmillar Castle Park. JL

# 2024

## MEMBERS SIGHTINGS



Lunar Hornet Moth *Sesia bembeciformis* (DL)



*Miris striatus* (DL)



Adder's Tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (EB)



Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* (SF)



Spindle Ermine *Yponomeuta cagnagella* (JMcN)



Juniper Rust  
*Gymnosporangium claviforme* (JMcN)



Angel Wings *Pleurocybella porrigens* (JMcN)



Marsh Cinqufoil *Comarum palustre* (LY)



Juniper Shieldbug *Cyphostethus tristriatus* (JMcN)



Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ishnura elegans* (JMcN)



Dot Moth *Melanchra persicariae* (DL)



Grass of Parnassus *Parnassus palustris* (LY)



Frog Orchid *Dactylorhiza viridis* (LY)



*Phasia hemiptera* (DL)



*Sturnus vulgaris* (JD)



King Alfred's Cakes *Daldinia concentrica* (JMcN)



Heron *Ardea cinerea* (JD)



*Conops quadrifasciata* (DO)



Nut Leaf Weevil  
*Strophosoma melanogrammu* (SF)



Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus* (DL)



Figwort Weevil  
*Cionus scrophulariae* (SF)



Large Pine Weevil *Hylobius abietis* (DL)



Stinkhorn *Phallus impudicus* (EB)



Buff-Tip *Phalera bucephala* (DL)



Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (LY)



*Dyseriocrania subpurpurella* (DL)



Rosemary Beetle *Chrysolina americana* (SF)



Ichneumon *Stenichneumon* (DO)



Wood Cranesbill *Geranium sylvaticum* (LY)



Drinker *Euthrix potatoria* (DL)



*Empis tessellata* (DO)



True Lover's Knot  
*Lycophotia porphyrea* (DL)



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