

Reports of BBS meetings

Throughout the following account, new vice-county records are indicated with an asterisk (*). Nomenclature follows Paton (1999), *The liverwort*

flora of the British Isles, and Smith (2004), *The moss flora of Britain and Ireland*, 2nd edition.

Summer field meeting 2005, Co. Fermanagh, Co. Leitrim and Co. Cavan, Ireland

D.T. Holyoak

8 Edward Street, Tuckingmill, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 8PA

Introduction

The headquarters for the summer meeting was at the Field Studies Council's (FSC's) Derrygonnelly Centre in Co. Fermanagh, north-western Ireland. It was strategically located so that fieldwork could be divided between some of the richest areas for bryophytes in the Republic of Ireland (Co. Leitrim, v.-c. H29 and Co. Cavan, v.-c. H30) and Northern Ireland (Co. Fermanagh, v.-c. H33). The FSC Centre is located on the edge of the large village of Derrygonnelly. Besides accommodation and space for three BBS members to camp in the grounds, it provided meals, packed lunches, a drying room, a laboratory for microscopy in the evenings and a small bar.

Twenty-five people attended for at least part of the ten-day meeting. Eighteen of these stayed at the FSC Centre: John Blackburn, Sam Bosanquet, Agneta Burton, Richard Fisk, Mary Ghullam, Paul Hackney, David Holyoak, Geraldine Holyoak, Liz Kungu, Neil Lockhart, Mark Pool, Ron Porley, Chris Preston, Gordon Rothero, David Rycroft, Sam Thomas, Richard

Weyl and Jo Wilbraham. Seven others stayed elsewhere and attended parts of the meeting: Maria Cullen, Howard Fox, Daniel Kelly, Caroline Mhic Daeid, Roy Perry, Grainne Ryan and Phil Stanley.

It was hoped that the results of the fieldwork would contribute to the information available for a forthcoming *Red Data Book of Irish Bryophytes* and this proved to be the case. Numerous significant records of rarities were made, including two moss species new to Ireland. In addition, a large body of data was accumulated towards the Society's new *Atlas*, including information from several poorly known areas (in Co. Monaghan, v.-c. H32 and East Donegal, v.-c. H34).

Saturday 30 July

Members arrived at Derrygonnelly throughout the afternoon and evening, most having travelled from Britain by way of ferries to Belfast or Dublin or flights to Belfast. Sufficient members brought cars for transport during the meeting to be unproblematic.

Sunday 31 July

The day was spent in **Lough Navar Forest** (v.-c. H33), an extensive area of coniferous plantations with sandstone scarps and lakes. **Meenameen Lough and Scarp** (H0355) were visited in the morning. Here the fallows on the boulder scree beneath the scarp soon produced *Daltonia splachnoides* and a good variety of other epiphytes, including *Aphanolejeunea*, *Colura* and *Ulota calvescens*. The rock of the scarp also had numerous bryophytes, including *Amphidium mougeotii*, *Bartramia pomiformis*, *Gymnostomum calcareum* and *Orthothecium intricatum*. We were introduced to *Conocephalum salebrosus*, a recent segregate from *C. conicum*, which grew with the latter species on the scarp and which was subsequently found on most days of the meeting. A damp slope beneath the rocks had *Sphagnum angustifolium*. It was pleasing to see that the forestry authority had cleared conifers from the base of this and some other scarps in response to requests from conservationists to reduce shading of the crags.

For the afternoon we moved a short distance northwards to **Glencreawan Lough** (H0256), searching flushes, fens and low limestone rocks around its shore. Gordon collected *Campyliadelphus elodes** and *Drepanocladus aduncus**. A small specimen showing characters of *Schistidium trichodon** was collected by Sam B (new to Ireland). A steep slope above the limestone crags of the Cliffs of Magho further north has several small flushes, in one of which *Seligeria oelandica* was relocated growing on several stones. Small-white Orchid (*Pseudorchis albida*) was not refound in the species-rich grassland nearby, but a few Frog Orchids (*Coeloglossum viride*) were a consolation.

One party (Chris, Sam B, Sam T) travelled to the southern edge of Co. Donegal in the late afternoon to begin *Atlas* mapping. Searches around **Assaroe Lake** (G96) produced a good bryophyte list, including *Schistidium platyphyllum** and several other vice-county records.

Monday 1 August

The rich limestone flora of the **Marble Arch** area (H1233; v.-c. H33) was investigated. During the morning the party scoured the crags, caves, woodland and river banks at Marble Arch and downstream to the north, refinding *Cololejeunea rossettiana*, *Pedinophyllum interruptum*, *Fissidens rufulus*, *Seligeria acutifolia*, *S. pusilla* and *Taxiphyllum wisserillii*. A significant new record was of *Amblystegium confervoides* found by Sam B on small pieces of limestone on the woodland floor. Roy found the scarce Shady Horsetail (*Equisetum pratense*) near the river bank.

For the afternoon we moved uphill to the **Pollawaddy** area (H1133) just to the south, exploring more limestone ravine, woodland and open grassy slopes with crags. *Pedinophyllum interruptum*, "*Brachythecium appleyardiae*" (= *Scleropodium cespitosum*) and *Mnium marginatum* were relocated, and new records were made of *Hygrohypnum eugyrium**, *Rhynchostegium lusitanicum** and *Thuidium recognitum**.

Tuesday 2 August

Our first day in the hills was at **Aghadunvane** (G8352; v.-c. H29). Steady drizzle punctuated by showers accompanied a steep walk to the high limestone crags and slopes, but when we reached the base of the crags the poor weather was soon forgotten as the rich flora was investigated. There was plenty of *Leiocolea fitzgeraldiae*, *Didymodon maximus*, *Hymenostylium insigne*, *Orthothecium rufescens*, *Seligeria oelandica* and *S. patula* on rocks that also had masses of Yellow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*). Calling choughs flew over at lunchtime. Other finds included *Pedinophyllum interruptum*, *Scapania aequiloba*, *Dicranella grevilleana*, *Distichium inclinatum*, *Mnium marginatum* and *M. thomsonii*. Few new discoveries were expected in this well-worked locality, but Sam B's close attention to *Schistidium* added *S. robustum** and *S. trichodon**, and Gordon, Ron and others found new patches of *Timmia norvegica* to add to the one already known here.



Figure 1. BBS summer meeting at Aghadunvane, Co. Leitrim, 2 August 2005. Photo: G.P. Rothero.

Wednesday 3 August

The limestone of the Ben Bulbin massif was visited again, this time at **Glencar Waterfall** river below the waterfall, admiring plenty of *Dumortiera hirsuta*, besides mixtures of *Conocephalum conicum* s.str. and *C. salebrosum*. Another thallose liverwort from a rock in the stream collected by Sam B was later identified as *Marchantia polymorpha* subsp. *montivagans**, its second record from Ireland. Fortunately, the weather soon improved as separate parties of bryologists radiated out to explore in several different directions. Gordon tackled the ravine above the waterfall, refinding *Daltonia splachnoides*. A larger group worked westwards up Swiss Valley to the Co. Sligo border, where *Didymodon maximus* and *Hymenostylium insigne* were

(G7643; v.-c. H29) and nearby. The weather started badly with heavy rain as we waded in the

revisited beside a waterfall. Along the route, the rare *Tortula marginata* was refound at a gap in a low field wall and rather surprising new records were made of *Sphagnum angustifolium**, found by Liz on a damp slope, and *Hygrobiella laxifolia**, found by David H on a low limestone rock in the middle of the well-trodden footpath.

Thursday 4 August

Poor weather with sustained drizzle accompanied our second day on high ground at **Cuilcagh** (H1630 to H1228; v.-c. H33), mainly in the RSPB's **Aghatirourke reserve**. One party

set off for the long walk over blanket bog towards the summit rocks, eventually reaching block screes above the eastern end of Lough Atona. The gritstone block screes held *Lepidozia pearsonii*, *Sphenobolopsis pearsonii* and *Tetradontium brownianum* in addition to a lot of *Dicranodontium asperulum*. *Discelium nudum* was refound on a stream bank. One member of the group was said to have had his finger bitten by a large frog.

A less energetic party began by ascending the blanket bog slopes in order to find *Pleurozia purpurea*. It was pleasing to see that former damage to the blanket bog and associated flushes due to over-stocking with sheep had been much reduced following fencing of the RSPB reserve. Having refound *Pleurozia* and listed other bryophytes on the bogs, we returned to the lower ground and limestone ravines around **Legacurragh** (H1530). A good list of bryophytes here included *Pedinophyllum interruptum*, *Fissidens gracilifolius*, *Mnium marginatum*, *Pohlia cruda* and *Ulotia calvescens*, besides the seemingly ubiquitous *Conocephalum salebrosum*. An effort to refind fertile *Seligeria* species on rocks where only non-fertile material was seen on an earlier visit was rewarded with a new record of *S. acutifolia* c.fr. Towards the end of a rather wet day an unsuccessful attempt to relocate a swallow-hole among the tall heather of an extensive blanket bog slope did little to diminish the good humour of the party.

Friday 5 August

Refusal of permission to walk across farmland had led to cancellation of the fieldwork planned in the Drumnagran area of Glenade (G7749; v.-c. H29). However, low water levels had been found in late July at loughs in the River Erne catchment and so visits to lough shores were substituted.

The first stop was near **Lady Craigavon Bridge** (H3328; v.-c. H33) on **Upper Lough Erne**. A characteristic but rather dull flora was found in the inundation-zone here, the only

surprising records being of *Didymodon luridus* on limestone beside the lough and *D. nicholsonii* on tarmac at the edge of the car park. In the afternoon, the shore of **Lough Oughter** at **Inishconnell** (H3506 and H3507; v.-c. H30) was much more productive. *Ephemmerum hibernicum* was refound in large quantities in several places in the inundation-zone, along with smaller amounts of *Aphanorbegma patens* and *Bryum neodamense*. Sallow carr fringing the lough produced *Scleropodium cespitans* and *Ulotia calvescens* among its epiphytes, and *Didymodon nicholsonii* was again found on tarmac. A *Fissidens* with mature capsules collected from the inundation-zone beneath the willows (by David H) was thought to be *F. incurvus* in the field, but later study revealed that it was *F. monguillonii* from a new site.

A small party comprising Chris, Ron, Sam B and Sam T made the long journey to Co. Monaghan to carry out *Atlas* mapping in a county with very few bryophyte records. Although no rare species were found and many of the habitats were unexceptional, their labours were richly rewarded with more than 50 new or updated vice-county records.

Saturday 6 August

A large party assembled for the visit to the well-known locality of **Correl Glen** (H0754; v.-c. H33) on the edge of Lough Navar Forest. An auspicious start was made when Yellow Bird's-nest (*Monotropa hypopitys*) was found in flower beside the entrance to the reserve, a rare plant in Northern Ireland. Exploration of the fine woodland, sandstone crags and river banks led to rediscovery of most of the rich bryophyte flora previously recorded here, including *Calyptogeia integrastipula*, *Leptoscyphus cuneifolius* and *Seligeria recurvata*. *Platydictya jungermannioides*, refound by Gordon, was particularly notable because it had not been seen on recent surveys.

The afternoon was devoted to a search of **Braade Scarp** (around H053550; v.-c. H33)

inside the **Lough Navar Forest**. It was hoped that *Orthodontium gracile* might be refound here at its only Irish locality, but no trace was found of any *Orthodontium*. Nevertheless, a good list of bryophytes was recorded, including *Leiocolea fitzgeraldiae*, *Amblyodon dealbatus*, *Gymnostomum calcareum* and *Ulotia calvescens*. The Irish bryologists present were particularly pleased to see good patches of *Aulacomnium androgynum* which is a rarity in Ireland.

Sunday 7 August

The two sites in Co. Fermanagh (v.-c. H33) chosen for study were both almost unknown bryologically. The first proved to be very rich, the other rather dull. We began at **Monawilkin** (H0852) which is already known to have considerable ecological interest and is protected as an Area of Special Scientific Interest for its vascular plants, butterflies (including Small Blue) and land-snails, occurring in a varied area with limestone crags, scree, flushes and grasslands. A long list of bryophytes found included *Cololejeunea rossettiana*, *Leptoscyphus cuneifolius*, *Seligeria donniana*, *S. pusilla*, *Taxiphyllum wissgrillii*, *Tortella nitida** and *Ulotia calvescens* (and, as usual by now, both *Conocephalum* species). In addition, two rarities were discovered: *Amblystegium confervoides** (by Sam B) and *Thuidium recognitum** (by Sam B and Liz). However, the most remarkable find was a *Weissia* from rocky limestone grassland on a sunny slope found by Mary and eventually identified as a result of her tenacity. In the field it was suggested that it might be *W. brachycarpa*, but microscopy that evening showed its spores were too small for that species. Eventually, the specimen was sent to Tom Blockeel who identified it as *W. condensata**, new for Ireland and a remarkable record of a mainly southern species.

A long walk during the afternoon was used to explore along the Ulster Way in the **Lough Doo** and **Little Dog** areas (H038505). Much of the route lay through coniferous plantations, which produced varied epiphytes

(including *Colura calyptrifolia*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum* and *Ulotia calvescens*, which are widespread in the county) and a patch of *Didymodon vinealis** on a track side, but little else of note. Low sandstone scarps and small patches of limestone were eventually found, but with unexceptional floras.

Monday 8 August

Following a long drive, we visited **Lough Oughter** at **Gartnanoul Point** (H3406; v.-c. H30) in the River Erne catchment. Attempts to refind *Fissidens monguillonii* here were frustrated because although the inundation-zone had large patches of *Fissidens* the plants had only very immature sporophytes or none, and so it was not possible to detect the long perichaetial leaves diagnostic of the species. *Scleropodium cespitans* was found on trunks of *Salix cinerea*, but there was little else here of bryological significance.

More driving brought us to **Rinn Lough** (N0994; v.-c. H29) in the Shannon catchment, which was already known for the rich bryoflora occurring in parts of its inundation-zone. The water level here was extraordinarily low, with Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*) dying on the exposed banks and Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*) stranded high and dry. Several of the rarer bryophytes of the inundation-zone were refound (*Aphanorhagma patens*, *Bryum neodamense*, *Ephemerum cobraerens* and *E. hibernicum*), while new records were made of *Riccia cavernosa* and *Scleropodium cespitans**. *Fissidens monguillonii* was revisited here at another known site, but it was again found to be virtually unidentifiable because of the very immature sporophytes.

Tuesday 9 August

Although access problems had prevented the visit to Drumnagran, study of the high limestone crags in Glenade was still possible in the similar **Cloontyprughlish** and **Crumpaun** areas (G7846 and G7847; v.-c. H29) further south,

because parking and access had been arranged on land owned by Coillte, the forestry authority.

We were lucky to have a fine day which allowed extensive bryologising. Most of the known rarities were refound, including *Leiocolea fitzgeraldiae*, *Pedinophyllum interruptum*, *Scapania aequiloba*, *Amblyodon dealbatus*, *Didymodon maximus*, *Distichium inclinatum*, *Hymenostylium insigne*, *Mnium marginatum*, *M. thomsonii*, *Orthothecium rufescens*, *Seligeria pusilla*, *S. trifaria* agg. and *Timmia norvegica*. Few new finds were expected, but the rare *Bryum elegans** was added by Gordon (otherwise known in Ireland only in Co. Sligo) and *Jungermannia subelliptica** by Sam B. Several of the rare vascular plants known in the area were also seen, including Northern Rock-cress (*Arabis petraea*),

Chickweed Willowherb (*Epilobium alsinifolium*) and much Holly Fern (*Polydicticum lonchitis*).

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Neil Lockhart and his colleagues at the National Parks and Wildlife Service for contacting landowners regarding access to sites in Co. Leitrim and to Richard Weyl and others at the Environment and Heritage Service for making access arrangements in Co. Fermanagh. The Field Studies Council staff at Derrygonnelly are thanked for their hospitality and cheerful assistance as well as the comfortable accommodation and good food they provided.

Reports of local meetings

South-East Group

Malcolm Watling

23 Dane Hill, Margate, Kent, CT9 1QP

Ham Fen (v.-c. 15), 3 December 2005

Beavers are the main point of interest in this Kent Wildlife Trust reserve near Sandwich. Cattle and sheep are used to graze the land and the beavers were introduced in 2003. From 1998 to 2003 the Heritage Lottery Fund enabled the removal of some areas of recent topsoil, exposing peat and alluvial layers. This provides more open water and good colonising sites. The reserve covers about a third of a square kilometre, just at the edge of the flat land associated with the Stour estuary, overlying the dipping chalk at the northern edge of the North Downs. It is mostly open grassland, fen and

ponds with an area of open woodland that includes alder carr. A natural stream runs through the site and it is cut into rectangular sections by a number of drainage channels.

We were asked to look for any bryological interest as a result of the management changes. Following a provisional visit in April, a group of four met Pete Forrest, the Trust area warden, to whom we extend our thanks. Pete showed us how to negotiate the electric fences and the highland cattle. The latter had refused, the previous week, to board the lorry intended to take them to another nearby reserve to continue their winter grazing duties, and were hungry. A