



GLASGOW NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May 2007

David Palmar
(Newsletter Editor)

Next Newsletter Deadline
22 July 2007

GNHS is a Registered Scottish
Charity Web-site:
<http://www.gnhs.org.uk/>

EXCURSIONS Morag Mackinnon (acting Excursion Organiser)

May

14-19th Evening bat/moth hunt at Necropolis. This has to depend on the weather so contact Richard Weddle, and he will contact you when it is decided which evening it will be.

Sunday 20th Castle Semple

Thursday 24th 7pm Trees of Pollok. Bob Gray Meet at Pollok House Car Park.

Saturday 28th Meet at 10.00am at Loch Lomond Aquarium (Loch Lomond Shores, Balloch). Dominic McCafferty is organising this visit and will need to confirm numbers to get a group rate (£5.60).

June

Tuesday 12th Summer Social to Ross Priory. See end of Newsletter for details

Tuesday 19th "Fin'-it-oot" Meet Uddingston Station 7pm John Lyth

Friday 15-Sun 17th Weekend - Trees in Ayrshire & Galloway. Bob Gray

Saturday 16th Shore Walk Oban Area, 11am Bridge over Atlantic. Wellies essential.

July

Sunday 1st Plean Country Park, 11am. Leave M80 at Stirling junction 6, go almost all the way round the roundabout above the M9 to exit on A872 (Denny) and after half a mile turn left on the minor road passing W. Plean. After two miles turn left again at the cross roads for the Country Park. The lawn in front of the derelict Plean House should have hundreds of various orchids. There are also two pit bings which are colonised with interesting plants. Bring picnic. Edna Stewart

Saturday 21st Mugdock Country Park. Botany for beginners - and others. Meet at 10.30 at Milngavie station car park. Lifts will be organised. We hope to park at the south car park, not the visitor centre. Take any wild flower book you have - Francis Rose Wild Flower Key recommended. Edna Stewart

Wild Flower Planting

Richard Weddle

On 10th May at 1:30pm the Countryside Rangers, assisted by children from Golfhill Primary School will be planting a wildflower area in the Necropolis, in an area which is currently 'just grass' (there are no graves).

The idea was an initiative of the Friends of Glasgow Necropolis, and is supported financially by a grant of £250 from the Blodwen Lloyd Binns Bequest. And we hope that in addition to enhancing the appearance of that part of the Necropolis, it will also enhance the wildlife, particularly invertebrates. The species to be planted are: Cuckoo-flower, Black Knapweed, Meadow Cranesbill, Meadow vetchling, Oxeye Daisy, Red Campion, Self-heal and Birds-foot Trefoil. Apart from providing a colourful display through much of the year, these will provide nectar for butterflies, bees and hoverflies, and pollen for bumblebees and various beetles, and seeds (and insects!) for birds. All the plants are either of local or Scottish provenance (GCC Daldowie Nursery).

The area is best accessed by entering at the gate on the corner of Wishart Street and Ladywell Street and following the path along past the base of former quarry face. And perhaps also take the opportunity to explore some of the attractive corners of the site. Knowledgeable Members of the Friends of the Necropolis will also be on hand to answer any questions about the history of the area.

Bats and Moth Evening at the Necropolis, 13-18th May 2007

Richard Weddle

The Necropolis is one of Glasgow's jewels – it is listed as a Designed Landscape which is nationally-notable, but until very recently we didn't know much about the wildlife apart from the flora (from earlier GNHS excursions) and the well-known roe deer. Recently a few more mammals have been recorded and a few invertebrates.

The proposed bat and moth evening will help to fill in some of the gaps. We are reasonably confident that bats, such as pipistrelles will be present, and that several species of moths will be found flying among the planted trees – which at certain points form natural-looking woodland. Members of the Clyde Bat Group will be on hand to demonstrate the various ways of recording bats, and members of Butterfly Conservation will be on hand with a moth trap – and the necessary identification skills.

Please contact me to register interest so that I can let you know which evening it will be – it's weather-dependent, so there may be as little as one day's notice. The meeting point is also yet to be decided but will probably be the Necropolis end of the bridge from the Cathedral precinct.

Castle Semple Loch is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, mainly on account of its birdlife, though the SSSI also includes the adjoining Barr Loch which contains the nationally-rare Eight-stamened Waterwort (*Elatine hydropiper*).

We have been asked by the Manager of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park to look at the aquatic invertebrates in the Loch, which haven't been fully surveyed for many years, so we plan to sample the waters at the edge of the Loch at various points with hand-nets and also to sample of a transect of the Loch by boat using a small dredge which we have recently acquired using money from the TE Kinsey bequest.

Jeanne Robinson will be in charge of the aquatic sampling - we expect to find several variety of water-beetles, and aquatic insect larvae such as caddis-flies and may-flies, and we will no doubt see several different species of dragonflies. The slightly less rare Six-stamened Waterwort (*E. hexandra*) is known to occur in this Loch, and we might just find *E. hydropiper* too.

We will of course also have the opportunity to see the many birds on the Loch, there should be a number of different butterflies to see, and there is considerable botanical interest in the neighbouring fields and woodlands.

If you want to come along, we will meet at 10:30am in the Visitor Centre car park – at the end of Lochlip Road, Lochwinnoch. Please contact Jeanne Robinson myself if you need any further information.

Rouken Glen Excursion Report

Morag Mackinnon

The first excursion for the summer had a great turnout of 12 enthusiastic members plus two of Rouken Glen's rangers. We had wonderful weather and John Faithfull, our Geology Convenor, gave us excellent notes and maps of the area of Rouken Glen Park, where there is a SSSI in the gorge of the valley of the Auldhouse Burn. We did not have time to look at all of the 16 points of interest that John had detailed in his notes, but after learning to recognise the difference between limestone & sandstone, we admired the glacial striations on the sandstone outcrops of big flat rocks beside the pond – formed 20-15 thousand years ago. Before leaving the pond we noted numerous toads mating in the shallows at the edge of the pond.

Past the waterfall, and to the west of the Picnic rocks in a little gorge we were shown a large log of fossil wood underneath an overhang. John explained how the thickness and tilt of beds give clues as to the nature of the site when these beds were laid down. He showed us a limestone rib running under the burn which he had discovered a few days before, thanks to the low water level. This Lower Orchard Limestone had been noted in the park in 1908 and not located again since! This represents a marine seafloor sediment.

We spent a lot of time looking at the outcrops in the section about 20 – 40 metres below the second bridge where a tree has fallen across the burn. Limestone beds can be seen in the bed of the burn and in the cliff to the east. This area shows a

transition from unfossiliferous grey muds to harder calcareous muds with shelly fossils under the lowest and thickest limestone bed. Traditionally the "shales above the Orchard Limestone" were regarded as having one of the most diverse marine faunas in the Scottish Carboniferous.

Slightly further downstream the winter waters coming down had washed away boulders and gravel and a large hole had been eroded in the base of the stream, giving access to some grey mudstones which had lots of fossils - crinoid fragments, brachiopods, gastropods and goniatites, plus some more exotic things like conulariids. Since John had permission, we were able to see how the fossils lay within their mudstone and marvel that we could guess the conditions that had existed so long ago when they were formed.

Fossil Wood - Petrified Forest

Julian Jocelyn

Further to the tutorial of March 13, I propose to compile a list of tree remains in the City of Glasgow besides those in Fossil Grove.

I have been told there is a stump (sandstone cast) in Househillwood Park. Wade's History of Glasgow (1821) mentions Col. Dunlop of Househill had such from Nitshill Quarry.

The book also mentions another visible (for a small fee) in a quarry on the north side of Sauchiehall Road. There are others.

It may be possible to show microscope slides of fossil wood on another occasion, left out of the tutorial.

If anyone knows of the whereabouts of any fossil wood, perhaps they might be good enough to contact me.

WHAT COLOUR IS ULTRAVIOLET?

Norman Grist

By definition, "ultraviolet" (UV) is the term for electromagnetic radiation lying just beyond the violet end of the visible spectrum of light. - out of our range so we humans are blind to it, though seen and used by many other animal species including some birds, reptiles, fish and invertebrates. . The familiar spectrum shown by prism or rainbow covers about one "octave" of electromagnetism between the longer wavelength infrared (IR) and the shorter wavelength UV light. What we recognise as colours are not "real", not "out there", any more than electromagnetic heat radiation (IR) or radio waves are "coloured". Colours express the brain's recognition and differentiation of the various wavelengths of light reflected from or emitted by objects in the world around us. This has survival value - an advance on monochrome sight for interrogating the outside world - to tell prey from predator, ripe from unripe fruit.

Look at the innermost and outermost rings of a rainbow. Both edges are similar in colour - maybe even identical if we saw more clearly? Compare the piano keyboard that spans many octaves of audible sound. Strike firmly one key in mid-range while holding down the pedal, then with a finger damp down the sounding

string to silence that note. Some other strings are sounding in response - most strongly those notes one octave above and below the silenced string - "harmonics" in sympathy responding to the pulsating input of energy from the original note with wavelength half or twice that of the others - in tune with their natural frequency. The analogy with UV and IR is close - the wavelengths of UV (380 - 450 nm) spans half that of IR (620 - 750 nm). Since $380 / 750$ is close to $1/2$, the octave interval, UV and IR should include THE SAME colour - if we could "see" them in the dim, hazy tones of the extreme outermost & innermost rings of the rainbow. Q.E.D.?

**Friday 15th to Sunday 17th June Weekend Excursion
Trees in Ayrshire & Galloway**

Bob Gray

Next Newsletter deadline 22nd July please.

Newsletter contributions are welcomed from all members, and should be sent by 22nd July, preferably to the email address on the front cover, or on a floppy disc in plain text, i.e. the ordinary text of the email is best, or a .txt file or a Word document with **no special formatting applied**.

If you feel you must format it, please use Verdana 12 points, with titles in bold and left justified, and your name to the right of the title as in the Newsletter, otherwise I will have to undo all your formatting! Also, please don't use abbreviations which may be obscure, or use & instead of 'and', or use 'etc.'.

Thank you
David Palmar
Newsletter Editor

June 12th The Summer Social is being held at **Ross Priory** on **Loch Lomond**. The time is 7pm for 7.30, but if the weather is good we can arrive earlier for a stroll about. The ground can be a bit wet, so a change of footwear might be a good idea! It is hoped that after the meal – weather permitting – we can run a moth trap and possibly use our bat detector.

Since the Christmas format of choosing from a mini-menu beforehand seemed to work quite well, here is the menu. Just tick your choices and add your name/s. You will be sent a reminder of date and your menu choice a few weeks before (no changing your mind at that late stage!!!) As at the Christmas dinner we will have a slip for your table place to assist the waiting staff to know your menu choice.

Here are the Menu suggestions - the price will be £20 excluding drink – and transport.

Starters	Member1	Member 2
Hebridean Style Lobster Bisque		
Fresh Pineapple and Melon Cocktail		
Chef's own Pate with Oatcakes		
Spinach Pancakes with cream cheese & chives.		
Main Course		
Honey Glazed Spring Chicken		
Salmon grilled with Herb & Lemon Butter		
Roast Saddle of Lamb with Apricot Stuffing		
Vegetarian Stroganoff and Rice		
Dessert		
Hot Raspberry Pancakes		
Chocolate & Brandy Mousse		
Fresh Fruit Salad		
Cheese and Biscuits		
Coffee & Mints		
I need transport		
I can offer transport		
Name/s----->		

NAME/s...Block capitals.....

Address.....

..... Postcode

TEL NO..... email.....

Send this page to Margaret Stead.