



# GLASGOW NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November 2009

David Palmar  
(Newsletter Editor)

Next Newsletter Deadline  
10 January 2010

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

## Indoor Meetings - in Graham Kerr Building unless noted: 2009 Indoor Meetings

### November

**Tuesday 10th**, 6.30pm Tutorial: Solitary bees: Cathy Fiedler.  
7.30pm Lecture: Evolution and diversity of trees: Richard Ennos.

### December

**Tuesday 8th**, 7 for 7.30pm - Christmas Dinner **in Cafe Connect** 348 Cathedral St, Glasgow G1 3BX (E of Queen St sta., on N side of the road).  
Speakers: Turtlewatch Cyprus and Tobago: Sofie Rogers and Laura Seaton.

Price £22 per person - please book by 30<sup>th</sup> November, by sending a cheque payable to GNHS, and booking form to Janet Palmar, 15 Endfield Ave, Glasgow G12 0JX

## 2010 Indoor Meetings

### January

**Tuesday 12th, 6.00-8.30pm - Visit:** Natural History books in the special collections, **University of Glasgow Library**. Julie Gardham. Booking essential – fill in form later in Newsletter.

**Thursday 28th, 6.00pm - Note day and time.** Please note this addition to published programme.

Lecture: Re-introducing beavers to Scotland - Roisin Campbell-Palmer and Meerkats in the Kalahari - Kate Thomson. Jointly with GU Zoological Society.

### February

**Tuesday 9th**, 7.30pm - **Lecture:** Scottish plants at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh: Heather McHaffie.

**Tuesday 23rd, 7.00pm AGM;** followed at 7.45pm by lecture:  
Great crested newts in Scotland, and the Gartcosh translocation: Debbie McNeill.

## Heritage Trees of Scotland

**Bob Gray**

Members are invited to attend a talk presented by Glasgow Tree Lovers' Society and The Friends of Glasgow Botanic Gardens at 7.30pm on Thursday 12th November in the Boyd Orr Building, University of Glasgow, University Avenue. The speaker will be Donald Rodger, arboricultural consultant and co-author of the book with the above title.

## **Nan Macpherson**

## **Peter Macpherson**

We are sorry to report the death of Nan Macpherson, Peter Macpherson's wife, on 28th April. Nan had been a member of the Society since 1967, was Minutes Secretary 1980-89 and a Council Member 1986-89. Our condolences go to Peter and the rest of Nan's family. (The Editor wishes to apologise that due to a misunderstanding, this was omitted from the previous Newsletter, in which it should have been printed.)

## **Mary Stewart Grist (nee McAlister)**

## **Norman Roy Grist**

Many readers will remember this member of GNHS who sadly died in May 2009. An American citizen by birth in California, her parents were Scottish immigrants from Arran. She grew up in the Santa Clara valley on a prune ranch in sunshine and warmth in sight of mountains, the Ocean, flowers and wildlife, with friends loving performing arts, with her friend Olivia de Havilland and others later well known on screen and stage. Her father's early death during the Great Economic Depression left his widow with three children. The eldest, Betty soon married, Mary who had to leave school and miss university, and young brother Angus at school. The unprofitable ranch required hired workers, mainly Mexican. British relatives persuaded her to sell the ranch and return with Mary and Angus to Britain where she received surgical treatment, Angus studied at Stowe and Mary travelled widely in England, Scotland and briefly France, then running a Hampstead flat and caring for her convalescent mother. Then war broke out and Hitler's blitz devastated the city round St. Pauls within sight. The family accepted an invitation to come to Glasgow for relative safety with relatives in Shawlands a few doors away from the Grists. We met, soon in love and engaged. By her own decision Mary volunteered to the Royal Air Force as a WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force), gaining British nationality by this and by marriage to me, a near-qualified medical student. Soon qualified, I was called into the Royal Army Medical Corps, and we both served to the end of the war in Europe.

Mary then was on compassionate leave from Leuchars Air Base to care for her mother, soon deceased, and I at Glasgow Victoria Infirmary, then at Ruchill Hospital for Infectious Diseases where my interest in these interactions between our own species and other parasites developed. I agreed to follow the new discovery of methods to study influenza, and now success with smallpox and poliomyelitis and other infections. Virology was soon recognised as important to the community and I was soon a Lecturer in the new University Department of Infectious Diseases.

Mary was able to create our first home in Glasgow with scope for second hand furniture and other well-chosen household items and scope for good taste from a month in Liverpool and a year in London. Infections threatened world-wide and together we travelled to Denmark and a month in Singapore for the World Health Organisation. This established a pattern of teaching, research and surveillance for WHO, usually accompanied by Mary whose experiences, culture and growing circle of friends widened and extended our ability to provide "food we can eat" (thanks from Orientals after one of the big dinner parties in our house after one of our post-graduate courses).

In our penthouse flat in Glasgow, we enjoyed the company of wildlife aloft (insects, birds and overwintering ladybirds). In the garden below were foxes and squirrels helping with environmentally friendly disposal of kitchen waste. Mary collected a group of portraits for display with our ancient and modern paintings. International travels continued, usually with Mary (except Australia and New Zealand). Turkey and Algeria added new historic and cultural experiences and friends. Retiral "from paid employment" released more time for exploring Britain and France by car and an old cottage in Arran kept us in touch with eagles, deer and Mary's forebears. Eventually we were hampered by age and infirmities, especially after Mary's hip fracture and my ceasing to use a car. For years we had given some charitable support to Erskine Home with no thought this might be our final refuge. Both qualified as Veterans, we found it the necessary shelter and support - it did, but within a year dear Mary peacefully died here one bright, sunny spring morning in sight of trees, flowers, birds, rabbits and other wildlife, to the end thinking for others - carers, family and friends including you Glasgow Natural History Society colleagues.

### **Price of *The Glasgow Naturalist***

The increasing costs of producing the journal were discussed at the GNHS Council meeting in September. We propose that the cover price of *The Glasgow Naturalist* be raised to £11.50, which is the approximate cost of producing each copy. The cost to members would be raised from £6.00 to £8.00, but this would only affect those members who have elected to take the journal - the subscription rates for others would be unchanged.

We intend to ask members to ratify this increase at the general meeting on Tuesday November 10th. If the membership is in agreement the increase will take effect for subscriptions for 2010.

### **Erskine bird sighting - Fri 9th Oct 2009**

**Norman Grist**

A Sparrowhawk was seen three nights ago by a credible witness, clamped on the back of a pigeon, pecking it, and carried it off. It broke away into a window but the Sparrowhawk sat nearby and re-attacked when it came out next day.

#### **General Correspondence to the General Secretary:**

**Next Newsletter - copy to David Palmar by 10th January 2010 please.**

**Contributor Guidelines** – please stick to these if possible to make the Editor's life easier! Contributions should be sent preferably as .txt (the body of an email is fine), rich text format (.rtf), Word 2003 (.doc) or Word 2007 (.docx) format. If you have time, please italicise taxonomic names. Please use **Verdana** font and size **12 points**, otherwise I will have to undo all your text formatting before I can use your contribution. If sending photos, please submit only a few, and make them small if you know how to do that. (Please ask for advice if you want to know how to make them under 100Kb each for emailing) and always as **separate jpg files**, definitely **not** as part of a Word document.

**Books received in exchange for reviews in *The Glasgow Naturalist***

***Woodlice and Waterlice in Britain and Ireland*  
Biological Records Centre**

**2009**

**Steve Gregory  
Paperback £19.50**

This book updates the account of isopods contained within "Woodlice in Britain and Ireland" by Harding and Sutton in 1985. It is the result of the national, non-marine Isopod Recording Scheme to the end of 2007 and is stimulated by the former work. The early part of the book deals with the basic classification and history of woodlice recording. The bulk of the text is devoted to accounts of both native and naturalised outdoor waterlice (4 species) and woodlice (40 species). The third but substantial part of the work covers accounts of habitats, biogeography, conservation and details of collating and recording techniques. An interesting aspect of this text is its reference to the importance of introduced as well as native species and of the presence of many Atlantic range species in this country. The author prepared most of the text on behalf of the British Myriapod and Isopod group.

***The Encyclopaedia of Birds*  
Oxford University Press**

**2009**

**ed. Christopher Perrins  
Paperback £19.99**

This beautifully illustrated guide to all the bird families of the world examines for most but not all groups how form is related to function, their distribution patterns, diet, social behaviour, breeding biology and conservation aspects. The early part of the book concentrates on the principles of bird classification, bird structure, adaptations, senses and reproductive behaviour including nest diversity. Separate panels throughout the book contain distribution maps, scale drawings and details of habitat, calls, nests and eggs. It is written by a team of distinguished zoologists, biologists and conservationists.

***Natural History Societies and Civic Culture  
in Victorian Scotland*  
Pickering and Chatto**

**2009**

**D A Finnegan  
Hardback £60**

This book the author of which, Diarmid Finnegan, gave a talk to the Society some years ago, is the ninth in a series about science and culture in the 19th Century. In addition to introductory and concluding chapters there are six others entitled: Founding Narratives, Fieldwork and Excursion Culture, Natural History and Civic Pride, Natural History and Self Culture, Organising Subscriber Science and Scientific Motives and Civic Society. It is a comprehensive work in which The Natural History Society of Glasgow (its 19th Century title) features considerably.

It is now possible to receive future Newsletters by email. This will save the GNHS money in distribution costs, and allow you to see future photos in glorious Technicolor! If you haven't already done so, please send the Society your email address - [info@glasgownaturalhistory.org.uk](mailto:info@glasgownaturalhistory.org.uk) and indicate that you wish to receive newsletters by email. Thank you.

## Excursion Reports

### Rannoch Weekend, 13-14th June 2009

Bob Gray

The Black Wood of Rannoch is the largest native Scots pinewood in the southern highlands and one of some 35 main remnants. We were fortunate to be accompanied around a forest trail, the Allt na Bogair, Carie wood walk, next to the iconic Black Wood, by Rob Coope, biodiversity manager for Tay Forest District. He is the son of Beryl and Russell Coope who memorably showed us round their farm, Tich-na-Clerich on the shores of Loch Tummel, in 2005.

He shares his parents' enthusiasm for nature and greatly informed our visit. He drew our attention to the major differences between productive and native woodlands and explained how income from the former is used to conserve the latter. Early on we saw how Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) compete with each other both to increase their height and reduce the number of large branches. Thinning, furthermore, increases root growth of the remainder, all of which improve the quality of the final timber to be extracted. The mechanised tree harvester leaves rows of debris which is piled into mounds and left to rot as a food source for fungi and beetles. No ploughing for planting is carried out here. Instead Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) parent trees act as a seed source for re-establishing the open, clear felled areas. In other parts birch is grown on a short term, 30 year cycle providing biomass for wood fuel. Seed from Rannoch pine used to be sent to the Dunkeld nursery but this provenance of pine can grow too slowly and produces branches that are too large for modern forestry practice. However, extensive areas of such pines remain in this area and provide some commercially valuable trees as well as valuable habitats for a variety of species and a scenic backdrop.

Scottish forestry strategy has a multi-purpose view of its woods as areas for recreation and conservation as well as timber production. Its 10 districts are divided into blocks, containing woods that are divided into zones containing management coupes. Within this strategy, for a wood to be designated ancient it requires to be found on one of Roy's maps from General Wade's time in the 18th Century.

Along the steep-sided river banks aspen (*Populus tremula*) grows in abundance, protected there from grazing pressure. This species is high on the palatability table of many animals, including incidentally the beavers recently introduced to Knapdale. Aspen is of considerable interest to entomologists owing to its specialist fauna. Some grand fir (*Abies grandis*) have occasionally been planted but its timber is of poor quality and not good even for paper pulp on account of its short fibres.

Plants we found included the ostrich-plume feather-moss (*Ptilium crista-castrensis*), found only in pinewoods, and the nationally scarce small cow-wheat (*Melampyrum sylvaticum*), an annual, hemi-parasite that needs a moist microclimate in which to grow and ants to spread its seeds (small refers to the size of its flowers). Suitable seeds have been moved to here from the Birks of Aberfeldy as part of a species action plan in order to establish small cow-wheat in forests with good wood ant populations. Four species of wood ant, indicators of undisturbed pine and old birch woodland, are found here – the Scottish wood ant (*Formica aquilonia*), the northern

wood ant (*F. lugubris*), the blood-red wood ant (*F. sanguinea*) and the very rare narrow-headed wood ant (*F. exsecta*). They are intolerant of intensive forestry practices, such as underplanting owing to the excessive shade cast, and clear felling. They require a balance between sun and shade, shown by the nests we found located on south-facing slopes. They play an important part in the forest ecosystem, e.g. by predated upon caterpillars of harmful sawflies and pine looper moths. Two rare beetles that are found here are the mountain pine (*Harminius undulatus*) and the birch sapwood borer (*Scolytus ratzeburgi*). We found the longhorn, timberman beetle (*Acanthocinus aedilus*), a pine specialist that is an early-colonist of decaying stumps and branches. Scottish crossbills, with beaks well-adapted to prising open the cones of different conifers such as are found here, were also spotted. Our attention was also drawn to signs of roe deer which mark trees on the edge of their territory using scent glands on their head.

Our path passed by a quarry that exposed the Dalradian schist bedrock of this area, providing locally sourced road metalling, now favoured over the previously imported stones. Near here we viewed examples of vigorously growing, pole-stage, genetically improved Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) reproduced by tissue culture in laboratory conditions. The lower reaches of Carie wood, sloping towards Loch Rannoch, contain old oakwoods, which had previously been under-planted with Douglas fir, now removed. From here we could see an osprey's nest located on top of a European larch (*Larix decidua*) growing beside the southern shore of Loch Rannoch – a grandchild perhaps of the ospreys we had seen some four years previously at Tigh-na-Clerich.

This being the bicentenary of the sowing of the Victorian apple, 'Bramley's seedling', it was appropriate that our next stop was to view and measure, some 9 miles along the southern shore of Loch Rannoch from Kinloch Rannoch, the 'Rannoch crab'. The latest edition of *the Heritage Trees of Scotland* replaces the St Boswell's apple with this tree as the largest crab apple in Scotland. We measured its girth as 2.9 m, one of the biggest in the UK.

**Sunday, 14th June** took us to **Allean forest**, located beside the Queen's View, Loch Tummel, named after Isobella, wife of Robert the Bruce. Some of the earliest post-glacial settlers passed this way as indicated by a dugout canoe found between Dunkeld and Pitlochry and carbon-dated at c.6400 years BC. The earliest evidence of settlement in this area is around 4000 BC. These peoples evidently used the chain of lochs and rivers running eastwards from Loch Linnhe up to the moor of Rannoch. This was the centre of the main ice sheet from which glaciers flowed in all directions, including eastwards along the Rannoch-Tummel system. Fluvio-glacial deposits were deposited as the ice retreated towards the Moor of Rannoch, which is now the east/west watershed.

Rob Coope had kindly given us a copy of the most recently modified management plan of the forest. Geologically the soil is underlain by Dalradian mica-schist which is exposed in the upper reaches of the forest, whereas lower down it is covered by fluvio-glacial sands and gravels. The upper part of the forest, which we had no time to access, consists of limestone pavement from which the trees, being poorly growing Scots pine, have been removed and the area is now managed for its conservation value in conjunction with SWT. Lower down is richer in nutrients that flow downhill and, being south-facing produces fertile soils that allow excellent

growth of species like Norway spruce, European and Japanese larches and Grand fir. Scots pine is restricted to the better-drained gravels, but even here growth is not particularly good, perhaps as a result of the 150 cm mean annual rainfall in this area, which contrasts with the 75 cm or so experienced by the pines that grow best in Rothiemurchus.

The aim is to keep the lower area of the forest under permanent tree cover and this is being achieved by allowing natural regeneration of most of these species to develop when the upper canopy is felled. The major exception to this is Scots pine, whose seedlings are strongly light demanding and so neither succeed under their own canopy nor in competition with other species. Scots pine is clearly a pioneer species. Norway spruce is being encouraged for red squirrels particularly (we found spruce cones that had been partially stripped by this squirrel) and some Scots pine is being retained hopefully as a habitat for capercaillie.

Near the start of our walk we found a partly restored 18th Century farmstead and towards the end the remains of an 8th Century 'ring fort'. Interesting animals we encountered included the migratory painted lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*), a large red damselfly (*Pyrrosoma nymphula*) and some frog tadpoles occupying a tiny pool on the track.

On the afternoon of **Sunday, 14th June** we reached the **Scottish Plant Collectors' Garden** at Pitlochry, which the Society last visited in June 2003, not long after it had been opened. In the meantime it has matured considerably.

The outstanding features of our visit were as follows:

1. Southern hemisphere section – Plant hunters represented here include Francis Masson, the first Kew plant collector, travelled with Captain Cook (1772), introduced red hot poker (*Kniphofia uvaria*); David Lyall, travelled with Sir James Ross, introduced New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*).
2. David Douglas pavilion – Pacific northwest, introduced NW American conifers (including Douglas fir) and flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*).
3. Himalayan glade. Moongate. George Sherriff, introduced the Himalayan blue poppy (*Meconopsis grandis*).
4. George Forrest pavilion – China and Tibet, introduced the snake-bark maple, *Acer davidii*.
5. Robert Fortune – Japan, introduced the lacebark pine (*Pinus bungeana*)
6. Archibald Menzies – South America, introduced the Chile pine (*Araucaria araucana*).

The above summary only scratches the surface of what may be found in this fine garden. Each of the above plant hunters was responsible for introducing large numbers of familiar garden and landscape plants many of which may be seen here at close quarters.

The pre-arranged guide failed to appear and so the manager of the garden kindly forwarded to us a number of tickets for a performance at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre on the 31st December. These have been forwarded to Rob Coope on the grounds that he will be able to make better use of the tickets than we will.

Located 5 miles NW of the city centre and bounded on the north by the River Kelvin, this area was obtained by the city in 1922 from Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth.

Fine weather greeted our arrival at the Ilay Road, w. entrance to this city park. 14 of its 33 ha consist of woodland previously known as the Belvidere plantation and in May, 2007 the park was declared a local nature reserve. Rhododendrons are being removed and the park improved with the aid of a Forestry Commission grant.

The park is criss-crossed with many inter-connected paths and so a route was followed that took us largely anti-clockwise around the perimeter with occasional forays into the interior in order to observe some particular specimen. Growing in the centre of the lawn of the house at the western entrance was a dove tree (*Davidia involudrata*). Its identification was confirmed by the owner who came out to investigate the group of people gathered outside his home. On discovering we shared his interest in trees he divulged that he was a keen gardener and drew our attention to a narrow-leaved ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia*), which was duly recorded, located near the southwest corner of the park. Also growing near the entrance were at least two types of Lawson's cypress – yellow-leaved 'Lane' and variegated 'Albospica'. Here also is a dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), growing beside a Sawara cypress (*Chamaecyparis pisifera*). The hedge beside the path towards the western perimeter contains gean, birch, beech, hornbeam and hawthorn and so provided a good opportunity to compare and contrast the leaves of hornbeam and beech that can easily be mistaken. The hedge also had growing through it a couple of Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*). So the differences between these and common oaks were readily observed. Viewing the council's herd of highland cattle in the neighbouring field provided a bit of light relief.

Towards the southeast corner of the woodlands we came across one of the most interesting and significant finds of the year – a number of sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) seedlings. This being a species of southern European origin (thought to have been introduced by the Romans) it is rare indeed to encounter its seedlings so far north. They were to be found only in an area close to one sweet chestnut, despite the fact that quite a few of these trees grow in an isolated fashion throughout the woodlands. From here we headed towards the blaes playing fields gate where we found the only example of silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) in the park, growing beside some crack willow (*Salix fragilis*). We walked from here to the path that leads along the north side of the redundant pitches, alongside which groups containing purple sycamore, London plane with occasional ash, sycamore and Norway maple have been planted. Along this path we came across examples of the common spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*). Broad-leaved helleborine had been encountered here during the recce. Treading down the steps at the east end of the pond, which is about to be refurbished, led us to a flat area that is a wildflower meadow. The trail then led us to what may be the largest-girthed beech in the park, 4.97 m, indicating a possible age of c.245 years. At this point we encountered a palmate newt which was duly photographed for later positive i/d. Following a path westwards took us along a fine row of elderly beech trees and up a few steps through an area that had obviously been carefully landscaped historically. Then we encountered in a copse an extremely tall hornbeam, which may be a record holder, although this has yet to be verified.

From here we headed southwards, following a woodland path that passed some fine Turkey and common oaks. We then came across a few examples of Sawara cypress 'Squarrosa', easily mistaken for juniper, before reaching the main avenue that leads back to the Ilay Road gate. Near the point we accessed the avenue we found the uncommon red-berried elder (*Sambucus racemosa*).

The park exhibits an eclectic mix of both hardwoods and conifers – groups of Scots pine, groups of yew and groups of beech (especially towards the north, on the banks of the Kelvin). Many fine oaks are scattered throughout as well as a considerable number of naturally regenerated sycamore which is in danger of overwhelming many of the park's more interesting trees, both native and introduced. Anyone who requires a copy of a Dawsholm Park map with tree locations marked may contact the author.

**Dalmarnock, 22nd July 2009**

**Peter Macpherson**

A botanical field meeting was held on the evening of 22nd July with an attendance of nine. The rendezvous was the Dalmarnock district of Glasgow. To begin with the party went along the River Clyde walkway, at the edge of which a yellow-cress had been noted in 1985 by Jim Dickson and Henry Noltie and identified in 1993 as Walthamstow Yellow-cress (*Rorippa x armoracioides*), the hybrid between Austrian Yellow-cress (*R. austriaca*) and Creeping Yellow-cress (*R. sylvestris*). Prior to the meeting drawings had been made of the leaves and fruits of the parents and hybrid. When the first stand of yellow-cress was encountered, the illustrations were shown and all present agreed that the plant matched the appearances of the hybrid—which still occurs in profusion.

Similarly, drawings had been made of the leaves of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Knotweed (*F. sachalinense*) and their hybrid *F. x bohémica*. Again, it was the unanimous opinion that a stand demonstrated was the hybrid. Shortly thereafter, the party left the walkway and recorded round the edge of a playing field. The most interesting plant in this section was Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*). In a grassy area we were interested to see Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*), while a little colony of viviparous white Clover (*Trifolium repens*) proved to be of interest. In the above areas a number of subspecies and varieties were demonstrated.

The party then drove a little northward to a roadside with a wood on the south-east which is to be the site of the Athletes' Village for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Presumably at one time wild flower seed had been sown as the flora included colonies of Fragrant Agrimony (*Agrimonia procera*), not otherwise recorded in Lanarkshire, and two different scabious species, as yet unidentified. Other plants included the ordinary Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Betony (*Stachys officinalis*), Marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*), Bloody Crane's-bill (*Geranium sanguineum*) and Hedgerow Crane's-bill (*G. pyrenaicum*). Although obviously not a 'native collection', it was an opportunity to demonstrate relative national rarities to those attending. During the evening, a total of 112 taxa was recorded.

## Palacerigg Country Park, 25th July 2009

Edna Stewart

Nine of us managed to navigate the dreaded roundabouts around Cumbernauld and arrived at Palacerigg. We were too early for coffee in the cafe, but helped ourselves to various leaflets with information on the history of Palacerigg. In 1905 Glasgow's Distress Committee was set up to help poor families at times of unemployment. The farm of Palacerigg was bought, so that men could live there, work and produce food for their families. By 1908 unemployment had increased and as many as 800 men were working at Palacerigg, transported daily by train to Cumbernauld station. Since much of the land was peaty moorland the workers drained it and built roads. The peat was sold for horse bedding, for burning, and later made into firelighters.

It seemed unfortunate that there was no mention of David Stephen in these leaflets. A well-known naturalist, author and photographer, he used to give Adult Education classes on wild life in the Airdrie area, and took students out at night to observe badgers - long before SWT's outings at Falls of Clyde. He was asked to be the first Director of the Country Park when it was set up in 1971, and came to live at Palacerigg in the old house which is now the office. He took his collection of animals, including wolves with him!

I had previously worked out a route which included a variety of habitats, and we were also helped by Jimmy Huis, a ranger with Glasgow City council, but who had previously worked at Palacerigg. We started by heading west, on a shady track through woodland, with Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsia*, Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca*, Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and Figwort *Scrophularia nodosa*. Hazel *Corylus avanula* was common, also Beech *Fagus sylvatica* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. Then a more open area where we turned on to a grassy, mown track which led to a small pond where we saw Square-stalked St John's-wort *Hypericum tetrapterum*, Great Willowherb *Epilobium hirsuta*, Wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, and Valerian *Valeriana officinalis* as well as some weeds of cultivation - Common Hemp-nettle *Galeopsis tetrahit* and Redshank *maculata*.

We turned off the main track to follow a track which had been recently been rebuilt due to subsidence as a result of old mine workings. The ground was more acidic, with Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, Blaeberry *Vaccinium myrtillis* and Heath Bedstraw *Galium saxatile*. By a small burn we found Marsh Ragwort *Senecio aquaticus* and Marsh speedwell *Veronica scutellata*.

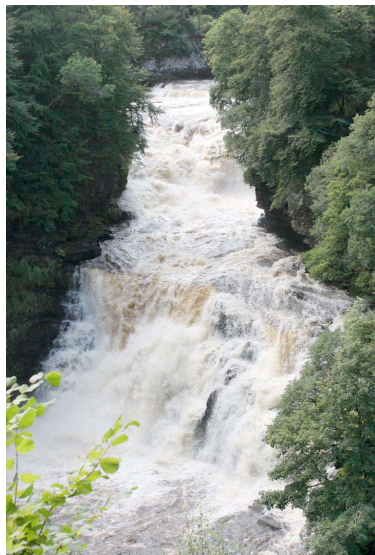
After a picnic by the side of the track we continued in an easterly direction. Most of the plants had been seen earlier, so this was good for reinforcing identification! One new one was Crosswort, *Cruciata laevipes*, a yellow flower in the Bedstraw family. One grass which became familiar to everyone was Tufted Hair-grass, *Deschampsia caespitosa* which accompanied us most of the way.

## Falls of Clyde, 22nd August 2009

Richard Sutcliffe

Michael and Valerie Pink and I visited the Falls of Clyde SWT Reserve on Saturday 22nd August, as this was forecast to be the better day of the weekend. The main reason for the excursion was to search for the Purple Hairstreak butterfly, which appears to be strangely absent from the area, despite the presence of plenty of its larval food plant - oak. It was initially a warm sunny afternoon, following several

days of very wet weather, and we were hopeful of seeing butterflies. Within a few minutes we saw our first Red Admiral and this was quickly followed by the sight of lots of butterflies on a Buddleia bush in a cottage garden beside the path. Not only were there Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshells, Peacocks and whites, but to my great pleasure there was also a single Comma. This species has been spreading in Scotland in the last few years (see my article in the current *The Glasgow Naturalist*), and as the local butterfly recorder I was becoming very jealous of all the people who had seen one (or more!). This was the first Comma I had actually seen in Scotland - so it made my day!



We saw more butterflies on some other Buddleias, before we started heading upstream beside the River Clyde. We kept stopping to search the oak trees that overhang the river for Purple hairstreaks, but unfortunately none was seen. It was a bit breezy, so perhaps if there were any, they were just not flying. We'll have to look again another time.

Michael pointed out to us where the Peregrines nest on the other side of the river and we could see where the birds had been plucking their prey, from all the feathers on the branch. The river was very impressive, due to all the heavy rain and the falls themselves were spectacular! By the time we got to Bonnington Linn it was starting to

cloud over and so we called it a day.

### **Natural History Books in the Special Collections Department of Glasgow University Library**

We have arranged a visit to Special Collections on Tuesday 12th January 2010. The Department can only cope with 15 people at once, so we need you to book a time.

Please give your name and contact details below, and an order of preference for the time of your visit (1 = first preference; 2 = second; 3 = third) in case we need to shuffle people about. Please assemble in the Library foyer 15 minutes before the time you are due in Special Collections (which is on the top floor of the Library). The Library entrance is 50 m up Hillhead Street from University Avenue. Please hand in your booking form at a GNHS meeting, or e-mail your details and preferences to Roger Downie ideally by 8th December.

### **Glasgow University Library visit booking form**

Name: .....

Phone ..... Email .....

Time of visit preference	6.30 -7.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
(meet 15 minutes	7.10 – 7.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
before the	7.50 – 8.30	<input type="checkbox"/>
listed time)		

**GNHS Christmas Dinner – 7 for 7.30pm, Tuesday 8th Dec in Cafe Connect,  
348 Cathedral St Glasgow G1 3BX**

Apple and Parsnip Soup  
Crispy Peppered Chicken Strips  
*served with chunky tomato salsa*  
Bruschetta  
*Italian bread topped with tomato and basil with mozzarella*

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Smoked Fish Pie  
*smoked fish in a cream sauce topped with mashed potatoes*  
Rib-Eye Steak  
*served with mushroom and brandy jus*  
Penne Pasta  
*with chicken and bacon in a rich tomato sauce*  
Vegetarian option on request  
*all served with seasonal potatoes and vegetables*

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Cranachan  
*fresh raspberries layered with honey, oats and whisky cream*  
Warm Apple Tart  
*served with cinnamon cream*  
Profiteroles  
*homemade, filled with Chantilly cream drizzled in chocolate sauce*

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Printouts of this menu and a booking form will be available at the lectures, to allow you to make your choice and keep a copy for yourself.

**Bookable now by sending a cheque for £22 per head payable to GNHS**

.....  
Name (please print) .....

Address.....

Phone no.....

Cheque enclosed for £.....

My Menu choice is (please tick)

Starter -    Soup  
              Crispy Chicken Strips  
              Bruschetta

Main    -    Fish Pie  
              Rib Eye Steak  
              Penne Pasta with Chicken - or Vegetarian option on request

Dessert - Cranachan  
              Apple Tart  
              Profiteroles