



GLASGOW NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November 2011

David Palmar
(Newsletter Editor)

Next Newsletter Deadline
10 January 2012

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

GNHS Indoor Meetings - in Graham Kerr Building unless noted

November 2011

Tuesday 8th

6.30pm Tutorial: Working towards a revival of the Clyde Valley orchards. Crispin Hayes

7.30pm Lecture: The bats of Scotland and Trinidad: Keith Cohen

Wednesday 16th - 5.00pm Blodwen Lloyd Binns Lecture: Plant speciation in action in the UK: tales of the unexpected. Richard Abbott. Note time and day

December 2011

Tuesday 13th

7 for 7.30pm Christmas Dinner **at Café Connect, 348 Cathedral St Glasgow G1 3BX: Please book now!** See end of Newsletter for booking form. Speakers: A contrast in expedition locations: Iceland and Peru. David Bradley and Emily Waddell

January 2012

Tuesday 10th

6.30pm Photographic Night: members' slides or digital slide shows, plus photographic competition results. David Palmar would like to know by email in advance the names and topics of members who would like to do a talk.

February 2012

Tuesday 14th

6.30pm Tutorial: Lampreys: love and life (history strategies). John Hume

7.30pm Lecture: Blood, sweat and deer(s): using animal DNA evidence to aid wildlife crime investigation. Lucy Webster

Tuesday 28th

6.30pm AGM: followed by Lecture: Plants: the (real) silent witnesses. Jennifer Miller

Tree Lovers' Society Meeting

Bob Gray

Thursday, 17th November, 7.30pm. In the Bower Building, University Avenue. Glasgow Tree Lovers' Society are holding their annual combined meeting with the Friends of the Botanic Gardens. Stuart Chalmers of Forestry Commission Scotland will talk about beautifying Glasgow's disused and forgotten spaces with managed woodland. The title of his talk is 'Go Green. Woodlands for Glasgow.'

Excursion Reports

Three Sites near Moffat, jointly with Edinburgh Natural History Society, 14th May 2011

Bob Gray

Lochwood Oaks

This 50 ha oakwood, managed by Annandale Estates, grows on a glacial terrace close to the ancestral home of the Johnstones. The trees make up the remains of ancient woodland pasture in which the oaks were cut at height and cattle were grazed underneath. Although they are supposed to be sessile oaks (*Quercus petraea*), the leaves of the few trees looked at indicated that at least some hybridisation has occurred. What is not in doubt, however, is that study of the annual rings in the 1970's by means of boring into the trunks enabled a ring sequence to be constructed from 1571 to 1970. This not only confirmed the ancient age of some of the trees but also enabled the ageing of local building timbers.

This ancient site clearly demonstrates the inter-relationships between different levels of the ecological food web, producers, consumers and decomposers. The ground flora consists of a mix of National Vegetation Classification W10 (lowland) and W11 (upland). Swathes of native bluebells (*Endymion non-scriptus*) emphasise the existence of long-term woodland cover. Natural regeneration amongst various soft grasses include oak (*Quercus* sp.), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and even Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) from a nearby plantation. The shrub layer is sparse and consists of coppiced hazel (*Corylus avellana*) with some holly. Fungi found included chicken of the woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) on oak and King Alfred's cakes (*Daldinia concentrica*) (unusually?) on beech and oak. A few moth caterpillars, not identified, were found feeding on the freshly developing oak leaves. Such invertebrates clearly provide abundant food for the young of nesting insectivorous birds such as blue tits, great tits, blackcaps, robins, green and great spotted woodpeckers and jackdaws, all of which were observed. The site is a SSSI, particularly on account of the variety of lichens that are found there.

Kinnel Shingles, beside Park bridge near a sand martin bank. This site consists of a river shingle bank and old river course with associated wetland each with a different array of plants. The shingle itself possessed, amongst many plants, water mint (*Mentha aquatica*), knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*), great bittercress (*Cardamine pratensis*), common figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*), common mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) as well as parsley piert (*Aphanes arvensis*) and changing forgetmenot (*Myosotis discolor*) whose flowers change their colour from yellow to blue. Monocots included *Luzula campestris* and early hair grass (*Aira praecox*). The waterlogged ground contained water ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), greater tussock sedge (*Carex paniculata*) and, a good find, water valerian (*Valeriana dioica*). An alder tree (*Alnus glutinosa*) which we measured on the far bank was 330 cm. in girth. Other observations included pleated inkcap (*Coprinus plicatilis*) and a large red damselfly.

Dyke Farm Nature Reserve, maintained by Moffat Wildlife Club. This 8 acre community reserve is located one mile south of Moffat and was opened in 2004. It contains both woodland and wetland habitats with a circular woodland path, three

ponds and two hides. The main hide contains bird watching information as well as several binoculars for the use of visitors. We observed mallard, a pair of Canada geese and a blue tit feeding its young, using one of the many nesting boxes. The woodland, consisting mainly of birch, alder and beech, provides a good habitat for many small garden birds. A 'plant a tree' scheme in conjunction with Macmillan Cancer Relief has resulted in a number of interesting trees being planted. These include Paul's scarlet hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata* 'Paul's scarlet'), Jacquemont's birch (*Betula utilis* 'Jacquemontii'), sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), fastigiate golden beech (*Fagus sylvatica*, 'Dawyck Gold'), which is rare, and aspen (*Populus tremula*). It is hoped that these trees will increase insect habitats and so attract more birds to the area.

We are particularly grateful to Wilma Harper of ENHS for organising this excursion and for her informative briefings.

Alexandra Park, 26th May 2011

Bob Gray

The nine person turnout was a good one for such an unseasonably cold evening. The 42 ha (104 acre) park was purchased in 1866 from the historic owners of the ground, the Stewart family. Gifted from Mr. A. Dennistoun was a further 5 acres in the southwest corner adjoining the admirable main gates where we met next to Alexandra Parade. Two fine Norway maples (*Acer platanoides*) stand on either side of this entrance. The park was officially opened in 1870 by Alexandra, the wife of the then Prince of Wales, after whom the park is named.

Geologically the park is located on boulder clay till left by the retreating ice some 10,000 years ago. About 90m deep, it is through this clay that the River Clyde has cut its passage to the sea. Beneath the clay, unexposed here, lies Upper Carboniferous bedrock (c.320 million years old). On this clay the initial plantings were faced with severe industrial pollution that essentially prevented the successful growth of conifers but encouraged the planting of deciduous trees which form the bulk of the older specimens found here. During the trade depression of the time work was provided for unemployed people in hard landscaping and the planting of the early trees.

Many flowering cherries have been used to great effect particularly lining the path that leads from the Alexandra Parade entrance. They make this a most attractive park in the spring. The bird cherry (*Prunus padus*) clone 'Watereri' and double gean, (*P. avium* 'Plena') have been used most effectively, although we were too late in the season to see the best of this. The recent gales had brought about the loss of many branches as well as, at least, a Swedish whitebeam (*Sorbus intermedia*), a beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and a Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*). We followed a roughly anti-clockwise but somewhat tortuous route round the park. An avenue of topiaried holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) lies beyond the ornamental entrance. We then passed the duck pond with the occasional weeping willow (*Salix x sepulcralis* 'Chrysocoma') on its banks and, on the tree covered island, a red horse chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea* 'Briotii') and Waterer's cherry amongst others. On the play area boundary a few willow-leaved pears (*Pyrus salicifolia*) are growing well. Then on to the walkway next to the boating pond near which a fine specimen of silver maple (*A. saccharinum*) was growing. Also here, growing close to each other, were a few

alders, common (*Alnus glutinosa*), Italian (*A. cordata*) and grey (*A. incana*) so it was possible to distinguish clearly between them.

From here we moved to the tennis courts beside which were growing some eastern balsam poplars (*Populus balsamifera*) recognised by their scent and suckering habit. Beyond here, lining one of the golf course fairways, were a few 'Leighton Green' Leyland cypresses (*x Cupressocyparis leylandii* 'Leighton Green') – 2 cm cones help to distinguish. Heading upwards we passed through a semi-natural woodland of sycamore ash, hawthorn, hornbeam and wych elm with natural regeneration of Norway maple seedlings and alder saplings. Farther on the more open woodland included ash, rowan, hawthorn, purple Norway maple 'Crimson King', horse chestnut, grey alder, silver birch, bird cherry, 'Lutescens' whitebeam, wild crab and saplings of Norway maple and hawthorn. The highest point, 74m a.s.l., gave us fine views north to Ben Lomond and south to the Tinto Hills. Westwards from here, moving downhill, brought us to a couple of old, craggy specimens of manna ash (*Fraxinus ornus*) (of which the park has a few) and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). Also, nearby, are fine examples of both small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*) and Turkey oak (*Q. cerris*).

The light was fading as we returned to the 40 foot, cast iron Saracen Fountain, gifted to the City after the 1901 International Exhibition and restored in 2000. Surrounding the fountain are an inner ring of double gean, a middle ring of alternating laburnum and Cheal's weeping cherry and an outer ring of Kanzan cherry – a wonderful sight in spring. Growing near it are a holm oak (*Q. ilex*), weeping ash and manna ash together with a few groups of young, ornamental conifers indicating the lower pollution levels of the present day.

A glorious day at Dunure, 4th June 2011

Junella McKay

Thanks to driver Alison Moss I was able to take part in the excellent outing to Dunure on Saturday 4th June. And what a joy the whole day was! Seven of us assembled on the cliff-top on a windy morning which promised rain later, but which magically gave us a dry and sometimes sunny day. Pam Murdoch had reced the area three weeks earlier after a fantastic visit the previous year.

During the morning we thoroughly explored the area of raised beach, steep tussocky hillocks, cliff and shoreline to the south of the castle, uncovering what were for some of us new species such as *Geranium dissectum* (Cut-leaved Cranesbill), *Glaux maritima* (Sea Milkwort), *Ligusticum scoticum* (Scots Lovage) and the last remains of *Scilla verna* (Spring Squill). In a sheltered bay were healthy examples of *Honckenya peploides* (Sea Sandwort) and *Mertensia maritima* (Oyster Plant) growing together – just as I had previously had the privilege of seeing them against a startling background of jet black sand on the south coast of Iceland.

Our energetic progress was rewarded with delicate patches of *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting), together with a perfect splash of *Helianthemum nummularium* (Common Rockrose). This latter, together with the delicate pale yellow of *Pilosella officinarum* (Mouse-ear Hawkweed) were flowers which had clearly come into full bloom after the horrendous 90mph gales of the previous Monday, as they were totally

undamaged – unlike the fragrant *Rosa pimpinellifolia* (Burnet Rose) which had suffered badly from the buffeting.

We lunched on the shore while curlew and willow warbler called and gannets dived. Then the party moved to the north side of the castle and, in a long afternoon, were rewarded with a further forty plants not previously on Pam’s list, including *Ranunculous bulbosus* (Bulbous Buttercup), *Spergularia marina* (Lesser Sea-spurrey) and *Chaerophyllum temulum* (Rough Chervil). The final tally was over 160 plants on a successful and energetic day made thoroughly enjoyable by all Pam’s work both in preparation and also on the day itself. The full list is available on request from Pam Murdoch.

Speaking of the gale, on our journey down, but still some distance from the coast, we were horrified to see great swathes of trees, including toughies like sycamore, not to mention larch and evergreens, together with hardy shrubs such as hawthorn, all turned brown and totally shrivelled on the windward side. We wondered if it was early enough in the season for them to make new growth. If not, the Ayrshire countryside would look extremely ugly this summer and there will be little autumn colour. On the coast even the tips of the bracken were totally blackened.

Knockshinnoch Lagoons SWT Reserve, 9th July 2011

Gill Smart

The excursion to Knockshinnoch Lagoons Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve on 9th July 2011 was attended by two Glasgow Natural History Society Members, Richard Weddle and Gill Smart. Both being avid amateur entomologists, and with the weather dry and warm, the hunt was on. The reserve is a patchily vegetated coal bing surrounded by wetland and open water. Only the bing was visited as it was a large area that offered a good range of habitats to explore - bare ground, flowery grassland, heathy areas and birch woodland. It was anticipated that the combination of shale and flowers might be good for mining bees and wasps but there only appeared to be an abundance of one species of *Lasioglossum* (awaiting identification to species). The season turned out to be a poor one for aculeates in Ayrshire so this site should not be written off for further study of this group.

Hoverflies fared better with eleven species identified including *Anasimyia contracta* which is believed to be associated with reed-mace (*Typha*) and is rare in SW Scotland. One delightful aspect of the outing were the hundreds of six-spot burnet moths (*Zygaena filipendulae*) that lifted as we walked through the grassland. This did, however, make sweep netting for other invertebrates troublesome. The list of invertebrates recorded is given below. Full details have been sent to the appropriate species recording schemes. For further information, please contact Gill Smart, Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserves Manager South West Scotland.

Hoverflies:

<i>Anasimyia contracta</i>	<i>Melanogaster hirtella</i>	<i>Platycheirus clypeatus</i>
<i>Cheilosia bergenstammi</i>	<i>Pipiza noctiluca</i>	<i>Scaeva pyrastris</i>
<i>Eristalis horticola</i>	<i>Platycheirus albimanus</i>	<i>Syrphus ribesii</i>
<i>Eristalis pertinax</i>	<i>Platycheirus angustatus</i>	

Bees:

<i>Lasioglossum spp.</i>	<i>Nomada spp.</i>
<i>Megachile spp.</i>	<i>Sphecode</i>

a sawfly	<i>Tenthredo arcuata agg.</i>
a soldier fly	<i>Chloromyia formosa</i>
a true fly	<i>Bibio pomonae</i>
ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>
common white wave	<i>Cabera pusaria</i>
small heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>
snout moth	<i>Hypena proboscidalis</i>
clouded border	<i>Lomaspilis marginata</i>
meadow brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>
common blue butterfly	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
common blue damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>
emerald damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>
mottled grasshopper	<i>Myrmeleotettix maculatus</i>
parent bug	<i>Elasmucha grisea</i>



Common blue butterfly
David Palmar
www.photoscot.co.uk

Bogleshole, 20th July 2011

Peter Macpherson

A botanical field meeting which had been arranged for Bogleshole in July 2010 was cancelled on account of incessant rain. Accordingly, my 2011 outing was to the same area and had an attendance of 16. The initial plant of interest shown was Goat's-rue (*Galega officinalis*), first seen in 2010 as a new record for Lanarkshire (VC 77) and now noted to be well established.

Recording then took place along a ditch and round part of a large pond. A stand of Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus sericia*) was noted among the native species. There was an abundance of Ribbed Melilot (*Melilotus officinalis*) and subsequently the rarer White Melilot (*Melilotus alba*) was demonstrated along a roadside.

The opportunity was taken to ensure that those present were familiar with the difference between Weld (*Reseda luteola*) and Mignonette (*R. lutea*). With regard to this and in other instances, aides-mémoire were passed on. The party then proceeded under a bridge where the road led to a small industrial complex. On the sloping railway embankment there was an abundance of Elephant's-ears (*Bergenia* spp) and Lesser Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). The difference between Hairy Tare (*Vicia hirsuta*) and the much rarer Smooth Tare (*Vinca tetrasperma*) was demonstrated.

Presence of the latter was proved to the satisfaction of all when Elspeth Lindsay found one with four seeds.

Subsequent determinations revealed that the Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*) was ssp. *serotinus*, that the Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*) was ssp. *neglectum* and that a small Timothy which I was shown was indeed just that (*Phleum pratense*) and not the Smaller Cat's-ear (*P. bertolonii*).



Six-spot Burnet Moths by Richard Sutcliffe

In total 101 different taxa were recorded. At one point some of the party were noted gazing at a clump of comfrey and the leader went over to impart an easy way of remembering the difference between the Common (*Symphytum officinale*) and Russian Comfrey (*S. x uplandicum*), only to discover that they were inspecting a moth! In fact, two of the members had nets, thereby adding to the biodiversity of the recording. The moth in question was a Gold Spangle - thanks to Willie Porterfield for spotting that. There were also Emerald damselflies and a small hoverfly, *Sphaerophoria scripta*, in the marshy area, and James Milner-White spotted a 6-spot Burnet moth in waste ground by the roundabout.

Some of the party then proceeded to the right bank of the River Clyde, west of Dalmarnock, where John Lyth showed us the Fig (*Ficus carica*) which featured in the recent issue of *The Glasgow Naturalist*.

Strathblane Fungus Foray, 1st September 2011

Robin Jones

Five dedicated fungiphiles, joined the leader and braved heavy, persistent rain to walk a route which none was familiar with, but all vowed to return to in more clement weather.

One can hardly blame those members who understandably decided to stay at home on such a foul day, but for the record, this is what they missed.

We had hardly begun climbing up from the school/library level towards Milndavie Road when the beautiful, pink Ballerina (*Hygrophorus calyptriformis*) was seen on a front lawn. Nearby, several species were found in very wet grass around birch, including *Armillaria mellea*, the Coconut Cap *Lactarius glycosmus* and *L. thiogallus* (now a species complex). Turning into Milndavie Road we soon found numerous Jelly Babies (*Leotia lubrica*) and a fine display of *Coprinus micaceous*. And we hadn't even reached the Gowk Stane path yet!

By now all pens had ceased to work on sodden notebook pages and pencils were used. If ever we needed the voice recorder of Dick Peebles it was now, so it was most unfortunate that this was the one foray he couldn't attend. Back home, your leader found that after separating and drying the pages, his 0.5mm clutch pencil had not so much written as scored the words into the paper, necessitating a magnifying glass and torch to give relief to the engraved letters in order to read them.

Near the start of the path were various species near birch and willow or in grass including the pure white *Hygrocybe virginea*, *Tricholoma fulvum*, *Cortinarius flexipes* (paleaceous), *Hebeloma pusillum*, Common Ink Cap (*Coprinus atramentarius*), the aniseed scented *Clitocybe fragrans* and growing on a Rowan branch was *Pleurotus pulminarius*, which was deftly retrieved by Allison with her umbrella, al la Hiram Holiday!

The Gowk Stane path rises so gently one doesn't realise how high one has climbed until reaching the viewpoint with seats which normally provides glorious views over Blanefield, the Strathblane Hills and Ben Lomond, but now presented us with a wall of low flying cloud.

Upon reaching the Gowk Stane - a boulder which once marked the boundaries of three counties and elicited some interest, especially from Sam - we forayed the adjacent grassy heath with Birch and Rowan. The yellow fingers of *Clavaria helvola* rising from the grass promoted an excited reaction from young Laura, a keen beginner who with her father Bill was avidly taking notes and photos. Here also was *Russula nitida*, *R. betularum*, the delicate, yellow stemmed *Mycena epipterygia*, *Leccinum variicolor*, *L. versipelle*, Grisette (*Amanita vaginata*), Tawny Grisette (*A. fulva*), *Panaeolus papilionaceus* (*campanulatus*) plus others. A little further on were added, the blue-footed *Tricholoma columbetta*, *Entoloma nidorosum*, Butter Cap (*Collybia butyracea*), *Russula vesca* (a pale form which occurs regularly here), the Ugly Milkcap (*Lactarius turpis*), the radish scented *Mycena pearsoniana*, the Parrot Waxcap (*Hygrocybe psittacina*), the Club Foot (*Clitocybe clavipes*), Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) spotless due to rain and to complete the grisette hat trick several bright orange *A. crocea* which shone out from the gloom.

Returning to the Gowk Stane path, by this time well soaked, three participants decided to retreat to live another day, while the remaining three, feeling we couldn't get any wetter now, continued to further finds. Under larch we found Wood Woollyfoot (*Collybia peronata*), *C. confluens* and the puffball *Lycoperdon nigrescens*.

The area of Boards Farm rarely disappoints and nor did it now. Here we found the first of many Tawny Funnel Caps (*Lepista (Clitocybe) flaccida*), *Hygrocybe conica*, Spotted Toughshank (*Collybia maculata*), Common Puffball *Lycoperdon perlatum*, *Boletus (Xerocomus) pruinatus*, Cep (*B. edulis*) and under old beech trees, *Russula nobilis (mairei)*, the geranium-scented *R. fellea*, the soap-scented *Tricholoma saponaceum* *T. scalpturatum (argyraceum)* and *Cantharellus tubaeformis*.

Further on, the old spruce trees gave us Blusher (*Amanita rubescens*), Sulphur Tuft (*Hypholoma fasciculare*), *H. capnoides*, False Chanterelle (*Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*) *Russula queletii*, *R. ochroleuca*, *Lactarius deterrimus*, two bright yellow species *Pholiota flammans* and *P. alnicola*, Plums & Custard (*Tricholomopsis rutilans*), *Amanita muscaria*, this time with its partner, *Calciporus (Boletus) piperatus*, *Clitocybe metachroa* and some massive Tawny Funnel Caps (*Lepista flaccida*).

Taking the path towards Carbeth Loch, more old Beeches produced *Boletus luridiformis (erythropus)*, Porcelain Mushroom (*Oudemansiella mucida*), the violet *Laccaria amethystina* and the parasitic *Cordyceps longisegmentis (capitata)*. The rain deterred us from digging down to find the attached truffle (*Elaphomyces* sp.).

Heading rapidly for the final descent to the West Highland Way, more mature Beeches backed by Pines supplied a grand finale of *Tricholoma sciodes* with its black dotted gill edges, the large, white *Lactarius vellereus*, a few Chanterelles (*Cantharellus cibarius*) and two groups of Hedgehogs (*Hydnum repandum*).

From here we headed back to the cars via the B821 and the old railway line. We were soaked through, but all (including those who left at lunchtime) had felt it was well worthwhile for the excellence of the site and suggested we repeat the foray next year, when, hopefully the weather will be kinder.

Summer Excursion Programme - Feedback Please

Anne Orchardson

As the year draws to a close it seems a good opportunity to reflect on this year's Excursion Programme before we start planning for 2012.

Firstly a big thank you to this year's excursion leaders as your contribution gave us a very varied and interesting summer. Also thanks to all of you who attended any excursions.

Whether or not you managed along to any of this year's trips, it would be very helpful to receive any comments which could contribute to making the programme more effective or relevant in the future. Listed below are some pointers to set you thinking:-

1. May to July are always busy months for excursions as these are times of most seasonal activity, but this might mean we have too many excursions too close together? Perhaps some excursions are too near holiday times?
2. Midweek or weekends - evening or daytime: any preferences?
3. Maybe it is difficult for you to reach sites outside Glasgow - are you happy to car share or would you prefer a minibus for such visits? Perhaps you don't

- know where the location is and don't have the relevant map when grid references are given: would a central meeting point or clearer directions help?
4. Is sufficient information given in advance for you to decide if you would like to attend an excursion? This might be information about the focus of the trip, or how much walking is involved, type of terrain, how long it will last, etc.
 5. Do you prefer excursions that focus on one specific aspect, or which potentially cover a wider variety of interests?
 6. There have been successful weekend trips in recent years - is this something which interests you and if so do you have any suggestions for visits?
 7. Are you willing to lead an excursion? Do you know somewhere you would like visited by "experts", or where perhaps you would like species recorded?
 8. Do you have an interest that has not been included in the Programme?
 9. Are you interested in joining other Natural History Societies in other areas; finding out about research projects; linking excursions to the winter talks?

I look forward to your thoughts and suggestions - please don't limit yourself to my pointers above, as I'm sure you'll have other ideas too! And please feel free to be critical! I'd prefer your thoughts by email, but if that's not possible for you then do give me a ring or drop me a line.

Thanks to all who have written such interesting and informative articles for this Newsletter, and particularly to those who keep contributing on a regular basis. This makes editing the Newsletter a much easier experience! If you have not contributed before, please feel free to do so, preferably by email to the address on the front page. Thank you David Palmar, Newsletter Editor

Snippets of news and pleas for help:

Snap

Ian C McCallum

I was surprised to read Robin Jones article on his 'Bugnet'. I went into my garden hut to collect my butterfly net – hoping to catch and identify rare butterflies, only to find the net had been mostly eaten away!

It was suggested that the culprit, a wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) which lives in the hut, is a member of the Butterfly Conservation Society!

Want to Study Wildlife?

BRISC (Biological Recording in Scotland) and Glasgow Natural History Society are together offering four bursaries towards attending a training course in natural history field studies skills. The bursaries are for up to £200 or 75% of the cost of the course, whatever is the lower. Courses must be chosen from the Field Studies Council's taxonomic courses listed under FSC's Professional Development Programmes, or similar professional development courses run by universities.

For full details, conditions, and the application form, see www.bris.org.uk/bursaries or www.gnhs.org.uk/bursaries.html Applications should be submitted by **Friday 6th January 2012** at the latest.

House Sparrows – Help Needed

Ross MacLeod

Do you know anywhere, in or around Glasgow, where house sparrows can regularly be found? Once common, House Sparrows are now a UK conservation red list species because populations have declined by about 70% over recent decades. As in many UK urban environments, House sparrows have disappeared from many parts of the Glasgow area and I am interested in why. I'm starting a project looking at the spatial distribution of remaining house sparrow populations to test whether individual level behavioural risk trade-off theory can predict population persistence.

It turns out that finding sparrows is even more difficult than expected so I wonder if you can help. Maybe you have some in your garden or pass a few on your way to work. Any information would be gratefully received. Casual sightings are fine and the most important information is a specific location such as a street, post code or description so positions can be marked on a map. If you think you know where all the sparrows have gone (and want to help figure out why) please contact me at:

Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine, Graham Kerr Building, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ.



House sparrows – maybe they're not doing enough of this?
David Palmar

Photos make the Newsletter more interesting. If you don't want to see so many of mine, why not send in some of yours?

Two or three megapixels or about 100 kilobytes is big enough. Thank you

David Palmar
Newsletter Editor

Photo SCENE - Natural History Photographic Competition David Palmar

This competition is sponsored by Glasgow Natural History Society and Glasgow University Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine.

The timescale for submission of this year's photographs has just passed, and judging is about to take place. The organisers would like to thank those who entered. There will be an announcement at the January meeting.

Film or sounds from the South American Rainforest

Jeanne Robinson

The curators in Glasgow Museums are in the process of developing a new object cinema display at Kelvingrove Museum to replace the existing one on Arctic Lives. The new display will be on South American rainforests.



South American rainforest - Jeanne Robinson

We are looking for film, still images and sounds of rainforest life and/or destruction of rainforests.

If you have visited the South American rainforest we would be very interested in any material you may have and which you would be prepared to let us consider for inclusion. We will of course acknowledge any individuals / organisations who contribute to the gallery and individuals will have the opportunity to showcase their work to thousands of national and international visitors.

Receiving future newsletters by email saves the GNHS money in distribution costs. If you haven't already done so, please send the Society your email address - info@glasgownaturalhistory.org.uk and indicate that you wish to receive newsletters by email. Thank you.

**GNHS Christmas Dinner – 7.00 for 7.30pm, Tue 13th Dec 2011
Cafe Connect, 348 Cathedral St Glasgow G1 3BX**

Stornoway Black Pudding and Bacon Salad
Melon Fans with Orange and Strawberry Pieces + Passion Fruit Syrup

Beef Olives with Whisky + Wholegrain Mustard Jus
Chicken Supreme with Tomato + Tarragon Cream Sauce
Homemade Fish Cakes with Tartar Sauce
Fried Rice Stuffed Peppers with Tomato Sugo
(All Served with Vegetables and Potatoes)

Apple Crumble with Raspberry Custard
Mixed Berry Pavlova
Carrot Cake with Orange Cream

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 *as soon as possible please* by sending a cheque for £23 per head payable to GNHS to Janet Palmar.

Name(s) (please print)

Address.....

Phone no.....

Cheque enclosed for £.....

My Menu choice is (please tick on menu above)