Welcome to this New Year’s edition to our irregular flora newsletter series. 2011 turned out to be a another cracker of a year for wildflower recording with new first records for the Island, the rediscovery of a few species feared lost and many records of rare and unusual plants.

The survey is still short of cornfield annual records such as the northern deadnettle (pictured below). If you pass a weedy field this coming season do make a note of the species and site and send them to me. Happy plant hunting in 2012.

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### Dates for your Diary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 13th May</td>
<td>A Wildflower Picnic at Foxtale School playing field. A picnic on this good species and orchid rich grassland followed by an afternoon stroll down the old railway line looking for early summer flowers. Bring your own picnic. Contact Andree for further information.</td>
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<td>Friday 22nd June</td>
<td>A Natural History Tour of Peel Castle. Kate Hawkins will lead an exploration of the wildlife and geology of St Patrick’s Isle. This is part of Manx National Heritage’s summer events programme. For tickets and further details, please contact Kate at MNH (tel. 648022/648000; email: <a href="mailto:kate.hawkins@gov.im">kate.hawkins@gov.im</a>).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 14th July</td>
<td>Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society Flora Recording Session at Druidale, starting at Sartfell Plantation greenway, SC342866, 2.00pm. Kate Hawkins is nominally leading this, but any botanical assistance or moral support from the Flora group would be very welcome. Please contact Kate (details above) for further information.</td>
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### Oak/Hazel Woodlands Survey

An inventory of the Island’s most important woodlands, the sites with relic oak and hazel trees, will soon be available to download from the Manx Wildlife Trust’s website (in the Wildflowers of Mann pages). The report highlights eight sites of conservation importance, including Ballure Glen (pictured right), Glen Roy and Dhoon Glen. The report is based upon a survey of the sites which revealed populations of rare woodland species such as marsh hawksbeard and pale sedge.

*The Ancient woodlands of Ramsey*’ a talk by Andree Dubbeldam to the Manx Wildlife Trust’s Northern Group will take place on Thursday 9th Feb 7pm at Ramsey Town Hall. Entrance is £2.50.
Port Erin Passes 500

In the last edition of this newsletter Port Erin, Sandygate and Ramsey all looked as though they could pass the 500 recorded species mark by the end of the survey.

No new records came in for Ramsey in 2011, Sandygate crept up to 493 records and some super new surveys in the Ballaugh Curragh brought its tally soaring to a tantalising 496, but Port Erin leapt past the post with an astonishing 523 records so far.

Some of the new records were predictably just casual garden escapees, with agave-leaf sea holly (Eryngium agavifolium) perhaps the most exotic of the lot, seeding in from a municipal flower border, into a pavement crack next to the town’s shoe shop. Doubtless it will be sprayed by herbicides in due course.

Most of the new records however are of native species, from common species previously overlooked such as changing forget-me not and trailing St John’s wort to some genuine rarities.

Above the Brooghs the municipal grassland revealed the common, but much overlooked bulbous buttercup and the rather rarer yellow oat-grass a species that is only easily identifiable for about a fortnight a year when it is in full flower.

The best site however was a small field on Mull Hill, just within the tetrad that contained 10 sedge species including flea sedge and tawny sedge. Better still was the finding of a small population of the tiny lesser skullcap, the first record for the South.

Open Orchids

This year the Manx Wildlife Trust will expand its usual orchid week activities from Close Sartfield Nature Reserve to the whole Island as a ‘Festival of Orchids’.

Plans at this stage should see an ‘Open Orchid’ event on Saturday 16th June where the public will be able to visit orchid meadows and sites around the Island. To make this work we need lots of orchid sites where landowners are willing to open their gates to let in the public.

If you know of any interesting sites and think you can persuade the owners to take part, please let me know and we will see if we can include it in our ‘Open Orchids’ day.

Contact Andree on 844432.
The Disappeared

Since David Allen’s flora was published 28 years ago in 1984 many species are now thought extinct, but every year of this flora survey we have been able to re-find one or two. The list below is of the 44 native species that we believe are now extinct, but are still worth looking out for. The decade of their last record is included. Agrimony, highlighted in yellow, is subject to a reintroduction scheme, the sedges marked in green have not been actively looked for in their remaining sites, and the species marked in pink still have cultivated forms found in the wild.

Agrimony  Agrimonia eupatoria  2000's  Lesser Clubmoss  Selaginella selaginoides  1990's
Alpine Clubmoss  Diphasiastrum alpinum  1920's  Mountain Pansy  Viola lutea  1940's
Autumn lady’s-tresses  Spiranthes spiralis  2000's  Moustail  Myosurus minimus  1800's
Bladder Sedge  Carex vesicaria  1990's  Pale heath-violet  Viola lactea  1880's
Carline Thistle  Carlina vulgaris  1990's  Perforate Pondweed  Potomogeton perfoliatus  1930's
Common Dodder  Cuscuta epithymum  1990's  Pillowort  Pilularia globulifera  1800's
Common Wintergreen  Pyrola minor  1990's  Reddish Pondweed  Potomogeton alpinus  1930's
Cowbane  Circuta virosa  1800's  Rock Sea-lavender  Limonium binervosum  1990's
Crab Apple  Malus sylvestris  1970's  Rue-leaved Saxifrage  Saxifraga tridactylites  1800's
Dense-flowered Orchid  Neotinea maculata  1980's  Small-flowered Buttercup  Ranunculus parviflorus  1940's
Dioecious sedge  Carex dioica  1970's  Stone Bramble  Rubus saxatilis  1930's
Field Rose  Rosa arvensis  1930's  Three-nerved Sandwort  Moehringia trinerva  2000's
Floating Bur-reed  Sparganium angustifolium  1970's  Variegated Horsetail  Equisetum variegatum  1800's
Fragrant Orchid  Gymnadenia conopsea  1990's  Vipers Bugloss  Echium vulgare  1920's
Frog Orchid  Coeloglossum viride  1960's  Viviporous fescue  Festuca vivipara  1800's
Great Broomrape  Orobanche repum-genistae  1950's  White Sedge  Carex curta  1990's
Greater Bladderwort  Utricularia vulgaris  1990's  White Waterlily  Nymphaea alba  1980's
Hair Brome  Bromus ramosus  2000's  Whorled Water-milfoil  Myriophyllum verticillatum  1970's
Horned Pondweed  Zannichellia palustris  1980's  Wood Stitchwort  Stellaria nemorum  1800's
Juniper  Juniperus communis  1940's  Yellow Loosestrife  Lysimachia vulgaris  1990's
Lesser Bladderwort  Utricularia minor  1990's  Yellow Saxifrage  Saxifraga aizoides  1800's
Lesser Butterfly-orchid  Plantanthera bifolia  1990's  Yellow Vetch  Vicia lutea  1960's

The Appeared

In the past 28 years many native (or possibly native) species have also been discovered, or on occasion a species has been promoted from sub-species status (marked in orange).

Alcopecurus aequalis  Orange Foxtail  M. Devereau  1987  Widespread in the North
Brachypodium rupestre  Tor Grass  Andree Dubbeldam  2009  Possibly native/Isle of Man
Dryopteris cambrensis  Narrow Buckler-fern  British Pteridological Society  2011  Ballaugh Curragh
Carex acuta hybrid  Hybrid Tufted Sedge  Jessie Tregale  2010  Ayres
Erophila glabrescens  Glaucous Whitlow Grass  Jessie Tregale and John Harris  2010  Jurby Dunes
Euonymus europaeus  Spindle  Jessie Tregale et al  1990  Santon Gorge
Hottonia palustris  Water Violet  M. Devereau  1988  Not refound since 1993
Juncus compressus  Round-fruited Rush  Eric Greenwood/BSBI  2007  Fort Island and Cornaa
Juncus subnodulosus  Blunt-flowered Rush  Jessie Tregale and John Harris  2009  Jurby Area
Lotus subtiliflorus  Hairy Birdsfoot Trefoil  RSPB  2011  Ayres Gravel pits
Orobanche hederae  Ivy Broomrape  Doris Harris  2009  Regaby
Polygonum borale  Northern Knotgrass  FH Jerring  2000  Not Confirmed
Potamogeton obtusifolius  Blunt-flowered Pondweed  Jessie Tregale  1999  Bishops Dub
Senecio viscosus  Sticky Groundsel  Unknown  1990's  Has been found since
Stellaria neglecta  Greater Chickweed  Jessie Tregale and John Harris  1990's  Ayres
Stellaria palida  Lesser Chickweed  Jessie Tregale and John Harris  1990's  Widespread in the North
Trifolium micranthum  Slender Trefoil  RD Hawkins  1989  Widespread in the South
Trifolium subterraneum  Subterranean Clover  M. Devereau  1993  Mooragh
Trifolium suffocatum  Suffocated Clover  M. Devereau  1993  Mooragh
Vulpia fasciculata  Dune Fescue  BSBI Field Meeting  1987  North Coast
BSBI Threatened Plants Project 2012

Every year the Botanical Society of the British Isles produces a hit-list of declining plants to look out for so they have up-to-date information on some of the most important species for conservation. This year three of the ten listed species are or have been found on the Island.

Small water-pepper (Persicaria minor) has been recorded once at Rushen Abbey.

Smooth Cat’s-ear (Hypochaeris glabra) is still found around the Cronk, up to Jurby. While much like the common cat’s-ear this species differs by being completely hairless and smaller and only opening to flower in sunshine. It grows in drier areas, particularly in scrappy sandy waste areas such as gateways and around rabbit burrows.

Corn Buttercup (Ranunculus arvensis) has only been found once in the past century so the chance of finding this cornfield annual is slight, but look out for this species in fields around the South East of the Island.

If you spot any of these species in 2012, e-mail me or the Island’s BSBI recorder, Linda Moore (ecotype@manx.net) and we will send you an official recording form.

For more information about the Threatened Plants Project: http://www.bsbi.org.uk/tpp.html

The British Pteridological Society Visit

The end of September saw the arrival of the British Pteridological Society to the Island. Among them were some of the foremost British experts on ferns, to see the best we have to offer and help out with our local fern identification skills.

The visit had so many highlights, both botanical and social, with 38 species, subspecies and hybrids of fern, horsetail and clubmoss recorded in five days.

The best records included:
- Banks of beech fern (pictured right) at Cornaa, showing the species still has healthy Island populations.
- Confirming Southern polypody in Glen Maye.
- Re-finding Wilson’s filmy-fern at Colden.
- Re-finding narrow buckler-fern at Stoney Mountain.
- Finding the recently separated, (it used to be a subspecies of golden male-fern), narrow male-fern in the Ballaugh Curragh.

The society saw the Island at its steepest, sunniest and wettest; they were fed upon by midges and ticks while maintaining tireless good cheer and a joyful willingness to share their knowledge with those of us fortunate enough to join them on their forays into the Island’s countryside. Indeed even getting the minibus stuck in Cornaa’s gravel beach (pictured below) followed by getting cut off by a spring high tides did nothing to dampen spirits.

Thanks particularly go to Erica Spencer for towing the minibus out of the gravel.

This newsletter was written and produced by the New Flora of the Isle of Man Working Group.

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