



# GLASGOW NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

April 2014

David Palmar  
(Newsletter Editor)

Next Newsletter Deadline  
22 July 2014

GNHS is a Registered  
Scottish Charity  
Website: [www.gnhs.org.uk/](http://www.gnhs.org.uk/)

## Forthcoming Meetings

David Palmar

### April

#### Tuesday 8th

6.30pm Tutorial: A year on the edge (of Loch Lomond); Paula Baker  
7.30pm Lecture: The ancient pinewoods of Scotland; Clifton Bain

### May

#### Tuesday 13th

6.30pm Tutorial: Claypits, Hamiltonhill – beyond the jagged fence; Shiona MacPhail  
7.30pm Lecture: Avian migration – timing matters. Barbara Helm

### June

#### Tuesday 3rd

**Summer Social** at SCENE, Rowardennan. Note that this is a week earlier than originally advertised. See end of Newsletter for booking form.

#### Thursday 5th

**Book Launch:** Home and abroad with a 19th Century Scottish naturalist: John Scouler of Kilbarchan

7-9pm, Graham Kerr (Zoology) Building, University of Glasgow.

Lecture by Dr Charles Nelson FLS, eminent historian of natural history, followed by reception and book signing

John Scouler has been overshadowed as a plant collector and general natural historian by the reputation of David Douglas, the best-known 19th Century Scottish botanist. Scouler was one of the first naturalists to visit the Galapagos Islands (1825, several years before Darwin) during a voyage to the Pacific northwest of America, in the company of Douglas. With the aid of funding from GNHS's Blodwen Lloyd Binns bequest, Charles Nelson has studied Scouler's original notebooks and research papers and has written a fully illustrated book on his life and contributions to science. This event is part of the Glasgow Science Festival and is free to attend.

### Winter Programme 2014-15

Roger Downie would like any suggestions for the winter programme 2014-15, which is being drawn up at the moment. Please provide the name and if possible email address of any potential speaker to Roger Downie

## **Summer Excursion Programme 2014 - Additional Information**

### **From Morag Mackinnon**

Be aware that if an outing is cancelled or postponed your phone details are essential so please give these to the named GNHS contact when indicating your interest and say if you can offer or would like a car space – also, please do advise contact if unable to attend.

#### **April**

Sunday 6th April 9am. East Loch Lomond. Reptiles. Meet at the Cashel Reserve car park at NS 399 940. A field excursion led by Chris McInerny to see reptiles on the east shore of Loch Lomond Bring sturdy walking shoes or wellingtons, and a packed lunch. There will be photographic opportunities.

Saturday 26th April 2.30pm Lunderston Bay. Shore walk. Meet at public car park on A770, opposite Cardwell Bay Garden Centre, PA19 1BB, NS220 675 McGills Buses stop outside. A good low tide at 5.15pm so plenty of time for a shore walk round to Lunderston Bay.

#### **May**

Sunday 4th 11am Botanic Gardens. Fungi - led by Dick Peebles CAFG.

Saturday 17th 10am Hamiltonhill Claypits. General. Meet at the gate W of the allotments in Ellesmere Street (NS585673). Leader Shiona MacPhail. She is giving us a tutorial on the 13th May so this will be a good follow up. Contact Richard Weddle.

Sunday 18th 11am Carrick Golf Course Nature Reserve - Plants and birds. Meet at Carrick Golf Club car park (approx. NS358859) by the club house. Access is off A82, after Arden roundabout, approx. 3 miles from Balloch roundabout. Leader - warden James Elliott. Please book in advance. James has restricted the numbers to 12. Strong waterproof footwear recommended. Bring packed lunch.

Thursday 22nd 7pm Linn Park. Trees. Meet at southwest gate on Clarkston Road to Linn Park (NS579591). No 4 and 6 bus stop right at the gate. Car parking available on north side of road behind Netherlee Shops.

#### **June**

Tuesday 3rd 6.30pm for 7.15 Summer Social at Rowardennan; Buffet meal. A bird excursion may be organised beforehand. Details will be sent out by email once confirmed.

See end of Newsletter for Booking Form

Saturday 7th 12pm till 6pm FORK. Gala Day – stalls and activities at Ha'penny Bridge House is FORK's Hub on the Kelvin Walkway. Joint with Friends of the River Kelvin. More info from [www.fork.org.uk](http://www.fork.org.uk)

Friday 13th – Sunday 15th Loch Sunart Area. Tree Weekend. Staying two nights at Ben View Hotel in Strontian, Acharacle. Leader Bob Gray

Tuesday 17th 7pm Uddingston Botany. Contact John Lyth.

Sunday 22nd at 10.30am. Locherwood Community Woodland and Ladymuir Reservoir. Plants, insects (butterflies and dragon flies), pond dipping in reservoir. Meet at Locherwood Community Woodland car park -NS 353 641 - off B786, half way between Lochwinnoch and Kilmacolm (car-share if possible). Leader Alison Moss. Please notify in advance and check on day. No shelter here. Will postpone if weather is bad. There are paths, but variable - need waterproof boots. Bring snack lunch.

## **July**

Thursday 3rd 7pm Elder Park. Trees. Meet at south-west gate opposite St. Kenneth Drive (NS543656). Bob Gray.

Wed 16th 7pm. Botanical recording - Peter Macpherson for meeting details.

## **August**

Saturday 9th Lockerbie area. Butterflies. Lockerbie meeting place to be arranged. Joint meeting with Butterfly Conservation Trust – Scott Donaldson. Contact George Paterson.

Saturday 16th 9.30 at Arran. Marine reserve and general. Meet at Ardrossan Ferry Terminal to get the 9.45 to Arran. Blown out last year - we plan to get a boat or Lamlash ferry over to Holy Isle. Numbers limited so names needed early. There is a train at Central Station for the 8.34 to Ardrossan or meet for the 9.45 ferry to Brodick. Arrive Arran 10.40 and get bus to Lamlash for boat trip. Return to get 16.40 or 19.20 ferry back. Arrive Glasgow by train at latest 21.25. Bring packed lunch and warm and waterproof clothing. Contact Morag Mackinnon

Saturday 30th 11am Argyll – Moine Mhòr raised Bog between Kilmartin and Crinan. Lichens and other flora fauna. Meet at car park at Moine Mhòr North Moss 3 m south of Kilmartin – turn off the Lochgilphead/Oban road A816 on to the B8025 back road to Crinan, Leader James Milner-White

## **September**

Sunday 28th Sunday 21st 11.00-15.00 Loch Libo. Plant galls, birds, insects, plants, fungi. Meet at layby on the A736 beside Loch Libo, NE end of Loch (NS437557). Leader James Milner-White. Public transport: Stagecoach X44 Glasgow to Ardrossan goes along the A736. The excursion will return to the cars. Terrain: Paths around the north end and down the far side of the loch. The paths are not made up and may well be muddy in places but are not difficult to walk on. Lunch in Uplawmoor Hotel or bring your own. Waterproof footwear, clothing etc. Leader James Milner-White

## **October**

Saturday 25th Meet 11am Bellahouston Park. Fungi. Joint meeting with CAFG – leader Dick Peebles. Contact Morag Mackinnon Additional excursions will be sent by e-mail and put on website.

## **RSPB Event**

**Sarah-Jayne Forster**

RSPB Living Nature Team in partnership with Kelvingrove Museum we will be hosting a BioBlitz' of **Kelvingrove Park** on **23rd May 2014**.

A "BioBlitz" is an event where expert naturalists and members of the public work together to do a survey of all forms of life in a natural space, during a daylong event. It is a fun way to bring organisations and the public together to learn more about the wildlife in our area.

### **Birds**

5.30am Dawn bird survey for people who have excellent ID skills.

8am General bird walk for everyone.

### **BioBlitz surveys and family activities**

From 9am– 7pm we will begin looking for all of the parks creatures with surveys and activities suitable for all ages. A fun day out for all the family!

### **Bat and moth night walk!**

20.30–23.30 Come along to our walk and use bat detectors and moth traps to discover the animals that come out after dark!

**To Register for this event or for more information please contact Sarah-Jayne Forster**

## **'TEK' Equipment**

**Richard Weddle**

As we are within sight of the next field-recording season – if indeed there is a break - it seems a good time to remind everyone that the Society possesses a number of items of equipment for the use of members. Many of these were purchased with the aid of a recent generous bequest from Thomas E Kinsey.

The list indicates that some items are 'in use'; this does not necessarily mean that they would not be available to others for a short time. However, there are also some items that have been purchased for particular research projects, and will not be available until the end of those projects. Items such as nets and sorting trays are sometimes needed for GNHS field excursions and other such events. GNHS Council do stipulate that requests to use items for any significant length of time should be supported by an outline of the project for which they are required, and that the results should be submitted for publication in *The Glasgow Naturalist*.

I should also point out that though the bat-detector is quite easy to use, it requires some training and experience to interpret what it picks up, and the Longworth traps can only legally be used by a trained and licensed operator.

| Description                         | Availability                | In care of                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 6 compound microscopes              | occasional use              | Hunterian Museum - Geoff Hancock |
| 10 Longworth mammal traps           | occasional use              | Countryside Ranger Service       |
| Batbox Duet bat detector            | occasional use              | Richard Weddle                   |
| 2 Garmin GPS (basic)                | 1 in use                    | Ian McCallum, Richard Weddle     |
| 2 Garmin eTrex GPS                  | 1 in use                    | Richard Weddle                   |
| Skinner moth trap (mains operated)  | In use                      | Anne Orchardson                  |
| Heath moth trap (battery operated)* | occasional use <sup>#</sup> | Richard Weddle                   |
| 2 pond nets: large / small          | occasional use              | Richard Weddle                   |
| 2 sweep nets: large / small         | occasional use              | Richard Weddle                   |
| 3 Butterfly nets                    | 1 in frequent use           | Richard Weddle                   |
| 3 Beating-trays                     | occasional use              | Richard Weddle                   |
| Emergence Traps (80)                | most available              | Richard Weddle                   |
| 3 sorting trays                     | occasional use              | Richard Weddle                   |
| 4 remote video cameras              | available                   | Richard Weddle                   |
| camera traps (3)                    | enquire <sup>#</sup>        | Stewart White                    |
| Data loggers                        | not available               | Barabara Mable                   |

\* there are additional Heath traps owned by Butterfly Conservation SW Scotland, which may be available for use by GNHS members.

# available by arrangement

If you'd like to borrow any item, contact me; or I can put you in touch with the current holder of the equipment.

**From the *Lennox Herald*** with thanks to John Mitchell for noticing it:  
 "Nature lovers are in for a treat on a Loch Lomond island. The Dawn Chorus will take place on Inchcailloch from 6.30am to 9am, with a National park ranger leading the trip. Walkers will have the opportunity to see and hear the lesser-spotted fly-catcher, red starts, wood whisperers and tree pipettes."

## **PhotoSCENE 2013 Natural History Photographic Competition**

Sponsored by Glasgow Natural History Society and the University of Glasgow Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine

This year there was a satisfactory entry of 33 pictures, mostly of excellent quality, from 10 entrants.

A show of the entries took place and prizes were presented at the Natural History Photographic Night in February. Only the odd entry had to be disqualified for not obeying the competition rules, in particular the preference for a minimum size of 6 megapixels.

The prizewinners were:

Redstart by Paul Jerem, who won £200 – built a hide to take this difficult to photograph species and captured the crucial moment with food in its beak

Tebanus Horse Fly by Richard Sutcliffe, who won £200 - achieved a striking frontal viewpoint and sharp focus on the eyes

Seedling by Gillian Simpson who won £100 with a thoughtful composition which stood out from the background

Thrift by Sarah Longrigg who won £100 with a picture in which the group of thrift flower heads were sharp from front to back, while still showing the context of the scenery

*Amanita* fungi by Sarah Longrigg, who won £50 for a picture which was sharp from front to back and well composed.

Rust and youth by Maria Quaggiotto who won £50 for a well-composed and impactful picture of a grey seal.

Gannet by Jana Jeglinski won £50 as it captured the crucial moment at which a Gannet was complaining about its humiliating treatment when it was marked with pink paint following capture during a research project on Grassholm.

Damselfly by Richard Sutcliffe who won £50 - care taken to get the whole damselfly in focus, which is difficult.

## **PhotoSCENE 2014**

An announcement will be made by email about this year's photographic competition. Anyone who does not have an email address but would like details should contact David Palmar.

## Excursion Reports

### Clachan Bridge

**Morag Mackinnon**

You may remember that last year on an excellent shore walk at Clachan in Argyll we noticed a small rotund beastie 2 mm - orange with white flecks and we have been trying to find out what it could possibly be. I passed on David Palmar's excellent photo round various museums and a friend in the British Museum has now got back to me with this:-

"I've now had a suggestion from a friend of my colleague that it is a part of the polychaete *Eupolymnia nebulosa* (strawberry worm) which is a terebellid, one of the suggestions made by Alex (the polychaete bod at NHM). So if it is a fragment rather than an entire organism, this is a possibility. The guy who suggested it has seen them live and is reliable so I don't want to question his authority, but to me it looks like the markings on all the Google images of this species run around rather than lengthways on the body. However, you mentioned that *Amphitrite johnstoni* was found during your survey - another terebellid worm. If you search Google for this species an image of three worm specimens together (the 10th option when I looked) comes up. The tail end of one of them looks very similar to your 'beast'. It isn't clear what species the picture represents, just that it is a terebellid. But a fragment of a terebellid seems more and more likely so the suggestion that it is *Eupolymnia nebulosa* which has a similar pattern is a distinct possibility. The problem is that none of the images I have looked at show the tail end very clearly - quite often they're missing or buried in the sediment into which they burrow."

### Letter from the Goldenland 7

**Jim Dickson and Geneviève Lécrivain**

#### The Curious Case of the Moss inhabiting Lavoirs (Wash Houses)



Photo 1. The late 19th Century Lavoir (1895) at Vauchoux, typical one.

As late as the 1960s in at least the rural parts of Haute-Saône there were numerous lavoirs (communal wash houses where the women did the family laundry). Many were constructed throughout the 19th Century, some even earlier. Each village had one or more, indeed in some of the bigger settlements there were several. The end came for lavoirs with the provision of indoor running water and washing machines. Many lavoirs have long since been abandoned, even completely removed, or converted to other purposes. They come in many shapes and sizes though most are rectangular and are roofed with an open side or sides but a few are roofless. (Photos 1 and 2). Some are sufficiently architecturally significant to be officially protected.

The lavoirs could be situated at the edges of streams or rivers but many took water directly from springs. Though without their original

purpose, not a few have been retained with clean flowing water and they have both plant and animal aquatic inhabitants (algae, mosses and invertebrates). We have never noticed any aquatic birds such as ducks in a lavoir, roofed or not.

One of the plants is the moss called *Fissidens fontanus* or *Octodiceras fontanum*. The concocted English name is Fountain Pocket-moss. It grows completely submerged in many of the Haute-Saône lavoirs, sometimes in abundance, that have clean but not stagnant water which often supports an algal scum. It is occasionally up to about 10 cm long but usually much less. No capsules have ever been seen in Haute-Saône or anywhere in France or in Britain or indeed in Europe for that matter. So the moss does not spread by spores which, in any case, are dispersed under water, not by air. It is highly improbable that the lavoirs on springs all arise from the same aquifer. How therefore does the moss spread from lavoir to lavoir? This is true even for small leafy fragments which obviously propagate the moss (Photos 3 and 4). It is a puzzle.



Photo 2. A very early open lavoir, Fontaine des Ormois of 1780. Lots of Greater Water-moss in the water but no Fountain Pocket-moss present.



Photo 3. A splendid clump of Fountain Pocket-moss.

Until very recently a connected question was why had the moss never been recorded growing in the River Saône or its tributaries? Local botanists noticed the occurrences of Fountain Pocket Moss in the lavoirs some time ago but recently there has been an upsurge in successful searching. Of course it is much easier to find a submerged moss in a lavoir than in the large turbid river like the Saône. Once it had been found in the lavoir habitat hunts began of more lavoirs. Hence the large number of new records compiled by local botanical expert Albert Piget. However, now it is no longer true that it is not in the rivers. In 2011 Gilles Bailly found it in the Durgeon, a tributary of the Saône, in the middle of the town of Vesoul and in 2012 Jenny and I found it in the Saône at the village of Cubry-lès-Soing. Has it been lurking unseen but common in the rivers for many years or is it undergoing a recent spread? It's hard to tell. So did Fountain Pocket-moss somehow move from

the rivers to the lavoirs or *vice versa*? In any case, there remains the puzzle how can it get from one lavoir to another if indeed they are not hydrologically joined?



Photo 4. Numerous patches of Fountain Pocket-moss on the floor and sides of the washing tanks at Vouchoux.

## **Proposed Amendments to Three Clauses of the Constitution:**

These will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Clause 3 - Membership** Currently, three membership categories exist: ordinary, concessionary and honorary. This resolution recommends the introduction of a new membership category, as follows: 4. Group. This is for organisations, approved of by Council, whose individual members are unlikely to join, but where membership may be beneficial. An example could be a relevant student society. The terms of membership for any particular group will be determined by Council.

**Clause 5 - Presidents and Vice-Presidents** In practice, we have found it beneficial to rotate the chairing of meetings amongst the President and Vice-Presidents, though this is not permitted by the Constitution. To regularise this practice, we propose to alter Cause 5.1 to read: 1. The President or a Vice-President shall normally chair all meetings of the Society and of the Council. In the absence of the President and any Vice-President, the meeting will elect a temporary Chair.

**Clause 11 - BLB Bequest Para 2** Alter to: The administration of the Bequest shall be delegated by the Council to an Executive comprising the President or a Vice-President, General Secretary and Treasurer together with scientific and financial advisors to be appointed each year at the AGM. BLB Executive meetings shall be chaired by the President or a Vice-President.

## **Summer Social 2014**

This year's summer social will take place on Tuesday 3rd June and will be held at Glasgow University Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE) at Rowardennan, the where building work in now complete. Location: NS376959 or [www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=237675&Y=695990&A=Y&Z=120](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=237675&Y=695990&A=Y&Z=120)

We'll meet there at 6.30pm for a conducted tour of the building and our cold buffet meal will be served about 7.15pm. The Menu in 2010 included wine and juices, vegetarian options, quiches, seafood, salads, wholemeal bread, chicken, desserts, cheese and crackers, and tea or coffee. I am sure this year will be just as good. A birding excursion beforehand may be organised and communicated by email. Let David Palmar know if you don't use email and may be interested.

The cost is £25 per person. Please complete the form below and return it to Mary Child before May 20th.

.....

I/We wish to attend the Summer Social on Tuesday 3rd June

NAME/S.....

ADDRESS.....

PHONE NO.....EMAIL ADDRESS.....

Amount enclosed £.....(Cheques made out to Glasgow Natural History Society)

I need transport.....

I can offer transport.....

Please complete this form and send, along with a cheque (£25 per person) to Mary Child.

**General Correspondence to the General Secretary:**

**Next Newsletter - copy to David Palmar by 22nd July 2014 please.  
email:**

Contributions by members – long or short - are particularly welcomed.  
Please send contributions by email, preferably as .rtf, .doc or .docx (Word 2007) format. If you have time, please italicise taxonomic names, and use **Verdana** font, size **12 points**.

Photos are welcome – Please send any to David for the Newsletter, especially if it illustrates an aspect of the work of GNHS, e.g. if it was taken on one of our excursions. If sending photos, please send separate jpgs under 100Kb each (**not** embedded in a Word file please).