



GLASGOW NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

August 2008

David Palmar
(Newsletter Editor)

**Next Newsletter Deadline
1 October 2008**

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

2008 Indoor Meetings

September

Tuesday 16th Exhibition meeting: wine and nibbles. Zoology Museum, 7.30pm.

October

Wednesday 8th BLB Lecture: A brush with foxes, and some other carnivore tales. David MacDonald. 5.00pm **Note time and day!**

Tuesday 14th Geology for Biologists: lecture plus practical.
John Faithfull. Venue: Hunterian Museum Annexe, Thurso Street, 7.00pm.
Numbers are limited: to book a place, contact Mary Child.

November

Tuesday 11th Tutorial: Wildlife Photography: David Palmar. 6.30pm
Lecture: Bat conservation in man-made environments: Kirsty Park. 7.30pm

Thursday 27th Lecture: Year of the frog: Jules Howard. 6.00pm
Jointly with University of Glasgow Zoological Society **Note time and day!**

December

Monday 8th Machair Conservation: Successes and Challenges
Full day conference: see below for details and booking form.

Tuesday 16th Christmas Dinner. Zoology Museum, 7.30pm
Menu and booking form in November Newsletter

Speaker: Conserving the world's most threatened bird family: curassows in Peru and Bolivia. Ross MacLeod

Machair Conference

The Great Yellow Bumble Bee project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Trust which we have been administering for the RSPB is now in its final year and the Conference on Machair - its Wildlife, Management and Conservation will be Monday the 8th December 2008. Speakers and delegates will be coming from the Highlands and the Islands. Delegates will be paying £30 (our members and RSPB members will only be asked to pay £15) and this includes a sandwich lunch on a Hebridean theme. For many of the delegates it will be a long and expensive journey which will necessarily involve staying over one or two nights. Several members have offered accommodation - many thanks for that - and we would appreciate other offers.

We will also be hoping that members will offer to help with registration, tea and coffee at the start and the intervals during the conference. This is just an advance notice so that you can put this date in your diaries. Richard Weddle is the Conference Secretary so send him your booking soon. (booking form on last page)

Spring - still SILENT

Norman Grist

I noticed an unfamiliar shortage of our usual Springtime dawn chorus of birds (Newsletter Nov. 2007). As promised, I was well prepared to note and record this year's first quarter experiences (2008) but was disappointed - there was no "chorus" - just a couple of Wood pigeons early on Tues. 8th January - one nearby, the other responding from distant SE; and one on Sun, 24 Feb, unanswered, since which just occasional others but no chorus of response. Our gardens now are a bit tidier with a bit less shelter and fewer food scraps than before, but no great change in surrounding wooded gardens. We heard the occasional "tweets" and even brief calls from daytime Blackbirds, chattering from up to 11 Magpies, squawking from up to five crows, and occasional jingles from Dunnocks - but no responses, no "chorus". Swifts arrived in Britain, but few here - just one seen at 21.30 hrs on Sunday 26 May (plus occasional reports from Richard Weddle (up to 4), Mary Grist (1) and credibly Riccardo Lazzarini (2) - not the usual trawling of the atmosphere between Gartnavel and Clarence Drive.

Bird Track in May with reports cited in the *Daily Mail* reflects wider concern about the "End of the Dawn Chorus: How Noise Pollution is Driving out Birds from Towns and Cities" (David Derbyshire). It is suggested that noise pollution by cars, trucks and factories is masking the dawn chorus used by males to attract mates. This could lead to decline in breeding success and the population size. Natural selection could then reduce populations in busy urban areas. Urban birds might call more loudly than before, more loudly than rural birds as reported from some European cities. New species might even develop - something to watch for.

A note about Norman and Mary Grist

Norman and Mary Grist are now living at the Erskine Home. Norman has limited access to his email at present, but if anyone wants to contact him the postal address is Red Cross House, Erskine Home, Erskine Ferry Road, Bishopton PA7 5PU.

Norman and Mary would be delighted to receive visitors in their new abode, but it would be advisable to phone first.

The society would like to thank Norman for finding time to make a contribution to the Newsletter at a point which must be very busy for both of them.

Although you are receiving this Newsletter as a black and white printout, (because there are other items being posted at the same time), 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 and indicate that you wish to receive Newsletters by email. Thank you.

Excursion Reports

Kennedy's Pass, 15th July 2008

Bernie Zonfrillo



South Ayrshire coast B Zonfrillo

The planned trip to Ailsa Craig did not transpire due to severe windy weather. Despite this the group headed for the Kennedy's Pass/Lendalfoot area of coast, south of Girvan.

Here the weather improved and enough sun appeared to allow some interesting butterflies to appear, including:

Butterflies and moths:

Large Skipper (a speciality of this area)
Ringlet (a newcomer in recent years, but now common)
Garden Tiger (newly emerged - see photo)
Northern Brown Argus (another speciality, linked to Rockrose *Helianthemum*)
Grayling (another mainly coastal species)
Common Blue
Six-spot Burnet Moth
The Clay
Large White
Meadow Brown

Latticed Heath Moth
Agriphila straminella
Large Yellow Underwing
Green-veined White
Yellow Shell

Larvae:

Timothy Tortrix
Fox Moth (not Northern Eggar)

Thanks to Neil Gregory for keeping a list of species seen.

Nesting on the cliffy areas were several pairs of Fulmars, a Kestrel, Buzzard and some Ravens flew over.

Maritime plants were in profusion with Bloody Cranesbill looking fine in the sunshine, Rock Rose, Carline Thistle and a few stems of Golden Rod.

This area of coast is relatively unpolluted and the slopes remain a good refuge for many creatures that have vanished from nearby hill pasture and farmland. One of these was a fine male Adder that obligingly basked in the sun for pictures.

On the whole the day was as good an alternative as could be had. Further botanical and entomological trips should be made here at other times of year.

Photos from the outing to Kennedy's Pass/Lendalfoot



Adder male *B Zonfrillo*



Rockrose *B Zonfrillo*



Garden Tiger moth *B Zonfrillo*



Photo Neil Gregory

Do you remember a pond?

Richard Weddle

One of the topics at a recent meeting with Froglife was ponds which have been lost over the years. So on their behalf, I'd like to hear about any ponds you remember or have heard of: where it was, how big / deep it was and anything you may know about the natural history of the pond (not just frogs!).

Froglife are planning a project to encourage more amphibian-friendly ponds in the Glasgow and Edinburgh areas. This is the "Year of the Frog", and we are likely to be hearing more on this subject over the coming months.

Please send information by email to info@glasgownaturalhistory.org.uk.

Next Newsletter - copy to David Palmar by 1st October please.

Sand Martins check in at Inchinnan - (reproduced from Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire Biodiversity Action newsletter summer 2008)

The Biodiversity Partnership's first purpose-built artificial Sand Martin nesting wall was constructed in 2006, thanks to funding from the Community Environmental Renewal Scheme (Scottish Executive & Forward Scotland), Scottish Natural Heritage, Professor Blodwen Lloyd Binns Bequest Fund, Paisley Natural History Society and Renfrewshire Council.

Sand Martins are a UK species of conservation concern. They spend winter in Africa but migrate in the spring to breed in Europe, making a round trip of at least 5000 miles. For the first two years, however, no Sand Martins used the wall but finally this spring around six pairs have decided to take up residence. The wall is installed near Inchinnan, close to Newshot Island proposed Local Nature Reserve. It is hoped that the offspring raised at the wall this year will return when it's their turn to breed, so that more birds arrive each spring in future years.

Söll Report

Morag Mackinnon

Eighteen of us went to Söll for a week to see the wonderful Alpine flowers in the Alps just as the snow had melted. We got lift passes that allowed us to get the cable cars, funicular train and buses in our area and were rewarded by seeing the early crocus, the beautiful little snowbell, *Soldanella*, the brilliantly coloured *Primula specabilis* and gentians and... so much more. Pam Murdoch is making a full list which we will hope to have at the Exhibition meeting along with some pictures to illustrate.

Some of the highlights of the week were -a welcome by the head of the tourist board and a glass of schnapps for good health; the views in perfect weather from the top of the Hohe Salve; a trip to Hintersteiner See and a walk up to the limestone alpine meadows; the Alpine Garden near the top of the Kitzbühlerhorn; the Village Band who played on despite the rain and the excitement of two of our members winning raffle prizes; the superb Tirolean in the Post Hotel: visiting Kufstein and hearing the amazing outdoor organ. Everyone enjoyed themselves and it was the fun and friendship that made this a great holiday in one of the prettiest and friendliest villages in the Tirol.

Rosshall Park, 22nd May 2008

Bob Gray

The pool and rock garden in the grounds of the red sandstone mansion house on the right bank of the White Cart Water in Crookston were designed and constructed around the turn of last century by the famous landscape firm, Pulham & Son. Large outcrops of artificial rock (Pulhamite) with strata matching pieces of included natural sandstone were introduced in order to form grottos and waterfalls. This artificial landscape contrasted markedly with the formal garden design popular at this time. Many trees were planted then, both in the garden itself and in the adjoining area. We followed a figure of eight route enabling us to view most of the trees in the park.

The tree trail incorporates well over 150 trees, many of which we were able to observe at close quarters in order to confirm their identity. The most eye-catching

feature of the trees of Rosshall Park is the considerable number of exotic conifers. In particular many, large Corsican pines (*Pinus nigra* ssp. *laricio*) are randomly scattered around in both the garden and the adjoining woodland area. The large number of the Sawara cypress 'Plumosa' (*Chamaecyparis pisifera*) is also a feature, as well as quite a few dawn redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) and coastal redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*). One Sierra redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) occurs and we found a hiba (*Thujopsis dolobrata*). Most intriguing, however, was a western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) possessing branches with variegated foliage.

Amongst the many hardwoods of interest are a fine, purple Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* f. *atropurpureum*) and Swedish birch (*Betula pendula* 'Laciniata') in the garden area and a Hers' maple (*A. grosseri* var. *hersii*) and roble beech (*Nothofagus obliqua*) near the northern entrance gate. Beside the river stand two, fine English oaks (*Quercus robur*) and an impressive weeping beech (*Fagus sylvatica* f. *pendula*) grows to the west of the pool. Many red horse chestnuts (*Aesculus x carnea*) are a feature of the garden area. The wooded area contains an avenue of lime trees (*Tilia x europaea*) almost lost amongst other plantings. At the northeast end of this avenue is a good example of silver lime (*T. tomentosa*).

We also found, unusually, a vigorously growing example of the sulphur polypore (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) or chicken of the woods on an English oak situated on the edge of the woodland area. This causes heart rot in the affected tree. It was thought that this was a first record for the Glasgow rectangle but it transpired another had been reported from Pollok only the week before! The long summer evening enabled us to complete the figure of eight circuit before sunset.

Lothians Weekend, 14–15th June 2008

Bob Gray

Friday, 13th: We took the opportunity to visit the National Trust Inveresk House since it was close to our hotel, where the garden had a fine Japanese dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) in full bloom. Inveresk garden is famous for its Graham Stuart Thomas designed rose borders and it possesses the National Collection of *Tropaeolum*, although the latter was somewhat disappointing. Most outstanding was a *Juglans nigra* growing well against a south-facing wall.

Saturday, 14th: An ebullient Major Henry Callander welcomed us to the grounds of his home, Prestonhall House in Midlothian. The estate comprises 165 ha of 18th Century designed landscape. The major explained how, in order to embellish his already substantial tree collection, he collected seeds on his world travels during his service in the army. Of considerable interest was the fact that, whilst serving as part of the armistice commission at Panmunjong, between North and South Korea, in 1979, he obtained two acorns of the Japanese chestnut oak (*Quercus acutissima*), which have since grown successfully. These trees are rarely seen.

The Prestonhall beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is one of Scotland's 100 "Heritage Trees" and its girth measured 103.15 cm (262") making it some 260 years old. We measured its height as 28.1 m. A Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*), just east of the walled garden, has a girth of 886 cm (349"). According to the Tree Register of the British Isles (TROBI) this is the largest in Scotland. Others, ostensibly bigger, having been measured at a lower level owing to low branching. It had been

measured in 1987 when it had a girth of 807 cm an increase of 79 cm (31") in 21 years, indicating a growth rate of c.1.5" per year. Its putative age is therefore about 232 years.

We were able to confirm the identity of two Lucombe oaks (*Q x hispanica* 'Lucombeana') and enjoyed being shown by the major a number of most unusual beech forms, including large-leaved beech (f. *latifolia*) and golden beech ('Zlatia'). He also showed us a form of Leyland's cypress (*x Cupressocyparis leylandii*), 'Castlewellan Gold', a cutting of the original tree, the first ever yellow Leylandii in the world which arose in the North of Ireland in 1962 when a Nootka pollinated a golden Monterey cypress. Other trees of considerable interest were *Nothofagus dombeyi* (a southern beech from Chile) and a Manchurian walnut (*J. mandshurica*).

Thanks are due to Ian McCallum for suggesting Prestonhall as a destination and for acting as tree measuring scribe during the course of the weekend. We could easily have spent the rest of the day in the policies of Prestonhall House but the grounds of Carberry Tower beckoned.

Carberry estate was given to the Church of Scotland by Elphinstone in 1962. We spent a short time admiring the façade of the house, a B-listed 16th Century tower, and the south-facing sunken garden with a central ornate sundial. Across the other side of the landscape was the site on Carberry hill where Mary, Queen of Scots made an agreement with her nobles in 1567. The place is one of great atmosphere. In the centre of the landscape is a Hungarian oak (*Q. frainetto*), arguably the finest in the east of Scotland, planted by the 15th Lord Elphinstone c.1861. It measured 472 cm (186") in girth. It has therefore averaged 1.25" in girth increment annually over its lifespan.

We also observed two young specimens of Indian horse chestnut (*Aesculus indica*) but were puzzled by a tree, some 4 metres high covered with elder-like flowers, viburnum-like leaves and beech-like bark. It was subsequently identified as *Cotoneaster x henryana*. The grounds boast an avenue of some 50 Sierra redwoods (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) planted in the 1870's, not really seen to best advantage on account of undergrowth and a gate across the middle. Amongst many interesting trees at Carberry we encountered a silver southern beech (*N. menziesii*), which is rare, and a columnar Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens* f. *stricta*), which is occasional.

As the evening approached we took the opportunity to visit the National Trust garden at Inveresk Lodge since it was close to the hotel where we were staying, where incidentally the garden had a fine Japanese dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) in full bloom. Although Inveresk Lodge garden is famous for its Graham Stuart Thomas designed rose borders and it possesses the National Collection of Tropaeolum, it was the flowering perennials and shrubs that really caught our attention. Amongst the trees were three young specimens of dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) and a Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*). Most outstanding was a common walnut (*Juglans regia*) growing well against a south-facing wall.

Sunday, 15th June. The morning saw us at the gates of Dalkeith Country Park where we were met by one of the Duke of Buccleuch's countryside rangers, Keith

Andrews, who proved to be a most knowledgeable and entertaining countryman, well versed in the wildlife of the estate. He shared with us some of the interesting history of the mansion house (James Smith designed 1701), currently leased to the University of Wisconsin, and Montague Bridge (Robert Adam, 1792). Control of grey squirrels is one of his chief jobs.

The main reason for coming here was to see the ancient oaks, which, together, are 'one' of Scotland's 100 Heritage Trees. Their conservation has only become an issue in the past 25 years or so. Prior to that, occasional specimens were being felled and the area planted up with more commercially viable species such as larch and beech. This policy has been reversed in parts of the estate so that areas are now being managed to encourage the preferential growth of naturally regenerated oak seedlings. In order to speed up the process, firstly, some exclosures have been constructed to keep out grazers and secondly, some taller oak trees grown from local seed have been planted. The leader gave a brief summary of some of the research carried out in connection with these trees over the past 40 years or so and the debate about the status of the wood – whether entirely native, or partly so, or consisting entirely of introduced species. The ranger gave us an insight into the management problems associated with maintaining this site, which is of national importance from a biodiversity and historical viewpoint.

We were shown the remarkable orangery (it was heated by vast quantities of coal) and told something of its history (designed and built by William Burn) and plans for its refurbishment. The ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) next to the conservatory is thought to have been planted by Gilpin in 1845 (he drew up plans for an arboretum in 1832). Its girth is 282 cm (75"). So, if the dates are correct, it is growing at about ½" per year. Just southeast of the stables we measured a particularly fine Cedar of Lebanon. Its girth is 243". It would have been interesting to see and measure some other Cedars of Lebanon, planted in 1770 north of the house, in order to check their growth rates. We did, however, see particularly outstanding and unusual weeping beech, grafted at about 3 metres.

The ranger showed us a large play area constructed by himself and a colleague. It was being enjoyed by many children but he indicated that such sites may fall foul of EU legislation, which seems to demand professionally built pre-fabricated structures. Finally Keith showed us what is arguably the most extraordinary ice-house in the country. It was rediscovered a few years ago, having been covered with builders' rubble. It is built into the bank of the River Esk and is no less than 38 feet deep. The ice was put in via a pluggable hole in the roof (now covered over), layer by layer with straw and sacking between the layers. The entrance near the top of the structure leads into a curved passageway thankfully lit by electricity. This passage was the location where meat etc. was stored and we marvelled at the stonemasons' marks on the carved stonework.

Then it was on to view the Ormiston yew (*Taxus baccata*), which proved to be a fitting climax to the weekend. We were met by Professor Aubrey Manning, a great friend of the Society, who lives at Ormiston Hall. He regaled us with the history of the area, particularly in so far as it related to the yew tree. Tales of Wishart, Knox, Beaton, Hopetouns, Lindsays and Elphinstone Tower were recounted.

Externally the yew appears to be more like a small wood than a tree (or maybe two trees); but once under its branches one realises that most of the external greenery emanates from branches that layer themselves, i.e. they droop to the ground where they put out fresh roots and shoots. Aubrey mentioned that over the 35 years that he has lived here, the tree's trunk has begun to open out, thus allowing more light through the canopy than had previously been the case. He is also considering having a genetic analysis carried out to determine whether the second, smaller trunk is identical, or not, to the major trunk.

Sir Thomas Lauder in c.1834 apparently measured the yew's girth at 4' as 177". We measured the trunk's girth, at 4 feet, as 584 cm (230"), which, at a growth rate of ½" per year, suggested by the late Alan Mitchell as applying to yews, indicates an age of some 460 years. Hence, on this basis, the tree was perhaps a seedling at the time of the Scottish Reformation. However, using the putative growth increment of 53" in the 174 years since Lauder's time a growth rate of 0.3" per year is indicated, which would make the tree over 760 years old so that it is not impossible that George Wishart preached under this tree. It was certainly at Ormiston in 1546 that he was seized prior to his martyrdom.

The Society is grateful to the many owners who allow us access to their grounds to enable us to indulge our passion for trees.

Inchcailloch, Loch Lomond, 21st June 2008

Ian C McCallum

On the the longest day there was an outing to Inchcailloch attended by both the Edinburgh and Glasgow Natural History Societies. Nineteen members came from Edinburgh and seven from Glasgow. McFarlane's ferry left Balmaha jetty just after 10.30. When we arrived on the island we saw a male goosander and a female red-breasted merganser. We were met on Inchcailloch by the Loch Lomond Park Ranger, Sandra Hutchison, who is also a member of the Glasgow Naturalists. She gave a short talk about the island and then we were climbing up the path – rebuilt since the last time we had visited – to the Central Valley. At the path junction the fitter ones headed off to climb to the summit, Tom Na Nigheanan, while the others continued through the Central Valley to Port Bawn. The climbers passed through the alder tree marsh where a tree pipit was seen and heard. This is one of the best locations for birds, however, as we were later than on our previous visits the following birds were heard but not seen: - redstart, redpoll, wood warbler, blackcap, garden warbler and sandpiper.

It was explained that Inchcailloch meant the Isle of the cowled women (nuns) which referred to the establishment of a nunnery on the island by St Kentigerna. It was also stated that no one had lived on the island for the last 200 years. At that time it had been a farming community growing oats and barley. The flora and fauna were very different at that time and included black grouse and brown hare but few woodland species such as great spotted woodpecker. In 1796 the tenant farmer was told to plant acorns and ash cones and from that time a system of woodland management evolved involving the coppicing of oak and alder. The oak bark was used for tanning leather and the stripped timber was used to make vinegar, wood tar and dyestuffs at a factory in Balmaha. The alder was used for wooden clogs and for gunpowder.

The next stop on the walk was at the conglomerate exposure, where it was explained about the Highland Boundary Fault, which runs through the island. The conglomerate is a 'hard' rock and forms the high ridge of the fault, which also forms Conic Hill. On the west side of the island the conglomerate is replaced by an outcrop of serpentine rock, which is softer, but base rich, and which gives more diverse vegetation. The serpentine rock was used as a fertilizer as there was no local limestone available.

At the Viewpoint we had an excellent panorama of the hills to the south including an island called the Kitchen, which is thought to have been used as a crannog about 2000 years ago.

At the Summit there was a 10-minute break for tea and to admire the views to the north of the Loch and the surrounding hills. The sun shone and the cameras clicked.

On the descent, an area at the side of the path was pointed out where there were tracks and signs of fallow deer as well as numerous dor beetles *Geotrupes stercorarius*. Farther down the trail the party were shown a corn-drying kiln, which had been used when the island was farmed.

At Port Bawn we met up with the rest of the party and lunch was enjoyed in the sunshine. The Ranger, Sandra, who is based there, was very helpful and arranged for the toilets to be open. On the previous visit to the island, the fungus, chicken of the woods, *Laetiporus sulphureus*, had been found near the Picnic Area but in spite of a quick look it was not in evidence.

After lunch we continued along the west side of the island, where we moved into the base rich area of the serpentine rock and saw woodruff *Galium odoratum*, and maidenhair spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes*, among other species. As we progressed along the path we crossed depressions, which were the remnants of the early ridge and furrow cultivation system.

Our next stop was at the ruined farmhouse, which had been used to stable horses at the time of the 1914/18 war. The horses were used to haul timber for the mainland. It was noted that timber was extracted from the island in the 15th Century to build ships for a punitive expedition against the Lord of the Isles.

We arrived at the burial ground where the leader was delighted to find a stone erected to an earlier McCallum. The burial ground contains the ruins of the 13th Century church dedicated to St Kentigerna. The grass cutting in this area has probably removed many wild flowers, however, we were informed by Sandra that there were 25 fallow deer on the island which were partial to the wild flowers – especially the enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* from which the flowers had been cropped. Sandra thought some form of control of the deer would be necessary. Although we did not see as many flowers as on our previous visit we did note the usual climbing corydalis *Corydalis claviculata*, beech fern *Phegopteris connectilis*, remote sedge *Carex remota*, etc.

Although there were not a lot of bird sightings, there were plenty of chaffinches and a tree creeper that performed well. The highlight of the bird sightings was just

before and as we were disembarking from the ferry when 4 ospreys were seen – one carrying a large fish!

On the track leading up to the Visitor Centre there was a fine specimen of the fungus, chicken of the woods *Laetiporus sulphureus* growing on an old oak tree. I seem to remember on one of the early excursions, that Society members helped themselves to the chicken for their evening meal.

At the Visitor Centre Sandra had organised tea and coffee for the members – and she was duly thanked for her superb organisation in making the day so enjoyable.

The final stroke of luck took place when the Edinburgh coach was ready to leave - the weather broke and the rain poured down – what timing!

Interesting Insects

Richard Weddle

Those who were present at the April talk on 'Recording Biodiversity on Glasgow' will not be surprised to hear that I have been focussing recently on insects and other invertebrates. There are those which come to the light-trap which I run occasionally on my kitchen window ledge, there are some which I find in the lanes around Hyndland, and I also look out for them on GNHS excursions.

First of all, the Light-brown Apple Moth which Neil Gregory highlighted in the last Newsletter as a 'new arrival': I find this, sometimes four or more individuals at a time, in and around the light-trap. So it certainly seems here to stay; as Neil mentioned, it's polyphagous, and there's certainly no shortage of foliage for it to consume.

Frequent finds in and around the trap are various pug-moths (*Eupithecia* spp.) many of which are difficult to identify either because the distinguishing features are rather subtle or because the specimen in question is rather 'worn'. However one specimen turned out to be the Oak-tree Pug, thereby settling the debate as to whether this species occurs in Scotland, though I couldn't justify claiming it as the first Scottish record.

Recently I found in the trap, a rather small black and white moth with a striking pattern. After some searching through the website www.ukmoths.co.uk I identified it as *Ypsolopha sequella*; it doesn't have a common name, but I have nicknamed it the 'Playboy moth' because of a distinct 'rabbit's head' mark which can be clearly seen looking at it from above. John Knowler and Keith Futter have recently recorded it in Milngavie and Dumbarton respectively. My record however is the first for Glasgow, and for Lanarkshire in general; I also contributed a second record on a visit to Castlemilk Glen on the same day.

During Peter Macpherson's excursion to Glasgow Bridge this week, we captured a very pretty little moth in the vegetation at the side of the canal. This turned out to be the Beautiful China-mark, and this was the only record I know of in this part of Scotland. It seems to be associated with the yellow water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*) so, as this also grows in the canal within Glasgow, I looked near Stockingfield the following evening and found the moth again. I subsequently heard that Land

Services' Ecologist had also discovered it almost simultaneously at Robroyston Park.

I don't restrict my attention to moths of course; last weekend a couple of small flies caught my eye as they danced upside down along the top bar of the window frame. Geoff Hancock kindly identified these as a picture-winged fruit-fly *Anomoia purmunda*. He remarked that this species is probably quite common at this time of year as the larva feed on hawthorn, but there are hardly any records from anywhere in Scotland in spite of the fact that it is easily identified from the pattern of lines and spots on the wings. Another GNHS member, when I told him about this, said he'd seen it recently too, in East Renfrewshire.

On the excursion to Inchcailloch a member of Edinburgh NHS found an interesting longhorn beetle. I had decided to ignore beetles (except ladybirds) altogether on that occasion as I knew that extensive surveys had been carried out in the recent past. However this was clearly not one which had been found there before. Jeanne Robinson kindly identified it as *Leiopus nebulosus*, a relatively common species of woodland, whose larvae feed in dead wood from broadleaved or coniferous trees.

Of course there's the also seemingly ubiquitous Orange ladybird (*Halyzia sedecimguttata*) which usually turns up on my kitchen window when I run the light trap, and which I find almost as often as any other ladybird. We found a number of these on a Sycamore in Plean Country Park during the recent excursion led by Edna Stewart.

Few, if any, of these species are likely to be rare in this part of Scotland; they are 'interesting' either because they have only recently arrived, or for one reason or another have been generally overlooked. So I think there is plenty of scope for similar 'interesting' finds in the future – anyone is welcome to join in the search!

Machair Conference Booking Form

Conference: Machair Conservation - Successes and Challenges
Monday 8th December 2008

Registration (GNHS members): £15 per member

Please fill form in capitals

Name (s) _____

Address _____

e-mail _____

Tel _____