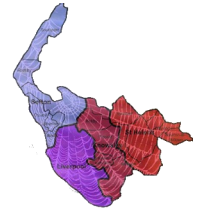


April/September 2017
Issue 43



Merseyside Nature Friends of Merseyside BioBank



Merseyside BIOBANK Active Naturalists

Naturalists are always welcome
at MBB and can make use of the
available library, equipment and
facilities

Created by and for Volunteer Naturalists. Edited by Bob Jude

Views expressed in this newsletter are those of individual authors.

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Articles, photographs, real life stories, web links and events from active naturalists are welcome additions to this newsletter. **Please send them in.** Stories from 250 words with accompanying photographs will take us all on your journey. Please E-Mail your work to: newsletter@activenaturalist.org.uk

This is a summary containing a potpourri of articles and information generated since April 2017. There has been much activity by the Naturalists of North Merseyside but a great deal of work and deserved information was unable to be published in this newsletter due to the Editor taking an enforced break. Ben Deed continues to distribute much this information online and Catrin Watkin produced an excellent interim online newsletter in August. It is impossible in this summary to contain all that has been missed but where contributors have submitted articles they have been included in this issue. This newsletter edition contains many of the newly reported or unusual species discovered in the area during this period.

Four-Banded Longhorn Beetle (*Leptura quadrfasciata*) : Image Phil Smith



WILDLIFE NOTES JULY 2017 - Dr Phil Smith



Some of the volunteers that turned out for the *Biodiverse Society's* Bioblitz on Birkdale Green Beach

At last a return to "normal" British weather saw measurable rainfall on about 12 days, including the first really wet day for over a year on 21st. This freshened up the natural vegetation and was a boon to local growers and gardeners but had little impact on the sand-dune water-table due to high rates of evaporation at this time of year.

July is usually a great month for wildlife along the coast and this one was no exception, though the early season meant things were already looking rather autumnal by the month's end.

The Devil's Hole blowout at Ravenmeols is a must in high summer, treats on 1st including the first flowering **Grass-of-Parnassus** and thousands of **Marsh Helleborines**. Shocking pink **Pyramidal Orchids** lined the dune ridges to the west. As usual, **Northern Dune Tiger Beetles** scurried about on the bare sand slopes, while two spectacular **Dark Green Fritillaries** and a **Spiked Shield-bug** added further interest.

Walking back to the car at the end of Range Lane, I checked the site of the **Ringlet** colony found in June. Sure enough, there were still 15 in the long grass, though a few weeks later none was to be seen.

The two ponds in a nearby field were also lined by **Marsh Helleborines** but the main surprise here was an enormous colony of **Yellow Bartsia**, a mainly southern plant that is scarce in the northwest. Later in the month, a Landscape Partnership guided walk to the iconic Devil's Hole attracted 32 participants to this spectacular landscape feature with its remarkable wildlife. Their reaction was suitably positive.

On 4th, as many as 25 volunteers turned out for the *Biodiverse Society's* Bioblitz on Birkdale Green Beach. Results circulated later showed that over 550 species of plants and animals were recorded, including 113 moths caught at night in light-traps and then released after being identified. Despite less than ideal weather conditions, an expert reported 69 different flies, including coastal specialists, rarities and some new to the Sefton Coast. These findings add to the already sky-high reputation of the Green Beach for its flora and fauna.

An early July trip to the Pinfold area of Ainsdale National Nature Reserve targeted the rare **Forester** moth at one of its key breeding sites in the region. I counted 17 shimmering green adults mostly on Ragwort flowers, an important nectar source for many insects in mid to late summer.



Forester moth

WILDLIFE NOTES JULY 2017 - Dr Phil Smith

All three of the Sefton Coast's grasshoppers, eight different butterflies and seven dragonflies added to my enjoyment of this outstanding habitat.

Another July highlight came on 9th when Patricia Lockwood and I led a guided walk to Crosby Coastal Park for the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland and Lancashire Botany Group. Twenty enthusiasts came from as far away as London to appreciate a wealth of plantlife, over 360 species having been recorded for the park.

The main targets included five different **Evening-primroses**, the largest colony of **Isle of Man Cabbage** in the country and the very rare **Dune Wormwood**. We were also blown away by sheets of **Sea Holly** on which were growing over 300 spikes of the parasitic **Common Broomrape**, normally only seen in ones and twos.



Common Broomrape

A couple of days later, Pat showed me a superb population of about 160 **Dune Helleborines** flowering on the National Trust estate near Blundell Avenue. A little later, the same area produced a smaller number of the rather similar **Green-flowered Helleborine**.

A regional rarity, the latter also turned up at Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve, where I was shown five flower-spikes after a guided dragonfly walk on 15th.

It was cloudy all afternoon and yet we still found six species of dragonflies. Some were netted and examined in the hand with the aid of an illuminating magnifier that demonstrated the wonderful colours and intricate structure of these ancient insects, much older than the Dinosaurs.



Common Wintergreen

For our main botanical survey this summer, Patricia and I chose the **Common Wintergreen** a regionally rare plant found mainly in Scotland.

It was last studied here a decade ago when ten colonies were recorded; this time we located 17, two being on the National Trust estate with the rest at Ainsdale Sand Dunes National Nature Reserve. Here it is mostly associated with firebreaks or small clearings in the pinewoods where the soil has been acidified by conifer needles producing extremely low soil pHs, often between 3 and 4.

In total, we counted about 10,600 plants, a significant increase on the previous estimate. Nevertheless, some of the 2007 populations were not refound, apparently lost to overshadowing by dense **birch** regeneration.

Another fascinating month on the Sefton Coast ended with a massive hatch of red and black **Six-spot Burnet** moths in the dunes. I counted 13 on one **Ragwort** plant at Ravenmeals, while in the Devil's Hole there were dozens nectaring on **Water Mint**.

WILDLIFE NOTES AUGUST 2017 - Dr Phil Smith

The unsettled weather of July continued into the first half of August with measurable rainfall on 11 days up to 18th but then hardly any for the rest of the month. This meant that the dune flora recovered somewhat from the severe early summer drought, this being reflected in a fantastic display of **Grass-of-Parnassus**, especially on the New Green Beach north of Ainsdale-on-Sea.



Even I balked at trying to count them but there were certainly tens of thousands in what is probably the largest British population of this nationally declining plant. Thousands more were at the Devil's Hole, though this colony was down on the numbers present a few years ago.



This month was better for insects than last August; just as well because a team from BBC *One Show* came up from Bristol on 9th to film our charismatic **Northern Dune Tiger Beetle** at Ainsdale. It was perfect weather – sunny and relatively calm but not too hot. There were lots of beetles and they posed well for the cameras. I recorded an interview with the presenter George McGavin but, at the time of writing, have not heard if or when it will be broadcast. Many insects are moving north in response to climate change.

One such is the attractive **Lesser Hornet Hoverfly** (*Volucella inanis*), a photo of which was taken at Ainsdale National Nature Reserve by Pete Kinsella on 3rd, seemingly the first for the Sefton Coast of this southern species. Coincidentally, a few days later I spotted one in Trevor Davenport's Freshfield garden.



Its big brother, the **Hornet Hoverfly** (*V. zonaria*) turned up at Hightown and Birkdale a few days later, also photographed by Pete. Remarkably, this **Hornet** mimic and our largest hoverfly, landed on my bag at Ainsdale NNR on 15th but zoomed off before I could photograph it.

I was luckier with a **Red-legged Shieldbug** that dropped onto my hand with a loud buzz. I managed to get pictures of what was only the third individual of this supposedly common species that I have seen.



WILDLIFE NOTES AUGUST 2017 - Dr Phil Smith

Dragonflies also did reasonably well, though I thought we would struggle to see any on 12th when I led a walk with 20 participants to look for these insects at Ainsdale. It was cloudy and cool early on but brightened up sufficiently for us to catch up with seven species, including our largest the **Emperor**, a male and female performing well at the slack 47 pools. Nearby, the Green Beach **Alders** provided shelter for a splendid male **Ruddy Darter** which allowed close views. Later in the month, a visit to a friend's enormous garden pond at Hillside was rewarded with five dragonflies, including another **Ruddy Darter** and also three **Migrant Hawkers**, which we hadn't recorded there before. This brings the number of species for this pond since 2014 to a pretty impressive total of 13.

On 19th, I joined the Liverpool Botanical Society for a trip round Crosby Coastal Park. The special plants here include four individuals of **Dune Wormwood** which had just been missed by a recent grass fire, emphasising the vulnerability of this tiny population at its sole British locality. It has become extinct at its other site in South Wales, though material has been cultivated and it is hoped to reintroduce it to the wild. A sharp-eyed member of the group spotted a **Bay** (*Laurus nobilis*) tree in a row of shrubs, which was a new plant for the Sefton Coast.

Venturing a little further afield, I was tempted to join a guided walk round Scutcher's Acres Nature Reserve, near Burscough, where John Watt led us to many of his 107 different trees. Lots of dragonflies and butterflies were also on show and I took the opportunity to visit the only colony of **Common Wintergreen** in South Lancashire away from the Sefton Coast.

Attending a meeting at the National Trust offices at Formby Point, I spotted the distinctive **Small Nightshade** in the gravel carpark. A native of Western North America, this extreme British rarity, with only seven post-2000 records, was first found here in 2009. Returning the following day with Patricia Lockwood and Joshua Styles, we counted 62 **Small Nightshade** plants, many with well-developed fruits, on the edges of sandy tracks and an asparagus field, showing that it has become well-established here. Several other notable plants were also seen, including sizeable populations of the Red-listed **Smooth Cat's-ear** and **Common Cudweed**.

Birds took a back seat for most of the month but I was delighted to see a **Spotted Flycatcher** at Range Lane, Formby. This once common species is heading for extinction as a breeding bird in our region. As usual, internationally important flocks of **Sandwich Terns** roosted on the shore between Ainsdale and Birkdale. I saw up to 1200.

A volunteer group organised by John Dempsey monitored their numbers and also reported numerous incidents of deliberate disturbance. One observer described two horses repeatedly being ridden into the roost, while another saw a day-tripper encouraging two children to run into the flock while he took photographs. Unfortunately, these were not isolated events but almost daily occurrences and a sad reflection of the attitude of some people to our natural heritage.



Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*) : Ron Knight: Wikicommons



Northern Dune Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela hybrida*): P.Gately : 2007

WILDLIFE NOTES SEPTEMBER 2017 - Dr Phil Smith

It's supposed to rain in September and, in complete contrast to 2016, this year it did, with measurable precipitation on about 16 days, though in no great quantity.

Total rainfall was about average, doing little to restore the sand-dune water-table which remained below ground at the Devil's Hole blowout, while Wicks Lake at Formby Point was bone-dry throughout.

A visit Highfield Moss near Golborne at least once a year is a must, so I joined Trevor Davenport on 1st for a trip to this wonderful raised-bog, a surviving relict of the mosslands that once stretched almost unbroken from Liverpool to Manchester. It was cloudy, breezy and rather cool, not ideal for the dragonflies we hoped to find. Nevertheless, several **Emerald Damselflies** were soon spotted around the large pools, while even better were **Black Darters**, a typical peatland speciality



I instinctively headed for a more sheltered area of tall vegetation and bumped into a superb male **Common Hawker** hanging up in the rushes.

Trevor soon joined me and joyfully pointed out another of the same species within a few feet of the first. This was a female of a rare pale-blue-spotted form mostly known from Scotland.

We snapped away happily until both insects woke up and beat a hasty retreat.

Other goodies here were three different grasshoppers, including the **Meadow Grasshopper** which, though widespread further south, seems strangely restricted to peat-bogs in northern England. Finally, a large colourful hoverfly landed at my feet, photographs showing it was the **Bog Hoverfly** *Sericomyia silentis*, another wetland specialist.



The importance of shelter for insects was shown again a few days later when, in equally unpromising conditions,

I headed with Trevor up to the Green Beach from Ainsdale. Here, **Alder** bushes provided a respite from onshore breezes, attracting several dragonflies, including **Migrant** and **Brown Hawkers** and dozens of **Common Darters**.

Butterflies were represented by **Red Admiral**, **Speckled Wood** and the sadly declining **Small Heath**, while three large hairy **Fox Moth** caterpillars also attracted our attention.



WILDLIFE NOTES SEPTEMBER 2017 - Dr Phil Smith

We were pleased to find the **Mottled Grasshopper**, a tiny species which likes warm, open sandy conditions with short vegetation.

Nearby were **Spiked** and **Green Shieldbugs**, two of the 11 members of this family that I have recorded on the Sefton Coast.

A dark-blue beetle on the Alders was later identified by Gary Hedges of World Museum Liverpool as the **Alder Leaf-beetle** *Ageslastica alni*. This was thought extinct until it appeared in Manchester in 2004, since when it has spread widely in northwest England.

The following day I headed off to Hightown with Patricia Lockwood and Joshua Styles for some botanical recording. The shore provided an interesting variety of scarce strandline and shingle plants, including **Ray's Knotgrass**, **Isle of Man Cabbage** and **Yellow Horned-poppy**. Unexpectedly, a nearby dune ridge had a specimen of **Devil's-bit Scabious**, while the regionally rare **Variegated Horsetail** was found in a scrape dug for Natterjack Toads.



Birch Shieldbug (*Elasmastethus interstinctus*)

Sea Buckthorn was rapidly invading the scrape, so we spent some time uprooting it. On the way back across the dunes, we picked up a sick young **Hedgehog** which was dropped off at the vets in Formby.

My interest in shieldbugs prompted a mid-month visit to Freshfield Dune Heath Nature Reserve where I have previously had good results at this time of year. I wasn't disappointed, no less than five species being located, including the very colourful **Birch Shieldbug** and the duller but rarer **Bronze Shieldbug**.

A few **Small Coppers** and a patrolling **Southern Hawker** added further interest.

One of the most important events on the coast for many years took place on 15th September when the National Trust and Sefton Council formally agreed the transfer of 204ha of duneland to the Trust, adding to their existing 210ha property at Formby Point.

This includes the Lifeboat Road area and Ravenmeols Local Nature Reserve, extending from the Trust's current land boundary about 2km south to the edge of Cabin Hill National Nature Reserve.

All of this area has a high wildlife value, reflected in protective designations:

Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation and RAMSAR wetland of international importance. The Trust is holding a series of meetings with "stakeholders" and others seeking views on the future management of their estate.

I am helping with guided walks for National Trust staff and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the new area, which includes the iconic Devil's Hole.

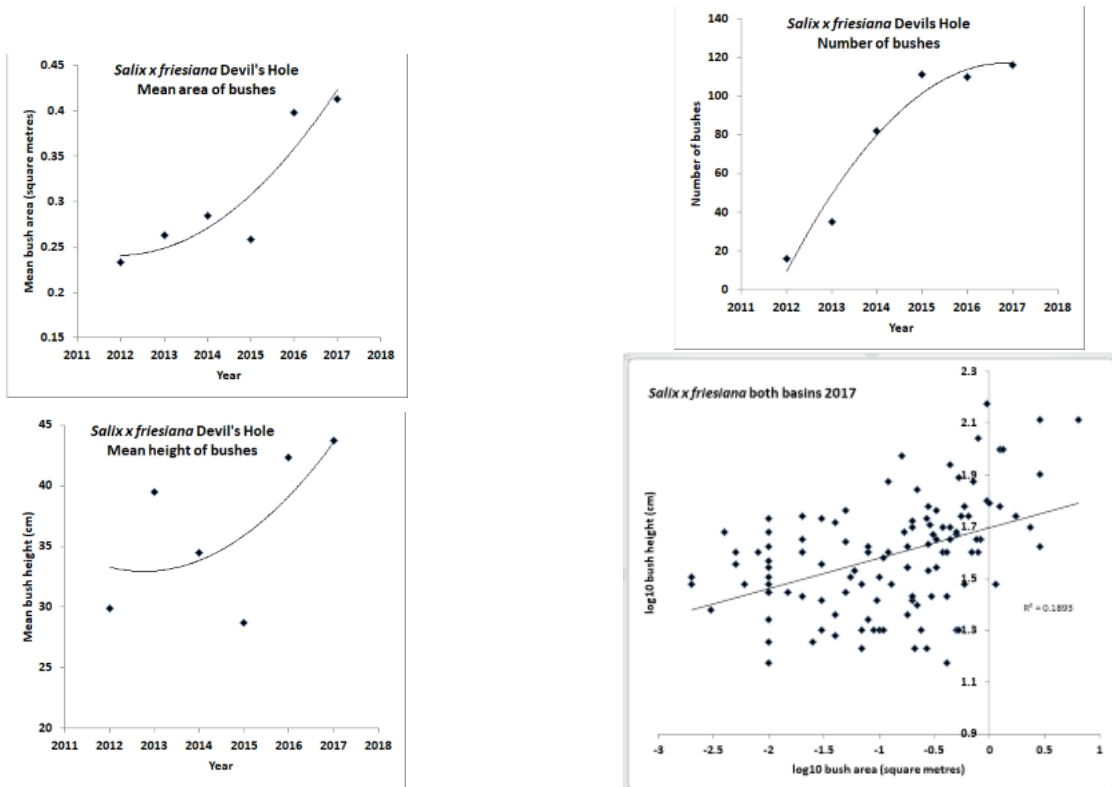
For further information, visit:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/formby/projects/get-involved---the-future-of-formby-point>

SALIX FRIESIANA - CHANGES IN DEVIL'S HOLE POPULATIONS - 2010 - 2017 - Dr Phil Smith



Phil has been collecting *Salix x friesiana* data from Devil's Hole. First recorded as "rare" in 2011 he started measuring and marking bushes in 2013, so now has six years of results. Shown are some graphs; the fitted lines are polynomials. The trend of bush numbers is quite interesting, suggesting that the rate of establishment is levelling off, probably due to competition, especially from *Salix repens*. Bush area also shows a reasonable trend with a gradual increase over time, except in 2015 when it dropped markedly, possibly due to the deep flooding that year. However, bush height against time is inconsistent. Field observations suggest that there was a lot of die-back of terminal shoots, some of it due to Rabbit browsing and also perhaps caused by summer drought in some years or flooding in others (2015). The larger, well-established bushes seem to have continued to gain height while smaller ones have struggled. Trampling and competition may have played a part. Also, many individuals seem to have a prostrate growth-form while others are more upright – individual variation perhaps. As in the case of *Rosa rugosa*, there is a statistically very highly significant relationship between bush height and area. There is a good deal of variation but larger bushes tend to be taller, as would be expected (also attached). The axes are transformed to log₁₀ to spread out the data points.



Relationship between *Salix x friesiana* bush height and bush area in Devil's Hole 2017. The correlation coefficient is statistically highly significant ($p = 0.00001$)

	No. of bushes	mean area	SD area	mean height	SD height
2012	16	0.233	0.368	29.88	8.18
2013	35	0.263	0.466	39.51	16.71
2014	82	0.284	0.14	34.51	4.36
2015	111	0.258	0.087	28.69	12.89
2016	110	0.398	0.255	42.33	11.46
2017	116	0.413	0.224	43.71	15.81

RIMROSE VALLEY – A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A THREATENED WILDLIFE SITE - Barry Smith



Rimrose Valley is a 3.5 km country park and valley in North Liverpool which provides a vital mosaic of habitats for wildlife in an urban built up area, it is a 'green lung' for the area and lies between Crosby and Litherland in the borough of Sefton.

It is a former tip and landfill site which was reclaimed in 1993 with a view to improving the area as an educational and recreational resource for the local community. It has two areas of Special Local Biological Interest at Brookvale LNR and Fulwood Way reed beds. It also has part of the Leeds Liverpool canal along its boundary.

The site is under threat from development and I am determined to help stop this. I enrolled on a four part biological recording course with bio bank and have since spent many hours recording and monitoring species data within the site. The deeper I look the more I see what an amazing place it is and how important it is to preserve its existence – Not just for wildlife but also for the different communities that surround it.

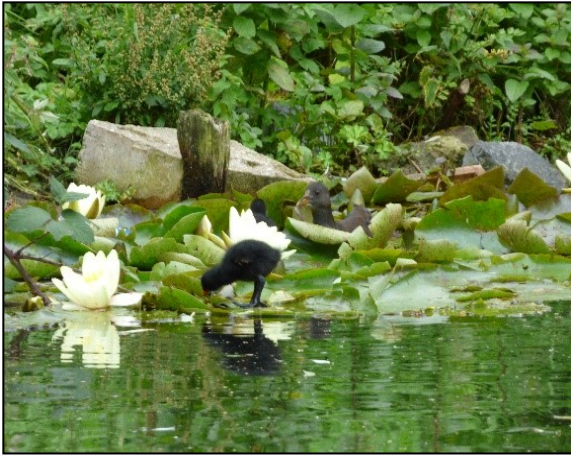
Hopefully this piece will do justice to its beauty, it won't be filled with words and scientific information, I aim to provide a more visual guide to what I have found over a twelve month period.

July/August/September

I began recording wildlife on the site in July 2016, it was alive with the sounds of singing whitethroat and grasshopper warbler. Swifts and house martins were circling overhead and numerous bees and butterflies were busy collecting pollen from plants and shrubs – Notable butterfly species were speckled wood, red admiral and peacock along with red tailed bumble-bee, common carder and early bumblebees.

I'm sure there was plenty that I missed, it was pretty early days for my recording project and I was very much on a steep learning curve (still getting steeper). Birds I could identify, the rest has been an enjoyable education – especially two bat surveys which revealed five different species within the site. I immediately appreciated what a special place it is.

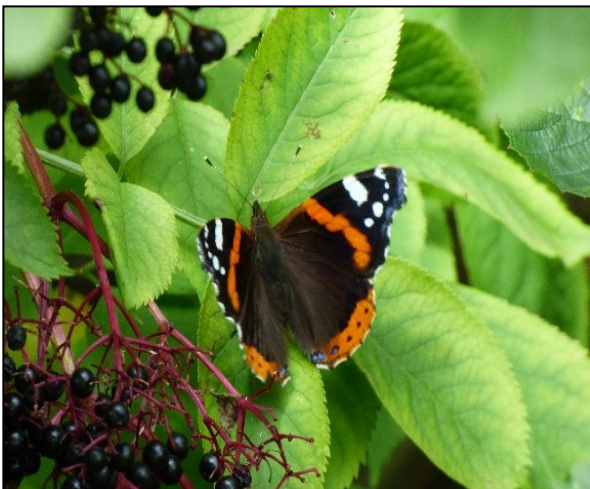
RIMROSE VALLEY – A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A THREATENED WILDLIFE SITE - Barry Smith



Moorhen chicks on the Leeds Liverpool canal



Grey Heron fishing on the Leeds Liverpool canal



Red Admiral in mid-September



Sunset on Rimrose Valley

Different Species recorded:

Bird	45
Flowering plant	6
Butterfly	6
Dragonfly	2
Bees	6
True bugs	1
Reptile	1
Mammal (Bats/Water vole/squirrel/Rabbit/Rat)	7

October/November/December

My recording through this period really tailed off, it started off well in October but by mid-November the weather and other commitments meant that I just couldn't find enough time. I did manage to get out on a couple of really frosty mornings though. Families of long tailed tits were flitting from tree to tree and there was a noticeable increase in gulls feeding on the fields - black headed, common and herring gulls doing their dance for worms.

Great spotted woodpeckers were particularly busy amongst the dense patches of poplar and sycamore and jays and grey squirrels were hurriedly storing the last acorns of the season - Hedgehogs getting ready to hunker down until Spring. Other notable winter visitors were Fieldfare, Goldcrest and a great view of a Woodcock..... obviously in the air as it beat a hasty retreat from my stealthy approach.



Sunrise through the fog on Rimrose Valley

RIMROSE VALLEY – A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A THREATENED WILDLIFE SITE - Barry Smith



Rainbow over Rimrose Valley



Peacock Butterfly warming in the sun



Great Spotted Woodpecker at dusk



Stonechat on the move



A contrast of Frost and Autumn colour



Blue tit on a crisp sunny day

RIMROSE VALLEY – A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A THREATENED WILDLIFE SITE - Barry Smith



Red-tailed bumblebee out early

Different species recorded:

Bird	33
Butterfly	1
Mammal	3

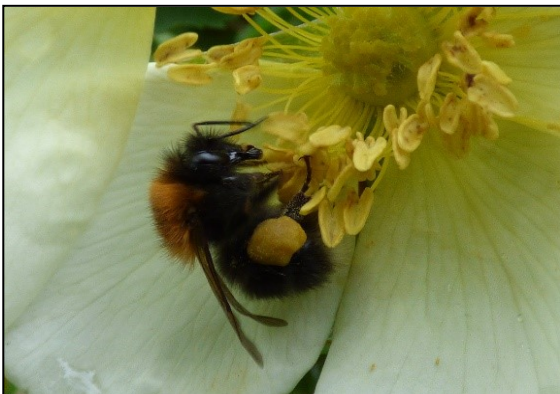
January/February/March

My new year recording started really well, with a number of bullfinch sightings along with goldcrest, tree creeper and a female yellowhammer. In mid-February I saw my first Peacock butterfly of the year and by march coltsfoot was beginning to push through and Hawthorn blossom was beginning to attract the early pollinators.

Chiffchaff and skylark returned and kestrel, sparrowhawk and buzzard were all busy patrolling the skies. Great spotted woodpeckers were clearing out nest holes and there was a real feeling that things were starting to happen....The breeding season was nearly upon us.

Different species recorded:

Bird	28
Flowering plant	1
Butterfly	1
Bee	2
Mammal	1



Tree Bumblebee gathering pollen



Sedge Warbler post song



Kestrel on the hunt



Large skipper arrived in early June

April/May/June

Rimrose is alive with life and birdsong.....chaffinch, greenfinch, blue tit, and great tit seem to be everywhere – Loudest of all is the song thrushes sorting out their territories.. I carried out a breeding bird survey in mid to late April which provided 40 different species of bird as possible/probable or confirmed breeding within the site – Amazing.

Lots of bees are doing their thing around the early flowering shrubs and brimstone, large white and red admiral have all appeared along with speck-

RIMROSE VALLEY – A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A THREATENED WILDLIFE SITE - Barry Smith

led wood and orange tip butterflies.

High up sky larks sing and drop to the ground, Kestrels and Buzzards are hunting for prey and voles squeal their way around the undergrowth attracting interest from kestrel and stoats.

Different species recorded:

Bird	36
Beetle	2
Butterfly	8
Bee	7
True fly	2
Mammal	1

It remains to be seen what will happen to Rimrose Valley in the long term, this lies in the hands of developers and the government. Opposition to the development has built, with new and existing community groups working together to fight against the new road, hopefully the strength of opposition will prove too much and alternatives will be agreed.

Spending a year with the wildlife on Rimrose Valley has shown me how important it is to keep these spaces free of commercial development. Wildlife is thriving in an area that was created for the good of the community – this is a project that has worked and is so important to the health and well-being of everybody who uses it.

It is vital that we understand our Local Wildlife sites and do all we can to protect them.

Rimrose Valley – List of species identified during my recording project.

The below tables contain a list of species recorded by me over a twelve month period, it mainly contains those areas that interest me – in particular birds, bees and butterflies.

However, I attempted others while going about my project...There is so much that went unrecorded during my visits and this is by no means a definitive list of the site.

Birds

Accipiter nisus - Sparrowhawk
 Acrocephalus scirpaceus - Reed Warbler
 Aegithalos caudatus - Long-tailed Tit
 Alauda arvensis - Skylark
 Anas platyrhynchos - Mallard
 Apus apus - Swift
 Ardea cinerea - Grey Heron
 Branta canadensis - Canada Goose
 Buteo buteo - Buzzard

Carduelis carduelis - Goldfinch
 Certhia familiaris - Treecreeper
 Chloris chloris - Greenfinch
 Chroicocephalus ridibundus - Black-headed Gull
 Columba livia - Rock Dove
 Columba palumbus - Common Wood Pigeon
 Corvus corone - Carrion Crow
 Corvus frugilegus - Rook
 Corvus monedula - Jackdaw
 Cyanistes caeruleus - Blue Tit
 Cygnus olor - Mute Swan
 Delichon urbicum - House Martin
 Dendrocopos major - Great Spotted Woodpecker
 Emberiza citrinella - Yellowhammer
 Emberiza schoeniclus - Reed Bunting
 Erithacus rubecula - Robin
 Falco tinnunculus - Kestrel
 Fringilla coelebs - Chaffinch
 Fulica atra - Coot
 Gallinula chloropus - Moorhen
 Garrulus glandarius - Jay
 Hirundo rustica - Swallow
 Larus argentatus - Herring Gull
 Larus canus - Common Gull
 Larus fuscus - Lesser Black-backed Gull
 Linaria cannabina - Linnet
 Locustella naevia - Grasshopper Warbler
 Motacilla alba subsp. yarrellii - Pied Wagtail
 Parus major - Great Tit
 Passer domesticus - House Sparrow
 Periparus ater - Coal Tit
 Phalacrocorax carbo - Cormorant
 Phasianus colchicus - Pheasant
 Phylloscopus collybita - Chiffchaff
 Pica pica - Magpie
 Prunella modularis - Dunnock
 Pyrrhula pyrrhula - Bullfinch
 Regulus regulus - Goldcrest
 Saxicola rubicola - European Stonechat
 Scolopax rusticola - Woodcock
 Streptopelia decaocto - Collared Dove
 Strix aluco - Tawny Owl
 Sturnus vulgaris - Starling
 Sylvia atricapilla - Blackcap
 Sylvia borin - Garden Warbler
 Sylvia communis - Whitethroat
 Tachybaptus ruficollis - Little Grebe
 Troglodytes troglodytes - Wren
 Turdus merula - Blackbird
 Turdus philomelos - Song Thrush
 Turdus pilaris - Fieldfare

RIMROSE VALLEY – A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A THREATENED WILDLIFE SITE - Barry Smith

Flowering plants/trees

Betula pendula - Silver Birch
Crataegus monogyna - Hawthorn
Hypericum - St. John's-Wort
Persicaria amphibia - Amphibious Bistort
Quercus robur - Pedunculate Oak
Sambucus nigra - Elder
Tussilago farfara - Coltsfoot

Insect – Beetle

Adalia bipunctata - 2-spot Ladybird
Harmonia axyridis - Harlequin Ladybird

Insect – Butterfly

Aglais io - Peacock
Aglais urticae - Small Tortoiseshell
Anthocharis cardamines - Orange-tip
Celastrina argiolus - Holly Blue
Gonepteryx rhamni - Brimstone
Maniola jurtina - Meadow Brown
Ochlodes sylvanus - Large Skipper
Pararge aegeria - Speckled Wood
Pieris rapae - Small White
Polyommatus icarus - Common Blue
Pyronia tithonus - Gatekeeper
Vanessa atalanta - Red Admiral
 Insect – Dragonfly
Aeshna mixta - Migrant Hawker
Sympetrum striolatum - Common Darter

Insect – Bee/Wasp

Andrena (*Trachandrena*) *haemorrhoa* - Early Mining Bee
Apis mellifera - Honey Bee
Bombus (*Bombus*) *lucorum* - White-tailed Bumblebee
Bombus (*Melanobombus*) *lapidarius* - Large Red-tailed Bumblebee
Bombus (*Pyrobombus*) *hypnorum* - Tree Bumblebee
Bombus (*Pyrobombus*) *pratorum* - Early Bumblebee
Bombus (*Thoracobombus*) *pascuorum* - Common Carder Bee
Bombus lucorum/terrestris/magnus/cryptarum - White-tailed Bumblebee
Vespa (*Paravespula*) *vulgaris* - Common Wasp

Insect – True bug

Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale - Hawthorn Shieldbug

Insect – True fly

Volucella bombylans subsp. *plumata*
Volucella pellucens

Reptile

Cheloniidae - Terrapin

Terrestrial Mammal

Arvicola amphibius - European Water Vole
Erinaceus europaeus - West European Hedgehog
Mustela erminea - Stoat
Nyctalus noctula - Noctule Bat

Oryctolagus cuniculus - European Rabbit
Pipistrellus - Pipistrelle
Plecotus auritus - Brown Long-eared Bat
Rattus norvegicus - Brown Rat
Sciurus carolinensis - Eastern Grey Squirrel



Rimrose Valley : Leeds Liverpool Canal WikiCommons : Sue Adair



Rimrose Valley : Nature Reserve: WikiCommons : David Lawler

BRITISH WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP AT WORLD MUSEUM - Hugh Harris

After lunch, we entered the City wildflower meadow, an ambitious project to create a colourful and diverse natural wildflower meadow that will brighten-up the existing grassed area and which will become a small urban wildlife refuge.

The Museum also would like to use this space to promote strong environmental messages.

Over 10 tonnes of turf and top soil have been removed from the site and replaced with sand and limestone dust. This has reduced the fertility of the meadow and encouraged high plant diversity by ensuring that there are not enough nutrients for potentially dominant plants to overpower other plants.

A small voluntary team of natural science curatorial staff have planted over 4,000 native wildflower plants and at least 150 different species of wildflowers and grasses are now established. Slowly but surely, the bare patches of soil and uniform areas of grass are starting to disappear. Once fully established, there should be significant colour in the meadow for six months of the year.

Here the workshop group used their diagnostic skills to identify the various grasses in the meadow.



Back at the workshop, Peter Gateley introduced us to the lateral key method with a code table for recording grasses. This adapted key was designed for use in lowland Britain and excludes chalk grasslands. Using the code table, the recorder looks along the rows from left to right and sees how many of the characteristics match those of his specimen. The line with the most characteristics should identify his specimen.

Flower-head	Florets	Awns	Spikelets	Ligules	Leaves	Growth form		Additional notes
A	D	F	I	M	N	Q	Italian rye-grass	A; basal sheath wine red, spikelets edgeways on to stem

BRITISH WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP AT WORLD MUSEUM - Hugh Harris

INTRODUCTION TO GRASSES Monday 10 th July 2017

Peter Gateley and Wendy Atkinson

The aims of the workshop were to develop skills in identifying British native grass species, recognise the most widely occurring grasses and to familiarise ourselves with reference book keys and herbarium specimens.

Peter Gateley, local **Ecologist** recommended at least 2 guides for starters in grass identification:

FSC "Guide to Common Grasses"

C.E. Hubbard, "Grasses", Third Edition, 1984 Penguin Books

We started with naming of parts of live specimens and photographs which are diagnostic in identifying the grass; *Inflorescence* (flower head), *florets*, *awns*, *spikelets*, *ligules*, *leaves* and *growth forms*. Then we were given an overview of common meadow grasses and their habitats:

Common meadow grasses			
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Common bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>
Crested dog's-tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Creeping bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Rough meadow-grass	<i>Poa trivialis</i>
Meadow foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Annual meadow-grass	<i>Poa annua</i>
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Smooth meadow-grass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>
False oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>		Found in playing fields and lawns.

Waste ground and roadside grasses			
Soft brome	<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Common couch	<i>Elytrigia repens</i>
Barren brome	<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Sweet vernal-grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>
Wall barley	<i>Hordeum murinum</i>		

Wendy Atkinson,

Assistant Curator of Botany gave the workshop access to the historic collections of grasses in the World Museum Herbarium and allowed members to examine the specimens with their hand lenses.

Wendy's duties involve the care and management of the botanical collections of the World Museum with responsibilities in the curation and development of the collections, and in managing their documentation and digitisation. She also supports access to the collections through enquiries, displays, workshops and exhibitions, and through the supervision of volunteers, work placements and visiting researchers. She is also responsible for the botanical library. Wendy's areas of interest lie in the British and Irish Flora, with a research interest in the Flora of Bantry Bay, SW Ireland. She is also involved in botany at a local level and is the secretary of the Liverpool Botanical Society.

The herbarium born of a Victorian passion for collecting, pressing, drying and attaching plants to individual sheets of paper or preserving in spirit in glass jars has become a vital tool for preserving world flora. Wendy's well-curated herbarium covers 98% of the British and Irish native flora and covers a time-span of over two hundred years including collections from J. H. Balfour (1808-1884) and G. C. Druce (1850-1932). The collections are particularly rich in the local flora containing the collections of local prominent botanists such as J. A. Wheldon (1862-1924), Vera Gordon (1916-2003) and Eric Greenwood.

WIND FORCE - Hugh Harris

FRANCIS BEAUFORT CLASSIFIES THE WIND

An instrument to measure wind speed proved difficult to perfect. The first instrument for classifying wind speed, developed by **Admiral Francis Beaufort** of the Royal Navy in 1806, was based on observing the effect of the wind on the ocean surface.

This scale has since been revised to incorporate wind observations over land. The wind speed is classified into 13 'forces', with 0 corresponding to flat calm and 12 corresponding to hurricane-force winds causing extensive damage to buildings.

Meteorologists still like to measure the wind speed in knots, which is another hangover from the nautical origins of wind instruments, with one knot corresponding to one nautical mile per hour. Most media weather forecasters these days give the wind speed in standard mph or km/h in countries which use the metric system.



The Earth's rotation causes parcels of air in motion to be deflected from their original path, to the right in the northern hemisphere and to the left in the southern hemisphere.

The Coriolis Effect

As air blows from high to low pressure in the atmosphere, the Coriolis force diverts the air so that it follows the pressure contours. In the Northern Hemisphere, this means that air is blown around low pressure in an anti-clockwise direction and around high pressure in a clockwise direction.

Think about a person standing at the Equator. In the course of a day, the planet rotates once, meaning that you travel a colossal $2\pi \times R$ (the radius of the Earth - 6370km) = 40,000km through space - a speed of about 1700km/hr. You don't notice that you are travelling so fast, because the air around you is travelling at the same speed, so there is no wind. On the other hand, if you are standing at a Pole, all you do in the course of a day is turn around on the spot, you have no speed through space and similarly the air around you is stationary.

Now, think about really fast moving, Tropical air which is being pulled towards the poles by a pressure gradient. As it travels polewards, it moves over ground which is rotating more slowly, and so it overtakes the ground, and looks like it is moving from west to east. Similarly, slow moving polar air will be left behind by the rotating Earth and look like it is moving from east to west if it is pulled equatorward by a pressure difference.

In general, moving air in the Northern hemisphere is deflected to the right by the Coriolis Effect. As the air blows from high to low pressure the Coriolis force acts on it, diverting it, and we end up with air following the pressure contours and blowing around low pressure in an anticlockwise direction and around high pressure in a clockwise direction (both true only for the Northern Hemisphere).

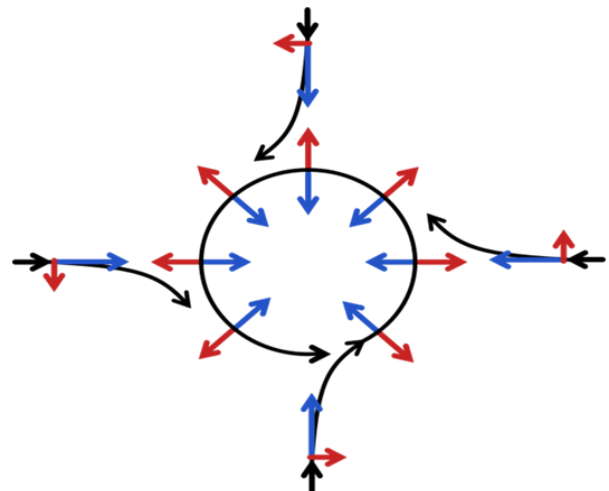


Figure 1

WIND FORCE - Hugh Harris

Figure 1: (Page 2) Schematic representation of flow around a low pressure area. Pressure gradient force represented by blue arrows. The Coriolis force, always perpendicular to the velocity, by red arrows. © SVG version, Roland Geider (Dgre), of the original PNG. (Cleontuni)

In the diagram shown on page 2, the black arrows show the direction the air is moving in. The Coriolis force pulls the air to the right (red arrows). As the air is being pulled in to the depression by the pressure gradient (blue arrows), it is continuously deflected by the Coriolis Force. When the air moves in a circle around the depression, the Coriolis force (red arrows) is balanced by the pressure gradient force (blue arrows).

Beaufort Scale

Wind Force	Description	Speed KPH	Speed Knots	Specifications
0	Calm	0	0	Smoke rises vertically
1	Light Air	1-5	1-3	Direction shown by smoke drift but not by wind vanes
2	Light Breeze	6-11	4-6	Wind felt on face; leaves rustle; wind vane moved by wind
3	Gentle Breeze	12-19	7-10	Leaves and small twigs in constant motion; light flags extended
4	Moderate Breeze	20-28	11-16	Raises dust and loose paper; small branches moved.
5	Fresh Breeze	29-38	17-21	Small trees in leaf begin to sway; crested wavelets form on inland waters.
6	Strong Breeze	38-49	22-27	Large branches in motion; whistling heard in telegraph wires; umbrellas used with difficulty.
7	Near Gale	50-61	28-33	Whole trees in motion; inconvenience felt when walking against the wind.
8	Gale	62-74	34-40	Twigs break off trees; generally impedes progress.
9	Strong Gale	75-88	41-47	Slight structural damage (chimney pots and slates removed).
10	Storm	89-102	48-55	Seldom experienced inland; trees uprooted; considerable structural damage
11	Violent Storm	103-117	56-63	Very rarely experienced; accompanied by widespread damage.
12	Hurricane	118 plus	64 plus	Devastation

PEMBROKESHIRE IN EARLY MAY - Bob Jude

Just before going for a knee replacement that would put me out of nature walking for some months Norma and I took our first ever visit to the Pembrokeshire Coast staying at the highly recommended 'Old Vicarage' in Moylegrove.

This is a stunning area of natural beauty. Narrow roads lined with a diverse variety of wild plants covered with insects. Most notable and numerous were the *Biblia marci* in their thousands.

The coastal path, established in 1970 as a National Trail is 300Km long and at its highest 574 M.



Biblia marci

Pembrokeshire is one of the most beautiful parts of the United Kingdom.. Wild and remote apart from the many walkers. In winter, probably desolate and dangerous.



Ceibwr Bay, travelling south towards the Witches Cauldron



Gorse lined coastal path of Ceibwr Bay



Oil Beetle (*Meloe proscarabaeus*)



Bloody nosed beetle (*Timarcha tenebricosa*)

PEMBROKESHIRE IN EARLY MAY - Bob Jude

We never saw the Porpoise or Seals that sometimes visit the tiny inlets and hazardous rocky coves below the high cliffs. We did however see a photographers, naturalists and geographers paradise of rocky outcrops, wild flowers, insects and birds.



Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)



Sea Thrift (*Armeria maritima*)



Celandine sp.



Ceibwr Bay, looking North



Red Campion (*Silene dioica*)

We visited the coastal path at Ceibwr Bay several times but we could have gone time and time again such was the beauty and splendour of the coast there.

PEMBROKESHIRE IN EARLY MAY - Bob Jude



Spring Squill (*Scilla verna*)



Scurvy Grass



Witches Cauldron, Ceibwr Bay, Pembrokeshire



Primula vulgaris



Birsfoot Trefoil



Viola sp.

Later we visited Poppit Sands where we saw a precursor of a later national news item. Large numbers of Jellyfish, almost one metre across, were stranded on the beach.

Sightings such as these have ignited a recent debate on whether such mass strandings are due to ocean warming.

Some of our later travels were somewhat less successful in terms of our desire to see the natural wonders of this area.

PEMBROKESHIRE IN EARLY MAY - Bob Jude



Sea Campion (*Silene uniflora*)

The postcode is a farmhouse and not the National Nature Reserve at Lockley Lodge Visitor Centre, that is a mile or so further.

When we arrived I was unable to walk very quickly and there is a short but steep route from the car park to the departure point. We missed the boat by 5 minutes and I glumly sat on a wall watching it sail away.

On the second visit we were also disappointed as we did not check the weather forecast and arrived 30 minutes early to find that high winds had prevented any sailings in the area. Disaster.



Barrel Jellyfish (*Rhizostoma octopus*)

We twice drove a considerable distance to visit Skomer Island hoping to see Puffins and other rare birds. On the first journey, we passed the correct road and used the GPS that unfortunately chose a much longer alternative route.



THE PEMBROKESHIRE COAST IN EARLY MAY - Bob Jude

However, this a National Trust Wildlife reserve and we visited the nearby RSPB hides, a short distance away, that overlooks a wetland area. On our way we found some butterflies such as a Peacock and Speckled Wood sheltering in the grass away from the wind.



Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*) spotted on the journey to Skomer



LLYS Y FRÂN Country Park & Reservoir



Views across the Preseli Hills

Our long journey forced us to stop on the way to record images across the Preseli Hills toward the Llys-y-fran reservoir in the distance and record our first high flying **Red Kite** majestically searching for prey.

FLOODS - Hugh Harris



Flooding comes in several different forms but the most dramatic is the sudden and unexpected flash flooding brought about by single heavy rain events. This is more of a summer phenomenon, with convective storms being largely responsible for the heavy rainfall amounts. Local geography is also a major factor in flash flooding.

If a concentrated, heavy thunderstorm occurs over a small, steep-sided river catchment the results can be devastating. Water that is unable to soak into the soil will run quickly down the steep sides of the valleys, channelling quickly and efficiently into the narrow streams that feed the main river. A swollen river flowing down a moderate gradient can have a tremendous force; enough to move large boulders and uproot trees.

In August 2004, I was holidaying near Boscastle in Cornwall when I gained the 'I was there' insight into a flash flooding event. Heavy rain had occurred in a narrow line of intense showers inland from the coast. The showers were triggered by a convergence of winds flowing round a headland to the west of Boscastle.

Photographs on that day 16th August 2004 show clear skies out to sea and a dark wall of thunder clouds on the inland side. Individual showers moved quickly along this line and new ones were generating continually at the western end, leading to almost continuous heavy rain along a very narrow band over a 7-hour period.

The catchment of the River Valency, which meets the sea at Boscastle, lay directly beneath this band and again the water was funnelled quickly into the river by steep sided valleys. Parked cars added to the natural debris washed down by the river and many buildings were damaged or destroyed completely by the flood. Dozens of people had to be rescued by helicopter from the roofs of buildings completely cut off by the flood water.

Thankfully no lives were lost, unlike, a similar event in Lynton and Lynmouth 50 miles along the coast where 34 people were killed on 15/16 August 1952. Devastation caused by flash flooding is an awesome sight.

CASE STUDY – BOSCASTLE FLOODS

Physical Impacts

Responses to the flooding

What happened to cause this event?

Physical Impacts

Flooding

On the day of the flood, about 75mm of rain fell in two hours – the same amount that normally falls in the whole of August. Huge amounts of water from this sudden downpour flowed into two rivers, the Valency and Jordan (which flows into the Valency just above Boscastle). Both overflowed, and this caused a sudden rush of water to speed down the Valency – which runs through the middle of Boscastle.

Destruction of houses, businesses and gardens

Floodwater gushed into houses, shops and pubs. Cars, walls and even bridges were washed away. The church was filled with six feet of mud and water. Trees were uprooted and swept into peoples' gardens. The weight of water eroded river banks, damaged gardens and pavements.

Human Impacts

There was a huge financial cost to the floods. This included:

- the rescue operation – involving helicopters, lifeboats, and the fire service.
 - the loss of 50 cars
 - damage to homes, businesses and land
 - a loss of tourism, a major source of income for the area
- The flooding also had several other key impacts on Boscastle and its inhabitants. These included:
- environmental damage to local wildlife habitats
 - coastal pollution caused as debris and fuel from cars flowed out to sea.
 - long-term disruption to the village, as a major rebuild project had to be carried out.
 - long-term stress and anxiety to people traumatised by the incident.

Responses to the flooding

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Prince Charles visited members of the emergency services and the local GP surgery, which acted as the emergency centre, in the days following the disaster.

Prince Charles, who is the Duke of Cornwall, made a large donation to a fund to help rebuild parts of Boscastle.

FLOODS - Hugh Harris

The Environment Agency is responsible for warning people about floods and reducing the likelihood of future floods. The Environment Agency has carried a major project to increase flood defenses in Boscastle, with the aim of preventing a similar flood happening again.

“We are investing in new ways of predicting heavy rainfall events on a small scale to produce better warnings.”

What happened to cause this event?

Weather map

Fig. 1 shows the weather map for midday on 16 August. The wind is blowing anticlockwise about the low- pressure area, so the air is arriving into Boscastle from a south-westerly direction. It is a warm and moist tropical maritime air mass.

The line labelled (known as a trough line) caused very heavy rain and thunderstorms. A trough is an area of localised rain and thunderstorms. A line of convergence formed near the coast line, where air moving in almost opposite directions collides, this helped to increase the rate of ascent and produced very heavy rain.

There is more about [surface pressure charts](#) in the weather section of the Met Office website.

Weather chart

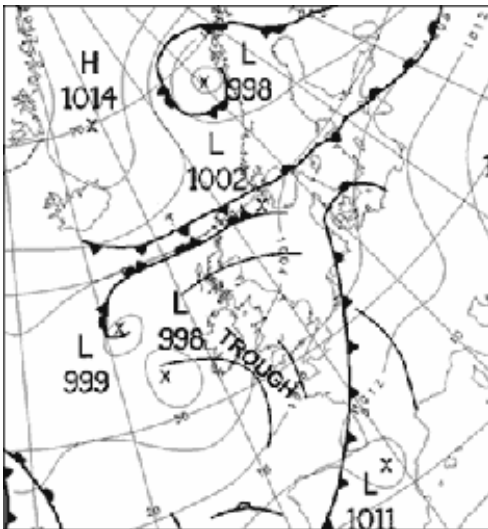


Fig 1. A weather chart from 16/08/2004.

Radar imagery Fig. 2 shows an animation radar pictures from 12 p.m. (midday) to 7 p.m. on 16 August. The rainfall rate key shows how the colours in the image relate to the rate the rainfall is falling. For example, the red areas indicate that rain is falling at between eight and 16 mm per hour. A line of very heavy rain starts at about 1 p.m. on the moors close to Boscastle. It remains over the area for about six hours. Rainfall rates of at least 32 mm per hour are being measured.

Radar imagery

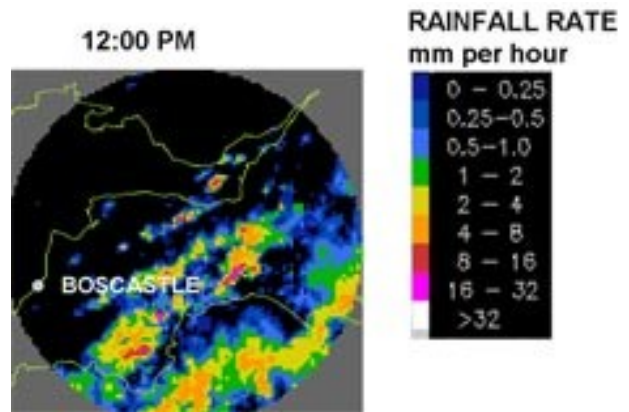


Fig 2. Rainfall Radar

Satellite imagery Fig. 3 shows an animation of satellite pictures from 12 p.m. (midday) to 7 p.m. on 16 August

Satellite imagery



Fig. 3: Satellite image

The thickest cloud is shown by the brightest white areas on the picture. The pictures show cloud forming over Boscastle at about 1 p.m. and staying there for much of the afternoon.

HH@Metlink

DROUGHT - Hugh Harris

What is a drought? Droughts are not very easy to define. A drought is not just a lack of water for a significant period. It is difficult to come up with a single definition as drought varies from place to place.

A severe drought in the Indian monsoon, such as that during the 2002 season, can be caused by just a few weeks of deficit rainfall. In south-east Australia, rainfall amounts have been below normal for about a decade, leading to an extended drought which has affected farming practices and has led to a series of wildfires in populated areas.

In the UK people say there is a hose-pipe ban if it doesn't rain for 14 days! In fact, there are a whole range of types of drought including: agricultural (farming), meteorological (weather), hydrological (surface water) and socio-economic (ones which affect humans).



Agricultural drought This is a drought which affects how farmers can use their land. An agricultural drought usually means there is not enough water for the crops to grow as there is a lack of soil moisture. It can also affect livestock such as cows and sheep.

Hydrological drought Hydrological droughts are ones which there is a lack of water at the surface of the earth, resulting in less water in streams, lakes and reservoirs and can impact on the use of water for houses and industry.

Meteorological drought This is usually simply defined as a period where there has been less rain recorded. Rainfall amounts can vary by duration (i.e. time the rain fell for) and the intensity of rainfall (how hard it was raining). Meteorological drought is usually recorded in the time there has been little or no rain for e.g. months or years.

Socio-economic drought A Socioeconomic drought is when physical water shortages affects the lives of people; such as their health and quality of life. It can also affect the supply of food and materials and so affect the economy.

Did you know ...

Large areas of 'blocking' high pressure over the UK can lead to long dry spells and can lead to a drought period as in 1976. In 1976 rain was less than 60% of normal across the whole of the UK and the countryside turned brown!

In South Wales, some homes had their water turned off for over 17 hours a day! If climate change, greenhouse gases and global warming increase then the UK will experience more droughts especially in the south-east of the country. Even when we have normal amounts of rain, the high population density in England and Wales means there is less water available per person than in some Mediterranean countries who receive much less rain (EnvironmentAgency2009). Defra (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs) manage droughts in England.

A heatwave lasted from June 22nd to July 16th in 1976 with temperatures reaching over 27C in many places in the UK.

Droughts can even happen at the poles where much of the precipitation falls as snow not rain!

Take home message ...

Extreme weather, like a drought, is the type of rarely occurring event which hits the headlines, impacts on people's livelihoods and sometimes leads to widespread loss of life and are more difficult to forecast by the very fact of its relative rarity.

Sources:

Peter Inness, "Understand the Weather", 2010. Teach yourself (Hodder Headline).
The Met Office, "British Weather", 2010.
David & Charles, www.metlink.org

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MBAN IMAGES



Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*) : Image Sue Marley and Steve McWilliam



Bullrush bug (*Chilacis typhae*) : Image Sue Marley



Longhorn Beetle (*Stictoleptura rubra*) : Image Mike Gosling



Western Conifer Seed Bug (*Leptoglossus occidentalis*) : Image M.Pritchard



Platycheirus rosarum : Image Ben Deed



Grasshopper (*Dmacestus viridulus*) : Image Sue Marley

MBAN IMAGES



Moth Night Photos : Image Mark Pritchard



Springtail (*Sminthurinus trinotatus*) : Image S. McWilliam and Sue Marley



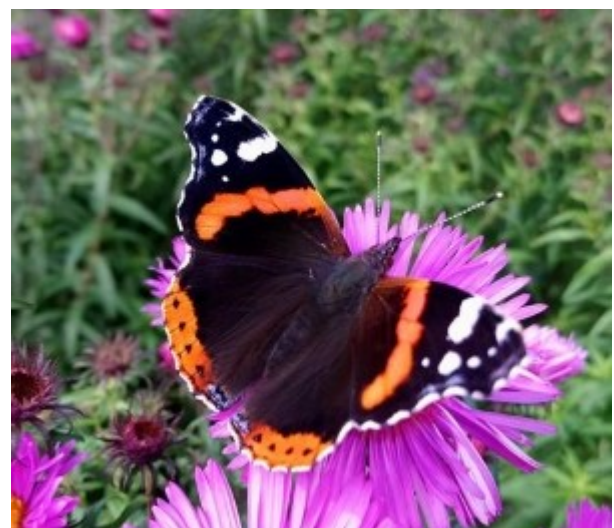
Yellow Underwing - The most common species found on Moth Night



Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) : Image Sue Marley



Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*) : Image Sue Marley



Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) : Image Danny Foy

MBAN IMAGES



Elephant Hawk Moth : Image D. Jude



Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) : Image Danny Foy



Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) : Image Sue Marley



Perfoliate Alexanders, *Smyrniium perfoliatum* : Image Joshua Styles



Monkey flower (*Mimulus guttatus*) : Image Danny Foy

NORTH WEST FUNGUS GROUP FORAYS AND PROGRAMME 2017

The NORTH WEST FUNGUS GROUP

Home Page: <http://fungus.org.uk/nwfg.htm>

In association with the British Mycological Society



The North West Fungus Group is a regional group aiming to promote an interest in fungi across the counties of Cheshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cumbria and North Wales.

Benefits of membership include:- two newsletters per year

Recording forays and special events

Outreach activities centering around National Fungus Day#]

Membership Individual membership - £7.50

Family membership - £10.00

Members joining after November 1st will receive membership for the following year. Membership Form available on website or from Secretary to whom cheque may be posted.

Officers include:

Chair:

Dr. Irene Ridge, Smalley's Farm, Whalley Old Road, Billington Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 9JF Tel. 01254 247274

Treasurer and Membership Secretary:

Kathleen Ryan, Skovhuset, Under Billinge Lane, Blackburn BB2 6RL

Bring strong footwear.

Details about terrain and accessibility of sites can be obtained from the foray leader.

Forays start at promptly at 10.30 - (or else at 10.00 after the clocks have gone back) - and continue into the afternoon with a pause for refreshments over lunchtime.

If travelling a considerable distance it may be advisable to confirm with the leader that the foray is taking place as on rare occasions forays have had to be changed at short notice. Any changes will be sent around by email.

Beginners are welcome at ALL forays. Please note that forays may not be suitable for very small children. No DOGS.

October 7th/8th - National Fungus Day.

To see and check events - <http://www.ukfungusday.co.uk/>

Sunday 15th October - Lyme Park, Disley, Stockport. Meet in car park 200 yards from house; SJ962824 (Sheet 109) By road: Entrance on A6 only. SatNav: Use SK12 2NR and stay on A6. Ignore any directions other than those to the A6 entrance. By train - Disley ½ mile from entrance. The house, garden & car park are about one mile from main gate. Leader - Jeanette Maddy (07548 838946).

Sunday 22nd October - Wigan Flashes Nature Reserve. Meet at Welham Road entrance SD579032 (Sheet 108/Explorer 285). Turn off Poolstock Lane (B5238) into Carr Lane (sign-posted Hawkey Hall High School) and follow this for approx. 1 mile. Street parking in vicinity of high school WN3 5NY. Level walking on good paths but can be wet underfoot in places; canal-side and mixed woodland(carr) ; No facilities. Leader - Christopher Bowden (01772 812910/07597 921981).

Sunday 29th October - Lytham Hall, FY8 4JX. Meet at 10.00 SD 3592864 (Sheet 102). From M55 J4 take A583 (Kirkham) at first roundabout, and take first right (Whitehall Rd) after second then immediately left onto Peel Rd. After 1.6 m turn right onto Ballam Rd and after 0.6 m turn right into Lytham Park and proceed to Hall (free entry for NWFG). Leader - Irene Ridge (07484 242523).

Sunday 5th November - Turn Slack Clough, Littleborough. Meet at 10.00 at Clough. Left off A58 onto Whitelees Road approaching Littleborough from west, continue along Calderbrook Road turning left at Clough Road. SD935173 (Sheet 109) (OL15 9JZ). Leader - Norman Bamforth (0161-336-3914).

Sunday November - Raven Meols Hills, Formby - 10.00. (SD275065) From 12th A565 Formby-By-Pass turn west to Formby at Tesco traffic lights on to B5195 Altcar Road. Continue to travel west to Formby Point, past Formby Railway Station to end of Kirkdale Road (1.8miles). Turn left past church to Shorrocks Hill Night Club (L37 2EB) then right on to Lifeboat Road to car park Bay One. Leader - Tony Carter (0151-724-4600)

OUT AND ABOUT IN MERSEYSIDE AUGUST 2017 - Tony Carter

Now is the start of the main fungus season and a few early fruiters have been recorded. A number of Boletes, they have pores instead of gills, have been sighted.

Leccinum duriusculum (**Slate Bolete**) is associated with *Populus tremula* (**Aspen**). This host was planted in large numbers at Childwall Golf Course, Liverpool, where almost every Aspen tree hosts this species.



Leccinum duriusculum (**Slate Bolete**)

Suillus grevillei (**Larch Bolete**) is another early fruiter, these were at Clock Face Country Park, St. Helens.



Suillus grevillei (**Larch Bolete**)

Caloboletus radicans (**Rooting Bolete**) was recorded in large number at five sites in Liverpool. All of them beside a road, on the grass verge or central reservation.

This species is moving north with the warmer climate, my first Liverpool record being 2013. A large fungus, it is not much to look at until you turn it over to show the yellow pores that turn blue when touched as does the cap when cut.

Interestingly, all were closely accompanied by the common pink coloured *Amanita rubescens* (**Blusher**) and on three sites, the far less common yellow *Amanita franchetii*, another species moving north, my first record being 2010.



Amanita rubescens (**Blusher**)



Amanita franchetii,

OUT AND ABOUT IN MERSEYSIDE AUGUST 2017 - Tony Carter

Is the close association of these species and their liking for roadside habitat just a coincidence?



Agaricus augustus (**The Prince**).

Large fruitbodies of the *Agaricus* genus are also showing. *Agaricus augustus* (**The Prince**), a very attractive species that grows with conifer, was recorded both at Springwood Crematorium and by the public path through Allerton Manor.

Agaricus arvensis (**Horse Mushroom**) can be found at a number of sites although it cannot be separated from *Agaricus macrocarpus* without a microscope.



Agaricus arvensis (**Horse Mushroom**)

For those tempted to collect for the pot, this is also the time that *Agaricus xanthodermus* (**Yellow Stainer**) makes an appearance. The most common of the *Agaricus*, it grows profusely in many habitats and is the probable cause of most UK fungus poisonings. Not fatal but you will not enjoy the experience. It is easy to identify because if you rub it or cut the stem base, the flesh turns an intense chrome yellow and it smells of ink. But an old specimen can take an hour to display. My latest record is from the Eric Hardy Reserve.



Agaricus xanthodermus (**Yellow Stainer**)

Finally the reappearance, at the same Reserve, of *Rhodotus palmatus* (**Wrinkled Peach**). Once common in southern England on Elm, it has declined with the host tree succumbing to Dutch Elm Disease. Another species that has moved north, my record in 2008 at Hale Icehouse Plantation was a first for VCS9 and was requested by Kew.

It appeared last year on a dead tree that had been blown down in a gale. The tree and many others that were blocking access to the lower section of the Reserve, have been now removed. The *Rhodotus* is growing on the sawn up pieces.



Rhodotus palmatus (**Wrinkled Peach**)

Unfortunately, the trees at both sites were decorticated and without the bark it is difficult to identify. From the presence of other fungi, the tree at Hale should be Beech.

END OF SEASON NOTES 2017 : Tony Carter

A strange end to the main season. After some spectacular flushes of fungi in the middle of October, they suddenly all went to ground. Reliable regulars failed to appear in their usual places. Hopefully, once the leaves have started to rot and undergrowth dies back, a warm spell will encourage late fruiting. For the gourmet there were some very good and continuous fruitings of *Boletus edulis* (Cep) at a variety of woodland and park sites.



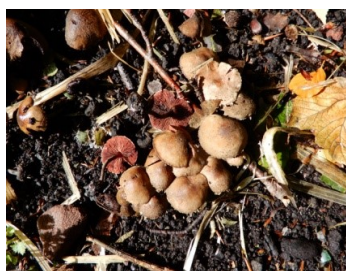
A nice *Amanita crocea* (Orange Grisette) at Childwall golf course.



Echinoderma asperum (Freckled Dapperling) grew for the third time at Calderstones Park. This species is normally found in the south of the UK but has taken a liking to south Liverpool, the only site I know of. It fooled me as it did not 'freckle' and I had to examine under a microscope to establish identity. The picture is from last year.



A very large group of *Melanophyllum haematospermum* (Redspored Dapperling) grew on a newly constructed earth bank at Allerton golf course. It is an uncommon species with striking red to vinaceous gills, usually solitary. The soil covered a previous barrier of rotting wood and nettle beds, a perfect humus rich substrate for this species.



An group of rare *Volvariella surrecta* (Piggyback Rosegill) appeared at Icehouse Plantation at Hale. This interesting species is so named because it grows as a parasite on old and decaying fruit bodies of *Clitocybe nebularis* (Clouded Agaric). My collection of a specimen resulted in a handful of squidgy mess.



Freshfield was awash with fungi in mid October. *Thelephora terrestris* (Earth Fan) covered large areas of the dune heath amongst the Gorse bushes.



Finally, a find that makes the subject of mycology so interesting and exciting. The Manager of Ainsdale Sand Dunes Reserve sent me a photograph of a fungus for identification. Mystified, I paid a visit and found a couple more. They are tiny at 2cms. Unknown to me and nothing in my books. No suggestions when I posted it on the web forums.

We believe it to be a *Cotyledia* (Rosette), possibly an American species not previously recorded in the UK. It has been sent to Kew Herbarium for DNA sequencing and determination. **Watch this space.**



Photo courtesy of Peter Gahan.

ABERDARON SH173268 – THE LLYN PENINSULA GWYNEDD - Hugh Harris

"there is everything to look forward to..." R.S. Thomas

Only by travelling through the Llyn can you really appreciate this ancient land, created by volcanic activity and sculpted first by ice then humans. Its soils have formed as glaciers retreated, leaving a land where farming has been a mainstay, and a patchwork landscape of fields enclosed by clawdd (bund) walls.

The peaks of Llyn's volcanic spine, once home to Iron Age people, now support important habitats and rare species, while the ancient rocks upon which Llyn has evolved have been quarried and transported all over the world. It is this rich tapestry of landscapes and human interaction that make Llyn so unique, culturally rich and ecologically diverse. The ancient pilgrims journeyed through these landscapes on their way to Bardsey Island.

To the farmer, fisherman and pilgrim, the sea has been an integral part of life on Llyn for thousands of years – an ever-present companion to the land and its people. Deep beneath the sea is a place where the boundaries between myth, legend and reality blur. Huge forests of kelp and grasses as diverse as a rainforest lie secretly in the darkness, briefly unveiled by the ebb and flow of the tide. This hidden world is revealed by the sea birds that skim the sea's surface and plunge into its depths.

The Big Five!

The combination of coastal grassland and heathland for feeding, and rocky cliffs for nesting, make the tip of Llyn one of the best places to see



- (1) **Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*. Red-billed choughs are acrobatic members of the crow family that have unique, bright red, curved bills. Within the UK they are restricted to the coasts of Cornwall, Wales, and a few isolated regions of Scotland. They engage in spectacular aerial displays, and courtship involves the preening and feeding of the female by the male. Neighbourly hillside sheep keep turf short, allowing choughs to probe the ground in search of insects. The relationship is mutually beneficial since choughs often perch on the backs of sheep to remove ticks.



- (2) **Grey seal** *Halichoerus grypus* Grey seals are the largest breeding seals found in the UK. Half of the world's population of grey seals are found around British coasts, and numbers here have doubled since 1960. They can be spotted around the coast of Aberdaron. Their favourite haul out spots include secluded rocky outcrops, beaches and caves. In the autumn, females congregate at traditional pupping sites called rookeries. Pups weigh 14 kilograms at birth, but since their mother's milk contains 60% fat, they quickly balloon and develop the blubber layer essential for maintaining body temperature out at sea. When feeding, these seals can dive to a depth of 70 metres in search of food and the rich waters around the Llyn provide the seals with plenty to eat.



- (3) Also found on the sea cliffs are the **Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*, a large and powerful falcon. It has long, broad, pointed wings and a relatively short tail. It is blue-grey above, with a blackish top of the head and an obvious black 'moustache' that contrasts with its white face. Its breast is finely spotted. It is swift and agile in flight, chasing prey. The strongholds of the breeding birds in the UK are the uplands of the north and west and rocky seacoasts. It has made the cliffs between Aberdaron and Mynydd Mawr its home.

ABERDARON SH173268 – THE LLYN PENINSULA GWYNEDD - Hugh Harris



- (4) **Porpoise** Family *Phocoenidae* are shy creatures that do not ride the waves alongside boats or jump out of the water like dolphins but scan the sea and you may see their fins. They are smaller than dolphins with a flatter face and straight edged dorsal fin. Porpoises eat fish and search for their prey using echo-location.



- (5) **Hare** *Lepus europaeus*; the subject of many references in Welsh mythology, but intensive farming has had a significant impact on them over the last century. Farmland on Llyn contains a good mix of habitat and you may well spot a hare's long black-tipped ears as it hunkers down in forms (shallow depressions in the ground) during the day. Hares are much longer-limbed and swifter than rabbits. They use their powerful hind legs to escape predation by outrunning their enemies, and have been known to reach speeds of 72kph (45mph). Brown hares are widespread throughout central and western Europe, including most of the UK, where they were introduced by the Romans. Courtship involves boxing, and this well-known 'mad March hare' behaviour involves unreceptive females fending off passionate males.

Gorse *Ulex europaeus* dominates the heathlands, and as part of an ongoing restoration project it's been cut back and sown with **Heather** *Calluna vulgaris* seeds in the long-term hope of managing the heathland with the help of traditional farming methods and grazing animals.

The sea around Aberdaron is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and contains an amazing underwater world of kelp forests, rocks covered in sponges and animals from octopus and fish to large crabs and lobsters. The coastal cliffs and islands are perfect places for sea birds including Puffin and Manx shearwater.



The tip of the Llyn is the only place on mainland Britain where the **Spotted Rock Rose** *Tuberaria guttata* grows and its yellow flowers only appear once in its lifetime.

Source: Porth y Swnt Visitor Centre, Aberdaron

HH@MBAN

EVENTS SUMMARY



Activity events

Knowsley: www.knowsley.gov.uk/things-to-see-and-do/events.aspx

Liverpool Parks: liverpool.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-events

Wildlife Trust: www.lancswt.org.uk/what-s-on

Court Hey Park: www.courtheypark.co.uk

National Wildflower Centre: www.nwc.org.uk/events

North West Fungus Group

There are forays and special events, with help and advice on a range of fungi related topics.

NWFG Home Page: <http://www.fungus.org.uk/nwfg.htm>



Liverpool Botanical Society

www.liverpoolbotanicalsociety.co.uk



Merseyside Naturalist Association

The MNA organize informal nature events including field trips, talks and practical sessions

Visit www.mnapage.info for the programme of events



Merseyside & West Lancashire Bat Group

The group runs events and training throughout the year check the group website, twitter or Facebook.



Facebook links require membership of Facebook

Some links may additionally require permission which can be obtained by contacting the group over Facebook as a pre-requisite. These links are increasingly becoming a major contact point for rapidly expanding naturalist groups and volunteers. Interested then link to:

Merseyside BioBank

www.facebook.com/MerseysideBioBank

MBAN

www.facebook.com/groups/ActiveNaturalists/

UK Hoverflies

www.facebook.com/groups/609272232450940/

WeBS

www.facebook.com/pages/Mersey-Estuary-WeBS

Lancashire Lepidoptera

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/119829941488294/>

British Wildlife Photography

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/415160405188412/>

Lancashire Mammal Group

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lancashire-Mammal-Group/169476803103866?>

BTD Garden Birdwatch

<https://www.facebook.com/gardenbirdwatch>

RSPB

<https://www.facebook.com/RSPBLoveNature>

British Spider ID

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/829354860449271/>

British Mycological Society (BMS)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/18843741618/>

Conopids

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/british.conopids/>



Interested in arranging one yourself next year?

For advice contact

ben.deed@merseysidebiobank.org.uk

HELP!

BIRDERS ALWAYS WANTED

The Mersey Estuary is one of Britain's best wetlands. We know this because each month we count the waterfowl as part of the national Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS).

However, we need 'new blood' volunteers. You don't need to be an experienced wildfowl counter, though you should be able to identify common waders and wildfowl. If you think you can help then please email Dermot Smith at dermot.smith71@gmail.com or phone 07505 418832 for further details.

For more information plus recent reports and photos visit the Mersey Estuary WeBS page on Facebook