

*THE
NORTHWESTERN
NATURALIST*

New series



Volume 22 No. 2 2021

CONTENTS

A.G.M. Notice.....	2
Bryophyte and Lichen Section Report, 2020	
Norman Bamforth.....	3
Fern Report 2020	
Mike Canaway.....	4
Vascular Plant Section Report, 2020	
David Earl.....	5
Society Diary	
Calendars of Meetings of Affiliated Societies.....	6
ASH - the definitive monograph of an endangered tree.....	11
Fern Identification Course.....	11

Contributions for the next issue by August please!

North Western Naturalists' Union AGM

2.00 pm on Saturday 13 March 2021

This will take place on Zoom

Important notice to all Affiliated Societies Members and Individual Members:

You are all very warmly invited to attend this meeting. To facilitate this **please send your email address as soon as possible to Phil James - epiphyte17@gmail.com**

After the AGM there will be a talk by David Earl giving an update on the South Lancashire Flora.

North Western Naturalists' Union: Bryophyte and Lichen Section Annual Report 2020

Due to the Covid-19 virus only one meeting took place this year.

Sunday 23rd February: Manchester City Centre.

We met at the top of the approach to Oxford Road Station in Manchester for what was quite an interesting meeting. The leader, Gail Quartly-Bishop's intention was to find *Kindbergia praelonga* in the two grid squares we were visiting as these were some of the few squares in VC59 that it was not recorded. We did find it in both. After a quick look at the mosses around the approach where the most interesting record was a fungus *Peziza domiciliana* growing out of the concrete on the pavement.

Our route then went a few yards up Oxford Street and onto the Rochdale Canal where we turned right towards Piccadilly. Quite a number of bryophytes were found including *Cratoneuron filicinum*, *Pellia endiifolia* and *Conocephalum salebrosum*. *Tortula freibergerii* which is common on the Bridgewater Canal was not found. We left the canal at Princess Street and made our way along Canal Street which is very subdued at lunchtime and into the Sackville Park where there is a statue of Alan Turing. Here was *Syntrichia papillosa* which has increased dramatically in the Manchester area in the last few years.

Then something unheard of except once at Hardcastle Crags, in the forty years or more that I have been in the group, we had an excellent lunch in a small café on Sackville Street.

The walk continued down Princess Street and into the Vimto Gardens. Here were such mosses as *Amblystegium serpens*, *Hypnum cupressiforme*, *Atrichum undulatum* and *Oxyrrhynchium hians*. Sackville Gardens and Vimto Gardens produced quite a number of common lichens they included *Phaeophyscia orbiculatus*, *Physcia tenella*, *Xanthoria parietina* and *Lepraria incana*.

We then continued on to London Road for a walk up Fairfield Street to Mancunian Way and Pin Mill Brow and across to Limekiln Lane beside the River Medlock where after a thorough search which bryophytes included *Othotrichum pulchellum* in profusion *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Frullania dilatata*, *Caliergon cuspidatum* and on some stonework was *Orthotrichum anomalum*. The meeting then made its way back to Piccadilly Station.

Note: I pointed out that although Limekiln Lane is only two minutes walk from a bus stop on my route into Town, I would never dream of entering it because of the stories I have heard and read of about druggies and worse in the area. We only saw friendly dog walkers.

Norman Bamforth

North Western Naturalists' Union: Manchester and North Midlands Fern Group Section Report 2020

The fern group had meetings planned for 2020 and then with the early lockdown and talk of older people having to self-isolate, the summer meetings were cancelled although we had hopes of meetings in September going ahead. However, with the “Hotel California” restrictions in the North-west and the increasing emphasis on social distancing and avoiding unnecessary social contacts, these were eventually postponed as well. One of these was to be a joint meeting led by the Yorkshire Fern Group but they cancelled it anyway so the decision was, to a large extent, taken out of my hands. The other meeting was due to be held at the new RHS Bridgewater site however they had to dispense with their volunteers due to Covid and hence the regular staff were having to cope with all the work that the volunteers would normally do in addition to their usual work so the fern group would have been an additional item to deal with although they would have done their best I am sure. I would ask members to support the new RHS site by visiting when restrictions permit. This is a large and costly venture by the RHS and will need to be well supported when the pandemic wanes. See [RHS Garden Bridgewater / RHS Gardening](#)

Looking ahead to next year the situation is still uncertain. Despite optimism over the vaccines that have been developed, at the time of writing, these are still to be approved by the regulators and it will be a massive logistical exercise to vaccinate the required number of people to see population immunity. Hence it is difficult to put together a meetings programme that can be guaranteed to take place until the situation becomes clearer. Nonetheless fern activity in the garden and the field can continue with an increased number of ferns being available from garden centres and online suppliers. Whilst the deciduous species will now have died back the winter-green ferns are asset in the dark months. A garden one I would recommend as withstanding the harshest conditions and standing green all winter is *Polystichum munitum* (Western Sword-fern) which has recently become more commonly available. A native of North America up to Alaska, it will grow into a handsome and sturdy plant which will not let you down. In the field it is a good time to look for *Polypodium* (Polypodies). Whilst the Common Polypody is as the name suggests, commonly recorded, its close relative, Intermediate Polypody (*Polypodium interjectum*) is often overlooked and hence under-recorded. In these parts Southern Polypody (*Polypodium cambricum*) is even more uncommon, being normally found on limestone, but mortared walls and other basic substrates are potential sites. There are quite a number of other winter-green ferns to look out for which are often concealed by tree and other vegetation growth in the summer months so these are worth looking out for.

Lastly I'd draw members' attention to the recently published *Britain's Ferns: A field guide to the clubmosses, quillworts, horsetails and ferns of Great Britain and Ireland* by James Merryweather. This is in the Wild Guides series and hence is lavishly and professionally illustrated with many photographs and diagrams. A good addition to the botanical bookshelf for those interested in ferns.

Mike Canaway

North Western Naturalists' Union Vascular Plant Section Annual Report 2020

2020 began with the annual BSBI New Year Plant Hunt and, as has usually been the case in recent times, a significant number of flowers continued to bloom at the beginning of January due to mild weather conditions.

Sadly, we lost two of our outstanding botanists early in the year, Martha Newton and Audrey Locksley and with our recent losses our NWNLU AGM presentation paid tribute to the contributions made to botany by them and a number of our other local botanists. Prior to the AGM the committee discussed at some length the South Lancashire Flora Project and the outcome of these discussions are provided at the end of this report.

On top of our recent losses the global corona virus pandemic resulted in a lockdown in March and the cancellation of our planned field excursions for 2020 but many of us continued to make our nature observations within the restrictions.

The records of numerous naturalists were captured by an iNaturalist Project called the Green Lent Challenge which Steve McWilliam set up initially for the Northwest but later for all of England. The project ran from 26 February to 11 April and resulted in 24,647 plant observations that included 1294 species. The project did cover both flora and fauna which extends observations to 48,106; 2951 species; 5236 observers and 1949 identifiers which is amazing for a single project on a single website.

Later the iNaturalist, City Nature Challenge ran from 24 to 27 April within or near to Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire producing over 11,784 plant observations that included 965 species. This was followed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust Coastal Nature Challenge that ran from 22nd July to 9th August (which only accepted digital images). The results included almost 2,400 observations of plants that included 660 species mostly from along the coastline and estuaries between the Wirral and Carlisle.

In addition to records from iNaturalist we continue to receive a significant number of plant records from iRecord, emails and spreadsheets with exciting finds often being made.

Efforts have been made to capture as many records as possible for the forthcoming Flora of South Lancashire. Back in March the flora committee decided that in due course the vascular plant sections of the flora are to be released as a series of downloadable pdfs from the NWNLU website and it is hoped that the initial sections covering Clubmosses, Horsetails and Ferns will be available shortly. In the meantime the vascular species accounts are being regularly reviewed, extended and updated with the addition of images and updated maps. The provision of the species accounts via downloadable pdfs gives us the flexibility to make and provide updates and we have already had some exciting finds during January 2021 the details of which should be available in the next issue of the Northwestern Naturalist.

David Earl

SOCIETY DIARY

At the time of publishing, in order to prevent the spread of the continuing Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) we are in a national lockdown. Understandably few societies have been in contact about events, some have planned meetings via Zoom which may be listed on their websites. Please note there have been several contact changes since the last publication of this list. We hope that you and all your family and friends are keeping safe and well during these unprecedented times.

Please note that members of the Northwestern Naturalists' Union are welcome to attend the meetings of all the affiliated societies.

ACCRINGTON NATURALISTS' AND ANTIQUARIANS' SOCIETY

Meetings start at 2.30 pm at Antley Methodists' Church Hall, Blackburn Road, Accrington. Enquiries 01254 381236. Non-members welcome - £2.00 minimum lecture fee.

ALTRINCHAM AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The indoor meetings are held at Jubilee Community Centre, The Firs, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 2TQ at 7.30pm. Excursions leave from the Jubilee Centre car park at 6.30 pm or meet at the venue itself. Entrance charges: £2.00 members, £3.50 guests. Please contact us at least 3 days in advance if you wish to attend any of the excursions. <http://www.altnats.org.uk>, info@altnats.org.uk, 0161 865 0118

BLACKBURN & DISTRICT BIRD CLUB

Indoor meetings are usually held on the first Monday of the month at Feniscowles Methodist Church, Preston Old Road, Blackburn, BB2 5ER at 7.30 pm. Outdoor meetings are held to observe and study birds in the field, and are usually led by a member of the committee.

CHESHIRE ACTIVE NATURALISTS

To find out more information about how to join Cheshire Active Naturalists visit www.cheshireactivenaturalists.org.uk or email Martyn at Martyn@czd.org.uk

CHORLEY AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Meetings September - April St Mary's Parish Centre Chorley.

See www.chorleynats.org.uk for details or contact Paul Brennan, 14 Merton Grove, Chorley, PR6 8UR

DERYSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

<http://www.danes-insects.org.uk/>

GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL RECORD CENTRE

Any queries contact: Steve Atkins, Local Record Centre Development Officer

E-Mail: Stephen.atkins@tameside.gov.uk, Mobile 07792 041 528

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Council Offices, Clarence Arcade, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside, OL6 7PT, Tel: 0161 342 4409

LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are at 7.30pm, unless indicated and are at Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham

LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST : CROAL-IRWELL GROUP

Indoor meetings are at the Creative Living Centre, 1A Rectory Lane, Prestwich, M25 1BP (on the opposite side of the car park from Prestwich Library) on the first Wednesday of the month, at 7.30pm. Admission and refreshments by £4 donation. Monthly field trips on Sundays start at 10.30 am. Details of these at the indoor meetings or from listed telephone numbers. Programme may be subject to change; please check before setting out. Stephen Harris Mob: 07831 627208, Work: 0845 458 6680

LEIGH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are in the Derby Room at Leigh Library. There is ample free car parking in the car park next to the Library (but please note that you do park at your own risk). Meetings are on Fridays at 7:15pm for a 7:30pm start. Everyone is welcome free of charge but a small donation to our funds from non-members would be gratefully accepted. A varied programme of speakers and slideshows on wildlife subjects is organised, commencing in September running through to May each year.

For all up-to-date information visit our website www.leighos.org.uk. A warm welcome is guaranteed at any of our meetings.

LIVERPOOL BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are held in the Clore Natural History Centre, World Museum, Liverpool, starting at 11.00am. Unless otherwise stated field meetings begin at 10.30am.

MACCLESFIELD & DISTRICT FIELD CLUB

Indoor meetings commence at 7.30pm at the Salvation Army Hall, Roe Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6PH, maccfieldclub.org.uk.

NORTH WEST ENGLAND FERN GROUP

Field meetings organised with an indoor meeting in October at Holehird, Windermere.

Contact: Robert Sykes r.sykes56@gmail.com

MANCHESTER AND NORTH MIDLANDS FERN GROUP

All meetings at 10.30 unless otherwise stated.

Field meetings organiser : Mike Canaway - mikecanaway@gmail.com

For field meetings members must abide by the BPS Code of Conduct <https://ebps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/BPS-Code-of-Conduct-2015.pdf> and https://ebps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/BPS_Safety_Code_A42015.pdf - the Safety Code which covers responsibilities, clothing and equipment etc.

MANCHESTER FIELD CLUB

Indoor Meetings are held at Sale United Reformed Church Hall, Montague Road, Sale, M33 3BU, near Sale Metro station, commencing 7.00pm. Members £1.00, visitors £2.00.

Chair: Alan Hill, 24 Kingsfield Drive, Didsbury, M20 6JA; awhill@globalnet.co.uk

Tel: 0161 215 0971; mobile 07719 659 689. www.manchesterfieldclub.org.uk

MANCHESTER MICROSCOPICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

All meetings are held in the Stopford Building (Medical School) University of Manchester M13 9PT, corner of Oxford Road and Aker Street (next to the Holy Name Church), Manchester, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. **All are welcome** – feel free to bring a friend or two. Non-members and members of other Societies are welcome. The Society's library will be available at all Stopford meetings and includes copies of our Newsletters and literature on microscopic history, as well as many books on microscopy and Natural History.

See also our Internet site at <http://www.manchestermicroscopical.org.uk>

MARPLE NATURALISTS

Meetings commence at 8.00 pm at United Reform Church, Hibbert Lane, Marple, SK6 7NN. Visitors welcome: £4 for individual meetings, Children free.

For further information: Jane Michael 07917 434598 or Derek Clifford 427 4611 or Marple Naturalists Community page on www.marple-uk.com or www.facebook.com/marplenaturalists

Outdoor meetings - arranged separately and announced at meetings.

MERSEYSIDE NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION

Full programme listings are on our website www.mnapage.info and reports of previous trips on our blog at www.NaturalistsNotebook.mnapage.info

NELSON NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Meetings are held at Christ Church, Carr Road, Nelson BB9 7JX and start at 7.30pm.

Enquiries and requests for copies of East Lancashire Butterfly Report and enquires contact David Nelson 01282 863012 davidnelson@btinternet.com Visitors welcome £2.50

NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION - BRYOPHYTE & LICHEN SECTION

All meetings on Saturdays, starting at 10.30 am and will commence whatever the weather. Bring food and clothing adequate for a full day in rough country and bad weather. Please check with section secretary a day or so before the meeting, in case of cancellation or changes.

“Beginners” are welcome any ANY meeting and there will always be a more experienced field bryologist present who will be more than happy to name and talk through the identification features of species encountered. There will not always be a Lichenologist present.

Section Secretary: Norman Bamforth, 1 Corporation Road, Audenshaw, Manchester. M34 5LY (0161 336 3914)

NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION – VASCULAR PLANT SECTION

Contact: David Earl - david.earl@talktalk.net

NORTH WEST FUNGUS GROUP

Forays start at 10.30am and are planned so that they can continue into the afternoon. Please bring food and drink. Please contact the foray leader to confirm your attendance and for possible last minute details.

Beginners always welcome at all forays. Forays are not suitable for small children. No dogs.

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

OLDHAM MICROSCOPICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Meetings at Werneth Centre, Oldham, at 7.30 pm. For more information call Phil Whiteman 01612900722,

philipwhiteman333@hotmail.com or <http://www.oldham-wildlife-link.org.uk/micro/>

PRESTON BIRD WATCHING AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The meetings are at St. Mary's Church, Church Avenue, Penwortham, PR1 0AH. All enquiries should be made to the Secretary, Kayleigh Roebuck, who can be contacted on prestonwildlife@gmail.com or on 07713 975321. www.prestonsociety.co.uk. There is a charge of £3.00 on the door for any visitors.

WILMSLOW GUILD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are held at Wilmslow Guild, 1 Bourne Street, Wilmslow, SK9 5HD
Monthly on Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. from Sept to Apr and field trips Feb to Oct
Visitors welcome to indoor meetings (£5) and field trips (free)

Contact Steve Osborne on 01625 879087 steve.osborne42@gmail.com

ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Given the difficulties in planning, due to Coronavirus, we are unable to give any details of events as far in advance as we would like. However we intend to run as many of our normal activities as possible under whatever restrictions are in place at the time. These will include local recording walks, car trips and Conservation & Education events.

Details will be posted on our website www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk and on our Facebook page.

For information about events or RFNS in general, rfnspublicity@gmail.com or the Secretary at rfnsenquiries@talktalk.net

www.rochdalefieldnaturalistsociety.org.uk

SADDLEWORTH NATURALISTS

Indoor meetings are held at 7.30 pm at Saddleworth Conservative Club, 75 High Street, Uppermill OL3 6AP.

To assist with venue costs and speakers' expenses a small collection will be made - suggested donations: £2.00 for members, £2.50 for non-members. Guests are welcome - please introduce yourself at the start of the meeting.

More details at <http://www.oldham-wildlife-link.org.uk/saddleworth/>

SOUTH EAST CHESHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Indoor Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month from September to April, starting at 7.30pm. Tea, coffee and biscuits are available at the end of each indoor meeting. We meet at Ettiley Heath Church Community Centre; Elton Road, Ettiley Heath, Sandbach, CW11 3NE. Visitors are charged £3 and are welcome at any indoor meeting.

Field trips are held on one Sunday a month from September through to June and a long weekend meeting in March is very popular. More local field meetings are also held on the first Tuesday of each month and local evening walks in the summer. Travel is usually by car, or sometimes by bus or mini-bus, to sites of particular birding interest and will be led by experienced birdwatchers. Bookings for the trips are made at the indoor meetings. Further information is available at www.secos.org.uk or by telephone from 01270 582642. Chairman Colin Lythgoe 01270 582642

WARRINGTON PLANT GROUP

<https://gailqb.wordpress.com/warrington-plant-group/>

WEST LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE

Meetings are held in Room B003 in the Business School Building, Edge Hill University, St Helen's Road, Ormskirk, L39 4QP. Please note that you can park in the car parks A & B in front of the main university buildings, and walk to the Business School Building. Please arrive by 19.15 for a prompt 19.30 start. Admission charge (including refreshments): £1.50 members, £2.50 non-members. More details at www.westlancswildlife.org.uk or contact 01704 83538.

Membership Secretary: Hilary Bedford 01772 519090

"ASH"

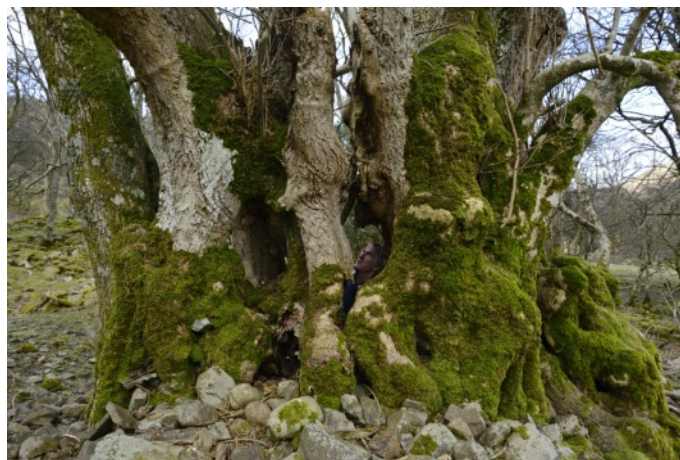
the definitive monograph
of an endangered tree.

It was almost four years ago that the author, Archie Miles, was first moved to mark the gradual passing of one of the nation's iconic broadleaf trees due the ravages of Ash Dieback Disease. He was able to gain enough sponsorship from The Woodland Trust and the Association of AONBs to make this book a reality.

"ASH" is a comprehensive, lavishly illustrated tribute publication featuring every aspect of the tree (see <http://www.archiemiles.co.uk/> for more info.)

Archie's book (rrp £30) is now available at 20% discount £24.00 including p&p.

Anyone wishing to buy a copy please email: archiemiles@btinternet.com



Online Fern ID Course for Beginners

NEW FOR 2021 Joshua Styles' very popular 2020 online fern ID course was made available last year to BSBI members only but we are now making it available to non-members at the same bargain price of just £5!

The one-hour course is available as a video link and it aims to get you started with fern ID. The fern course followed on from Joshua's online Dandelion ID course which has attracted more than 3,000 views so far. That first course was free but without external funding we are having to charge a small amount for the fern course, although it's still great value!



For more information, please see <https://bsbi.org/fern-identification>

We need more articles

The Newsletter has to have pages in multiples of four (12, 16, 20, ...). We had copy for approximately ten pages for this issue so pages 11 and 12 are blank.

This is a wasted opportunity.

The Northwestern Naturalist welcomes all articles, either long or short and with or without photographs, to fill our pages.

Suggestions are accounts of your local nature reserve; enjoyable places to walk in our region; interesting wildlife records from the present or rediscoveries from the past; observations of animal behaviour; wildlife in your garden or at your bird table and reprints of articles from our Affiliated Societies newsletters which other members would find interesting.

Editor

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