

Wild Flowers of the Cornish Valleys and Lizard Peninsula

Naturetrek Tour Report

19 – 22 May 2021



Sea Sandwort



View



Burnet Rose



Thrift

Report and images compiled by Pip O'Brien



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Day 1

Wednesday 19th May

The group met up in the car park of our Helston hotel after some epic trips across England. Everyone was determined to make the most of sunshine on the first day of what for many, was their first real trip out in almost 18 months. We headed straight out on the Lizard peninsula past Cudrose Naval station and through the pretty village of Gunwalloe, down to Church Cove. Every hedge was hazed navy blue with Bluebells and clouds of Cow Parsley brushed the van on the narrow lanes.

In glorious late afternoon sunshine, we wandered out of the car park towards the cove. The Cornish hedges were covered in the glossy green leaves of Sea Beet (*Beta maritima*) interspersed with Danish Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia danica*) that was coming to the end of its flowering season. As we got nearer to the beach, one wall was covered from top to bottom with a blanket of Sea Sandwort (*Honckenya peploides*) in full flower. The cliffs were dotted with Common Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia officinalis*) and huge mounds of Thrift (*Armeria maritima*). Up on top of the cliffs we came across our first blue Spring Squills (*Scilla verna*).

Making our way down to the churchyard we had a good look at some Sand sedge (*Carex arenaria*) then headed across a swathe of Marram Grass and Sea Holly leaves to a small stream where we found some Amphibious Bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*).

No one wanted to rush back to the hotel, so we decided to explore along the coastal path to the east. This was very worthwhile with English Stonecrop (*Sedum anglicum*), some fine flowering Navelworts (*Umbilicus rupestris*) and to finish the day off nicely, Early Purple Orchids (*Orchis mascula*).

Day 2

Thursday 20th May

The day started with lashing rain, very high winds and a diabolical weather forecast. Undeterred, the intrepid group set off down to Lizard Point. We managed to get the van doors open, and fought our way down towards the cliffs, but were quickly forced to turn back as it was difficult to stand up. Next, we headed down to Kynance Cove to see if that might be a little more sheltered. Half-way down the road towards the car park we spotted an excellent stand of Rosy Leek (*Allium roseum*) on the side of the road. Despite the rain, it was standing up well and showing off the tiny brown bulbils at the base of the umbels. Moving down the path from the car park towards Kynance Cove in horizontal drizzle, we found our first Dyer's Greenweed (*Genista tinctora*) and some very red Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*). The rain then turned to hail and, with winds gusting Force 10, we retreated back to the van and thence to Lizard Village.

Several hot chocolates and large slices of cake later, the rain stopped, and we decided to risk a walk down to Caerthillian Cove. The sun came out, and although the wind did not moderate, all of us dried out and barely noticed it in the sunken footpath that led us down the valley. The hedges presented us with a white flowered Dove's-foot Crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*), Common Polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*) and Tree Mallow (*Malva (Lavatera) arborea*). At the bottom of the valley, the sea had been whipped into a thick swirling mass of yellowish cappuccino

type foam as waves crashed into the bay, but a brief exploration of the stream at the bottom gave us Sea Milkwort (*Lysimachia (Glaux) maritima*) and a Water Parsnip.

With the improvement in the weather, we decided to give Kynance cove another try, and managed to find a spot down behind a drystone wall where we could eat our lunch without it blowing away. On the peaty heath by the car park, we admired tussocks of Black Bog Rush (*Schoenus nigricans*). Venturing in amongst the Gorse bushes, in some peril because of the very strong winds, our chief orchid spotter cheered us all with some newly emerged Heath Spotted Orchis (*Dactylorhiza maculata*), we also found good patches of Lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*) and a lot of Common milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*) that ranged in colour from bright pink to deep blue. A walk down to the café in the cove gave us Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*), just coming into flower with rich creamy buds seemingly untouched by the gales, and Bloody Cranesbill (*Geranium sanguineum*), again just coming into flower.

We arrived at the café just too late for a cup of tea, so made our way back to the hotel where all of us made good use of the hotel's seemingly endless supply of hot water to defrost before dinner.

Day 3

Friday 21st May

Day three looked even less inviting than day two, as the rain lashed down across the car park. However, we set off as planned for Porthgwarra, a tiny group of cottages down an interestingly narrow lane in the bottom of a valley. It was dry when we got there, so we raided the coffee shop then sat on the grass to try find interesting plants in the turf. The tiny Slender Trefoil (*Trifolium micranthum*) was loitering under one of the picnic tables and some Western Clover (*Trifolium occidentale*) was showing just enough flower to give us an accurate ID. There was plenty of other clover foliage in a wall by the café, but without flower it proved impossible to identify. We climbed the narrow smugglers' path up to the top of the cliffs to see if we could see some of the breeding Choughs that live up there, but the wind on top proved to be ferocious to walk with any safety and, after watching the Grey Seals floating effortlessly among the waves in the cove, we retreated back to the van.

A short drive, with only one minor excitement involving a double decker bus on a very tight corner, and we descended into the shelter of Nanquidno Valley. A sparkling stream edged the road and encouraged the growth of huge stands of *Gunnera manicata* outside several of the cottages. Encouraged, we took our picnics down a narrow side valley towards the sea. Nothing of botanical interest was to be seen, but some of the group were lucky enough to spot a Peregrine landing on its nest of the cliff.

A little way further down the road was a lovely meadow edged with a boggy stream. We found Early Forget-me-not (*Myosotis ramosissima*) and Creeping Forget-me-not (*Myosotis secunda*) plus lots of Ragged Robin (*Silene (Lychnis) flos-cuculi*) that was looking more ragged than usual as it had been battered by the wind. The most memorable plants for some of the group were some magnificent Marsh Thistles (*Cirsium palustre*) just bursting into flower, while for others, it was the delicate Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria alsine*). There was also a large flowering patch of Subterranean Clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*). The sedge specialists amongst the group enchanted us with tiny Star Sedge (*Carex echinata*) and a Toad Rush (*Juncus bufonius*).

Our final stop of the day was Marazion, where we hoped to find some Sea Bindweed and a view of St Michael's Mount, but wind and rain made this so unpleasant that most opted for tea and cake instead.

Day 4

Saturday 22nd May

As so often in Cornwall, the sun came out again, the wind dropped, and we had a glorious morning. Determined to cover some of the areas we had been forced to miss earlier in the week, we went straight to Kynance Cove and, pausing only for a quick coffee, climbed up the serpentine knoll the other side of the valley.

The Thyme Broomrape was not yet in flower, but we did find Thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*) about to burst its buds. There were also masses of Sheep's-bit (*Jasione montana*) just coming into flower. Turning inland from the cliff top we came across Smith's Pepperwort (*Lepidium heterophyllum*) and some Dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*) just about to come into flower. At the side of a wet bank leading down to a stream was Bog Pimpernel (*Lysimachia (Anagallis) tenella*) and Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*). Across the field we heard the first Cuckoo of the year calling, and later found our first butterfly, a Common Blue.

Our last stop brought the tour full circle as we revisited the Lizard point to try and find some Choughs. The day could not have been more different, a light wind and almost cloudless sky made the sea sparkle invitingly. The cliffs looked amazing, covered in the invasive, yellow-flowered Hottentot Fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*) and Purple Dewplant (*Disphyma crassifolium*). Stopping to admire a very large Grey Seal just off the Lizard Point, one of the party drew our attention to some Choughs strutting around on the cliff not far from where we stood. It was a wonderful end to the trip, and pausing only to stock up with pasties for the journey, we set off to our various homes.

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Species Lists

Plants

Aspleniaceae

Asplenium (Phyllitis) scolopendrium

Athyriaceae

Athyrium filix-femina

Cystopteridaceae

Cystopteris fragilis

Dennstaedtiaceae

Pteridium aquilinum

Dryopteridaceae

Dryopteris filix-mas

Equisetaceae

Equisetum palustre

Polypodiaceae

Polypodium vulgare

GYMNOSPERMS

Pinaceae

Pinus sylvestris

ANGIOSPERMS

DICOTS

Acanthaceae

Acanthus mollis

Amaranthaceae

Beta vulgaris subsp. *maritima*

Chenopodium album

Apiaceae

Anthriscus sylvestris

FERNS & ALLIES

Spleenwort family

Hart's-tongue

Lady-fern Family

Lady Fern

Bladder-fern Family

Brittle Bladder Fern

Church Cove

Bracken Family

Bracken

Buckler-fern Family

Male-fern

Horsetail Family

Marsh Horsetail

Polypody Family

Common Polypody

CONIFERS

Pine family

Scot's Pine

FLOWERING PLANTS

Acanthus Family

Bear's Breeches

Caerthillian

Goosefoot Family

Sea Beet

Fat Hen

Carrot Family

Cow Parslev

*Crithmum maritimum**Daucus carota**Eryngium maritimum**Hydrocotyle vulgaris**Oenanthe crocata**Pastinaca sativa* var. *sativa**Smyrniolus sativum*

Rock Samphire

Wild Carrot

Sea Holly

Marsh Pennywort

Hemlock Water-Dropwort

Wild Parsnip

Alexanders

Aquifoliaceae*Ilex aquifolium***Holly Family**

Holly

Araliaceae*Hedera helix* subsp. *helix**Hedera helix* subsp. *hibernica***Ivy Family**

English Ivy

Atlantic Ivy

Asteraceae*Achillea millefolium**Artemisia vulgaris**Bellis perennis**Cirsium arvense**Cirsium palustre**Cirsium vulgare**Hypochaeris radicata**Leucanthemum vulgare**Picris echioides**Senecio vulgaris**Sonchus arvensis**Sonchus asper**Taraxacum* agg.**Daisy Family**

Yarrow

Mugwort

Daisy

Creeping Thistle

Marsh Thistle

Spear Thistle

Cat's-ear

Oxeye Daisy

Bristly Oxtongue

Groundsel

Perennial Sow-thistle

Prickly Sow-thistle

Dandelion group

Betulaceae*Alnus glutinosa***Birch Family**

Alder

Boraginaceae*Myosotis secunda**Myosotis ramosissima***Borage Family**

Creeping Forget-me-not

Early Forget-me-not

Brassicaceae*Alliaria petiolata**Capsella bursa-pastoris**Cardamine flexuosa**Cardamine hirsuta***Cabbage Family**

Garlic Mustard

Shepherd's-purse

Wavy Bitter-cress

Hair Bitter-cress

Cardamine pratensis

Cuckooflower

Cochlearia officinalis

Common Scurvygrass

Cochlearia anglica

English Scurvygrass

Cochlearia danica

Danish Scurvygrass

Lepidium heterophyllum

Smith's Pepperwort

Campanulaceae**Bellflower Family***Jasione montana*

Sheep's-bit

Caprifoliaceae**Honeysuckle Family***Lonicera periclymenum*

Honeysuckle

Sambucus nigra

Elderberry

Caryophyllaceae**Pink Family***Armeria maritima*

Thrift

Cerastium fontanum

Common Mouse-ear

Honckenya peploides

Sea Sandwort

Minuartia verna

Spring Sandwort

Sagina apetala

Annual Pearlwort

Sagina procumbens

Procumbent Pearlwort

Silene dioica

Red Campion

Silene (Lychnis) flos-cuculi

Ragged Robin

Silene maritima

Sea Campion

Spergularia marina

Lesser Sea-Spurrey

Spergularia media

Greater Sea-Spurrey

Spergularia rubra

Sand Spurrey

Stellaria alasine

Bog Stichwort

Stellaria holostea

Greater Stichwort

Stellaria media

Common Chickweed

Convolvulaceae**Bindweed Family***Convolvulus arvensis*

Field Bindweed

Cornaceae**Dogwood Family***Cornus sanguineus*

Dogwood

Crassulaceae**Stonecrop Family***Sedum anglicum*

English Stonecrop

Umbilicus rupestris

Wall Pennywort

Ericaceae*Calluna vulgaris***Heather Family**

Heather

Fabaceae*Anthyllis vulneraria**Cytisus scoparius* subsp *maritimus**Genista anglica**Genista tinctoria**Lotus corniculatus**Medicago arabica**Medicago lupulina**Trifolium campestre**Trifolium dubium**Trifolium hybridum**Trifolium micranthum**Trifolium occidentale**Trifolium ornithopodioides**Trifolium pratense**Trifolium repens**Trifolium subterraneum**Ulex europaeus**Ulex gallii**Vicia sativa***Pea Family**

Kidney Vetch

Prostrate Broom

Petty Whin

Dyer's Greenweed

Bird's-foot Trefoil

Spotted Medick

Black Medick

Hop Trefoil

Lesser Trefoil

Alsike Clover

Slender Trefoil

Western Clover

Bird's-foot Clover

Red Clover

White Clover

Subterranean Clover

Common Gorse

Western Gorse

Common Vetch

Geraniaceae*Geranium dissectum**Geranium molle**Geranium robertianum**Geranium rotundifolium**Geranium sanguineum***Crane's-bill Family**

Cut-leaved Crane's-bill

Dove's-foot Crane's-bill

Herb Robert

Round-leaved Crane's-bill

Bloody Crane's-bill

Hippocastanaceae*Aesculus hippocastanum***Horse-chestnut Family**

Horse-chestnut

Lamiaceae*Ajuga reptans**Glechoma hederacea**Mentha aquatica**Stachys officinalis**Stachys sylvatica**Teucrium scorodonia**Thymus polytrichus***Dead-nettle Family**

Common Bugle

Ground-ivy

Water Mint

Betony

Hedge Woundwort

Wood Sage

Wild Thyme

Malvaceae*Malva (Lavatera) arborea**Malva sylvestris***Mallow Family**

Tree Mallow

Common Mallow

Mesembryanthemum*Carpobrotus edulis**Disphyma crassifolium***Ice-Plant Family**

Hottentot Fig

Purple Dewplant

Oleaceae*Fraxinus excelsior***Olive Family**

Ash

Orobanchaceae*Pedicularis sylvatica***Broomrape Family**

Lousewort

Papaveraceae*Fumaria officinalis**Papaver rhoeas***Poppy Family**

Common Fumitory

Common Poppy

Plantaginaceae*Plantago lanecolata**Plantago major**Plantago maritima**Plantago coronopus***Plantain Family**

Ribwort Plantain

Greater Plantain

Sea Plantain

Buck's-horn Plantain

Polygalaceae*Polygala vulgaris***Milkwort Family**

Common Milkwort

Polygonaceae*Persicaria amphibia**Rumex acetosa**Rumex acetosella***Knotweed Family**

Amphibious Bistort

Common Sorrel

Sheep's Sorrel

Primulaceae*Lysimachia (Anagallis) arvensis**Lysimachia (Anagallis) tenella**Lysimachia (Glaux) maritima**Primula vulgaris***Primrose Family**

Scarlet Pimpernel

Bog Pimpernel

Sea Milkwort

Primrose

Ranunculaceae*Ficaria verna**Ranunculus acris***Buttercup Family**

Lesser Celandine

Meadow Buttercup

<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	Lesser Spearwort
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup

Rosaceae

<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>
<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
<i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i> subsp. <i>minor</i>

Rose Family

Hawthorn
Dropwort
Common Rock-rose
Silverweed
Tormentil
Creeping Cinqufoil
Blackthorn
Burnet Rose
Bramble
Salad Burnet

Rubiaceae

<i>Galium aparine</i>
<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>

Bedstraw Family

Goosegrass
Field Madder

Saxifragaceae

<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>

Saxifrage Family

Opposite leaved Golden Saxifrage	Stream by hotel
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Salicaceae

<i>Salix cinerea</i>
<i>Salix repens</i>

Willow Family

Grey Willow
Creeping Willow

Sapindaceae

<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>

Maple Family

Sycamore

Scrophulariaceae

<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
<i>Euphrasia</i> sp.
<i>Veronica arvensis</i>

Figwort Family

Ivy-leaved Toadflax
Foxglove
Eyebright
Wall Speedwell

Solanaceae

<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>

Potato Family

Woody Nightshade

Urticaceae

<i>Parietaria officinalis</i>

Nettle Family

Pellitory-of-the-wall

Urtica dioica

Common Nettle

Valerianaceae**Valerian Family***Centranthus ruber*

Red Valerian

Violaceae**Violet Family***Viola odorata*

Sweet Violet

Viola riviniana

Common Dog-Violet

Vilva lactea

Pale Dog-Violet

MONOCOTS**Amaryllidaceae****Daffodil Family***Allium roseum*

Rosy Garlic

Allium triquetrum

Three-cornered Leek

Allium ursinum

Ramsons

Araceae**Arum Family***Arum maculatum*

Lord's and Ladies

Asparagaceae**Asparagus Family***Hyacinthoides non-scripta*

Bluebell

Scilla verna

Spring Squill

Cyperaceae**Sedge Family***Carex arenaria*

Sand Sedge

Carex caryophylllea

Spring-sedge

Carex echinata

Star Sedge

Carex flacca

Glaucous Sedge

Carex otrubae

False Fox Sedge

Carex panicea

Carnation Sedge

Carex paniculata

Greater tussock Sedge

Carex pendula

Pendulous Sedge

Carex pulicaris

Flea Sedge

Carex viridula subsp *oedocarpa*

Common Yellow Sedge

Eleocharis quinqueflora

Few-flowered Spike-rush

Iridaceae**Iris Family***Crocus x crocosmifolia*

Montbretia

Gladiolus byzantinus

Whistling Jack

Iris foetidissima

Gladdon Iris

Juncaceae**Rush Family***Juncus bufonius*

Toad Rush

<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush
<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>	Heath rush
<i>Luzula multiflora</i>	Heath Wood-rush
<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>	Black Bog-rush

Orchidaceae

<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	Common Spotted-orchid
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early Purple Orchid

Poaceae

<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal Grass
<i>Briza maxima</i>	Greater Quaking Grass
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking Grass
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft-brome
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted Hair-grass
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	Flote-grass
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Purple Moor-grass
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass
<i>Poa humilis</i>	Spreading Meadow-grass

Orchid Family**Grass Family****Birds**

Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	
European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Heard at Kynance Cove
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	
Red-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	
Western Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	

European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>

Butterflies

Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
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Reptiles and Amphibians

Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>
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Mammals

Atlantic Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>
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