

Ireland - The Burren

Naturetrek Tour Report

24 - 27 May 2011



Geranium sanguineum



Pyramidal Orchid



O'Kelly's Orchid



Golden Rod in scailp

Report and images compiled by Maureen Ponting



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Leaders: Maureen Ponting (Naturetrek Leader & Botanist)

Participants: Diana Dixon
Jennifer Thomas
Nova Williams
Lis Butler
Elizabeth Bathurst
Audrey Davis
Mairi Franses
Georgina Hopkins
Judy Hollis
Pennie Malpas
Brian Maybee
Margaret Maybee
Simon Currie
Martin Currie
Jessica Newbery

Day 1

Tuesday 24th May

Thirteen of us were picked up from Shannon Airport by our bus driver Declan who would look after us so well during our stay in the Burren. He took us through the Burren to lunch at Linnane's Lobster Bar on the Flaggy Shore. We then met the rest of our party at Sheedy's Hotel, Lisdoonvarna, and were welcomed by Martina Sheedy. She and her husband John have been caring for Naturetrek clients for the past 16 years.

That evening, the weather was fine and we had our first walk on Cappanawalla, a limestone hill where we got a marvellous view of the coast and Ballyvagan harbour and our first chance to see many of the typical Burren plants: *Rosa pimpinellifolia*, the Burren Rose; *Antenaria dioica*, Catspaw, *Geranium sanguineum*, Bloody Cranesbill and Heath Spotted Orchids. We stopped to look at many ferns growing on the rocks. The highlight of the walk was *Pinguicula grandiflora*, the Large Butterwort, thought to be a pre-glacial relic, and Northern Europe's only site. It is otherwise native of the mountains of southwest Europe.

Day 2

Wednesday 25th May

Next morning we woke to rain and wind which cleared during the day. However, we started with a walk at Poll Salach, where the Burren limestone pavement runs into the sea. We looked into the scailps (deep crevices) for the many plants nestling in their own micro-climates; Golden Rod, *Solidago virgaurea*; Vernal Sandwort *Minuartia verna*, and Honeysuckle. In the short turf, we saw masses of Common Spotted Orchids.

Our next stop was Blackhead, a 1,000 foot hill running down to the sea. We botanised round the base to see the Burren Saxifrage, *Saxifraga rosaceae*.

We then moved to the Rine, a low spit of land jutting into the sea. The special plant here is *Limonium humile*, Sea Lavender (not in flower), growing amongst bright patches of thrift; and Sea Milkwort, *Glaux maritima*. We also saw a Large-flowered Cerastium, *C. arvense*, growing along a sandy bank.

We had lunch at the Garden Tea Room, Ballyvaughan: delicious food, surrounded by a beautiful garden.

In the afternoon we drove to the Green Lane, Fermoyle...an old stock road which runs the length of the Burren. The original walls were built with stones laid vertically. Here we saw patches of *Primula polyantha* and their parents, *Primula vulgaris* and *P. veris* at various stages of hybridisation.

Our last walk of the day was down the Caher River, the only river in the Burren, looking at the lovely flowery hillsides with *Dryas Octopetala*, Mountain Avenas; masses of Twayblades and the Common Butterwort, *Pinguicula vulgaris*.

Day 3

Thursday 26th May

A showery day... We visited Kilfenora Cathedral and the Burren Centre for maps and guidebooks etc. Some of us saw a short film about the geology and natural history of the Burren. Then, on to Mullach Mor, an area of limestone pavement with a rich flora and several turloughs – winter lakes which almost disappear in summer. We walked round one side of the biggest turlough, L. Gealain. This is a good place for orchids and we saw several: *Dactylorhiza traunsteineri*, Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid; *D. incarnata* Early Marsh Orchid and *D. cruenta* the Leopard Orchid. There were many violets: *Viola persicifolia*, the Turlough Violet and the hybrid, *Viola canina* x *V. persicifolia*. We also saw *Thalictrum minus* and many shrubs, such as *Viburnum opulus*, *Prunus spinosa* and *Frangula alnus*, growing prostrate among the rocks.

We left for a late lunch, climbing up a steep windy road above Mullach Mor to Cassidy's Inn at Carron, converted from an old police station. And then on to the Cliffs of Moher where in spite of high winds we were able to see Razorbills, Kittiwakes, Puffins and Fulmars on the sheltered cliffs, the highest in Western Ireland.

Day 4

Friday 27th May

First we had a blustery walk on the dunes at Fanore. We then drove to the Caher Bridge Garden and were taken around by the owner, Carl Wright, who had designed and planted this fascinating collection; from native river plants below the bridge to damp-loving plants, including Rodgersias and a mass of Candelabra primulas, to a dry garden in the natural limestone pavement. Naturetrek groups had leaned over the bridge to look at this garden for many years but we were the first group actually to visit it.

Reluctantly, we left this beautiful collection for Shannon Airport and home.

Species List

Plants

PS = Poll Salach MM = Mullach Mor Cap = Capanawalla ** = seen previous years

Aquifoliaceae

Ilex aquifolia

Holly Family

Holly

scailps, common

Araliaceae

Hedera helix

Ivy Family

Ivy

common

Asteraceae

Achillea millefolium

Antennaria dioica

Carlina vulgaris

Centaurea nigra

Cirsium dissectum

C. palustre

C. vulgare

Crepis vesicaria

Eupatorium cannabinum

Heracium anglicum

Hypochoeris maculata

H. radicata

Leucanthemum vulgare

Mycelis muralis

Pilosella officinarum

Solidago virgaurea

*Sonchus asper***

*S. oleraceus***

Tripleurospermum maritimum

Daisy Family

Yarrow

The Rine

Cat's -foot

Cap, etc

Carlina Thistle

The Rine

Common Knapweed

meadows

Bog Thistle

MM

Marsh Thistle

Caher River

Spear Thistle

The Rine

Beaked Hawk's Beard

Fanore

Hemp-agrimony

PS

Irish Hawkweed

Cap.

Spotted Cat's Ear

Cap

Common Cat's Ear

Cap.

Ox-eye Daisy

Newtown, common

Wall Lettuce

common

Mouse-ear Hawkweed

PS, common

Golden Rod

PS

Rough Sow-Thistle

Cliffs of Moher

Smooth Sow-thistle

roadsides

Sea Mayweed

PS, Fanore

Betulaceae

Alnus glutinosa

Betula pubescens

Birch Family

Alder

common

Brown Birch

M.M etc

Boraginaceae

Symphytum officinale

Borage Family

Comfrey

Fermoyle

Brassicaceae

Arabis hirsuta

Cakile maritima

Cardamine pratensis

Cochlearia officinalis

*Coronopus didymus***

Hesperis matronalis

Raphanus raphanistrum subsp. *maritimus*

Sisymbrium officinale

Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum

Cress Family

Hairy Rock Cress

green lane

Sea Rocket

Fanore

Cuckoo Flower

meadows

Scurvy Grass

PS and Fanore

Swine Cress

Kilfenora Cathedral

Dames' Violet

roadsides

Sea Radish

Fanore

Hedge Mustard

The Rine

Watercress

Cap. and Caher River.

Caprifoliaceae

Lonicera periclymenum
Sambucus ebulus
S. nigra
Symphoricarpos albus
Viburnum opulus

Caryophyllaceae

*Arenaria serpyllifolia***
Cerastium arvense
*C. diffusum***
C. fontanum
Honkenia peploides
Lychnis flos-cuculi
Minuartia verna
*M. hybrida***
Silene vulgaris subsp. *maritima*
*Spergularia marina***
*S. media***
Stellaria holostea
S. media

Celastraceae

Euonymus europaeus

Chenopodiaceae

Atriplex portulacoides
A. prostrata
*A. glabriuscula***
Beta vulgaris subsp. *maritima*
Salicornia europaea
Suaeda maritima

Cistaceae

Helianthemum canum

Convolvulaceae

Calystegia soldanella

Cornaceae

Cornus sanguinea

Corylaceae

Corylus avellana

Crassulaceae

Sedum acre
*S. album***
Umbilicus rupestris

Honeysuckle Family

Honeysuckle PS, common
Dwarf Elder roadsides
Elder The Rine
Snowberry Cap.
Guelder Rose Cap. and MM.

Pink Family

Thyme-leaved Sandwort PS
Field Mouse-ear The Rine
Dark Green Chickweed The Rine
Common Mouse-ear common
Sea Sandwort Fanore and The Rine
Ragged Robin meadows
Vernal Sandwort PS
Fine-leaved Sandwort MM
Sea Campion PS and The Rine
Lesser Sea Spurrey The Rine
Greater Sea Spurrey The Rine
Greater Stitchwort common
Common Chickweed common

Spindle Family

Spindle Cap.

Fat Hen Family

Sea-purslane The Rine
Spear-leaved Oranche The Rine
Babington's Oranche The Rine
Sea Beet PS & Fanore
Glasswort The Rine
Annual Sea Blight The Rine

Rockrose Family

Burren Rockrose PS

Bindweed Family

Sea Bindweed dunes, Fanore

Dogwood Family

Dogwood Cap.

Hazel Family

Hazel very common, invasive

Stonecrop Family

Biting Stonecrop PS
White Stonecrop MM
Pennywort Kilfenora Cathedral

Empetraceae Empetrium nigrum**	Crowberry Family Crowberry	Black Head
Ericaceae Arctostaphylos uva-ursi ** Calluna vulgaris Vaccinium myrtillus	Heath Family Bearberry Heather Bilberry	Black Head common Black Head
Euphorbiaceae Euphorbia heliscopia E. paralias E. portlandica	Spurge Family Sun Spurge Sea Spurge Portland Spurge	green lane dunes, Fanore dunes, Fanore
Fabaceae Anthyllis vulneria Lathyrus linifolius L. pratensis Lotus corniculatus Medicago lupulina Trifolium dubium Vicia cracca V. sepium	Pea Family Kidney Vetch Bitter Vetch Yellow Vetchling Birds Foot Trefoil Black Medick Shamrock Tufted Vetch Bush Vetch	PS Cap. roadsides common Fanore common MM roadsides
Gentianaceae Blackstonia perfoliata Gentiana verna	Gentian Family Yellow Wort Spring Gentian	Cap. common
Geraniaceae Erodium cicutarium Geranium columbinum G. molle G. lucidum G. robertianum G. sanguineum	Geranium Family Storksbill Long-stalked Cranesbill Soft Cranesbill Shining Cranesbill Herb Robert Bloody Cranesbill	The Rine The Rine common The Rine. common scailps, common
Hypericaceae Hypericum androsaemum** H. pulchrum H. tetrapterum	St John's Wort Family Tutsan Beautiful St John's Wort Square-stalked St John's Wort	scailps Cap green lane
Lamiaceae Ajuga pyramidalis ** A. reptans Mentha aquatica Oreganum vulgare Prunella vulgaris Teucrium scorodonia Thymus polytrichus	Mint Family Pyramidal Bugle Bugle Water Mint Marjoram Self Heal Wood Sage Wild Thyme	PS Caher River Caher River & MM MM common common common
Lentibulariaceae Pinguicula grandiflora	Butterwort Family Greater Butterwort	Cap.

<i>P. vulgaris</i>	Common Butterwort	Khyber Pass
Linaceae	Flax Family	
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Purging Flax	Cap. and Green Lane
Orobanchaceae	Broomrape Family	
<i>Orobanche alba</i> **	Thyme Broomrape	PS
Plantaganaceae	Plantain Family	
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buck's Horn Plantain	PS
<i>P. maritima</i>	Sea Plantain	common
<i>P. lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	common
Plumbaginaceae	Sea Lavender Family	
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Thrift	common
<i>Limonium humile</i>	Lax-flowered Sea Lavender	The Rine
<i>L. recurvum</i> subsp. <i>pseudotranswallianum</i>	Rock Sea Lavender	rocks, PS
Polygalaceae	Milkwort Family	
<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	Common Milkwort	common
Polygonaceae	Knotweed Family	
<i>Polygonum hydropiper</i>	Water Pepper	ponds
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	common
Primulaceae	Primrose Family	
<i>Glaux maritima</i>	Sea Milkwort	The Rine
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> **	yellow pimpernel	green lane
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip	common
<i>P. vulgaris</i>	Primrose	common
<i>P. polyantha</i> (<i>P. vulgaris</i> x <i>P. veris</i>)		green lane
<i>Samolus valerandi</i>	Brookweed	PS
Ranunculaceae	Buttercup Family	
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine	Cap
<i>Caltha palustre</i>	King Cup	Caher River
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	Lesser Spearwort	Green Lane
<i>R. bulbosa</i>	Bulbous Buttercup	dunes, Famore
<i>R. acris</i>	Common Buttercup	common
<i>Thalictrum minus</i>	Lesser Meadow-rue	MM
Rhamnaceae	Buckthorn Family	
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	Alder Buckthorn	PS and MM
<i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>	Buckthorn	MM
Rosaceae	Rose Family	
<i>Alchemilla xanthochlora</i>	Pale Lady's Mantle	Green Lane
<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsley Piert	The Rine
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	scailps and roadsides
<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	Mountain Avens	Black Head etc.
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	Caher River

<i>Geum rivale</i>	Water Avens	Green Lane
<i>G. urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	hedgerows
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed	common
<i>P. erecta</i>	Tormentil	common
<i>P. fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Cinquefoil	MM
<i>P. reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil	Cap
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	scailps and roadsides
<i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>	Burnet Rose	scailps, common
<i>Rubus caesius</i>	Dewberry	roadsides
<i>R. saxatilis</i>	Stone Bramble	MM
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad Burnet	Cap
<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Whitebeam	Cap
<i>S. aucuparia</i>	Mountain Ash	Cap
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family	
<i>Asperula cynanchica</i>	Squinancywort	The Rine
<i>Galium boreale</i>	Northern Bedstraw	MM
<i>G. odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruffe	Cap.
<i>G. palustre**</i>	Marsh Bedstraw	MM
<i>G. sternerii</i>	Limestone Bedstraw	common
<i>G. verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw	Green Lane
<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	Wild Madder	Cap etc
Salicaceae	Willow Family	
<i>Salix aurita</i>	Eared Willow	MM etc
<i>S. caprea</i>	Goat Willow	roadsides
<i>S. pentandra</i>	Bay Willow	roadsides
<i>S. repens</i>	Creeping Willow	MM
<i>Populus tremula</i>	Aspen	Green Lane
Saxifragaceae	Saxifrage Family	
<i>Saxifraga hypnoides**</i>	Mossy saxifrage	Black Head
<i>S. tridactylites</i>	Rue-leaved Saxifrage	The Rine
<i>S. rosaceae</i>	The Burren Saxifrage	Black Head
Scrophulariaceae	Figwort Family	
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	Kilfenora
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	roadsides
<i>Erinus alpinus</i>	Fairy Foxglove	Caher Bridge
<i>Euphrasia salisburgensis var. hibernica</i>	Irish Narrow-lvd. Eyebright	Fanore
<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	Lousewort	Cap. and PS
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Hayrattle	PS and green lane
<i>Veronica arvensis</i>	Wall Speedwell	Fanore
<i>V. beccabunga</i>	Brooklime	green lane, Caher River
<i>V. chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell	common
<i>V. officinalis</i>	Common Speedwell	Green Lane and Cap
<i>V. serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Speedwell	Green Lane and Cap
Umbelliferae	Hedge Parsley Family	
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Hedge Parsley	common
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	Fool's Watercress	Caher River

<i>Conium maculata</i>	Hemlock	roadsides
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut	Cap., common.
<i>Crithmum maritimum</i>	Samphire	PS and Fanore
<i>Eryngium maritimum</i>	Sea Holly	Fanore
<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i> **	Marsh Pennywort	
<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	Parsley	walls of Newtown Castle
<i>Sanicula europaea</i>	Sanicle	roadsides
<i>Smyrniolum olusatrum</i> **	Alexanders	roadsides
Urticaceae	Nettle Family	
<i>Parietaria judaica</i>	Pellitory of the Wall	Newtown Castle
Valerianaceae	Valerian Family	
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	Valerian	roadsides
<i>Valeriana locusta</i> **	Lamb's Lettuce	Fanore
Violaceae	Violet Family	
<i>Viola canina</i>	Heath Dog Violet	MM
<i>V. canina x persicifolia = V. ritschliana</i>	MM	
<i>V. persicifolia</i>	Turloch Violet	MM
<i>V. riviniana</i>	Common Dog Violet	common

MONOCOTYLEDONS

Alliaceae	Onion Family	
<i>Allium triquetrum</i> **	Three-cornered Garlic	Black Head roadside
Cyperaceae	Sedge Family	
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Common Cotton Grass	peat bogs
<i>E. vaginatum</i> **	Hare's Tail Cotton Grass	peat bogs
<i>Carex arenaria</i>	Sand Sedge	dunes, Fanore
<i>C. binervis</i>	Green-ribbed Sedge	Cap. & MM
<i>C. elata</i>	Tufted Sedge	MM
<i>C. flacca</i>	Glaucous Sedge	common
<i>C. hostiana</i>	Tawny Sedge	Cap.
<i>C. panicea</i>	Carnation Sedge	Cap.
<i>C. pendula</i>	Pendulous Sedge	Lisdoonvarna wood
<i>C. remota</i>	Remote Sedge	MM
<i>C. sylvatica</i>	Wood Sedge	Lisdoonvarna wood
<i>C. viridula</i> subsp. <i>brachyrhyncha</i>	Long-stalked Yellow Sedge	Cap.
<i>C. viridula</i> subsp. <i>oedocarpa</i>	Common Yellow Sedge	Cap.
<i>Cladium mariscus</i>	Great Fan Sedge	MM
<i>Schoenus nigricans</i>	Black Bog Rush	common
Iridaceae	Iris Family	
<i>Iris pseudachorus</i>	Yellow Iris	common, ponds & rivers
Juncaceae	Rush Family	
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Jointed Rush	Cap.
<i>J. conglomeratus</i>	Common Rush	common
<i>J. effusus</i>	Soft Rush	meadows

<i>Luzula campestris</i>	Field Woodrush	meadow
<i>L. sylvatica</i>	Great Wood Rush	Lisdoonvarna wood
Juncaginaceae	Arrowgrass Family	
<i>Triglochin maritimum</i>	Sea Arrowgrass	The Rine
Orchidaceae	Orchid Family	
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramid Orchid	Fanore
<i>Dactylorhiza cruenta</i>	spots on both leaf surfaces	MM
<i>D. fuchsii</i>	Common Spotted Orchid	common
<i>D. fuchsii subsp. okellyi</i>	O'Kelly's Orchid	Khyber Pass and Fanore
<i>D. incarnata</i>	Early Marsh Orchid	MM
<i>D. maculata subsp. ericetorum</i>	Heath Spotted Orchid	common
<i>D. majalis subsp. occidentalis</i>	Broad-leaved Marsh Orchid	MM
<i>D. traunsteineri</i>	Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid	MM
<i>Epipactis atrorubens</i> **	Dark-flowered Helleborine	Black Head
<i>E. helleborine</i>	Broad-leaved Helleborine	scailp: MM
<i>Gymnandenia conopsea</i>	Fragrant Orchid	Khyber Pass and Fanore
<i>Listera ovata</i>	Twayblade	common
<i>Orchis intacta</i>	Dense-flowered Orchid	Cap.
<i>Ophrys apifera</i> **	Bee Orchid	dunes, Fanore
<i>O. insectivora</i>	Fly Orchid	MM
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early Purple Orchid	common
<i>Platanthera biflora</i>	Lesser Butterfly Orchid	MM and green lane
Poaceae	Grass Family	
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail	common
<i>Ammophila arenaria</i>	Marram Grass	Fanore
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal Grass	common
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass	roadsides
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking Grass	limestone
<i>Catapodium maritimum</i>	Sea Fern Grass	PS
<i>Cynosurus crestatus</i>	Crested Dog's Tail	common
<i>Dactylus glomorata</i>	Cocksfoot	common
<i>Elymus farctus</i>	Sand Couch	Fanore
<i>Helictotrichon pubescens</i>	Downy Oat Grass	Green Lane, common
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Ryegrass	common: meadows
<i>Melica uniflora</i> **	Wood Medick	scailps
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Purple Moor Grass	MM
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Smooth Meadow-grass	meadows
<i>P. trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	roadsides
<i>Puccinellia maritima</i>	Common Saltmarsh Grass	The Rine
<i>Sesleria caerulea</i>	Blue Moor Grass	most common grass
GYMNOSPERMS		
<i>Juniperis communis</i>	Juniper	MM
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	common
FERNS		
<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	Maidenhair Fern	MM
<i>Anthyrium felix-femina</i>	Lady Fern	roadsides

<i>Asplenium adiantum nigrum</i>	Black Spleenwort	Cap.
<i>A. marinum</i>	Sea Spleenwort	Fanore
<i>A. ruta-muraria</i>	Wall Rue	common
<i>A. trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair Spleenwort	common
<i>Blechnum spicant**</i>	Hard Fern	roadsides
<i>Ceterach officinarum</i>	Rusty-back Fern	common
<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i>	Brittle Bladder Fern	Lisdoonvarna Spa
<i>Dryopteris affinis**</i>	Scaly Male Fern	Doolin meadow
<i>D. dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler Fern	Lisdoonvarna wood
<i>D.felix-mas</i>	Male Fern	Green Lane
<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	Heart's Tongue Fern	common
<i>Polypodium australe</i>	Southern Polypody	Black Head
<i>Polystichum aculeatum</i>	Hard Shield Fern	common

Original List made from **Flora of Connemara and The Burren** (DA Webb and M J P Scannell (1983)

Floras used: **New Flora of the British Isles** (Clive Stace)

Wild Flowers of Britain and Northern Europe (Collins Pocket Guide)

Orchids: (Pierre Delforge)

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Mullach Mor – turlough and mountain