

Ireland - The Burren

Naturetrek Tour Report

28 - 31 May 2011



Leopard Orchid *Dactylorhiza cruenta*



Hairy Rock Cress



Early Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata*



The Burren Dolmen

Report and images compiled by Maureen Ponting



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Day 1

Saturday 28th May

Seven of us were met at Shannon Airport. We drove through the Burren to lunch at Linnane's Lobster Bar on the beautiful Flaggy Shore.

Then we drove to 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.

Mary Farrell, who was to drive us for the rest of our stay, took us to Cappanawallah (a limestone hill), where we got a marvellous view of the coast and of Ballyvaughan harbour. This was to be our first chance to see many of the typical Burren plants: *Rosa pimpinellifolia*, the Burren Rose; *Antennaria dioica*, Catspaw, *Geranium sanguineum*, Bloody Cranesbill; and the Heath Spotted Orchids and the Mediterranean Orchid, *Orchis intacta*. 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

Sunday 29th May

This morning we woke to a cloudy day. We started with a walk on 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-climate; 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 among 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 joined the Green Lane at Formoyle ... 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 one in the Burren, looking at the lovely flowery hillsides, with *Dryas Octopetala*, Mountain Avens; masses of Twayblades, the Common Butterwort, *Pinguicula vulgaris* and Spring Gentian, *Gentiana verna*.

Day 3

Monday 30th May

A bright day, interspersed with showers... 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 over 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 we went to the Cliffs of Moher where we were able to see Razorbills, Kittiwakes, Puffins and Fulmars on sheltered cliffs, the highest in Western Ireland.

Day 4

Tuesday 31st May

It was a fine morning, which we spent on the coast and dunes at Fanore. On the short turf we found *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and along the shore, *Cakile maritima* and the showy flowers of Sea Bindweed. Amongst the interesting flora on some huge erratic stones deposited on the coast, was *Asplenium maritimum*, Sea Spleenwort. Finally, we stopped to see the Poul nabrone Portal Dolmen (tomb), before beginning our reluctant return to Shannon Airport and home.

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

Anthriscus sylvestris
Apium nodiflorum
Conium maculata
Conopodium majus
Crithmum maritimum
Eryngium maritimum
*Hydrocotyle vulgaris***
Petroselinum crispum
Sanicula europaea
*Smyrniolum olusatrum***

Urticaceae

Parietaria judaica

Valerianaceae

Valeriana officinalis
*Valeriana locusta***

Violaceae

Viola canina
V. canina x persicifolia = V. ritschliana
V. persicifolia
V. riviniana

Hedge Parsley Family

Hedge Parsley common
 Fool's Watercress Caher River
 Hemlock roadsides
 Pignut Cap., common.
 Samphire PS and Fanore
 Sea Holly Fanore
 Marsh Pennywort
 Parsley walls of Newtown Castle
 Sanicle roadsides
 Alexanders roadsides

Nettle Family

Pellitory of the Wall Newtown Castle

Valerian Family

Valerian roadsides
 Lamb's Lettuce Fanore

Violet Family

Heath Dog Violet MM
 MM
 Turloch Violet MM
 Common Dog Violet common

MONOCOTYLEDONS**Alliaceae**

*Allium triquetrum***

Cyperaceae

Eriophorum angustifolium
*E. vaginatum***
Carex arenaria
C. binervis
C. elata
C. flacca
C. hostiana
C. panicea
C. pendula
C. remota
C. sylvatica
C. viridula subsp. *brachyrhyncha*
C. viridula subsp. *oedocarpa*
Cladium mariscus
Schoenus nigricans

Iridaceae

Iris pseudachorus

Juncaceae**Onion Family**

Three-cornered Garlic Black Head roadside

Sedge Family

Common Cotton Grass peat bogs
 Hare's Tail Cotton Grass peat bogs
 Sand Sedge dunes, Fanore
 Green-ribbed Sedge Cap. & MM
 Tufted Sedge MM
 Glaucous Sedge common
 Tawny Sedge Cap
 Carnation Sedge Cap.
 Pendulous Sedge Lisdoonvarna wood
 Remote Sedge MM
 Wood Sedge Lisdoonvarna wood
 Long-stalked Yellow Sedge Cap.
 Common Yellow Sedge Cap.
 Great Fan Sedge MM
 Black Bog Rush common

Iris Family

Yellow Iris common, ponds & rivers

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)



2011 Naturetrek Group Members