The Burren

Naturetrek Tour Report

22 - 25 May 2012

Report compiled by Maureen Ponting



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Tour Report The Burren

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Day 1

Tuesday 22nd May

Eleven of us were picked up from Shannon Airport by our bus driver Declan who would look after us so well during the first two days of 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 warmly welcomed by Martina Sheedy. She and her husband John have been caring for Naturetrek clients for the past 17 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 Ballyvaughan 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 23rd May

Next morning we woke to sun and wind. 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 *Minuarta verna*, and Honeysuckle.

In the short turf, we saw masses of Common Spotted Orchids, and on rocks, large patches of *Helianthemum* canum, the Burren Rockrose

Our next stop was Blackhead, a 1000 foot hill running down to the sea. We botanised round the base to see the Burren Saxifrage, *Saxifraga rosaceae*, and 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 Monks Bar, overlooking the quay at Ballyvaughan, with delicious seafood a speciality. In the afternoon we drove to the Green Lane, 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 river in the Burren, looking at the lovely flowery hillsides with Dryas Octopetala, Mountain Avens; masses of Twayblades and the Common Butterwort, Pinguicula vulgaris. There were also beautiful, startlingly blue patches of Spring Gentian, Gentiana verna.

Day 3 Thursday 24th May

Another lovely day... we visited Kilfenora Cathedral and the Burren Centre, for maps and guidebooks etc. and then went 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, Lough Gealain. This is a good place for orchids, and we saw *Dactylorhiza cruenta*, the Leopard Orchid.

Our new bus driver, Noel, a Burren botanical enthusiast, spotted the Dense-flowered Orchid, *Orchis intacta* and the Fly Orchid, *Ophrys insectivera*.

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 and plenty of Potentilla fruticosa.

We left for a late lunch, at Cassidy's Inn, Carran, converted from an old police station. And then on to the Cliffs of Moher where we were able to see Razorbills, Kittiwakes, Puffins and Fulmars on cliffs which are the highest in western Ireland.

Day 4 Friday 25th May

Another sunny day and first we had a walk along the dunes at Fanore. Striding over beach and rocks, we saw many seaside plants: *Crithmum maritimum*, Samphire and on the dunes, *Eryngium maritimum*, Sea Holly, and short turf covered with thyme and the endemic *Euphrasia salisburgensis* var. *hibernica*, Irish Narrow-leaved Eyebright.

We then set off to find a place for our picnic lunch, known only to our bus driver Brian - Cahermor Ring Fort. Here we found *Saxifraga hypnoides*, Mossy Saxifrage, in flower, and leaves of *Epipactis heleborine*.

After lunch and a lovely view, we set off for a brief stop at Poulnabrone portal tomb dolmen before leaving for Shannon Airport and home, with memories of beautiful weather, outstanding flora and our friendly, helpful Irish hosts.

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Plants

Apiaceae Hedge Parsley Family
Anthriscus sylvestris Hedge Parsley

Anthriscus sylvestrisHedge ParsleycommonApium nodiflorumFools WatercressCaher RiverConopodium majusPignutCap commonCrithmum maritimumSamphireP S and Fanore

Eryngium maritimumSea HollyFanoreHydrocotyle vulgaris*Marsh PennywortmarshesSanicula europaeaSanicleroadsides

Aquifoliaceae Holly Family

Ilex aquifolia Holly scailps, common

Aralaceae Ivy Family

Hedera helix Ivy common

Asteraceae Daisy Family

The Rine Achillea millefolium Yarrow Antenaria dioica Cat's Foot Cap. and P.S. Carline Thistle Carlina vulgaris common meadow Centaurea nigra* Common Knapweed Cirsium arvense Creeping Thistle Green Lane C.dissectum Bog Thistle MMC. palustre Marsh Thistle Caher River

C. patistre
C. vulgare
C. vulgare
Spear Thistle
Common
Crepis vesicaria
Beaked Hawks Beard
Eupatorium cannabinum
Hemp Agrimony
P S
Heracium anglicum
Irish Hawk Weed
Cap.

Heracium anglicumIrish Hawk WeedCap.Hypochoeris maculataSpotted Cats EarM MH. radicata*Common Cats EarCap.

Leucacanthemum vulgare Ox-eye Daisy Newtown, common

Mycelis muralisWall LettucecommonPilosella officinarumMouse –ear HawkweedcommonSolidago virgaureaGoldenrodP S

Tripleurospermum maritimum Sea Mayweed P S and Fanore

Betulaceae Birch Family

Alnus glutinosa Alder common
Betula pubescens Brown Birch M M

Boraginaceae Borage Family

Symphytum officinale Comfrey Formoyle

Brassicaceae Cress Family

Arabis hirsuta *Hairy Rock CressGreen LaneCakile maritimaSea RocketFanoreCardamine pratensisCuckoo FlowermeadowsCochlearia officinalisScurvy GrassP S and FanoreHesteris matrionalisDames Violetroadsides

Hesperis matrionalisDames VioletroadsidesRaphanus raphanistrum subsp. maritimus*Sea RadishFanoreSisymbrium officinale*Hedge MustardThe Rine

Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum Watercress Cap and Caher River

Caprifoliaceae Honeysuckle Family

Lonicera periclymenumHoneysuckleP S. CommonSambucus nigraElderThe Rine

Symphoricarpos albus Snowberry Cap.

Viburnum opulus Guelder Rose Cap and M M

Caryophyllaceae Pink Family

Arenaria serpyllifoliaThyme-leaved SandwortP SCerastium arvenseField Mouse-earThe RineC. diffusumSea Mouse-earThe RineC. fontanumCommon Mouse-earcommon

Honkenia peploides Sea Sandwort Fanore and The Rine

Lychnis flos-cuculi Ragged Robin meadows Minuarta verna Vernal Sandwort P S ММ M. hybrida Fine-leaved Sandwort Silene vulgare subsp. maritima Sea Campion PSSpurgularia marina* Lesser Sea Spurrey The Rine The Rine S. media* Greater Sea Spurrey

S. media* Greater Sea Spurrey The Rine
Stellaria holostea Greater Stitchwort common
S. media Common Chickweed common

Celastraceae Spindle Family

Euonymous europaeus Spindle Cap

Chenopodiaceae Fat Hen Family

Atriplex portulacoides*Sea-purslaneThe RineAtriplex prostrataSpear-leaved OrancheThe RineBeta vulgaris supsp. maritimaSea BeetP S and FaboreSalicornia europaea*GlasswortThe Rine

Cistaceae Rockrose Family

Helianthemum canum Burren Rockrose P S

ConvolvulaceaeBindweed FamilyCalystegia soldanellaSea Bindweeddunes: Fanore

CornaceaeDogwood FamilyCornus sanguineaDogwoodCap.

Coryllaceae Hazel Family

Corylus avellana Hazel very common: invasive

CrassulaceaeStonecrop FamilySedum acreBiting StonecropP SS. album *White StonecropM M

Umbilicus rupestris Navelwort Kilfenora Cathedral

Cuscutaceae Dodder Family

Cuscuta epithymum Dodder (on Thyme) Dunes: Fanore

EmpetraceaeCrowberry FamilyEmpetrium nigrumCrowberryBlack Head

Ericaceae Heath Family

Arcto-staphylos uva-ursi* Bearberry Black Head

Calluna vulvaris Heather common

Calluna vulgaris Heather common Vaccinium myrtillus Bilberry Black Head

EuphorbiaceaeSpurge FamilyEuphorbia heliscopia*Sun SpurgeGreen Lane

Sea Spurge rocks, P S and Fanore E. paralias E. portlandica* Portland Spurge Fanore Fabaceae Pea Family Anthyllis vulneria Kidney Vetch Cap and P S Lathyrus linifolius Bitter Vetch Cap L. pratensis* Yellow Vetchling roadsides Lotus corniculatus Birds Foot Trefoil common Medicago lupulina Black Medick Fanore Trifolium dubium Lesser Trefoil common Vicia cracca* Tufted Vetch MMBush Vetch roadsides V . sepium Gentianaceae **Gentian Family** Blackstonia perfoliata Yellow Wort Cap and P S Gentiana verna Spring Gentian common Geraniaceae **Geranium Family** Erodium cicutarium The Rine Storksbill The Rine G. columbinum Long-stalked Cranesbill Soft Cranesbill G. molle common G. lucidum Shiny Cranesbill common G. robertianum Herb Robert common G. sangineum Bloody Cranesbill scailps: common Hippuridaceae Mares Tail Family Hippuris vulgaris Mares Tail Caher River Bridge St Johns Wort Family Hypericaceae Hypericum androsaemum Tutsan scailps H. pulchrum Beautiful St Johns Wort Cap H. tetrapterum* Square-stalked St Johns Wort Green Lane Lamiaceae Mint Family PSAjuga pyramidalis* Pyramidal Bugle Caher River Bugle Ajuga reptans Mentha aquatica Water Mint Caher River M M Oreganum vulgare Marjoram Prunella vulgaris PSSelf Heal Teucrium scorodonia Wood Sage common Thymus polytrichus Wild Thyme common Lentibulariaceae **Butterwort Family** Pinguicula grandiflora Greater Butterwort Cap P. vulgaris Common Butterwort Khyber Pass Linaceae Flax Family CAP and Green Lane Linum catharticum Purging Flax Menyanthaceae Bog Bean Family Menyanthes trifoliata Bog Bean Caher Bridge Orobanchaceae **Broomrape Family** Orobanche alba* Thyme Broomrape PS**Plantain Family** Plantaganaceae

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Bucks Horn Plantain

Plantago coronopus

PS

P. maritima Sea Plantain common P. lanceolata Ribwort Plantain common

Plumbaginaceae

Armeria maritima Thrift common Limonium humile Lax-flowered Sea Lavender The Rine L. recurvum subsp. pseudotranswallianum Rock Sea Lavender rocks, PS

Sea Lavender Family

Polygalaceae

Polygala vulgaris Common Milkwort common

Milkwort Family

Knotweed Family

Polygonaceae

ponds Polygonum hydropiper Water Pepper Rumex acetosa Common Sorrel common

Primulaceae

Anagallis arvensis Scarlet Pimpernel dunes, Fanore Glaux maritima Sea Milkwort The Rine Lysimachia nemorum Yellow Pimpernel Green Lane Primula veris Cowslip common P. vulgaris Primrose common

Buttercup Family

Primrose Family

P. polyantha (P. vulgaris \times P. veris) Green Lane

Samolus valerandi Brookweed PS

Ranunculaceae

Aquilegia vulgaris Columbine CAP Caltha palustre King Cup Caher River, scailps Ranunculus acris Common Buttercup common R.bulbosa Bulbous Buttercup dunes, Fanore R. flammula Lesser Spearwort Green Lane R. repens Creeping Buttercup common Lesser Meadow-rue Thalictrim minus MM

Rhamnaceae

Buckthorn Family PS and MM Frangula alnus Alder Buckthorn Rhamnus catharticus Buckthorn PS and MM

Rose Family

Rosaceae

Rosa pimpinellifolia

Sanguisorba minor

Rubus caesius

R. saxatilis

Sorbus aria

Alchemilla glabra Hairless Lady's Mantle Cap A . xanthochlora Pale Lady's Mantle Green Lane Crataegus monogyna Hawthorn scailps and roadsides Mountain Avens Black Head & Khyber Pass Dryas octopetala Filipendula ulmaria Meadowsweet Caher River Geum rivale Water Avens Green Lane hedgerows

G. urbanum Wood Avens Potentilla anserina Silverweed common P. erecta Tormentil common P. fruticosa Shrubby Cinquefoil MMCreeping Cinquefoil P. reptans Prunus spinosa

Blackthorn scailps and roadsides Burnet Rose scailps, common Dewberry roadsides

Stone Bramble PS and MM Salad Burnet Cap Whitebeam Cap

Rubiaceae

Asperula cynanchica*
Galium boreale
G. odoratum
G. palustre
G. sterneri
G. verum*
Rubia peregrina

Salicaceae

Salix aurita S. caprea S. pentandra* S. repens Populus tremula

Saxifragaceae

Saxifraga hypnoides S. tridactylites S. rosaceae

Scrophulariaceae

Cymbalaria muralis Erinus alpinus

Euphrasia salisburgensis var. hibernica

Pedicularis sylvatica Rhinanthus minor Scrophularia nodosa Veronica arvensis V. beccabunga V. chamaedrys

V. officinalis
V. serpyllifolia

Urticaceae

Parietaria judaica

Valerianaceae

Valeriana officinalis Valerianella locusta

Violaceae

Viola canina

V. canina \times persicifolia = ritschliana

V. persicifolia V. riviniana **Bedstraw Family**

Squinancywort The Rine
Northern Bedstraw M M
Sweet Woodruffe roadsides
Marsh Bedstraw M M
Limestone Bedstraw common
Lady's Bedstraw Green Lane
Wild Madder Cap etc

Willow Family

Eared Willow M M
Goat Willow roadsides
Bay Willow roadsides

Creeping Willow Khyber Pass and M M

Aspen Green Lane

Saxifrage Family

Mossy Saxifrage Cahermor Ring Fort

Rue-leaved Saxifrage common
The Burren Saxifrage Black Head

Figwort Family

Ivy-leaved Toadflax walls

Fairy Foxglove Caher Bridge
Irish narrow-lvd. Eyebright P S and Fanore
Lousewort Cap and P S
Hay Rattle P S

Common Figwort roadsides
Wall Speedwell The Rine

Brooklime P S and Caher River

Germander Speedwell common
Heath Speedwell Cap
Thyme-leaved Speedwell The Rine

Nettle Family

Pellitory of the Wall Newtown Castle

Valerian Family

Valerian roadsides Lambs Lettuce common

Violet Family

Heath Dog Violet M M

Turloch Violet M M Common Dog Violet common

MONOCOTYLEDONS

Cyparaceae

Eriophorum angustifolium Carex arenaria C. binervis C. elata

C. flacca C. hostiana C. panacea

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Sedge Family

Carnation Sedge

Common Cotton Grass
Sand Sedge
Green-ribbed Sedge
Tufted Sedge
Glaucous Sedge
Tawny Sedge

peat bogs dunes, Fanore Cap and M M M M

common Cap common

C. pendulaPendulous SedgeLisdoonvarna WoodC. remotaRemote SedgeM M

C. sylvatica Wood Sedge Lisdoonvarna Wood

C. viridula subsp. brachyrhyncha
C. viridula subsp. oedocarpa
Common Yellow Sedge
Cap
Cladium mariscus
Great Fan Sedge
M M
Schoenus nigricans
Black Bog Rush
Cap

Iridaceae Iris Family

Iris pseudacorus Yellow Iris common, pods and rivers

Juncaceae Rush Family

Juncus articulatusJointed RushCapJ. conglomeratusCommon RushcommonJ. effususSoft RushmeadowsLuzula campestrisField Woodrushmeadows

Luzula sylvatica Great Woodrush Lisdoonvarna Wood

Juncaginaceae Arrowgrass Family

Triglochin maritimum Seas Arrowgrass The Rine

Orchidaceae Orchid Family

Anacamptis pyramidalis* Pyramid Orchid Fanore
Dactylorhiza cruenta Leopard Orchid (spots on M M

both leaf surfaces)

D. fuchsiiCommon Spotted OrchidcommonD. incarnata*Early Marsh OrchidM MD. maculata subsp. ericetorumHeath Spotted OrchidcommonD. majalis subsp. occidentalisBroad-leaved Marsh OrchidCap and M M

D. Okellyi * O'Kelly's Orchid Khyber Pass & M M

D.traunsteineriNarrow-lvd Marsh OrchidMMEpipactis helleborineBroad-leaved HelleborineCahermor Ring FortGymnandenia conopsea*Fragrant OrchidKhyber Pass and Fanore

Listera ovata Twayblade common
Orchis intacta Dense-flowered Orchid Cap and M M

Ophrys insectivora Fly Orchid M M
O. mascula Early Purple Orchid common

Platanthera biflora Lesser Butterfly Orchid M M and Green Lane

Poaceae Grass Family

Alepecurus pratensisMeadow FoxtailcommonAmmophila arenariaMarram GrassFanoreAnthoxanthum odoratumSweet Vernal GrasscommonArrhenatherum elatiusFalse Oat-grassroadsidesBriza mediaQuaking Grasslimestone

Catapodium maritumumSea Fern GrassP SCynosurus crestatusCrested Dogs TailcommonDactylus glomerataCoxfootcommonElymus farctusSand CouchFanore

Helictotrichon pubescens Downy Oat Grass Green Lane, common Lolium perenne Perennial Ryegrass common, meadows

Molinia caeruleaPurple Moor GrassM MPoa pratensisSmooth Meadow-grassmeadowsP. trivialisRough Meadow-grassroadsidesPuccinellia maritimaCommon Saltmarsh GrassThe Rine

Seslaria caerulea Blue Moor Grass most common grass

Gymnosperms

Juniperis communis Juniper Green Lane & M M

Taxus baccata Yew common

Ferns

Adiantum capillus-veneris* Maidenhair Fern Black Head Anthyrium felix-femina Lady Fern roadsides Asplenium adiantum nigrum Black Spleenwort Cap Sea Spleenwort A marinum Fanore A ruta-muraria Wall Rue common A trichomanes Maidenhair Spleenwort common Ceterach officinarum Rusty-back Fern common Cystopteris fragilis Brittle Bladder Fern Lisdoonvarna Dryopteris affinis* Scaly Male Fern Doolin meadow Broad Buckler Fern D. dilatata Lisdoonvarna wood

D. felix-masMale FernGreen LanePhyllitis scolopendriumHarts-tongue FerncommonPolypodium australeSouthern PolypodyBlack HeadPolystichum aculeatumHard Shield FerncommonP. setiferumSoft Shield FernCap

Original list made from:

Flora of Connemara and the Burren (D A 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)

By Maureen Ponting (Jul 2012)