# The Burren

# Naturetrek Tour Report

21 - 24 May 2013



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2013 Naturetrek Group at Poll Salach

Irish Saxifrage

Report compiled by Maureen Ponting & Dave Shute Images by Dave Shute

England



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Tour Report The Burren

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## Day 1

# **Tuesday 21st May**

We were picked up from Shannon Airport by our bus company owner, Brian Farrell, who once again would look after us so well. He has a great knowledge of Burren history and is an ardent conservationist. He took us through the Burren to lunch at Linnane's Lobster Bar on the Flaggy Shore. By the wall outside we recorded White Ramping-fumitory Fumaria capreolata. After lunch we had our first walk, on Cappanawalla, a limestone hill. The weather was sunny, windy and clear so we got a marvellous view of the coast and Ballyvaughan harbour and our first chance to see many of the typical Burren plants. Because of the unusually late spring we only saw a few blooms of Rosa pimpinellifolia, the Burnet Rose, but we did see Antenaria dioica, Catspaw, Geranium sanguineum, Bloody Cranesbill, Bitter-vetch Lathyrus linifolius and masses of Early Purple Orchids Orchis mascula. We stopped to look at many ferns growing on the rocks. The highlight of the walk was Pinguicula grandiflora, the Large-flowered Butterwort, thought to be a pre-glacial relic and in Northern Europe's only site. It is otherwise native of the mountains of South-west Europe. Also in the same area were masses of Spring Gentians Gentaiana verna. A Cuckoo was flying round, calling continually. We arrived at Sheedy's Hotel, Lisdoonvarna and were warmly welcomed by Martina and John Sheedy who have been caring for Naturetrek clients for 18 years. We sat down to a delicious dinner which, thanks to the miracles of modern communication, we had chosen from the bus.

### Day 2

# Wednesday 22nd May

That morning we woke to sun and wind. We started with a walk at Poll Salach, where the Burren limestone pavement runs into the sea. A large Oak Eggar caterpillar was seen by the road.

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, Limestone Bedstraw Galium sterneri, Maidenhair Fern Adiantum capillus-veneris and Honeysuckle Lonicera periclymenum. In the short turf, we saw masses of Heath Spotted Orchids Dactylorhiza maculata, Spring Gentians Gentiana verna and Bird's-foot Trefoil Lotus corniculatus, and on rocks, large patches of Helianthemum canum, the Burren Rockrose and also the Burren Saxifrage, Saxifraga rosaceae and two Broad-Leaved Marsh Orchids, Dactylorhiza occidentalis. Wheatear and Rock Pipit were new birds here.

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. We also saw Field Mouse-ear *Cerastium arvense*, growing along a sandy bank, Sea Sandwort *Honkenia peploides*, Thyme-leaved Speedwell *Veronica serpyllifolia* and Field Madder *Sherardia arvensis*. A group of waders on the shore proved to be a mix of Dunlin and Ringed Plover. On the walk back we saw a Wall Brown butterfly and a Speckled Yellow moth.

We had lunch at Monks Bar, overlooking the quay at Ballyvaughan, with delicious seafood a speciality. In the afternoon we walked a short way up the Caher, the only river in the Burren. The banks were covered with *Dryas octopetala*, Mountain Avens. We paused by the bridge to admire Fairy Foxglove *Erinus alpinus*, naturalised on the wall.

We then drove to the Green Lane, Formoyle ... an old stock road running the length of the Burren. Its original walls were built with limestone slabs laid vertically. From here we had a lovely view of the surrounding hills. In the Green Lane we saw patches of False Oxlip *Primula polyantha* and their parents, *Primula vulgaris* and *P. veris*, at various stages of hybridisation. We puzzled over *alchemillas* but decided all were Pale Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla xanthochlora*. A Dingy Skipper butterfly was seen and an attractive green ground-beetle *Carabus granulatus*.

On our arrival back at Sheedy's Hotel, some of us walked down to see Lisdoonvarna Spa with its strange early 20th Century buildings and pump. On the stream running through we saw some interesting plants, including a mass of the Brittle Bladder Fern growing on the stream wall.

### Day 3

# Thursday 23rd May

Another lovely day...we visited Kilfenora Cathedral and the Burren Centre, for maps, 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 today was Noel, a Burren botanical enthusiast, who found the Burren (or Dense-flowered) Orchid, Orchis intacta which was much appreciated by all. We spotted Viola persicifolia, the Turlough Violet and the hybrid, Viola canina x V. persicifolia. Also among the rocks Thalictrum minus and many shrubs, such as Stone Bramble Rubus saxitilis, Guelder Rose Viburnum opulus, Blackthorn Prunus spinosa and Alder Buckthorn Frangula alnus, growing prostrate, together with plenty of Potentilla fruticosa, Shrubby Cinquefoil.

On the way to Carron for lunch we drove up a hill, stopping for a marvellous view of Mulloch Mor beneath us. On the other side of the road the group were very interested to see the Carron archaeological site where *Saxifraga hypnoides*, Mossy Saxifrage, was spotted.

We left for a late lunch at Cassidy's Inn, in the village of Carron, converted from the police station and jail and then carried on to the Cliffs of Moher, where we were able to see Razorbills, Guillemots, Kittiwakes, Puffins and Fulmars on cliffs, the highest in the west of Ireland.

Day 4 Friday 24th May

Another sunny day with many projects to complete in the time available; first, to find the Pyramidal Bugle, *Ajuga pyramidalis*, which we did on the cliffs above Poll Salach, followed by a walk on the beach and dunes at Fanore. We saw seaside plants, including *Eryngium maritimum*, Sea Holly and Sea Spurge *Euphorbia paralias* and in the short turf, Wild Thyme *Thymus polytrichus* and the endemic *Euphrasia salisburgensis* var. *bibernica*, Irish Narrow-leaved Eyebright. On an erratic boulder we found the fern, Sea Spleenwort *Asplenium marinum*. Skylarks were singing all around, a Gannet passed by close inshore and a pair of Stonechats scolded us in the dune-slacks.

Then we had a quick stop at the Pinnacle Well to see more *Erinus alpinus*, Fairy Foxglove, in full flower then on to Ballyvaughan harbour to enjoy our sandwiches, with tea and coffee from Monks Bar, organised by Brian.

After lunch we set off for a brief stop at the ancient burial tomb, Poul na Brone Portal Dolmen before leaving for Shannon Airport and home, with memories of beautiful weather, interesting flora and our friendly, helpful Irish hosts.

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Tour Report The Burren

### **Species List**

Plants (MM = Mullach Mor)

Scientific Name Common Name Location / comments

Apiaceae Hedge Parsley Family

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

Eryngium maritimum Sea Holly Fanore

Oenanthe crocata Hemlock Water Dropwort Lisdoonvarna spa

Sanicula europaea Sanicle MM

Smyrnium olusatrum Alexanders roadside

Aquifoliaceae Holly Family

Ilex aquifolia Holly scailps, common

Aralaceae Ivy Family

Hedera helix Ivy common

Asteraceae Daisy Family

Antenaria dioica Cat's Foot Cap. and P.S. Carlina vulgaris Carline Thistle common Creeping Thistle Cirsium arvense Green Lane C. palustre Marsh Thistle Caher River C. vulgare Spear Thistle common Crepis vesicaria Beaked Hawks Beard common

Eupatorium cannabinum Hemp Agrimony PS

Leucacanthemum vulgare Ox-eye Daisy Newtown, common

Mycelis muralisWall LettucecommonPilosella officinarumMouse –ear HawkweedcommonSolidago virgaureaGoldenrodP SSonchus oleraceusSmooth Sow ThistleMMTaraxacum palustriaTurloch DandelionMM

Tripleurospermum maritimum Sea Mayweed P S and Fanore

Betulaceae Birch Family

Alnus glutinosa Alder common

Betula pubescens Brown Birch M M

Scientific Name **Common Name** Location / comments Boraginaceae **Borage Family** Symphytum officinale Comfrey Formoyle Brassicaceae **Cress Family** Cakile maritima Sea Rocket Fanore Cardamine pratensis Cuckoo Flower meadows P S and Fanore Cochlearia officinalis Scurvy Grass Sisymbrium officinale Hedge Mustard Pinnacle Well Watercress Cap and Caher River Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum Caprifoliaceae Honeysuckle Family Lonicera periclymenum Honeysuckle PS. common Sambucus nigra Elder The Rine Symphoricarpos albus Snowberry Cap. Viburnum opulus Guelder Rose Cap and M M Caryophyllaceae **Pink Family** Arenaria serpyllifolia Thyme-leaved Sandwort P S P S and The Rine Cerastium arvense Field Mouse-ear C. diffusum Sea Mouse-ear The Rine C. fontanum Common Mouse-ear common Sea Sandwort Fanore and The Rine Honkenia peploides PSVernal Sandwort Minuarta verna Silene vulgare subsp. maritima Sea Campion PS **Greater Stitchwort** Stellaria holostea common S. media Common Chickweed common **Spindle Family** Celastraceae Euonymous europaeus Spindle Cap Chenopodiaceae **Fat Hen Family** Atriplex prostrata Spear-leaved Oranche The Rine Beta vulgaris subsp. maritima Sea Beet P S and Fanore Cistaceae **Rockrose Familly** P S Helianthemum canum Burren Rockrose Convolvulaceae **Bindweed Family** 

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Sea Bindweed

Calystegia soldanella

dunes: Fanore

Scientific Name **Common Name** Location / comments Cornaceae **Dogwood Family** Dogwood Cap. Cornus sanguinea Coryllaceae **Hazel Family** Corylus avellana v. common: invasive Hazel Crassulaceae **Stonecrop Family** Sedum album White Stonecrop MMUmbilicus rupestris Kilfenora Cathedral Navelwort Cuscutaceae **Dodder Family** Cuscuta epithymum Dodder (on Thyme) **Dunes: Fanore** Ericaceae **Heath Family** Calluna vulgaris Heather common Euphorbiaceae **Spurge Family** Euphorbia paralias rocks, PS and Fanore Sea Spurge Fabaceae **Pea Family** Anthyllis vulneria Kidney Vetch Cap and PS Bitter Vetch Lathyrus linifolius Cap Birds Foot Trefoil Lotus corniculatus common Medicago lupulina Black Medick Fanore Trifolium dubium Lesser Trefoil common **Bush Vetch** Vicia sepium roadsides **Fumitory Family** Fumariaceae Fumaria capreolata White Ramping-Fumitory Flaggy Shore Gentianaceae **Gentian Family** Blackstonia perfoliata Yellow Wort Cap and PS Spring Gentian Gentiana verna common Geraniaceae **Geranium Family** Geranium columbinum Long-stalked Cranesbill The Rine G. molle Soft Cranesbill The Rine G. lucidum Shining Cranesbill common G. robertianum Herb Robert common

Scientific Name **Common Name** Location / comments G. sangineum **Bloody Cranesbill** scailps: common Hippuridaceae **Mares Tail Family** Hippuris vulgaris Mares Tail Caher River Bridge Hypericaceae St Johns Wort Family Hypericum androsaemum Tutsan Cap and scailps Beautiful St Johns Wort H. pulchrum Cap Green Lane H. tetrapterum Square-stalked St Johns Wort Lamiaceae Mint Family Ajuga pyramidalis Pyramidal Bugle Cliffs above P S A.reptans Bugle Caher River Mentha aquatica Water Mint Caher River Prunella vulgaris Self Heal P S Stachis sylvatica Hedge Woundwort Lisdoonvarna Spa Teucrium scorodonia Wood Sage common Thymus polytrichus Wild Thyme common Lentibulariaceae **Butterwort Family** Large-flowered Butterwort Cap Pinguicula grandiflora Linaceae Flax Family Linum catharticum **Purging Flax** Cap and Green Lane Menyanthaceae **Bog Bean Family** Menyanthes trifoliata Bog Bean Caher Bridge Oxalidaceae **Wood Sorrel Family** Oxalis acetosella Wood Sorrel Cap and The Rine **Plantain Family** Plantaganaceae **Bucks Horn Plantain** P<sub>S</sub> Plantago coronopus P. maritima Sea Plantain common P. lanceolata Ribwort Plantain common Plumbaginaceae Sea Lavender Family Armeria maritima **Thrift** common Limonium humile Lax-fld. Sea Lavender The Rine

Location / comments Scientific Name **Common Name** L recurvum subsp. pseudotranswallianum Rock Sea Lavender rocks, PS Polygalaceae **Milkwort Family** Polygala vulgaris Common Milkwort common Polygonaceae **Knotweed Family** Polygonum hydropiper Water Pepper ponds Rumex acetosa Common Sorrel common **Curled Dock** Rumex crispus Cap Primulaceae **Primrose Family** Anagallis arvensis Scarlet Pimpernel Fanore Glaux maritima Sea Milkwort The Rine Lysimachia nemorum Yellow Pimpernel Green Lane and Cap Primula veris Cowslip common P. vulgaris Primrose common P. polyantha (P. vulgaris x P. veris) False Oxlip Green Lane and The Rine Samolus valerandi **Brookweed** P S Ranunculaceae **Buttercup Family** Columbine Cap Aquilegia vulgaris Caltha palustre King Cup Caher River, scailps Ranunculus acris Rine and Fanore Common Buttercup R.bulbosa **Bulbous Buttercup** Rine and Fanore R. flammula Green Lane Lesser Spearwort R. repens Creeping Buttercup common R. ficaria Lesser Celandine common Thalictrum minus Lesser Meadow-rue ММ Rhamnaceae **Buckthorn Family** Frangula alnus Alder Buckthorn ММ Rhamnus catharticus Buckthorn PS and MM Rosaceae Rose Family Alchemilla xanthochlora Pale Lady's Mantle Common Aphanes arvensis Parsley Piert The Rine Crataegus monogyna Hawthorn scailps and roadsides Mountain Avens Dryas octopetala Cap. & Khyber Pass Caher River Filipendula ulmaria Meadowsweet

Scientific Name	Common Name	Location / comments
Fragaria vesca	Wild Strawberry	MM
Geum rivale	Water Avens	Green Lane
G. urbanum	Wood Avens	hedgerows
Potentilla anserina	Silverweed	common
P. erecta	Tormentil	Сар
P. fruticosa	Shrubby Cinquefoil	ММ
P. reptans	Creeping Cinquefoil	Сар
P. sterilis	Barren Strawberry	hedgerows
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	scailps and roadsides
Rosa pimpinellifolia	Burnet Rose	scailps, common
Rubus caesius	Dewberry	roadsides
R. saxatilis	Stone Bramble	P S and M M
Sanguisorba minor	Salad Burnet	Сар
Sorbus aria	Whitebeam	Сар
Rubiaceae	Bedstraw Family	
Galium boreale	Northern Bedstraw	M M
G. odoratum	Sweet Woodruff	roadsides
G. palustre	Marsh Bedstraw	M M
G. sterneri	Limestone Bedstraw	common
Rubia peregrina	Wild Madder	Cap etc
Sherardia arvensis	Field Madder	The Rine
Salicaceae	Willow Family	
Salix aurita	Eared Willow	MM
S. caprea	Goat Willow	roadsides
S. repens	Creeping Willow	Khyber Pass and M M
Saxifragaceae	Saxifrage Family	
Chrysosplenium oppositifolia	Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage	Lisdoonvarna Spa
Saxifraga hypnoides	Mossy Saxifrage	Carron Arch. Site
S. tridactylites	Rue-leaved Saxifrage	common
S. rosaceae	The Burren Saxifrage	PS
Carambularia	Signature Formilla	
Scrophulariaceae	Figwort Family	walls
Cymbalaria muralis	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	
Erinus alpinus	Fairy Foxglove	Caher Br. & Pinnacle Well
Euphrasia salisburgensis var. hibernica	Irish Narrow-Ivd. Eyebright	P S and Fanore
Pedicularis sylvatica	Lousewort	Cap and P S

Scientific Name	Common Name	Location / comments
Rhinanthus minor	Hay Rattle	PS
Scrophularia nodosa	Common Figwort	roadsides
Veronica arvensis	Wall Speedwell	The Rine
V. beccabunga	Brooklime	Caher River
V. chamaedrys	Germander Speedwell	common
V. officinalis	Heath Speedwell	Сар
V. serpyllifolia	Thyme-leaved Speedwell	The Rine
Urticaceae	Nettle Family	
	Pellitory of the Wall	Newtown Castle
Parietaria judaica	Pellitory of the wall	Newtown Castle
Valerianaceae	Valerian Family	
Centranthus ruber	Red Valerian	roadsides
Valeriana officinalis	Valerian	roadsides
Valerianella locusta	Lambs Lettuce	Fanore
Violaceae	Violet Family	
Viola canina	Heath Dog Violet	MM
V. canina x persicifolia = ritschliana	Violet Hybrid	MM
V. persicifolia	Turlough violet	MM
V. riviniana	Common Dog Violet	common
MONOCOTYLEDONS		
Araceae	Arum family	
Arum maculatum	Lord's and Ladies	
Asparagaceae	Bluebell family	
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell	
Cyparaceae	Sedge Family	
Eriophorum angustifolium	Common Cotton Grass	peat bogs
C. binervis	Green-ribbed Sedge	Cap
C. flacca	Glaucous Sedge	common
C. panacea	Carnation Sedge	common
C. pendula	Pendulous Sedge	Lisdoonvarna Wood
Schoenus nigricans	Black Bog Rush	common
Iridaceae	Iris Family	
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Iris	ponds & rivers

Scientific Name **Common Name** Location / comments Juncaceae **Rush Family** J. conglomeratus Common Rush common Luzula sylvatica **Great Woodrush** Lisdoonvarna Wood Orchidaceae **Orchid Family** Dactylorhiza cruenta Leopard Orchid(spots on both leaf surfaces) MMD. fuchsii Common Spotted Orchid MM D. maculata subsp. ericetorum Heath Spotted Orchid common Broad-leaved Marsh Orchid D. majalis subsp. occidentalis Cap and M M Listera ovata Twayblade Cap Orchis intacta Dense-flowered Orchid ММ Orchis mascula Early Purple Orchid very common Poaceae **Grass Family** Alepecurus pratensis Meadow Foxtail common Ammophila arenaria Marram Grass Fanore **Sweet Vernal Grass** Anthoxanthum odoratum common Arrhenatherum elatius False Oat-grass roadsides Briza media **Quaking Grass** limestone Cynosurus crestatus Crested Dogs Tail common Coxfoot common Dactylus glomerata Helictotrichon pubescens **Downy Oat Grass** Green Lane, common Lolium perenne Perennial Ryegrass common, meadows P. trivialis Rough Meadow-grass roadsides Seslaria albicans Blue Moor Grass most common grass **Gymnosperms** Juniperis communis Juniper Green Lane Taxus baccata Yew common **Ferns** Adiantum capillus-veneris Maidenhair Fern P S roadsides Anthyrium felix-femina Lady Fern Black Spleenwort Asplenium adiantum nigrum Cap A marinum Sea Spleenwort Fanore A ruta-muraria Wall Rue common A trichomanes Maidenhair Spleenwort common Hard Fern Blechnum spicant LisdoonvarnaSpa Ceterach officinarum common Rusty-back Fern

Scientific Name	Common Name	Location / comments
Cystopteris fragilis	Brittle Bladder Fern	Lisdoonvarna Spa
Dryopteris affinis	Scaly Male Fern	Green Lane
Phyllitis scolopendrium	Harts-tongue Fern	common
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	PS
Polypodium australe	Southern Polypody	Lisdoonvarna Spa
Polystichum setiferum	Soft Shield Fern	Cap and roadsides

# 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)

### Birds

Mute Swan	Cygnus olor	roadside
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchus	roadside
Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus	Leamaneh castle
Fulmar	Fulmarus glacialis	Cliffs of Moher
Gannet	Morus bassanus	Fanore
Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo	PS
Shag	Phalacrocorax aristotelis	Cliffs of Moher
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	M M
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	The Rine
Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus	roadside
Oystercatcher	Haematopus ostralegus	Fanore
Ringed Plover	Charadrius hiaticula	The Rine
Dunlin	Calidris alpina	The Rine
Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	common
Great Black-backed Gull	Larus marinus	common
Kittiwake	Rissa tridactyla	Cliffs of Moher
Sandwich Tern	Sterna sandvicensis	common around coast
Puffin	Fratercula arctica	Cliffs of Moher
Black Guillemot	Cepphus grylle	off Black Head
Guillemot	Uria aalge	Cliffs of Moher
Razorbill	Alca torda	Cliffs of Moher
Wood Pigeon	Columba palumbus	common
Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus	common

Skylark Alauda arvensis Fanore
Barn Swallow Hirundo rustica common
House Martin Delichon urbicum common

Rock Pipit Anthus petrosus P S and Fanore

Meadow PipitAnthus pratensiscommonPied WagtailMotacilla albacommonGrey WagtailMotacilla cinereaCaher riverRobinErithacus rubeculacommon

Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe PS and Formoyle

Stonechat Saxicola torquatus Fanore Song Thrush Turdus philomelos common Mistle Thrush Turdus viscivorus roadside Blackbird Turdus merula common Blackcap Sylvia atricapilla common Whitethroat Sylvia communis common Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus common Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collybita common Wren Troglodytes troglodytes common **Great Tit** Parus major common Magpie Pica pica common common Jackdaw Corvus monedula Rook Corvus frugilegus roadsides **Hooded Crow** Corvus cornix roadsides Starling Sturnus vulgaris common House Sparrow Passer domesticus in towns Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs common Linnet Carduelis cannabina roadsides

Bullfinch Pyrrhula pyrrhula Cap and The Rine

Caher river

Chloris chloris

Reed Bunting Emberiza schoeniclus M M Yellowhammer Emberiza citrinella M M

Reptiles

Greenfinch

Common Lizard Zootoca vivipara M M

Butterflies

Large White Pieris brassicae Fanore Small White Artogeia rapae common Orange Tip Anthocharis cardamines common Brimstone Gonepteryx rhamni MMPeacock Inachis io Formoyle Speckled Wood Pararge aegeria Cap

Wall Brown Lasiommata megera The Rine Dingy Skipper Erynnis tages Formoyle

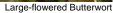
Moths

Speckled Yellow Pseudopanthera macularia The Rine Common Heath Ematurga atomaria M MOak Eggar (larva) Lasiocampa quercus ΡS

Beetles

A ground beetle Carabus granulatus Formoyle Green Tiger Beetle Сар Cicindela campestris







Dense-flowered Orchid