

## Moth-Trapping in Galloway Gardens

This summer we have had the opportunity to go moth trapping at two very different but fascinating gardens.

Our first event was at Cally Gardens, a plant nursery and garden created within the old walled gardens which served the Cally Palace at Gatehouse of Fleet. The garden itself grows over 4,000 perennial plants sourced from all over the world and many are fantastic nectar plants for bees, butterflies and of course moths. We set two traps up at Cally Gardens, one within the walled garden and one next to a nearby wood and boggy area. Both were successful, however it became apparent that the trap within the garden was by far the most full. In fact we counted over 41 species from this one trap alone. We spent the morning identifying them all, along with Sally and Michael, who are the garden owners, and the enthusiastic visitors who came. Some beautiful photographs were taken by people who attended and I must thank in particular James Champion who sent me copies of some of his fantastic shots.

Some of the beautiful moths which were caught included the Pale Prominent, Phoenix, Gold Spangle, Early Thorn, Rosy Rustic and Magpie and at one point we got very excited thinking we might have a rare 'Balsam Carpet' only to have it identified later by local moth recorder Jessie MacKay as a simple 'Red Twin-spot Carpet', ah well, you live and learn. I understand the Sally enjoyed it so much that she has since bought a moth book so that she can identify the moths in the garden herself.

Our second moth trap event was in the beautiful garden of Arndarroch, near Dalry and belonging to Annikki and Matt Lindsey. This garden was started in 1991 and has been created from bare hillside by the dedication and enthusiasm of its owners. The whole garden is designed to be a haven for all kinds of wildlife and Annikki is even thinking of writing a book about her successes in this regard. Unfortunately for us on the night of our trapping our generator (which runs one of the traps) started fine but must have shut itself off almost as soon as we left, so the trap was empty come the morning. Our second trap which we ran from the mains was a little more successful, catching us 10 species including Grey Chi, Canary-shouldered Thorn and Pink-barred Sallow and a most enjoyable time was had meeting the visitors and wildlife enthusiasts who came, despite fairly damp weather, to view the garden and its wildlife. Annikki had some wonderful displays showing the history of the garden, nests which have been found and some of the wildlife which has been spotted.

I would like to thank the owners of both gardens for allowing us to attend, all those people who came along and shared stories and enthusiasm, Jeremy Brock and Jessie MacKay and her daughter who helped at Arndarroch and my ever patient and enthusiastic daughter Morgan who helps me at every event, never complains and probably knows more about moths than me by now.

Ella McLellan

## Knowetop Diary

I wrote about the otters in the March edition of the newsletter. I don't often see them, but I always know that they are there by the excrement or "spraint" that they leave behind. Whenever the dog otter visits the reserve he leaves his "mark" on a special rock close to the edge of the inner lochan. Whenever I encounter the spraint I record the event and remove the material so that I will know when he visits again. This has been going-on for the past four or five years now, so I was quite concerned when the sprainting suddenly stopped – soon after I wrote the article! For about four months I could find no trace of otter-spraint and then, in the middle of July, the otter-spraint suddenly re-appeared - but this time on a different rock! It's not absolutely clear what's been going on because otters have large territories and there have been one or two short "absences" in the past. But the fact that the spraint re-appeared on a different rock does suggest that the territory may have been taken over by a new male!?

August was a rather wet and dreary month and so, when we finally got a warm and sunny spell in September, the dragonflies responded immediately. The boardwalks were filled with Black and Common Darters, each claiming their own territory in the sun, making sure that another Darter didn't get too close. The Darters are the last of the dragonflies to appear and can sometimes fly well into October. They are better equipped to cope with cold weather than other dragonflies, and their dark colouration helps absorb the heat. They were joined by two damselflies which were more unexpected:

In mid-September, I encountered an ageing Emerald Damselfly close to one of the dragonfly pools. The damselfly was really old and all the sparkle and colour had drained from its body making it drab and brown. This damselfly must have emerged during the good weather in July and survived the cold and damp of August before making its final appearance in September. I think it was the last one!

I was also surprised to find a young Large Red Damselfly which, in contrast to the Emerald Damselfly, had just emerged from the pools and was still pale and immature. The Large Red is one the first damselflies to appear in the spring. They reach their peak numbers in June and have usually finished breeding by August. Large Red Damselfly nymphs are programmed not to emerge later than this, but rather to delay over winter and emerge next spring. This individual was evidently fooled by the sudden warm weather in September and was encouraged to emerge far too soon. Sadly, I didn't see any other Large Red Damselflies to join it!

Graham Smith (Convenor, Knowetop)

## Dumfries & Galloway LBAP

A new edition of the Dumfries and Galloway Local Biodiversity Action Plan was published in April by the Dumfries & Galloway Biodiversity Partnership. This will guide the conservation and enhancement of wildlife across the region for the next 5-10 years.

The first edition of the LBAP was published in 1999 and won the Royal Town Planning Institute Scottish Award for Quality in Planning and the Scottish Silver Green Apple Trophy for Environmental Best Practice. More than 80 organisations, including community and school groups, have been involved in its implementation. Successful projects include the establishment of an annual Wildlife Festival; the setting up of the Dumfries & Galloway Environmental Resources Centre to store and make available wildlife information; restoration of woodlands, riverbanks and peatlands; the reintroduction of Red Kites; and the appointment of a Community Biodiversity Officer to assist local communities enhance the wildlife on their doorstep.

The new Plan builds on these successes, and ensures that future work takes account of issues barely mentioned in the first plan, such as climate change, ecosystem services and genetic conservation. Proposed new actions support the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan but, just as importantly, they address the concerns of local people about local species and habitats, as identified through extensive local consultations. Alistair Speedie, Director of Sustainable Development at Dumfries & Galloway Council said "The plan is the reference point for action to conserve local wildlife and habitats over the coming years. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity is an important part of delivering a sustainable future."

The second edition can be downloaded from [www.dumgal.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/biodiversity) or copies requested on CD by contacting the Biodiversity Officer, Peter Norman, on 01387 260172 or [pe.biodiversity@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:pe.biodiversity@dumgal.gov.uk)

## Galloway SWT: Winter Indoor Programme, 2009/2010

All meetings take place in the Gordon Memorial Hall, St Ninians Church, St Andrew Street, Castle Douglas, commencing at 7:30 pm. All are welcome (members & non-members).

St Ninians is at the bottom end of Castle Douglas: as you leave Castle Douglas on the B736 (to Gelston & Auchencairn), you will find St Ninians on the right hand side.

Wed 04 Nov 2009	AGM followed by... "A Study of Badgers" by Elaine Rainey	A look at the Natural History of these secretive creatures and their status in Scotland, based on the results of the recent Scottish Badger Survey Elaine is coordinator of the Scottish Badger Survey
Wed 02 Dec 2009	"Planning for Wildlife in Dumfries & Galloway" by Peter Norman	An interactive talk about the diversity of wildlife in our region and how we plan to manage it, based on the latest Biodiversity Plan for Dumfries & Galloway. Peter is Biodiversity Officer for Dumfries & Galloway.
Wed 06 Jan 2010	"Grasslands – the World at your Feet" by Pam Pumphrey	A look at our grasslands and the wealth of life that they contain: from flowers & orchids to grasshoppers & beetles. Pam is an active member of the SWT and Chairman of the RSPB Committee for Scotland
Wed 03 Feb 2010	"All about Bumblebees" by Bob Dawson	The Natural History and status of Bumblebees in Scotland, and what is being done to conserve them. Bob is Scottish Conservation Officer for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Wed 03 March 2010	"Wildlife of the Cairngorms" by Allan Bantick	A look at the varied and splendid wildlife that is found in the magnificent mountains that are the Cairngorms. Allan is a naturalist and photographer who lives, walks and climbs the Cairngorms. Allan is Chairman of the SWT Council.

## Galloway SWT Members Centre Newsletter – Nov 2009

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### Welcome to the November edition of the Galloway SWT Newsletter.

The summer season is now well behind us and winter is beckoning, so I want to say a few words about the summer season (just gone) and the winter season (to come).

I'm pleased to say our summer season was most successful. We put on 10 outdoor events during the summer and all were well-attended, enthusiastically supported, and largely unhampered by the weather. When I put the programme together I was a little concerned that the programme was too lengthy, but feedback has been good, so I think we'll try to something similar next year.

As part of the summer season we also ran a moth-trapping programme in cooperation with the Galloway "Open Gardens" Scheme. We chose a couple of gardens in our region and arranged to run a moth-trapping event in tandem with the Garden "Open Day". This presented a win-win situation to both organisations. Hopefully we would attract extra people to the gardens and, at the same, it would be an opportunity for us to engage with members of the public interested and gardens and nature. The days were a great success and quite a few people came to see the moths, as well as those who came to see the gardens, so I'm sure that we will continue this scheme next season. The events were organised by Ella McLellan with help from Jessie MacKay and Jeremy Brock. My thanks to them all for making this idea work.

Our AGM is on Wed 4<sup>th</sup> November. This will be a short ceremony and is followed by Elaine Rainey, from the Badger Trust, who will present the results of the Scottish Badger Survey which completes its work this year. I know that many of you have personally contributed to this project, so this presentation should be of particular interest to us all. In December, our local Biodiversity Officer, Peter Norman, will tell us the latest plans and strategies for managing wildlife in Dumfries & Galloway, based on the new Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) released in April this year. This document is key to the success of environmental planning in our region, and it is important that we fully understand its contents. I have included an extract from an earlier press-release in this Newsletter

In January, our own Pam Pumphrey has prepared a presentation about grasslands and the myriad of insects, flowers and other creatures than depend upon them. In February, Bob Dawson from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust has agreed to come down from Stirling to tell us about the different Bumblebees that are found in Scotland, the problems they face and the measures being taken to conserve them.

Perhaps the highlight of the winter season is in March when we are privileged to be joined by Allan Bantick, Chairman of our SWT National Council. I have asked Allan to give a presentation on the Wildlife of the Cairngorms, which is an area that he knows and loves. Allan lives in Boat of Garten, he is a keen naturalist and has walked and climbed the mountains extensively. I'm told that he was (or is) a member of Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team.

I know that Allan would like to meet us all on the day, so I would suggest that we start a little earlier than usual - say at 7.00 pm. Allan may be also be joined by our Vice Chairman, Jean Barr. So do come along and meet them both and glory in the wildlife of the Cairngorms.

Graham Smith