

Vascular plants of Kenilworth Road dunes and embankment, Ainsdale

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Introduction

Kenilworth Road dunes and embankment is a 5.76ha dune remnant bounded by housing estates, a road and a school. It is owned by Sefton MBC and a central Grid Reference is SD 308 122. The site is a proposed Local Nature Reserve and a Management Plan was written in 1996. The plan refers to a list of 107 vascular plants for the site, including the nationally very rare Round-headed Leek *Allium sphaerocephalon*. However, this seems to be a misidentification for the similar, but common, Wild Onion *A. vineale*. The JCAS Sites/Species Database lists 112 taxa. Visits in 1997 suggested that both the plant lists were incomplete (Smith 1997). Therefore, I undertook further survey work in 1998 and 1999 with the aim of producing a comprehensive vascular plant inventory for the site.

Results

I identified 183 vascular taxa on the site in 1998 and 1999. Twenty-four plants listed in the JCAS Sites/Species Database were not found (Table 2). Combining the two lists gives a grand total of 207 taxa. Two of these are nationally scarce. Smooth Rupturewort *Herniaria glabra* is included in the JCAS list. However, this is only known to occur on the adjacent Kenilworth Road grass verge and not on the dunes or embankment. The other notable taxon is Portland Spurge *Euphorbia portlandica*, two plants of which were found in 1999 near the northern end of the dunes. Also of interest is the first Sefton Coast record of Hedgerow Crane's-bill *Geranium pyrenaicum*, though this species is generally regarded as non-native. Of the grand total, 74 taxa (35.8%) were considered to be introduced. This compares with a figure of 27.1% for the Sefton Coast dune system as a whole (Smith 1999).

Discussion

Bearing in mind its relatively small size and the absence of slacks, a total of 207 vascular plants for the site is quite high. However, the Kenilworth Road dunes are among the most man-modified of any on the coast. In particular, there is a major problem of garden waste tipping, especially on the eastern margin. Within the woodland area, especially, there are many piles of refuse, amounting to several tonnes. Tipping also takes place in the open dunes, several dune hollows near to Kenilworth Road being used regularly by householders on the west side of the road. As a result, there are large patches of enriched vegetation supporting Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, etc., as well as an unacceptable number of garden escapes. Some of these are invasive; for example, the open dunes are badly infested with White Stonecrop *Sedum album*. This problem, which is barely mentioned in the management plan, needs to be addressed as a priority.

References

- Smith, P.H. 1997. Field notes on Kenilworth Road dunes, Ainsdale, 9th & 15th June 1997. Unpub. report to Sefton Coast Life Project.
- Smith, P.H. 1999. A provisional inventory of vascular plants for the Sefton Coast. Unpub. report to Sefton Coast Life Project.

Table 1. Alphabetical list of vascular taxa on Kenilworth Road dunes and embankment, Ainsdale, with relative frequency on "DAFOR" scale.

Sources : Sefton Sites/Species Database 1981-96 (1); P.H. Smith field survey, 1997-99 (2).

Acer pseudoplatanus*	Sycamore	ld	1 2
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow	vlf	1 2
Aesculus hippocastaneum*	Horse-chestnut	r	2
Aegopodium podagraria	Ground-elder	ld	1 2
Agrostis capillaris	Common Bent	f	1 2
Aira caryophylla	Silver Hair-grass	o	1 2
A. praecox	Early Hair-grass		1
Alliaria petiolata	Garlic Mustard	o	2
Allium vineale	Wild Onion	r	2
Ammophila arenaria	Marram	f	1 2

Anisantha sterilis	Barren Brome	la	1 2
Anthoxanthum odoratum	Sweet Vernal Grass	lf	1 2
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow Parsley	o	2
Anthyllis vulneraria	Kidney-vetch	f	1 2
Arabidopsis thaliana	Thale Cress	o	2
Arctium minus	Lesser Burdock	r	2
Arenaria serpyllifolia	Thyme-leaved Sandwort	o	1 2
Armoracia rusticana*	Horse-radish	o	1 2
Arrhenatherum elatius	False Oat-grass	la	1 2
Artemisia vulgaris*	Mugwort	r	1 2
Asparagus officinalis*	Garden Asparagus	o	1 2
Aster sp.*	Michaelmas-daisy	vla	2
Avena sativa*	Oat		1
Bromus hordeaceus	Soft-brome	o	1 2
B. hordeaceus hordeaceus	Soft Brome		1
Calystegia silvatica*	Large Bindweed	la	2
Campanula medium*	Cantebury-bells	r	2
C. rotundifolia	Harebell	o	1 2
Cardamine hirsuta	Hairy Bitter-cress	o	2
Carex arenaria	Sand Sedge	f	1 2
Centaurea nigra	Common Knapweed	o	2
Centaurium erythraea	Common Centaury	o	1 2
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse-ear	lf	1 2
C. semidecandrum	Little Mouse-ear	f	1 2
C. tomentosum*	Snow-in-Summer	f	1 2
Chamerion angustifolium	Rosebay Willowherb		1
Chenopodium album	Fat-hen	lf	2
C. bonus-henricus	Good-King-Henry		1
Cirsium arvense	Creeping Thistle		1
Claytonia perfoliata*	Spring Beauty	la	2
Convallaria majalis*	Lily-of-the-valley	vla	2
Conyza canadensis*	Canadian Fleabane		1
Cotoneaster sp.*	Cotoneaster	r	2
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	o	1 2
Crepis capillaris	Smooth Hawk's-beard	o	1 2
Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora*	Montbretia	r	2
Cymbalaria muralis*	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	vlf	2
Cytisus scoparius	Broom	o	1 2
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot	f	1 2
Daucus carota	Wild Carrot	o	1 2
Dianthus sp.*	Pink	r	2
Dryopteris dilatata	Broad Buckler-fern	r	2
D. filix-mas	Male-fern	r	1 2
Elytrigia juncea	Sand Couch	r	1 2
E. repens	Common Couch	r	2
Equisetum arvense	Field Horsetail	o	1 2
Erodium cicutarium	Common Stork's-bill	o	1 2
Erophila verna	Common Whitlowgrass	f	2
Euphorbia portlandica	Portland Spurge	r	2
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	r	2
Fallopia baldschuanica*	Russian Vine	ld	1 2
F. japonica*	Japanese Knotweed	ld	1 2
Festuca brevipila*	Hard Fescue	lf	1 2
F. ovina	Sheep's-fescue	o	2
F. rubra	Red Fescue	a	1 2

Fuchsia magellanica*	Fuchsia	r	2
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash		1
Galium aparine	Cleavers	f	1 2
G. verum	Lady's Bedstraw	o	1 2
Geranium molle	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	o	1 2
G. pratense*	Meadow Crane's-bill	la	1 2
G. pyrenaicum*	Hedgerow Crane's-bill	lo	2
G. robertianum	Herb-Robert	lf	1 2
G. sanguineum*	Bloody Crane's-bill	lf	1 2
Geum urbanum	Wood Avens	lf	2
Glechoma hederacea	Ground-ivy	vlf	2
Hedera helix hibernica*	Irish Ivy	ld	1 2
Hedera helix	Common Ivy	ld	1 2
Helichrysum sp.*	Everlastingflower	r	2
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed		1
Herniaria glabra	Smooth Rupturewort		1
Hesperis matronalis*	Dame's-violet	r	2
Hieracium umbellatum	Umbellate Hawkweed	o	1 2
Hippophae rhamnoides	Sea Buckthorn	ld	1 2
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire-fog	o	1 2
Hordeum murinum	Wall Barley	vlf	1 2
Hyacinthoides hispanica*	Spanish Bluebell	lf	2
H. orientalis*	Hyacinth	r	2
Hypochaeris radicata	Cat's-ear	f	1 2
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	lf	2
Knifofia uvaria*	Red-hot-poker	r	2
Lamium album	White Dead-nettle	lf	2
L. purpureum	Red Dead-nettle	o	2
Lathyrus latifolius*	Broad-leaved Everlasting-pea	vla	2
Leontodon saxatilis	Lesser Hawkbit		1
Leymus arenarius	Lyme-grass		1
Ligustrum ovalifolium*	Garden Privet	r	2
Linum catharticum	Fairy Flax		1
Lolium perenne	Perennial Rye-grass	la	1 2
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle	o	1 2
Lotus corniculatus	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	o	1 2
Lunaria annua*	Honesty	lo	2
Luzula campestris	Field Wood-rush	o	2
Lychnis coronaria*	Rose Campion	r	2
Medicago lupulina	Black Medic	lo	2
Melilotus alba*	White Melilot	r	2
Muscari armeniacum*	Globe Hyacinth	r	2
Myosotis ramosissima	Early Forget-me-not	o	2
M. sylvatica*	Wood Forget-me-not	r	2
Narcissus cultivar*	Garden Daffodil	o	2
Oenothera biennis*	Common Evening-primrose		1
O. fallax*	Intermediate Evening-primrose	o	2
O. glazioviana*	Large-flowered Evening-primrose	o	1 2
Olearia macrodonta*	New Zealand Holly	r	2
Ononis repens	Common Restharrow	o	1 2
Ornithogalum angustifolium*	Star-of-Bethlehem	r	2
Papaver dubium	Long-headed Poppy	vla	2
Papaver orientale*	Oriental Poppy	r	2
Pentaglossis sempervirens*	Green Alkanet	r	2
Phleum arenarium	Sand Cat's-tail	f	1 2

Pilosella officinarum	Mouse-ear Hawkweed	lf	2
Pinus contorta*	Lodgepole Pine	lo	2
P. nigra laricio*	Corsican Pine	lo	2
Plantago coronopus	Buck's-horn Plantain		1
P. lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain	o	1 2
Poa humilis	Spreading Meadow-grass	f	1 2
P. pratensis	Smooth Meadow-grass	la	2
P. trivialis	Rough Meadow-grass	lf	2
Polygala vulgaris	Common Milkwort	o	2
Polygonatum x hybridum*	Garden Solomon's-seal	r	2
Polypodium vulgare	Polypody	vla	1 2
Populus alba*	White Poplar	la	1 2
P. x canadensis*	Hybrid Black-poplar	f	2
P. candicans*	Balm-of-Gilead	la	1 2
P. x canescens*	Grey Poplar	la	2
P. nigra "Italica"*	Lombardy Poplar	la	1 2
Prunus avium*	Wild Cherry		1
P. spinosa	Blackthorn	r	2
Prunus sp.*	Cherry	r	2
Quercus robur	Pedunculate Oak	r	1 2
Ranunculus bulbosus	Bulbous buttercup	o	1 2
R. ficaria	Lesser Celandine	r	2
R. repens	Creeping Buttercup	lf	2
Raphanus raphanistrum maritimum	Sea Radish	r	1 2
R. r. raphanistrum	Wild Radish	r	1 2
Rhinanthus minor	Yellow-rattle	o	1 2
Ribes sanguineum*	Flowering Current	r	2
Rosa canina agg.	Dog-rose	o	1 2
R. rugosa*	Japanese Rose	la	2
Rubus caesius	Dewberry	o	1 2
Rubus series Glandulosi	Bramble	la	1 2
R. idaeus	Raspberry	lf	2
Rumex acetosa	Common Sorrel	r	2
R. acetosella	Sheep's Sorrel	lf	1 2
R. crispus	Curled Dock	o	1 2
R. obtusifolius	Broad-leaved Dock	r	2
Salix cinerea	Grey Willow	r	2
S. fragilis	Crack Willow		1
S. x reichardtii	Hybrid Willow	r	2
S. repens	Creeping Willow	la	1 2
Santolina chamaecyparissius*	Lavender-cotton	r	2
Saponaria officinalis*	Soapwort	la	1 2
Saxifraga granulata*	Meadow Saxifrage	r	2
S. tridactylites	Rue-leaved Saxifrage	o	2
Sedum acre	Biting Stonecrop	o	1 2
S. album*	White Stonecrop	f	1 2
S. rupestre*	Reflexed Stonecrop	r	1 2
S. spectabile*	Butterfly Stonecrop	r	2
S. telephium*	Orpine	r	1 2
Senecio jacobaea	Ragwort	o	1 2
Silene latifolia	White Campion	r	2
Sisymbrium officinale	Hedge Mustard	r	2
Solidago canadensis*	Canadian Goldenrod	la	1 2
Sonchus arvensis	Perennial Sow-thistle		1
S. oleraceus	Smooth Sow-thistle	r	2

<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> *	Rowan	r	2
<i>S. intermedia</i> *	Swedish Whitebeam	r	2
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	r	2
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> *	Snowberry	la	2
<i>Symphytum x uplandicum</i> *	Russian Comfrey	r	2
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> *	Lilac	r	1 2
<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	Tansy	vla	1 2
<i>Taraxacum sect. Erythrosperma</i>	Dandelion	o	1 2
<i>T. sect. Ruderalia</i>	Dandelion	f	1 2
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion		1
<i>Taxus baccata</i> *	Yew	r	2
<i>Thalictrum minus</i> *	Lesser Meadow-rue	vlf	2
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard	o	1 2
<i>Trifolium arvense</i>	Hare's-foot Clover	o	1 2
<i>T. campestre</i>	Hop Trefoil	r	2
<i>T. dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil		1
<i>T. hybridum</i> *	Alsike Clover	r	2
<i>T. pratense</i>	Red Clover	lo	1 2
<i>T. repens</i>	White Clover	la	1 2
<i>Tulipa gesneriana</i> *	Garden Tulip	r	2
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	r	1 2
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	la	1 2
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	Ivy-leaved Speedwell	la	2
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch	1	
<i>V. hirsuta</i>	Hairy Tare	r	2
<i>V. lathyroides</i>	Spring Vetch	o	2
<i>Vinca major</i> *	Greater Periwinkle	la	2
<i>V. minor</i> *	Lesser Periwinkle	1	
<i>Viola canina</i>	Heath Dog-violet	r	2
<i>V. riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet	1	
<i>Vulpia bromoides</i>	Squirreltail Fescue	1	
<i>V. fasciculata</i>	Dune Fescue	la	1 2

Total 207 taxa

* = introduced taxa (74 = 35.8%)

Table 2. Vascular taxa recorded in the JCAS Database but not found in 1997-99

<i>Aira praecox</i>	Early Hair-grass
<i>Avena sativa</i>	Oat
<i>Bromus hordeaceus hordeaceus</i>	Soft Brome
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear
<i>Chenopodium bonus-henricus</i>	Good-King-Henry
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	Canadian Fleabane
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash (definitely absent in 1997-99)
<i>Herniaria glabra</i>	Smooth Rupturewort (only on road verge)
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Leontodon saxatilis</i>	Lesser Hawkbit
<i>Leymus arenarius</i>	Lyme-grass
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Fairy Flax
<i>Oenothera biennis</i> *	Common Evening-primrose (probably <i>O. fallax</i>)
<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	Buck's-horn Plantain (seen only on road verge)
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry

Salix fragilis
Sonchus arvensis
Taraxacum officinale agg.
Trifolium dubium
Vicia cracca
Vinca minor*
Viola riviniana
Vulpia bromoides

Crack Willow
Perennial Sow-thistle
Dandelion (included in other **Taraxacum** taxa)
Lesser Trefoil
Tufted Vetch
Lesser Periwinkle
Common Dog-violet
Squirreltail Fescue

* = introduced taxon