Autumn Newsletter 2020

Reports from award holders
Lee Raye – Scotia Illustrata

The Scotia Illustrata, published in Latin by Robert Sibbald in 1684 was based on a questionnaire sent to naturalists across Scotland 350 years ago. The book has several chapters describing the plants, animals, geography, geology and diseases in Scotland.

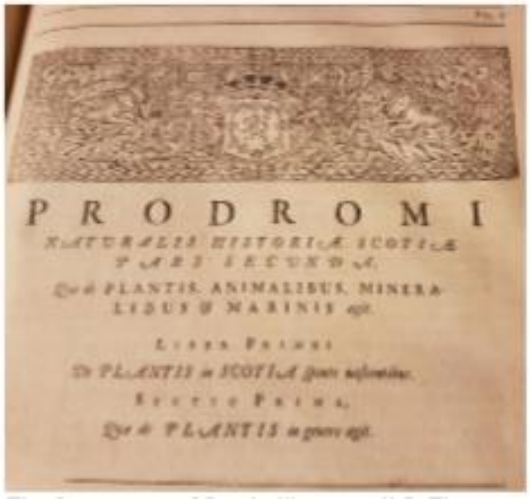
In 2016 Lee Raye, with the support of the Alice McCosh Trust, published a translation of a section of Scotia Illustrata (Part II, Book 3) on wildlife, and compared the results with the fauna of Scotland today. Having been awarded a second grant, Lee has now translated Part 2, Book 1, on plants of Scotland. This has led to the publication of a second book "The Wild Plants of Scotland and The Animals of Scotland"

Lee reports that the project was a great success and being able to interpret the names of the plants, means we know exactly which species of plant were commonly reported in the seventeenth century. This gives us evidence about what has changed. For example, henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*) and stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*) described in the original text as common, are today rare in Scotland and are both classed as Vulnerable to Extinction.

The changes are likely to be a result of land-use changes– most probably the intensification of agriculture and increased use of herbicides in the twentieth century. Stories like these can help scientists explain and put into context the current threats facing nature today.

You can hear more about Lee's work on twitter: #WildflowersOfScotland.

The front page of Scotia Illustrata II:3
Naturally Occurring Plants of Scotland.



Simran Aujla
The Carnivorous Round-leaved sundew plant

The Round-leaved sundew is a carnivorous plant found in peatlands across England. Being carnivorous it acquires its nutrients from its leaves and therefore has a reduced root system. So it is an ideal species to study as non-invasive methods can be undertaken without the need to look below groundlevel.

Simran looked at how the Round-leaved sundew responded to nitrogen pollution in different regions.

In summary Simran concluded:

- nitrogen had a negative effect on plant growth
- no significant effects of nitrogen on reproduction were observed
- small changes in nutrient aailablilty may change performance and competitive interactions between plants
- Site location and water availability is also important when considering reproductive output and mortality.

A much more detailed summary is located here on The Alice McCosh website and some more fantastic photographs.

Photos of Round-leaved sundew

Courtesy: Simran Anujla

Cards for sale

We still have a few Christmas cards and notelets for sale which can be purchased by following this link or go stright to the Alice McCosh website.

The Trust

The Alice McCosh trust has now been registered under the Scottish Charity Regulator since 2006.

It was established in order to perpetuate Alice's name and her lifetime's work, and seeing this transpire over the last decade and more is wonderful.

The object of the Trust is to advance education by providing or assisting with grants for work or study related to natural history and/or the environment. Since the establishment of the Trust 18 grants totalling over £16,000 have been awarded.

We continue to receive donations from many different sources and always from individuals that speak so affectionately of Alice.

Due to travel restrictions this year the receipents of last year's awards have been unable to undertake the field work so the Trust has extended the time required for them to complete the work. With this in mind the Trustees have decided to suspend our grant giving this year and hope to resume again in 2021.