

THE IOS 2015 FIELDTRIP

BRENDAN SAYERS

THE NORTH BULL ISLAND FIELD TRIP

MEMBER REPORTS

Records from Met Eireann show that 4.7 mm (3/16 in) of rain fell at Dublin Airport on Monday July 6th, 2015. As many people intending to go on a field trip will wait to see how the day is, some decided that the 2015 trip to the North Bull Island was to be missed. With relatively small showers at 6.30pm six members decided to take a walk regardless of the dark and heavy rain clouds out to sea.

Heading in the direction of the old lavatory block from the Interpretative Centre we encountered the pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), marsh helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), common-spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), the probable hybrid of the early marsh and common-spotted orchid, (*D. incarnata* x *D. fuchsii* = *Dactylorhiza* x *kernerorum*) on higher ground. As we dipped down into the large dune slack behind the toilet block we saw the last plants of the dune subspecies of the early marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *coccinea*) fading into plump seed pods, along with common twayblade (*Neottia ovata*) and large clumps of marsh helleborine. Also here was a broken flowering stem of the probable hybrid of the northern marsh and common-spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella* x *D. fuchsii* = *D. x venusta*).

The northern marsh orchid was the second last orchid seen that evening and so began the return walk and all eyes on the look out for a bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*). Finally found, it closed the evening with delight to see such an amazingly structured flower.

2015 seems a good year for orchids at the North Bull Island and the overabundance of dank grass that was obvious in 2013 seems to be diminishing. ■



NORTH BULL ISLAND, DUBLIN



NORTH BULL ISLAND ORCHIDS



Bee orchid - Ophrys apifera



Epipactis palustris



Dactylorhiza fuchsii



Dactylorhiza incarnata coccinea



Dactylorhiza kernerorum



Anacamptis pyramidalis

Images courtesy of Deirdre McGrane

*This year we did not find the Common fragrant orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) as we did not trek in the direction of the Alder Marsh; Bob and I found it there about five years ago. However, seeing that wonderful *Dactylorhiza x venusta* was a great boon and no less than four Bee Orchids made the overhanging clouds just a trifle!

*The Common Twayblade as the name suggests is usually found growing profusely on the North Bull Island however this year we found only a few. This may be because they were at the end of their season and there seemed to be more on the north side of the Island last year. It is thought that it takes twelve years for a Twayblade to grow from seed to flowering plant.

*Despite lower numbers than normal due to the weather conditions, we were not in the least disappointed in the numbers of orchids encountered, not just in variety but sheer volume. A beautiful sight indeed. Thanks go to Marie Hourigan, Vincent Sex and others who visit Bull Island prior to our annual trip to give us a 'heads up' on the best places to go. No doubt next year the weather will be more favourable!

MARY BRADSHAW

ÚNA BREATHNACH

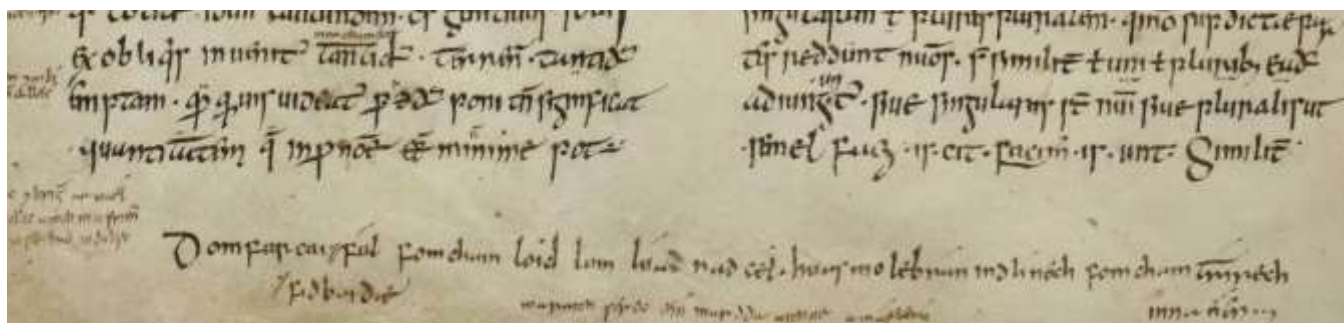
LISA COFFEY

*Dom-farcaí fídbaide fál
fom-chain loíd luín, lúad nád céil;
h-úas mo lebrán, ind línech,
fom-chain trírech inna n-én.*

*Fomm-chain coí menn, medair mass,
hí m-brot glass de dínnaib doss.
Debrath! nom-Choimmdiu-coíma:
caín-scribaimm fo roída ross.*

**Over me green branches hang
A blackbird leads the loud song
Above my pen-lined booklet
I hear a fluting bird-throng**

**The cuckoo pipes a clear call
Its dun cloak hid in deep dell:
Praise to God for his goodness
That in woodland I write well**



The scribe in the woods. This beautiful early Irish poem describes the joy of a scribe working in a forest surrounded by bird song and nature. It is found in the margins of a ninth century Irish treatise on Latin grammar, which now resides in the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland.

