

TWO WILD FLOWERS WHICH HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM BUTE

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Umbelliferae. *Eryngium Maritima*. Sea Holly.

This is a most attractive plant growing on sandy beaches. The leaves, of a distinctive light blue green, are prickly and make a delightful pattern as they grow. The flower is light blue, not very conspicuous, so that it is the leaves and their manner of growth which give the plant its distinction.

The one place where I know that it grew in Bute was on the Stravanan shore. When this bay began to be popular with picnickers some members of the Society discussed the advisability of giving it the protection of a fence and a notice. Rightly or wrongly it was decided that anything of that kind would just draw attention to the plant. In the summer of 1968 I found no trace of it growing.

John Lee in *Flora of the Clyde Area* (1933) notes it as "not common" in this area, giving Inverkip, Bute, Cumbræ and Arran as the places where it grows. It is common in the south of England and I have found a sandy bay full of it in Donegal. An attempt is being made to re-establish it in a less frequented sandy bay.

Urticaceae *Arietaria Officinalis*. Pellitory of the Wall.

It was the late Charles Kirkwood, one of Rothesay's most knowledgeable of field naturalists, who pointed out this little plant growing on the wall of St. Mary's Chapel by the High Kirk. It is not a spectacular plant, it is a little 6 in. spike with lanceolate leaves and small reddish green flowers. But there is always pleasure in seeing a plant growing when one knows that it is a rarity, for Lee gives it as "rare" in the Clyde area. It is much more common in the south. It only grows on old walls. Mr. Kirkwood was delighted to find it on Dean Castle which the Society visited some years ago.

In 1968 I looked for it in Rothesay but found that when the masons of the Ministry of Works restored St. Mary's Chapel they removed all the plants and ferns which used to grow in the crannies on the walls. It is sad that the preservation of ancient buildings and a preservation of lime and mortar loving plants are incompatible.