

London Natural History Society (LNHS) members are fortunate to have at their disposal a wonderful and well-stocked library located the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Biodiversity (AMC). Based at the London Natural History Museum (NHM), the AMC has a wide array of facilities and resources for people to undertake natural history research. The LNHS library complements this with its comprehensive collection of natural history references, with its bookshelves brimming with many specialist natural history books and periodicals. Both members of the public and society members can use the library but only society members may borrow books. LNHS members can also use the AMC equipment, including microscopes and photo-stacking equipment for photographing specimens. It is also possible to hold section meetings and workshops with the use of AV equipment and other facilities.

Attached to the AMC is the British and Irish herbarium collection. This is one of the most comprehensive collections of plants from this region. When I visited the library recently, Julie Berk, the LNHS librarian, took me there. She introduced me to the very friendly John Hunnux, one of the herbarium curators. As soon as introductions had been made, he rushed off like a busy bee, up and down to collect pressed plants for us to look at. One of the samples he brought back was Common Mallow (*Malva sylvestris*); the colour of the pressed flowers was still preserved, a distinct pinkish purple. The folded paper sheets used to contain the sample had a written label on it stating that it had been collected from 'near Deptford' in Kent in 1773. The specimen comes from Joseph Banks' herbarium. Banks was a prominent English naturalist and botanist who sailed with Captain James Cook on his historic voyage to the Pacific.

Julie also showed me around the NHM wildlife garden, located just outside the doors of the Darwin Centre. The garden is a well-kept oasis for wildlife in central London and serves as a habitat for a few thousand British flora and fauna. It is now closed (as of 1 August 2022 for a year) as it is undergoing an extension and renovation. When the garden reopens, there will be more opportunities for LNHS members to explore the gardens and use library resources for species identification. In fact, the LNHS is already using the AMC and library for species identification workshops, including one on [hoverflies this Saturday, 20 August](#). We hope to see you there!

The library is a valuable resource, a treasure trove of natural history books that many may not have access to otherwise. We encourage all of our members to come down to the library for research, species identification or simply for the pleasure of looking through lovely, illustrated books and periodicals. For more information on opening times, please see the [library webpage](#), and if you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the [LNHS librarian, Julie Berk](#).

Words: Andrew Planet (August 2022)