



Laura George: plant-community assembly on a soil with fluctuating hydrology.



The key research question I am going to address is to examine the impact of inter- and intra-annual variability (between and within years) on species richness at a range of field sites. I will be analysing data which has already been collected from floodplain meadows across the UK over the past 30 years, and then collecting new data from Irish turloughs.

A turlough, which literally translates from the Irish as 'dry' (tur) and 'lake' (lough), is a type of temporary lake found in western Ireland on lowland limestone karst. It is a fascinating habitat which has its own distinctive hydrology but also similar plant assemblages to those found on floodplain meadows; therefore they are useful case study and provide a great opportunity to better our understanding of how hydrological variability impacts on plant diversity.

I have had a hectic summer of carrying out fieldwork on meadows and turloughs, experienced a lot of weather, and seen a great many plants. Over the coming months I will be undertaking preliminary analyses of the data I have collected, and planning the details of a controlled experiment which will begin in spring 2017.

