

NEWSLETTER

Issue 18 September 2001

WILTSHIRE BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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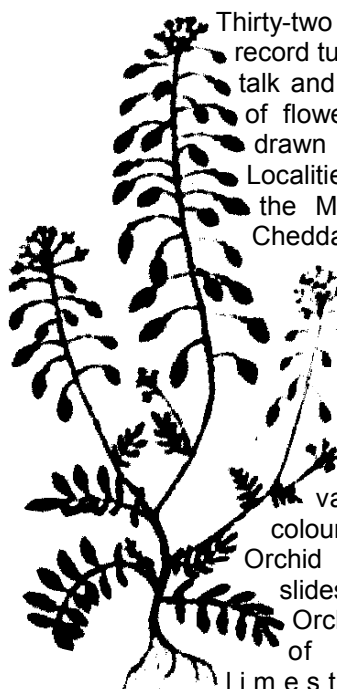
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10 February 2001

Plants of Carboniferous Limestone

Speaker: John Tucker



Thirty-two people, a probable record turnout, attended John's talk and presentation of slides of flowers, vistas and hand-drawn maps of site areas. Localities covered included the Mendips, Avon Gorge, Cheddar Gorge, Derbyshire and Yorkshire.

Writing in the dark, I'd made notes of about 80 plant taxa illustrated. John's main speciality, orchids, included variants, with four colour types of Early-Purple Orchid and some beautiful slides of Lady's Slipper Orchid. Listing only a few of his carboniferous limestone rarities, representatives from the *Brassicaceae* (*Cruciferae*) included Hutchinsia, Alpine-pennycress, Bristol Rock-cress, Narrow-leaved Bittercress and the rare *Arabis* originally introduced by the local mediaeval bishop, but unidentified at species level. Other crucifers included expanses of wallflowers, Honesty and Hairy Rock-cress.

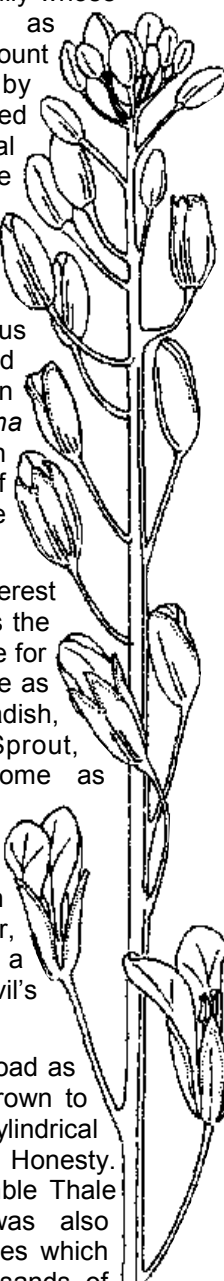
One of the best slides illustrated Steep Holm Island Peony introduced to the Mendips; but photography of the Avon Gorge Spiked Speedwell necessitated climbing beyond the safety barriers when onlookers expected John to make a suicide jump. Unfamiliar or rare *Caryophyllaceae* included Spring Sandwort, and the Cheddar Pink on the highest sheer vertical face of Cheddar Gorge. Two young women had been innocently sitting on another large mat of Cheddar Pink on a cliff ledge, but the dangerous inaccessibility of most clumps of this rare plant led to John's comment "No one will ever wipe it out".

Jack Oliver

17 March 2001

Mustards, Cresses And Cabbages

Speaker: John Presland



This talk, illustrated by slides, provided a look at the *Cruciferae* (or *Brassicaceae*), a family whose members are, justifiably, regarded as difficult to identify. It began with an account of the family characteristics, illustrated by slides of the Wallflower. I then explained the characters used to identify individual species in the family, and illustrated the process by reference to keys I have devised for Wiltshire species. Some of these were in Wiltshire Botany 4, and the rest are planned for Wiltshire Botany 5. The rest of the talk took us through most of the British species and concluded with some attractive foreign members, such as the violet *Arabis verna* and the pink *Malcomia flexuosa*, both photographed in Crete, and masses of white *Diplotaxis eruroides* on the Greek Theatre at Syracuse in Sicily.

A number of topics of particular interest were taken up during the talk. One was the use of particular species for food - some for oil, notably Rape and Wild Turnip, some as main foods, such as Turnip, Swede, Radish, cabbages, Broccoli, Brussels Sprout, Cauliflower and Sea Kale, and some as condiments, such as Black and White Mustard, Garden Cress, Water-cress and Horse-radish (including the former practice of mixing the latter with mustard, Cayenne and black pepper, chillies and chilli vinegar to produce a dressing called "The Universal Devil's Mixture").

Other topics were the former use of Woad as a source of a blue dye, a *Brassica* grown to make walking sticks, and the way a cylindrical ovary turns into a flat spherical fruit in Honesty. The importance of the apparently humble Thale Cress as an experimental plant was also described - the only green plant species which has had every single one of its thousands of genes mapped and the only crucifer which has its own journal, the *Arabidopsis Information Service*. Medicinal uses of plants were also referred to, such as the 17th century herbalist Culpeper's advice to mix Water-cress juice with vinegar to apply to the forehead to help those that "have the lethargy".

John Presland

26 April 2001

Home Covert

John Philips

This was the first of the “substitute” visits, engendered by foot and mouth. Seventeen members converged on the 33-acre garden and wood of John Philips, an amazingly knowledgeable and witty plantsman. The central six acres or so is basically an arboretum with many rare specimens, and naturalistic understoreys of equally interesting shrubs, herbaceous plants and bulbs. The whole collection has taken about 40 years to accrue from scratch.

The entrance drive was lined with *Erythroniums* and *Trilliums*, and the most interesting shrub was a Chinese *Heptacodium* with curved (resupinate) leaves like Dinosaur claws – hence the nickname ‘Jurassic Park Tree’. It was discovered only 20 years ago. On the edge of the lawn was the largest weeping beech in the country, and a fastigate *Sorbus* that John reckoned should replace some city plane trees!

On the walk towards the stream valley was a hybrid *Daphne* (*D. mezereum* x *laureola*) with purple leaves and scentless pink flowers – possibly the only plant in existence. Superb tree *Magnolias* were dotted between pines (e.g. *wallichiana* – Bhutan Pine), Southern Beech (*Nothofagus*, e.g. *antarctica*), *Halesia* (Snowdrop Tree), *Davidia* (Handkerchief Tree) and many others. John’s most troublesome ‘weed’ is *Cardamine bulbifera*, but it is still contained within the garden, despite John swearing that its bulbils can roll uphill.

In the valley several streams converge (‘headwaters of the Amazon’) and John has put two bridges across them. In the streams were two species of *Lysichiton* (Skunk Cabbage) – *americanus* and *camchatkensis* – *Gunnera* and Water Forget-me-not, which would fill the streams without severe raking out. Parasitic on the roots of *Metasequoia* and hazel, as well as the more usual poplar and willow, were large patches of *Lathraea clandestina*.

On the way back to the house an *Illicium anisatum* was in flower. Apparently it has tracheids rather than the usual xylem and phloem, which implies that it is more primitive than its nearest relatives, the *Magnolias*. Then it was tea and discussion about a fascinating afternoon with an entertaining host.

Simon Young

Sunday 20/05/2001

Bentley Wood

Leader: Pat Woodruffe

Bentley Wood is magnificent and many thanks to Lady Colman (mustard) for saving the wood and putting it in the care of trustees. Pat is one of these trustees. The wood is vast, 5 miles by 3 at its broadest. Soil is neutral and it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and probably part of one of the primeval forests of England.

Jack soon found a hybrid between *Salix cinerea* (Grey Willow) and *S. caprea* (Goat Willow), *S. x reichardtii*. There can be more hybrid than parents in the wood, so the Goat Willow is well named.

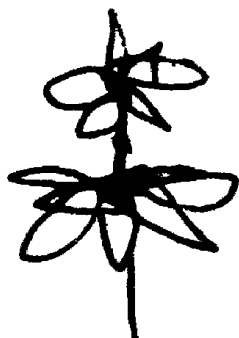


Sanicle - from an engraving by Robin Tanner

We had a “field day” with grasses, sedges and rushes. Large clumps of *Carex divulsa* (Grey Sedge), *C. hirta* (Hairy Sedge), Remote Sedge and Pale Sedge. *Luzula multiflora* var. *congesta* (Heath Wood Rush) was a good find and *Glyceria fluitans* (Flote Grass) and Wood Melick, too. Speckled Yellow Moths were abundant, but Drab Looper Moths are more important as a B. A. P. (Biodiversity Action Plan) species. The food plant, Wood Spurge, is plentiful. There was a patch of *Rhododendron*, not too invasive, but favoured by the Broad-bordered Bee Hawk Moth

– Honeysuckle for the larvae.

We went through a part of the wood with Bitter Vetch abundant, also Sneezewort and Slender St John's Wort in this part. This was on the way to an arable field between two arms of the wood, which will be returned to meadowland eventually. Here we found Parsley-piert, Marsh Foxtail, Meadow Fescue, Black Grass, Field and Germander Speedwell and Smooth Hawk's-beard. Also a strange Scentless Mayweed with a small flower head on a stalk growing out of the main flower head, i.e.



We had lunch in the barn in the wood where we were surprised to find Small-flowered Buttercup under the picnic tables. The leaf was rather crane's-bill-like. There was an unidentified plant in the hard core (could it have been the beginnings of Canadian Fleabane?).

After lunch, more surprises: a Meadow Saffron area where we found the leaves and seed heads, passing lovely patches of Solomon's Seal. Then on again to see Lily of the Valley and Herb Paris, which were thriving in very shady conditions. We



Herb Paris - *Paris quinquefolia*?

found a patch of almost white Germander Speedwell flowers and last but not least to the top edge of the wood for large clumps of Early Purple Orchid and Wood Sanicle. During the day we saw Seven Spot and Twelve Spot Ladybirds,

Orange Tip and Brimstone Butterflies, Green Woodpecker, Chiff-Chaff and Willow Warbler calling frequently and a Cuckoo in the distance. A memorable day.

Rosemary Duckett



Name this leaf

25 May 2001

Clatford Arboretum

Leader: Jack Oliver

After having all our visits curtailed by foot-and-mouth restriction up to now, it was a great pleasure for a number of us to get out and see some real plants at Jack Oliver's arboretum at Clatford in May. There was ample parking but a few got bogged down in the wet ground before we started and were rescued by towing and brute strength. It had after all been the wettest season on record.



Joy and Jean battle with the Arums

This ambitious undertaking was begun by Jack in 1992 on 7½ acres of wall-to-wall nettles along side the Kennet. We know how fond Jack is of nettles! The collection seen on this occasion was mainly of willow and poplars, but there is also an almost complete collection of all the world species of *Tilia*, some of which had amazingly attractive leaves, just freshly opened. There were a few conifers from Edinburgh Royal Botanical Gardens including specimens of White Atlantic cypress from New Jersey, (now extinct in Massachusetts). He has most of the endemic

Sorbi including small *Sorbus wilmottiana* trees from the steep slope of the Clifton gorge. By misfortune and misunderstanding, English Nature and their contractors had cut down and then sprayed the type specimen's largest site. However, some berries had been rescued and subsequently grown on by Jack. He had good words to say for the maligned *Leylandii* as not only was it the fastest growing screen and a (new) native, but also the most effective plant known in absorbing a variety of noxious air-borne pollutants and in muffling noise.

Jack produced a number of samples from his comprehensive assembly of Willows and Poplars that he conjured up from behind a tree to pass round to examine, ones he had prepared already, so that we could appreciate the finer points of difference between the various hybrids of which there were a considerable number. We then walked round to see the trees themselves. Of especial interest were young introduced native Black Poplars, the species recently discovered to be quite plentiful on riverbanks in Wiltshire. Old trees are characterised by bosses on the boles, dipping drooping branches and there are tiny hairs on the young shoots.

Apart from the trees, there was a colourful stand of the Purple Toothwort, a parasite on willow roots and forming a spectacular clump. This is an introduced species but one which appears anew, distances away from the point of introduction.

Barbara Last

Saturday 9 June 2001

Somerford Common

Leader: John Grearson

Six of us gathered on a gentle summer's day.

First John set us to work counting Greater Butterfly Orchids, designating our blocks of ground, some of which were tangled with a year's growth of scrub. There had to be some shouting to check we were not poaching next door's blooms: "Have you done these ones by the wood?" and so on. It was the perfect date to do the count as we could include the early ones, now nearly over, and some late ones scarcely started, as well as the majority in full exquisite bloom. We found 223, probably a county record, and we were very pleased.

After that we potted companionably through the wood serenaded by warblers (common, willow, blackcap). We found Lousewort in a new area and Ragged Robin that John had not expected. There were regiments of Marsh Thistle resplendent in their pre-flowering purple and green. We found a few Heath Spotted Orchids among the Common Spotted, with probable hybrids nearby.

There was a dearth of butterflies and John was mourning the non-emergence (as yet) of Marsh Fritillaries, but there was a hefty conical web-nursery of Small Eggar Moth to admire.

A happy morning.

Rosemary Duckett



Greater Butterfly Orchid

Sunday 10th June

Westonbirt Arboretum

Leader: Jean Wall

A small group gathered on a coolish June day and set out across the meadow towards Silk Wood. There was a good mix of familiar limestone grassland plants, Ox-eye Daisy, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Black Medick, Common Milkwort, Common Thyme, Common Spotted Orchid and scattered plants of Yellow Rattle, Pignut and Common Rock-rose. Resolutions to get to grips with yellow composites came to the fore with identification of Rough Hawkbit and the lemon coloured flowers of Mouse-ear Hawkweed. The presence of Tormentil suggested patches of acid soil.

At the bottom of the bank, the song and fleeting glimpse of a Blackcap greeted us as we approached a fine patch of Sea-buckthorn in a moister area. It was a pleasure to see a fine group of mature Box close to the Waste Gate and a scattering of smaller ones amongst the trees. Further up the slope was a small glade with large Twayblades and Common Spotted Orchids competing well with long grass. Nearby a Spindle was in bloom and a small patch of Lady's Smock half-hidden by overhanging *Cotinus*.

In a larger glade we found a fine display of perfect Greater Butterfly Orchids amongst the leaves of Meadow Saffron. Several Chinese roses were in bloom, including *Rosa multiflora*, with a delicious scent and arching sprays of clustered white blooms. We also found several patches of *Geums*, which we concluded were *G. hybridum*, since the flowers were creamy yellow and nodding, though some with a pinkish tinge; a further patch had smaller pale yellow nodding flowers, quite distinct from the nearby Herb Bennett. Other common woodland species we noted were Woodruff, Wood Sorrel, Sanicle and a mercifully small patch of Ramsons. Also in the same area was a group of *Cornus ?florida* covered with four-sepalled white starry flowers.

Two mature trees with grafts some six feet above the ground were Pendant Silver Lime on Large-leaved lime and Pyrenean Beech on Common Beech. Among the profusion of exotic maples we were particularly delighted by *Acer campestre schwerinii*, which had brilliant winged fruits.

After lunch we enjoyed the profusion of colour and scent offered by the *Rhododendrons* and *Azaleas* in the Old Arboretum.

Interesting ground cover plants were less plentiful here, but we were able to compare the foliage

and seeds of Male Fern and Lady Fern side by side and identified *Lemna Trisulca* in the pond, which was surrounded by Yellow Irises.

Gillian King

Thursday, 14 June 2001

Westbury Chalk Pit

Leader: Rosemary Duckett

There was a good turnout on this fine, breezy, cool day. We were met by David Beattie of Blue Circle Cement. He led us down a track to the edge of the vast, vertiginous quarry, where he gave a brief and most interesting description of the geology. The scale of the quarry is awe-inspiring, about half a mile square, and rather like an inverted White Cliffs of Dover. The chalk deposit line, which lies right across Salisbury Plain, stretches east as far as the Urals where the deposits become as thick as 35 metres, on top of rock.

David next led us away from the quarry edge (a relief for some) to begin the morning's botanical foray. The track went gradually downhill through a wide belt of grassland in which we had our first find, a scattering of Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*),

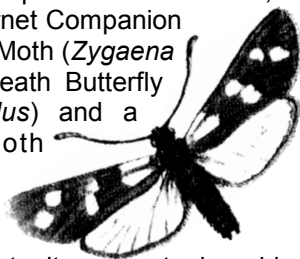


David Beattie points out a Peregrine's nest to Eileen 'two hats' Rollo

together with Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*). Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*), Yellow Wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) and Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*) were observed. A Beaked Hawk's-beard (*Crepis vesicaria*) was closely scrutinised for the distinguishing beaked achenes. Good numbers of various other common species had been added to the list by the time we reached the

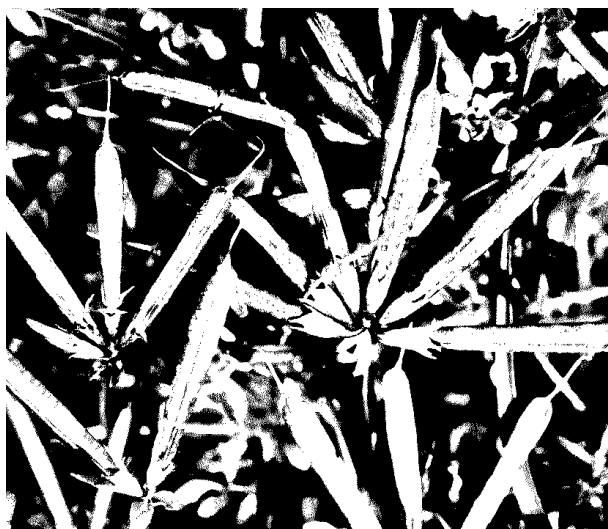
bottom of the track, and David, waiting with a Landrover for the ornithological element of the day. Ten Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) reside in the quarry and we were about to be shown a nest on the quarry face opposite. At this point the group divided and some of the less nimble of us were wafted to the top of the quarry in the Landrover. Sure enough, there they were, three chicks, almost ready to fly, one with a tuft of down still on its head, waiting for a parent to return with food. David had brought a telescope and we were able to enjoy a good 15 minutes observation.

After that excitement we were whisked up to the high downland to continue our botanising. Here more common species were found; Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*), Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*), Ribbed Mellilot (*Mellilotus officinalis*) and Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) - to name a few. A few larks were singing overhead, and Barbara captured some insects, including a Sawfly, a Burnet Companion Moth, a Six Spot Burnet Moth (*Zygaena filipendulae*), a Small Heath Butterfly (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) and a Mother Shipton Moth (*Callistege mi*).



It was an unusual opportunity to be able to see just how thin the layer of topsoil is on the chalk, which supports such a variety of meadow flora. The mixture of geology, ornithology and botany, and a beautiful summer day, combined to make a satisfying and enjoyable outing.

Rosemarie Smith



Monday 18 June 2001 Rodborough Common, Stroud

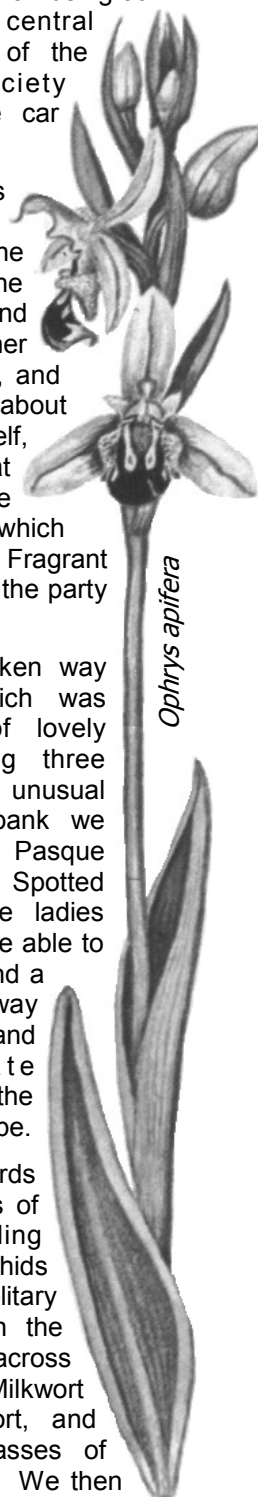
Leader: John Tucker

In spite of Rodborough Common being at least forty miles from central Wiltshire, seven members of the Wiltshire Botanical Society assembled at the roadside car park on the common.

From here we set out towards the southern boundary of the common, and we had not gone far when I noticed that the ladies had spotted a mound covered in Rock Rose together with a few Fragrant Orchids, and were getting quite excited about them. I had to smile to myself, as they had no idea of what was to come. We soon came to a triangular flat area, which contained quite a number of Fragrant Orchids, and I could see that the party was quite impressed.

We then descended a sunken way above a steep bank which was populated by hundreds of lovely Fragrant Orchids, including three albino specimens and two unusual plants. Descending the bank we found seed heads of the Pasque Flower and several Common Spotted Orchids. Here two of the ladies produced magnifiers and were able to determine several grasses and a sedge. Back on the sunken way several juniper bushes and patches of prostrate Cotoneaster were noted, the latter probably a garden escape.

We then proceeded northwards passing several dense areas of Fragrant Orchids, including albinos, a few Pyramidal Orchids just breaking bud and a solitary Bee Orchid in bud right in the middle of the track. Thence across a grassy area, with Chalk Milkwort where the grass was short, and Common Milkwort with masses of Yellow Rattle in other areas. We then came to a contouring path overlooking a steep escarpment which led to quarried areas



passing groups of the inevitable Fragrant Orchids plus some Common Spotted Orchids *en route*. Here there were a few more budding Pyramidal Orchids and in a trench another solitary Bee Orchid in flower. Unfortunately, the Bee Orchid var. *trollii* which can usually be found in this trench was not in evidence this year.



Ophrys apifera var. trollii

On northward again, passing an area which has good varieties of Early Purple Orchid in May. Then towards Rodborough Fort (a Victorian folly), still with numerous orchids along the way, Common Spotted Orchids becoming more prevalent and Twayblades beginning to appear.

Below the fort there were fine patches of Rock Rose, Horseshoe Vetch and Bird's

Foot Trefoil shown off to advantage against bare Cotswold limestone. Rounding the fort's walled enclosure we then headed south again through a wooded area with large Common Spotted Orchids and Twayblades.

This led us back to the edge of the open common near to the main road which crosses it. Here we followed a path parallel to the road back to the car park, Twayblades and Fragrant Orchids all the way, including some fine specimens of the latter only a few yards from the parked vehicles.

Jean Wall commented that the site had produced more orchids than anywhere else that she had seen in England. There were indeed thousands of Fragrant Orchids and very many Common Spotted Orchids and Twayblades. Thankfully all present said it was a worthwhile meeting, the good weather and the numerous flowers made the day.

John Tucker

Sunday, June 24, 2001

Painswick Rococo Garden, Gloucestershire

Leader: - Jean Wall

A sunny Sunday in June brought four members of the Society to the delightful Rococo Garden at Painswick in Gloucestershire. This was one of the extra outings kindly arranged by Joy and Jean to compensate for not being able to carry out all the planned programme as a result of the foot and mouth epidemic.

On an earlier reconnaissance in April Jean had seen the Town Hall Clock (*Adoxa moschatellina*) Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) indicating ancient woodlands, but by June only the leaves of the two latter were visible under the dense woodland canopy which included oak, ash, beech, alder, cherry and field maple. Beautiful grasses Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) and Rough Meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*) were conspicuous under the trees.

The woods are famed for their snowdrops in early spring and lie at the far end of the formal gardens which are on the side of a hill. There is a Nature Trail for children through the woods and a pond lying just above with Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) on the verge, where Emperor Dragonflies, blue Damselflies and red Darters were enjoying the sunshine, along with a brood of half grown moorhens on the grassy slopes above.

The formal gardens were created by the owner, Benjamin Hyett in the 1740s and have recently been restored to the design shown by Thomas Robins in a painting of 1748. The asymmetry of the garden buildings which adorn the landscape helps to recreate a unique vision of the brief period when *rocaille* (rockwork) and *coquille* (shell) were fashionable. Contemporary herbaceous borders were bright with flowers, the Sweet Williams being especially colourful. We also explored the recently designed Anniversary Maze, with its solar-powered fountain and admired the view of the Stroud Valley from the Viewing Point and the young fruit trees and grassy vistas.

We had a most enjoyable lunch and are very grateful to Joy and Jean for arranging such a delightful visit.

Phillida Sneyd

12th July 2001

West Yatton Down

Led by Mark Lang

Six of us braved a cloudburst to visit West Yatton Down, but as we left the cars the sun shone, and there was no more rain. This area is exceptionally interesting limestone grassland as there are steep slopes facing North, South, East and West, each subtly different in flora.

We climbed up, over the top and down, then through woodland. The downland species included *Succisa pratensis* (Devil's-bit Scabious), *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Pyramid Orchid), *Serratula tinctoria* (Saw-wort), and *Genista tinctoria* (Dyer's Greenweed), the last species rather uncommon.



Dyer's Greenweed

Plenty of Marbled White butterflies fluttered around, one carrying bright red parasites. A few very fresh Small Tortoiseshells were seen, some equally brilliant newly emerged Commas, and one Chalk Hill Blue; the first of the year for most of us.

A beautiful moth stayed obligingly still on the wonderful buds of *Cirsium eriophorum* (Woolly Thistle) later identified as White Ermine.

We ate lunch on a sunny slope whilst identifying *Leontoden saxatilis* (Lesser Hawkbit).

A wonderful few hours in a very special place

Joy Newton

Wednesday 18 July 2001

Hungerford Marsh

Leaders: Christine Knight and Susan Hartley

In spite of the woeful weather forecast, the walk started in beautiful sunshine with a light breeze and summer scents all around us. Hungerford Marsh is a large strip between the canal and the road and is watered by the River Dun, which joins the Kennet near Newbury. Our guides were Christine Knight, the author of a small but informative book on the marsh, and her illustrator Susan Hartley. The entrance to the marsh is over a small bridge overhung with willow. As we went through the gate a Sedge Warbler was singing and a little further into the reeds we heard the song of the Reed Warbler.

Most of the plants were easily identifiable; Meadowsweet, Hairy Willow Herb, Tufted Vetch and Gypsywort grew in large clusters whilst Water Speedwell and Water Forget-me-not were growing alongside the edges of the many small meandering streams. Water Mint was there, its bright purple leaves making a bright contrasting colour to the green of the reeds and dark water, whilst small islands held vivid yellow and orange *Mimulus*. The Southern Marsh Orchids were over by now but the splendid spikes still stood and here and there small late ones were still flowering. Large patches of Marsh Ragwort contrasted with Red Bartsia and the bright blue of *Prunella*. The Thistles were magnificent, mostly Marsh Thistle but there were also Nodding and Field Thistle, attracting many bees and other insects. The Sedges and Rushes were the subject of much debate: Articulated Rush, Reed Sweet Grass and Hard Rush with its little breaks along the stem.

The list of plants is a long one and we were there to study the flora but there were other delights. Swallows, Swifts and Martins were buzzing over us at speed and there was a great deal of general interest from singing Chiffchaffs, Greenfinches and Linnets. Some discussion ensued over two terns sitting on a telegraph wire but it was finally decided that they were Common Terns. On the streams the water birds were still tending their families, Mallards of course, but also Coot and Moorhen and in the large pond, a lovely sight of Little Grebe with four beautiful orange-headed chicks. Butterflies were mostly Meadow Brown but we did see Small Tortoiseshell, Large White and a mating pair of Green Veined White. Near the bridge a Scarlet Tiger Moth flew into the rushes and completely disappeared. A small

detour was taken by some athletic souls who clambered over a high lock gate to visit a nearby wall, where they found Mullein.

After lunch, which was taken in the churchyard, some of us visited the BBOWT reserve. Here there was mostly Common Reed and Bulrush with Willow Herb and Nettles. Many species of birds feed here and it is an important habitat with its plentiful supply of seeds whilst the Nettles are the food plant of several of our loveliest butterflies and moths. The marsh is very diverse and offers much whatever time of year it is visited; it makes one determined to visit again. If you do visit then it is strongly recommended that you take with you a copy of Christine's excellent book, it is packed with information including the history of the site and is well worth acquiring.

Monica Blake

From the Meetings Secretary

This year has been exceedingly difficult due to Foot & Mouth Disease. We arranged some alternative dates, but sometimes it was not clear until the last minute if the original meetings could go ahead.

Most of those cancelled will be re-arranged for 2002 and let's hope there will be no more problems

Joy Newton

Lyme Disease

Lyme Disease can be serious to humans, and can affect the central and peripheral nervous systems, the heart, the joints and other organs. The adverse effects can be medium-term, or prolonged for years. It is best treated if caught in the early stages.

Three recent examples are known to me from Pewsey and Marlborough areas, the last two cases from Wilton and Bedwyn Brails southeast of Savernake Forest. The most serious and prolonged local case followed regular tick

infestation, with delayed treatment. Tick infestation in Savernake Forest appears to be increasing over the last three years, and it is possible for humans to develop Lyme Disease even in the absence of the characteristic red area around the bite. Also, contrary to past veterinary experience, the local ticks can now parasitise animals and humans well on into the autumn months.

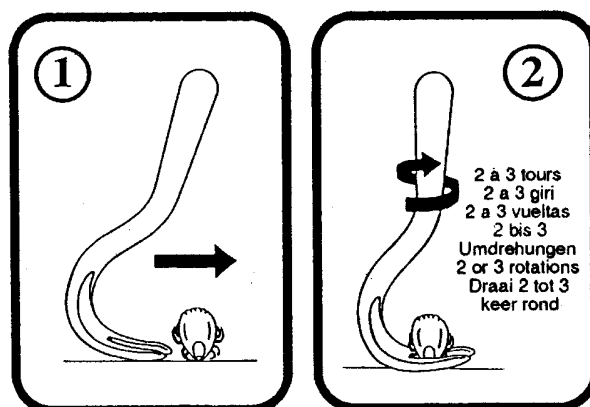
Wellington boots protect feet, ankles and lower legs from brambles and ticks. Ticks should be removed promptly before they build up greater quantities of infecting organism: long fingernails can be an advantage in removing the penetrated mouthparts. Alcohol, acetone and ethyl acetate (nail-varnish and nail-varnish remover) can anaesthetise the ticks, loosening their hold, as can the non-water based correction fluids. The last are useful for marking the ticks in dense dog or cat fur, when they just drop off or are easy to re-find or remove. A newly patented tick-hook with a narrow tapering "V" at its end is illustrated.

- 'available from any vet' -

**CROCHET
GANCHO
DER HAKEN**

Q'TOM

**HOOK
HAAK**



Finally your doctor should be told if you become ill following tick bites.

Jack Oliver

Colchicum autumnale



I am most interested to read your comments in the Spring 2001 newsletter, concerning the apparent appearance of fruiting bodies without previous flowers of *Colchicum autumnale*. In the very first edition of the journal 'Wiltshire Botany' I reported on the colonies of Meadow Saffron which we have in Bentley Wood. Likewise I have found a greater number of fruits than there were flowers the previous late summer. As a result, I wrote to Christopher Brickell, then Director General of the RHS and requested his opinion. He suggested that some flowers hardly emerge above ground, or have very reduced petals, but are fertile and therefore produce capsules.

I hope this comment will go some way to confirming your suspicions.

Pat Woodruffe

Some treasures

...

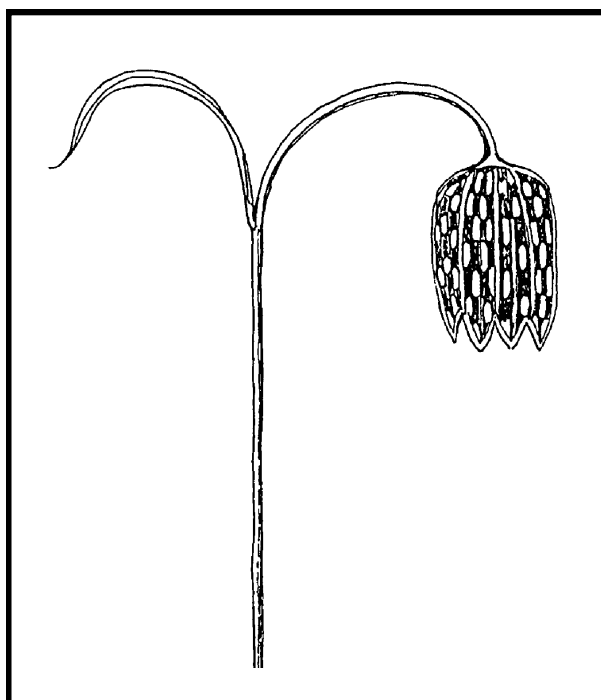
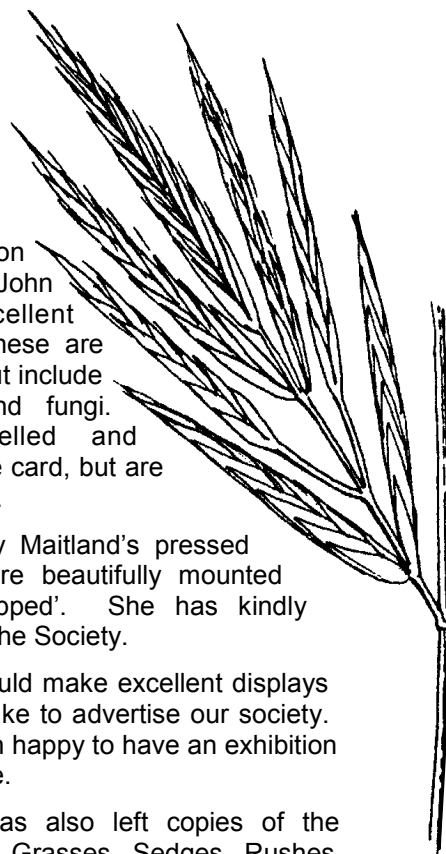
I am in possession of some of John Presland's excellent photographs. These are mainly flowers, but include a few ferns and fungi. They are labelled and mounted on white card, but are easily detachable.

I also have Lady Maitland's pressed grasses which are beautifully mounted and 'shrink wrapped'. She has kindly donated them to the Society.

Either or both would make excellent displays if anyone would like to advertise our society. Libraries are often happy to have an exhibition if they have space.

Lady Maitland has also left copies of the Collins 'Guide to Grasses, Sedges, Rushes and Ferns' and the standard 'Grasses' by C.E. Hubbard. If anyone would like either for a small donation to the society, I will arrange to pass them on.

Gwyneth Yerrington



WILTSHIRE BOTANICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEE

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Membership

We welcome new members, beginners and experts alike. If you would like to join, please complete the slip and send it to:

Gwyneth Yerrington
28 Meadowfield
Bradford on Avon
Wilts BA15 1PL

Subscriptions:

Ordinary Member----- £5.00 per year

Joint Membership----- £7.50 per year

Wiltshire Botanical Society

Name:

(Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr)

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

Telephone number

Please make cheques payable to "Wiltshire Botanical Society"

From the Editor

Thanks again for all the well-written reports, which require very little editing. If I do have to make changes, I try to keep close to the style of the original and hope authors are happy with the results. Please keep sending news items, comments and information.

Pictures to illustrate reports are always welcome. We have not yet produced a full colour edition of the newsletter, so photographs have to survive being reproduced in black and white. They do this best if they have bold outlines. Line drawings reproduce well, whether they are rough sketches or more artistic efforts.

I am happy to type from hand-written reports, but even happier if I do not have to do so. Printed or typed text can be scanned into my computer, but this can produce mistakes. Sending computer disks or emails guarantees complete accuracy. My email address is

richard@aisbittr.freemove.co.uk

and my postal address is

84 Goddard Avenue
Swindon
Wilts SN1 4HT

Richard Aisbitt

Future meetings

Joy Newton welcomes suggestions. Contact her at:

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