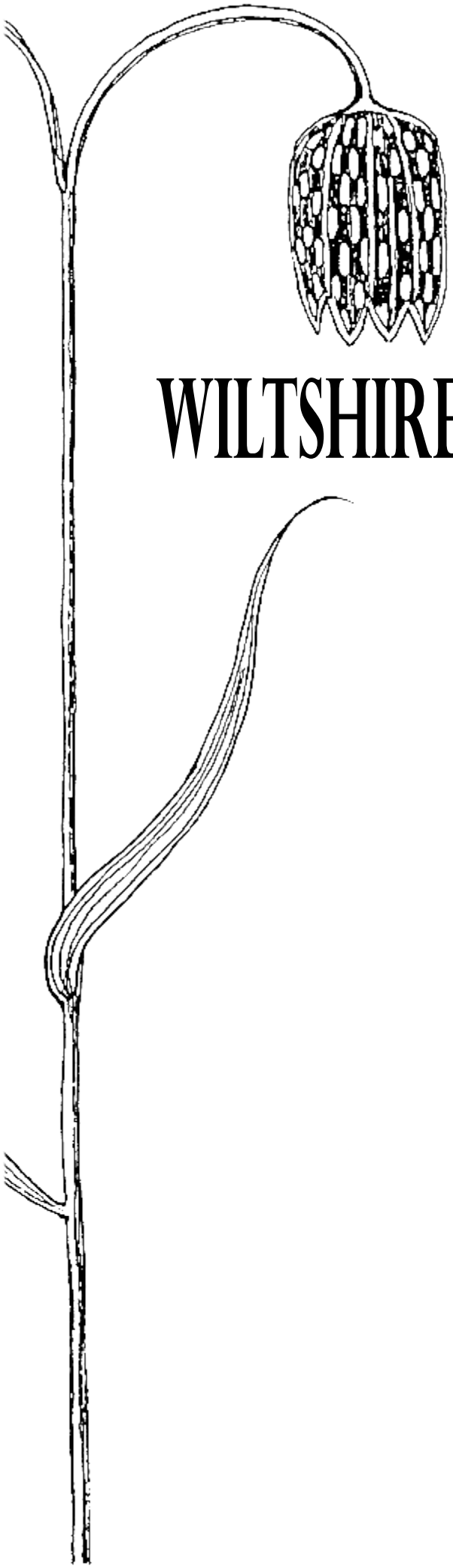


NEWSLETTER

Issue 34 Summer 2009

WILTSHIRE BOTANICAL SOCIETY

In this issue

Website: http://www.wiltsbotsoc.co.uk

Bentley Wood Bryophytes

18th April 2009


Orthotrichum lyellii - Sharon Pilkington

Water-filled squirty bottles were barely necessary during this well-attended visit to Bentley Wood, following a good downpour the previous day.

Although it was extensively replanted in the mid-twentieth century, the ground flora of Bentley persists admirably and there is an abundance of characteristic woodland mosses and liverworts within a few hundred metres of the barn in Compartment 9. First to be encountered were big mosses such as *Thuidium tamariscinum* (delicate, fern-like leaves), *Eurhynchium striatum* (springy, with pleated leaves) and the ubiquitous and indistinctive *Brachythecium rutabulum*. In the vicinity of an old woodland pit we found the tree-like *Thamnobryum alopecurum* and *Cirriphyllum piliferum*, with its unique leaf shape. Feeling confident, we moved onto leafy liverworts, first encountering the big, glamorous *Plagiochila asplenioides* and the small, fragrant *Lophocolea bidentata* with its pincer-like leaves.

The epiphytes (bryophytes living on trees and shrubs) were impressive at Bentley and we found many widespread species as well as a few scarce ones. A hazel was festooned with the small thalloid liverworts *Metzgeria furcata* and *M. fruticulosa*, along with the distinctively one-sided *Cryphaea heteromalla*. This moss is highly sensitive to atmospheric pollution and poor air quality during the early twentieth century eliminated it from many parts of the country. With the return of cleaner air it has been rapidly spreading back to many of its old haunts. Big, round purplish blotches on ash boles revealed themselves as colonies of the little leafy liverwort *Frullania dilatata*, which has lower leaf lobes which resemble a policeman's helmet. Keen-eyed Richard then found an even smaller liverwort on an ash tree – so small that individual leaves could only be seen with a hand-lens. *Microlejeunea ulicina* lives up to its other name of Fairy beads; it is quite a common epiphyte in Wiltshire but is frequently overlooked on account of its size!


Cirriphyllum piliferum - Sharon Pilkington

I became very excited when I spotted a similar species on a neighbouring tree. *Cololejeunea minutissima* is quite scarce in Wiltshire and always a pleasure to find. Under the hand-lens it is possible to see little star-like structures (perianths) which are the 'inflorescences'.

After a much-appreciated brew-up back at the barn (thanks Pat!) we inspected a pile of recently-felled ash logs along a track. This was a terrific opportunity to get to know even more of the tree-dwellers at close quarters. The moss genera *Orthotrichum* and *Ulota* were well-represented and we had a lively discussion about the differences between them. Well-grown *Orthotrichum lyellii* was impressive and covered in a dusting of brown filamentous gemmae (propagules) which made it look fuzzy. It also has a curious habit, with its shoots growing down and then curling up, resembling a large dead

spider. *Ulota phyllantha* also had brown gemmae, but was a much neater plant and the gemmae were clustered at the stem apex, making the plant look spotty.

Finally we moved across to a beech plantation where the soils appeared to be more acidic and supported bryophytes more typical of mildly acidic habitats. Here we compared the leaf lamellae of *Atrichum undulatum* (only on the nerve) and *Polytrichum formosum* (all over the upper surface of the leaf). We also saw *Dicranum scoparium*, *Dicranella heteromalla*, *Fissidens taxifolius* and the pretty alien moss *Campylopus introflexus*.

At this point several people pleaded near-saturation and so we set off back to the barn to examine our collections. We didn't get far though before my eye was caught by numerous neat-looking cushions of a small *Orthotrichum* on a tree at the edge of the plantation. This later turned out to be *O. stramineum*, quite rare in Wiltshire and probably a first record for Bentley Wood.

Back at the hut we tried our hand at natural-light microscopy and the true beauty of tiny species like *Microlejeunea ulicina* was revealed. We had a very pleasant time sitting in the sun and comparing notes. Whilst it is true that bryophytes are not an easy group to get to know, not least because of the terminology involved and requirement for microscope skills, with a little patience it is possible to quickly become familiar with many of the more widespread ones.

I shall probably be running more bryology field-meetings in the future (as long as there is demand for them!) but all WBS members would also be very welcome at the Wessex Bryology Group meetings, led by Andrew Branson and I. These take place on average once a month between November and April and visit various interesting sites in Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset. Watch your WBS newsletter for details or please contact me directly for further information.

Sharon Pilkington

26-27 April 2009

Woods and Meadows - A Weekend in South Gloucestershire

We followed a successful two days in the New Forest in September 2008 with two days on Wiltshire's northern borders. We were guests of Clare and Mark Kitchen, the county recorders for Gloucestershire, and also had the benefit of expertise from Tim Wilkins of Plantlife, Dave Green, previously plant recorder for north Wiltshire, but now living in Monmouthshire, and of course our own county recorder, Sharon Pilkington.

Saturday 25 April, morning.

Midger Wood

Dave Green, Mark and Clare Kitchen

This was the first phase of our two-day foray into Gloucestershire

Seventeen of us crammed our cars into a small roadside quarry and set off to walk through moist woodland with a splendid springtime under-storey. We very soon found Summer Snowflake *Leucojum aestivum* beside the road and there were extensive carpets of Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* where it was damp enough. Where it was a little drier there were swathes of Ramsons *Allium ursinus* (scented or stinking according to taste) and Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. In one place there was a little Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria* and a patch of Twayblade *Listera ovata*

By a stream – BSBI recorders being thick on the ground – we had a short session distinguishing Thin-spiked Wood-sedge *Carex strigosa* and Pendulous Sedge *C. pendula* only from the leaves. Then we went uphill to a rich patch with Early-purples *Orchis mascula*, real wild Lily-of-the-valley *Convallaria majalis* and a little Herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia,* though none in the quantities that we were to see them in the afternoon. There was also Spurge Laurel *Daphne laureola* beside the track and, throughout, occasional Wood Spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides.*

We retraced our steps to walk down the lane where we had our annual fix of admiration for Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* and on the bank there were some handsome specimens of Goldilocks *Ranunculus auricomus*. We walked as far as a good patch of Green Hellebore *Helleborus viridis*, some in full flower, before unscrambling our cars to go to Minchinhampton Common to eat our picnics in the sun

Rosemary Duckett

Summer Snowflake

Bridge over the canal - Gillian King

Sapperton Woods

Leaders: Dave Green, Mark and Clare Kitchen

The start of our walk took us steeply downhill through Frampton Wood, an old hazel copse misty with bluebells. Close to the railway line Mark pointed out the leaves of Autumn Crocus with the fruit developing in the spring with the leaves, even though the flowers appear in the autumn. Beside the railway line was a flourishing clump of Wild Basil and then, as we descended further, Wood Spurge, Wood Sorrel, Woodruff and Herb Paris bordered the path. At the bottom of the valley we left the Bathurst Estate. The line of the former Thames and Severn Canal follows the valley of the Frome and beneath the canal bridge Water Parsnip, Great Water Dock and Water Mint were growing in a pool. A short way up the path into Siccaridge Wood there was a fine clump of Toothwort on a hazel stool. Then we had a steady climb up the hill and a chance to check out the differences between Wild Strawberry and Barren Strawberry on the way, before coming upon the real treat of the afternoon: great swathes of Lily of the Valley which spread from the path and down the steep slope of a side valley. Here they were in bud only, but further up, where there was more light, they were fully in flower and very photogenic. Clumps of Bugle and the occasional Sanicle added variety.

Distinguishing between Barren Strawberry (right - sepals visible behind the petals, middle tooth of middle leaflet shorter than the teeth either side, leaves dull) and Wild strawberry (left - petals almost hide the sepals, middle tooth on middle leaflet is longer, leaves glossy)

Photo - Lesley Wallington

Lily of the Valley - Gillian King

Emerging from the wood, we crossed the lane and walked along Daneway Bank, where Cowslips and Green-Winged Orchids were in peak condition on the south facing slope and we found a group of small Lady's Mantle plants, which Mark identified as *Alchemilla filicaulis* subsp. *vestita*, the only one which grows in our area. Meanwhile Dave foraged energetically for St George's Mushrooms, so called because they traditionally make their appearance on St. George's Day. Such was his enthusiasm that others of us were persuaded to collect some too – thank you Dave, they were delicious. As we descended into the valley a line of doves were perched at regular intervals along the roof of the ancient Daneway House with a similar line of Mallards along a lower roof ridge, looking for all the world like a fretwork embellishment.

A short walk along the valley below the Daneway Inn brought us to the ornate north portal of the 2½ mile long Sapperton Tunnel. For over a hundred years this area would have been alive with activity as the narrowboats passed on their way to Gloucester or London. As the tunnel has no towpath the boatmen had to propel their craft by lying on the top and pushing with their feet: no wonder a pub was needed at either end! Later, in the early part of last century, the architects and craftsmen of the Arts and Crafts Movement built their houses and worked in Sapperton under the patronage of Lord Bathurst and displayed their artefacts at Daneway House. Now the valley is just a peaceful backwater.

From the tunnel we made our way up a gentle slope back to the cars, with a final botanical query beside the parking place: there was a vigorous rose with vicious semi-circular thorns. It might be *Rosa obtusifolia* Mark thought. The answer was inconclusive – you have to see the flowers.

Thank you Clare, Mark and Dave for a delightful afternoon

Gillian King

Toothwort - Gillian King

Lady's Mantle

26 April 2009

Cotswold Farm Park

On Sunday April 26th we met with our leader, Tim Wilkins from Plantlife, at the Cotswold Farm Park, east of Cheltenham. Tim has been monitoring a population of the rare Cotswold (Perfoliate) Pennycress *Thlaspi perfoliatum* at this and other sites for many years. On this occasion we had agreed to help with the annual count in exchange for being shown some of the other botanical delights of the site.


Cotswold Pennycress - Pat Woodruffe


Cotswold Pennycress - Pat Woodruffe

Setting off from the visitor car park we first encountered many spikes of Meadow Saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata;* always a joy to see at this time of year. The area was very undulating and Tim told us that it had, in the past, been hand dug for limestone 'slates'. These were extracted during the warmer months and allowed to weather during the winter when freezing and thawing caused the necessary splitting to make the roof tiles. We then walked along the edge of an arable field and spotted Venus's Looking-glass *Legousia hybrida* (in leaf), Field Pansy *Viola arvensis* and Field Madder *Sherardia arvensis* before reaching the SSSI known as Barton Bushes.

This is the area noted for its population of *Thlaspi* and it resembled our first stop in the undulating nature of the ground. Our eye was drawn first to the minute Early Forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima* and Tim explained that it was a plant commonly found in the same habitat as *Thlaspi*. It wasn't long before we spotted one! The task then was to note the essential differences between it and Common Whitlowgrass *Erophila verna*, with which it is often confused. The clasping, grey/green leaves growing up the stalk were good characteristics as well as the more compact inflorescence and the shape of the fruits. Armed with our newly gained knowledge we quickly became 'experts' and spilt into groups to cover the site. The majority of plants, a total of 83, were found on disturbed ground near the bottom of a hollow or on a south facing side. We were very pleased with our count although Tim informed us that in a good year there could be thousands.

Perhaps that would have been a mixed blessing for those of us who had volunteered for the task!

Our thanks to Tim for getting up at 6.00am on a Sunday morning to join us – we do hope that we helped Plantlife in its work of not simply of monitoring but also providing the information to ensure good management in the future.

Pat Woodruffe


Early Forget-me-not - Pat Woodruffe

Sunday 26 April pm

Barnsley Warren

Leaders: Mark and Clare Kitchen


Botanists in orchid-heaven

A slightly depleted party made its way to Barnsley Warren Gloucestershire Trust Reserve after lunch in the hope of seeing the Pasque flower, *Pulsatilla vulgaris.* We were rewarded by the sight of significant numbers of this beautiful plant in full bloom and very photogenic. There were also sheets of the deep blue Chalk Milkwort *(Polygala calcarea*) and the first flowers of kidney vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*). The pale green shoots of Bastard Toadflax (*Thesium humifusum*) were just beginning to emerge in some profusion. Further


Green-winged Orchid

into the reserve, the first orchids were putting on a good display, a mixture of Green-winged (*Orchis morio*) and Early Purple (*Orchis mascula.* Most of the other plants were only leaves at this time of year, but we identified many familiar species of calcareous grassland from their foliage, including Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*), Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) and Dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*). The distinctive heads of last year's Carline Thistles (*Carlina vulgaris*) were also evident. All this and serenaded by skylarks too!


Chalk Milkwort

The party dispersed after this visit with everyone agreeing that the weekend had been a great success. Thanks very much to Mark and Clare for showing us some of their home turf, to Dave Green for his boundless enthusiasm, to Tim Wilkins for introducing us to Cotswold Pennycress (*Thlaspi perfoliatum*) and of course to Pat Woodruffe who organised the whole thing.

Five of us took the opportunity to renew briefly our acquaintance with North Meadow at Cricklade en route for home. The Snake's-head Fritillaries were past their peak, but still a wonderful sight.

Anne Appleyard


Pasque Flower


Snake's-head Fritillaries

Wednesday 13 May 2009

Medicinal Plants at the Dundas Viaduct

Leader: Zoe Hawes

Ten of us had a delightful and informative walk led by Zoe Hawes, a practising herbalist, along the Kennet and Avon towpath. She stressed that she adopted an holistic approach to treatment, treating the person rather than merely curing symptoms.

Although the ancient "doctrine of signatures" (plants indicating which ailments they cured) is discredited, some, perhaps by chance, are efficacious; e.g. the Lesser Celandine with pile-like tubers, pulverised in oil and wax is a good ointment for piles, curing symptoms (but not causes), and the lumpy roots of Figwort are used to treat lumpy swollen lymph nodes.

Zoe's logo

I was suffering from a bunged-up nose and was amazed at how effective crushed Ground Ivy leaves were as a decongestant, though it is properly used as a "tea" or inhalation against sinusitis. Wild Garlic (Ramsons) is another internal decongestant and is also purgative and extremely anti-bacterial, and has many uses. The Elder tree is another super-herb, a veritable pharmacopoeia on its own (see Mrs Grieve's huge standard work on Herbal medicine*) and many of its uses were pointed out to us; the flowers are strongly anti-fever and used steeped in vodka to make a tincture, whilst the berries are powerfully anti-viral and useful in combating colds and 'flu.

Dandelions are also highly valued, famously diuretic (French name '*pis en lit*'; old Wiltshire name pissabed) but safely so since its high potassium content balances the potassium loss.

Its bitter chemicals stimulate secretion of digestive hormones (gastrin and pancreatic hormones) which aid digestion and aids treatment of diabetes; peristalsis is also stimulated. A decoction of the root also helps the liver make an extra-watery bile and helps eliminate gallstones.

On seeing Woundwort our guide quoted from an old herbal which said that "if stamped with vinegar and applied in the manner of a pultis it taketh away wens and kernels under the jaw".

Comfrey, known as Knitbone, has long had healing uses, indicated by its generic name *Symphytum*, meaning joining or mending. Our

Zoe explains the many uses of Elder

leader once cured a broken foot remarkably quickly using a whole-plant poultice. It can cure stomach ulcers in a few weeks. Great care is needed in its use as its active chemicals are very penetrative and perhaps carcinogenic in some circumstances.

A discussion on aspirin/salicylates was prompted by a willow tree and the benefit of Meadowsweet (old botanical name Spiraea, hence aspirin) as a gentle mucilaginous source of aspirin which doesn't irritate the gut lining was noted.

Many other plants and their usage included:

Hops: cannabinoid chemicals act as a central nervous system relaxant and soporific.

Broad-leaved Plantain: juice contains an anti-histamine so good for insect bites and internally for hay-fever

Burdock: used with Dandelion as a tonic and to stimulate the liver.

Cleavers: used for skin diseases and lymphatic swellings; roots used as a tincture to aid dissolution of kidney stones.

Lime flowers: a relaxant slowing pulse and relaxing blood vessel walls; good for fevers especially as gentle action for children.

Finally we had our attention drawn to nettles, which the Romans used to stimulate blood flow. A tea made from the leaves is a very effective treatment for gout, and when used with Wild Garlic as a soup is good for hay fever. The roots have been used to treat prostate problems.

So beguiling was our leader and her talk that we attracted passers-by, including an interesting young man and his delightful dog called Little Finch.

Zoe can be contacted professionally on zoehawes@btinternet.com and has a web site at www.zoehawes.co.uk

Canal-side plants - Comfrey, Gypsywort and the poisonous Hemlock Water-dropwort

*A Modern Herbal, Penguin Handbooks, Mrs M Grieve, 2 volumes, 1980 (first published 1931). An on-line version is available at http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/mgmh.html

David Pickering

Dundas Aqueduct (backgound, left of centre)

Monday 25 May 2009

Parsonage Down National Nature Reserve

Leader – Roger Marris, Farm Manager, Natural England

21 people turned up for this trip. When we set off from home it was a grey cool day, with light rain en route, so we were well wrapped up but needn't have been as it became hot and sunny by the afternoon.

Jean and I have visited Parsonage Down before so we noted the absence of the old minibus (pensioned off by the Health and Safety Police!) this was replaced with a tractor and trailer complete with bales of hay acting as seats. From Cherry Lodge Farm Roger drove us to the far western end of the site where we disembarked the trailer.

I soon found one of my target species – Burnt Tip Orchid – *Orchis ustulata*

Burnt Orchid

this proved to be plentiful at this site. Shortly afterwards we found some Frog Orchid – *Dactylorhiza viridis* [new name!]. The other Orchid seen was Fragrant Orchid – *Gymnadenia conopsea.*

Of great interest to me was Dodder – *Cuscuta epithymum* we almost overlooked the tangle of red stems in our search for the orchids.

Fragrant Orchid

As we walked steadily eastwards I began noticing some typical chalk grassland plans such as Dropwort – *Filipendula vulgaris,* Fairy Flax – *Linum catharticum* and Chalk Milkwort – *Polygala calcarea.*

Roger picked us up to move us on further eastwards on this large site and on this part of the journey I saw a Corn Bunting.

We eventually lunched at the bottom of a north facing slope and after lunch at Sharon's suggestion we made a determined effort to find another target species – Field Fleawort – *Tephros*eris *integrifolia*. I believe we eventually found about 15 specimens.

Other plants I noted down were: Thyme-leaved Sandwort – *Arenaria serpyllifolia;* Mouse-ear Hawkweed- *Pilosella officinarum;* Hairy violet – *Viola hirta.*

We were driven on to see the famous heard of Longhorn Cattle, which have been bred at this farm since 1953.

The big surprise of the day was at the end as we were about to re-enter Cherry Lodge where we were passed by hundreds of Painted Lady butterflies within a very short period of time. This turned out to be a rare invasion of this species.

An enjoyable and interesting day was had by all.

Tom and Jean Smith

Martin Down

Saturday 30 May 2009

Hampshire Rare Plant Register Survey - Martin Down

Our final session to census the Dwarf Sedge *Carex humilis* in western Hampshire took place on a glorious warm sunny day, in striking contrast to the previous year. Apart from one lucky Wiltshire contingent who got a stretch of the Bokerley Dike, most people had to suffer a laborious tramp through the least interesting grasslands of the reserve, for the sake of demonstrating that the sedge wasn't there. These were areas ploughed during the Second World War and after. At least everyone will now be familiar with some strikingly dull CG3d and CG6b grassland communities, even if they don't realise it.

Fortunately we had enough people to bring this exercise to a close by late lunchtime, and after a picnic amongst the Early Gentian *Gentianella anglica* near the car park, we set off down the dike and rifle butts to enjoy some of the treats. Burnt Orchid *Orchis ustulata* and Field Fleawort *Tephroseris integrifolia* were showing well on the ancient earthworks and nearby. A hunt for Frog Orchid *Coeloglossum viride* on the butts revealed only a few rosettes with buds of flowering spikes barely showing. Farther east in the big block of gentle downland slope west of Sillens Lane, we were able to admire a spectacular flowering of Greater Butterfly Orchid *Platanthera chlorantha* as well as more Burnt Orchid and Field Fleawort. At this point some people dropped out while a few of us went on to look at the *Gentianella anglica* on the slopes farther east. Here we were rewarded in the late afternoon sun with over 500 plants, many of them large. A final stop on the way back confirmed that the Pasque Flower *Pulsatilla vulgaris* had flowered and fruited well this year, although some of the seed heads had been nibbled off.

Martin Rand, reproduced with permission from ***Flora News***

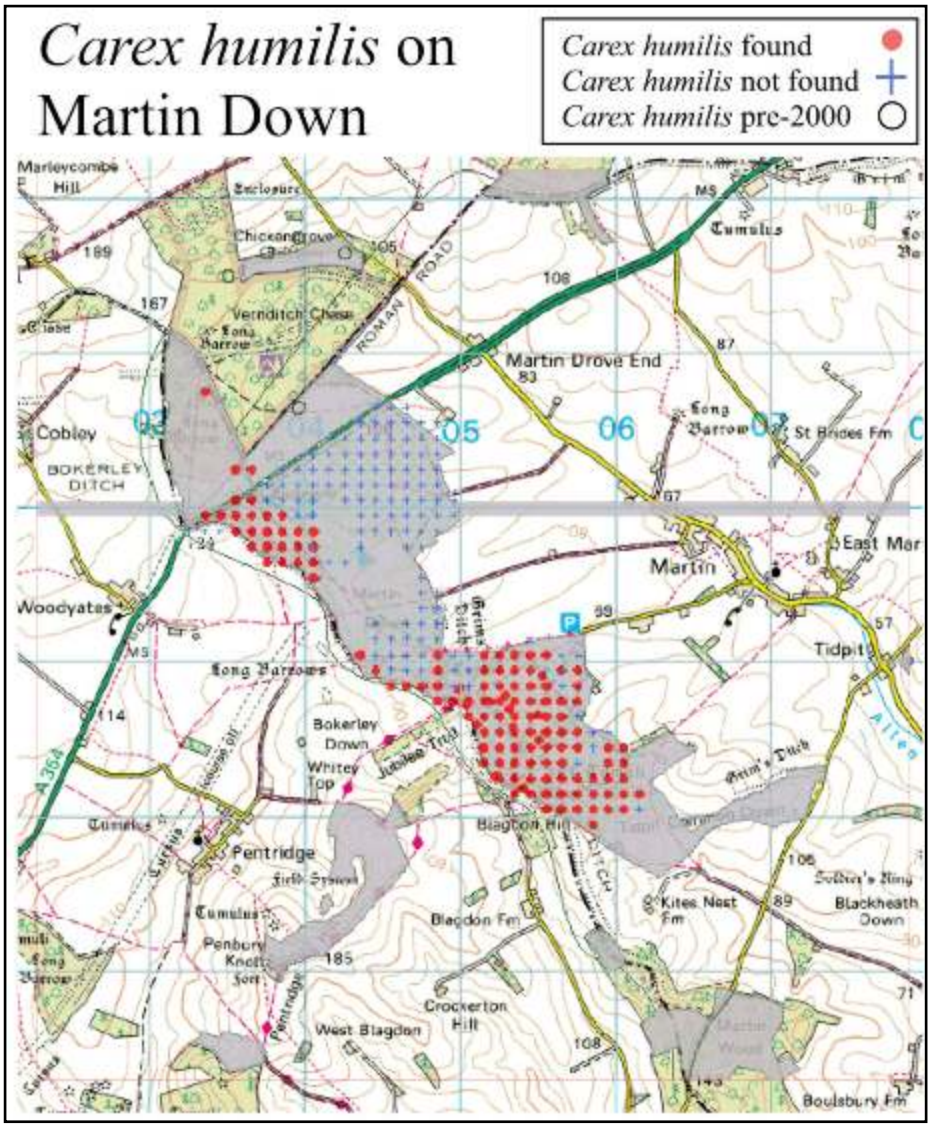
Martin Down - the Wiltshire link

This was a joint meeting of the Hampshire Flora Group and the Wiltshire Botanical Society, organised by the Martin Rand, the BSBI plant recorder for South Hampshire.

The county boundary runs across the top of the map, following "ROMAN ROAD" for part of the way and puts Martin Down in Hampshire. Over the years, the county boundary has been altered, sometimes gaining new territory for Wiltshire and sometimes losing it; the Watsonian Vice County boundary has not altered and still puts Martin Down in VC8, South Wiltshire. Wildlife recording tends to use the old vice county boundaries.

Results of the survey

This was the last of a series of field meetings which produced an incredibly detailed survey of *Carex humilis* on Martin Down. The blobs (red if you have colour) show its occurrence on a 100 metre grid, whilst crosses (blue) show where grid squares were searched, but *Carex humilis* was not found.



Grey shading on the map shows Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

For more news of Hampshire botanical activities and downloadable copies of Flora News, visit their website **Hants Plants** at http://www.hantsplants.org.uk/index.php

Three Days (+) in South Devon

7 - 9 June 2009

Our trip away in 2009 took us to a secluded spot beside the Dart estuary. Anne Appleyard arranged for most of us to stay in a very well appointed converted barn called "The Shippon" at Sharpham Barton. The owners lease it out as a unit sleeping fourteen or so, which would be good for extended family parties. The seclusion was enhanced by a steep, private road with killer speed bumps. The Shippon had a kitchen and dining room which coped with twenty-four for supper at one sitting. We made full use of this twice, once with in-house cooking and the other time with salvers of roast chicken carried in from our hosts' kitchen across the fields. Otherwise, we invaded nearby pubs for supper and made their summers worthwhile.

We had a games room, swimming pool, tennis court and trampoline, but the cool weather didn't attract us to the more sporting activities and we spent our evenings seriously examining the day's botanical catch. A foursome ran an equally serious Scrabble game, although, as with the botany, no blood was spilt.

Anne had done the research, explored the sites and arranged local guides so as to give us a top quality, varied experience of Devon. We visited coastal shingle, standing freshwater, marsh and fen, river, woodland and moor. Most of the sites were on acid soil, so different from all but small patches of Wiltshire.

We have reports and pictures from these visits over the next few pages. See for yourself that our few days was a rich and enjoyable experience. Think about joining us next year in the Yorkshire Dales.


River Dart

Sunday 7 June 2009

Dart Valley

We met in the Newbridge car park and were loudly serenaded by a song thrush while assembling. First, we walked along the river through the Dart Valley Nature Reserve woodland and admired the Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* in its natural habitat.


Royal Fern

The sessile oak/downy birch/hazel woodland (*Quercus petraea/Betula pubescens/Corylus avellana*) had an interesting ground flora: Marsh Violet *Viola palustris*, Bitter-vetch *Lathyrus linifolius*, Common Cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense*, and Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris* as well as well as the more familiar Pignut *Conopodium majus* and Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*. A variety of sedges less familiar to us – Smooth-stalked Sedge *Carex laevigata*, Star Sedge *C. echinata,* Green-ribbed Sedge *C. binervis,* and Common Yellow-sedge *C. viridula* subsp. *oedocarpa* – made their first appearance of the day.

A large pond caught our attention as it was dominated by and unfamiliar plant – Cape Pondweed or Water Hawthorn *Aponogeton distachyos*, a clearly rampant alien. We just avoided standing on Ivy-leaved Bellflower *Wahlenbergia hederacea* while identifying Cape Pondweed.

Next we walked back towards the car park through dry acid grassland/heath with the classic community of Heath Bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and Tormentil *Potentilla erecta* with Heath-grass *Danthonia decumbens* and Hair-grass *Aira praecox*, with two more sedges Pill Sedge *C. pilulifera* and Spring Sedge *C. caryophyllea*. The song thrush was still singing as we crossed the car park to explore a wet and boggy meadow.


Bitter-vetch


Pale Butterwort

This meadow proved so botanically rich that we happily abandoned the schedule and spent much time admiring Cornish Moneywort *Sibthorpia europaea*, Lesser Skullcap *Scutellaria minor*, Blinks *Montia fontana*, flowering Pale Butterwort *Pinguicula lusitanica* and, perhaps more familiar, Marsh St John's Wort *Hypericum elodes*, Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and at least sixteen other species. All along the edge of the bog, where it bordered more woodland, was an extremely impressive stand of *Osmunda* – the group by the river we had so admired was insignificant by comparison. A vigorously flowering Alder Buckthorn *Frangula alnus* attracted our attention on the way back to the cars.


Alder Buckthorn

Taking our lunch with us, we now crossed the River Dart and walked through the Holne Chase woods on

the eastern side. The steep hillside was a forest of ferns: Hard *Blechnum spicant*, Broad Buckler *Dryopteris dilatata*, Scaly Male *D. affinis* agg., Lady *Athyrium filix-femina*. There were also large stands of Great and Hairy Woodrushes *Luzula sylvatica* and *L. pilosa* and Wavy Hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*. Bitter-vetch and Common Cow-wheat was more abundant than on the other side, and there was a useful comparison of *Veronica montana* and *V. officinalis* (Wood and Heath Speedwells) growing side-by-side.

The noise of the River Dart, torrential after the previous day's rain, did not eliminate the chat over lunch on the rocks by the river, and we rounded off this visit by finding Pink Purslane *Claytonia sibirica* and another two aliens – the variegated Yellow Archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* and New Zealand Willowherb *Epilobium brunnescens*.

Refreshed by some delicious ice cream from a van in the car park, we drove to Dartmeet for the rest of the afternoon. On the first dry stonewall we found English Stonecrop *Sedum anglicum*, Dog Lichen *Peltigera*, Black Spleenwort *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* and Maidenhair Spleenwort *A. trichomanes*. The river ran through acid grassland with gorse, bracken, heather and bilberry (*Ulex europaeus/ Pteridium aquilinum/ Calluna vulgaris/ Vaccinium myrtillus*) and we soon had another opportunity to distinguish a host of sedges – *Carex pilulifera, C. binervis* (whose leaves go russet at the tips), *C. panicea, C. nigra* and *C. ovalis.* Round-leaved Crowfoot *Ranunculus omiophyllus* grew in a


Round-leaved Crowfoot

pond nearby. A Mountain Fern *Oreopteris limbosperma* was discovered on the riverbank and we agreed its fronds had a hint of lemon, but their curling edges were more diagnostic.


Mountain Fern

The final habitat investigated was another boggy flush – again within sight of the car park – which rewarded those not too exhausted to climb up to it with an even more impressive Mountain Fern, flowering Marsh Violet *Viola palustris*, more Ivy-leaved Bellflower *Wahlenbergia hederacea* – and wet boots.


Name these mosses!

Thanks to Anne for leading us to such a varied and productive set of contrasting habitats.

Sue Fitzpatrick


Marsh Violet


Plenty of interest in the bog

Monday 8th June 2009

Slapton Ley

Led by Brenda Child

Brenda is a WBS member who moved to Devon and is a tour leader from the Field Studies Council, who manages the reserve for the Whitley Trust.

The Lower and Upper Ley which is pronounced Lea (from the Old English) are lagoons enclosed by a shingle barrier beach which is constantly moving. The Lower Ley is the largest freshwater lake in S.W. England with varied habitats – open water, reed beds and open fen. The Upper Ley is bordered by fen woodland, with many ancient trees, especially Ash, and much reed swamp. There is ordnance from shelling during 'Operation Tiger' in 1944 when 950 American soldiers were drowned when preparing for D Day. There is a very moving memorial to them at the North end of the bay and a Duplex Drive amphibious Sherman tank dredged up from the sea bed at the Southern end.

Because of the danger from pieces of metal, conservation activities in the Upper Ley have to take place with great care. There is little management there, and we explored an area of the Southern lagoon, which is managed for flora, birds butterflies, otters, dormice and much more.

The beach runs North/South. This results in an unusual combination of shingle with an Eastern aspect which is sheltered from the main Atlantic wave systems. The 'bar' is continually rolling landward due to sea level rise. The ridge was built up about 10,000 years ago, taking 3,000 years to reach today's level; it consists of flint and chert brought in by the sea. Before the ridge was formed the area was an estuary open to the sea; there has been very occasional flooding since, the last time in 2001. Brenda was a mine of information on the fascinating geology and history of the area.

Strapwort

We walked along the shingle in the biting wind for some serious botanising. There were great clumps of Sea–Kale (*Crambe maritima*) from which many of our domestic greens are descended. We saw the fleshy Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) which is delicious with fish but not abundant enough to encourage its use in gastronomy. Sea Bindweed (*Calystegia soldanella*) has beautiful flowers but nothing can beat the Yellow Horned-poppy (*Glaucium flavum*), one of the wonders of the shingle. For contrast Rough Clover (*Trifolium scabrum*) was tiny and prostrate but abundant at the back of the shingle.

What you have to do to see Strapwort

We crossed the road and found shelter from the wind behind the shingle barrier, and found different species rarely found in Wiltshire.

Portland Spurge

Golden-ringed Dragonfly

Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*) has a close relative used extensively in the treatment of malaria, Sea Radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum* ssp. *maritimus*), Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Sea Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) and Sea Campion (*Silene uniflora*).

We walked back to the bridge between the two lagoons, and while Brenda briefed us about our next walk Dave found the star plant of the day. We were lucky as he had searched for it unsuccessfully twice before; Strapwort (*Corrigiola littoralis*). It was quite plentiful on the muddy trampled grassland at the edge of the water in its only native habitat. To say the plant is small would not describe it properly; it was minute but in full flower and quite beautiful under a lens.

Walking through the reserve when we could drag ourselves away from the Strapwort we had views of the Lower Ley were rare *Chara* species in the central deeper area, so inaccessible. We heard Cetti's Warbler and some of us had a view of it.

Butcher's-broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) was very abundant, and Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*) lined the water's edge. We saw Great Crested Grebes, one with a chick on her back, Little Egret and the occasional Tern.

Brenda had obtained permission for us to walk through the Sanctuary Reserve, where Otters and Dormice live. We saw Otter spraints, a magnificent Golden-ringed Dragonfly and, a beautiful Demoiselle.

The flora included Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*) and the exciting Bladder-sedge (*Carex vesicaria*) which was new to many.

Picnic time loomed and we arrived at a beautifully designed viewing area looking out over the lake... It was built for 60th anniversary of the Field Studies Council in 2003. Adding to the delights of this lunch stop a Marsh Harrier gave us a fleeting view. We seem to have a tradition of spectacular picnic places, and this was no exception...

Altogether a stunning morning and many thanks to Brenda.

Joy Newton

Slapton – a village walk

One of the benefits of having more than a cursory knowledge of your subject is the ability to glean interest from seemingly poor situations. So it was with the walk back to the ley after lunch, which, though not as arresting as the species rich foreshore and ley-edge habitats had its own particular charms. Passing through the village, Mexican Fleabane (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) is a notable feature and seems to smother every available wall space. Alongside it were other plants of wayside and other well trodden places such as Common Ramping fumitory (*Fumaria muralis*), Caper Spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*), Greater Quaking Grass (*Briza maxima*) and Keeled-fruited Cornsalad (*Valerianella carinata*).

Greater Quaking Grass - Tim Kaye

There was also some discussion on the key features of the two Swine-cresses. A way to identify them is to look for the pods which look like wrinkled testicles in Swine-cress (*Coronopus squamatus*) and pods like smooth testicles in the non-native Lesser Swine-cress (*Coronopus Didymus*), which is what we identified. One lucky home owner had Silver Hair-grass (Aira caryophyllea) growing on top of a wall, a delicate and beautiful grass that might have been easy to miss. Not so the Giant Viper's Bugloss *Echium pininana* growing stately in someone's front garden and more reminiscent of the Canary Islands. Another plant more often seen in somewhere like the

Mexican Fleabane - Tim Kaye

Isles of Scilly was Karo (*Pittosporum crassifolium*). There was also a small stream running through the village which had a few heads scratching at American watercress (*Cardamine rotundifolia*), Floating Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) and the interestingly named but quite dull Mind-your-own-business (*Soleirolia soleirolii*). A slight distraction was the 14th century tower in the centre of the village which is all that remains of a ecclesiastical college. Nothing to do with plants so I didn't bother to go and see it! A hedgerow rich in roses produced Sherard's Downy Rose (*Rosa sherardii*) and Short-styled Field Rose (*Rosa stylosa*). As we neared the car park those who hadn't noticed the flowering Amphibious Bistort (Persicaria amphibia) were in for a treat as a whole raft had come in to bloom at the edge of the ley.

Tim Kaye

The Giant Viper's Bugloss - Tim Kaye

Berry Head with Red Valerian

Tuesday 9th June 2009

Berry Head National Nature Reserve, Brixham

We were lucky to be shown round by Nigel Smallbones of the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust even though he was on leave! He has managed the reserve since 1985 and his enthusiasm and depth of knowledge of the area helped us have a hugely enjoyable and interesting visit.

The site has an outstanding limestone flora and forms part of the Torbay Limestones Important Plant Area (Plantlife). It is a Special Area of Conservation i.e., it is of European importance. It is important for the archaeology (the fort is a scheduled monument), geology, birds and greater horseshoe bats as well as the plants. This means the reserve is managed for a range of species, as well as for 200,000 visitors per year.

The reserve is grazed by fourteen Red Devon cattle and by some goats. Soay sheep have been purchased and will also be used. The grazing is important for the bats as they feed on dung beetles. There is a winter roost of over 200 greater horseshoe bats and a maternity roost of about 112. Among the bird species are peregrine falcons, a guillemot colony, kittiwakes, shags and fulmars. There are five breeding pairs of Cirl buntings this year. Lottery and Seachange funding have enabled work to stabilise the fort, improve the visitor facilities and increase the grazing. There are now three staff.

Nigel led us straight to the area of short limestone grass where we saw small hare's-ear (*Bupleurum baldense*) in abundance. There is only one other site for this at Beachy Head where there are few plants. The management of Berry Head has enabled the species to increase and there is a second colony now in this area nearer the

White Rockrose

Honewort

Small Hare's Ear (1P for scale)

cliff. We also saw white rockrose (*Helianthemum apenninum*) and honewort (*Trinia glauca*) in flower. The small restharrow (*Ononis reclinata)* had already flowered and had seed heads.

Near the fort we saw Portland spurge (*Euphorbia portlandica*) and carrot broomrape (*Orobanche maritima)* which triggered a discussion about broomrape classification as it is now regarded as Orobanche minor and not a separate species. We await the forthcoming publication on broomrape. We also saw rock stonecrop (*Sedum forsterianum)*, knotted clover (*Trifolium striatum*), burrowing clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*), rough clover (*Trifolium scabrum*) lesser meadow-rue (*Thalictrum minus*), crow garlic (*Allium vineale*) and pale St John's-wort (*Hypericum montanum*). The bee orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) were over and we saw seed-heads, but there were plenty of pyramid orchids (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*).

After a very full day we paused at the café then most of us went back to feast our eyes again on the small hare's-ear

Sonia Heywood

Glandular hairs on flower buds of Pale St John's Wort

Carrot Broomrape with Wild Carrot

Small Restharrow

Up close with the cliff-top limestone flora

Tuesday 23rd June

Home Farm, Cholderton

Leader: Anne Appleyard

A select group of seven met at the farm shop and from there went on to our site for the day at the intriguingly named Windy Dido. We were joined at the outset by Henry Edmunds, who farms the Cholderton Estate organically and is well known to WBS members from previous visits. The field we were to look at had been allowed to revert from arable to grassland over the last fifteen years or so and our mission was to record its flora. Henry told us that a ditch in the field was part of a Bronze Age field system and had been excavated by Barry Cunliffe. Quite a number of juniper cuttings, taken from old junipers on the estate, had been planted and fenced to protect them from grazing cattle. As others have found, attempts to raise junipers from seed had proved unsuccessful, but the cuttings were flourishing. After welcoming us, Henry left us to get on with our survey.

Hawkweed (Hieracium agg.), which carpeted some of the woodland clearings

Long-headed Poppy

We split into two teams and walked the field to cover as much ground between us as possible and spent the morning with our checklists. We found a number of spikes of Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) and large numbers of Common Broomrape (*Orobanche minor*). Other plants familiar to us from chalk downland included Upright Brome (*Bromopsis erecta*), Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), Greater Knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*) and Sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia*). Small Scabious (*Scabiosa columbaria*) and Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*) were also recorded. As expected, some of the plants characteristic of undisturbed chalk grassland were missing, but our total of nearly one hundred species showed a good diversity. The

presence of abundant butterflies and other invertebrates showed that wildlife appreciated the variety of flowering plants available. Brimstone, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Small Tortoiseshell and Painted Lady were all seen. We also heard Skylarks and disturbed Brown Hares in our wanderings. At lunch time we discovered we were sitting amongst Spiked Sedge (*Carex spicata*), fortunately less spiky than the thistles that usually seem to materialise under unwary behinds!

After lunch we went into the adjacent woodland where Henry had undertaken some scrub clearance in several scallops along the edge last winter. He thought that the woodland originated as wood pasture and was keen to restore at least part of it to this habitat. We found a number of calcareous grassland plants in the clearings, including Rock Rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Crested Hair-grass (*Koeleria micrantha*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*) and Salad Burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*), suggesting that parts at least had been open grassland habitat quite recently. Perhaps at some stage these will make it into the field next door! There was one young Juniper that had been discovered during the clearance, now protected by wire-netting from browsing deer. We also recorded some typical woodland species including Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) and Bearded Couch (*Elymus caninus*). Our most exciting find was of five spikes of Bird's-nest Orchid, four a short distance in from the woodland edge and one right by the path along the margin.

Thanks very much to Henry Edmunds for allowing us access onto his land; it is very encouraging to see how his methods encourage plant and wildlife diversity. Thanks also to Eileen Rollo, who was to have been the joint leader of the visit and came with me to do the initial exploration. Unfortunately she was unable to be with us, but we were thankful to hear that she was on the road to recovery.

Anne Appleyard

Bird's-nest Orchid

Sunday July 12th 2009

Pike Corner

Leader: Sharon Pilkington

Fourteen of us gathered at this northern extremity of Wiltshire for a morning investigating the flora, and in particular the sedges, to be found at Pike Corner. The two fields are part of the Lower Mill Estate and lie within the Cotswold Water Park SSSI. Their rich flora was recognised by Dave Green during the Wiltshire Flora Mapping Project and one of our members, Joy Newton, commented that she had last visited the site with Dave in the mid 1980s.

Hairy Sedge - Pat Woodruffe

Our first find was a sedge which proved hard to identify fully – aren't they all, I imagine many thinking! Sharon convinced us that it was either Tawny Sedge *Carex. hostiana* or Distant Sedge *C. distans* and it was only later in the day, using books and microscopes at Lower Moor Farm, that we were able to confirm that it was *C. hostiana* by the trigonous tips to the leaves and the relatively long beak on the utricle. In contrast, our next find was Hairy Sedge *C. hirta*, one of the more common and easily identified sedges that lives up to its name with its hairy leaves, utricles and male glumes.

Parsley Water-dropwort - Leif Bersweden

As we walked further in to the field we spotted Parsley Water-dropwort *Oenanthe lachenalii* a plant that is frequently associated with coastal marshes. Its basal leaves had withered but it was readily separated from Corky-fruited Water-dropwort *O. pimpinelloides* by the open, convex heads. By this time we were becoming puzzled by the plant associations that we were finding. Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea* and Bog Pimpernell *Anagallis tenella* – both plants of acid wetlands – were growing alongside

Carnation Sedge - Pat Woodruffe

Flat-sedge *Blysmus compressus*, which generally prefers to grow in base-rich soils. *Blysmus* can be identified by the compact and flattened inflorescence but sadly is a Red Data Book species and, in Wiltshire, is found in wet meadows in the north of the county. Another good find was Common Adder's Tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and we were amazed to see some particularly

Tawny Sedge - Pat Woodruffe

Flat Sedge - Pat Woodruffe

Adder's Tongue - Leif Bersweden

tall plants growing in quite rank vegetation whilst in the shorter turf we found a plant of Marsh Arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris*.

Not all sedges, of course, are classified in the genus *Carex* and we found a few such plants; Grey Club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani,* Bristle Club-rush *Isolepis setacea* and Common Spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*. We have found *S. tabernaemontani* on visits to several other sites in this area and it is notably glaucous with minute red dots covering the glumes. The *Isolepis* is a tiny plant which is an annual or short-lived perennial growing in disturbed ground. The distribution map suggests that it is widespread in wet, acidic areas but it is possibly often overlooked. Under the microscope we were able to see very clearly the longitudinal ribs on the nut - the main feature that distinguishes it from its close relative Slender Club-rush *I. cernua*. Three different species of *Eleocharis* have been recorded from Pike Corner but I think we identified only one on this occasion – unless of course I missed something whilst taking a photograph!

Downy-fruited Sedge - Pat Woodruffe

There were more *Carex* waiting for us; Common Sedge *C. nigra* with its highly trigonous stem, dark glumes and smooth utricles and Long-stalked Yellow-sedge *C. viridula* subsp. *brachyrrhyncha* (previously *C. lepidocarpa*). We pondered over the latter at the Lower Moor Farm Centre and were able to take time to note all its characteristics. There was also False Fox-sedge *C. otrubae* with its stout, highly triangular stem and, last but by no means least, *C. filiformis*. This sedge is Nationally Rare and confined almost to the Thames Valley floodplain. Its common name, Downy-fruited Sedge, is totally justified when the inflorescence is examined and the utricles in particular looked quite stunning under Sharon's microscope.

Marsh Arrowgrass - Pat Woodruffe

Our thanks to Sharon for helping us yet again on this visit. She is always busy, but most particularly during the summer season, and we are all very grateful for the time she spends with us. I felt that the afternoon session was extremely useful and would welcome comment from others.

Pat Woodruffe

Bog Pimpernell - Pat Woodruffe

Tuesday 21 July

Oliver's Castle, Roundway and Beacon Hill

Lesley Wallington

Wet, windy and a weekday. Would anyone come? Yes, eight of us, all well wrapped against the weather.

It is always a joy to see Round-headed Rampion *Phyteuma orbiculare (P. tenerum* in Rose's Wild Flower Key) and its English name is suitable for this place – we peered into the wooded depths of Bloody Ditch where, in 1643, many of the fleeing Roundhead cavalry tumbled to injury and death. The colony of Rampions is extensive here – we were seeing them everywhere

Round-headed Rampion - Pat Woodruffe

The site has not had enough grazing lately but where the soil is thin enough there would be banks prettily laid out with desirable chalky plants. Bastard toadflax *Thesium humifusum* in full flower, Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia,* Squinancy-wort *Asperula cynanchica* and Spiny Restharrow *Ononis spinosa.*

We found seven species of thistle including the ultimate prize, Tuberous Thistle *Cirsium tuberosum*. There was a healthy population growing on a steep slope. Perhaps it is protected from hybridisation by the long grass, especially Tor Grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*, which does not suit Dwarf Thistle *C. acaule*.

David had botanised here as a young lad – with Donald Grose, no less – and thus could tell us that Woolly Thistle *Cirsium eriophorum* [one of the glories of Wiltshire] had only arrived on this hill about 50 years ago.

After pottering about we tramped round to Beacon Hill for a wind-sheltered though wet picnic. All the way along there were plentiful Knapweeds, both Black and Greater *Centaurea nigra,* and *C. scabiosa* so the dominant palette of our day was purple: Rampions, Thistles, Knapweeds, Clustered Bellflower *Campanula glomerata* [a few] and Harebells.

A good trip; lovely things to look at in congenial company. Thank you Lesley

Rosemary Duckett

Tuberous Thistle - Pat Woodruffe

Hybrid Tuberous Thistle - Leif Bersweden

A note on the Hybrid Tuberous Thistle, *Cirsium x medium* (*C. Tuberosum x C. Acaule*)

A small group of more agile botanists found *C. medium* growing just down the hill from the pure *C. tuberosum*. The stem was about half the length of the *tuberosum* and the flower is slightly different (see photos). the leaves were also slightly different and were covered in tiny spines; the stems were cob-webby at the top, but covered in white, bristly hairs at the bottom; the leaves also grew all the way up the stem rather than just at the bottom like on *C. Tuberosum.*

Leif Bersweden

Saturday 8 August 2009

Ratz Bottom

Leader: John Moon

A hot day for some arable botanising with the Hampshire Flora Group and having assembled in the car park, we set out along the field edges of the Leckford Estate. The fields contained a vast range of common arable species that included Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), Common-field Speedwell (*Veronica persica*) and the bluer Grey-field Speedwell (*Veronica polita*), which has a slightly smaller flower than *V. persica*. Black-bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*), Perennial Sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) and Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*) were also among the common finds. Both Round-leaved Fluellen (*Kickxia spuria*) and Sharp-leaved Fluellen (*Kickxia elatine*) were seen, the former being much commoner, and Dwarf Spurge (*Euphorbia exigua*) and Henbit Deadnettle (*Lamium amplexicaule*) were present in good numbers.

Round-leaved Fluellen

Walking along the second field edge we found Cornfield Knotgrass (*Polygonum rurivagum*) with its characteristic thin leaves, lots of the beautiful Venus's-looking-glass (*Legousia hybrida*) in among the wheat and also lots of Thyme-leaved Sandwort (*Arenaria serpyllifolia*) covering the ground with its little white flowers. We saw numerous poppies, most of which were long-headed poppies (*Papaver dubium*), but we did see several rough poppies (*Papaver hybridum*) although most of them had lost their fragile petals already. Just before we stopped for lunch we found a pale pink form of Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis ssp. arvensis var. carnea*) and a strange thistle that was long debated over, but we eventually came to the conclusion that it was a Welted Thistle (*Carduus crispus*), rather than a hybrid.

Couded Yellow - Leif Bersweden

Plenty of butterflies on the wing making the most of the hot weather. A patch of Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) provided a wonderful display of Painted Ladies, whites and blues as well as a few Small Tortoiseshells! Many of us hadn't seen the latter for a very long time! Further on, the keen eyed spotted Common Blues and three Clouded Yellows as well as an occasional Red Admiral.

After a picnic lunch in the shade of a hedge we wandered on and left the cornfields to walk through some calcareous grassland, where the commonest species was comfortably Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), before returning to the car park. It had been an interesting day botanising at Ratz Bottom in very nice weather and it was capped off by two Hobbies circling overhead. Thanks to the Hants Flora Group for inviting us along.

Venus's Looking Glass

Leif Bersweden

Sunday 8 August 2009

Bromham Market Gardens

Leaders: Joy Newton and Rosemary Duckett

Shaggy Soldier - Pat Woodruffe

Beautiful weather and an interesting location tempted 20 members to join us for this meeting. Rosemary described how the pattern of land ownership had remained almost feudal until the last few years. Individuals had owned strips of land in various locations resulting in small patches being cultivated in different ways according to the crops grown. For the 'weeds' this meant that no adverse treatment was likely to occur over an extensive area and thus the chance of their survival somewhere nearby was quite high. Sadly, the pattern of ownership is changing as the Bromham Consortium of Vegetable Growers develops and more modern methods of cultivation are being employed. Needless to say, this is not to the benefit of the flora!

Bugloss - Pat Woodruffe

The rich light soils are derived from the Lower Greensand and when we first stepped on to the land we were confronted with an array of plants including both Gallant Soldier *Galinsoga parviflora* and Shaggy Soldier *G. quadriradiata*. These two are apparently easily distinguished by the presence or absence of hairs but it is not as simple as that … *G. parviflora* can be hirsute and then the better method of identification is to look at the scales on the receptacle, which are much more lobed in this species. Growing close-by was a great patch of Bugloss *Anchusa arvensis* – not a plant that we see very often at all.

Hairs on Shaggy Soldier - Pat Woodruffe

Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium* was another lovely species that clearly found the conditions just right.

Green Nightshade *Solanum physalifolium* is an introduced plant, rather similar to Black Nightshade in having white flowers but having green stems and fruits and much larger leaves. Leafy-fruited Nightshade *Solanum sarachoides* has been known from this site for many years but there was also some consideration of *S. physalifolium* being present. Although no longer in flower, there was a multitude of the lovely Corn Spurrey *Spergularia arvensis* and quite a lot of the relatively large Ramping Fumitory, *Fumaria muralis.*

Leafy-fruited Nightshade- Pat Woodruffe

Red Dead-nettle - Pat Woodruffe

Dave Green vividly recalled where he recorded Weasel's Snout *Misopates orontium* in 1986 ('behind that white van over there') but failed to find it again. We also searched for Small-flowered Crane's-bill *Geranium pusillum* but could only spot Round-leaved Crane's-bill *G. rotundifolium*. One particularly interesting suite of species was the three pink / purple dead nettles – Red Dead-nettle *L. purpureum,* Henbit Dead-nettle *L. amplexicaule* and Cut-leaved Dead-nettle *L. hybridum* all growing together. A wonderful way to be able to compare three closely related plants.

Wandering slowly along the paths through the plots we came across the white form of wild radish with some

Henbit Dead-nettle - Pat Woodruffe

lovely prickly fruits, several plants of long-headed poppy and numerous plants of Annual Nettle, *Urtica urens*. No one was keen to test the suggestion that its sting is much worse than that of Stinging Nettle *U. dioica*. *Ballota nigra*, Black Horehound was found in the non-flowering state and there was lots of *Thlaspi arvensis* Field Pennycress as well. An unusual grass was *Ceratochloa carinata*, Californian Brome, which used to be called *Bromus carinatus*. It is much more common in the south-east, having first naturalised near the Thames at Kew, and was introduced from USA. One of our last nice finds was *Malva neglecta,* Dwarf Mallow, with a creeping habit and small pale flowers.

Our thanks to Joy and Rosemary for a fascinating few hours, which provided such a marked contrast to our excursions into arable fields the previous day. Let us hope that future

Cut-leaved Dead-nettle - Pat Woodruffe

management will be able to combine a viable business with the conservation of these unusual weeds.

Sue Fitzpatrick and Pat Woodruffe (all photos by Pat)

Common Stork's-bill - Pat Woodruffe

Your mystery picture - Pat Woodruffe

Dwarf Mallow - Pat Woodruffe

Sunday 23 August 2009

Salisbury

Leaders: Sue Fitzpatrick and Anne Appleyard

Twelve of us set out from the car park to explore what floristic delights the City of Salisbury had to offer. Jack Oliver was amongst us and the trees in St Martin's Churchyard attracted some attention, including an


Sea Spurrey

exceptionally large Elder and various Limes. Biting Stonecrop (*Sedum acre*) and Hart's-tongue Fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) were noted growing in a grid. A small area of waste ground by St Martin's Church St yielded Annual Mercury (*Mercurialis annua*), Canadian Fleabane (*Conyza canadensis*), Wall Lettuce (*Mycelis muralis*) and Prickly Lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), together with Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*) and the ubiquitous Buddleja. Emerging by the ring road, we found Buck's-horn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*) and Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*) growing in the zone influenced by salt spray from road-gritting. Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*) and Wall Barley (*Hordeum murinum*) were also flourishing. Further along Rampart Road, again close to the ring road, we spotted two more halophytes Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass (Puccinellia distans) and Danish Scurvygrass (Cochlearia danica).


Guernsey Fleabane

The pavements and walls of Rampart Road produced quite a variety of plants, some of them garden escapes with tongue-twisting names such as *Campanula portenschlagiana* (Adria Bellflower), *C. poscharskyana* (Trailing Bellflower), *Pseudofumaria lutea* (Yellow Corydalis), *Erigeron karvinskianus* (Mexican Fleabane) and the more pronounceable *Oxalis corniculata* (Procumbent Yellow Sorrel). Canadian Fleabane was joined by its much hairier cousin the Guernsey Fleabane. Quite why this plant originating in Peru has acquired the scientific name of *Conyza sumatrensis*, heaven knows! It was found in Guernsey in 1961, hence its English name. We saw the native Pellitory-of-the-wall (*Parietaria judaica*) here and in many other places on our walk. This used to be an important plant in herbal medicine for the treatment of kidney and bladder stones because it grows on stone. The logic of this escapes me!

Our route then took us under the ring road to Guilder Lane via Winchester Street. Another wall-dwelling plant Ivy-leaved Toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) was abundant here. Gigant Street produced some relics from hanging baskets such as Garden Lobelia (*Lobelia erinus*) and Bacopa (*Sutera cordata)*. We also found Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*). Entering the Cathedral Close through St. Anne's Gate, we saw Swine-cress (*Coronopus squamatus*) and seedlings of Pendulous Sedge (*Carex*


Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass

pendula) were, rather strangely, growing in a gutter nearby. Apart from planted Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*), there was also Caucasian Lime (*Tilia x euchlora*) which has dark green glossy leaves. The effects of Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner Moth larvae were much in evidence on some 'Conker' trees. On a much smaller scale, Slender Trefoil (*Trifolium micranthum*) was spotted in


Buck's-horn Plantain

short turf, while the bright orange Fox-and-cubs (*Pilosella aurantiaca*) was growing in a shrub border. Leaving the close by Harnham Gate, we found the tiny Mind-your-own-business (*Soleirolia soleirolii*) lurking at the base of a wall in De Vaux Place and Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) growing on walls in St. Nicholas Road. Our final record before we crossed under the

Pendulous Sedge

roundabout to Churchill Gardens was Dwarf Mallow (*Malva neglecta*).

In contrast to our walk through the streets, we now followed the River Avon and saw quite a variety of marginal aquatic plants and a large colony of Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*). Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*) and Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica)* were in flower. The park has many specimen trees and the poplars attracted discussion on their possible status as native Black Poplar (*Populus nigra ssp. betulifolia*). The presence of numerous spiral galls on some near the car park/A36 confirmed that these at least were the genuine article; hybrid Black Poplars never have these galls. En route back to our starting point, we also walked alongside a canalised channel, parts of which had been subject to a river restoration scheme about four years previously. Sue was involved and told us about the use of pre-planted coir rolls in this project. The contrast between untreated sections with barren concrete sides and treated sections with their luxuriant vegetation was very marked. The attractive Cyperus Sedge (*Carex pseudocyperus*) was amongst the plants introduced and thriving.

After lunch overlooking the river restoration, a decision was taken by those staying on into the afternoon to retrace our steps along the Avon to look at aquatics growing in the main river, rather than to go on to Harnham as originally planned; Jack had brought a pole and hook, so we were able to grab plants for identification. We hope to fit in a visit to the Harnham reserve earlier in the season next year. Sharon was able to confirm her identification of Perfoliate Pondweed (*Potamogeton perfoliatus*) and also to identify Fennel Pondweed (*P. pectinatus*). Another pondweed, originally thought to be Shining Pondweed (*P. lucens*) was later confirmed by Sharon to be the rare hybrid between Perfoliate and Shining Pondweeds, *P. x salicifolius*. Richard had spotted that the leaves were sessile rather than petiolate and closer examination revealed other differences. Shining Pondweed is known from the Salisbury Avon. Other aquatics included Stream Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus penicillatus ssp pseudofluitans*), Common Duckweed (*Lemna minor*) and the aquatic moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*. The hybrid dock *Rumex x ruhmeri* (*R. conglomeratus x R. sanguineus*) was growing on the riverbank.

Thanks to Sue for all the extra effort she put into designing our route, to Sharon for her botanical expertise, including subsequent confirmation of some identifications, to Jack for sharing his knowledge of trees and to Pat whose knowledge of the Salisbury flora and help with reconnaissance was invaluable. The exercise certainly demonstrated that botanising should not be confined to the countryside!

Anne Appleyard
(all photos by Pat Woodruffe)

Native Black Poplars. Inset: leaf with diagnostic spiral gall on its petiole

Wiltshire Botany - Issue 12: Biodiversity

Wiltshire Botany 11 is expected to appear early in 2010. I am also looking ahead to No. 12. I would like this to feature articles on the theme of biodiversity and think this is an area where many members of Wiltshire Botanical Society would be able to contribute, including members who feel their expertise is still in process of development. Contributors can write about their own neighbourhoods, which should simplify the task. Below I outline the nature of the topic, and the ways in which it might be approached. I will be happy to offer help and advice to any members not yet convinced that they can write an article. Indeed, I would be prepared, if necessary, to receive relevant information and make it into an article.

Biodiversity is a term for the variety of wildlife which we ought to be maintaining and enhancing. It refers to the survival of a large number of species of living things (e.g. Pyramid Orchid, the Marbled White butterfly), of the different communities of which they form a part (e.g. species-rich limestone grassland), and of the environments which these species and communities require (e.g. limestone grassland which has not been agriculturally improved by fertilisers, herbicides, etc)

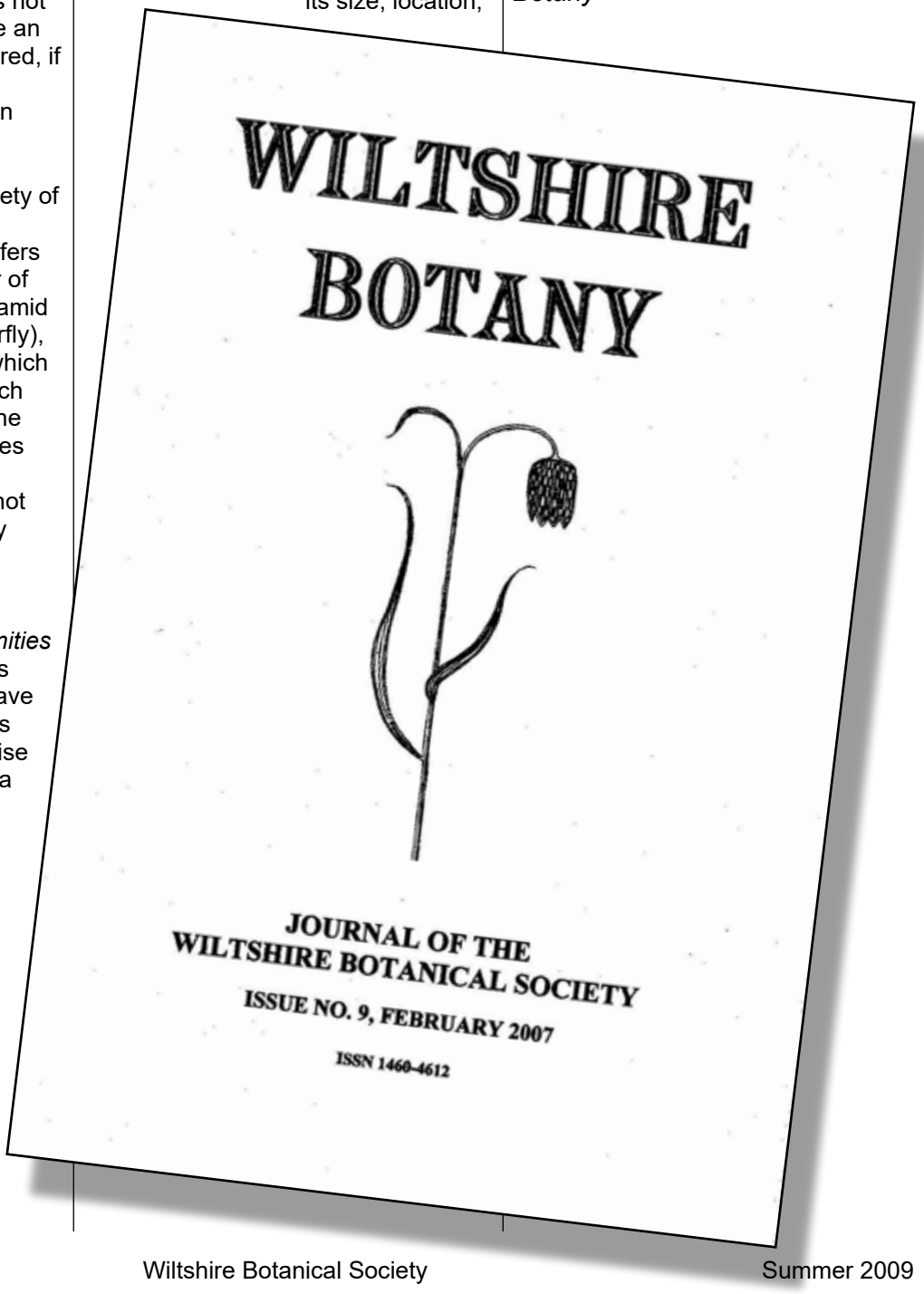
Section 40 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* (*The NERC Act*) 2006 states that all public authorities must have regard to biodiversity, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions. This is part of a wider commitment by the European Union to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 (*Countdown 2010*). The duty means that all public authorities and their statutory undertakers must make efforts to conserve biodiversity in all of their activities. This means that each authority needs some sort of plan. So this is a “hot” current topic. Any information we can assemble could be helpful to local authorities in drawing up such a plan.

What I have in mind for a contribution can be summarized as:

- The writer selects an area for study - the home village or town or valley, or an area of particular interest.
- The study area is described - perhaps with a map
- The types of habitat found are listed - e.g. meadows, woodlands, road verges, walls, rubbish tips, neglected gardens, surface of Water Board reservoir, waste ground, building sites, etc etc.. Again a map of the sites could be helpful.
- A description of each type of habitat or and/or site, including its size, location, geographical features, the most numerous plants and how it is managed.
- A list of the rarer and/or more interesting plants that are found in addition to the main ones.
- Any special conservation status, and any available information about Local Authority plans for it.
- Any ideas about what may be needed to conserve its natural history interest.

It would help me to know if you are interested in having a go at this, so that I can start planning ahead.

John Presland, Editor, Wiltshire Botany



Jizz ...

When a plant is identified, we sometimes say it is because it has a certain jizz.

Chambers Dictionary (1993 edition) defines 'jizz' as:

> n. the characteristic features which distinguish a bird, animal or plant from other species which resemble it [Etymology uncertain]

Another thought is that the word is derived from a military term GIS, which means General Impression and Shape, referring to a ship or aircraft before it is close enough to be sure of positive identification.

Can any other WBS members confirm this? or have any other suggestions?

Jane Brown

Replies to the editor please.

Looking for Arable rarities - Swindon Area

Part of the Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan deals with surveying on farmland particularly looking for arable weeds. Tim Kaye wonders if any WBS members would be interested in participating in such an undertaking. If so it is anticipated that work will begin next year scouring field edges for some of the plants listed in this edition's crossword. For more details please contact Tim on timdankaye@hotmail.com or 01249 656284.

Tim Kaye

Arable Crossword

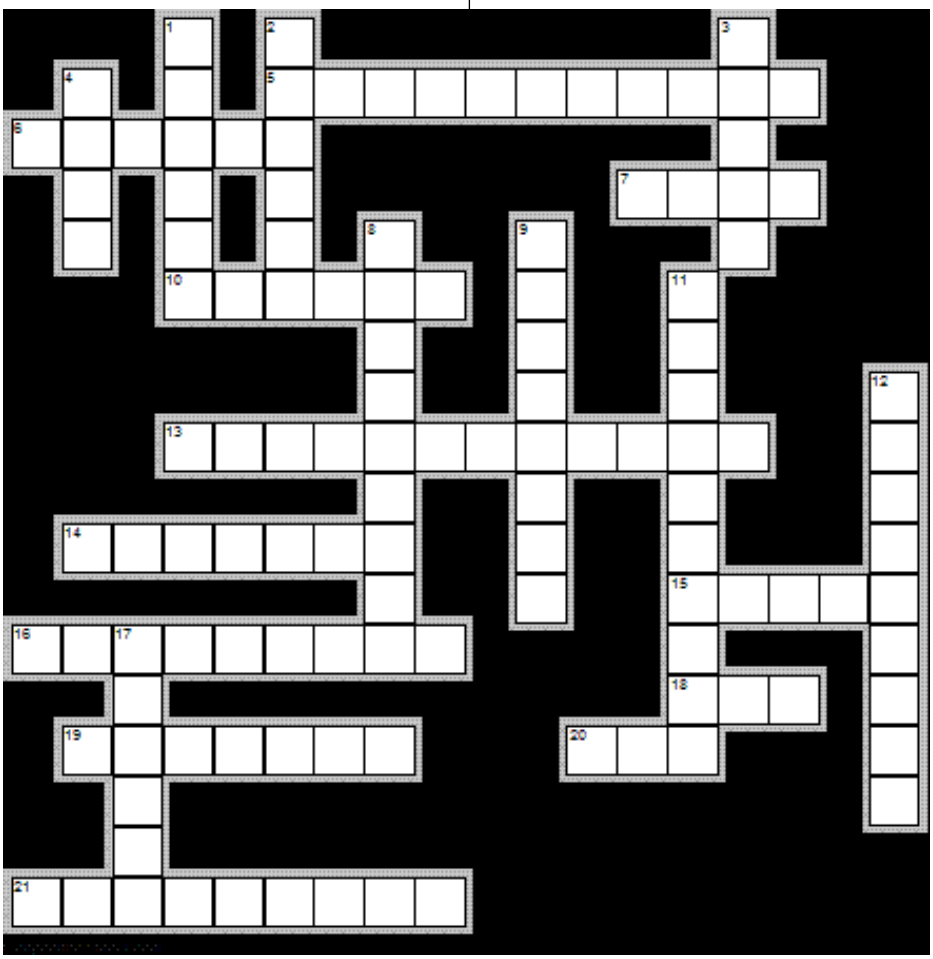
Tim Kaye has provided this for your delight - bring your answers to the AGM in 2010.

Clues Across

5. Brome at Kew
6. False wheat or cockle
7. How many leaves to this allseed?
10. Through the wax
13. Mustelid's nose
14. The smoke weeds
15. Wimp
16. Lawn parrot (sic)
18. Headlice grass
19. A fluellen
20. Occular capacity of the pheasant
21. Euphorbia helioscopa

Clues Down

1. Chicken chomp of dead nettle
2. Commune in the province of Bergamo, Italy
3. Roman goddess of love has a looking glass
4. Which succory?
8. End of the rodent
9. Bird riding aid
11. Conifer on the floor
12. Sweet clump
17. Petite girl



Limes and Lindens

The great cosmopolitan *Tiliaceae* family has 47 genera and 700 species, mainly trees. Six genera are important tropical hardwoods; some of these are dispersed via elephant droppings. The north temperate *Tilia* genus with 21-50 species (depending on "lumping" versus "splitting" taxonomy") is by no means the biggest genus in the family. Tilias are thought to have evolved in the region of the northeast Chinese-Korean border, spreading east to Japan and North America, and west to Asia and Europe. They died out in western North America and central Asia, but generally became bigger, tougher and more frost-resistant in northwest Europe. Likewise the north Japanese and east Siberian limes tend to be larger than those from the warm southern Japanese islands such as Kyushu (*T. kiusiana*). In England, the Large-leaved Lime (*T. platyphyllos*) can reach 31 metres, the small-leaved Lime 32 metres, and the Common Hybrid Lime (*T. europaea/T. vulgaris*) can achieve 47 metres. The last can be considered Europe's and Britain's tallest and biggest broadleaved tree, although challenged by another hybrid, the Bryanstone (London) Plane Tree in Dorset ("Above 45m", Tree Register of the British Isles, March 2008).

Recent research has shown lime, not oak, to have been the dominant tree of the dense European forests. Professor Pigott writes "Its [lime's] home was in the vast primaeval woods that covered the European Plain from England in the west across central Europe to the far reaches of old Russia in the east". There are still one million hectares of limes along the Volga, making Russia the world's biggest honey producer; great lime forests also survive in Poland, Germany, Romania and the Balkans.

Limes are extremely shade-tolerant and can survive as complete ("maiden") trees in dense woodland for over 300 years. However, cut and re-sprouted stumps might be considered immortal (CD Pigott). Some living Lake District small-leaved lime rings from single specimens are 10 metres in diameter and over 1,600 years old.

Green is the light wavelength not used in photosynthesis, and limes cast an alluring diffused green shading rather than the dappled shades seen under other deciduous trees. The family of Linnaeus took their name from a linden at Jonsboda. *Tilia miqueliana* is a tree sacred to the eastern Buddhists, preserved and described from ancient temples in Japan and China. Limes were usually symbolic for women, oaks for men, specially for Baltic tribes. Fashionable favourites or personal preferences and prejudices make aesthetic pontifications foolish. Even so, limes have continued to be highly popular trees with European Silver-lime (*T. tomentosa*) and European Silver Pendant Lime (*T. (x?) petiolaris*) as regular front-runners. More recently, two Chinese limes, *T. henryana* & *T. oliveri* (another silver lime) have been given awards of merit and been voted as overall best trees.

Small-leaved Lime *Tilia cordata*) at Webb's Wood, near Brinkworth.
Unusually, this wood has huge numbers of this native lime as mature trees, coppiced stools and young saplings. Parking (SU 0379 8571) is up a short track east off Wood Lane

Silver limes have the dense silvery-white indumentum of eight-armed stellate hairs on leaf under surfaces, discouraging aphid infestation. Even more intriguing are the evolutionary adaptations surrounding our great common hybrid limes which ***use*** aphids in a complex four-organism nitrogen-enhancing symbiosis. Soil cyanobacteria thrive on the fallen honeydew, and in***tra***cellular bacteria ***within*** lime aphid organ tissues manufacture amino acids (see Newsletter 25, Spring 2005, p3). This four-way symbiosis is quite as extraordinary as anything in the Brazilian rainforests or the Australian Great Barrier Reef, albeit less obvious.

Since the 1993 Wiltshire Flora, further Small-leaved Limes have been found in the county. The oldest, at Wolfhall Farm south of Savernake Forest, has an impressive spread and a girth at 5 feet of 5.3 metres, putting it (probably well up) in the top five for the British Isles. This tree was the nucleus for a subsequent avenue of later-planted horse-chestnuts and common limes (lindens). An interrupted two-mile long and 60 yard wide double-ranked avenue of lindens comprised the London Ride east of Savernake Forest. Although long-neglected and overgrown, some of the residual lindens have girths of over 5 metres. There are many other fine avenues and lines of lindens, such as a fringe by the Salisbury Cathedral precincts. Dense coalescing stem sprouts and burrs make reliable girth measurements on these old hybrid lindens difficult, but Stourhead has one of the world's most bulky specimens. Its girth inside the stem sprouts is over 10 metres, but 14 metres around the burrs and semi-coalesced and fused vertical trunk branchlets. The Cobham Frith roadside avenues of lindens and horse-chestnuts include a linden with a girth of 7.5 metres at 5 feet, but 8.7 metres at 1 foot (in a clear zone between stem and ground sprouts). Bowood has hybrid lindens of well above 40 metres high, but these could be matched or surpassed by some of the gigantic Savernake

Forest and Tottenham Estate lindens. The Tottenham Estate holds another lime in the top five for British Isle records, probably the third greatest Large-leaved Lime. This was confirmed as *Tilia platyphyllos* subsp. *cordifolia*, a small-leaved variant of the Large-leaved Lime, with a girth of over 6 metres. None of these were known to the Wiltshire Flora.

Two unique limes occur in Wiltshire. Penny Theobald reported to Barbara Last an extraordinary and vigorous linden on a farm near Blackmoor Copse with a parabola of gigantic nodules, bizarre branch distortions, and dense (secondary?) mistletoe infestation – a tree worthy of a Harry Potter film. The second is an interesting and vigorous Lockeridge American Lime (*T. americana*) which in one year produced complex and striking infructescences with large fertile seed, its progeny under study (for both, see Abnormalities in Plants, Presland et al, 2009, pp 50 & 85).

My arboretum at Clatford has 27 *Tilia* species, ten hybrids and in all over 55 taxa including subspecies, variants and cultivars. So far these trees are disease-free and already show signs of dominating all the other native tree genera especially when closely planted, possible excepting Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Especially successful are some of the American and Siberian Tilia species, European Silver Limes, and the three native limes. Perhaps in 50 years time, this little corner of Clatford could look like England 6,000 years ago.

Jack Oliver

Caucasian Limes, *Tilia euchlora*, heavily controlled in St Martins churchyard, Salisbury - photo, Pat Woodruffe

WBS Website

Sonia Heywood looks after our website on the Communigate site (www.wiltsbotsoc.co.uk). She keeps this up to date with our meetings programme, publications and other news, but feels that there is room for more development. Particularly, we need a site that offers downloads, so that current and back numbers of our newsletter and journal are available over the web.

For examples of what can be done, take a look at "Hants Plants" at www.hantsplants.org.uk/news.php, or Essex Field Club at www.essexfieldclub.org.uk/portal. There are others.

Sonia would like to hand over to someone who can devote more time and expertise to website development. If you think you could take on this role, or can offer advice and help, please contact her at sonia.heywood@tiscali.co.uk.

News from the Wildlife Trust

John Presland has extracted some botanical good news from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust publications. Here it is:

Conigre Mead: The changing face of an urban oasis -

Conigre Mead is a Wiltshire Wildlife Trust reserve beside the River Avon at Melksham, a stone's throw from Sainsbury's car park. It floods every winter and makes a good home for wetland plants such as Ragged Robin, Cuckoo Flower, Yellow Flag and Meadowsweet, as well as a variety of grassland plants. There is also a magnificent Crack Willow and a wide range of animal life.

Sue Litherland, Wiltshire Wildlife 98, September 2009, pp. 6-7.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Annual Report 2008-09

Pyramidal Orchid has returned to **Coombe Bissett Down Nature Reserve**.

Langford Lakes Nature Reserve now has a circular walk through old water meadows, with a fine example of a native Black Poplar. In addition an adjoining area of river and pasture has been purchased, and there are plans to turn it into a rich wetland habitat.

The Trust has purchased **Sandpool Farm**, which adjoins Lower Moor Farm Nature Reserve at Oaksey. It features a wet woodland and heronry.

Membership

We welcome new members, beginners and experts alike. If you are interested, please feel free to come to a meeting or two before you commit yourself. Subscriptions and contact details go to:

Tim Kaye
35 Marshall Street, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 0ED
Telephone: 07980 863 577
Email: timdankaye@hotmail.com

Subscriptions:

Ordinary Member	£10.00 per year
Joint Membership	£15.00 per year
Life Membership	£100 (Family £150)

Wiltshire Botanical Society Committee

Richard Aisbitt	Chairman, newsletter, records	01793 694680	richard@theaisbitts.co.uk
Anne Appleyard	Annual Field Trip	01980 610 385	anneappleyard@tiscali.co.uk
Jane Brown		01672 569241	janeluke@elephant87.freeserve.co.uk
Paul Darby	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	01380 725670	pdarby@wiltshirewildlife.org
Rosemary Duckett	Secretary	01373 858296	rosemary.duckett@virgin.net
Sonia Heywood	Web site	01380 830478	sonia.heywood@tiscali.co.uk
Jack Oliver		01672 861251	
Sharon Pilkington	BSBI Recorder for Wiltshire	01225 775945	sharon.pilkington1@btinternet.com
John Presland	Editor: Wiltshire Botany	01225 865125	johnpresland2@tiscali.co.uk
Tim Kaye	Treasurer	07980 863 577	timdankaye@hotmail.com
Pat Woodruffe	Meetings Secretary	01794 884436	pmw.bentley@waitrose.com

Winter - Spring Meetings

Sunday 11 October 2009	Bentley Wood Fungus Foray, Malcolm Storey
Saturday 17 October 2009	SE Asia, Dave Green
Tuesday 3 November 2009	Natural History Museum, hosted by WANHS.
Saturday 14 November 2009	Abnormalities in Plants, John Presland
Saturday 16 January 2010	Rangering and Rambling, Tim Kaye
Saturday 23 January 2010	Bryology, Vernditch and Martin, Andrew Branson
Saturday 6 February 2010	Moths and their Larval Foodplants, Barbara Last
Saturday 6 March 2010	AGM, 'Memories of South Devon in June 2009'
Thursday 25 March 2010	Lichen Workshop, Urchfont Manor, Lesley Balfe

Note: this was wrongly dated in the meetings programme as 25 *Feb* 2010

Thursday 15 April 2010	*Ophrys sphegodes*, Worth Matravers, Purbeck

For details, see our meetings leaflet or the Wiltshire Botanical Society web site at http://www.wiltsbotsoc.co.uk

Future meetings

Please suggest ideas for meetings or talks. Perhaps more training workshops? If so, what would you like to learn about? Contact me by writing to:

Anchorsholme, Hop Gardens
Whiteparish, Nr. Salisbury
Wilts SP5 2ST

or by phone or e-mail (01794 884436, pmw.bentley@waitrose.com)

Pat Woodruffe

Your Newsletter

There's always a brief debate at the start of a WBS meeting about who will write a report for the newsletter. Pat Woodruffe is skilled at gentle arm-twisting and tries to share out the task fairly. I am told that members enjoy these reports, so a big thank you to the many people who have given in to Pat's persuasion.

Members' photographic skills get better and better; you will see a number of their efforts in this issue. I always credit the photographer in the caption or elsewhere; if there is no credit, I have used my own pictures. If you see one of your pictures without your name attached, let me know and I will correct this in the next issue.

Accounts of visits and meetings form the major part of the newsletter. However, I always welcome other types of article - there are some examples in this issue. Here are some suggestions:

- Plant Portraits – descriptions of features, ecology, folklore and/or history etc of single plants or plant groups
- Habitat or site portraits
- Identification tips – distinguishing between related species
- News of plant surveys
- Interesting plant records
- Wiltshire botanical history and Wiltshire botanists
- News of conservation gains or losses
- Letters, questions
- Cartoons (surely we can do better than Twitcher in the Swamp?)
- And thank you for the crossword, Tim

If you have an idea for an article, do please write it and send it in. If you are not sure, you could discuss it with me first.

There is almost no editorial policy for the newsletter and I value and respect differences in style. However, I do like to include both the botanical and the common names in the text. Accuracy is appreciated, but don't worry, I check all the plant names and should correct any errors.

Deadline for the spring number (issue 35): **31 March 2010**.

Please send material by post to: 84 Goddard Avenue, Swindon, Wilts SN1 4HT, or better, by email to: richard@theaisbitts.co.uk

Richard Aisbitt