## Flora of the Hampshire Downs

Naturetrek Tour Report

22 - 24 June 2007





Melampyrum arvense





Epipactis palustris

Compiled by Paul Harmes



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Day 1 Friday 22nd May

Weather: Dull and cloudy.

Ten tour members met in the lounge of the Alton Grange Hotel, where Paul gave a brief outline of the proposed itinerary for the weekend, before sitting down to dinner. With our meal complete, eight group members met with Paul in the car park, where we boarded our minibus for the thirty minute drive to the splendid fen site of Mapledurwell, where we were to search for typical wet meadow species. The light was not perfect, due to some rather heavey cloud, but this did not detract from the site, which is described as the "richest half acre of Hampshire".

Dactylorhiza trausteineri (Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid), Dactylorhiza praetermissa (Southern Marsh Orchid) and the delicate Epipactis palustris (Marsh Helleborine) were all seen together with Lychnis flos-cuculi (Ragged Robin), Carex paniculata (Greater Tussock-sedge), Valeriana dioica (Marsh Valerian), Menyanthes trifoliata (Bogbean) and Eupatorium cannabinum (Hemp Agrimony), among many, many more. We were back at the hotel by 22-15hrs.

Day 2 Saturday 23rd May

Weather: Bright and sunny at first, becoming wet and breezy later.

After a splendid breakfast we were ready for the day ahead. We left the hotel at 09.00hrs and made the short trip down to Noar Hill, near Selbourne. Parking at the end to a track, we took the footpath up to the low scarp. This site is grazed by domestic animals for some of the year. It also has patches of scrub with some larger trees, some longer rough grassland and short, rabbit-grazed, species rich turf.

The approach path was flanked by *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn), *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn) and *Fraxinus excelsio*r (Ash), with Bramble and *Clemitis vitalba* (Old man's-beard). There were also scattered specimens of *Juniperus communis* (Juniper), *Sorbus aria* (Whitebeam) and *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan).

It was the short turf that attracted most attention because of the number of different species. Helianthimum nummularium (Common Rockrose), Common Twayblade (Listera ovata), Dactylorhiza fuchsii (Common Spotted Orchid), Gymnadenia conopsea (Fragrant Orchid), Campanula glomerata (Clustered Bellflower) and Euphrasia nemorosa (Eyebright) were all present. However, it was the sheer numbers of Herminium monorchis (Musk Orchid) and a small group of three Coeloglossum viridis (Frog Orchid) which attracted most attention.

Moving on, our next stop was near Hawkley at Prior's Dean church to view a very ancient and splendid *Taxus baccata* (Yew). As we were now fast approaching 12-00hrs, we decided that lunch would be next on the agenda. This was taken at the Shoe public house, in the village of Exton.

Following lunch, we made another short drive to the wonderful beech hanger (Wooded Hillside) of Galley Down. By now it was raining quite heavily, so the terrain was fast becoming very muddy under foot. Galley Down appears to be a mixture of some ancient woodland with some obvious deciduous planting about two hundred years ago. Here we found good numbers of *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid) and a huge patch of *Ruscus aculeatus* (Butcher's-broom).

With a short respite in the rain, we moved north to Beacon Hill, parking in the rough car park under the *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech). We set off on the fifteen minute walk along the track, to the more open, south facing hillside. Along the track we passed Cornus sanguineus (Dogwood) and *Euonymus europaea* (Spindle).

The scarp slope of Beacon Hill, is yet another form of chalk grassland. Less rabbit grazed that Noar Hill, with slightly less rough grassland. Here we found one of the South of England, and Hampshire rarities, *Phyteuma orbiculare* (Round-headed Rampion). It was growing with *Odontites verna* (Red Bartsia), *Origanum vulgare* (Marjorum) and *Verbascum nigrum* (Dark Mullein).

Our final stop of the day was at Chappetts Copse, West Meon. Here we hoped to find *Cephalanthera damsonia* (White Helleborine) and *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Sword-leaved Helleborine). This was not easy, as both species had finished flowering. However, with some perseverance, we did identify both species. From here, it was relatively short journey back to our hotel.

Prior to dinner we met in the hotel lounge, where Paul had brought his laptop computer, and showed us some of the orchid species we had not found in flower, as well as outlining the next days itinerary.

Day 3 Sunday 24th May

Weather: Wet and windy.

Following a second wonderful breakfast, and the vacating of our rooms, we were ready, again, to depart the hotel by 09.00hrs. Today we drove south for about forty-five minutes, before arriving at our first port of call, Portchester Hill, above the city of Portsmouth. As we arrived, there was an advantageous lull in the rain. From our vantage point, we had a splendid, in darkened, view of Portsmouth Harbour and the Spiniker Tower.

In a relatively small area we saw a number of interesting and rare plants, including *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid), *Melampyrum arvense* (Field Cow-wheat), *Orobanche hederae* var. *monochroma* ('Yellow' Ivy Broomrape) and *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Orchid).

As the rain again began to fall, we return to the minibus, and made our way to our nest location. This was the National Nature Reserve of The Warren. Once again we would be investigating a beech hanger, and searching for one of the UK's rarest orchids, *Cephalanthera rubra* (Red Helleborine). Restricted to less than half a dozen sites in Britain, this plant is at the northern most edge of its' European distribution in Southern England.

This reserve requires care when entering, as the hillside is very steep, with rough steps cut in the paths. Due to the continuous rain, these steps and paths were very slippery. However, we negotiated them safely and were rewarded by finding three plants, one of which was in loose, pink bud. A slow walk back to the minibus found us *Polypodium vulgare* (Common Polypody) and *Allium ursinum* (Ramsons) on the lane verge.

As the morning was rapidly moving into afternoon, we made a stop at the Selborne Arms, in the village of the same name, for lunch. Selborne was made famous by the eighteenth centuary naturalist, Rev. Gilbert White, who wrote The Natural History of Selborne, published in 1788.

After a satisfying lunch, we set of for a site in the Woolmer Forst. This site is a completely contrasting habitat to the chalk downland we had spent the previous day and a half exploring. It is on the edge of the greensand, so offers a more acid soil type to that of the chalk, which is, of course, alkaline. Although this site is open access, it also doubles as a shooting range.

Upon our arrival, we saw the red warning flags flying, but we also met the reserve ranger, who was in the process of lowering them. Setting off, it was very soon apparent that the only similarity between the chalk and the sand was the extent of the rabbit-grazing. *Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush), Rumex acetosella (Sheep's Sorrel), Trifolium arvense (Hare's-foot Clover), Molina caerulea (Purple Moor Grass), Deschampsia flexuosa (Wavy Hair-grass) and Pinus sylvestris (Scots Pine) were all seen for the first time this weekend.

In an area of Betula pendula (Birch) woodland, we found three species of Helleborine, Epipactis Helleborine (Broadleaved), Epipactis leptochila (Narrow-lipped) and Epipactis phylanthes (Green-flowered). This brought our Orchid count for the weekend to eighteen.

From here, we made the short journey back to Alton to collect our luggage and vehicles and bid farewell to one another, as we began our homeward journeys.

## **Species List**

Group/Species English Name(If any) Location

PTERIDOPHYTES FERNS & ALLIES

Equisetaceae Horsetail Family

Equisetum arvenseCommon HorsetailWoolmer ForestEquisetum telmatiaGreat HorsetailSelbourne

Aspleniaceae Spleenwort Family

Asplenium ruta-muraria Wall Rue Church wall, Hawkley

Phyllitis scolopendrium Hart's-tongue The Warren

Dennstaedtiaceae Bracken Family

Pteridium aquilinum Bracken Common on verges

Dryopteridaceae Buckler Fern Family

Dryopteris felix-mas Male Fern Verge near The Warren

Polypodiaceae Polypody Family

Polypodium vulgare Common Polypody Verge near The Warren

Woodsiaceae (Athyriaceae) Lady Fern Family

Anthyrium felix-femina Lady Fern Verge near The Warren

PINOPSIDA (GYMNOSPERMS) CONIFERS

Cupressaceae Juniper Family

Juniperus communis Juniper Noar Hill

Pinaceae Pine Family

Larix deciduaEuropean LarchGalley DownPicea abies ssp. abiesSprucePlanted

Pinus sylvestris Scot's Pine Woolmer Forest

Taxaceae Yew Family

Taxus baccata Yew Galley Down

MAGNOLIOPSIDA(ANGIOSPERMS) FLOWERING PLANTS

Magnoliidae (Dicotyledons)

Aceraceae Maple Family

Acer campestrisField MapleBeacon HillAcer pseudoplatanusSycamoreCommon

Apiaceae (Umbelliferae) Carrot Family

Aegipodium podagaria Ground Elder Verge near Galley Down

Anthriscus sylvestrisCow ParsleyCommonHeracleum sphondylliumHogweedCommonSanicula europaeaSanicleThe Warren

Aquifoliaceae Holly Family

Ilex aquifolia Holly Galley Down

Araliaceae Ivy Family

Hedera helix agg Ivy Common

Asteraceae (Compositae) Daisy Family

Achillea millefolium Yarrow Common Bellis perennis Daisy Common Centaurea nigra Knapweed Noar Hill Greater Knapweed Noar Hill Centaurea scabiosa Cirsium palustre Marsh Thistle Mapledurwell Ploughman's Spikenard Noar Hill Inula conyzae Lapsana communis **Nipplewort** Noar Hill Leucanthimum vulgare Ox-eye Daisy Noar Hill Track. Noar Hill Matricaria discoidea Pinapple Weed

Mycelis muralis Wall Lettuce The Warren Pilosella officinarum Mouse-eared Hawkweed Noar Hill Senecio erucifolius Hoary Ragwort Noar Hill Senecio jacobae Ragwort Noar Hill Senecio vulgaris Groudsel Alton Prickly Sow-thistle Alton Sonchus asper Sonchus oleraceus Smooth Sowthistle Alton Taraxacum agg Dandelion Noar Hill Goatsbeard Noar Hill Tragapogon pratensis

Betulaceae (Corylaceae) Birch Family

Betula pendula Silver Birch Woolmer Forest

Boraginaceae Forget-me-not Family

Anchusa arvensisBuglossWoolmer ForestEchium vulgareViper's BuglossWoolmer ForestMyosotis arvensisField Forget-me-notWoolmer Forest

Brassicaceae (Cruciferae) Cabbage Family

Alliaria petiolata Garlic Mustard Common

Arabidopsis thaliana Thale Cress Woolmer Forest

Capsella bursa-pastoris Shepherd's Purse Common

Sinapis arvensis Charlock Track, Noar Hill

Campanulaceae Bellflower Family

Campanula glomerata Clustered Bellflower Noar Hill

Campanula trachelium Nettle-leaved Bellflower Noar Hill

Campanula rotundifolia Harebell -

Phyteuma orbiculare Round-headed Rampion Beacon Hill

Caprifoliaceae Honeysuckle Family

Lonicera periclymenumHoneysuckleBeacon HillSambucus nigraElderCommonViburnum lantanaWayfaring TreeBeacon HillViburnum opulusGuelder RoseHedges

Caryophyllaceae Pink Family

Silene vulgaris

Thyme-leaved Sandwort A.serpyllifolia ssp. serpyllifoia Woolmer Forest Cerastium fontanum Common Mouse-ear Common Gerastium glomeratum Sticky Mouse-ear Woolmer Forest Lychnis flos-cuculi Mapledurwell Ragged Robin Silene dioica Red Campion The Warren Silene latifolia (S.alba) White Campion Mapledurwell

**Bladder Campion** 

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Noar Hill

Celastraceae Spindle-tree Family

Euonymus europaeus Spindle-tree Beacon Hill

Cistaceae Rock-rose Family

Helianthimum nummularium Common Rockrose Noar Hill

Clusiaceae (Guttiferae, Hypericaceae)

Hypericum hirsutumHairy St.John's-wortNoar HillHypericum perforatumPerforate St. John's-wortNoar Hill

Convolvulaceae Bindweed Family

Calystegia sepiumHedge BindweedRoadside hedgesCalystegia silvaticumAmerican BilbineRoadside hedgesConvolvulus arvensisField BindweedNoar Hill

St. John's-wort Family

Convolvatus arvensis Field Billiaweed Noai Fi

Cornaceae Dogwood Family

Cornus sanguinea Dogwood Noar Hill

Corylaceae Hazel Family

Corylus avellana Hazel The Warren

Crassulaceae Stonecrop Family

Sedum acre Biting Stonecrop Woolmer Forest

Cucurbitaceae Cucumber Family

Bryonia dioica White Bryony Noar Hill

Dipsacaceae Teasel Family

Dipsacus fullonumTeaselVergesKnautia arvensisField ScabiousNoar Hill

Ericaceae Heath family

Calluna vulgarisHeatherWoolmer ForestErica tetrilixBell HeatherWoolmer ForestVaccinium myrtilisBilberryWoolmer Forest

Euphorbiaceae Spurge Family

Euphorbia amygdaloides Wood Spurge Chappetts Copse

Euphorbia peplus Petty Spurge Alton

Mercurialis perennis Dog's Mercury The Warren

Fabaceae (Leguminosae) Pea Family

Anthyllis vulnerariaKidney VetchNoar HillClinopodium vulgarisWild basilNoar HillHippocrepis comosaHorseshoe Vetch-

Lathyrus pratensisYellow VetchlingBeacon HillLotus corniculatusBird's-foot TrefoilNoar HillLotus uliginosaLarge Bird's-foot TrefoilMapledurwellMedicago arabicaSpotted MedickNoar Hill

Medicago lupulinaBlack MedickPortchester HillMelilotus altissimusRibbed melilotBeacon HillOnonis repensRestharrowNoar Hill

Trifolium campestris Hop Trefoil Noar Hill Lesser Yellow Trefoil Trifolium dubium Beacon Hill Trifolium pratense **Red Clover** Common Trifolium repens White Clover Common Vicia cracca Tufted vetch Noar Hill Common Vetch Noar Hill Vicia sativa ssp. segetalis Vicia sepium Bush Vetch

Fagaceae Oak & Beech Family

Carpinus betulus Hornbeam

Fagus sylvatica Beech Beacon Hill Quercus robor Downy Oak Beacon Hill

Geraniaceae **Geranium Family** 

Erodium cicutarium Common Stork's-bill Portchester Hill

Long-stalked Crane's-bill Geranium columbinum Geranium dissectum Cut-leaved Crane's-bill

Track to Noar Hill Geranium molle Dove's-foot Crane's-bill Portchester Hill Geranium robertianum Herb Robert Common

Lamiaceae (Labiatae) **Dead-nettle Family** 

Clinopodium acinos **Basil Thyme** Portchester Hill Black Horehound Noar Hill Ballota nigra Clinopodium vulgare Wild basil Noar Hill

Lamium album White Deadnettle Churchyard near Hawkley

Lamium purpureum Red Deadnettle

Portchester Hill Oregano officinalis Marjoram Prunella vulgaris Selfheal Noar Hill

Salvia pratensis Meadow Clary

Hedge Woundwort Churchyard near Hawkley Stachys sylvatica

Teucrium scorodonium Wood Sage Woolmer Forest

Wild Thyme Noar Hill Thymus polytrichis

I inaceae Flax Family

Linum catharticum Purging or Fairy Flax Noar Hill

Oleaceae **Olive Family** 

Fraxinus excelsior Common Ash Ligustrum vulgare Wild Privet Galley Down

Willowherb Family Onagraceae

Chamerion angustifolium Rosebay Willowherb Woolmer Forest Epilobium hirsutum Hairy Willowherb Mapledurwell

Orobanchaceae **Broomrape Family** 

monochroma

Oxalidaceae

Orobanche Hederae var. Portchester Hill Ivy Broomrape

Orobanche elatior Knapweed Broomrape Noar Hill

**Wood-sorrel Family** Oxalis acetosella Wood-sorrel Chappetts Copse (Leaves only)

Papaveraceae **Poppy Family** 

Papaver dubium subsp. dubium Long-headed Poppy Chappetts Copse

Papaver rhoaes Corn Poppy Common in arable fields

Plantaginaceae

**Plantain Family** 

Ribwort Plantain Noar Hill Plantago lanceolata Plantago majus Greater Plantain Track to Noar Hill

Plantago media Hoary or Lamb's-tail Plantain Noar Hill

Polygalaceae **Milkwort Family** 

Heath Milkwort Polygala serpyllifolia Woolmer Forest

Polygala vulgaris Common Milkwort Noar Hill

**Knotweed Family** Polygonaceae

Rumex acetosa Sorrel Noar Hill

Track to Noar Hill Rumex crispus Curled Dock

Broad-leaved Dock Rumex obtusifolius Common

Rumex acetosella French Sorrel Woolmer Forest

Primulaceae **Primrose Family** 

Primula veris Cowslip Noar Hill

Ranunculaceae **Buttercup Family** 

Caltha palustris Mapledurwell Kingcups Clematis vitalba Track to Noar Hill Old man's-beard Ranunculus acris Meadow Buttercup Mapledurwell Ranunculus bulbosus **Bulbous Buttercup** Beacon Hill Ranunculus repens Creeping Buttercup Common

Resedaceae **Mignonette Family** 

Reseda lutea Wild Mignonette Noar Hill

Reseda luteola Weld Woolmer Forest

Rhamnaceae **Buckthorn Family** 

Rhamnus catharticus Buckthorn Verge, Mapledurwell

Rosaceae Rose Family

Parsley Piert Woolmer Forest Aphanes agg.

Cornus sanguineus Crataegus monogyna Hawthawn Common

Verge, The Warren Fragaria vesca Wild Strawberry

Filipendula ulmaria Meadowsweet Mapledurwell

Filipendula vulgaris Dropwort

Geum urbanum Wood Avens or Herb Bennet Common Potentilla anserina Silverweed Common Potentilla erecta Woolmer Forest Tormentil

Potentilla reptans Creeping Cinquefoil Common Prunus avium Beacon Hill Wild Cherry Blackthorn Beacon Hill Prunus spinosa Rosa canina agg Dog Rose Common Rubus caesius Dewberry Beacon Hill Bramble Common Rubus fruticosus agg Sanguisorba minor agg Salad Burnet Beacon Hill Whitebeam Sorbus aria agg Noar Hill

Sorbus aucuparia Rowen Woolmer Forest

Rubiaceae **Bedstraw Family** 

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Cruciata laevipes Crosswort Verge near Hawkley Galium aparineCleversVery CommonGalium mollugoHedge BedstrawNoar HillGalium verumLadies bedstrawNoar HillGalium saxatileHeath BedstrawWoolmer ForestSheradia arvensisField MadderWoolmer Forest

Scrophulariaceae Figwort Family

Ivy-leaved Toadflax Cymbalaria muralis Walls in Alton Digitalis lutea Small Yuellow Foxglove Portchester Hill Digitalis purpurea Foxalove Woolmer Forest Melampyrum arvense Field Cow-wheat Portchester Hill Odontites verna Red Bartsia Beacon Hill Rhinanthus minor agg Hay Rattle Beacon Hill Scrophularia auriculata Water Figwort Mapledurwell Verbascum nigrum Dark Mullien Beacon Hill Veronica chamaedrys Germander Speedwell Beacon Hill Veronica serpyllifolia Thyme-leaved Speedwell Woolmer Forest

Solanaceae Nightshade Family

Solanum dulcamara Bittersweet Portchester Hill

Urticacae Nettle Family

Parietaria judaicaPelitory of the WallAltonUrtica dioicaCommon NettleNoar Hill

Valerianaceae Valerian Family

Centranthus ruberRed ValerianWest MeonValeriana dioicaMarsh ValerianMapledurwell

Verbenaceae Vervain Family

Verbena officinalis Vervain -

Violaceae Violet Family

Viola riviniana Common Dog Violet The Warren

Liliidae (Monocotyledons)

Araceae Arum Family

Arum maculatum Lords and Ladies Galley Down (In fruit)

Cyperaceae Sedge Family

Carex caryophyllea Spring Sedge Noar Hill

Carex divulsa Grey Sedge Verge, The Warren

Carex flaccaGlaucus SedgeNoar HillCarex hirtaHairy SedgeNoar HillCarex paniculataGreater Tussock SedgeMapledurwell

Carex spicata Spiked Sedge

Dioscoreaceae Black Bryony Family

Tamus communis Black Bryony Verge, The Warren

Iridaceae Iris Family

Iris psuedocorus Yellow Flag Mapledurwell

Juncaceae Rush Family

Juncus acutiflorus Sharp-flowered Rush Mapledurwell

Verge near The Warren

Verge at Portchester Hill

Galley Down

Juncus articulatusJointed RushMapledurwellJuncus conglomeratusClustered RushWoolmer ForestJuncus effususSoft RushMapledurwellJuncus squarosusHeath RushWoolmer ForestJuncus tenuisSlender RushWoolmer Forest

Luzula campestrisField WoodrushNoar HillLuzula multiflorum aggField WoodrushWoolmer Forest

LiliaceaeLily FamilyAllium ursinumRamsonsAllium vinealeWild OnionRuscus aculeatusButcher's-broom

## Orchidaceae Orchid Family

Anacamptis pyramidalis Pyramidal Orchid Noar Hill Cephalanthera damasonium White Helleborine Chappetts Copse (In fruit) Cephalanthera longifolia Narrow-leaved Helleborine Chappetts Copse (In fruit) Cephalanthera rubra Red Helleborine The Warren (In bud) Noar Hill Coeloglossum viride Frog Orchid Common Spotted Orchid Noar Hill Dactylorhiza fuchsii Dactylorhiza maculata **Heath Spotted Orchid** Dactylorhiza praetermissa Southern Marsh Orchid Mapledurwell

Dactylorhiza maculataHeath Spotted Orchid-Dactylorhiza praetermissaSouthern Marsh OrchidMapledurwellDactylorhiza traunsteineriNarrow-leaved Marsh OrchidMapledurwellEpipactis helleborineBroad-leaved HelleborineWoolmer Forest (In bud)

Epipactis leptochila

Narrow-lipped Helleborine

Woolmer Forest

Epipactis palustris

Marsh Helleborine

Mapledurwell

Epipactis phyllanthes Green-flowered Helleborine Woolmer Forest (In bud)

Fragrant Orchid Noar Hill Gymnadenia conopsea Herminium monorchis Musk Orchid Noar Hill Listera ovata Twayblade Noar Hill Neottia nidus-avis Birdsnest Orchid Galley Down Ophrys apifera var. apifera Bee Orchid Portchester Hill Bee Orchid Portchester Hill

Ophrys apifera var. bulgarumBee OrchidPortchesteOphrys insectiferaFly Orchid-Platanthera chloranthaGreater Butterfly Orchid-

## Poaceae (Gramineae) Grass Family

Anisantha sterilis Barren Brome Woolmer Forest Anthoxanthum odoratum Sweet Vernal Grass Beacon Hill Arrhenathrum elatius False Oar-grass Noar Hill Woolmer Forest Brachypodium sylvaticum False Brome Bromopsis erectus **Upright Brome** Noar Hill Bromus hordeaceus Noar Hill Soft Brome

Briza media Noar Hill **Quaking Grass** Noar Hill Cynosurus cristatus Crested Dog's-tail Dactylis glomerata Cock's-foot Roadsides Tall Fescue Roadsides Festuca arundinacea Festuca ovina agg Sheep's Fescue Noar Hill Festuca rubra agg Red Fescue Noar Hill Koeleria macrantha Crested Hair-grass Noar Hill Lolium perenne Perennial Rye-grass Noar Hill Melica uniflora Wood Melick Galley Down Molinia caerulea Purple Moor-grass Woolmer Forest

Poa annua
Poa nemoralis
Poa trivialis
Trisetum flavescens

Annual Meadow-grass Wood Meadow-grass Rough Meadow-grass Golden Oat Alton Woolmer Forest Mapledurwell Noar Hill