

# Flora of the Hampshire Downs

Naturetrek Tour Report

21 - 23 June 2013



Fly Orchid



'belgarum' Bee Orchid



Silver Y pollinating a Fragrant Orchid



Greater Butterfly Orchid

Report & images compiled by Jon Stokes



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## Day 1

Friday 21st June

The group met before dinner and we talked about the plans for the weekend, and then sat down to a great dinner. The weather this year has been very strange, with the coldest March in over 50 years delaying many species by over a month, whilst other species have come out on time. This has led to a weird compacting of flowering this year, opening the possibility of a good weekend on the downs.

After dinner we set off and travelled a few miles north towards Odiham. Our first stop was a look at Odiham Common, a lovely spot covered with Yellow Rattle and Common Spotted Orchids. From here we went to a wet flush where Southern Marsh Orchid and the rare Narrow Leaved Marsh Orchid were growing amid Common Spotted Orchids, Hemlock Water Dropwort and Ragged Robin.

Then our last stop of the night was beside the Basingstoke Canal. Here Daubenton bats foraged around the surface of the water, whilst Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelles, Long Eared Bats and Natterers Bats could be seen and heard flying around overhead. This spot is one of the best in the county for bats and the continuous noise on the bat detector gave us the chance to familiarise ourselves with the different bat calls, before we headed home for bed. En route we spotted another species - a Serotine - taking our bat count to 6 species and 3 orchids before bed.

## Day 2

Saturday 22nd June

The morning dawned overcast but dry and we headed off for our first stop - a mixed woodland on the downs. Due to the delay in flowering this year, the spring orchids were in great shape with an excellent display of Sword-leaved Helleborine, White Helleborine, Fly Orchids and Birds Nest Orchids in flower, whilst the Broad-leaved Helleborine was still in development.

Next we trekked onto the stunning Butser Hill where Common Spotted Orchids abounded with some of the Early Purple Orchids still in full bloom (6 weeks later than usual). Swifts were feeding over this steep down, often passing within feet of our heads. Green Woodpeckers called from the valley below, whilst Wood Tiger moths fluttered around our feet with lots of Narrow Bordered Five Spot Burnets also on the wing.

Next we visited a small and unique woodland where Whitebeam and Rowan trees grow in proximity to the much rarer Wild Service trees. The effect of these 3 species living in close proximity in this isolated spot has been hybridisation between these trees. One hybrid is a Wild Service x Whitebeam has led to a hybrid where the only known trees are in the Wye Valley and here.

Another cross that has occurred here is a probable hybrid between Wild Service x Rowan. This has led to a unique tree which is currently being worked on genetically to determine its true parentage.

After collecting some sandwiches, the family home of the leader on Portsdown Hill beckoned and lunch, a cup of tea and biscuits later, we were admiring this chalk downland garden with Bee Orchids, Pyramid Orchids, Small Blue and Common Blue butterflies. Then over the garden hedge we found more Bee Orchids, Common Lizards plus the beautiful Sainfoin.

Our next stop was for a beautiful yellow form of Ivy Broomrape which is a speciality of Portsdown and nearby was the beautiful and extremely rare Field Cow-wheat in the same place is a patch of Bee Orchids which are a mixture of the normal form and the much rarer variety 'Belgarium'.

On top of Portsdown in an old arable field, a mixture of Rough and Common Poppies flowered over a carpet of the tiny Wild Pansies whilst the striking Nodding Thistle grew alongside the uncommon Wild Gromwell. In a meadow on the north of Portsdown, Early Marsh and Southern Marsh Orchids were in superb flower with one very striking orchid known as a 'Leopard' Orchid which is intermediary between Southern Marsh and Common Spotted.

Birds were our next target and a trip to Hayling Island. Oyster Beds yielded breeding Black Headed Gull, Common and Little Terns and the much rarer Mediterranean Gulls. The cacophony of calls, smell of guano and constant movement of birds made this an enchanting spot. Down on the beach at the southern edge of Hayling, we hunted in vain for Green Winged Orchids, but Sea Holly, Yellow Horned Poppy and Woody Nightshade attracted the eye.

Our final stop of the day was a roadside on a country lane where under a large oak, 40+ Green-flowered Helleborine were growing. These weird orchids often have cleistogamous flowers which don't open and yet pollinate themselves. This was a great final plant for the day, so we then returned to the hotel for dinner and to reflect on an orchid tally which now stands at 14 species.

## Day 3

## Sunday 23rd June

Sunday dawned and we set off for a special spot where Otters had recently been sighted during the daytime. However although there was plenty of evidence of their presence, we couldn't find them, but there were some amazing 500 year old oaks, superb lichens and some curious pollarded alders. Then onto a beautiful west facing slope where amongst clouds of vetches, Greater Butterfly Orchid occurs in considerable number amongst Common Spotted Orchids and Fragrant Orchids. The sun then broke through to light up this beautiful down and Wild Columbine which glowed in the morning light.

Next was an ancient yew at Priors Dean church, an amazing 2500 year old tree, before we set off for Noar Hill where the orchid profusion comprised thousands of Fragrant Orchids, Common Spotted Orchids and Pyramid Orchids along with Musk Orchids, Frog Orchids and Fly Orchids. We also managed to find Knapweed Broomrape, Dragons Teeth and some very beautiful albino Fragrant Orchids.

We also spotted a Silver Y moth feeding on the Fragrant Orchids. This species is known to be moth pollinated, its long corolla to the flower attracting moths with its plentiful nectar supply. However what made this particularly special is that the guide managed to get a picture of this event which shows the orchids pollinia attached to the moth's tongue. Pictures of orchid pollination are rare and this was a fantastic bit of luck.

Now down to our last hour, we decided to use it on Woolmer Forest. This special area of heathland sits at the base of the north side of the chalk and is a very interesting place to visit. Unfortunately being a military training ground, access to this space is very restricted and tragically the army hadn't stopped using the area. However from the perimeter of the site we found Silver-studded Blue butterflies whilst we could see Heathers intermixed with lichens, Southern Marsh and Heath Spotted Orchids. Under some birches we found Purple Helleborine beginning to develop and under a log sat a superb Natterjack Toad.

Finally we stopped at another ancient yew - the fantastic ancient Yew in Farrington Churchyard which is about 3000 years old and is one of Britain's most important ancient trees. Its shape and form have allowed it to survive for this amazing period of time, and with luck it should last for a few thousand more.

So that concluded our weekend and after the short trip back to the hotel, we went on our separate ways, but knew that we had seen some of Hampshire's finest wildlife including 20 species of orchid!

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Leaves from various 'sorbus' trees

## Species List

### Flora

#### PINOPSIDA (GYMNOSPERMS)

##### Cupressaceae

*Juniperus communis*

##### Pinaceae

*Larix decidua*

*Picea abies* ssp. *abies*

*Pinus sylvestris*

##### Taxaceae

*Taxus baccata*

#### MAGNOLIOPSIDA (ANGIOSPERMS)

##### Aceraceae

*Acer pseudoplatanus*

##### Apiaceae (Umbelliferae)

*Aegipodium podagaria*

*Anthriscus sylvestris*

*Heraclium sphondylium*

*Sanicula europaea*

##### Aquifoliaceae

*Ilex aquifolia*

##### Araliaceae

*Hedera helix* agg

##### Asteraceae (Compositae)

*Achillea millefolium*

*Bellis perennis*

*Centaurea nigra*

*Centaurea scabiosa*

*Cirsium palustre*

*Lapsana communis*

*Leucanthimum vulgare*

*Matricaria discoidea*

*Myelis muralis*

*Senecio erucifolius*

*Senecio jacobae*

*Senecio vulgaris*

*Sonchus oleraceus*

*Taraxacum* agg

*Tragapogon pratensis*

##### Betulaceae (Corylaceae)

*Betula pendula*

##### Boraginaceae

*Anchusa arvensis*

*Echium vulgare*

#### CONIFERS

##### Juniper Family

Juniper

##### Pine Family

European Larch

Spruce

Scot's Pine

##### Yew Family

Yew

#### FLOWERING PLANTS

##### Maple Family

Sycamore

##### Carrot Family

Ground Elder

Cow Parsley

Hogweed

Sanicle

##### Holly Family

Holly

##### Ivy Family

Ivy

##### Daisy Family

Yarrow

Daisy

Knapweed

Greater Knapweed

Marsh Thistle

Nipplewort

Ox-eye Daisy

Pineapple Weed

Wall Lettuce

Hoary Ragwort

Ragwort

Groudsel

Smooth Sowthistle

Dandelion

Goatsbeard

##### Birch Family

Silver Birch

##### Forget-me-not Family

Bugloss

Viper's Bugloss

<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not
<b>Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)</b>	<b>Cabbage Family</b>
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard
<i>Arabidopsis thaliana</i>	Thale Cress
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's Purse
<i>Sinapis arvensis</i>	Charlock
<b>Caprifoliaceae</b>	<b>Honeysuckle Family</b>
<i>Lonicera perichlymenum</i>	Honeysuckle
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring Tree
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder Rose
<b>Caryophyllaceae</b>	<b>Pink Family</b>
<i>A.serpyllifolia ssp. serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Sandwort
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear
<i>Gerastium glomeratum</i>	Sticky Mouse-ear
<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged Robin
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion
<i>Silene latifolia (S.alba)</i>	White Campion
<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder Campion
<b>Celastraceae</b>	<b>Spindle-tree Family</b>
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle-tree
<b>Cistaceae</b>	<b>Rock-rose Family</b>
<i>Helianthimum nummularium</i>	Common Rockrose
<b>Clusiaceae</b>	<b>St. John's-wort Family</b>
<i>Hypericum hirsutum</i>	Hairy St. John's-wort
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St. John's-wort
<b>Convolvulaceae</b>	<b>Bindweed Family</b>
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed
<b>Cornaceae</b>	<b>Dogwood Family</b>
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood
<b>Corylaceae</b>	<b>Hazel Family</b>
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<b>Crassulaceae</b>	<b>Stonecrop Family</b>
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting Stonecrop
<b>Cucurbitaceae</b>	<b>Cucumber Family</b>
<i>Bryonia dioica</i>	White Bryony
<b>Dipsacaceae</b>	<b>Teasel Family</b>
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	Field Scabious
<b>Ericaceae</b>	<b>Heath family</b>
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Heather
<i>Erica tetralix</i>	Bell Heather

**Euphorbiaceae**

*Euphorbia amygdaloides*  
*Euphorbia peplus*  
*Mercurialis perennis*  
*Euphorbia exigua*

**Fabaceae (Leguminosae)**

*Anthyllis vulneraria*  
*Hippocrepis comosa*  
*Lathyrus pratensis*  
*Lotus corniculatus*  
*Lotus uliginosa*  
*Medicago arabica*  
*Medicago lupulina*  
*Melilotus altissimus*  
*Ononis repens*  
*Trifolium campestre*  
*Trifolium dubium*  
*Trifolium pratense*  
*Trifolium repens*  
*Vicia cracca*  
*Vicia sativa* ssp. *segetalis*  
*Vicia sepium*  
*Tetragonolobus maritimus*

**Fagaceae**

*Carpinus betulus*  
*Fagus sylvatica*  
*Quercus robur*

**Geraniaceae**

*Erodium cicutarium*  
*Geranium columbinum*  
*Geranium dissectum*  
*Geranium molle*  
*Geranium robertianum*

**Lamiaceae (Labiatae)**

*Clinopodium acinos*  
*Ballota nigra*  
*Clinopodium vulgare*  
*Lamium album*  
*Lamium purpureum*  
*Oregano officinalis*  
*Prunella vulgaris*  
*Stachys sylvatica*  
*Teucrium scorodonium*  
*Thymus polytrichis*  
*Lamium amplexicaule*  
*Ajuga chamaepitys*

**Linaceae**

*Linum catharticum*

**Oleaceae**

*Fraxinus excelsior*  
*Ligustrum vulgare*

**Spurge Family**

Wood Spurge  
 Petty Spurge  
 Dog's Mercury  
 Dwarf Spurge

**Pea Family**

Kidney Vetch  
 Horseshoe Vetch  
 Yellow Vetchling  
 Bird's-foot Trefoil  
 Large Bird's-foot Trefoil  
 Spotted Medick  
 Black Medick  
 Ribbed melilot  
 Restharrow  
 Hop Trefoil  
 Lesser Yellow Trefoil  
 Red Clover  
 White Clover  
 Tufted vetch  
 Common Vetch  
 Bush Vetch  
 Dragons teeth

**Oak & Beech Family**

Hornbeam  
 Beech  
 Downy Oak

**Geranium Family**

Common Stork's-bill  
 Long-stalked Crane's-bill  
 Cut-leaved Crane's-bill  
 Dove's-foot Crane's-bill  
 Herb Robert

**Dead-nettle Family**

Basil Thyme  
 Black Horehound  
 Wild basil  
 White Deadnettle  
 Red Deadnettle  
 Marjoram  
 Selfheal  
 Hedge Woundwort  
 Wood Sage  
 Wild Thyme  
 Henbit Deadnettle  
 Ground Pine

**Flax Family**

Purging or Fairy Flax

**Olive Family**

Ash  
 Wild Privet

**Onagraceae***Chamerion angustifolium**Epilobium hirsutum***Orobanchaceae***Orobanche elatior**Orobanche hederea***Oxalidaceae***Oxalis acetosella***Papaveraceae***Papaver rhoas**Pavaver hybridum**Glaucium flavum***Plantaginaceae***Plantago lanceolata**Plantago major**Plantago media***Polygalaceae***Polygala serpyllifolia**Polygala vulgaris***Polygonaceae***Rumex acetosa**Rumex crispus**Rumex obtusifolius**Rumex acetosella***Primulaceae***Primula veris***Ranunculaceae***Clematis vitalba**Ranunculus acris**Ranunculus bulbosus**Ranunculus repens**Aquilegia vulgaris***Resedaceae***Reseda lutea**Reseda luteola***Rhamnaceae***Rhamnus catharticus***Rosaceae***Crataegus monogyna**Fragaria vesca**Filipendula ulmaria**Filipendula vulgaris**Geum urbanum**Potentilla anserina**Potentilla erecta**Potentilla reptans***Willowherb Family**

Rosebay Willowherb

Hairy Willowherb

**Broomrape Family**

Knapweed Broomrape

Ivy Broomrape

**Wood-sorrel Family**

Wood-sorrel

**Poppy Family**

Corn Poppy

Rough Poppy

Yellow Horned Poppy

**Plantain Family**

Ribwort Plantain

Greater Plantain

Hoary or Lamb's-tail Plantain

**Milkwort Family**

Heath Milkwort

Common Milkwort

**Knotweed Family**

Sorrel

Curled Dock

Broad-leaved Dock

French Sorrel

**Primrose Family**

Cowslip

**Buttercup Family**

Old man's-beard

Meadow Buttercup

Bulbous Buttercup

Creeping Buttercup

Columbine

**Mignonette Family**

Wild Mignonette

Weld

**Buckthorn Family**

Buckthorn

**Rose Family**

Hawthorn

Wild Strawberry

Meadowsweet

Dropwort

Wood Avens or Herb Bennet

Silverweed

Tormentil

Creeping Cinquefoil



*Prunus avium*  
*Prunus spinosa*  
*Rosa canina* agg  
*Rubus caesius*  
*Rubus fruticosus* agg  
*Sanguisorba minor* agg  
*Sorbus aria* agg  
*Sorbus aucuparia*  
*Sorbus torminalis*

**Rubiaceae**

*Cruciata laevipes*  
*Galium aparine*  
*Galium mollugo*  
*Galium verum*  
*Galium saxatile*  
*Sherardia arvensis*

**Scrophulariaceae**

*Cymbalaria muralis*  
*Digitalis purpurea*  
*Melampyrum arvense*  
*Odontites verna*  
*Rhinanthus minor* agg  
*Scrophularia auriculata*  
*Verbascum nigrum*  
*Veronica chamaedrys*  
*Veronica serpyllifolia*  
*Chaerorhinum minus*

**Solanaceae**

*Solanum dulcamara*

**Urticaceae**

*Parietaria judaica*  
*Urtica dioica*

**Valerianaceae**

*Centranthus ruber*  
*Valeriana dioica*

**Verbenaceae**

*Verbena officinalis*

**Violaceae**

*Viola riviniana*  
*Viola arvensis*

**Liliidae****Araceae**

*Arum maculatum*

**Dioscoreaceae**

*Tamus communis*

Wild Cherry  
 Blackthorn  
 Dog Rose  
 Dewberry  
 Bramble  
 Salad Burnet  
 Whitebeam  
 Rowan  
 Wild Service Tree

**Bedstraw Family**

Crosswort  
 Clevers  
 Hedge Bedstraw  
 Ladies bedstraw  
 Heath Bedstraw  
 Field Madder

**Figwort Family**

Ivy-leaved Toadflax  
 Foxglove  
 Field Cow-wheat  
 Red Bartsia  
 Yellow Rattle  
 Water Figwort  
 Dark Mullein  
 Germander Speedwell  
 Thyme-leaved Speedwell  
 Small Toadflax

**Nightshade Family**

Bittersweet

**Nettle Family**

Pelitory of the Wall  
 Common Nettle

**Valerian Family**

Red Valerian  
 Marsh Valerian

**Vervain Family**

Vervain

**Violet Family**

Common Dog Violet  
 Field pansy

**(Monocotyledons)****Arum Family**

Lords and Ladies

**Black Bryony Family**

Black Bryony

**Iridaceae***Iris psuedocorus***Iris Family**

Yellow Flag

**Liliaceae***Allium ursinum**Allium vineale**Ruscus aculeatus***Lily Family**

Ramsons

Wild Onion

Butcher's-broom

**Orchidaceae***Anacamptis pyramidalis**Platanthera chlorantha**Cephalanthera damasonium**Cephalanthera longifolia**Dactylorhiza fuchsii**Dactylorhiza praetermissa**Dactylorhiza incanata**Dactylorhiza maculata**Dactylorhiza traunsteineri**Epipactis helleborine**Epipactus purpurata**Epipactus phyllanthus**Gymnadenia conopsea**Hermannium monorchis**Listera ovata**Neottia nidus-avis**Coeloglossum viride**Ophrys apifera**Ophrys insectifera**Orchis mascula***Orchid Family**

Pyramidal Orchid

Greater Butterfly-orchid

White Helleborine

Narrow-leaved Helleborine

Common Spotted Orchid

Southern Marsh Orchid

Early Marsh Orchid

Heath Marsh Orchid

Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid

Broad-leaved Helleborine

Purple Helleborine

Green Flowered Helleborine

Fragrant Orchid

Musk Orchid

Twayblade

Birdsnest Orchid

Frog orchid

Bee Orchid

Fly Orchid

Early purple Orchid

**Additional Wildlife of Note**

Soprano Pipistrelle

Daubenton bats

Common Pipistrelle

Long Eared Bats

Natterer's Bats

Serotine Bat

Small blue

Five Spot Burnet

Silver Studded Blue

Natterjack Toad

Common Lizard