

WILTSHIRE BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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Editor's Ramblings

What a glorious Summer!

Martin Buckland worked with gusto to produce a full and varied programme of meetings, not all within the boundaries of Wiltshire. Some welcome new members joined us on these, often stopping to ask 'what's this?' and 'why?' - very much to be encouraged.

Pat Woodruffe and Dave Green organised and led our three days in North Wales - daily details further on - giving us a taste of mountain, sand dune and limestone flora, with many new and unusual species.

Thank you to people who wrote accounts of our excursions, especially Martin, and those who sent in photographs, making this newsletter possible.

Sadly, two notable Wiltshire botanists died this year; we include accounts of their activities.

John Presland has again compiled a list of new finds in each 10 kilometre square, this time for 2015.

Alison Robinson has completed the web-based 'Identiplant' course for serious beginners who want to improve their skills and has written a detailed account of her experiences.

So, on to our first meeting of 2016

Richard Aisbitt

26th March 2016

Grovely Woods

We set out from our homes with less than promising forecast, but although the wind roared, the heavy rain waited until the afternoon. We met at the very western tip of the wood, actually in Dinton Beeches rather than in Grovely Wood itself. Anne Appleyard, Sue Fitzpatrick and Pat Woodruffe led us and were joined by five other members. We set off into the main wood and made a leisurely circuit in the part known as "Snapes".



An early Wood-anemone

Spring was just beginning so there were representatives of just a few early flowers: Celandines (*Ficaria verna*), Primroses (*Primula vulgaris*), Town Hall Clocks (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), Early Dog Violet (*Viola reichenbachiana*) and Ivy Leaved Speedwell (*Veronica hederifolia*). There were also two woodrushes in flower, Great (*Luzula sylvatica*) and Hairy (*L. pilosa*), and the similar but distinguishable Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*) and Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*). There was a patch of the invasive Three-cornered Leak (*Allium triquetrum*) with flower buds. This will probably spread further.

Some other plants, like Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*) and Heath Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*) were

in leaf only and tested our identification skills. We puzzled over a grass with wide, floppy, keeled, hairy leaves, eventually deciding it was the usually familiar False Brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*). This was promptly confirmed by old flower spikes



Three-cornered Leak - flower bud



And forming a sward

We followed our walk with a filling lunch in the warm at Wyndham's pub in Dinton.

Richard Aisbitt

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Great Bedwyn, Marlborough

27 April 2016

Leaders: Jane Brown and Paul Darby

The cold spring was still evident as the group, well wrapped up, set off from Great Bedwyn to have a walk. Our amblings were to take us along the towpath of the Kennet and Avon Canal, up to and through Wilton Brail and returning down to the towpath. Indications were that spring would be late with not too many plants in flower, leaves to the fore for identification and deciduous trees only just showing signs of life.



One of the first of our interesting finds was black spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*) growing out of a bridge over the canal, we did find it later growing from the churchyard wall. Many familiar plants were spotted along the towpath, few if any in flower, but quite a few butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) looking fresh in their pink were seen. These plants are liked by bees and usually found near a source of water. Growing in the water was greater pond sedge (*Carex riparia*) and seen all along the canal side. Another plant that was growing out of the water was water dock (*Rumex hydrolapathum*), this likes the edges of shallow water and is often described as stately.

Leaving the towpath, the footpath took us through a fallow field to the edge of Wilton Brail where one of the first things to spot was a large stand of meadow saffron (*Colchicum autumnale*) looking bright green with seed pods at the bottom. This part of the Brail is wet and several common frogs were seen jumping around and in



poools of water. All around were the usual mix of spring woodland plants. Goldilocks buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) was growing on an earth bank, a sign of ancient woodland. Another interesting find was the parasitic toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*) found growing beneath rotting bark. As we walked through, bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) were beginning to flower but those at the topmost part of the Brail were far



from flowering. Another plant spotted amongst the undergrowth of tangled brambles and leaf litter was moschatel/town hall clocks (*Adoxa moschatellina*). Much discussion took place about sandwort seen growing on a dead tree trunk. Opinion suggested

it was three-nerved sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*).

After exploring a little of the Brail, which is access land, we made our way back towards the towpath. During the day a hare was spotted in the wood escaping quickly, a few orange tip butterflies were about and birds seen were a red kite, buzzard with blackcaps, great tits and chiffchaffs singing. The plateau of Wilton Brail is capped by London Clay, overlying Reading Beds pebbles and clay, then Chalk below. The top area is therefore acid-neutral, and soggy enough to have ponds which are old clay-pits. The pebbles are small and rounded like birds' eggs, and dark brown or black due to oxidation of the flint from which they were eroded onto a beach 60 million years ago.

Our lunch stop at the Brail included a conviviality different to the usual! Richard Gosnell mentioned a word which he did not know but had been in the news, but this elicited mischievous grins and "You had a sheltered upbringing!" This led to a stimulating conversation concerning Latin and Greek words. Richard also cracked this botanical joke:- "A botanist became ensnared in a Venus Flytrap. How did he escape? He paid a Ramson!" A mild resolution was to have further botanically themed joke occasionally.

Richard and Judy Gosnell



Profusion of flowers - Alison Robinson

Clattinger Farm

Saturday 14th May 2016

Our leader, Martin Buckland, is a volunteer warden on this SSSI, an ancient damp meadow system still managed with a careful grazing and cutting regime to preserve its amazing plant and animal life. We visited several fields, each subtly different.

Sedges seemed rather late this year and although plenty of Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*) and some False Fox Sedge (*C. otrubae*), the Downy-fruited Sedge (*C. filiformis*) was elusive despite long back-tracking walks following hopeful calls.

The geology here is alluvium on top of river Terrace gravel, which together with damp soil made finding Common Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*) and Cowslips (*Primula veris*) a surprise, especially mixed with damp-lovers like Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*), Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*), Marsh valerian (*Valeriana dioica*) and Spike Rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). We also saw both purple and white forms of Fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*), though mostly over. The commonest obvious grass was Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) which was flowering everywhere.

Although not flowering, leaves and buds of Pepper Saxifrage (*Silau silaus*) were seen as were the leaves

of the rare Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum flavum*). Also in vegetative state due the time of year were the leaves and large seed pods of Meadow Saffron (*Colchicum autumnale*) at the edge of one field.

Of course the stars of the day were the huge expanses of Green-winged Orchid (*Anacamptis morio*), the numbers of which increase hugely year by year having started from very few. Flowering of the Early Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*) was late this year though we saw lots imminent in a fenced enclosure.

Sharon Pilkington, who was working here professionally earlier in the week, was here again with us and pointed out the real Black Poplars (*Populus nigra* subsp. *betulifolia*) growing at the edge of the field and was able to show us how it lacks glands on the lamina end of the petiole, which itself is downy/hairy with leaves simply-toothed (without hooked ends). It was too early to see the distinctive galls which cause a twist in the petioles, but this and the other characters distinguish *P. nigra* from its hybrids.

The sheets of orchids with May sunshine and distant willows, with the competition between singing blackcaps and garden warblers was unforgettable. Martin taught us how to distinguish the shriller notes of the blackcap from the deeper burbling and throaty song of the garden

warbler, though they are notoriously difficult to tell apart.

Perhaps the most extraordinary sight of the whole day, though totally non-botanical, was the lunchtime spotting of a circling huge white-tailed eagle. Martin said no-one would believe us, but it was unmistakable and clearly identified with my trusty monocular.

David Pickering



Green-winged Orchids

Ravensroost Wood

29th May 2016

Just 8 members attended this meeting which made for an amiable slower pace and in-depth look at many species. The old joke about not being able to get out of the car park did not apply but then we only covered 100m in the first hour ! Grasses are tricky to many members and today was no exception. A patch of scrawny prostrate grass under heavy shade puzzled many of us but it turned out to be Rough Meadow Grass, *Poa trivialis* and in fact as we walked from the shade to the light it was like the 'ascent of man' image as the grass gradually grew and changed stature.

Ferns played their part for close examination with the first two being Male Fern, *Dryopteris filix-mas* and Broad Buckler Fern, *Dryopteris dilatata*. A couple of horsetails



A Scaly Male-fern?

showed themselves firstly at the edge of the track with Field Horsetail, *Equisetum arvense* and for good comparison a large patch of Marsh Horsetail, *Equisetum palustre* within and surrounding a pond.

A few Early Purple Orchids, *Orchis mascula* had just enough left about them to show some of the newer botanists amongst us and then Richard spotted a fern with bright gold scales; a Scaly Male-fern, *Dryopteris affinis* that everyone poured over intently. Just a few metres away on the other side of the track a few plants of Slender St John's Wort, *Hypericum pulchrum* were identified but sadly not in flower. We had now reached the old Woodman's Hut exhausted after two hours of intense botanising and just 350m from the car park !



Lunch by Keepers' Hut

We recommenced with Zig-zag Clover, *Trifolium medium* to the edge of the track which seems quite common here before Richard with his coppice-maintenance hat on took us into a recently worked area of wood that clearly had a trace of low pH soil. We began to see Heath Speedwell, *Veronica officinalis* and Velvet Bent, *Agrostis canina* amongst the coppiced stools and also another fern in shuttlecock form that was Narrow Buckler Fern, *Dryopteris carthusiana* and which we were able to compare with nearby Broad Buckler Ferns. A dwarf Yellow Sedge was identified as *Carex demissa*.

Many young Wild Service-trees, *Sorbus torminalis* were a delight with many in flower. I believe it is said that any young trees found 'must' be



Wild Service Tree in flower

'suckers' from their parents as UK trees do not host viable seed but in this coppiced block there were no mature trees as parents and whilst a pull on a few ground level plants bore the suckering idea out many we were sure were seed-borne.

A pause to decide direction gave us another species. We sometimes forget to look up don't we ? Well Richard found a dead fern frond on the floor and on looking up we discovered a line of epiphytic Intermediate Polypody, *Polypodium interjectum* on the limb of an oak tree.

Time to go home now but not before Martin spotted a small rush growing in a wet and muddy patch at the side of a path. Superficially like Toad Rush with a reddish base there were enough plants growing to enable us to remove one to reveal the details needed to identify Bulbous Rush, *Juncus bulbosus* of which Richard was able to advise was last recorded in 1994 and so made a good ending to the day.

The day was down to be led by myself but Richard provided the expertise for the day so many thanks go to him.

Martin Buckland

Canada and West Wellow Commons

Sunday 5 June 2016



Hands and knees job

After a cold start to June we were delighted to have a spell of sunny, almost too hot, weather for this visit. It was good to meet not only with established friends but also some newer members who were keen to learn more about this special but atypical habitat in VC8. The area used to be part of Wiltshire but the county boundary was changed in 1974 and it is now in Hampshire but still in VC8.

Our first stop was on open forest grassland kept tightly grazed by both cattle and ponies. As a result, all botanising was at the 'hands and knees' level and required a hand lens. Unusual plants came thick and fast and the check list that has been customised for recording in this vice county was not really up to the job. 25 species were additional to those on the printed sheet. Two grasses which were common were *Aira praecox* (Early Hair-grass) and *Vulpia bromoides* (Squirrel-tail Fescue) and amongst them were quantities of the mat-forming *Trifolium micranthum* (Slender Trefoil), looking rather like a

depauperate version of *Trifolium*



Round-leaved Crowfoot

dubium (Lesser Trefoil). With these the small but beautiful *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (Bird's-foot Clover



Birdsfoot flowers and pods

or Fenugreek) and *Ornithopus perpusillus* (Birdsfoot) were growing. It is fortunate that the latter two are quite distinct; both leaves and fruits make them easy to tell apart.

Some careful looking led us to *Moenchia erecta* (Upright Chickweed) an annual which – to make life even harder – only opens its flowers in full sun. Once spotted it was relatively easy to see its opposite, narrow, stitchwort-like leaves in the turf. Other good finds included *Montia fontana* (Blinks) and *Radiola linoides* (Allseed), something we usually see later in the season when it has dried up.



Japanese Iris

After lunch under the shade of a birch we moved to a site just a few kilometres to the north and part of the same stretch of heathland. Here we also found extensive wet areas, so adding to the range of species already noted. *Viola palustris* (Marsh Violet) leaves were frequent along the edge of a stream and in this location we also found a colourful Iris, yet to be identified*. It was clearly a well-established escape which a few of us thought we might like around our ponds at home! Another plant which has arrived at this site by unknown means was *Osmunda regalis* (Royal Fern). Grose (1957) states that the plant is extinct in natural habitats and that the population from Landford Common was rooted out to a considerable extent for transplantation to ferneries. Another nice fern was *Dryopteris carthusiana* (Narrow Buckler Fern) and, close by, a rare sedge *Carex curta* (White Sedge)



Becky's dog in a quiet moment

which was along the stream and in a carr between two branches of the stream. It was first recorded here in 1990 by Francis Rose and may well be the only site known in VC8.

The list of species found is long and will certainly add to our current records for this part of the vice county. Our thanks to Dave Green for showing us so many unusual plants and for helping us come to grips with a bewildering array of 'new' plants.

Pat Woodruffe

*Since then, Anne Appleyard has identified it as *Iris laevigata*, Japanese Iris. Martin Rand has confirmed the ID and wants it to be removed as it is on the invasive species hit list for the New Forest.



Fyfield Down

9th June 2016

For this meeting we were met and led by Natural England (NE) local Manager, Ben Cooke co-hosted by Richard Aisbitt.

Ben gave us a potted history and analysis of the site and we learnt that Fyfield Down has been a National Nature Reserve (NNR) since 1951 and is in fact owned privately with



Sheep's Sorrel

NE being the tenants. The site is a Scheduled Monument, and nearly all areas a SSSI for its geomorphology. (I wondered what all the stones were). The area is largely Chalk Downland but with pockets of slightly acidic soil particularly around each sarsen stone due to erosion, and also toward the northern end of the site. The land is grazed at a low level year round with Aberdeen Angus cattle. At our visit the area was slightly undergrazed with many of the sarsen stones not so obvious.

The early part of our walk was not so floriferous with just the odd Musk Thistle *Carduus nutans* amongst a sea of grass but matters soon improved as we moved amongst the stones. Spring Sedge, *Carex caryophyllea* was found amongst the pockets in the stones and Crested Hair-grass, *Koeleria macrantha* on shallow soil nearby. As we walked slowly north and slightly uphill the scene improved; Pignut, *Conopodium majus* especially abundant in places.

A debate on whether Lesser Stitchwort, *Stellaria graminea* preferred or tolerated slightly acidic

soils was discussed. I'm not sure of the outcome however when found they did seem to hug the edges of the sarsens.

Ben pointed out a chalk bank that contains thousands of Meadow Saxifrage, *Saxifraga granulata* plants and indeed we were lucky to find flowers still open.

Lunch was had under the shade of a group of Beech trees. We congratulated Ben on managing to lead WBS further than on any other outing and on such a warm day before lunch...about 3km!!

After a well-earned rest we hunted a chalk bank below the Beech trees for Frog Orchids, as there had been an old record of them but none were found although Early Gentian, *Gentianella anglica* were a very pleasant find. Amongst nearby stones Heath Bedstraw, *Galium saxatile* was found and within thin soils on top of stones Early Hair-grass, *Aira praecox* proved the acidic nature of the sarsens and their surroundings.



Hop Trefoil and Wild Thyme

Another long walk back with many red faces and tired legs at the car park but a well enjoyed experience by all I am quite sure.

Huge thanks to Ben for his time and direction and to Richard and all who shared their botanising knowledge and ID tips.

Martin Buckland

Amesbury

Saturday 18 June 2016

We explored a loop of the Salisbury Avon and its enclosed grassland on the southern edge of Amesbury. Setting off from the sports field, we went at a botanist's pace across sheep grazing (with sheep) towards the riverbanks. We were delayed by cranesbills – Cut-leaved (*Geranium dissectum*) and Dove's-foot (*G. molle*), but despite searching, could find no more. There was also the tiny yellow-flowered Slender Trefoil (*Trifolium micranthum*). Spiked Sedge (*Carex spicata*) with its tawny-brown inflorescences and Hairy Sedge (*C. hirta*) were freely scattered, but Lesser Pond-sedge (*C. acutiformis*) made dense stands in the wet bits.

The riverbanks gave us the chance to see the difference between Blue Water-speedwell (*Veronica anagallis-aquatica*) and Pink Water-speedwell (*V. catenata*), as well as the slightly similar Brooklime (*V. beccabunga*). Sharon got her grapnel into the water and brought out Curled Pondweed

(*Potamogeton crispus*), Fennel Pondweed (*P. pectinatus*), Horned Pondweed (*Zannichellia palustris*) and Stream Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus penicillatus*), but the Water Starwort was fruit-less and had to stay as *Callitriche* agg. We also found the once-troublesome Canadian Waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*), now largely replaced by another alien, Nuttall's Waterweed (*E. nuttallii*). There were both Bur-reeds – the hunky, "Branched" *Sparganium erectum* and the slender-leaved, submerged "Unbranched", *S. emersum*.

The big meadow has a modern sewage works in the middle. Ditches and the occasional sluice suggest that the area had once been managed as a water-meadow, but the features seem too large. A sewage works was established in the early 1900s and I wonder if this was actually a sewage farm, where effluent was trickled through the soil to purify it, fertilising crops along the way. For once, the internet did not help.

We found a range of wet meadow species with names beginning with

"Marsh": Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*), Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) and Horsetail (*Equisetum palustris*). Also stands of the slender Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*).

After completing the loop, we split for other adventures on the way home. Most went to see the newly-discovered Matt-grass Fescue *Vulpia unilateralis* on Sidbury Hill, while others investigated a wide scrubby verge on the road south from Amesbury.

Richard Aisbitt



Residential Visit to North Wales

Cwm Idwal, Snowdonia

8th July 2016

My passengers and I were so taken with the scenery on our way to Cwm Idwal that the excitement took us about a mile past the car park!

The start of the walk threw up an anomaly straight away with a beautiful rose showing a lot of signs to be a Sweet Briar but not quite. As often with these things it was showing hints of being a hybrid nonetheless it

was very showy and would not have looked out of place in any garden.

Holiday plants soon turned up with Viviparous Fescue *Festuca vivipara* that have spikelets that proliferate giving the flower head a tufty appearance. Only just a short time after we started our walk a smattering of Ferns for us to coo over (okay me): Parsley Fern, Hard Fern, Beech Fern, Lemon-scented Fern, Golden-scaled Male Fern and Broad Buckler Fern. Plenty there to photograph and discuss.

An assortment of ferns



Lemon-scented



Parsley



Hard



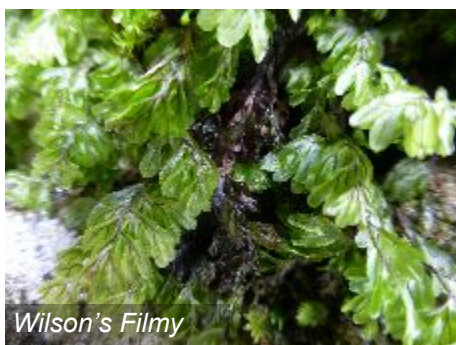
Beech



Lemon-scented again
- aka mountain fern



Oak



Wilson's Filmy



Brittle Bladder

A boggy area filled in our lists with a few sedges, Lousewort and Butterwort but perhaps the best plant was the diminutive Bristle Club-rush *Isolepis setacea*.

We arrived at the main lake which looked quite bare. However the stems of Water-lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna* were seen along the edges as well as Shoreweed *Littorella uniflora*. At the sandy edge many samples of these plants had been washed up including those of Quillwort *Isoetes lacustris*. On our way and through a gate I found the first of many Smooth Lady's Mantle *Alchemilla glabra* to be seen. Most Eyebrights are well, Eyebrights, but one species found by our leader had a deep purplish hue with long internodes; this was Scottish Eyebright *Euphrasia scotica*. In the adjacent grass a few of us stopped to look at Velvet Bent *Agrostis canina*. 'Are you sure as I have Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*?' Confusion reigned for two seconds until we realised it was all mixed up but good for making comparisons.

At the edge of the water we were shown Awlwort, *Subularia aquatica* which is the only annual and underwater crucifer. It seems to like the area between being in a wet muddy margin or just being shallowly underwater.

I had been expecting to see Clubmosses as we were walking steadily higher but I was surprised to see some so close to the path perhaps just growing in a bare patch of damp rocky soil amongst other vegetation. Three were had for appraisal and they were Stag's-horn Clubmoss, Fir Clubmoss and Alpine Clubmoss. At the edge of a rushing stream Mountain Sorrel *Oxyria digyna* looks looking nothing like its namesakes but belonging to that family. Also there, Goldenrod, the 'proper' sort this time and not some garden escape and a good time to stop before a small climb.

After lunch a peer into a wet flush gave us some beautiful Starry Saxifrages, *Saxifraga stellaris* before we climbed a steep path to poke

around scree and boulders. What looked like Thyme growing on a rock was in fact Purple Saxifrage, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*. It was a surprise to me to see Wood Sorrel and Burnet Saxifrage growing under a boulder overhang and then look up to see Alpine Meadow-rue *Thalictrum alpinum* and Roseroot *Sedum rosea* growing on the edge of the same stone.

I don't think I would have thought to look deep into a wet rock crevice however you are always learning. I was told to squeeze right in and look up to the wet dripping edge and there among the mosses was a translucent leaved plant. A Wilson's Filmy-Fern,



Water Lobelia



Starry Saxifrage

Hymenophyllum wilsonii confirmed by our leader.

To cap the day however we were very fortunate in being shown three small plants of the very rare Tufted Saxifrage, *Saxifraga cespitosa*. The native population is so near extinction that cuttings have been taken and these three shown to us were a few of those produced plants.

I would like to thank not only our leader but all the attending Wilts Botsers for their companionship on this good start to our holiday.

Martin Buckland



Common Butterwort



Roseroot



Stagshorn Clubmoss



Alpine Clubmoss



Soon we came to some most remarkable rocks about 4 m high. They had folded and contorted layers with mineral-rich inclusions of jasper and other

Newborough Warren, Anglesey

Saturday 9 July 2016

We could not expect three dry days in Snowdonia and this was the wet one. Dave arrived with an umbrella patterned in winsome kittens but the cheap umbrellas blew out before the end of the day if not put away in time.

Our guide was Barry Wrightson who knew his patch very well and was kindly patient with us. First off, he asked us about an Agrimony – possibly a hybrid; later we wondered whether this was a little test to see what manner of group he had today.

The dunes gave us a bounty of different habitats; salt marsh, dune ridges, wet and dry slacks, grassland and scrub – a great deal to see in just one morning.

The salt marsh had the expected Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*), Lax-flowered Sea-lavender (*Limonium humile*), Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*) and Annual Sea-blite



Marsh Helleborine - Penny

(*Suaeda maritima*), and more unusually English Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia anglica*), Hare's-foot Clover (*Trifolium arvense*) and Parsley Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe lachenalii*). An odd find was a little clump of, apparently, yellow-dried moss. Lens inspection revealed a tiny tangle of a red alga. Later Barry named it for us: *Bostrychia scorpioides*.

The dry dunes had plenty of Restharrow (*Ononis repens*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Common Stork's-bill (*Erodium cicutarium*), Wild Thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*) and Creeping Willow (*Salix repens*). There were many delightful assemblages of these plants on hummocks in the sand looking designed and ready for Chelsea.

Paths in the sand had been marked out with crushed white cockle shells, not indigenous but imported from South Wales.

Among the higher dunes and in the slacks we found a wealth of lovely plants, Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), Bog Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*), and Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*). Coming to the drier grass and scrub we came upon a long line of pretty Welsh ponies, with the stallion at the end of the line between us and his girls. They stood quietly to watch us pass.

We returned to the cars and motored round to Newborough Forest where we had our picnic, some of us sitting damply among the Dune orchids (*Epipactis muelleri* var. *dunensis*) and Sheep's-bit (*Jasione montana*).

The forest is 20 km² of Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra*) planted on the dunes in 1949-1953. They are not regenerating or being harvested and are skinny for their age reflecting the nutrient-poor subsoil. Underfoot there was some relict dune flora. Quite often there were large, pale, undulating pillows of *Cladonia* lichens; an unusual sight.

things. They are a Mecca for geologists and Barry explained them for us lucidly but, not being a geologist, I did not understand all he said. However they were wondrous even for the ignorant and in the cracks grew Black Spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*).

We then tramped on quite a way to see Shore Dock (*Rumex rupestris*) which is dependent on the mineral leaching in the area. Barry was cross to find there was a



Dune Helleborine

new fence but none of the promised cattle so all was overgrown. Sharon climbed the fence and found Brookweed (*Samolus valerandi*) along the stream but the dock was found further down and most people managed to see it.

On our wet walk back to the car park, some went down to the beach and found Frosted Orache (*Atriplex laciniata*), Sea-holly (*Eryngium maritimum*), Sea Sandwort (*Honckenya peploides*) and Prickly Saltwort (*Salsola kali*) which was a treat at the end of a long and very rich day.

Several times during the day we had come to a bright pink rose about which there was no conclusion. A branch of it made it back to the nunnery and in the sitting room that evening several people were seen, separately, to settle down with it and the rose book. There was still no conclusion but a probability of *R. sherardii* or *R. mollis*.

Penny Lee

Great Orme, Llandudno

Sunday 10th July 2016

Our third and last day in North Wales dawned fair and we truly hoped for a dry day. We were lucky, although the mainland hills were masked by dark clouds. There had been warnings



Dark-red Helleborine - Pat



Common Rockrose

about the wind on this limestone headland and there indeed were times when we were almost lifted off our feet.

Once again we were joined by Wendy McCarthy whose lifelong love of the area became evident. A central part of the headland is owned and managed by The National Trust (NT) and the rest by Conwy Borough Council which provides a warden service. The land has several conservation designations including SSSI, SAC (Special Area of

Conservation) and is part of the Heritage Coast. A herd of around 200 Kashmir goats roam freely over all but the NT land and also frequent local gardens!

Our route took us roughly in a circle from the car park, around the edge of the NT property and back via some of the rocky cliffs and also the limestone pavement. Growing in the shelter of a stone wall we saw white horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) and on it two larvae of the rare Horehound Plume Moth which feeds exclusively on this plant. The short turf supported many spring squill (*Scilla verna*) now reduced to the dried remains of their fruits. It was interesting to see heathers (*Calluna vulgaris* and *Erica cinerea*) growing with common and hoary rockroses (*Helianthemum nummularium* and *H. oelandicum*) in close proximity in this limestone heath. Patches and bands of loess, a wind-blown fine sand or silt, occur in places over the limestone and this allows for the juxtaposition of lime-loving and lime-hating plants.



Can Neville get down again? - Pat

There were several really good finds on this day. The first was the rare spiked speedwell (*Veronica spicata*) a lovely deep shade of blue and sufficiently attractive to have been brought into cultivation. Our second rarity was dark-red helleborine (*Epipactis atrorubens*) which grew out of small crevices in the vertical

rocks. These were a real challenge to photograph not only because they were often above head height but also because of the high winds. Last, but by no means least was the plants of the endemic cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster cambricus*) for which this is the only known site. Efforts to increase the very small population have resulted in some new, young plants, which we were shown. Let us hope that they can withstand the ravages of the goats.

Wendy went on during the afternoon to show us many more plants but this is not the place to list them all. Both she and Dave gave us a superb insight into an immensely interesting



A tiny Burnet Rose

area with such a varied flora. Our thanks to them both for making the day so enjoyable.

Pat Woodruffe



Spiked Speedwell - Pat

Pepperbox Hill and Landford Bog

Saturday 16th July 2016



The Pepperbox - Pat

Pepperbox Hill has been owned and managed by the National Trust since 1930s and even before then was an open, cattle-grazed site where local people were able to wander. Scrub invasion has been taking place for many years and photographs from 1950s show a population of small juniper bushes to the south-west of Eyre's Folly (The Pepperbox). Further north-east there is a second population which are thought to be older still. Sadly none of these bushes appears to be regenerating but, on the roadside, there are many young plants just a few cm. high and others, stunted by persistent rabbit grazing which are still very short but bushy and woody and clearly much older – 20 years perhaps.



Field Rose - Pat



and Small-flowered Sweet-briar - Pat

Ten years ago The Society was approached by NT and asked to carry out an appraisal of the scrub. There were records of several different roses from unspecified locations which it was important to identify. Several members helped with this work which Anne Appleyard and I oversaw and from which we compiled a report. Ben Cooke, who was our leader on this day, managed the site until recently and assures us that the report is still of value to those who look after it. At lunch we were joined by the new site manager, Peter Oliver, whose father, Jack, is a founding member of this society.

The presence of cattle on the site since 2008 has resulted once again in a short grassy sward in many places and also a remarkable transition from cleared young woodland and scrub back to a flower-rich grassland in an extensive area to the east of The Pepperbox. During our visit we were able to look at the roses, in particular small-flowered sweet briar *Rosa micrantha*, which is common on the site, as well as plants such as vervain *Verbena officinalis*, ploughman's spikenard *Inula conyzae*, hairy St John's-wort *Hypericum hirsutum* and the diminutive thyme-leaved sandwort *Arenaria serpyllifolia*.

Pat Woodruffe

Landford Bog Nature Reserve in the New Forest owned and managed by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. A flower-rich bog which is a very rare habitat currently funded through Countryside Stewardship.

We arrived at Landford Bog Nature Reserve at around 1.30pm and made our way through the silver birch woodland that screens the site from the road. Along the shady path we stopped to examine various plants including the scaly male fern *Dryopteris affinis* and it was compared to the broad buckler fern *Dryopteris dilatata* growing nearby. After a short distance the woodland opens out on to a very rare habitat, the flower-rich bog itself. Cattle were grazing the site to ensure that scrub and rough grasses are kept at bay and to maintain structural diversity suitable for a variety of species particularly those less dominant ones that rely on niche

habitats. The grazing was contained within a specific area due to the recent discovery of a gravid adder, a measure designed to protect her from the cattle's trampling hooves. The bog itself is dominated by cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and Sphagnum species. Scattered regularly throughout the area are the beautiful yellow spikes of bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, pale butterwort *Pinguicula lusitanica*, tufts of common cotton grass *Eriophorum angustifolium* waving in the slight breeze and an occasional orchid long past its best but which we think was *Dactylorhiza incarnata*. The pale butterwort is of particular note since this is probably the only site in Wiltshire where it occurs and, at present, it seems to be doing rather well growing on bare peat between the hummocks of purple moor-grass. Some very interesting sedges and rushes on the site include common yellow sedge *Carex demissa*, carnation sedge *C. panicea*, star sedge *C. echinata*, toad rush *Juncus bufonius*, heath grass *Danthonia decumbens* and heath wood rush *Luzula multiflora*. Where the bog gives way to a group of sallows several interesting plants were found including marsh speedwell *Veronica scutellaria*, marsh St John's-wort *Hypericum elodes* and lesser skullcap *Scutellaria minor*. One of the biggest wildlife spectacles of the day was the 100 or so young tick larvae that launched themselves *en masse* onto Richard's arm. Quite an impressive sight that got us all scratching.

Nicola Quinn



Botanists in the bog - Pat

King's Play Hill SSSI

31st July 2016

I had only visited this site once before



Martin finds a Juniper

in the autumn a couple of seasons ago as part of my Atlas recording and decided then that this may well be a good site to come back to. Most of our planned site visits have a quality the leaders are already aware of and so able to share their knowledge more readily however I realised that we never plan a 'come and see what we



can find meeting' so this was it with nearby Oliver's Castle on the back burner should we require it.

No point of this meeting was pre-



Examining Bastard Toadflax

walked and after warning members of a recalled rough and muddy track to come found instead that the Local Authority had laid down tarmac

scalpings! No doubt someone had travelled all this way to dump garden rubbish a while ago but a well-established garden Quince, *Chaenomeles japonica* entered the records as an alien. Another strange appearance was the many Apple trees along a hedge row. They were not



Blackstonia / Yellow-wort

Crab Apples and there were too many to be 'apple-core throw-outs' but then again not good enough to be select varieties.

As if to prove this was not pre-planned it took us a few minutes to find the direction of the footpath. The finger board pointed into a hedge but we caught up with it in a slightly different spot and angle across a cropped field some yards away but full marks to the farmer for leaving an undrilled path. Not many arable weeds to be seen but one Small Toadflax, *Chaenorhinum minus* was found.

To a stile now and the beginning of chalk downland with our first prize a large, fruit bearing Juniper, *Juniperus communis*. We scanned the slopes bagging many species but perhaps it was Hawkweed Oxtongue, *Picris hieracioides* that caused the most interest, not for the plant, but for the most tongue-twisting versions of names that people gave; Bristly-Hawkweed-Picris-Helminthotheca-oxxtongue etc etc!

Crossing a road now to King's Play Hill proper, this site was once managed as a Wiltshire Trust reserve many years ago and still holds SSSI status. Lots of the attendees were very pleased with the first of many Whitebeams we saw however two of our visitors were so involved on looking down for plants they hadn't

seen the first trees and had to walk back!

After a fantastic lunch spot where we bathed in sunshine and splendid views we gradually climbed up the hill and well worth it was too for we encountered numerous Clustered Bellflower, *Campanula glomerata* and Round-headed Rampion, *Phyteuma orbiculare*. Bastard Toadflax, *Thesium humifusum* was well spotted as was a diminutive Autumn Gentian, *Gentianella amarella* although Anne has to take the prize for multi-tasking for not only did she take on voluntary recording for the day she also found a single Frog Orchid, *Dactylorhiza viridis*.

The sight of many more Whitebeams lining the edge of the hill was quite new to most people and I heard many members comment how pleased they were to witness this 'new area' of Wiltshire.

Just before we left the hill Anne gave me a shout to come and see a 'baby' plant of Juniper that she found growing on the edge of a bank. These do not often grow to maturity, either being grazed off or trodden on, so this 20cm bush was great to see and a fitting end to King's Play Hill.

My thanks to the 15 members who attended and making this a brilliant day.

Martin Buckland



Wylde Downs

Sunday 7th August 2016

The group met on the crest of the hill to the west of Dinton Beeches where there are lovely views both to the north and south. My suggestion was a fairly brisk walk northwards through arable land to reach units 1 and 2 of the Wylde Downs SSSI. Unsurprisingly, this did not happen; there was too much of interest along the way!

The first plant that Sharon spotted almost immediately we left the cars was Slender Sandwort *Arenaria leptoclados*. Unfortunately, there is little to distinguish it from its larger relative *A. serpyllifolia* except the size of the sepals and shape of the capsules and many books will refer to these as two subspecies of *A. serpyllifolia*. In the nearby crop the heads of Rye Brome *Bromus secalinus* could be seen standing well clear of the wheat. This plant is becoming a common weed of cereal crops and one to look out for.

Further up the track we pondered over a rose growing in a tall hedge of Spindle *Euonymus europaeus*. The prominent styles and downward pointing last leaflets made Sharon consider *R. stylosa* but further identification led to the conclusion that it was a robust specimen of *R. arvensis*. Our final point of interest before we reached the SSSI was a planted headland where several species, particularly *Lotus corniculatus* and *Anthyllis vulneraria* were suspiciously large and likely to have been from non-native seed supplies.

The main purpose of this visit was to show members both Tuberous thistle *Cirsium tuberosum*, Dwarf thistle *C. acaule* and their hybrid *C. x medium*, hence the visit in mid to late summer. When Anne, Sue and I surveyed this site for Natural England in 2008 we estimated that Tuberous thistle and the hybrids were present in their thousands in Unit 2. We found several large populations and searched only a small part of the unit and so it seems likely that numbers have been maintained in this scrubby area where the grasses grow tall. On our previous visit we noted that many new, young plants were found in areas of scrub clearance and, if this management can be continued, their future looks secure. A few easily seen characteristics can be used to separate the hybrid from its parents:



Tuberous Thistles - Neville
Inset - foreground: possibly pure *tuberosum*; behind: probable hybrid

	<i>C. tuberosum</i>	<i>C. acaule</i>	<i>C. x medium</i>
Arachnoid hairs on upper part of stem	✓		✓
Jointed, simple hairs on upper stem		✓	✓
Globose receptacle	✓		Intermediate
Elongate receptacle		✓	
Glossy leaves with very sharp spines		✓	Intermediate
Grey/green leaves with softer spines	✓		

We found both parents and the hybrids in this area and then went on to the National Nature Reserve, just the other side of the fence to find more hybrids, this time growing amongst only the shorter parent, *C. acaule*. In this situation the hybrids rarely grew to more than 30cm high in the much shorter sward.



Rye Brome - Sharon

The turf proved to be rich with Clustered Bellflower *Campanula glomerata* and Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* providing late colour amongst an abundance of Dwarf Sedge *Carex humilis*. We did spot several dead heads of orchids but sheep were grazing the downland, so reducing our chances of finding Frog Orchids *Dactylorhiza viridis*. We did however find Zigzag Clover *Trifolium medium* and a small amount of Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria* in the ungrazed grassland of Unit 1.

The views from the reserve were much appreciated and it seemed that this was a new site for many. I have the feeling that several members will make a note to return in the early summer next year.

Pat Woodruffe

Atlas Recording Days

Lyneham area

Saturday 20 August 2016

Hilmarton – recording team: Pat and Anne

Anne and I took on the square that included much of the village of Hilmarton (SU0275) and the surrounding fields. We were able to tick off a good variety of ‘street flowers’ and caused some interest amongst local people as we peered over hedges looking for garden weeds. It can be something of a game to guess what a trampled specimen in paving might be and, improbable as it seemed, we thought we had found *Carex pendula*. To our delight, when we ventured down a narrow path which led out of the village, we did indeed find some healthy specimens. Presumably seeds had been brought back into the village on shoes or the coats of dogs after a walk. At one stage we were frustrated by a barrier across what we believed to be the right of way and, tantalisingly, we could see some blue flowers in the field beyond but couldn’t get close enough to identify them. At the end of the afternoon we drove around to the other side of the field and discovered more of the mystery plant. It was chicory *Cichorium intybus* most probably volunteers from a previous crop or from a headland seed mix. Although we covered only a small proportion of the square, a healthy 150 records were achieved by trying to dip into most of the habitats that were easily reached.

Pat Woodruffe

Goatacre – recording team: Richard and Kate

Kate from the Devizes Record Centre and I set out down dark lanes and across grazing fields, picking up a variety of more common species along the way. We were heading for a meandering stream that looked interesting on the map. It did indeed have a variety of species of wet

habitats: Marsh and Fen Bedstraws, a collection of rushes, two sweet-grasses and various others. The invasive alien Indian Balsam was less welcome, being scattered along the stream, but nowhere rampant. The map showed a large pond nearby, but it was invisible on the ground until we found it completely camouflaged by trees. This added Rigid Hornwort in the water and some other wetland species.

Kate did a “this looks odd” to a rose under a willow tree, wondering if it was a *Rosa arvensis*, the Field Rose. I examined the hips back at home and it turned out to be the Short-styled Field Rose *Rosa stylosa*, which is rather more unusual.

We had covered only half of our kilometre square when increasing rain cut our explorations short, but a return visit to visit other interesting parts pushed the species count to a respectable 193.

Richard Aisbitt

Oaksey area

Sunday 11 September 2016

Kemble - recording team: Martin and Sharon

Our meeting took us to an area little visited in Wiltshire, the village of Kemble. Our map showed us typical habitat to cover such as housing estates, roadside verges and farmland plus the added interest of the River Thames. First, however we homed in on Kemble Railway Station. Sites such as this combine rail verges, industrial estates, waste ground and car parks into a single area with great potential due to prolific transport bringing seeds in on vehicles or blowing seeds along rail routes. We were not disappointed.

The first car park yielded many expected weeds such as Annual Meadow-Grass *Poa annua* and Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg. but also the odd special ‘grot’ such as Squirrel’s-tail Fescue *Vulpia bromoides*. Moving into the Station campus we took a peek at the railway tracks just in case it was worth it and

there side by side between the rails was Groundsel *Senecio vulgaris* and Sticky Groundsel *Senecio viscosus* for comparison. We even recorded Tomato *Solanum lycopersicum*. I doubt it was a Money-maker and certainly not a Gardener’s Delight!

Crossing the bridge, the other side provided a former rail route, now reduced to a 100m siding full of out of bounds ‘grots’ which was painful to leave as well as a large car park made up of former ballast and limestone scalplings. Now, this was good and we racked up the species list. Late flowering Thale Cress *Arabidopsis thaliana*, Lesser Swinecress *Lepidium didymium* and Canadian Goldenrod *Solidago canadensis* were present but the real treats were the fleabanes with Blue Fleabane *Erigeron acris*, Canadian Fleabane *Conyza canadensis* and even Bilbao’s Fleabane *Conyza floribunda*, a species on the increase so keep an eye out.

Roadside verge and housing estates brought us a few more plants including Red Goosefoot *Chenopodium rubrum* found in a road drain. Rather nicer was Grey Field-speedwell *Veronica polita* found growing in soil-filled cracks in a roadside path. This is a plant many of us miss so check out your field guides and prepare to find it as it occurs a lot more than we believe. Our section of the Thames was not that fruitful; aside from being dry it was over-shadowed by scrub but it did allow us to walk along it and over ubiquitous Fool’s Water-cress *Apium nodiflorum* and to inspect the scoured out gravel river bed. As we left it we did find a couple of small scrubby plants of Purple Willow *Salix purpurea*.

We finished with the corner of a bean field, well there had to be a few goodies and there were. How nice to finish the day with Round-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia spuria* and Thorn-apple *Datura stramonium*. A thoroughly enjoyable day.

Martin and Sharon

Oaksey – recording team:
Richard and Kate

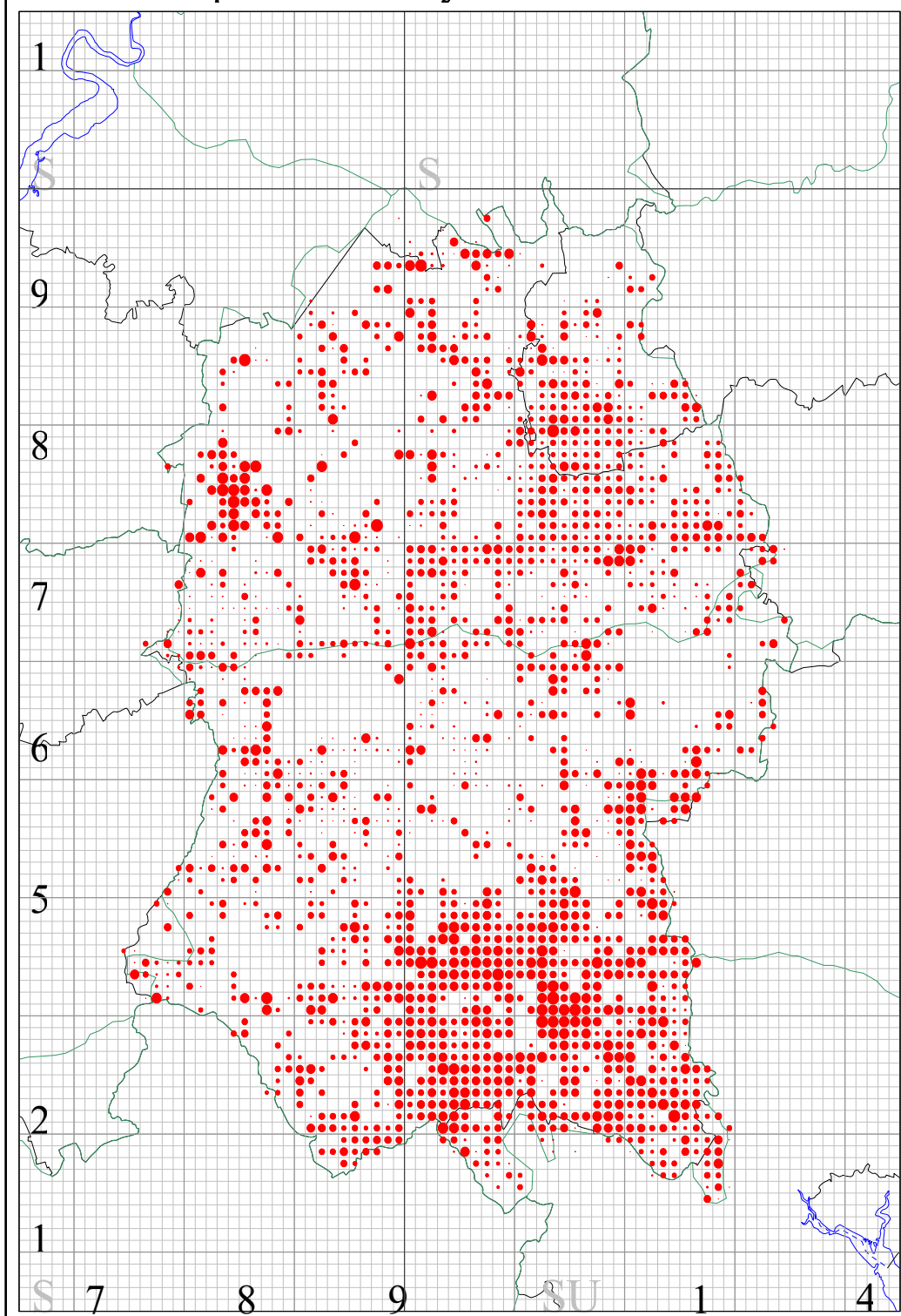
Being rather smaller than Kemble, the Oaksey area is more villagey and agricultural. Nevertheless the village gave a sprinkling of weedy urban species and the churchyard added some more. Does every churchyard lawn have Slender Speedwell *Veronica filiformis*? Maybe. Oaksey Wood is private to vehicles, but does not discourage walkers, so we were able to explore this semi-natural wet broadleaved woodland. It's always nice to see the delicate inflorescences of Wood Melick and Wood Millet, grasses still recognisable late in the season.

We found dry stream beds east of the wood, cut down through the clay and paved with limestone flakes. They had occasional Soft and Hard Shield-ferns on their banks. The wide bridleways alongside had frequent stands of Nettle-leaved Bellflower *Campanula trachelium*, not unexpected in this near-Cotswold location.

With better weather, we covered both our target kilometre squares, but retrospect always seems to show gaps which need a return visit.

Richard Aisbitt

Wiltshire Species Density 1km 2010+



Progress with the Atlas Update

We have 2017, 2018 and 2019 left to record for the BSBI's Atlas Updating Project. The map shows our coverage so far and includes all our records from 2010 onwards. You can see that we still have gaps to fill.

Recorders have sent in 18,000 records this year and there may be as many more to come. This adds to the 200,000 already received.

Thank you to all members who have put so much effort into exploring meadows, pastures and crop edges, footpaths, bridlepaths, byways and road verges, rivers, canals streams and ponds, woods, downland, towns and villages.



Sand Point, Weston-super-mare

24th September 2016

The tide was out when we arrived so we started off with the saltmarsh and lower rock slopes. Immediately though we were drawn to a very small area of disturbed ground and rounded up not only many common arable weeds but an abundance of Sea Radish *Raphanus raphanistrum* ssp. *maritimus*.

I recently found an advertisement for Mexican Fleabane *Erigeron karvinkskianus* at £5.99 for a 9cm pot.



Black Spleenwort - Sharon

Crikey, we struck gold for the plant was well spread amongst the rocks here. If only Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum* was the same price we could all retire comfortably. Another common plant, and quite pretty too, on top and at the edge of the rocks was Common Calamint *Clinopodium ascendens*. Not quite so bright and well finished were the scores of Ivy Broomrape *Orobancha hederæ* on no other plant than, well, Ivy!

On the marsh were many plants of Sea Aster *Aster tripolium* and in this instance there were two forms; the typical blue faced daisy but also the variant with no ray florets i.e. with just yellow 'noses'. Common Cord-grass *Spartina anglica* is

well known as an abundant grass around our coast and here was no exception, the yellowy-green culms and leaves were very obvious. Not so obvious were the Sea-spurreys! Were they white, red or pink? Are you sure 'cos mine looks like this? Well, we had two types, Greater and Lesser, *Spergularia media* and *S. marina* growing side by side in places to make us chuckle. A lot easier were the Sea-blites; early on we had the perennial Shrubby Sea-blite *Suaeda vera* and nearer the sea in more open mud the annual version, Annual Sea-blite *Suaeda maritima*.

Our climb to the top of the Point commenced with a few plants of Wild Clary *Salvia verbenaca* and many more at the top. In fact many were trampled, routinely growing as they did within the footpath. I'm not sure my garden varieties would accept this. Rosettes of another familiar plant nearby caused Sharon to say she could smell rodents. (Yes, really, I know I couldn't believe it too). Apparently the leaves of Houndstongue *Cynoglossum officinale* smell of mice when everyone knows they smell of Peanut Butter Sandwiches! Anyway we allowed our leader to continue in her role.

Common Gromwell *Lithospermum officinale* became an increasing find and was quite decorative covered with white seed nutlets much like a dusting of polystyrene bobbles. Nearby another plant coping with trampling was

Fiddle Dock *Rumex pulcher* although a search around did produce a few better plants. A truly good find by our leader though was Honewort *Trinia glauca*. We could admire its bluey-green fern-like leaves but not its flowers of course, but we did have the appreciation of seed heads.

The trip did not provide many of the programmed hopefuls such as Somerset



Honewort foliage

Hair-grass but nonetheless a good day was had by all.

I would like to add my grateful thanks to the hardy crew of eight members that turned up for the finale of the season and especially to Sharon for all the knowledge she freely imparts.

Martin Buckland



Saltmarsh - Sharon

A Plant Parasite in the Making?



A very strange pinkish coloured spike emerging out of the ground was spotted in Bentley Wood by Sue Walker and Tony Goddard in June 2015. It seemed likely that this was an achlorophyllous form of *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine) as many normal specimens can be seen in the vicinity, but proving this was something of a challenge. Thanks to considerable predation by slugs no leaves or flowers developed sufficiently for a full identification to be made and we resigned ourselves to a long wait for the next opportunity, thinking that it would be June 2016 at the earliest.

Sue and Tony were amazed to see a new spike developing early in December and this was quickly followed by several others. Unfortunately the slugs got to know about this event before we did and some damage was sustained but the plant was protected by a shortened tree guard and bubble plastic and a few leaves developed sufficiently for Sharon to be able to confirm our suspicions by looking at the leaf

venation. The hard frosts of mid-January were its downfall.

It is well documented that orchids – and indeed most probably the vast majority of plants – are to some extent dependent upon fungal activity for good growth. It is probable that normal, green helleborines depend upon a fungal relationship that provides sufficient energy for the spike to develop and that the contribution from their own photosynthetic activity mainly fuels the production of flowers, fruits and seeds. It seems that more than one type of fungus is involved including those that have an association with the roots of trees.

Surprisingly, researchers have found that there is no increased fungal activity in those plants in the genus which lack chlorophyll when compared with those that

have a normal amount. Estimates suggest that around 80% of carbohydrate found in both types of plant in the spring, as growth commences, is of fungal origin but that this drops to 20% as the normal plants start to photosynthesise. It certainly begs the question of whether these albino plants will have the resources to permit reproduction, even if slugs can be controlled. What seems even more improbable is that there were sufficient resources left in the tuber for our plant to be able to attempt a second shot at growth at a time when the supporting trees, which I assume are the primary source of carbohydrates, have lost their leaves. We have experienced a very mild autumn which could have

allowed the fungi to remain active and it is also possible that reserves were held back when the shoots produced in the summer were slug-eaten. Who can be sure? Could the grasses which surround the orchid be making a contribution?

In the case of any plant which lacks chlorophyll the relationship with associated fungi must be ‘one way’ and the plant can be thought of as parasitic upon the fungus. This cannot be the whole story because fungi cannot photosynthesise and have to obtain their carbohydrates from either dead organic matter, such as leaf mould, or from other living plants. Some plants which consistently lack chlorophyll, have specific host plants, the broomrapes for example. Whether there is an intermediate fungus involved, I am not sure but in this instance in Bentley it seems that we are seeing a relatively rare event in which the delicate balance between fungi and plant is being tipped in favour of the plant. Since the plant has sufficient resources to grow twice in one year, it must be supposed that the partnership is working to the advantage of the orchid! That said, I shall be quite surprised if it supports another set of shoots in the summer of 2016.

Pat Woodruffe



Ann Margaret Hutchison

Ann was born in Buxton, Derbyshire on 2nd July 1930, and attended Altrincham Grammar School for girls near Manchester. As part of her University entrance requirements, she needed Chemistry. This meant attending the local boys' school for tuition as it was not taught in her school. At Manchester University, she attained a degree in Biological Sciences.

Ann worked as a scientific officer/civil servant for the MOD at Porton Down, Wiltshire, where she was a librarian in what is now known as Public Health England but was formally the Micro Biological Research Establishment.

Of Ann's many interests, she was a founder member of the Wiltshire Trust for Nature Conservation and sat on its council for many years, and also a member of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, National Trust, Salisbury Plain Conservation Group, Wiltshire Botanical Society and Salisbury & District Natural History Society in which she was vice President until her death, YMCA, Kew Gardens Foundation, Cats Protection League and Spana, a charity for working animals of the world.

Ann made her home in Salisbury and nearby Wilton; in later life she moved to Mere.

Ann served as BSBI recorder for South Wilts VC8 from 1976 to 2003 and was the co-author of the main body of the Wiltshire flora, in association with her opposite number for North Wiltshire Dave Green, published in 1993 and edited by Beatrice Gillam. To this end, she was a founder member of the Wiltshire Flora mapping group, formed with the intention of surveying plant occurrence and population sizes in Wiltshire, and systematically recording up-to-date data. She worked with a large group of people over the years 1984 to 1992. She sat

on the Science, Publication and Steering groups throughout the period of the project to produce the Flora. Over these intervening years, she assessed the incoming records, and compiled maps and text on the 1200 species surveyed. At a time when electronic storage and retrieval was in its infancy, this involved a great deal of time-consuming work.

Ann was a private person who was dedicated to her botany, and she brought to the post of recorder the order and thoroughness of a librarian. Her problems with mobility which stemmed from childhood, led her to be limited in the field but she identified huge numbers of specimens that were brought to her, sending off bundles of critical species to national referees for determination, as part of the Mapping project.

With the instigation of the Wilts Botanical Society in 1993, Ann became a lifelong member, and continued to add to the annual list of rare and localised plants found in the south of the county. She corresponded diligently, replying to all requests and queries about the flora of South Wilts.

Ann died at home on 28th of May 2016.

Dave Green

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or a Hawkweed
or a Hawkbit
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I am very much an amateur botanist and although I have a biological sciences background, I knew very few plants and little about how to go about identifying them when I first joined the Wiltshire Botanical Society several years ago.

Over the years, I have picked up a few common names and have been on a few Field Study Council weekends which helped me to get plants into families. Our field trips and the experiences of the botanists in the society have also helped in

building up my knowledge as our meetings are very welcoming and members are always very helpful to beginners.

I agreed to help with the Atlas Monitoring project, knowing that it would develop my skills, and there would also be help available with anything tricky. Sharon Pilkington and other members have also put on a number of excellent training events, so gradually I felt I was improving.

However, I was still struggling with using keys and general confidence so this on line course, run jointly with the Field Study Council and the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland seemed aimed directly at me. You don't need to be a BSBI member to take part.

The course has been developed to be completed in one year, but you would need to have a reasonable amount of free time in the summer as the units do come quite quickly. You can take two years to complete it as I have done. When I started in 2015 it cost £300, but it is free for some wildlife volunteers, but you need a reference from your charity to be able to do this.

You are allocated an on line tutor; I had Tim Kaye, who has now left Wiltshire, but has continued to tutor me this year. Richard Aisbitt and Penny Lee also tutor this course, and if any other members feel they could act as a tutor then I am sure Richard or Penny would give them some more information.

The course starts in February and runs until the end of August, with all work to be completed by the end of September. There are 15 units, the first three are on classification, terminology, flower formulae and using a key and so give you a really good botanical base to build on. The course expects you to make your own keys up for some plants, which I found really useful as it make you look really carefully for small differences.

The units look at the 12 commonest families and there is a unit which covers four additional small families. The notes for each unit notes are very well put together and include information about the commercial value of many of the species for food and horticulture. However you can't get the unit until the release date, which can be a good idea as you get time to consolidate and find plants, but it can mean you miss plants during the season, especially if the season peaks early or what you require has a small window of flowering time, or is not particularly common local to you.

Each unit needs you to find different representative specimens, which you describe for your tutor and carry out other observations. The course starts with the *Brassicaceae*, so some early flowers to find here, for example *Erophila verna* (Common Whitlow Grass). This unit also needed some comparative work later on in the season, looking at the fruits as well as the flowers of two yellow flowering species and their fruits.

We went on to look at groups largely as they come into flower, with the *Ranunculaceae* next where I had to write a flower formula and this year I finally managed to find some *Ranunculus penicillatus* (Stream Water Crowfoot) from the river Kennet with my homemade grapple made from a whisk. Next came the *Liliaceae* and I now know that my



garden English Bluebells, from a reputable nursery are more of a mixture than I would like. The *Caryophyllaceae* unit had me carrying out other observations on the male and female flowers in red campions. I've always found the *Apiaceae* a particularly tricky group and the good notes for this unit have helped me to make a start on sorting these out, especially this year as taking two years to complete allowed me some prior knowledge of what to expect. The *Fabaceae* unit was relatively easy to complete with plenty of examples to find locally. Our field trip to North Wales allowed me to easily find some *Potentilla erecta*, an essential for the *Rosaceae* unit. The *Lamiaceae* unit also had some easy local finds. I was really pleased to see that this year the requirements for the *Scrophulariaceae* had changed and it was no longer essential to find *Odontites vernus* (Red Bartsia), which although relatively common, is not so easy a find locally for me.



The 'small family unit', included the *Polygonaceae*, *Geraniaceae*, *Onagraceae*, and *Rubiaceae*. This unit is used as an opportunity to prepare two voucher specimens and send these off to your tutor. The final family with plants to find in the field is the *Asteraceae*, so I have made some progress with all those yellow daisies this year, but still need to work on these to be confident. The course finishes with an overview of the *Orchidaceae*.



Although the plants you have to find are allegedly common, I did find some a bit tricky and I have had a number of trips to different environments. A mid-summer walk in the first year to Llanthony priory in Wales and well away from 'the chalk' helped fill some gaps. It is also surprising at what pops up on walls and pavements in Swindon Old Town, such as *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Thale Cress) and *Sagina procumbens* (Procumbent Pearlwort).

The terminology unit asks you to find examples of various plant characteristics, as you go through the season, and I have been able to complete most of that unit over the two years.



I have really enjoyed the Identiplant course as it has helped me with my botany confidence and to tackle the keys in the Frances Rose "Wildflower Key", and to start to use Stace as a reference. It is perhaps not a good course for complete beginners as some basic prior knowledge helps as does knowing where to look for some of the examples, especially if like me, you do not live in a particularly floriferous area or close to nature reserves. However if you are out in the field quite regularly then you should be able to complete the units over one season and the option of studying over two seasons allows you to fill in any gaps in the second year.



The course does not give any 'professional qualifications' but if you complete it satisfactorily then there is a certificate.

Alison Robinson September 2016

The roundels are "badges" sent as congratulations for completing a unit.

Beatrice Gillam and the Wiltshire Flora

The idea of producing a county flora to update that of Donald Grose, published in 1957, was conceived by a group known as The Wiltshire Natural History Forum, of which Beatrice was a member. The purpose of this group was to bring together representatives from all of the natural history societies in the county. She, together with Ted Culling, the chairman of the Forum, set the process in motion by inviting the two Botanical Society of the British Isles county recorders who kept the botanical records for Wiltshire and whose help would be essential in the years to come, to a meeting of the Forum. The group agreed to support the preparation and eventual publication of a new county flora. Beatrice played a very important part in this early period of planning the first step of which was to call a meeting of all those who might be keen to support the project. No fewer than 60 enthusiasts turned up to this meeting at Lackham College and this gave the Forum the encouragement to go ahead with the launch of the Wiltshire Flora Mapping Project which resulted in a pilot study in 1983 followed by county recording from 1984 – 1991.

Not only did Beatrice play a crucial role in the organisation of the project but she also took on a substantial amount of recording work herself. The basic area for recording purposes was a 2 x 2km square, known as a tetrad, as defined on Ordnance Survey maps. Beatrice collected records from no fewer than 64 of these squares, which involved a considerable amount of footwork as well as a good knowledge of the county and of its plants. At this time she had a caravan located at Parsonage Down, the newly acquired farm which had been purchased by Natural England (then Nature Conservancy Council) and almost 5000 of her records come from this locality. She also made a very

significant contribution to the records from the Devizes area and also further west on Salisbury Plain as well as around Mere and Warminster. Her total tally for the project stands at over 15000 records. I recall a lady of advancing years driving a 4 x 4 Mitsubishi across the downland, a sight which may not be so unusual today but one which has lodged in my memory!

As the period of survey work drew to a close Beatrice was the clear choice to edit all the species accounts which the county recorders wrote. Both tasks were immensely time-consuming but the process of ensuring standardisation required both firmness and patience, both of which she possessed. If this was not sufficient, she also contributed several articles to be included in The Flora. These included both species monographs and also an appraisal of the habitats of Wiltshire.

Beatrice's contribution may not have seemed very important to the casual observer but to those involved in the project over the ten or more years, her part in keeping everyone on track and ensuring a publication of which the many contributors could be proud was immense. Without her, would the publication, the ultimate aim of the project, have been realised?

Pat Woodruffe and Dave Green

The Living Ash Project

A new citizen science project is being promoted that aims to monitor the health of a large number of ash trees throughout the UK. The challenge is to identify trees with good tolerance to Ash Dieback disease and to secure this material for further breeding work so that it can quickly be made available to commercial outlets.

Individuals are being asked to identify one or more trees in their vicinity and to monitor their health over three years. If you would like further information and / or to become involved then please visit the website at

www.livingashproject.org.uk/intro

Pat Woodruffe

New Plant Records 2015

Hoary Mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*)



Explanatory notes

- The following is a selection from WBS records received in 2015. For each species, initials of recorders and names of towns, villages and sites are not repeated. Assume it's the same one until a new one appears.
- Only those new to their 10 km square are included. This is relative to the period since the flora mapping in the 1980s and 1990s for the 1993 Wiltshire Flora and recorded there.
- Where a record is also a 1st county or vice-county record, this is stated at the end of the list of records for the species i.e. it doesn't say which specific record it is. An unqualified statement means that it is the first record ever, as far as is known. Where the word "recent" is inserted, it means that it is the first since the flora mapping began, but had been recorded before this period.
- Where a recording square is only partly in Wiltshire, any comment on record status applies only to the part within Wiltshire.
- Names are those in the 3rd edition of *New Flora of the British Isles* (Clive Stace 2010).

Recorders

AA - Anne Appleyard
CSh - C Shellswell
DG - David Green
DMo - David Morris
DP - David Pickering
ECo - E Coke
GGo - Graham Goodfellow
GHC - G H Colley
HCr - H Crouch
HE - Henry Edmunds
IL - I Lucas
JBE - J Bennett
JBr - Jane Brown
JRM - John Moon
JWs - J Walters
LWa - Lesley Wallington
MBu - Martin Buckland
MDP - M Peverett
MHo - M Hodgkiss
NJS - Nicholas Self
NPu - N Pullen
PD - Paul Darby
PLe - Penny Lee
PMA - P Marston
PMW - Pat Woodruffe
PSk - Paul Skelton
RAi - Richard Aisbitt
RDu - Rosemary Duckett

RR - Rob Randall
RW - R Walls
SFi - Sue Fitzpatrick
SPi - Sharon Pilkington
TC - Tom Cairns
U3K - Kennet Flora and Fauna Group
WBS - Wiltshire Botanical Society

Abbreviations

SPTA - Salisbury Plain Training Area
CCDA - Cross Country Driver Area
NNR - National Nature Reserve
WWT - Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest

VC 7

Aconitum napellus; Monk's-hood; DG; Studley and Ratford; 7,170 approx. by river, looking "native".

Agrostis canina sens. lat.; Velvet Bent; DG; Upper Seagry; Scotland Hill.

Agrostis gigantea; Black Bent; DG; Sherston; various habitats.

Allium oleraceum; Field Garlic; RAi; Bishopstone; about 50 in grassland; TC/DG; Heddington; Oliver's Castle; on sheep sleights, 500-700 plants.

Allium triquetrum; Three-cornered Garlic; DG; Derry Hill; roadside, 50+ spikes; Holt; clump on stream side.

Alnus incana; Grey Alder; RAi; South Marston; Nightingale Wood; widespread.

Amaranthus hybridus; Green Amaranth; TC; Melksham; town centre streets; side of A350; recent 1st county record.

Amaranthus retroflexus; Common Amaranth; DG; Studley and Ratford; derelict arable, 100+ plants.

Anemone x hybrida; Japanese Anemone; WBS; Ashton Keynes; Kent End; on quarry spoil; 1st county record.

Angelica archangelica; Garden Angelica; DG; Sherston; road verge, 2 plants.

Anisantha diandra; Great Brome; DG; Upper Seagry; Scotland Hill; cornfield weed, 20 plants.

Aquilegia vulgaris; Columbine; SPi; Cricklade; North Meadow NNR; self-sown on to a verge; NJS; Studley; Searchers Wood; probably garden escape.

Asplenium trichomanes subsp. quadrivalens; Maidenhair Spleenwort; SPi; Cricklade; drystone wall.

Avena sativa; Oat; DG; Marshfield; arable land, 20+ plants; TC; Chittoe; Dickinson's Scrape, Spye Estate.

Avena strigosa; Bristle Oat; DG/HCr; Bromham; 50-60 plants over 100m of arable track.

Berula erecta; Lesser Water-parsnip; RAi; Bishopstone; wooded stream.

Bolboschoenus maritimus; Sea Club-rush; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Ballard's Ash; Flaxland's Fishery, planted but spreading.

Brachypodium rupestre; Tor-grass; DG; West Yatton.

Callitriche obtusangula; Blunt-fruited Water-starwort; RAi; Minety; Ravensroost Wood; pond.

Campanula persicifolia; Peach-leaved Bellflower; DG; Derry Hill; roadside, 1 plant.

Campanula poscharskyana; Trailing Bellflower; RAi; Swindon; Croft Road; walls, 2 locations.

Cardamine bulbifera; Coralroot; DG; Sherston; 500+ in secondary woodland near relic of old building.

Carex acuta; Slender Tufted-sedge; DG; Bradford-on-Avon; riverside meadow.

Carex divulsa subsp. leersii; Many-leaved Sedge; WBS; Ashton Keynes; Kent End and Cleveland Farm.

Carex paniculata; Greater Tussock-sedge; MBu; Dauntsey; Waite Hill Farm.

Centaurea cyanus; Cornflower; DG; Sherston; 30 in newly disturbed improved pasture.

Centaurea montana; Perennial Cornflower; SPi; Cricklade; North Meadow NNR; 1 naturalised on road verge.

Cerastium tomentosum; Snow-in-summer; MBu; Devizes; cracks in top of garden wall; Wootton Bassett; grass verge and kerb edge.

Chara vulgaris; Common Stonewort; RAi; Blunsdon; Stanton Country Park; small pond;

Cochlearia danica; Danish Scurvygrass; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Vastern; road and verge.

Convallaria majalis; Lily-of-the-valley; NJS; Calne; Abberd Brook; garden escape probably.

Conyza sumatrensis; Guernsey Fleabane; RAi; Swindon; Gorse Hill; A4311 roundabout, abundant; 1st vice-county record.

Cotoneaster horizontalis; Wall Cotoneaster; MBu; Wootton Bassett; coral rag stone wall.

Cotula coronopifolia; Buttonweed; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Ballard's Ash; Flaxland's Fishery, drying pond; 1st county record.

Crassula helmsii; New Zealand Pigmyweed; DG; Kington Langley; village pond.

Crepis biennis; Rough Hawk's-beard; TC; Chittoe; Spye Estate; ruined farmhouse.

Dactylorhiza x kerneriorum; D. fuchsii x incarnata; GGo; Clattinger Farm; among *D. incarnata*; 1st county record.

Dryopteris affinis; Scaly Male-fern; RAi; Preston; Membury Fort; woodland on ramparts; NJS; Rowde; King's Play Hill; DG; Upper Seagry; Scotland Hill.

Elodea nuttallii; Nuttall's Waterweed; RAi; Minety; Ravensroost Wood; ponds, abundant in some.

Erigeron karvinskianus; Mexican Fleabane; TC; Lacock; village streets; Melksham; streets; MBu; Wootton Bassett; footpath edge; DG; Sherston; wall.

Erodium cicutarium; Common Stork's-bill; DG; Sherston; various habitats.

Euphorbia lathyris; Caper Spurge; WBS; Ashton Keynes; Cleveland Farm.

Euphorbia oblongata; Balkan Spurge; DG; Woolley Green; 35+ clumps by roadside.

Euphorbia stricta; Upright Spurge; WBS; Ashton Keynes; Kent End; several on former quarry spoil, presumably naturalized.

Fallopia baldschuanica; Russian-vine; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Dunnington Farm; roadside embankment.

Filago vulgaris; Common Cudweed; JBr/PD; Oare; ryegrass ley.

Foeniculum vulgare; Fennel; TC; Melksham; St Michael's churchyard.

Galega officinalis; Goat's-rue; U3K; Ramsbury; bridleway by river.

Galeopsis bifida; Bifid Hemp-nettle; MBu; Minety; Bicks Farm; pheasant feeding crop.

Galium palustre subsp. palustre; Common Marsh-bedstraw; GHC; Swindon: Rivermead.

Geranium pusillum; Small-flowered Crane's-bill; RA/RDu/PLe; Marlborough; edge of barley field.

Geranium rotundifolium; Round-leaved Crane's-bill; RAi; Swindon; Gorse Hill; A4311 roundabout.

Geranium versicolor; Pencilled Crane's-bill; RAi; Swindon; Coate Water; roadside verge; WBS; Ashton Keynes; Kent End.

Glyceria notata; Plicate Sweet-grass; RAi; Bishopstone; wooded stream.

Glyceria x pedicellata; *G. fluitans x notata*; DG; Giddeahall.

Helleborus foetidus; Stinking Hellebore; RAi; Penhill; open land; woodland edge.

Hesperis matronalis; Dame's-violet; DG; Kington Langley; mixed habitats.

Hieracium spilophaeum; WBS; Gastard; Boyd's Farm Quarry; 1st county record.

Hieracium vagum; Glabrous-headed Hawkweed; TC/DG; Melksham; station; lane side and about 150 plants around tarmac track.

Hirschfeldia incana; Hoary Mustard; DG; Kingsdown; golf course; 1 large plant, side of road.

Hyacinthoides hispanica; Spanish Bluebell; DG; Studley and Ratford; Sherston; various habitats.

Hyacinthoides x massartiana; Hybrid Bluebell (*H. non-scripta x hispanica*); RAi; Braydon; verge; 1 clump; SPi; Cricklade; North Meadow NNR.

Hypericum androsaemum; Tutsan; RAi; Bishopstone; beside shaded track; DG; West Yatton; 1.

Hypericum calycinum; Rose-of-Sharon; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Dunnington Farm; dumped garden waste, about 3sq.m.

Juglans regia; Walnut; DG; Biddestone.

Juncus effusus var. subglomeratus; RAi; Minety; Emmett Hill Meadows; ungrazed meadow; Castle Combe; Brook Meadow; Forestry Commission nature reserve, 2 locations.

Juncus subnodulosus; Blunt-flowered Rush; TC; Chittoe; Spye Estate; 2 locations, one a small marsh.

Kickxia elatine; Sharp-leaved Fluellen; MBu; Minety; Bicks Farm; pheasant feeding crop.

Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum; Garden Yellow-archangel; RAi; Preston; Membury Fort; ramparts covered in old woodland, small patch; Swindon; The Lawns; wet woodland; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Lower Greenhill; garden escape; about 50sq.m.

Lamium maculatum; Spotted Dead-nettle; DG; Sherston; garden throw-out, 1m square.

Lemna gibba; Fat Duckweed; JBE/SPi/LWa; Marlborough; Savernake, The Column; pond; SPi; Castle Combe; By Brook; flat form, plentiful in stream; RAi; Preston; Membury Fort; pond; JBE/SPi; Bradford-on-Avon; River Avon; plentiful around bridge footings; flat thalli.

Lepidium draba; Hoary cress; RAi; Swindon; Barnfield; beside cycle track, several metres strip.

Leucanthemum x superbum; Shasta Daisy; RAi; Blunsdon; Stanton Country Park; unmown grassland.

Leucojum aestivum; Summer Snowflake; NJS; Calne; Penn Wood reserve.

Leycesteria formosa; Himalayan Honeysuckle; MBu; Wootton Bassett; cracks at base of wall.

Lithospermum officinale; Common Gromwell; RAi; Bishopstone; Russley Downs; frequent in oat field edge; WBS; Brinkworth; Somerford Common; roadside woodland.

Lotus tenuis; Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil; DG; Bradford-on-Avon; Great Cumberwell; large numbers on landfill; Little Chalfield; damp grassland; RAi; Blunsdon; Stanton Country Park; unmown grassland.

Lysimachia punctata; Dotted Loosestrife; DG; Upper Seagry; Scotland Hill; woodland ride, 1 clump; NJS; Studley; Searchers Wood.

Malcolmia maritima; Virginia Stock; TC; Chittoe; Dickinson's Scrape, Spye Estate; 1st county record.

Malus pumila; Apple; RAi; Bishopstone; ridgeway and roadside; South Marston; Nightingale Wood; Bishopstone; ridgeway and track; U3K; Hungerford.

Medicago sativa subsp. sativa; Lucerne; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Woodshaw; roadside verge; from imported soil.

Melilotus albus; White Melilot; MBu; Devizes; Hopton Industrial Estate; 1 in crack in concrete of A361 central reservation; SPi; Bishops Cannings; A361; 1 in road.

Mentha x villosa var. alopecuroides; Apple-mint; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Coped Hall, several sq.m.; 1st county record.

Menyanthes trifoliata; Bogbean; DG; Kington Langley; planted, perpetuating itself in village pond.

Mimulus guttatus; Monkeyflower; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Ballard's Ash; in ditch fronting Flaxland's Fishery.

Montia fontana; Blinks; DG; Sutton Benger; acidic rush grassland; one small patch.

Muscari armeniacum; Garden Grape-hyacinth; MBu; Wootton Bassett; footpath, garden throw-out.

Myriophyllum aquaticum; Parrot's-feather; DG; Sutton Benger; recently created pond, well established.

Nectaroscordum siculum; Honey Garlic; MDP; Sutton Benger; M4; large colony; 1st county record.

Nigella damascena; Love-in-a-mist; MBu; Wootton Bassett; cracks in the pavement and garden wall.

Nitella flexilis; Smooth Stonewort; RAi; Ravensroost Wood; small pond beside 15m long track.

Oenanthe aquatica; Fine-leaved Water-dropwort; JBE/SPi; Malmesbury; 1-2 in middle of river.

Oenothera glazioviana; Large-flowered Evening-primrose; MBu; Wootton Bassett; cracks and kerb edges.

Oxalis exilis; Least Yellow-sorrel; DG; Biddestone; paving cracks and turf.

Oxalis stricta; Upright Yellow-sorrel; TC; Melksham; town centre streets; 2 places.

Pentaglottis sempervirens; Green Alkanet; DG; Studley and Ratford; Kington Langley; mixed habitats; MBu; Wootton Bassett.

Petasites fragrans; Winter Heliotrope; RAi; West Swindon; old railway track; DG; Marshfield; WBS; Ashton Keynes; Cleveland Farm.

Pilosella aurantiaca; Fox-and-cubs; MBu; Wootton Bassett; cracks in edge of footpath and wall base; several locations; DG; Biddestone.

Polypodium interjectum; Intermediate Polypody; SPi; Cricklade; North Meadow NNR; 1 on a drystone wall; DG; West Yatton; RAi; Blunsdon; Stanton Country Park.

Polypogon viridis; Water Bent; Ashton Keynes; Kent End and Cleveland Farm.

Polystichum aculeatum; Hard Shield-fern; MBu; Oaksey; Oaksey Moor Farm Meadow.

Polystichum setiferum; Soft Shield-fern; RAi; Preston; Membury Fort; ramparts covered in old woodland; abundant.

Polystichum x bicknellii; P. aculeatum x setiferum; DG; Upper Pickwick; The Larches; 1 by woodland footpath; 1st vice-county record.

Pontederia cordata; Pickerelweed; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Ballard's Ash; Flaxland's Fishery, planted but spreading; 1st vice-county record.

Populus alba; White Poplar; DG; Studley, Ratford and Kington Langley; mixed habitats.

Populus nigra sens. lat.; Poplar; DG; Sherston; mixed habitats.

Potamogeton crispus; Curled Pondweed; DG; Sherston; mixed habitats.

Potentilla x mixta; P. anglica x reptans; RAi; Swindon; Barnfield; cycle tracks; 4 and 5 petals.

Raphanus raphanistrum; Wild Radish; RAi; Membury; edge of Rape field, several plants, white-flowered; DG; West Yatton.

Rosa obtusifolia x canina; Rosa x dumetorum; DMO; Ashton Keynes; Kent End; 1 large bush on sandy/gravelly bank of track by flooded gravel pit; 1st recent county record.

Rosa rubiginosa; Sweet-briar; DG; Winsley; 1 bush in planted hedge; RR; Bradenstoke; 2 bushes in hedge between village and abbey.

Rosa rubiginosa x canina; Rosa x nitidula (f x m); TC/DG; Heddington; Oliver's Castle; single bush at base of escarpment; 1st county record.

Rosa stylosa; Short-styled Field-rose; DG; Winsley; frequent in hedgerows.

Rosa tomentosa x canina; Rosa x scabriuscula (f x m); RR; Studley; Stanley Lane; single bush; 1st county record.

Rubus laciniatus; DG; Bradford-on-Avon; Woolley Green; roadside.

Sagina filicaulis; Upright Pearlwort; RAi; Swindon; Hawksworth; roadside grass and unused ground; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Dunnington Farm; Wootton Bassett; Woodshaw and elsewhere; AA/JBr/MBu/PD; Marlborough; Forest Hill; SPi/WBS; Chapel Knapp; Boyds Farm Quarry; TC; Melksham; town centre streets; WBS; Chapel Knapp; Boyd's Farm Quarry.

Salix x fragilis; Hybrid crack-willow (S. euxina x alba); U3K; Hungerford; DG; Sherston; mixed habitats.

Sambucus ebulus; Dwarf Elder; TC; Chittoe; Upper Selves Wood, Spye Estate; edge of wood.

Saxifraga granulata; Meadow Saxifrage; NJS; Ashton Keynes; Clattinger Farm.

Securigera varia; Crown Vetch; WBS; Ashton Keynes; Kent End; many on bank of flooded gravel pit.

Senecio viscosus; Sticky Groundsel; JBE/SPi; Melksham; plentiful near railway line; TC; Melksham; town centre streets; car park of motor company.

Soleirolia soleirolii; **Mind-your-own-business**; MBu; Wootton Bassett; Dunnington Farm; wall and pavement edge; DG; Kington Langley; base of building, church; SPi; Cricklade; North Meadow NNR.

Solidago gigantea; **Early Goldenrod**; WBS; Ashton Keynes; Cleveland Farm; RAi; Brinkworth; The Firs WWT reserve; dense patch by field entrance.

Solidago gigantea; **Early Goldenrod**; RAi; Castle Combe; Brook Meadow; solid stand by stream. Forestry Commission nature reserve.

Symphytum orientale; **White Comfrey**; DG; Sherston; 1 on road verge near garden.

Symphytum x uplandicum; **Russian Comfrey (S. asperum x officinale)**; U3K; Hungerford.

Tellima grandiflora; **Fringecups**; DG; Holt; 1 clump on stream side; 1st vice-county record.

Thuja plicata; **Western Red-cedar**; WBS; Brinkworth; Milbourne Common Wood; RAi; South Marston; Nightingale Wood.

Thymus pulegioides; **Large Thyme**; DG; Sherston; 1 clump on downland.

Torilis nodosa; **Knotted Hedge-parsley**; SPi; Cricklade; 15+ in wall-pavement angles.

Trachystemon orientalis; **Abraham-Isaac-Jacob**; DG; Kington Langley; single clump regenerating in dense hedgerow strip.

Ulmus minor; **Small-leaved Elm (sensu Stace)**; DG; Studley and Ratford; several small trees on A4 embankment.

Urtica dioica subsp. galeopsifolia; **Stingless Nettle**; DG; Bradford-on-Avon; Widbrook; single clump approaching 2m. high on canal towpath.

Valerianella carinata; **Keeled-fruited Cornsalad**; JBE/SPi; Chippenham; A350; several on verge.

Valerianella locusta; **Common Cornsalad**; MBu; Devizes.

Veronica catenata; **Pink Water-speedwell**; RAi; South Marston; Nightingale Wood; pond.

Veronica x lackschewitzii; **V. anagallis-aquatica x catenata**; JBE/SPi; Malmesbury; weir.

Vicia parviflora; **Slender Tare**; TC/DG; Melksham; Bowerhill Industrial Estate; disused rail-track.

Vicia sativa subsp. segetalis; **Common Vetch**; DG; Kington Langley; mixed habitats.

Vicia tetrasperma; **Smooth Tare**; RAi; South Marston; Nightingale Wood.

Vinca major; **Greater Periwinkle**; DG; Sherston; mixed habitats.

VC 8

Achillea ptarmica; **Sneezewort**; AA/SFi; Coombe; at junction of footpath and military road.

Alchemilla mollis; **Garden Lady's-mantle**; SPi; Warminster; Portway Industrial Estate; brownfield site; AA/SFi; Coombe.

Anchusa arvensis; **Bugloss**; JBr; Manningford Bruce; mixed habitats.

Anchusa officinalis; **Alkanet**; MHo; Larkhill; artillery range; 2 on grass track.

Anthyllis vulneraria subsp. carpatica; **Kidney Vetch**; JRM; Newton Tony; centre; chalk bank in football field; 1st vice-county record.

Antirrhinum majus; **Snapdragon**; AA/SFi; Netheravon; Enford; garden escape by roadside.

Aquilegia vulgaris; **Columbine**; PMW; Charlton-All-Saints; Franchises Common; with Crocosmia and probably dumped; AA/SF/PMW; Landford; recreation park + woodland; garden escapes; JBr; Manningford Bruce; garden escape.

Arum italicum; **Italian Lords-and-Ladies**; SFi/WBS; Dinton; in car park, naturalised by roadside hedge.

Asparagus officinalis agg.; **Asparagus**; TC; Seend; village streets; garden escape.

Aster x salignus; **Michaelmas Daisy (A. lanceolatus x novi-belgii)**; PMW; Plaitford; A36.

Aubrieta deltoidea; **Aubretia**; SPi; Trowbridge; 1 in pavement crack; MBu; Devizes; self-sown in garden wall.

Avena sativa; **Oat**; JBr; Pewsey; Pewsey Down; various habitats.

Barbarea verna; **American Winter-cress**; SPi; Trowbridge; planted area near river.

Bergenia crassifolia; **Elephant-ears**; JRM; Cholderton; centre; garden escape; 1st county record.

Berula erecta; **Lesser Water-parsnip**; PMW; West Wellow; Canada Common.

Bromus secalinus; **Rye Brome**; AA/MBu/TC; Manningford Bruce; bean crop edge.

Calendula officinalis; **Pot Marigold**; SPi; Warminster; Cold Harbour; self-sown on road verge.

Campanula latifolia; **Giant Bellflower**; TC; Seend Hill; A361; hedgerow well away from habitation.

Campanula poscharskyana; **Trailing Bellflower**; JRM; Cholderton; centre; garden escape; AA/SFi/PMW; Milston; SPi; Trowbridge.

Carex acuta; **Slender Tufted-sedge**; SPi; Warminster; Smallbrook Meadows WWT Reserve; in swamp vegetation.

Carex disticha; **Brown Sedge**; SPi; Westbury; dense patch fringing a pool; HE/JRM; Cholderton; Scotland Wood; 2 clumps in rough grassland.

Carex divulsa subsp. divulsa; **Grey Sedge**; AA/SFi/PMW; Figheldean.

Carex paniculata; **Greater Tussock-sedge**; JRM; Cholderton; Scotland Wood.

- Centranthus ruber; Red Valerian;** AA/SFi; Fittleton; AA/SFi/PMW; Figheldean; PLe/IL/SPi; Manningford Bruce.
- Ceratophyllum demersum; Rigid Hornwort;** SPi; Westbury; choking several pools.
- Chamaecyparis lawsoniana; Lawson's Cypress;** AA/SFi/PMW; Landford; Landford Bog (WWT Reserve); 1 young plant.
- Chara vulgaris; Common Stonewort;** SPi; Tidworth; Salisbury Plain SSSI: CCDA.
- Chenopodium bonus-henricus; Good-King-Henry;** AA/SFi; Coombe; side of track.
- Clinopodium ascendens; Common Calamint;** AA/SFi; Fittleton; bank by roadside; RDu /DP; Maiden Bradley; Long Knoll; various habitats; RR; Little Durnford; 6 by roadside; AA/SFi/PMW; Netheravon; path and roadsides.
- Cochlearia anglica; English Scurvygrass;** SPi; Warminster; A36 by-pass; 1 among carpets of *C. danica* at the edge of the road; 1st county record.
- Cochlearia danica; Danish Scurvygrass;** PLe; Warminster; traffic island, about 6 plants.
- Consolida ajacis; Larkspur;** PSk; Erlestoke; SPTA: Coulston Hill; 1.
- Conyza sumatrensis; Guernsey Fleabane;** PMA; Brook.
- Cornus sericea; Red-osier Dogwood;** JRM; Newton Tony; centre.
- Crassula helmsii; New Zealand Pigmyweed;** PLe/IL/SPi; Manningford Bruce; River Avon; pool.
- Crococsmia x Crocosmiiflora; Montbretia (C. aurea x pottsii);** AA/SFi/PMW; Figheldean; escape; PLe/IL/SPi; Manningford Bruce.
- Cyclamen hederifolium; Sowbread;** AA/SFi; Enford; self-sown in churchyard gutter.
- Dryopteris affinis; Scaly Male-fern;** PLe/LWa; West Ashton; Biss Wood; PLe/IL/SPi; Manningford Bruce.
- Epilobium roseum; Pale Willowherb;** SPi; Warminster; Portway; several in wall/pavement angles.
- Erigeron karvinskianus; Mexican Fleabane;** PMW; Plaitford; A36.
- Eschscholzia californica; Californian Poppy;** JRM; Cholderton; centre; seeded copiously into gravel.
- Fagopyrum esculentum; Buckwheat;** JRM; Newton Tony; centre; from bird seed mix.
- Fallopia baldschuanica; Russian-vine;** JRM; Newton Tony; centre; verge.
- Fragaria ananassa; Garden Strawberry;** JRM; Tidworth; Perham Ranges; old tank crossing.
- Frangula alnus; Alder Buckthorn;** DP; East Knoyle; pheasantry; 4 bushes.
- Galeopsis bifida; Bifid Hemp-nettle;** PMW; Whiteparish; Sandlands Copse.
- Galinsoga parviflora; Gallant Soldier;** JRM; Newton Tony; centre; pub car park.
- Galium palustre subsp. elongatum; Great Marsh-bedstraw;** AA/SFi/PMW; Milston.
- Geranium pusillum; Small-flowered Crane's-bill;** TC; Semington; village streets.
- Geranium x oxonianum; Druce's Crane's-bill;** AA/SFi/PMW; Netheravon; Durrington.
- Glyceria notata; Plicate Sweet-grass;** SPi; Tidworth; Salisbury Plain SSSI: CCDA.
- Hedera hibernica; Atlantic Ivy;** PLe/IL/SPi; Manningford Bruce; covering woodland floor, well naturalised; 1st vice-county record.
- Helleborus foetidus; Stinking Hellebore;** TC; Market Lavington; probably naturalized.
- Hirschfeldia incana; Hoary Mustard;** SPi; Westbury; several on railway embankment and 2 on verge elsewhere; Bradford-on-Avon: small patch on bank above car park.
- Hyacinthoides hispanica; Spanish Bluebell;** JRM; Cholderton; centre.
- Hypericum pulchrum; Slender St John's-wort;** JRM; Tidworth; CCDA North Sidbury Hill; Cholderton; Scotland Wood; scattered in copse.
- Hypericum x desetangii; H. maculatum x perforatum;** AA/SFi/PMW; Landford; recreation park + woodland; a few on edge of field and path.
- Impatiens capensis; Orange Balsam;** MBu; Horton; 2 locations.
- Iris foetidissima; Stinking Iris;** JRM; Cholderton; churchyard and centre.
- Lactuca serriola; Prickly Lettuce;** PMA; Brook.
- Lactuca virosa; Great Lettuce;** SPi; Trowbridge; about 20 large plants on wayside.
- Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum; Garden Yellow-archangel;** AA/SFi; Coombe.
- Lamium amplexicaule; Henbit Dead-nettle;** TC; Semington; village streets.
- Lemna turionifera; Red Duckweed;** SPi; Longleat; ornamental pool.
- Linum bienne; Pale Flax;** RW; Berwick St John; Winkelbury Hill.
- Lunaria annua; Honesty;** AA/SFi/PMW; Milston.
- Lysimachia punctata; Dotted Loosestrife;** PMW; Landford; byway.
- Malva arborea; Tree-mallow;** SPi; Dilton Marsh; Petticoat Lane; 2 self-sown in pavement cracks.
- Meconopsis cambrica; Welsh Poppy;** AA/SFi/PMW; Figheldean; escape.
- Medicago sativa subsp. sativa; Lucerne;** RAi; Tilshead; road verge for approx. 125m.
- Nigella damascena; Love-in-a-mist;** JRM; Cholderton; centre; garden escape.
- Nonea lutea; Yellow Nonea;** PLe; Stourhead; about 10 at base of garden brick wall; 1st county record.

Omphalodes verna; Blue-eyed-Mary; TC; Seend; village streets.

Ophrys apifera; Bee Orchid; HE/JRM; Cholderton; Scotland Wood; 20 in 3 places in rank grassland.

Orobanche alba; Thyme Broomrape; HE/JRM; Cholderton; Hills Copse; thyme-rich slope; 1st county record.

Papaver somniferum; Opium Poppy; PMW; Charlton-All-Saints; Franchises Common.

Petasites fragrans; Winter Heliotrope; AA/MBu; Manningford Bruce.

Phacelia tanacetifolia; Phacelia; JRM; Newton Tony; centre.

Pilosella aurantiaca; Fox-and-cubs; AA/SFi/PMW; Landford and Netheravon; recreation park + woodland; TC; Semington; village streets.

Pinus nigra; Austrian Pine/Corsican Pine; AA/SFi/PMW; Netheravon.

Plantago coronopus; Buck's-horn Plantain; SFi/WBS; Dinton; roadside verge.

Platanthera chlorantha; Greater Butterfly-orchid; NPu; Coombe Bissett.

Poa angustifolia; Narrow-leaved Meadow-grass; SPi; Westbury; Newtown; road verge.

Polygala serpyllifolia; Heath Milkwort; PLe; Windmill Hill.

Potamogeton pusillus; Lesser Pondweed; JRM; Larkhill; SPTA(E) Silk Hill Plantation.

Poterium sanguisorba subsp. balearicum; Fodder Burnet; JRM; Newton Tony; bank in football field.

Prunus lusitanica; Portugal Laurel; JRM; Cholderton; centre; garden escape.

Pseudosasa japonica; Arrow Bamboo; JBE/SPi; Longbridge Deverill; extensive thicket spreading vigorously on waste ground.

Pteris cretica; Ribbon Fern; PLe; Stourhead; 1 on garden stone wall; 1st vice-county record.

Pulmonaria officinalis; Lungwort; JRM; Cholderton; centre.

Pyracantha coccinea; Firethorn; AA; Salisbury; Lime Kiln meadow.

Rorippa palustris; Marsh Yellow-cress; JRM; Cholderton; centre; stream bed.

Rosa rubiginosa; Sweet-briar; RR; Great Cheverell; numerous along edge of arable field; AA/SFi/PMW; Landford; recreation park + woodland; 1 in hedgerow.

Rosa stylosa; Short-styled Field-rose; AA/SFi/PMW; Landford; Landford Bog (WWT Reserve); some possibly hybrids with *R. canina*; RR; Little Durnford; 1 bush.

Sagina apetala; Annual Pearlwort; TC; Semington; village streets.

Sagina filicaulis; Upright Pearlwort; SPi; Warminster; Portway Industrial Estate; SPi; Heywood; Dilton

Marsh; Tower Hill; Warminster; Salisbury Plain Danger Area; RAi/JBr/PD/JWs; Upavon.

Salix cinerea subsp. cinerea; Grey Willow; AA/SFi/PMW; Landford; recreation park + woodland; Netheravon.

Salix x reichardtii; S. caprea x cinerea; JRM; Tidworth; Perham Range; 2 locations.

Saxifraga hypnoides; Mossy Saxifrage; JRM; Cholderton; centre; garden escape.

Sedum anglicum; English Stonecrop; JRM; Cholderton; centre; foot of wall.

Sedum spurium; Caucasian-stonecrop; DG; Limphey Stoke; old rail siding, 1m. sq.

Senecio viscosus; Sticky Groundsel; JRM; Thruxton; Down Barn/Parkhouse West; A303 verge.

Smyrniolum olusatrum; Alexanders; DG; Devizes; Kennet and Avon Canal.

Soleirolia soleirolii; Mind-your-own-business; PLe/IL/SPi; Manningford Bruce.

Solidago canadensis; Canadian Goldenrod; AA/SFi; Coombe.

Symphytum orientale; White Comfrey; JRM; Tidworth; Perham Ranges; old tank crossing; roadside.

Trifolium fragiferum; Strawberry Clover; JRM; Tidworth; CCDA South; 1 on track.

Triticum aestivum; Bread Wheat; PMA; Wittensford; roadside; JBr; Pewsey; Pewsey Down; various habitats.

Valerianella rimosa; Broad-fruited Cornsalad; CSh/ECo; Cholderton; Home Farm; 70 or so in two places.

Verbascum densiflorum; Dense-flowered Mullein; DG; Downton; 4-5 on new industrial estate.

Veronica peregrina; American Speedwell; PLe; Stourhead; about 10 in garden; 1st vice-county record.

Veronica x lackschewitzii; V. anagallis-aquatica x catenata; RAi/JBr/PD/JWs; Upavon; river bank, 2 locations.

Vinca major; Greater Periwinkle; AA/SFi; Coombe; RAi/JBr/PD/JWs; Upavon.

Vulpia bromoides; Squirreltail Fescue; RDu/DP; Maiden Bradley; Long Knoll; various habitats.

John Presland

Aliens in Wiltshire...have you seen them?

Cast your mind back 10 years or so. You may not recall what you were doing in the middle of the 'noughties' but being botanically inclined you probably have a fair idea of what the various plant communities in your area were like. I can think back to 2004, the year after I settled in Wiltshire and also the year that I started recording plants seriously. Most days, I would cycle from my house in Trowbridge to catch a train from the station into Bath, where I worked at the time. This journey would take me through modern estates and Victorian terraces and if the train was delayed I would have plenty of time to look at the various ruderals growing in the station car park and between paving slabs on the platform.

One of the first neophytes (botanical jargon for many so-called alien plants) that I noticed in Trowbridge was Water Bent *Polypogon viridis*.



Water Bent - Sharon

The name of this rather attractive if understated grass is a bit of a misnomer, as it is not aquatic, merely preferring places that are damp some of the time. It quickly made itself at home in the garden centre behind my house and is still there, seeding around very happily in the ground

between the plant displays. Here in Westbury it grows in neglected corners in the town centre and wall-pavement angles on several roads elsewhere. Its appearance and habit suggests Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, from which it is most readily distinguished by the tiny prickles all over the glumes (these are confined to the middle of the glumes in Creeping Bent). Watch out for it in urban places – it is almost certainly overlooked.

Annual Beard-grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* is also worth looking out for, especially in disturbed, gravelly ground in the Cotswold Water Park district and on the fringes of the New Forest. A highly attractive species, it is actually a scarce native, but only in coastal habitat from Dorset to Norfolk. It is thought to have spread inland as a bird-seed alien and it is becoming an increasingly common sight in disused quarries and waste ground and near gardens.

One species that I remember being quite uncommon when I first came to live in Wiltshire is Mexican Fleabane *Erigeron karvinskianus*. This native of Mexico grows in dry places, such as in wall cracks and forms masses of small pretty purple daisy-like flowers



Annual Beard-grass - Sharon



have elongated fruits appressed to the stem and only Hoary Mustard has a fruit with a swollen-looking terminal beak (like an old-fashioned clothes' peg). Until very recently, it was rare here in Wiltshire but it is now becoming increasingly common, especially in disturbed ground in urban areas and near railway lines. It could be spreading with soil imported for construction projects.

Perhaps surprisingly, a rush is also becoming another familiar alien, albeit in a highly restricted ecological niche. You may have walked along damp woodland tracks where Slender Rush *Juncus tenuis* has become established. It is a small erect plant, usually 20-30cms tall, with clusters of greenish flowers at the tops of its stems. It always has one or more leaf-like bracts just below the flower cluster, at least one of which will far exceed the inflorescence. It likes regularly trampled woodland paths, especially in places over at least moderately acid soils where it can form large swarms of plants. Here in Wiltshire it is most common in the greensand woods of Longleat and Stourhead, in Savernake Forest and in the New Forest although it's clearly spreading into suitable habitat elsewhere.

There are many others. Perhaps one to look for is Stinking Tutsan *Hypericum hircinum*, a plant that I first became acquainted with during the Society's summer meeting in North Wales this year. Driving along the A55 coast road near our base at Penmaenmawr it was impossible not

to notice this beautiful shrub on the verges. It is unkindly described in Stace's flora as having a 'strong unpleasant smell' when its leaves are bruised. Personally, I find the plant pleasantly aromatic but perhaps I am in a minority. Since returning home I have found Stinking Tutsan self-sown in Westbury and *en masse* in the river wall in central Bradford-on-Avon, where John Presland first noticed it in 2002. Surely it grows elsewhere? It resembles a large-flowered and pale Tutsan *H. androsaemum* but its strong scent makes it immediately recognisable.

No doubt rapid changes to our climate, land management practices and increasing urbanisation will introduce even more neophytes to our native flora in years to come. Most aliens happily appear to be quite well-behaved, integrating with our native species and lacking the thuggish tendencies of the likes of Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and Indian Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*. I find it fascinating how much things have changed even in the short period of time that I have lived in Wiltshire. If you do see any of these species (or others) in your local area, please do let me (or Richard) know – we're as keen to have records of aliens as well as our natives.

Sharon Pilkington

in summer and autumn. It likes a mild, equable climate and has been in SW England for some time; its spread across Wiltshire has been rapid and it is now common in many towns and villages. Look out for it near you.

Anyone who regularly visits London or urbanised south Wales will probably be familiar with Hoary Mustard *Hirschfeldia incana*. A tall, sprawling crucifer with yellow flowers and distinctive, appressed fruits, this species is a native of southern Europe but has become very common in these areas. Before you dismiss it as yet another tricky crucifer, bear in mind that only three of our larger yellow-flowered species

Subscriptions

Subscriptions become due in January; please get your payment to Sue Fitzpatrick. The rates are:

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We hope that you will renew and take part in the society's activities.

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