

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT WILDLIFE TRUST

FLORA GROUP NEWSLETTER - WINTER 1992

1992 HOLLY CUTTING TASK

On January 12th 1992 the Flora Group carried out the first voluntary conservation task to conserve lichens ever carried out on the New Forest. In the past it was considered that the most serious threats to the New Forest's internationally important epiphytic lichen flora, were air pollution and the conversion of pasture woodlands to plantations. The latter is no longer a threat, but the former is certainly depressing the growth and reproduction of the more sensitive species; however, 30 years of observations by Dr. Francis Rose have shown that there is a further more insidious threat. This is the dense shade cast by Holly within the old woodlands. Holly has been a part of the Forest for a very long time but never in such abundance. The decline in its use as winter fodder, combined with periods of low grazing intensity after 1851 and 1935, produced the current thick understorey of the majority of the pasture woodlands. When fully developed, the shade prevents the growth of all but a few common lichen species on both the trees and the holly. This is clearly exacerbating the plight of the most sensitive species by drastically reducing the number of trees available for colonising. The answer to this problem is to revive the coppicing and pollarding of Holly for winter fodder and this has been carried out on an increasing scale by the F.C. since the late 1980s.

The aim of the Flora Group's task at Little Stubby Hat was to tackle areas of Holly directly threatening existing rare lichen species. Two patches were cut, an area about 30m wide and a small patch around an individual Beech. Both had Beeches supporting the tree Lungwort Lobaria pulmonaria. In the former healthy Lobaria occurred about 4m high just above the Holly canopy, but had formerly grown lower down. The second site had Lobaria near the base of the tree which was being heavily eaten back by slugs, a typical sign of recession in shaded Lobaria.

During the task many Hollies were coppiced and seventeen pollarded with several large diameter Hollies pollarded later in April by the F.C. The cut material was trimmed and converted to short lengths. The logs were piled to the side and the leafy branches spread out for the ponies as fodder. The following observations on the cut material and the pollards were made:-

Date	Days after Cutting	Observations
19.1.92	7	About 15% of the leaves eaten; no bark eaten.
26.1.92	14	About 30% of the leaves eaten.
01.2.92	21	About 60% of the leaves eaten, extensive bark stripping of cut branches.
08.2.92	28	About 70% of the leaves eaten, weather warmer with grass growing and clearly much less activity.
16.2.92	35	No activity.
APRIL		F.C. cut more pollards
20.6.92		F.C. cut material not eaten, buds bursting on some pollards.
06.9.92		Nearly all the Hollies supported green growth.

By September two or three Hollies still had failed to burst, but experience shows that most of these will burst next year. The pattern of browsing by the ponies indicates that they are only strongly interested in holly browse when it is too cold for any grass growth and cutting too late in Spring may not be of much benefit to the ponies.

Several of the small diameter holly which dominated the area were ring counted indicating that the bulk holly invaded between 60 - 80 years ago.

So far the Lobaria in the smaller cut area is now successfully regenerating and supports many small new lobes. In the large clearing however, the aim is the regeneration of new plants below the surviving ones and if successful this will take several years to be apparent.

A further task is planned this year, and Flora Group members are welcome to join in.

N.A.Sanderson

Fen Day 27 June 1992

The group met on a gloriously sunny day at the Ted Wallace memorial reserve at Greywell moors. Francis Rose led the party of members and friends around the reserve where great attention was paid to the habitat zonation and critical groups such as Carex hybrids as well as enjoying the fine stands of Mezereon Daphne mezereon Marsh Helleborine Epipactis palustris and very large specimens of Marsh Lousewort Pedicularis palustris. At the invitation of the water company we then enjoyed superb shows of Dactylorhiza Marsh Orchids, more Marsh Helleborines including the pallid form E. palustris ssp ochleuroides and dune-like vegetation supporting oddities such as the Dwarf Willow Salix repens.

After lunch we called into Basing Fen with the kind permission of the Hackwood Park estate. Until recent years the fen has been grazed. The site has a fine reputation for species such as Cotton Grass, Water Avens, Quaking Grass and other open fen plants. Regrettably grazing had ceased and in scenes reminiscent of 'The African Queen' a few hardy souls sought out a few fen plants in the tall rank fen. These included some worth-while species including Bottle Sedge Carex rostrata and Marsh Orchids.

The day rounded off with a visit to the Mapledurwell reserve where all the expected species were found. What was to follow however proved a great surprise. Due to the number of cars Neil Sanderson was forced to park a little further away from the reserve gate than usual. Just next to his car, through a convenient hedge, lay a small, previously unsurveyed, field brimming with Marsh helleborines (both the usual and pallid form) and Pugsley's Marsh Orchid.

This is an important new site in the Mapledurwell area and raises the question as to how many more fen relicts

may persist in this complex of habitats.

Clive Chatters

Field Trip - Harewood Forest - Arable Weeds

On Sunday 16th August 1992 fourteen Flora Group members (and one guest) met near Harewood Forest with the aim of searching for rare arable "weeds" near Upping Copse. The two species which we particularly hoped to find were Cut-leaved Germander Teucrium botrys and Ground Pine Ajuga chamaepitys. John Moon had kindly obtained permission from the Wherwell Estate for us to visit this remarkable woodland and the edge of the adjacent arable fields.

We found masses of Cut-leaved Germander, much of it in flower and, thanks to Geoffrey Field's bright eyes and good memory, relocated a few specimens of Ground Pine. Whilst searching for these two species, we came across a number of other interesting arable "weeds" many of which are of much more limited distribution than they were formerly; species found include Dwarf Spurge Euphorbia exigua, Sharp-leaved Fluellen Kickxia elatine, Round-leaved Fluellen Kickxia spuria, Lesser Toadflax Chaenorhinum minus, Field Madder Sherardia arvensis Annual Mercury Mercurialis annua, Henbit Dead-nettle Lamium amplexicaule, Field Pansy Viola arvensis and Corn Mint Mentha arvensis. During the walk we had the opportunity to look at a few areas of relic chalk grassland. Neil Sanderson noticed an interesting lichen growing on a hawthorn near the edge of one of these chalk grassland patches. The lichen is Parmelia acetabulum, an eastern species of nutrient-rich bark which, in Hampshire, is on the edge of its range.

Catherine Chatters

Fern Identification Day

On 5th September 1992 Dave Winsland led an extremely useful day helping people to identify ferns found in the New Forest. He took us to a variety of woodland sites in the Roydon area which enabled us to observe a number of species growing in their typical habitats. Dave brought along a number of specimens of other species which we would not find in the vicinity, for example, Chinese Holly Fern and Water Fern Azolla filiculoides.

By the end of the morning we had managed to have a good look at Male Fern Dryopteris filix-mas, Scaly Male Fern Dryopteris affinis, Lady Fern Athyrium filix-femina, Broad Buckler Fern Dryopteris dilatata, Narrow Buckler Fern Dryopteris carthusiana, Hay-scented Buckler Fern Dryopteris aemula, Soft Shield Fern Polystichum setiferum, Hard Shield Fern Polystichum aculeatum, Bracken Pteridium aquilinum, Royal Fern Osmunda regalis Lemon Scented Fern Oreopteris limosperma and Hard Fern Blechnum spicant.

Catherine Chatters

Rumours and Truths

Every year brings rumours of botanical discoveries. These usually refer to our more exotic species such as Orchids and are usually without firm foundation. This year for instance raised hopes that Ghost Orchid and Summer Ladies Tresses had returned to our counties' native flora. What was discovered this year was a plant of Early Spider Orchid on the Isle of Wight by visiting botanists. A welcome return of the species to the Island after long absence. This is a species well worth searching Hampshire for in 1993. It is clearly expanding its range with growth in the Dorset populations as well as plants turning up in Wiltshire and Suffolk. The orchid was in Hampshire into the 1970s. Where and when it makes its return is a matter for speculation.

Clive Chatters

NEW LATIN NAMES

The welcome publication of Clive Stace's New Flora of the British Isles is unfortunately marred by the usual blight of new names. As the new flora is to be accompanied by a check list, long suffering field botanists are simply going to have to learn to use these as they are going to be regarded as 'standard' for quite a few years to come. To help people along, I have skimmed through the flora and attach a list of the majority of the changes which will affect botanists in the south.

Many of these changes are related to the application of the strict rules governing scientific names and are beyond dispute. A large percentage however, are simply a matter of taxonomic opinion and those who feel they disagree AND can support their opinion with reasoned argument can go on using the old names. Certainly the breaking up of large genera such as Polygonum and Senecio appears to unfortunately be quite the fashion at the moment. One change I was sad not to see was the reduction of the tetraploid Dactylorhiza taxa to sub species of D.majalis. The orchyawns have triumphed over commonsense as far as I am concerned and I will certainly not be following Stace in this case.

N. A. Sanderson

FUTURE EVENTS

Sunday 6 December 1992

Red-tipped Cudweed (*Filago apiculata*)

During January of this year a team of Flora Group members tackled invasive scrub at the Red-tipped Cudweed site on the outskirts of Fleet. The remains of some 8-10 plants which had set seed in the 1991 season were found. The site was monitored after the winter clearance work and about 60 plants were counted during 1992. The plant obviously responds well to the scrub clearance work so we are planning to undertake another session during December 1992.

Meet at 10 am on Sunday 6 December at entrance to Broomhurst Farm (grid reference SU 813563) on the B3013, just north of the M3, from where we will go on to the site. Tools will be provided. It would be helpful if those who intend coming could telephone the Hampshire Wildlife Trust office to let Clive Chatters know so that the correct number of tools can be provided, Romsey (0794) 513786.

Leader: Tony Mundell.

Sunday 17 January 1993

Holly Pollarding task in the New Forest

Leader: Neil Sanderson

Meet at 10 am at Rufus Stone, grid reference SU 271125

Sunday 28 February 1993 (provisional date)

Man Orchid Site at Exton

Arrangements are being made for a scrub clearance task at the roadside Man Orchid site at Exton in the Meon Valley. Please telephone Clive Chatters at Hampshire Wildlife Trust office for details of meeting place, time etc.

If anyone has ideas for other events during 1993, please let us know.

Catherine Chatters,
Flora Group Secretary.
30 Eling Lane
Totton
Southampton
SO4 4GE
Tel.No. 0703 862139

Name Changes in C. Stace's 'New Flora of the British Isles'
(only Southern English species)

Old Name	New Name
Acinos arvensis	Clinopodium acinus
Agropyron canina	Elymus canina
A. junceum	Elytrigia juncea
A. pycnanthus	E. atherica
A. repens	E. repens
Aphanes microcarpa	Aphanes inexpectata
Artemisia maritima	Seriphidium maritima
Atriplex hastata	Atriplex prostrata
Avenula pratensis	Helictotrichon pratensis
A. pubescens	H. pubescens
Bromus erecta	Bromopsis erecta
B. ramosa	B. ramosa
B. sterilis	Anisantha sterilis
Calamintha ascendens	Clinopodium ascendens
C. sylvatica	C. menthifolium
Carex demissa	Carex viridula oedocarpa
C. lepidocarpa	C. viridula brachyrrhyncha
C. serotina	C. viridula viridula
Corydalis claviculata	Ceratocarpus claviculata
Drosera anglica	Drosera longifolia
Dryopteris austriaca	Dryopteris dilatata
D. pseudomas	D. affinis
Elymus arenarius	Leymus arenarius
E. farctus	Elytrigia juncea
E. pycnanthus	E. atherica
E. repens	E. repens
Festuca tenuifolia	Festuca filiformis
Galium debile	Galium constrictum
Glyceria plicata	Glyceria notata
Halimione portulacoides	Atriplex portulacoides
Hieracium pilosella	Pilosella officinarum
Lemma polyrhiza	Spirodela polyrhiza
Leontodon taraxacoides	Leontodon saxatilis
Lotus uliginosus	Lotus pedunculatus
Lycopodium inundatum	Lycopodiella inundatum
Montia fontana chondrosperma	Montia fontana minor
Nardurus maritimus	Vulpia unilateralis
Peplis portula	Lythrum portula
Phyteuma tenerum	Phyteuma orbiculare
Poa subcaerulea	Poa humilis
Polygonum amphibium	Persicaria amphibium
P. bistorta	P. bistorta
P. hydropiper	P. hydropiper
P. lapathifolium	P. lapathifolia
P. minus	P. minor
P. mite	P. laxiflora
P. persicaria	P. maculosa
Polypodium australe	Polypodium cambricum
Potentilla tabernaemontani	Potentilla neumanniana
Ribes sylvestre	Ribes rubrum
Salix cinerea atrocinnerea	Salix cinerea oleifolia
Scirpus cernua	Isolepis cernua
S. fluitans	Eleogetum fluitans
S. maritima	Bolboschoenus maritimus
S. setacea	Isolepis setacea
Scheonoplectus lacustris	Scheonoplectus
tabernaemontani	tabernaemontani
Senecio integrifolius	Tephrosia integrifolius
Silene maritima	S. uniflora
Sparganium minimum	Sparganium natans
Thymus praecox	Thymus polytrichus