

FLORA GROUP NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 1993

Dear Flora Group Member,

A few events have been arranged for the Autumn / Winter programme. Details are as follows:

Sunday 21st November, 1993  
Man Orchid Task at Exton

We will be returning to the man orchid site along the road verge near Exton to do some more scrub clearance. The leaders will be Graham Roberts and Mick Finnemore, the National Nature Reserve Warden of Old Winchester Hill NNR & Beacon Hill NNR. Meet at 10 am at the Beacon Hill Car Park at SU 598 228. Bring gloves as there will probably be quite a lot of brambles to clear!

Sunday 5th December, 1993  
Red-tipped Cudweed at Broomhurst Farm

Flora Group members have done work at the Red-tipped Cudweed (*Filago apiculata*) site near Fleet during January 1992 and December 1993. We will be returning to this site during December 1993 and hope to have the use of a Rotavator. Meet at 10am at the entrance to Broomhurst Farm (SU 813 563) on the B3013, just north of the M3. It would be helpful if those who intend coming could telephone the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust office to let Clive Chatters know so that the correct number of tools can be provided - 0794 513786. Leaders - Chris Hall and Tony Mundell.

Sunday 16th January 1994  
Holly Pollarding and Coppicing in the New Forest

Neil Sanderson will be leading a task in the New Forest, at Rockram Wood near Cadnam. The work will be to improve conditions for the very rare lichen *Parmelia minarum* which has recently been discovered here on four trees. This lichen is included on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which means it is a protected species. We will meet at 10am at the Cadnam Cricket Pitch car park (SU 296 128). Tools will be provided but please bring a saw if you can. For further details contact Neil Sanderson on 0703 844442.

REPORT ON RECENT FLORA GROUP EVENTS

UMBELLIFER TRAINING DAY

(or should we say *Apiaceae* Training Day?!)

On June 19th 1993 at Upper Hamble Country Park, Mervyn Southam led a party of Flora Group members to identify the difficult family of Umbellifers. The day proved to be both interesting and helpful to all those present.

The day began with Mervyn introducing us to several items he had brought with him. Firstly, copies of Umbellifers made on photo-copying machines; this showed up their distinctive characteristics and it is an easy way to send by post unknown species to a recorder or expert for identification. The second item was seeds of Umbellifers. These were attached to cards by glue, each with its appropriate name, giving a quick and easy reference to the identity of Umbellifers that have seeded, as each species of Umbellifer has a different shaped seed.

Mervyn had also brought with him plants from other countries such as *Eryngium yveparium*.

There are 72 UK Umbellifers (with the garden escapes, over 100). Among those we found were Spreading Hedge Parsley *Torilis arvensis* and others not so rare such as Upright Hedge Parsley *T. japonica*, Corky-fruited Water-dropwort *Oenanthe pimpinelloides*, Hemlock Water-dropwort *O. crocata*, Pignut *Conopodium majus*, Wood Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Pepper Saxifrage *Silene silaus*, Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, Stone Parsley *Sison amomum*, Rough Chervil *Chaerophyllum temulum* and Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*.

Joan Cocksedge.

ARABLE WEED DAY  
26th June 1993

This event was well attended by sixteen people and was split into a morning and afternoon sessions. During the morning we visited the Longwood Estate near Winchester where we hoped to rediscover Ground-pine *Ajuga chamaepitys*, but without success. However we saw a number of less 'exciting' plants including Prickly Poppy *Papaver argemone*, Venus' Looking-glass *Legousia hybrida*, Field Madder *Sherardia arvensis*, the Speedwells *Veronica arvensis* and *V. persica*, Lesser Toadflax *Chaenorhinum minus*, Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare*, Swine Cress *Coronopus squamatus*, Common Fumitory *Fumaria officinalis*, Dwarf Spurge *Euphorbia exigua*, Sharp-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia spuria* and Round-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia spuria*.

In the afternoon we visited Longparish Cornfields, which have been designated a Countryside Heritage Site by Hampshire County Council because of the nationally rare species found there. Dr Phil Wilson showed us a number of interesting plants, the highlight being a number of huge specimens of the rare Pheasant's-eye *Adonis annua* (each plant had about 50 flowers!). We also saw Spreading Hedge-parsley *Torilis arvensis*, Shepherd's-needle *Scandix pecten-veneris* and a number of the other species seen during the day.

We are grateful to Phil for leading this task and sharing his knowledge with us. Catherine Chatters

WARREN HEATH PONDS SSSI  
AND BRAMSHILL COMMON  
11th July 1993

These areas were planted up with conifers by the Forestry in the 1920s. After the timber had been harvested during the 1970s the area was quarried for gravel, restored, and some replanting has been done. Also, several ponds have been made.

The morning's objective was to see the club mosses around Warren Heath Ponds.

The walk to the Ponds was enlivened by finding a good stand of *Persicaria minor* and Water-purslane *Lythrum portula* in deep wheel ruts. Also seen were Allseed *Radiola linoides*, Chaffweed *Anagallis minima*, Lesser Centaury *Centaurea pulchellum*, and the blue form of Pimpernel *Anagallis arvensis foemina* - a beautiful plant.

Arriving at the Ponds, some searching revealed Marsh Clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata* and Stag's-horn Clubmoss *Lycopodium clavatum* - the latter beginning to suffer from competition from other vegetation. Other interesting plants seen were Pillwort *Pilularia globulifera*, Lemon-scented Fern *Oreopteris libosperma*, Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* and Alternate Water-milfoil *Myriophyllum alterniflorum*.

The first plants noted in the afternoon on Bramshill Common were Heath Cudweed *Gnaphalium sylvaticum*, Bristle Bent *Agrostis curtisii* and a colourful patch of Goat's-rue *Galega officinalis*.

Quarrying still continues on this site and some areas have been restored comparatively recently. These were carpeted with a mass of plants, many of which were common species such as mayweeds, thistles, etc., but also noted were Water Chickweed *Myosoton aquaticum*, Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* and - find of the afternoon - Yellow Bartsia *Parentucellia viscosa* in quantity, possibly thousands of plants.

Plants along the wetish ride verges included Yellow-loosestrife *Lysimachia vulgaris*, Common Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, Bristle Club-rush *Isolepis setacea* and Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*.

The several ponds are developing a good flora and fine plants of Pillwort *Pilularia globulifera* were seen, also Six-stamened Waterwort *Elatine hexandra*.

Chris Hall was warmly thanked for a very interesting day.

Vera Scott

AQUATIC PLANT TRAINING DAY  
8th August 1993

We were lucky enough to have Chris Preston of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology to lead us on this training session based on the Basingstoke Canal. The Canal is one of the botanically richest aquatic sites in England, so we were able to see a wide range of different species. About a dozen regular Flora Group members attended, plus a few 'visitors' from Surrey whom we were pleased to see. The plants seen ranged from an aquatic bryophyte *Fontinalis antipyretica*, through Pondweeds *Potamogeton* spp, to *Charophytes*. At Greywell, Chris pointed out the 'Greywell Buttercup' *Ranunculus pencillatus* var. *vertumnus* which is found here in its *locus classicus*. One of the highlights of the day was the exotic American plant called *Cabomba caroliniana* which Chris Preston was very pleased to see.

Catherine Chatters

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NEWS AND VIEWS

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CHAMOMILE *Chamaemelum nobile*

Chamomile, once widespread in England and concentrated in the south of England has suffered a catastrophic decline. A recent study of its distribution and conservation requirements has revealed that in counties where Chamomile was once rare it is now extinct and in counties where Chamomile was once common it is now rare. The decline has been attributed to various factors, but principally lack of grazing of old commons and village greens. In Hampshire we have the largest colony, mainly in the New Forest where traditional grazing continues, and some populations in the north of the county, inhabiting regularly mown cricket pitches and sports fields.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the survey; their help has been invaluable.

Heather R. Winship

FIELD COW WHEAT

Over the last few months, Dr Phil Wilson has been researching the ecology of this extremely rare plant. The flower is found native in Britain on the Isle of Wight (on one of the Trust's nature reserves) together with less than a handful of sites on the mainland. The purpose of Phil's work is to try and understand the ecology of the species sufficient to revitalise populations throughout Britain, but also to see whether it is possible to reinstate the plant in historic locations. Part of the work that has been needed to have been done is growing the plant from seed. There has been very little success in botanic gardens around Europe in

growing the plant. The germinated seed has failed to fully develop into flowering plants. At Ventnor Botanic Gardens on the Island, Simon and Deb Goodenough have succeeded in raising the plant, both in sterile compost and growing with grass. Field Cow Wheat is suspected to be a hemi-parasite. We hope that later in 1994 we will be in a position to see whether or not it is possible to re-establish extinct populations. This work has been jointly funded by English Nature's Recovery Programme and Bass (the brewers) Wildlife Fund.

Clive Chatters

#### HEATH LOBELIA

The Hampshire Heath Lobelia site has been visited this year by a PhD student, Janet Dinsdale, from Plymouth University. The Hampshire colony of Heath Lobelia is now one of five in Britain. Our Hampshire plants seem to differ from those in the West Country in that some individuals are perennial and remain winter green. We are keeping in close contact with Janet and hope the outcome of her research will help us to undertake some long term conservation work on the species.

Clive Chatters

#### LIZARD ORCHID

As in previous years, it is always a delight to report the reappearance of a rare and attractive plant. This year 'somewhere in Hampshire' the Lizard Orchid reappeared. The plants seemed strong and healthy and had probably been at this site for a number of years. The Trust is discussing the future management of the site with the owners and we hope that the plant will form a stable population.

Clive Chatters

#### JNCC SCARCE PLANT PROJECT

The Joint Nature Conservation Council and the BSBI have been drawing together information on all Britain's scarce plants. These are plants found in less than 100 10km squares. Hampshire and the Island enjoy the privileged position of supporting populations of many nationally scarce plants. The local abundance of some of these plants makes it difficult for us to appreciate their national scarcity. The outcome of the detailed studies of JNCC is hoped to be published in the relative near future.

Clive Chatters

#### YELLOW TOWER CRESS : ARABIS GLABRA

Amongst the nationally scarce species found in Hampshire is the Yellow Tower Cress. This species is found in two sites in East Hampshire, one a road verge and one in a junction of heathy woodland rides. The national plant conservation charity Plantlife is looking to secure these populations by talking to the landowners and undertaking practical work. The road verge site is being invaded by grasses and elm scrub. Plantlife hopes to arrange a conservation working party this winter to improve the habitat. If you are not a member of Plantlife, but would like to help look after this plant, please drop Clive Chatters a note at the Trust Office.

Clive Chatters

#### RARE LICHENS SURVEY

As noted in the last newsletter, many of Britain's rarest lichens have been accorded protection under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act for the first time, including three Hampshire species. Two of these species are epiphytes which form part of the exceptionally rich corticolous i.e. living on bark and wood lichen flora of the New Forest. This flora, which includes more than 300 species, is unique in lowland Europe and is thought to be close to the original lichen flora of the wild wood.

The two species are *Parmelia minarum* and *Catillaria laureri*. The *Parmelia* has been recorded from nine woods in the New Forest, two sites in Cornwall where it grows on rocks and Beech trees, while there are 19th century records from Devon. In Europe it is a highly south-western species. The *Catillaria* has only been recorded from four woods in the New Forest and is now known nowhere else in Britain, although it may have once occurred in Beech pasture woodlands in the Weald. It is also very scarce in Europe.

Both grow on Beech trees in the New Forest but the *Parmelia* is found on markedly more acid bark than the *Catillaria*. Details of the actual numbers of trees on which these species grow, their ecology and the degree of threat to these species however is as yet unclear. There have been no systematic review of the species' distributions while the threats described in the second review of Schedule 8: collecting by botanists, tree felling and air pollution do not appear entirely applicable to the New Forest. On one knowingly collects these species and tree felling is hardly a threat in the open Forest. Air pollution is certainly a worry, but lichenologists are also seriously concerned by the increasing shading caused by unmanaged Holly shrub layers.

Fortunately the scheduling of these species has drawn attention to their plight. This has resulted in funds being made available by English Nature and the Forestry Commission to facilitate a survey and HWT has contacted Neil Sanderson to carry this out.

An inventory describing all the populations which can be located will be produced and details of the species' ecology recorded, including associated species, types of trees used, conditions of woodland, etc. From this data, strategies to ensure the survival of the species will be recommended which are likely to include both species and site-specific recommendations, some of which will be applicable to the lichen flora of the New Forest in general.

Neil Sanderson

#### RED-TIPPED CUDWEED *Filago lutescens* AT BROOMHURST Visit to site on 6th July 1993

Last Winter (6th December) the site was managed again, by disturbing the ground and removing some of the excess grass and gorse. A total of 83 *Filago* plants were counted today, in five groups. There are none on

those parts of the bank where no management was carried out on the most recent session and 16 plants at the north end, on the corner by the entrance into Broomhurst. This part of the site could be expanded; it is threatened by the spread of gorse.

The central part of the bank has three groups of 13, 31 and 15 plants. One is multiple-stemmed, as a result of rabbit grazing; many are small, dwarfed, likely to produce only one cluster of capitula on a very short stem; the bank is currently extremely droughted, and a number of the seedlings seen a month ago have not survived.

There have been 18 days without rain in the Fleet area, many of those with high temperatures. In these conditions it is probable some of the plants will not survive long enough to set seed. It may be that some grass is beneficial in maintaining some shade at ground level and reducing moisture loss. However, the sheltered hollow that is this site must, at some hours of the day, create a very hot micro-climate.

At the south end of the bank, the most recently cleared part, there were eight plants of *Fliago*, but three of these have been uprooted by rabbit activity.

The central part of the bank has 8 plants of *Scleranthus annuus*, another addition to the list of arable plants which are no longer found.

Chris Hall

#### SOME HAMPSHIRE PLANTS ABROAD

Botanising in Europe often throws light on the requirements of plants so rare in England that one dare not generalise about them here. My Swiss friend spotted from the train a promising looking warm, dry, bare, calcareous slope on the Jura side of the Lac de Neuchatel. When we went to look (in July 1993) it was very like Micheldever Spoil Heaps - and indeed, the first two plants we saw were *Potentilla verna* and *Teucrium botrys*, as found by the Flora Group at Micheldever in 1991. Further up we found more *Teucrium*, this time with *Ajuga chamaepitys* an association found by the Flora Group in Harewood Forest in 1992. What we might have considered 'luck' seems likely to be actually 'normal'. Moreover, what seemed to be the chief threat to this rich site was, at Micheldever, encroaching hawthorn and similar scrub. It needs management by a Swiss equivalent of the HWT!

John Ounsted

#### COTONEASTER KEY

Last year Lady Anne Brewis provided the Trust with a *Cotoneaster* Key. If anyone would like a copy of this, please send a large stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters at the address at the end of this newsletter. (It has been written by Jeanette Fryer).

#### FUTURE EVENTS

We have already started to plan events for the Summer of 1994. Details will come out in a future newsletter, but you might like to make a note in your diary of one event which has already been arranged:-

#### UMBELLIFER EVENING - WEDNESDAY

15th June 1995

Mervyn Southam (who led the Umbellifer Training Day earlier this year) has kindly offered to show Flora Group Members round his Umbellifer Garden. Starting at 6.30 on 15th June 1994, he will display a number of additional exhibits. Mervyn lives at 72 Fareham Road, Gosport. Telephone 0329 234726.

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We are hoping to arrange a Compositae Training Day but would be grateful for any ideas of a suitable person to lead it and a suitable location to hold it; Any ideas....?

Please let Catherine Chatters know.

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We are also hoping that Dr John Hopkins of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee will come down to the Isle of Wight next Summer to lead a day looking at the *Gentianella anglica* site on Afton Down.

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Other suggestions include another *charophyte* training day (we held one back in April 1990 in the New Forest) - any offers of a leader for this event?

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#### AND FINALLY.....

Please let us have any ideas for events which YOU would be interested in.

We would really appreciate offers of help to a) write up reports of events for inclusion in the newsletter, b) lead or organise tasks and training days, c) provide news items for inclusion in the newsletter. At present the committee comprises Jean Cocksedge, Neil Sanderson, Clive Chatters and Catherine Chatters. If anyone else would like to come on the committee, you would be very welcome.

The Flora Group members' address list is very long and we are aware that we may be sending newsletters to people who may no longer need/desire them. If you would like to continue receiving the newsletter, please let me know.

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