

FLORA GROUP NEWSLETTER



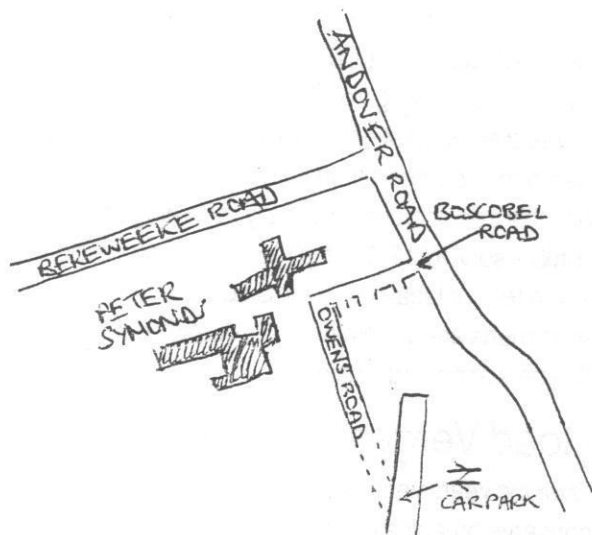
AUTUMN 1996

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 2 October 1996, 7.30

Atlas 2000 meeting - mapping Hampshire's flora

A joint meeting with colleagues from BSBI will be held on 2 October 1996 at 7.30 in the Recital Room, Peter Symonds College, Owens Road, Winchester. The aim of the meeting is to discuss how we are to help with the Atlas 2000 mapping project. This project intends to update the atlas of plant distribution in Britain. If you are keen to help please do come along. We are not necessarily looking for expert botanists but people who can spend time recording presence and absence of plants in their local area. Where expert advice is required we hope we can arrange for this to be available. This is an important meeting which will set out the substantial part of the Flora Group's work over the next few years. The venue for the meeting is a very short walk from Winchester railway station.



Sunday 8th December 1996, 10.30am

Holly cutting in the New Forest

Leader - Neil Sanderson

We will be spending the morning coppicing and pollarding holly with bowsaws and loppers to improve conditions for rare epiphytic lichens. Meet at the Busketts Wood cricket pitch car park (grid reference SU 311 111) at 10.30. It would be helpful for us to know if you are coming so that we can have the correct number of tools available; please leave a message with Tara at the Trust office on 01703 613636/613737.

Saturday 11th January 1997, 10.30am

Red-tipped Cudweed

Filago lutescens

Leader - Chris Hall

Come along and help conserve one of Britain's rarest wild plants by digging over a grassy road verge. We will spend a morning working with garden forks and mattocks. Meet at the entrance to Broomhurst Farm off the B3013 north of Fleet (grid reference SU 812 563) at 10.30am.

Lymes Disease

After a recent, particularly tick-laden trip to Scotland, Francis Rose reminds us of the dangers of Lymes Disease. This is an infection carried by ticks. The infection is readily treated by antibiotics but if untreated can result in severe, permanent damage to joints and the nervous system. If you experience tick bites followed by possibly a rash and low-grade 'flu' symptoms please consult your doctor and mention Lymes Disease. Leaflets on the disease are increasingly widely available. We hold a few at the Trust office but many district council offices and doctors' surgeries also have a stock.

Interesting records

Our thanks to everybody who passed us interesting botanical records. Here is a short selection which we hope will encourage more recording:-

Tilia platyphyllos - woodland, East Meon, Confirmed by F Rose.

Lycopodiella inundatum - Bramshill Plantation. A Branson.

Trifolium subterraneum - Bramshill Park. Abundant. A Branson.

Illecebrum verticillatum - on sands on the river bank of the Hampshire Avon. I L Ralphs.

Cephalanthera rubra - two plants only this year; neither set seed. Trust files.

Ranunculus parviflorus - various sites around the New Forest including Setley Marl Pits (BSBI trip), Hatchet Pond and Beaulieu Estate road verges. I L Ralphs.

Tilia cordata - open Forest woodland at Bramshaw. J Spencer. We believe this is the first *bona fide* record of small-leaved lime on the open Forest.

Ulmus glabra - riverine woodland near Lyndhurst. N Sanderson. Another notable record from the riverine woodlands of the New Forest.

Crassula tillaea - Setley Marl Pit (BSBI visit). This plant seems to be spreading quite strongly in south-west Hampshire. These magnificent specimens were found in flower. Is it also spreading in the north-east?

Bromus inermis - rough grassland in the Candover Valley. J Rowe.

Pertusaria pupillaris - acid bark of wild service tree. N Sanderson. The first record of this lichen outside east Hampshire.

Gentianella anglica - S Telfer reports another year of low populations on the Isle of Wight. This is a second low year in a row following the population in excess of 3.5 million in 1994.

Melampyrum arvense - cliff face at St Lawrence, Isle of Wight. R Bullock and A Tillotson. A population in the order of 3,000 plants. Possibly the largest population now in Britain. This cliff face is only accessible to trained climbers.

Polygonum maritimum - scattered localities around both the western and eastern Solent. This appears to be a plant very much on the move. Various recorders. Worth looking for on all vegetated beaches.

Pinguicula vulgaris - Upper Itchen Valley. The historic population of this plant in the headwaters of the Itchen persists in good health with other notable species such as *Epipactis palustris*. F Rose
Geranium lucidum - extensive population on verge of Frensham Lane. K Long.

Erodium maritimum - after an absence in our counties of over 60 years this species has been refound in huge abundance on disturbed ground by the Blashford Lakes. Discovered by G Field. Dorset colleagues report it doing well on similar inland sites. It is worth checking your local gravel pit next spring for this delightful species.

Goodyer's Elm

This curious elm *Ulmus minor* ssp *angustifolia* was first described in 1624 by John Goodyer. The elm is very much a south-west Hampshire coastal/Avon Valley specialist. Paul Bowman has found some specimens growing from Dutch Elm Disease devastated populations. Would anyone in south-west Hampshire be interested in familiarising themselves with this tree and systematically recording any notable survivors? Does anyone have an infallible key to tell our local native elms apart when mature specimens are unobtainable? Please contact Clive Chatters at the Trust office.

Road Verges

Over the years various attempts have been made to conserve botanically-rich road verges. This summer Katie Long has been systematically re-visiting all of those previously notified as being of value in Hampshire. If you know of a valuable verge for wild

flowers there is a special recording card designed by Hampshire County Council. For copies please send an A4 stamped address envelope to the Trust office marked "Road Verge Card".

Ancient Tree Survey

In September the Trust will be launching an Ancient Tree Project with the aim of locating and surveying the county's most spectacular old trees. This will be a two year project involving as many people as possible, from experts to the general public.

The project will be conducted in three distinct phases. The first will be the public phase which can be carried out by interested volunteers with no special training and will be chiefly concerned with locating trees of interest. Trained volunteers will then sift the results and phase two will see more experienced volunteers being asked to visit those deemed worthy of further study. They will produce more detailed information including the presence of lichens, fungi or invertebrate associates. If appropriate, specialists will be asked to survey species of note in phase three of the survey.

As well as giving us valuable information regarding the quantity, location and wildlife value of Hampshire's ancient trees, the results will enable us to offer advice on their management and conservation.

Help from anyone who is able to offer their expertise will be much appreciated. Please contact Frances Cooper at the Trust Office.

Atlas 2000

As part of the preparatory works for the Flora mapping, Hampshire County Council has printed out all species records held on their computer that have been gathered since 1987. The vast majority of these records have been made by Ian Ralphs and John Rowe, the Trust's Habitat Surveyors. Some 10 km squares have over 400 species recorded within them since 1987; one notable square has no records. The number of records indicate the pattern of survey effort with much recording in Central and Southern Hampshire but less in the North-East and little in the South-West. Copies of the relevant lists will be supplied to those Flora Group members who volunteer to take on recording a square of their own

as part of the Atlas 2000 work.

Orchid pollination

Richard Hedley is undertaking detailed monitoring of the sword-leaved helleborines *Cephalanthera longifolia* in the Chappetts Copse nature reserve. Richard has trapped a solitary bee which was discovered visiting the flowers. The bee has been identified by George Else as *Lasioglossum fulvicorne*. This is usually regarded as a chalk grassland species and thus reinforces the conclusions reached by Andy Byfield (following the Flora Group's study a few years ago) that this helleborine is a species of scrubby secondary woods on chalk rather than a plant which requires ancient woodland sites.

Perham Ranges

Perham Ranges constitute the eastern-most section of the army's Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) and are geographically separated from the rest of the Plain by the shallow Bourne Valley. Recent boundary changes have ceded parts to Wiltshire but most of the area falls within VC12 and it constitutes an interesting mosaic of unimproved chalk grassland, secondary woodland and arable interspersed with only the occasional military artefact. Amongst the interesting species is the only location of purple milk vetch *Astragalus danicus* recently re-confirmed by Paul Bowman.

The area was missed out (lack of time and money) when the rest of the SPTA was surveyed a few years ago prior to large areas being designated SSSIs. Paul Toynton on secondment to MoD from English Nature is now trying to rectify the omission and is coordinating a flora survey being carried out by the Salisbury Plain Conservation Group and our Flora Group (in the persons of Mike Wildish and John Moon) who have carved up the area between them. The survey is now in its second year and is being carried out on a site by site basis; anyone who feels able to assist or contribute records please contact John Moon (01264 710123). We are hopeful that the survey might eventually lead to SSSI designation for parts of the area. As well as its botanical interest the area is the richest in NW Hampshire for butterflies and is one of the very few places in Hampshire where the brown hairstreak can be found.

One of the hazards of not having SSSI designation is this land is not subject to the same conservation safeguards. Paul Toynton recently intervened to get a newly-planted forestry scheme removed from one of the best downland slopes on the ranges. The fact that local Wildlife Trust members were able to provide fairly comprehensive plant and lepidoptera species lists was a considerable help - which underlies the value of recording.

John Moon

Arable Weeds

Near Augers Hill Copse

For many years a small population of the rare arable weeds, cut-leaved germander *Teucrium botrys* and ground pine *Ajuga chamaepitys* has survived along the headland of an arable field on the edge of Harewood Forest. For each species this is one of only two sites left in the county and the only one where they occur together. The warm, dry, south-facing slope and light chalky soil of the site are ideal but the regular spring wheat crop has been subject to the usual herbicide programme and the weeds have been able to survive partly because the sprayer boom has not been able to reach all corners of the rather convoluted field boundary and partly because the stubble has been allowed to remain all winter. This has been done primarily for the benefit of the game on the estate but it has had the side effect of allowing late-maturing plants of *Teucrium botrys* and *Ajuga chamaepitys* to set seed.

This year the field has been put down to permanent grass set-aside which could have signalled the end of the road for any annual arable weeds. However, the landowner, Lord Camden, has generously offered to follow a management regime suggested by the Trust which involves regular harrowing along the field headland to provide the necessary germination conditions. In the absence of an annual herbicide dose we are hopeful that the populations of *Teucrium botrys* and *Ajuga chamaepitys* will now survive.

John Moon

Botanical Societies

Catherine Chatters, the Flora Group Secretary, regularly receives information on events organised by the Wiltshire Botanical Society and the Sussex Botanical Recording Society. If anyone would like to

receive details of these events, please write to Catherine (enclosing a stamped addressed envelope) at Ivy Cottage, Ashurst Bridge Road, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 7EA.

Pepperbox Hill

Flora Group members may like to join the Wiltshire Botanical Society on their trip to Pepperbox Hill near the Hampshire border. This trip will be led by Dr Pat Woodruffe and will examine how scrub clearance and grazing by New Forest ponies are being used to manage this site, which is owned by the National Trust. Meet on Saturday 21st September at grid reference SU 211248, 8km south east of Salisbury, just off the A36. Turn east along the narrow gravel track at the top of the hill. Park up track on right over cattle grid.

Tree Damage Alert

Catherine Chatters has received a copy of Tree Damage Alert No 20, produced by the Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service. It gives advice on how to protect trees from damage caused by horses and rabbits chewing the bark. If you would like a copy please send a stamped addressed envelope to Catherine at the address given above (in the section on botanical societies).

Wild Service Trees

In the previous edition of the Flora Group newsletter we offered FG members copies of a report on wild service trees in the New Forest. A number of people sent in requests for this paper. The report is still being finalised and will be sent to those people (and anyone else who would like a copy) who supplied a stamped address envelope. Don't worry - we haven't forgotten you!


ENGLISH
NATURE



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