

The Dorset Heath

The Newsletter of the Dorset Flora Group

Volume 2

2011 Events

We have a mixed bag of events this year; Purbeck District Council has decided to run a whole month of events under the title Wonderful Wild Flowers. Ted Pratt is leading walks across Purbeck, supported by other members from Purbeck and beyond. Our own Wildflower Week incorporates a number of these events and adds others in Weymouth and Portland, Bournemouth and elsewhere.

We have several trips to look for rare plants – Robin Walls wants to get a better idea of the distribution of *Melittis melissophyllum*, Bastard Balm, in its only Dorset site, a trip with limited numbers this year – please contact Robin for details.

Ted Pratt wants to map *Scorzonera humilis*, Viper's Grass across Corfe Common following John Wright's discovery of a new site there for

this very rare species, and John Newbould and Robin plan to lead an expedition to map the distribution of *Hordeum marinum*, Sea Barley at Cogden.

Other activities include a training course helping recorders to transfer field notes to Excel spreadsheets and a training day looking at sedges and giving you the tools and sources to identify them with confidence. By the time you read this a small group will have carried out management work to try to restore Deptford Pink in its one Dorset site. We are also hopeful of working on the Heath Lobelia site and are assisting a DWT work party with their efforts to conserve Pale Heath Violet on Higher Hyde.

All in all a busy year ahead – we look forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones in 2011.

Inside this issue.

Events Programme 2011

Wildflower Week

Looking for the Dorset Hybrid Heath

A walk along the Chesil Bank

Distribution of English Sticky Eyebright in Purbeck

Field meeting reports for 2010

BSBI recorder's notes and Threatened Plants Project

Dorset Flora Group AGM 2010

Our AGM was again a well-attended and highly enjoyable meeting. We had some very interesting displays, bargain books from British Wildlife Publishing, two excellent quizzes supplied by Peter and Margaret Cramb (congratulations to David Leadbetter – 2010 champion) and some very good speakers. To reassure those who have not yet been to an AGM - the speakers did not drone on for hours!

About 12 minutes was the maximum and the well illustrated talks gave some useful insights into botanical activities in and out of Dorset. We hope to see you next year – clashes with other meetings will be avoided if possible and high quality tea and biscuits served as usual.

Dorset Flora Group Wildflower week 2011: 28th May – 5th June 2011.

Everyone is welcome to come along on these field days (DFG members and non-members). Accompanied children are usually welcome. The terrain can be uneven, rocky or boggy so please wear appropriate footwear and contact the leader if you have any specific questions.

Saturday 28th May 10.30am Ballard Down

Rich variety of summer downland flowers, including Early Gentian. Some slopes.
Meet at Ulwell Lower Lay-by, map ref. SZ021809.

Leader: David Leadbetter. To book places call: 01929 426988 (Maximum 20). No charge.

Saturday 28th May, 10.30am onwards, Corfe Mullen

A Bioblitz following up last year's very productive and enjoyable event. The hope is to greatly increase the number of species by searching the parish at a different time of year. The event will run all day and possibly into the evening, so drop by at any time. All groups of animals and plants will be recorded with the emphasis on investigating sites that have been neglected. Several walks for wild flowers are being planned. (DWT Beacon Hill phone number is 01202 692033).

Meet at Corfe Mullen village hall, map ref. SY988972.

Leader: Jane Adams, contact DWT for details of the day. No charge.

Sunday 29th May 10.30am Steamer Point Nature Reserve

Summer Tree identification with Christchurch Countryside Service.

Meet at the Information Centre, Steamer Point, Christchurch, map ref. SZ198929.

Leader: Phil Budd. For more information call: 01425 272479. Cost: £2.50 Adults; £1.50 Children.

Sunday 29th May 2.30pm Durlston Country Park

Flower-rich hay meadows at their best with Early Gentian and other downland flowers.

Meet at the Visitor Centre, map ref.. SZ031773.

Leader: Ted Pratt. To book places call: 01929 424443. Cost: £3 Adults; £2 Children and Friends of Durlston & car park charges.

Monday 30th May 2.30pm Stoborough Heath RSPB Reserve

Early heathland flowers, including the nationally scarce Pale Dog Violet.

Meet at Creech Bottom on Grange Road, map ref. SY919846.

Leader: Ted Pratt. For more information call: 01929 427229. No charge.

Tuesday 31st May 10.30am Winfrith Heath Dorset Wildlife Trust Reserve

Heathland flowers, orchids and wetland plants by the Tadnoll Brook. Two miles.

Meet at Gatemoor Road Reserve entrance, map ref. SY805863.

Leader: John Wright. For more information call: 01929 556816. Donations to DWT welcome.

Tuesday 31st May 2pm Portland Bill

Meet outside the Lighthouse Visitor Centre at the Bill, map ref. SY677685. There is plenty of parking but there will be a charge. Walking will mainly be on flat ground, but will be uneven and rocky in places.

Leader: Bryan Edwards. To book places call: 01305 225081. Contact on the day: 07779 695101.

Wednesday 1st June 10.30am Corfe Common

A beautiful range of flowers on the dry and wet parts of the Common.

Meet at West Street car park, map ref. SY958818.

Leader: Angela Peters. To book places call: 01929 450259. Charge for the car park, donations to National Trust welcome.

Wednesday 1st June 2.15 - 4pm Powerstock Common Dorset Wildlife Trust Reserve

This promises to open your eyes to the incredible natural history found at Powerstock.

Meet at Powerstock Common Car Park, map ref.. SY547974.

Leader: Jim White. For more information call: 01305 264620. Cost: £6 Adults; £3 Children, (costs include afternoon tea, cake and scones at the Kingcombe Centre after the walk).

Wednesday 1st June 2.30pm Northbrook Copse

A gem of a little wood, owned by Swanage Town Council.

Meet at D'Urberville Drive, map ref. SZ025798.

Leader: Laurence Taylor. To book places call: 01929 426533. No charge for the walk.

Thursday 2nd June: 10.30am Old Harry and Ballard Down

A 4 to 5 hour walk looking at the variety of plants found in the different habitats of Old Harry and Ballard Down, 4 miles approx. Please bring a picnic lunch.

Follow the signs in Studland village to South Beach Car Park (next to the Bankes Arms Hotel) Meet at map ref. SZ 037825, the car park pedestrian exit near the hotel.

Leader: Mike Downing. To book places call: 01202 698840. Car park charges for non-NT members.

Thursday 2nd June at 10.30am Stanpit Marsh Nature Reserve

Join Christchurch Countryside service to identify and learn about the wildflowers of Stanpit Marsh.

Meet at the Marsh Pod information centre, Stanpit Marsh Nature Reserve, Christchurch, map ref.

SZ166921. Sturdy footwear advised.

Leader: Phil Budd. For more information call: 01425 272479. Cost: £2.50 Adults; £1.50 Children.

Friday 3rd June 10.00am Sutton Poyntz

The day will include Wildflower walks and other activities organised by the Sutton Poyntz

Biodiversity group; the Wessex Water museum will be open and refreshments will be available.

Meet at Sutton Poyntz water works, map ref. SY706839.

Leader: Robin Walls. For more information call: 01305 852444. No charges.

Saturday 4th June 10.30am Corfe Charity/NT Meadows

One of the rarest habitats – unimproved lowland meadows, full of flowers. Only 3% of such meadows remain in Britain, compared with 60 years ago. Approx. distance two miles.

Meet at Scotland corner on Slepe Road, map ref. SY961840. Wellingtons advised.

Leader: Ted Pratt. For more information call: 01929 427229. Donations to National Trust welcome.

Saturday 4th June 2pm – 4pm. Lorton Meadows Dorset Wildlife Trust Reserve

Guided walk to discover the diversity of early summer flowers at Lorton.

Meet at map ref SY673826. Refreshments afterwards.

Leader: Sam Dallimore. For more information call: 01305 264620. Cost: £1 per person.

Sunday 5th June 10.00am Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve.

Family event at Bournemouth's finest nature reserve. A moth trap will be opened and moths identified at 10.00am. This will be followed by a walk across the Head looking at wild flowers, including the food plants used by the butterflies and moths that are found in this exceptional site. Meet at the thatched barn at the entrance to the nature reserve, map ref SZ166910.

Leaders: Mark Holloway and Jon Crewe. For more information call: 01202 420909. No charge.

Dorset Flora Group Field and Training Meetings 2011

Saturday 12th March 10.00am – 2.00pm. From Field Notebook to Database using Excel.

A training day led by John Newbould.

Many field naturalists hold very valuable field records in their notebooks. This course is designed to give delegates an insight in using an industry standard spread sheet to provide accurate data, in a structured way, which may be rapidly imported into our Recorder database, following verification by the County's Recorders.

It would help if delegates could bring a laptop computer, together with some field records and a 1:25,000 map of the location of their data. If you do not have a laptop, bring a data stick to take away various databases.

The Mission Hall is located near the Springhead pub off Sutton Road. Tea and Coffee will be available all day but bring lunch. Parking is on Sutton Road and there is a First bus service every forty minutes from Weymouth.

Cost: £5 to cover hall costs payable to Dorset Environmental Records Centre. Please book with Rhiannon Rogers (R.rogers@dorsetcc.gov.uk) 01305 225081.

Saturday April 16th 10.30am Hibbit Woods DWT Reserve (Map ref.ST547075).

Leaders Tony Bates and Robin Walls

This is a recently acquired Dorset Wildlife Trust reserve which is under-recorded. DWT President Tony Bates knows the site and will lead us round. The main aim is to record the woodland flora early in the year as a baseline for future recording on site. If time permits we may go on to another nearby site in the afternoon. Booking is essential as there is restricted parking by the site and we will have to operate a ferry service from the nearby village of Halstock. Please book with Rhiannon Rogers (R.rogers@dorsetcc.gov.uk) 01305 225081.

Thursday April 28th 9.30am Stonebarrow (NT Golden Cap estate)

Leader John Newbould

Take narrow road from Charmouth to the Stonebarrow estate. Meet in the car park at the east end SY381933 to monitor **Green-winged Orchid** and the spring bird migration. A small car parking charge applies to non-National Trust members.

Saturday April 30th 11 am on Brownsea Island

DNHAS and Dorset Flora Group

It will be a little over fifty years since the Dorset Wildlife Trust opened its first nature reserve on the island. We have been asked to organise a meeting to Brownsea to celebrate the event. Members wishing the warden to conduct a guided tour of the DWT reserve should book with John Newbould (01305 837384 or email john_newbould@btinternet.com.) Please make your way to the Island, either from Poole or Studland and meet at 11.00a.m. by the NT visitor centre. Please note NT charges apply.

Saturday May 14th, 10.30 Stubhampton Bottom.

Leader Peter Hatherley.

A chance to see the spring woodland flora and birds.

Meet at the bend in the road north-west of Tarrant Gunville, map ref. ST913142. Parking could be tight so please share lifts.

Saturday May 21st 10.30 Corfe Common.

Leader Ted Pratt.

Meet at West Street car park, map ref. SY958818.

This meeting will look at known sites for Vipersgrass (*Scorzonera humilis*), on Corfe Common and attempt to find new sites. Those attending will have a chance to see the plant first and get the look of it lodged in their brain before we break into smaller search groups. Please book - 01929 427229 - so as to help with planning. No numbers limit. Parking charges apply.

Thursday June 9th 10.30 Chetterwood.

Leader Robin Walls.

This meeting has been planned as a search for Bastard Balm (*Melittis melissophyllum*) in its remaining known Dorset site. The wood is private and we have been given permission to bring a small group to search away from the footpaths. In order to restrict numbers, joining instructions will only be sent to the first 10 members to book a place. To book by telephone call Rhiannon Rogers at DERC on 01305 225081.

Saturday June 25th, Sedge Identification training course

National Trust training room and Corfe Common. Tutor Robin Walls.

An introduction to sedge identification with an opportunity to test your understanding in the field in the afternoon. DFG members and NT volunteers £10.00, all others £20.00. Please call Robin on 01305 852444 or Rhiannon Rogers at DERC on 01305 225081 to book a place; joining instructions will be issued later.

Saturday July 9th 10.30 Arne Moors.

Leader Ted Pratt.

Arne Moors is an area of damp pastures with drainage ditches; part RSPB closed reserve, part private. Species to be seen include Great Fen-sedge, Marsh Fern, Cyperus Sedge and Long-stalked Yellow Sedge, as well as more colourful Tufted Forget-me-not, Water-plantain and Dorset Hybrid Heath amongst others. Dorset Heath and Zigzag Clover will also be seen on the roadside.

Meet at map ref. SY945863 on Arne Road, between Ridge and Arne, the first RSPB gate you pass on your left. Wellingtons are **absolutely essential**.

There will be a break for lunch at 1.30pm; those who wish to stay after lunch will visit a nearby site for Vipersgrass and Whorled Caraway, with the meeting ending at about 3.30pm. Numbers limited to 20 - please book on 01929 427229. Unsuitable for children.

Saturday August 6th 10.30 Tamarisk Farm, West Bexington.

Leader Peter Cramb.

Arable plants on an organic farm in a beautiful setting above Chesil Bank. Meet at the farm – the exact parking place will be decided by the farmer nearer the day; please therefore ensure that you book beforehand with the leader (Peter Cramb 01308 488019) who will have this information.

Depending on time and what sort of season we are having there may be a further brief excursion to Cogden afterwards to look at the population of Sea Barley (*Hordeum marinum*).

Other events

September: We hope to organise a Fern day led by Fred Rumsey. Details will be circulated later in the year.

ERICA X WATSONII (Dorset Hybrid Heath)

DORSET DISTRIBUTION SURVEY 2003-2010

Background

Purbeck contains most of the British sites of *Erica x watsonii*, the hybrid between *Erica ciliaris* (Dorset Heath) and *E. tetralix* (Cross-leaved Heath), all of which occur on damp heathland. There are also a few small sites in Cornwall.

When the *Dorset Rare Plant Register* (B. Edwards and D. Pearman) was published in 2004, it included records for seven* scarce or rare hybrids, but none for this one. The text indicated that insufficient was known by its authors about the distribution of *Erica x watsonii*, and this was confirmed in pers.comm. by David Pearman.

Identification

Erica ciliaris has deep pink tubular flowers, with a narrowed outer end, and usually spread out down a stem, and deep green foliage. *Erica tetralix* has smaller pale pink flowers in a clump at the top of a stem, and greyish foliage. *Erica x watsonii* has deep pink flowers, of a similar shape as *Erica tetralix*, slightly larger, and in a clump like it, but with the deeper colour of *Erica ciliaris*, and with deep green foliage like it.

The easiest feature to examine for identification is the appendages to the anthers, which may be seen by carefully dissecting a flower with fingers, and examined with a lens. *Erica ciliaris* anthers have no appendages; *Erica tetralix* anthers have two backward pointing pale appendages, almost as long as the anther. The hybrid has two shorter, brown appendages.

Erica x watsonii is a long-lived plant, like its parents. When mature it can form conspicuous domed humps. Its parents also form humps, but usually less neatly domed ones.

Survey

The writer had already made a few records for the hybrid in 2003. During the course of the next four years he surveyed all heathland in The Isle of Purbeck open to the public, in the course of preparation for *The Wild Flowers of The Isle of Purbeck, Brownsea and Sandbanks* (2008). Whilst so doing he mapped the distribution of *Erica x watsonii* on a 100m square basis, with the use of a GPS Navigator. In the three years since he has surveyed private damp heathland in the area to complete the coverage, and the largest of the outlying sites for *Erica ciliaris* north of Wareham.

Unlike surveys of some species, this work could be carried on throughout the year; indeed it was an enjoyable winter task, given reasonable weather. This was possible because some of the “dead” flowers, bearing their diagnostic anthers, remain on the plants for twelve months, though in an increasing desiccated state (a point that will be illustrated by a photograph in the writer’s forthcoming booklet *The Special Wild Flowers of The Isle of Purbeck*).

Results

The results have been plotted on a map, copies of which have been given to DERC, Natural England, the County Botanical recorder and major landowners. ***Erica x watsonii* was recorded in 332 100m squares.** A list of sites is available from the writer, mostly giving eight-figure map references. These references are, in many cases, not the only sites within a 100m square, but typical ones. They include the population within a typical 10m square, and this helps to give some idea of the quantity in a 100m square.

The five main concentrations of the hybrid are in the NE of Stoborough Heath (between the A351 and Soldiers Road), the W and N sides of Hartland Moor, the E half of Hartland Moor, private forestry land S of Arne Road between Soldiers Road and Slepe Road, and in the felled area of Rempstone Forest between Wytch Heath and Wytch Moor.

The extent of the area in which the hybrid occurs in The Isle of Purbeck is from the W side of Stoborough Heath (E of Grange Road) to E of the Agglestone on Godlingston Heath, and from the N end of the Arne peninsular to the S part of Brenscombe Heath (W of Rempstone Farm).

Small populations occur on Arne Heath, Crichton Heath, Grip Heath, Coombe Heath, the Arne Road Triangle, Scotland Heath, Langton Wallis Heath, Rempstone Heath (W), Brenscombe Heath, N and W of Claywell, and at two small sites N of Wareham.

Coverage

No surveyor should ever claim 100% coverage, and this survey may have missed a few 100m square sites. Also most of the fairly isolated sites for *Erica ciliaris* north-west, north and north-east of Wareham have not been surveyed, because it is believed that they only contain small populations of the species and are therefore unlikely to contain hybrids.

Further work

During the course of the survey various other things have been learned about recognition of this hybrid, about its habitat preferences, and other aspects of its biology, much of the latter from earlier researchers. It is hoped to write further about it in due course, with due acknowledgements.

The Rev. Edward Pratt, 7 Bay Close, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 1RE January 2011

*One *Alopecurus* hybrid, one *Carex*, two *Drosera* and three *Potamogeton* hybrids are included in the *Dorset Rare Plant Register*.

A Walk along the Chesil Bank

It was 1st September 2010 - the first day after the summer bird breeding season that walkers were permitted on the Chesil Bank east of Abbotsbury. For some while I had been planning to walk from Abbotsbury Beach car park along the Bank to a point opposite Moonfleet and back - a distance of about 8 miles, but effectively much longer due to the difficulty of progressing over the shingle.

The sun was shining and I left the car park with high hopes of botanical discoveries, but a little apprehensive of the task ahead. I also very much hoped that the car park's ice cream parlour would be open on my return!



Sea-purslane

As I crossed the line of tank traps half a mile south-east of the car park, a group of five herons flew over me, calling to each other with high-pitched cries; surely a good omen for the adventure ahead! I was soon striding along the Bank proper, with the Fleet lagoon on my left and the sea on my right - a wonderful feeling of freedom and isolation as the mainland was left behind. As I walked along the top of the Bank I passed occasional clumps of Sea-kale (*Crambe maritima*), Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and Sea Pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*), with more frequent patches of Sea Campion (*Silene uniflora*), while to the left, along the outer shore of the Fleet, was a dense and almost continuous strip of Sea-purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*) and Shrubby Sea-blite (*Suaeda vera*).

About a mile along from the tank traps came the first excitement, a dozen or so large clumps of Sea Pea, in a tetrad not recorded in the Dorset Rare Plant Register. But then I saw a figure of a man ahead of me - surely not another botanist taking advantage of the first day of the open season? As he was ahead of me any new records would rightly be his; perhaps if I caught up with him we could agree to share any later finds? My heart pounding, I lifted my binoculars to my eyes, to see if he was another Flora Group member: one or two of the usual suspects came to mind, but I could not be sure. Eventually he stopped and I caught up with him - it was no one I recognised. After we exchanged greetings, I tentatively asked "Are you looking for plants?" "No" he replied "I'm just having an amble". What a relief!



SeaPea

With renewed energy I pushed on eastwards, from time to time sending up small groups of Ringed Plovers, which wheeled away in perfect formation, wings whirling, while the occasional snowy-white Little Egret flew low over the Fleet. As I approached a point opposite Langton Hive, the vegetation on the top of the Bank became sparser and a fence marked the limit of the controlled area. I saw some fishermen on the sea shore to my right - they row across the Fleet to the Bank. It was now approaching the time I would have to turn

round to return to Abbotsbury, but I was still a little short of my target spot opposite Moonfleet. With fatigue increasing I pushed on and saw in the distance vegetation carpeting the landward side of the Bank; surely it wasn't? - yes it was - vast areas of Sea Pea! Interestingly, it is recorded at this point in the Rare Plant Register as "rare" in 2003, and so seems to have spread substantially in just seven years. As I walked over the plants - there was no way round - a distinct legume smell arose- and I was reminded of the 16th Century story of people in Suffolk eating them to keep alive during a famine. I did not try any!

Having reached my target, I dropped down towards the shore of the Fleet and, starting the return journey, soon saw groups of Yellow Horned-poppy (*Glaucium flavum*), some still in flower. Close to the water's edge were Glassworts (*Salicornia* agg.) and, nestling in the thick carpet of Sea-purslane, the beautiful, purple-flowered Rock Sea-lavender (*Limonium dodartiforme*). A little further on, I disturbed a hare, which raced away along the shingle: it was over 3 miles from the mainland in both directions - does it live permanently on the Bank, I wondered? As I continued westwards, I saw neat, low clumps of Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), a special form found here quite unlike the sprawling plants found in hedgerows.



Rock Sea-lavender

I returned to the top of the Bank and trudged wearily onwards, my whole body aching. The sun was beating down and I began to weave a fantasy - I was John Buchan's hero, Richard Hannay, being pursued by enemy agents: ahead blocking my escape along the Bank was a line of men - more agents. What could I do, swim across the Fleet to the mainland or take my chance in the sea? Fortunately, I did not have to decide as it became apparent that the line ahead was the row of tank traps. I had made it!

Passing the traps, I descended to the landward side and finally left the shingle. It was strangely quiet, as I was now walking on grass and the incessant sound of boots on shingle had stopped. I returned to the car park with feelings of exhilaration and relief. I had a good haul of records for Robin and DERC and had enjoyed a very special experience; and, yes, the ice cream parlour was open!

Peter Cramb
Drawings by Margaret Cramb.

EYEBRIGHTS ON CORFE COMMON

The mapping of *Euphrasia officinalis subspecies anglica* (English Sticky Eyebright) began on West and Middle Commons at Corfe Castle, its only site in East Dorset, on a 10m square basis in 2008, but most of the survey was done from 25th June to 12th July 2010, including checking many of the areas covered in 2008. There proved to be far more of this Dorset Scarce species than expected. (There are four other county sites, all in West Dorset).

Using a GPS Navigator, the likely areas of West and Middle Commons were walked over at 20 metre intervals, using the Navigator to walk on a northing or easting as appropriate. It took 28 hours in 2010. Wherever Eyebrights were found, the area was searched at 10 metre intervals. This way a few very small populations may have been missed, but nearly all *E. officinalis* has been mapped.

Euphrasia confusa (Little Kneeling Eyebright), which begins to flower in July, was also recorded when visible. In late August and September, whilst adding in paths and boundaries to the map, the main areas for that species were visited again. However the whole Commons were not surveyed again for it, so some smaller populations of that species will have been missed.



Euphrasia officinalis ssp anglica B Edwards

The likely areas for *E. officinalis ssp anglica* soon became apparent. Associates were Tormentil, Heath Bedstraw, Sweet Vernal Grass, Mouse-ear Hawkweed, Saw-wort and a thin population of Bracken. Heath Spotted Orchid usually indicated ground too wet for the Eyebright, but occasionally the two species overlap. Areas of thick Bracken, Purple Moor-grass or low Gorse did not hold this Eyebright; nor did the well-grazed lawns on the north side of West Common. The main areas for it are either side of the road to Blashenwell - between the first and second valleys on the W side of the road and on the N-facing slope on the E side of the road. Small pockets of it occur in many other places on West and Middle Commons. There was very little near the top of the main ridge of either part of the Common.

E. confusa on the other hand prefers the more heavily grazed areas on the north side of West Common (but not in the best areas for Chamomile). Elsewhere *E.confusa* is apt to occur on the edges of paths, sometimes in the same area as *E. officinalis*. Hybrids between the Eyebrights may occur; investigation is necessary.

The July mowing of the Commons took place, but it did not impede the survey – the mower was set to cut Gorse, Bracken and Bramble and the taller grasses. It usually passed over low species.

***E. officinalis ssp anglica* was found in 520 10x10m squares, and *E. confusa* in 357. Of those they were both in the same square 36 times.**

The Rev. Edward Pratt

Reports of 2010 Field Meetings

24th April 2010 Dorset Flora Group survey: Leader Peter Hatherley.

Queen's Copse and Prior's Copse, East Dorset.

Driving through Hinton Martell to the meeting point at the end of Queen's Copse Drive gave a foretaste of the potential to be surveying some quite old countryside as there were many fine veteran oaks in the hedgerows and indeed at the meeting point a householder had quite wisely placed some logs to dissuade parking. Queen's Copse has a number of entry-points but we used one in the southwest corner SU035061. Here the lane to the north has a Holly boundary with a number of old coppice stools suggesting that the area has been used in the past as a cattle pound. At the entrance to the wood there is a large (2m diameter) coppice stool of Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*). Bowen (2000) refers to a record from 1595 from Holt Forest. The wood is drained by streams originating from Chalbury Common, which run eastwards to the Moors River. The central ride separating Queen's Copse (Holt) from Prior Copse (Horton) forms the parish boundary.

Queen's Copse and its adjoining neighbour Prior's Copse are managed by the Forestry Commission and are mainly planted with Douglas Firs (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). Although there are many large blocks of this tree, the planting was undertaken with some sympathy for native species and recent management has thinned the firs, whilst allowing the native trees to flourish. It is under the native trees that the ground flora is at its most interesting, especially along the woodland edge.

One of the target species for the day was Spurge Laurel – a shrub of old woods tolerant of shade favouring calcareous clay soils (Bowen, 2000). This we found along the western boundary of both Queen's Copse and Priors Copse with a small number of plants showing distress. Rackham (2006) published a list of plants he considers to be ancient woodland indicators. These woodlands contained twenty-two of these species including: Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Anemone, Bluebell, Hairy Woodrush (*Luzula pilosa*), Wood Spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*), and although in all instances only quite rarely Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), Early Purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*), Climbing Corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*), Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) and Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*).

The margins contained plenty of native species with Small-leaved Lime coppice, which in the north-east corner of Queen's Copse also had Mistletoe (*Viscum album*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Ash, Pedunculate Oak occasional Beech with an understorey of Hawthorn, Hazel and Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*) in wet places. Holly is found frequently in the boundary. In the north east quarter of Prior's Copse is an area of about 120 x 100m of Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), whilst immediately to the south in Queen's Copse is an area of Small-leaved Lime. The sweet Chestnut coppice is still worked and has a rich Bluebell ground flora. We returned to the start along the southern margin of Queen's Copse where a substantial wood-bank can be seen.

15th May, 2010 Leaders Robin Walls and E.A. Pratt.

Stoborough Heath for Pale Dog Violet *Viola lactea*

Pale Dog Violet is an herb of well drained, dry heathland habits generally found in the heathlands of Hampshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall with a number of sites in west Wales and Anglesey. This was one of our target species in the B.S.B.I. rare and scarce plant survey in 2010. The plan being to take members to a site where the violet is found and ask them to search other places where it has previously been recorded in Dorset. This was not as easy as thought as not only was this species present, but Heath Dog-violet (*Viola canina*), Common Dog Violet (*V. riviniana*) and the hybrids *V. lactea* x *riviniana* and *V. canina* x *lactea* were also present. These were all photographed with samples checked in the literature before members set off to search other places.

Stoborough Heath is managed by the RSPB and on this higher dryer part, scrub management is carried out to keep rides open and gorse and birch under control. The area was quite rich botanically with some seventy species recorded.

In the afternoon session, we visited Higher Hyde Heath where a smaller number of the violets were present, but a little scrub management should ensure larger populations in the future. We also searched two adjacent sites, where we had grid references, with no luck and finally visited Gallows Hill to search for an old record again with negative results.



Viola lactea

B Edwards

**26th June, 2010 Leader Robin Walls. Report Jon Crewe
Batcombe Down.**

The group met at the car park near Cross and Hand, SY635055, in fine weather. 19 members and friends attended and the day started with a short walk to the west-facing slope of Batcombe Down, where the Musk Orchid (*Herminium monorchis*) was last seen in Dorset. There was some doubt about the date of the last record but it appears not to have been seen here for 10 years despite several searches. We spread out downhill and walked NW, attempting to cover the entire slope.

The turf is in reasonable condition although rather poached in the more accessible areas; some orchid species were found, including Common Spotted (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), and Pyramidal (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) Orchids while close observation by Peter Cramb and Robin Walls added both greater butterfly (*Platanthera chlorantha*) and bee (*Ophrys apifera*) orchids to the list. Many typical downland plants were present, although in the main in small numbers. Squinancywort (*Asperula cynanchica*), Small Scabious (*Scabiosa columbaria*) and Common Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) were among the better finds. Unfortunately the Musk Orchid remained elusive. It is a tiny and unobtrusive species and may still be present here; 2010 was a poor year for this plant even in hotspots such as Noar Hill in Hampshire but the chances of refinding it in Dorset are now looking slim.

We ate lunch on the down before moving on to the second part of our excursion, a visit to Hendover Coppice. This exceptional site was previously owned and managed by Bryan Collins before he generously gave it to the Dorset Wildlife Trust. Bryan joined us for the morning; although unable to stay for the visit to Hendover Coppice, his directions helped us to find Herb Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*) and Wood Vetch (*Vicia sylvatica*). The highlight of this part of the trip came when we eventually tracked down the small colony of Fly Orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*). A few flowers were found in good condition, which gave the photographers their opportunity. It is a matter of concern that the orchids here are declining, with Bird's Nest Orchid apparently lost from the site and all species much reduced in recent years. The reasons for this are not known.

Robin Walls as leader and Bryan Collins for giving us the benefit of his specialist local knowledge were thanked for their assistance with this meeting.

**8 July 2010 Leader Ted Pratt.
Godlingston Heath**

The annual survey of Bog Orchid was carried out over a period of four days, led by the Rev. E.A. Pratt. The population of this species and its flowering period was determined during this survey in which many Society members and National Trust volunteers took part. It is with considerable regret that due to predation of this orchid on other sites by determined individuals, the detailed report the Rev. Pratt prepared for the Flora Group will not be put in the public domain.

**17 July 2010 Leaders Dr Jonathan Cox and Sean Cooch (Natural England)
Lyscombe and Highdon S.S.I.**

This area is located to the south of the Blackmoor Vale in the north-east corner of the parish of Piddletrenthide. The valley is a south-facing horseshoe reaching a maximum height of 255m. We parked at Lyscombe Farm making our way, first of all, to a beautiful restored chapel with a simple wooden cross, made from drift wood. We then climbed the eastern slopes onto the chalk grassland, grazed by Hebridian sheep. Hobby was seen overhead, whilst both Linnet and Yellowhammer were present in the Gorse. The eastern slopes had over sixty chalk downland species in the grassland where Tor-grass is rare. Highlights included Clustered Bellflower (*Campanula glomerata*), Squinancywort (*Asperula cynanchica*), Common Rockrose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) and a grass which I suspect is under recorded, Crested Hair-grass (*Koeleria macrantha*).



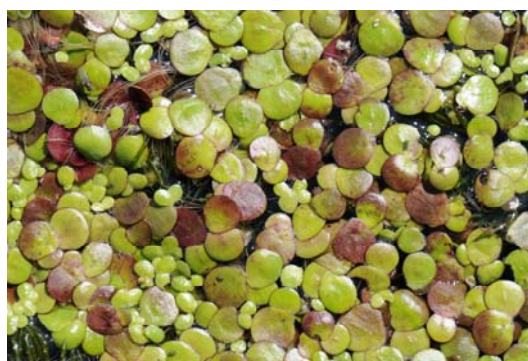
Campanula glomerata B Edwards

We next moved onto a small area of wood pasture with many anthills. Although the field has many open areas, Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) were scattered across the field. The soil here was of a more acidic nature with Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*). At the foot of the slope is a small copse of Ash and Hazel with a ground flora of Dog's Mercury in drier areas and Ramsons in the wetter areas. A woodland ride had Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*) and there was a good area of the tall woodland Hairy-brome Grass. (*Bromus ramosa*).

As part of the agreement with Natural England, the farm has been working to create more chalk grassland on the valley floor. Whilst crossing this large field we were pleased to see a Badger run across some 200m away. The area was not as rich as the hill slopes but the herbs are returning with Rock-rose, Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*) and Red Bartsia. We had a further surprise with an arable crop in very chalky ground where plants such as Fool's Parsley (*Aethusa cynapium*), Small Toadflax (*Chaenorhinum minus*), Round-leaved Fluellen, (*Kickxia spuria*), Field Pansy (*Viola arvensis*), and Dwarf Spurge (*Euphorbia exigua*) were present along the margins. Returning to the farm along the western ridge brought no surprises in the calcareous grassland.

Wareham Common

Five members braved the weather forecast and joined the leader for two hours to look at species of a rich ditch and a riverside. The ditch afforded opportunity to compare Branched and Unbranched Bur-reeds (*Sparganium erectum* and *S. emersum*), and Greater Duckweed (*Spirodela polyrhiza*), Common and Least Duckweeds (*Lemna minor* and *L. minuta*). Ivy-leaved Duckweed (*L. triscula*) was seen in the river later. Rigid Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) was found beneath the surface, and Nodding Bur-marigold (*Bidens cernua*), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*) and Water Dock (*Rumex hydrolapathum*) above it. Colourful species lining the banks included Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Ragged Robin (*Silene* [formerly *Lychnis*] *flos-cuculi*) and Common Marsh-bedstraw (*Galium palustre*) among them.



Spirodela polyrhiza

B Edwards

Crossing the Common to the River Piddle, Janet O'Connor found Fen Bedstraw (*Galium uliginosum*) growing in the grass – a first for the tetrad.

Part of the river had recently been dredged, but there was still plenty of River Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*) and the true Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) in it. The leader's grapnel fished out first some Pedunculate Water-starwort (*Callitriche brutia* Ssp. *brutia*), a new site for this Dorset Rare species, some Nuttall's Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*), curly but with narrower leaf apices than Canadian Waterweed (*E. canadensis*), and later some Perfoliate Pondweed (*Potamogeton polygonifolius*).

It only rained a little early in the meeting – the forecast had proved pessimistic!



Silene flos-cuculi B Edwards

Holt Heath NNR

The objective for this meeting was principally to search for some old records of Marsh Gentian (*Gentiana pneumonanthe*). This plant has declined considerably in the UK due to neglect of the damp acid grasslands. There are small populations in Yorkshire and Norfolk, with a few localities in the west of Britain, but the Dorset and Hampshire heathlands are its stronghold. The group has searched for this species in early September on Cranborne Common with some success in recent years and it was with high hopes that we could relocate the species at Holt Heath, especially as grazing has been reintroduced. Robin Walls and Peter Hatherley did some preliminary searching without any luck in the two weeks before the visit. It was with great pleasure that quite early in the day one flowering spike was located, followed quickly by a second spike some distance away. It was at this second spike that we realised our difficulties. For whatever reason, the plant was only just coming into flower and the non-flowering shoots are very difficult to locate amongst the mass of vegetation. We moved further west to search two other locations. The northerly one I searched was in waist high Purple Moor-grass and none was located, but the party who searched the southern location found around 40 flowering spikes. In addition to this plant we located some of the heath's other specialities including Brown-beaked Sedge (*Rhynchospora fusca*), White-beaked Sedge (*R. alba*) good areas of Marsh Clubmoss (*Lycopodiella inundata*) and Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*; Oblong-leaved Sundew (*Drosera intermedia*) was widespread in shallow mires. Common Lizard, Sand Lizard and Smooth Snake added to the heath's interesting species range. Grayling butterfly was present in good numbers, together with Small Heath.



Drosera intermedia

B Edwards

We finally made a small detour to see Dorset's only site for Copse Bindweed (*Fallopia dumetorum*) on a roadside verge.

Bowen, H.J.M. (2000) *The Flora of Dorset* Pisces Publications, Newbury.

Green, G. (2004) *Birds of Dorset* Christopher Helm, London.

Rachkam, O. (2006) *Woodlands* Collins New Naturalist, London.

Deptford pink (*Dianthus armeria*) working party

The morning of 29th January 2011 saw five members gathering at Hethfelton to improve the habitat of the Deptford Pink. This delightful flower is an annual / biennial which has declined greatly in recent years. The BSBI website records its presence in 53 hectads between 1987 and 1999, falling to 29 after 2000 and there may only be a dozen sites left by now. The plant has not been seen at our only site in Dorset for several years.

The problem is that the track and turning circle are now rarely used. When the Forestry Commission owned the wood they used to turn heavy vehicles, scouring the surface and thereby keeping the area free of moss. The plant must have open ground to germinate, and preferably light, slightly basic soil.

Ted Pratt had met the owner and asked whether we could spend an hour or so scratching with rakes and forks in the hope that we can revive the plant's fortunes. Although the air temperature was a little above freezing we soon got warm. Just as well, because we kept stopping to say something to our neighbour (that was the excuse, but actually, it was just to get our breath back). Under the thick weft of pleurocarpous bryophytes (mainly *Calliergonella cuspidata* and *Pseudoscleropodium purum*) we found a typical forestry road construction of crushed limestone. This helps explain the presence of the plants in an area of fairly acid soil. It also opens up the possibility of other interesting species.

In an hour and a half we cleared an area of about 175 m², most of the unshaded area of the turning circle. Now all we can do is to wait until late spring when we hope to find happy little plants appearing. This is the first time the Dorset Flora Group has organised a working party for conservation purposes. We have organised a joint work party with Dorset Wildlife Trust to clear scrub from a *Viola lactea* (Pale Heath Violet) site. We hope to be able to fix a day to do similarly for *Lobelia urens* (Heath Lobelia) before too long.

R.M.Walls

The lost Breeze Hill Juniper – Refound!

The first edition of the Dorset Heath included an article about the Plantlife Lowland Juniper project. Work on this has continued throughout 2010; Juniper is a slow growing plant and seed does not germinate for a long time after sowing, so the success of the work to create new colonies is still uncertain. However, there have been some early indications that the seed collected for sowing in the scrapes created on sites across the South of England is viable. Three pots in my garden have seedlings, and Julia Carey in Bucks has numerous small plants which appeared from seed in 2010.

The previous article stated that Dorset had only one Juniper; this was not accurate, as there are a few on private land with no access and a few more in open landscapes on Cranborne Chase. However, numbers are barely into double figures, so there have been several attempts to check on the sites of old records. In general these have been

unsuccessful, so a suggestion from Tim Wilkins that a small party should look for a 1985 record from Breeze Hill might have met with a poor response had lunch to follow not been included.

The party consisted of past and present workers on the Juniper project; Robin Walls lent botanical authority but was perhaps outranked by Lena Ward, who has studied England's Juniper populations since the 1970s, and whose record card was the source of the information that the plant existed on the site. Unfortunately the grid reference appeared to be wrong – or correct for Somerset - so we decided to head for Breeze Hill and search likely sites. Leaving Tim's wife Cora and daughter Fern to cook lunch (Many thanks, Cora), we set off.

The walk to the site was slightly complicated by steep, muddy conditions and by the landowner choosing to wrap barbed wire around all but 2 feet of the top rail of one gate, but at the cost of minor damage to trousers and dignity we reached the West facing chalk slope. We spread out across the hill, the more agile members scrambling along the steep face of the hill while Lena took the path closer to the base. There were no signs of Juniper; the grassland appears quite rich, with numerous isolated hawthorns but no dense scrub at higher levels. Robin and Rachael Arden searched a strip of scrubby woodland at the base of the hill while Tim and I kept to higher levels. Eventually I descended towards Lena, fairly sure that we had failed, only to find her pointing up hill near to where I had been. We agreed that it looked like gorse but nevertheless I slogged back up the slope and found to my delight that Lena's nose for a Juniper had not failed!

I would imagine that no single Juniper bush has ever had quite so much attention; photographs, notes, GPS position records and general admiration. It is not every day that you add around 10% to a species numbers in the county with one discovery. The position proved to be to the West of the area marked Breeze Hill on the OS map, which may have been the cause of previous failures to locate the bush, but the view from higher on the hill was blocked by a nearby hawthorn, so it is possible that searchers have just walked by before. We returned to Tim's house feeling we had earned our lunch and a celebratory glass of wine. A photo of the bush with its intrepid finder can be seen below.



Dorset Flora Group

Vice-county recorder's notes

Summary of the Threatened Plant Project 2010

In 2010 we had six species of the TPP to survey and here is a round up to the outcome:

Glebionis (= *Chrysanthemum*) *segetum* (Corn Marigold)

We found many sites found during the arable project and other botanists reported incidental finds. I did not organise any special searches or visits to previously recorded sites because the species is widespread and likely to appear in different fields as conditions change. Even from the casual records it is clearly that this species is in good health in vc9, as I think it is throughout the country.

Herminium monorchis (Musk Orchid)

We failed to find this species at its last known site on Batcombe Hill during our well attended visit to search for it and the previous recce. I had also looked at some older sites, but unlike the Batcombe downland, the habitats were no longer appropriate.

Hordeum marinum (Sea Barley)

There is only one well located site where I found a very few plants. My visit was a little late, so I am hoping a small party can do a better survey this year. A search further along the Fleet where the habitat looked ok failed to find it, but this is a tricky species. Apart from being annual, with all that implies, it is very like the common wall barley. Like finding a prince, you have to kiss an awful lot of frogs before you find the right one.

Juniperus communis (Juniper)

We have very few bushes in Dorset. You heard of the Plantlife survey at the AGM and in last year's Dorset Heath. So there was no need for us to organise a full survey in 2010. Please see pages 17-18 for an account of the search for one older record.

Melittis melissophyllum (Bastard Balm)

This is a lovely plant that once occurred in several Dorset woods. I went to all the more recent sites and found it in none. However, all is not lost because I met the retired woodman at one site and he assured me it was in flower a few weeks previously. So we have a trip planned this year, hopefully at the right time, to see if we can find it and record the habitat properly.

Viola lactea (Pale Dog-violet)

This was the most problematical of the species because of its ability to hybridise with other violets, especially *V. riviniana*. It also has a short flowering period, outside which it is impossible to identify with any certainty. We also have a lot of sites where it has been recorded, with varying reliability. Ted Pratt guided us to the best sites, but even there we spent a lot of time getting to grips with the taxa. Several members visited other sites and sent me their reports, but I still feel we only have a fuzzy idea of the status of this species. One practical outcome has resulted from our visit to the DWT reserve at Higher Hyde where we found the large colony had been reduced by

an order of magnitude. Tony Bates (now DWT President) has organised a workday to clear scrub on 6th February. All are invited, although you are probably reading this after the event.

New Records in 2010

There were some good finds last year, especially as a result of the arable fields survey for FWAG. I have neither had all the records from DERC for validation nor the time to extract all the more interesting ones from my own records, but here are a few highlights.

Chara virgata, *Potamogeton alpinus*, *P. trichoides*, *P. acutifolius* and *Littorella uniflora*.

All these appeared in an overgrown pool that Robert Aquilina showed me near Wareham. Quite a haul for such a neglected pond.

Cotoneaster nohelii

Ted Pratt found this cotoneaster near Wareham and had the identification confirmed by Jeannette Freyer because it is the first record for the county and only the third in the British Isles.

Echinochloa colona

This is a large grass, similar to cockspur (*E. crus-galli*) and it may be overlooked for that reason, that I found in a field at Sherford Farm during the arable survey. Its English name is Shama millet.

Matthiola sinuata

Discovered by Steve Trehwella at the end of Studland Peninsular. He spotted a plant in October 2009 and returned to find it in full flower last July. The nearest native site is the Channel Islands and this is the first record for Dorset since 1931 at Flag Head Chine.

Ophrys apifera var. *atrofusca*

The brown bee orchid was found at Radipole a few years ago by Naomi Bailey and she had been looking after it. This year there were several stems which gained notoriety by appearing in the twitchers websites and the RSPB feared for its safety. It has survived and Naomi has written a short note for BSBI News.

Scorzonera humilis

John Wright found a small colony of this species at a new site on Corfe Common in May. As a result we have a visit this year to search the common more widely.

Projects for 2011

General recording

Towards the end of last year the BSBI published a recording strategy for 2010-20, available from the website (<http://www.bsbi.org.uk/RecordingStrategy.pdf>). I am pleased to say that we have most of the items in the list of priorities, although a little updating would not come amiss. The first aim is to update the hectad (10km grid square) records by 2019 in readiness for publishing the third atlas of the British and Irish flora by 2024. Further in the document you will see that records should be collected at the tetrad scale (2km grid square), or finer. To completely record the vice-county in a ten year period will require good planning and mobilisation of all botanists in the county. We have a well recorded county and I doubt there have been sufficient significant changes to make such an endeavour worthwhile. The one area I feel insecure about in making that statement is N Dorset, simply because I do not know the botany well enough. Most of my knowledge comes from the mid 1990s when I conducted a phase 1 survey of the Blackmore Vale assisted by Dominic Price (now working for Plantlife) and later, a more intensive survey of the area around Gillingham.

N. Dorset is not blessed with the range of habitats to be found to the south, there is not much Access land and the footpath network is patchy. Consequently botanists rarely visit and few of our members live there. Much of it is intensively managed farmland, although unlike the E of Britain, many of the hedges and copses still survive. So there could be delights waiting to be discovered and we should check it out. I have not yet worked out how best to do this, but broadly I would like to collect records at the monad (1km grid square) level for common species and better for the scarce species, aiming to do at least one of the four in each tetrad. If anyone living 'up't north', or intending to spend time there would like to be involved, please contact me so that we can avoid duplication of effort.

As I've said before, my view is that our efforts are probably better directed at monitoring the rarer or declining plants, where it makes sense to be able to detect changes as soon as possible and increase our knowledge of their ecology and habitats. Please use of the rare plant recording form when you find an interesting species. Or, if you do not want to use the form, at least keep it as a check list and record the information listed.

Dorset Rare Plant Register search list

Two people, Ted Pratt and Peter Cramb, have visited a lot of sites at their respective ends of the county, up-dating the information in the database. Thank you to all who have sent me records and if you have not yet done so, it is never too late. As a result we have reduced the search list by a substantial number of sites and I ought to trawl the database for more old records to update. This I will do when I have validated the botanical records sent to DERC in 2010.

Other searches

I am still concerned about the Frog Orchid (*Coeloglossum viride*), which I failed to find at the specified site in 2009 and populations may have declined. I would like to hear of any locations, ideally with a full species list from the site even if you did not find it at a site where it had previously been recorded. It might well occur on some of the sites we will be searching for the Burnt-tip Orchid (*Neotinea ustulata*).

Threatened Plant Project (TPP)

The BSBI have published the species, but not yet sent me the sites we need to search in Dorset. However, with one exception, I am hoping we can visit all the sites. Only eight of the ten species have been recorded in Dorset and three of these are unlikely to still be present:

Baldellia ranunculoides
Cicendia filiformis
Cuscuta epithymum
Galium pumilum
Juncus compressus
Neotinea (Orchis) ustulata
Silene conica
Torilis arvensis

I will be preparing a strategy to cover all the sites that are worthwhile once I have the selected sites from the BSBI. If anyone would especially like to survey for one of these species, please let me know. Dodder (*Cuscuta epithymum*) is the species I think is so widespread that it is not worth surveying every record. Nevertheless, I would like to hear of any sightings as you wander over the heaths. Fill in a TPP form if you can, but if not please note the host plant in addition to the grid reference, date etc. A GPS is almost essential for getting a grid reference to better than six figures in the middle of a heath. An alternative is to carefully note where you are in relation to paths, scrub, or any other landmark and then to locate your position on an aerial photo on the Dorset Explorer or Where's-the-path websites and read off the grid reference.



Baldellia B Edwards



Cuscuta epithymum B Edwards

Dorchester County Museum Herbarium

One of the projects I have been working on is our county herbarium (abbreviated to **DOR** in the literature). You probably know that this is founded on Mansel-Pleydell's collection and it is held at the county museum. Peter and Margaret Cramb have been diligently sorting and cataloguing M-P's Dorset material for several years and have just completed it. They have moved on to the smaller collections. I have been checking the determinations of some of the material and thinking about how to make the herbarium more accessible.

There are two other collections that deserve to be in **DOR**: Professor Good's and the Nature Conservancy's herbarium, initiated by its first director-general, C.Diver, and containing the material from the South Haven Peninsular survey begun in 1932. These were held by CEH at Winfrith and dumped when they moved to Wallingford. Fortunately Bryan Edwards rescued six large boxes and has recently passed them to me. Two of the boxes have Good's material which is unmounted. Over the Christmas period I began the task of mounting the specimens ready for accession to the county herbarium.

The work is straightforward, but it is going to take a long time. The material was carefully tied up in packages and marked for Furzebrook (the previous home of CEH and its predecessor organisations in Dorset). Each specimen is stored between sheets of newspaper and has a label with details of collector, determiner, location etc. which can be stuck to the herbarium sheet. Interestingly, the newspaper used was half sheets of The Times from the 1870s. If anyone can answer the puzzle as to what Good was doing with newspaper published before he was born, I would like to know. It is impossible not to read snippets from the paper and the contrast with more superficial reporting in today's papers, even in The Times, is striking. Another puzzle is why Good collected what he did. It is not a comprehensive collection of local or rare species and there are many repeats. At the time of writing I am working through the violets. There are dozens of specimens of the same species, most determined by P.M.Hall, and using a bewildering number of varietal names (these are all in his Geographical Flora). Nearly all the names of the subspecies and varieties have been sunk, but clearly it was important at the time. My impression is that Good collected specimens of things he was unsure of, but there may be other explanations.

The NC herbarium is mounted. From a brief look, it includes material from elsewhere in Britain and some of the identifications are dubious or obviously wrong. I intend to check all the sheets before incorporation into **DOR**.

The first step in making the herbarium more usable is to fully catalogue the collection and make that generally available. Our plan for this is to get it added to the Herbaria@Home website. If you have not visited the site, I can recommend it. Not only does it give you access to a massive herbarium (77,387 specimens had been catalogued last time I looked), but lots of information of the collectors, invaluable to historians of botany. The way it works is that photographs of all the sheets (probably over 20,000 in **DOR**) are put on the website. Volunteers then go online to copy the information from the labels into a form and add any observations that occur to them. Ultimately the collection is reviewed and catalogued and anyone can search online for the material.

R.M.Walls, vice-county recorder for Dorset

DFG Events Programme 2011

Saturday 12 th March	10am – 2pm	Excel training course, Sutton Poyntz
Saturday 16 th April	10.30am	Hibbit Woods DWT Reserve
Thursday 28 th April	9.30am	Stonebarrow (NT Golden Cap)
Saturday 30 th April	11am	Brownsea
Saturday 14 th May	10.30am	Stubhampton Bottom
Saturday 21 st May	10.30am	Corfe Common
Thursday 9 th June	10.30am	Chetterwood
Saturday 25 th June	10.30am – 4pm (TBC)	Sedge training course, Corfe Castle
Saturday 9 th July	10.30am	Arne Moors
Saturday 6 th August	10.30am	Tamarisk Farm, West Bexington

Dorset Wildflower Week

Saturday 28 th May	10.30am 10.30am all day	Ballard Down Corfe Mullen Bioblitz
Sunday 29 th May	10.30am 2.30pm	Steamer Point Nature Reserve Durlston Country Park
Monday 30 th May	2.30pm	Stoborough Heath RSPB Reserve
Tuesday 31 st May	10.30am 2pm	Winfrith Heath DWT Reserve Portland Bill
Wednesday 1 st June	10.30am 2.15pm 2.30pm	Corfe Common Powerstock Common DWT Reserve Northbrook Copse
Thursday 2 nd June	10.30am 10.30am	Old Harry and Ballard Down Stanpit Marsh Nature Reserve
Friday 3 rd June	10am all day	Sutton Poyntz
Saturday 4 th June	10.30am 2-4pm	Corfe Charity/NT Meadows Lorton Meadows DWT Reserve
Sunday 5 th June	10am	Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve

Full details of these events are available in the DFG newsletter and on the DERC website www.derc.org.uk under the Local Groups section.

Projects for 2011 to get involved in

- General recording of rarer or declining plants
- Dorset Rare Plant Register search list
- Frog orchid (*Coeloglossum viride*)
- BSBI Threatened Plant Project: eight nationally scarce plants to re-find