



# ***The Dorset Heath***

## **Newsletter of the Dorset Flora Group 2013**

**Chairman and VC9 Recorder Robin Walls; Secretary Jon Crewe**

### **Editorial:**

At short notice, I have taken over editing the *Dorset Heath* from Jon Crewe. Jon is now quite busy as a partner in Abbas Ecology. For the future, I will be quite happy to receive articles for publication about Dorset's flora. My email address is: Johna72newbould[at]yahoo.co.uk Please note the use of the full [at] you will need to substitute this with @.

In many ways, 2012 onwards was an exciting time for biological recording. It is some fifty years since the Botanical Society of the British Isles published its *Atlas of the British Flora* and ten years since the *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora* was published. B.S.B.I. are considering compiling a new atlas around 2020 and a new recording effort will be required. Please note in the programme of events the March meeting organised by Robin Walls to discuss strategy.

In 2013, The British Ecological Society celebrates its centenary and Golden Jubilee of the *Journal of Applied Ecology* whilst in 2014 we will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the foundation of the CEH Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood. The BSBI Conference held at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh in September 2012 was not only a celebration of the publication of the first atlas but many speakers demonstrated the quite advanced analysis the powerful computers in academic institutions can output.

*John Newbould*

### **Chairman's comments on 2012**

The last year was as busy as usual and the reports elsewhere describe the excursions. I would just like to highlight a few items and look at how they will develop in the future.

### **Conifers**

In November we had a well attended conifer workshop run by Matt Parratt from the Forestry Commission's Alice Holt research station. This was hugely helpful as a comprehensive introduction to the main genera and species that we could find locally.

In the morning Matt had brought a good range of material for us to inspect whilst he talked us through the identification.

In the afternoon we left the relative warmth of the Drax Hall to drive the short distance to the Sugar Hill arboretum for a tour of the extraordinary range of species growing there. Despite a very cold day and 'conifer fatigue' threatening to overtake us, Matt's enthusiasm and brisk pace kept us going. We are extremely grateful to Matt for giving up the time and planning such a well run day. Now it is up to us.

The choice of the Sugar Hill arboretum for the field trip was Ted Pratt's suggestion when we were looking for a place with a good range of species. It could not have been better for this. It was set up by the Forestry Commission as a trial about 60 years ago, to find which species would be economic to grow in Britain. Now that the trees have matured and seeded in some cases, we have a fantastic facility, freely accessible, on our doorstep. The area is a little derelict and the original research buildings have gone. Getting around is tricky in places and the trees do not have nametags. It could be made more useful and enjoyable to walk around by clearing the brash to create paths and setting up a trail. We thought this is a project the Flora Group should encourage and possible help with volunteer labour. We are talking to the local forester about this and the signs are that the Forestry Commission is keen to do something.

There a very helpful key to conifers created by Martin Rand and on the Hampshire Flora Group web site. As well as the keys and some good illustrations, Martin has written very good summaries of the species in Hampshire. Obviously much of this applies to Dorset and I can recommend downloading the file.

John Poland is revising the vegetative key to conifers. I have a copy and it is much more comprehensive than the one in the book. My opinion is that it works well and includes many species that are only going to be found in parks and gardens. If anyone would like to try it out, let me know. John has agreed to run a workshop on vegetative identification (of species other than conifers) for us this year, probably in September – details of date and place are yet to be decided.

### ***Arable plants***

Despite FWAG's loss of funding over a year ago, Clare Buckerfield found time to organise more surveys of arable farms in 2012. We started the year with a sociable meeting in a pub to discuss where we had got to and what we wanted to do in the future. Tracy and Simon from the Cranborne Chase and W. Wilts Downs AONB gave us a presentation on their results and their analysis. During the summer we surveyed five farms with the usual mixed results; many common species found and a good smattering of rarities. The highlight is probably Ted Pratt's finding of a good population of *Bromus secalinus* in a Purbeck farm. This species has been absent from Dorset for many years and we thought it was the first record since the 1920s for a while. Then it turns out Andrew Branson had found it in N. Dorset two years earlier. I have since heard that it seems to be turning up in Hampshire; is this indication of climate change, different agricultural practices or more observant botanists? Clare is hoping to arrange more farms for us to survey this year.

### ***Heath lobelia***

Last February we ran a working party on Hurst Heath to manage the small site for this rare species. In August a few of us returned to see the results. It was not an

enormous increase in numbers, but the plants were certainly growing a lot better. I also found a second site with a few plants on the other side of the Morden road. We had planned to do more work this February, but the very wet soil and difficulty in finding a rotavator in time led us to postpone this event to the autumn or into 2014.

### VC recorder's report

#### **Dorset Rare Plant Register**

2012 was the last year of the BSBI's Threatened Plants Project (TPP). Not that that means there are no longer any species threatened by extinction or severe population crashes. Whilst this has been a worthwhile endeavour, I have found it difficult to do it justice. It sounds easy; go to a representative selection of site for the chosen species in the year during the summer and record the population size and the habitat. In practice, the appropriate season is often quite short, so a fortnight's holiday at the flowering time can prevent any chance of finding it. Add to that the very few plants to find at an inadequate grid reference, the site might be on private land and the usual pressures of life and it becomes obvious that the success rate is not going to be good.

The solution to keeping track of our threatened plants, at least on a vice-county scale is to extend the time scale and recruit a team of botanists to do the searching. This is where the stochophyte list comes in; something Bryan Edwards started five years ago, although not using this name. This list is available to anyone and it does not have a cut-off date.

A good proportion of the sites have been visited and I have now taken some off the list because they have been refound or there is no hope for the site. I added some newly recognised taxa where more information is needed to see how rare they really are and we may have these taxa in Dorset. That leaves 810, but I've added all the records from the RPR that are older than 2000. This is another 2602! I am reducing this by deleting the obvious losses and combining records where they are clearly the same site expressed differently in the record. At the moment I have got it down a still scary 3514 sites to check. If you would like to join in the fun of finding long lost plants with a gratifying feeling that you are doing something useful, please contact me for the list, or sections of it. The information I have for a site is like this:

|                 |            |          |            |      |      |  |                         |
|-----------------|------------|----------|------------|------|------|--|-------------------------|
| <i>Mentha</i>   |            |          |            |      |      |  | Many plants on old clay |
| <i>pulegium</i> | Pennyroyal | SY927832 | Furzebrook | 1996 | HJMB |  | waste                   |

I can send you the whole list or if that is too awesome, I can send a list for selected 10 km squares or for particular species.

#### **Recording strategy to 2020**

To recap, the drivers behind the strategy are:

- We need to keep records up to date and track gains and losses.
- A decade is a suitable timescale on which to summarise geographical occurrence data.
- A monad (1km grid square) is a reasonable geographic scale for Dorset.
- BSBI aims to revise the British Isles atlas in 2020.

If records are not recorded for a particular site, for most species it will be sensible to collate at the 1km level, if only to avoid a plethora of sites in our databases.

Collecting at the tetrad or larger scale is no longer appropriate. The species that warrant more attention and a more precise grid reference are:

- Nationally scarce or declining species (RDB, NS)
- County or regionally scarce or declining spp. (DRPR, notable species, axiophytes)
- Common Dorset species where we have a significant proportion of the national resource.
- Potentially declining species for which we have insufficient information (data deficient, TPP)
- Newly recognised taxa (data deficient, scaly male fern segregates)
- Aliens & aggressive, invasive species.

The online recording system, Living Record, has been used for a year or more and it is proving very effective for the process of verification and data entry into DERC. This is our preferred way of collecting records, although we will still accept paper lists and spreadsheets. If you would rather send data this way, please speak to me or to DERC first to ensure it is done in the most efficient way. DERC has given every monad and hectad a name (in addition to the grid square reference) that we wish to use and avoid confusion of different names for the same place. These are the default names on Living Record. A second field will allow you to specify the site more precisely within the square.

So far I have about half the 47 hectads in the vice-county assigned to DFG members. Carolyn Steele and I are running a day to explain these to people and others who might be interested what we would like and to discuss the best way to forward on 16<sup>th</sup> March. If you have not been emailed about this and would like to come, please let me know. Lawrence Taylor, John Newbould, Peter and Margaret Cramb have already made a good start. From the lists Peter has sent in for SY48 and 49 he is finding between 100 and 200 species per monad.

Robin Walls, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013

## FIELD MEETING REPORTS 2012

*J.A. Newbould, 3 Brookmead Close, Sutton Poyntz, Weymouth DT3 6RS*

### **Thorncombe Woods LNR – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012 – Leader John Newbould**

A small party assembled in the car park for this meeting around 10.30a.m. when we all agreed that lunchtime would be a suitable time to finish in view of the weather forecast of heavy afternoon showers, which materialised about 1.30p.m.

Thorncombe Woods are managed by Dorset CC Countryside services and we witnessed an active programme of management through out our visit, starting with an area of recently coppiced Sweet Chestnut by the car park. The 26 ha site is a mixture of Oak Birch woodland with a small pond located on the edge of Black Heathland – formerly part of Egardon Heath. In addition, to the oak woodland, there are areas of mature Beech where the ground flora interest is poor. However, it is in the Beech woodland area where we witnessed the Swallet Holes formed by the gradual removal of the soluble bedrock by percolating water. These are featured in Chapter 28 entitled “the Hollows amid the Ferns” of Hardy’s novel *Far from the Maddening Crowds*. The pits we saw are shaded out by the Beech and ferns although present were scarce.

Significant areas of Rhododendron have been cleared to reduce the risk of sudden oak death caused by the fungus *Phytophthora ramorum*. Fortunately we saw no evidence of this disease but the leaves on small stumps were infected by a fungus identified by Laurence Taylor as *Gleosporium rhododendri*. In 1km square SY7292,

we recorded 56 species for the botanical list including in the shrub layer Spindle, Gooseberry, Hawthorn, Hazel, frequent Holly with both Silver and Downy Birch. Bravely Lawrence Taylor and Robin Walls were identifying coniferous tree species with some five species present.

On the ground, we were pleased to find, Town Hall-clock, Wood Anemone, Wood Sedge, whilst in the pond Lesser Spearwort and Bog Pondweed (*Potamogeton polygonifolious*) and adjacent Alder Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*).

On a cold day, we saw just two Orange-tip Butterflies, a beetle *Gastrophysa viridula* – a common beetle associated with Broad-leaved Dock and the Minotaur dung beetle (*Typhaeus typhoeus*). Although there were no specialist bird watchers a few woodland species were noted and Green Woodpecker was heard calling from the adjacent heath.

#### **Westhay Farm and Stonebarrow 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012. John Newbould**

Seven members braved strong winds and heavy showers of rain to survey Stonebarrow and the fields around Westhay Farm to monitor the populations of Green-winged Orchid (*Anacamptis [Orchis] morio*) as part of a national survey organised by the Botanical Society of the British Isles. In addition, we had hoped to monitor the small bird populations associated with the Gorse on Stonebarrow, but strong winds and natural noise from the sea defeated any representative survey.

We estimated across five fields we saw some 12,000 flowering spikes of the Green-winged Orchid with the numbers increasing each year. Typically the orchids were present in neutral herb-rich **MG5** grassland with associated species such as Yellow-rattle (*Rhianthus minor*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), at one site there was a prostrate white form of Common Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) with the most frequent grass in flower being Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). Interestingly, Una Garland identified the Dipterous Gall *Cystiphora leontodontis* on a few leaves of the Hairy Hawkbit. Management of the meadows involves a July hay crop followed by after-math grazing by cattle and occasionally sheep.

With regard to the birds, Whitethroat, Blackcap and Willow Warbler were seen and heard through the morning. There was one record of Song Thrush on Stonebarrow Hill. Raven had finished breeding in Monument Coppice with a pair mobbed by Carrion Crow. A pair of Buzzard was around most of the morning whilst Jon Campbell reported Sparrowhawk from Westhay Farm together with a solitary Swallow.



**Upper left: Green-winged Orchid,  
Westhay Farm**

**Upper right: Dorset Flora Group  
members surveying in Garston Wood  
on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2012**



**Lower left: Solomon's-seal  
*Polygonatum multiflorum* in Garston  
Wood**

**Photographs © John Newbould**

### **Garston and Pribdean Woods (Sixpenny Handley parish.) 12<sup>th</sup> May 2012.**

**Leader: Peter Hatherley.**

Ten members of the Flora Group assembled to assist R.S.P.B. with a woodland survey of the northern compartments of this historic wood – part of Cranborne Chase. These woodland compartments were drawn on the Thomas Arkwell Map of 1618AD with the northern boundary of the present wood forming the Dorset and Wiltshire County today.

The woods are managed in a traditional way with Hazel coppiced by rotation, with compartments fenced using 2m post and wire and in other places using Hazel wattle. Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash, Field Maple and Holly are grown on as standards, whilst some small areas are quite open allowing a good mixed ground flora with Hawthorn, Spindle and occasional Blackthorn providing a shrub layer and opportunities for saproxylic insects to nectar. The woods are classified by the National Vegetation Communities as type **W8** Ash, Field Maple and Dog's Mercury (*Fraxinus excelsior* – *Acer campestre* and *Mercurialis perennis*). This broad – brush group is broken down into a number of sub communities including: the *Anemone nemorosa* sub-community, *Deschampsia cespitosa* sub-community in damper places, *Allium ursinum* sub-community again in damper places lower down the gentle slopes, whereas Bluebell is found on the higher dryer slopes along with the typical sub-community dominated by Dog's Mercury. Toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*) was found scattered through the wood whilst Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) was just coming into flower and needed searching for. Solomon's-seal (*Polygonatum multiflorum*) was noted in four locations in the woods confirming a 1937 record (Bowen, 2000). This species is uncommon in Dorset. Care needs to be taken with identifying this plant, as Garden Solomon's-seal has distinctly angular stems and single flowers. Early Purple-orchid (*Orchis mascula*) was common through the wood but just a few spikes of Bird's-nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*) were found on one path. Twayblade (*Listeria ovata*),

Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) and Greater Butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) were also seen on the day. There were large areas of Wood-spurge (*Euphorbia amygdaloides*) whilst Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*) was just coming into flower and harder to recognise. Peter Hatherley had done an earlier visit and pointed out to us Dusky Cranesbill (*Geranium phleum*) near the public car park. There were small areas on rides indicating a more acid soil type with Tormenitl (*Potentilla erecta*) and Sweet-Vernal-grass together with scattered Bracken.

Two tasks were completed on the day. Most of the ten members concentrated on re-recording quadrats established by RSPB some ten years ago, whilst I concentrated on recording two 1km squares for the BSBI Atlas Recordings Scheme 2020. In all: in 1km square SU01 there were 120 records whilst in SU02 121 records with a total of 123 species. In the second edition of the *Wildflower Key* (2006), Dr Keith Kirby of Natural England lists 35 species in Dorset as Ancient Woodland Indicators. We recorded 15 of the 35 or 43%.

There were just a few common plant galls with the single Yew tree providing *Taxomyza taxi*. Just two species of Butterfly were noted viz. Orange Tip and Brimstone and two species of moth (Brown Silver-lines and Burnett Companion). With most of our members concentrating on the flora, members of the public provided most of the bird records, which were typical woodland species. However, on his earlier visit Peter Hatherley did note Red Kite across the border in Wiltshire. This bird is worth looking for in north east Dorset whilst on the Salisbury Road.

#### **Hod Hill (National Trust) 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (Hanford parish for northern rampart and Stourpaine parish) Leader John Newbould.**

Twelve members of the Society, Dorset Flora Group and National Trust volunteers assisted Andy Foster (Senior Surveyor) and Matthew Oates (Nature Conservation Advisor) from the National Trust's Consultancy team in a resurvey to update the Nature Conservation Evaluation of one of Dorset's most important Chalk grassland S.S.S.I.s. Assistance was also given on 2<sup>nd</sup> July in a torrential downpour and on 25<sup>th</sup> August. This report can only be a brief résumé of the evaluation. With one entomologist in our party and one ornithologist, the botanists were split into groups of two to survey the north, south, east and west ramparts. The survey generated 1500 botanical records alone on the day with an estimated contribution of 72 volunteer hours, plus 16 hours of data entry time.

Vegetation: JAN had made a series of visits to Hod Hill in 2006-7 when there were the beginnings of scrub invading, following a serious effort to open up grassland areas, especially on the southern ramparts in the winter of 2005. Regrettably circumstances have been such that the small Trust management team have been unable to obtain contractors with suitable equipment to tackle the sensitive steep slopes of the ramparts with scrub consisting of Hazel, Silver Birch, Ash, Bramble, Dog Rose, Spindle, Wild Clematis and Blackthorn becoming a major issue in places.

We had a number of target species of plant we were keen to find. These included Dwarf Sedge (*Carex humilis*), which is doing well on the northern and western ramparts. An old record for White Heleborine (*Cephalanthera damasonium*) was reported by Laurence Taylor, from the west margin. Spring Sedge (*Carex caryophylla*), Rock Rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Dwarf Thistle (*Cirsium acaule*), Salad Burnet (*Sanguisorbia minor*), Saw-wort (*Serratula tinctoria*), Horse-shoe Vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*) and Devil's bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) were amongst the chalk grassland herbs.



**Hod Hill August 2012. Photographs © John Newbould**

**Upper left: Scrub invasion on the northern rampart. Upper right: Carline Thistle  
Lower Left: Clustered Bell-flower. Lower right: Herb rich Erect Brome  
grassland on the southern rampart.**

One Dorset special plant not found was Field Fleawort (*Tephrosia integrifolia*). The large middle area, which had been ploughed during the Second World-war, seemed to be improving and was more herb rich with plenty of Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*) and Greater Knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*). There were small numbers of Woolly Thistle (*Cirsium eriophorum*) on the eastern rampart.

John Newbould was busy identifying plant galls with the gall of the Red Data Picture-winged fly gall *Uphora spoliata* on Saw-wort during the August visit; the gall wasp *Diplolepis mayri* forms a miniature Robin's pin Cushion type gall on the leaves of Dog Rose and is easily confused with the much larger *D. rosae*. In addition many more common galls were noted on plants such as Spindle, Hawthorn, Goosegrass, Hazel and Blackthorn.

**Winfrith Heath Nature Reserve (Winfrith Newburgh parish) 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012**

**Leader Laurence Taylor**

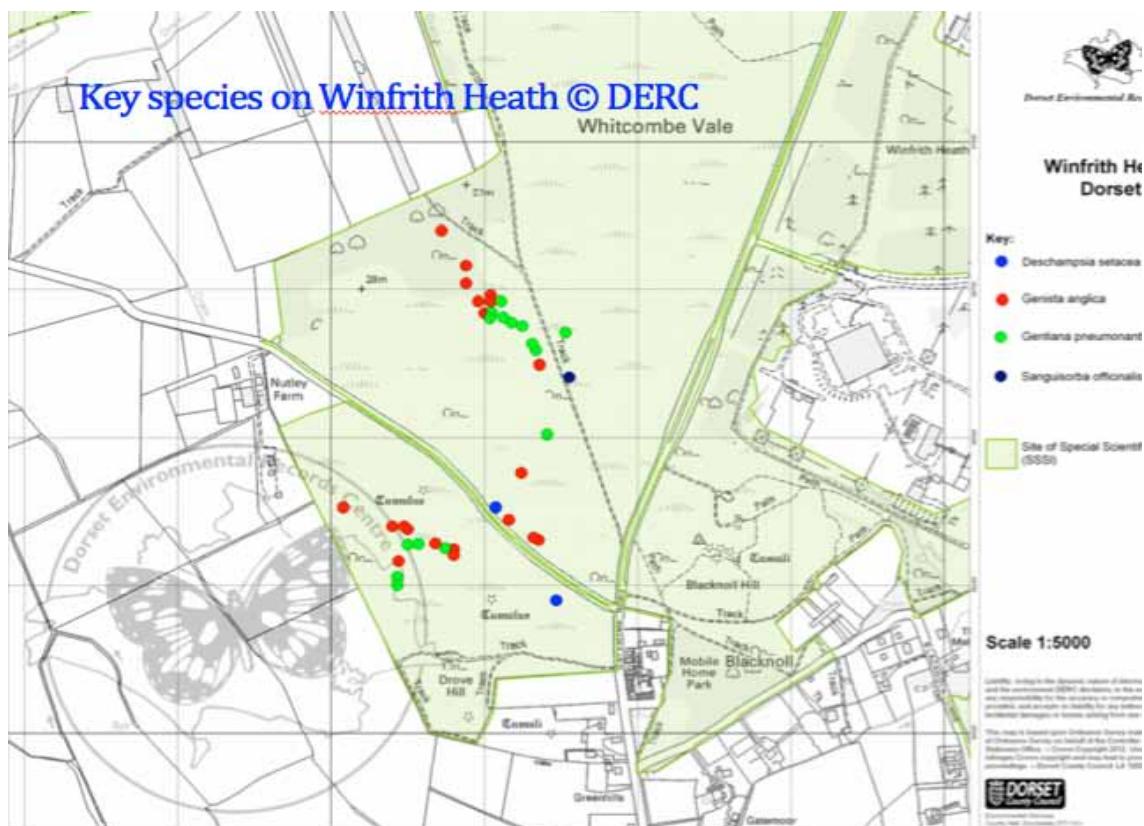
A small party of four members assembled to search for Petty Whin (*Genista anglica*). This small sub-shrub is usually confined to damp heathland where its habitat requirements are good light, moderately damp environment, an acidic soil with low nitrogen. (Hill *et. al.* 2004) Edwards and Pearman (2002) consider the plant scarce in Dorset. Our leader had found a number of plants in the southern part of the Reserve in 2011 and we aimed to establish the population in the area. We quickly located our first few plants and realised we were to look, not in the boggy areas of heath, but in the tussocks of Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) where it is also associated with Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*). During the course of the morning some sixty plants were

located at twenty-two locations. The shrub is small and spiny and rarely exceeded 300mm.



**Petty Whin on Winfrith Heath May 2012**

Elsewhere the flushes had Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) with the first flowers of Bog Ashphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) were in bud. At the roadside, we located a patch of Bog Hair-grass (*Deschamsia setacea*) known only at two other Dorset Heaths (Edwards and Pearman) and again Nationally Scarce mainly found now in north west Scotland. In a ditch just south of Nutley Farm, Round-leaved Crowfoot (*Ranunculus omiophyllus*) was seen in a ditch with the hybrid Sweet-grass (*Glyceria x pedicellata* [*G. fluitans* x *G. notata*]).



**Red dots show Petty Whin and Green dots show Marsh Gentian.**

Precision recording allows plant associations over a season to be mapped.

Just two butterflies were seen during the morning including a Green Hair-streak. *Odonata* were shy appearing but we had records for Four-spot Chaser and Large Red Damselfly. I also recorded ten plant galls including the uncommon stem gall *Hexomyza simplicoides* on Grey Willow.

In subsequent months, two of us undertook a Marsh Gentian Survey during September recording 64 flowering spikes in 15 locations.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> June, 2012. Leader and report Jonathan Cox.**

##### **Hartland Moor & Stoborough Heath**

Unfortunately this field meeting coincided with a period of very wet weather plus competing local events, and these were no doubt significant causes of the complete absence of attendees. However all was not lost as the leader, accompanied by his nine-year-old son, undertook a shorter walk across the grazed acidic grassland habitats of the adjacent Stoborough Heath NNR, where species seen included Small Cudweed *Filago minima*, Bird's-foot *Ornithopus perpusillus*, Common Storksbill *Erodium cicutarium*, Slender Trefoil *Trifolium micranthum*, Silver Hair-grass *Aira caryophylla*, Wall Speedwell *Veronica arvensis* and Heath Speedwell *Veronica officinalis*.

#### **Chesil to Ferrybridge (Portland parish) 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 Leaders: Dr Jonathon Cox and Robin Walls.**

Ten members of Dorset Flora Group and three members of the Hampshire Flora Group surveyed two very different habitats found on both sides of the road to Portland. Initially we surveyed, the western Chesil bank side to the north west of the new visitor centre. Here the shingle of the bank grades down to the muddy foreshore of the Fleet with its typical saline communities.

Initially we surveyed the south west side where Shrubby Sea-blight (*Suaeda vera*) grows on drier ground but due to the exposed windy conditions is more stunted and has more dead wood than what is by comparison lush growth in the ditches of the eastern side of the road. On the muddy foreshore nearby we found a few plants of Annual Sea-blight (*S. maritima*). Here there are many areas of Glasswort (*Salicornia* sp.) but it was too early in the season to determine to species level. Sea Purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*) was another early coloniser together with a few plants of Portland Spurge (*Euphorbia portlandica*). Restrictions on visiting the area of the Little Tern colony meant we were unable to check the status of Sea Spurge at its only Dorset location. Yellow-horned Poppy (*Glaucium flavum*) was seen in the pebbles under the shingle bank.

Grass areas were covered with Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*), Bird's-foot Trefoil, Rough Clover (*Trifolium scabrum*) and salt marsh grasses such as Common Salt-marsh Grass (*Puccinella maritima*), with occasionally Dune Fescue (*Vulpia fasciculata*), Hard-grass (*Parapholis strigosa*) Sand Cat's-tail (*Phleum arenarium*) and Sea Couch (*Elytrigia atherica*).

We then crossed to the east side using the board-walk where Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) was in flower. We then walked southwards looking for the specialities, which included the rare Prostrate Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis* Ssp. *prostratus*), Sea Clover (*T. squamosum*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyris nissola*), Common Broomrape (*Orobanche minor*) parasitic on the family *Asteraceae* and Wild Carrot but Yarrow Broomrape was not located. Of particular interest we found

Dodder (*Cuscuta epithymum*) parasitic on Kidney Vetch, which is usually found parasitic on Gorse and Heather (Sell and Murrel, 2009).



***Dodder found parasitic unusually on Kidney Vetch. Chesil June 2012***

The area contained many members of the Cabbage family but of most interest was Perennial Wall-rocket (*Diplotaxis tenuifolia*) mainly found in Dorset on Portland (Bowen, 2000). Finally we found two plants of Sea Holly (*Eryngium maritimum*), another rather scarce Dorset plant but it had moved away from the disused railway into a more densely vegetated area.

**Deadmoor Common (Fifehead Neville parish) 28<sup>th</sup> July 2012. Leader Andrew Branson and report Jon Crewe**

At 2.30 pm a select group of 12 flora group members and friends gathered at Deadmoor Common for a walk around the accessible areas, led by Andrew Branson.

This is an interesting site, part of the Blackmore Vale Common and Moors SSSI noted for fen-meadow, rush-pasture and unimproved grassland. Most of the interesting grassland at Deadmoor Common has scrubbed over due to lack of grazing and we noted scrub encroachment in many places. There are also substantial areas of secondary woodland. However, despite the wet conditions and occasional difficulties negotiating bramble patches it proved a very interesting site. Wood False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) was an expected early find as we entered the site through a wooded area but we were pleased to see Hairy Brome (*Bromopsis ramosa*), in addition. We were then quite surprised to find Quaking grass (*Briza media*) in tangled vegetation in the fen meadow nearby. This was accompanied by Large Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*), Meadow Thistle (*Cirsium dissectum*) and Zigzag Clover (*Trifolium medium*).

We moved across the Common, crossing areas resembling the Purple Moor Grass (*Molinia caerulea*) communities of the Poole basin heaths but with much more floristic variety, including Saw-wort (*Serratula tinctoria*) and Dyer's Greenweed (*Genista tinctoria*). Both Lesser Skullcap (*Scutellaria minor*) and, Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*) were encountered en-route, together with Betony (*Stachys officinalis*) and much Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*). We spent some

entertaining moments burning our tongues tasting, Water-pepper (*Persicaria hydropiper*) in the hope of finding the rare tasteless variety but without success.

The site also had a few interesting trees, including Wild Service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*). We looked out for nightingales, which still occur here, but were unlucky on this occasion. However, we were well entertained by several Silver-washed Fritillaries in one glade. Many thanks to our knowledgeable leader for again taking us into one of the less visited North Dorset sites and providing an entertaining introduction. It is to be regretted that the site is not currently being grazed; as some fine habitats are in danger of being lost.

**Studland Heath NNR for Little Sea and Poole Harbour NNR for Brand's Bay (Studland parish), August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Leader Dr Jonathon Cox.**

The party met at the on the Peninsula road and briefly looked at some of the specialities of Spur Bog before moving on to a bay on the western side of Little Sea. Dr Cox briefly gave an historical account of the development of what is now an ologotrophic lake with a maximum depth of 2.5m. Originally a tidal bay, over the past four centuries sand dunes have built up on the eastern side over Bagshot Beds, enclosing the area, we now call Little Sea. Following its enclosure (*circa 1880*), the water body was initially brackish but with acidic water draining into the south-eastern side it has become freshwater. For much of its time with a sandy bottom, the water has been clear, but recently Carp have invaded (possibly introduced by Canada Geese). To successful breed Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) require a water temperature of 18°C, which should be achieved here by late May to early June together with marginal vegetation to spawn. (Davis *et.al.* 2004). Coupled with mud from decomposing leaf litter, from surrounding woodland, the Carp stir up the muddy bottom reducing light available to the speciality water plants. The party only looked at some 500m of the western shore, but many of the Little Sea speciality waterweeds were shown to us. These included: Six-stamened Waterwort (*Elatine hexandra*), Alternate-leaved Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum alternifolium*), Shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*), three pondweeds – *Potamogeton perfoliatus*, *P. obtusifolius* and *P. berchtoldii*, Spring Quilwort (*Isoetes echinospora*). Another invasive waterweed was identified as Nuttall's Pondweed (*Elodea nuttalli*). Marginal vegetation included Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), a single plant of Water Plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and Lesser Skulcap (*Scutellaria minor*). A shallow muddy pool had Lesser Bladder-wort (*Utricularia minor*) with Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocoyle vulgaris*) growing round the stems of Bog Myrtle (*Myrica gale*). Dr Cox commented that Deer are now being controlled here allowing the fringe water vegetation to develop.

We walked some 500m north through marginal Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) woodland where in an open bay the fringe vegetation included Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), Branched Bur-reed (*Sparganium erectum*), Floating Club-rush (*Eleogiton fluitans*), Common Spiked-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) and Marsh St John's-wort (*Hypericum elodes*).

In the tall Purple Moor-grass we found a single female Wasp Spider (*Argiope bruennichi*). Of the six herptiles recorded on Studland, Laurence Taylor saw just one - Common Lizard. There were just a few birds seen including a Little Egret on the far shore with a few Swallows above Little Sea and a Hobby over the heath.

Visitors to the area, wishing to study the aquatic plant life of Little Sea should first seek permission and safety advice from the National Trust's Purbeck staff as unexploded munitions from the Second World-war are found at intervals. Grappling hooks, for example, should not be used.

The short afternoon session took the party to search the mudflats associated with the Brand's bay section of Poole Harbour. The harbour meets the criteria for designation as a Special Protection Area under the EU directive and as a wetland of international importance under the RAMSAR convention. Here one of the nicest sightings was six Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) described in the *Dorset Bird Report* as a localised winter visitor and passage migrant. These birds were typically catching flies at the waters edge and totally disregarded our presence within 3 metres.

Plant life at the mean high-water mark included: Townsend's Cord Grass (*Spartina alterniflora x maritima*) forming mats furthest into the harbour. On the strand line, we found various species of Glasswort (*Salicornia* agg.), just a few plants of Annual Seabligh, Parsley Water Drop-wort (*Oenanthe lachenalii*), Beaked Tasselweed (*Ruppia maritima*) and Sea Lavender (*Limonium vulgare*). Lesser Sea Spurry (*Spergularia marina*) was scattered along the littoral zone with two-minute fungal galls *Uromyces sparsus* and the white blisters of *Albugo lepigoni*. Lastly, our attention was drawn to a few plants of Grass-leaved Orache (*Atriplex littoralis*), which had the aphid gall *Hayhurstia atriplicis* causing in-rolled leaves. Regrettably poor weather meant that many of the speciality *Odonata* and *Orthoptera* of the area did not show with records of Common Darter from the former group and the only *Orthoptera* was Meadow Grasshopper.

**Hartland Moor NNR (Studland parish), 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2012. Leader and Report  
Rev. E.A. Pratt  
MARSH GENTIAN (*Gentiana pneumonanthe*) Survey 2012.**

Fourteen National Trust volunteers and/or Dorset Flora Group members, searching in pairs, undertook the survey, from 1030 to around 1600, in pleasant weather. The survey covered all the likely sites in Hartland Moor, Middlebere Triangle, Scotland Heath (both parts) and Langton Wallis Heath. The surveyors were given maps compiled by the leader showing their area and recent records of the Gentians in them.

They made records of how many flowering gentians were in each ten-metre square. These are listed west to east with the recorders' names. A map will be compiled later. **The overall total of 2568 plants** compares with 1511\* recorded on Godlingston and Studland Heaths (excluding the Golf Course) chiefly in 2011. (The Godlingston figure of 1511 includes 213 recorded on Godlingston Heath by John Winterbottom on the same day as this Hartland Moor survey - John counted two areas, which did not get covered in the 2011 survey.)

No plants were found in Langton Wallis Heath, south of Hartland Moor, where a few had been found in the past. On the other hand 118 were recorded in Middlebere Triangle, east of Slepe Road, where none had been recorded recently. Further south 25 plants were recorded on the northern part of Scotland Heath - but none were found in the south part of Scotland Heath. All these are included in the overall total.

This area, taken with that part of Stoborough Heath to its west, the area east of the main A351 road, which area is in the care of Natural England, may be the best locality for Marsh Gentians in Britain.

This was the last botanical survey organised by Angela Peters at the end of her eleven years as National Trust Ranger Ecologist in the area. At the close of the meeting, members of the group thanked Angela and wished her well in her new post with the New Forest National park.

## **Turnworth Down (National Trust) (Turnworth parish) 27<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

**Leader: John Newbould**

By late September, we have really started to look at the results of fungi and insects, leaving their mark on our trees and plants in the form of rusts and plant galls. We were also hoping for a crop of the larger macro-fungi but these have just not materialised. Interestingly we found a plant gall on Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) caused by a nematode *Subanguina graminophila* and also a gall caused by a bacterium on Ash *Pseudomonas syringae*.

We recorded 34 species of gall all in square ST8108, which added to 23 others we recorded in 2011, but not in 2012 means that this square with 57 species is one of the best worked for galls in Dorset over the last five years. Of particular interest new to the square were some of the fungal galls including *Puccinia circaeae* on the underside of the leaves of Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), *P. glechomatis* on Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and *P. hieracii* on Autumnal Hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*). Galls derived from insects of interest included *Mecinus pyrae* a cigar shaped gall on Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). This is one of the UK's most widespread plants, but this was a personal first time. There was an upward bulge on the leaves of the introduced Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*) on the roadside, which turned out to be *Phytopus erinotes* whilst in the grassland the gall on the root of Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) *Xestophanes brevitarsis* was found. The gall *Dasineura helianthemis* was found again on the flower-heads of Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*). No galls were found on Woundworts, or Herb Bennet or Herb Robert. Laurence Taylor spent time looking for rusts and was rewarded with *Coleosporium tussilaginis* on the eyebright *Euphrasia nemorosa* and *Pucciniastrum agrimoniae* on Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*.

## **The National Trust's CYRIL DIVER Project**

*John Newbould, 3 Brookmead Close, Sutton Poyntz, Weymouth DT3 6RS*

**Untraditional thinking**

**has a tradition of success.**

**Advert for Lupton Fawcett Solicitors (February 2010)**



Diver was born in Parkstone, Dorset. As a child he had a love of the natural world. He took a first degree in Zoology at Oxford then served in France in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and subsequently became Clerk of the Committees at the House of Commons. He particularly sort this form of employment as Parliament had many long vacations allowing him to pursue his greatest interest, natural history. He made significant contributions to the study of mollusca, to plant - animal and animal - habitat associations and to the natural history in its broadest sense on the Studland Peninsula.

In 1945, Sir Julian Huxley was asked by the Minister of Town and Country Planning to establish a Wildlife Conservation Special Committee for England and Wales. Very quickly knowing of Diver's interest and first allegiance was to nature, he was quickly recruited as a member of the Committee along with Tansley and Pearsall. Huxley described his incredible capacity for work between sessions; his ability to examine a tangle of facts and opinion and report back to committee in a cogently stated and usually acceptable draft. Huxley believed that his fellow committee members agreed that it was Diver's ability, perseverance in drafting and revision, which were decisive in producing the memorable command paper 7122 in 1947, which was virtually adopted *en-bloc* both by Government and Parliament resulting in the formation of the Nature Conservancy and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

In 1948 Diver was appointed first Director General of the Nature Conservancy and a Biological Service responsible to the Agricultural Research Council (now the Food and Environment Research Agency, previously Central Science Laboratories). Shortly after the Nature Conservancy was established by Royal Charter under the aegis of a committee of the Privy Council. Its functions were to provide scientific advice on the conservation and control of the natural flora and fauna of Great Britain; to establish and maintain Nature Reserves in Great Britain, including the physical features of scientific interest and to organise and develop the research and scientific services related there to.

Diver made significant contributions to the study of genetics, especially mollusca. He was President of the British Ecological Society in 1943.

One of the initial successes of Diver's Studland research was to present a case to oppose development similar to the housing on the northern shore on South Haven. During the Second World War, Studland became a military area and research stopped. Diver died in 1969 leaving a large collection of species maps, habitat maps, notebooks, entomological specimen and herbaria. His widow made arrangements with Professor Nigel Webb to establish a Diver collection library at the Furzebrook research station. This was subsequently removed to CEH Winfrith. On closure of CEH Winfrith, the collection was saved but dispersed. The entomological collection is at the Hope Museum, Oxford. The herbaria is with Robin Walls prior to transfer to the Dorset County Museum and the box files with the maps and note books are now in the Dorset History Centre and at the time of writing are being digitised.

The National Trust has secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Natural England and Operation Neptune to in part employ David Brown as a Project Officer and to fund project's running expenses for a three-year period. A further aim of the project is to increase public participation in biological recording and provide training for new recorders. As part of this process a beginners briology group is meeting monthly and has begun recording the mosses and liverworts.

The project is advised by a steering group including: Robin Walls of Dorset Flora Group, John Newbould Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, Dr Chris Spilling representing the invertebrate recording community, Matthew Oates and other staff members from the National Trust, Bryan Edwards representing Dorset Environmental Records Centre, Professor James Bullock CEH, Nick Squirrel (Natural England) and Dr Anita Dyas (Bournemouth University).

For enquiries Email [David.Brown4@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:David.Brown4@nationaltrust.org.uk)  
Tel 01929 452308 or mobile 07768 864954

## **A great leap forward – Biological recording since the 1962 *Atlas of the British Flora* 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2012**

**Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.**

Although the conference was held to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the 1962 atlas, it was coincidentally 62 years since B.S.B.I. at held a conference entitled *the study of the distribution of British Plants* in 1950. The outcome of that conference was a proposal by Professor A.R. Clapham that B.S.B.I. commence mapping the flora of Britain on the basis of the OS 10km. grid system (a decision taken in 1953). Peter Marram covered the history of the early development of the first atlas under the supervision of Professor Max Walters of Cambridge by Franklyn Perring as paid administrator. It is hard to believe in present times the technological struggle to produce what is effectively an atlas of dot maps with no interpretive text. In five years 1500 participants sent in 1.5 million records and all but 7 grid squares in Britain and Ireland had been visited.

Marram described the mapping scheme as a success due to a long tradition of detailed plant recording; a strong desire to record change and establish a quantifiable basis for nature conservation. He also considered that there is an intellectual striving to understand why plants grow at a particular location.

Chris Preston's contribution covered unexpected consequences of the 1962 Atlas. This included a stimulus to produce local floras with most botanists scaling down mapping to tetrad (2km squares). Amateurs generally produced the local floras, with little help from professionals. Ornithologists followed botanists' lead with 10km national atlases and local atlases at tetrad distribution. With the establishment of the Biological Records Centre in 1964 at Monks Wood many other groups followed suit.

Preston felt that although the 1962 Atlas was produced to advance science, he felt its impact was not great. The Monitoring Scheme (1987-88) where 1 in 9 Atlas squares were surveyed highlighted the critical need for statistical tools to compare the results of repeat surveys.

Trevor Dines of Plantlife has been working with CEH Wallingford looking at Biogeographical patterns in the British and Irish Flora using multivariate species occurrence analysis. See page 6 for a Dorset example. Simon Smart of CEH Lancaster spoke on ten years of vegetation change since the B.S.B.I. future flora conference in 2002. Then he forecast:

- Increased broad-leaved woodland cover in England, but more land take for transport and urban growth.

- Progress towards priority habitat conservation especially at landscape scale.
- Increased compliance as a condition of receiving farming payments
- Wider uptake of both organic farming and possible cultivation of GM crops.

He illustrated his talk using data from the Countryside survey and demonstrated the increase in woodland cover using James Bullock's analysis of Dorset woodland compared with woodland cover in the 1930s Dudley Stamp survey of the 1930s. He also commented on an analysis of the rare plant monitoring scheme.

David Pearman spoke on progress separating native and alien flora. Mark Hill spoke on recorder bias. Some people do not do aquatic macrophytes, others rarely go out before May. Some specialise in woodland; others in native grasslands. He commented on one excellent botanist who cover a wide range of plant species but also recorded liverworts (not mosses) only on trees. Apparently he was bored in winter.

Michael Braithwaite spoke on changes to the Berwickshire flora. Provisionally the populations of rare and scarce plants are disappearing at the rate of 16% in a decade whilst some species are spreading. The overall increase in taxa recorded by hectad has increased by 21%.

Helen Roy spoke on the responses of phytophagous insects to a changing flora. She commented that although changes in the distribution of the British flora are well documented one might expect that changes to phytophagous insect populations will have responded to the changes. However, although many insect populations have been recorded, large-scale assessments of changes in insect populations are limited. However modern data analysis is allowing some change to be measured where runs of continuous records exist.

BRC is presently looking at evidence of climate change in insect populations, the arrival of non-native species and habitat modification. For example, the Brown Argus butterfly has expanded northwards away from calcareous grasslands where its host plant is rock-rose to other types of grassland where the larvae feed on common storks-bill and dove's-foot cranes-bill. She also commented on conifer specialists, which have arrived in Britain and are found in gardens. She reported on the recent find in Leeds of the rhododendron leaf-hopper where the source was traced to imported plants.

Antje Ahrends – a post grad student at RBG Edinburgh is studying patterns of isolation in the flora of The British Isles. This study is looking at the fragmentation of species and habitats thought to be a critical threat to conservation. Using a variety of different methods to assess individual taxa and habitats, the atlas provides a unique resource to characterise spatial patterns of the 1500 native vascular plants found in the British Isles. By aggregating individual species maps it is possible to highlight hotspots of isolation. In many instances such groups were found in the Scottish Highlands and places such as the Lizard, the Breckland speedwells *etc.*

This is a brief summary of many excellent talks held in the lecture theatre at RBG Edinburgh last September. In many instances, recorders working in isolation must wonder if all the effort is worthwhile. I came away feeling, that if I had recorded in a more rigorous fashion my data would be more worthwhile.

(JAN)

## DORSET WILD FLOWER WEEK 2012 REPORTS

Thirteen people went on a walk at **Durlston Country Park** on Sunday June 10th, led by Ted Pratt, in damp weather. The first notable species was Knotted Hedge Parsley (*Torilis nodosa*) in the edges of the car park spaces. Moving to the meadows, Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*) was not at its best in the damp. Near a shallow quarry Early Gentian (*Gentianella anglica*) was plentiful, but closed, whereas Stars-in-grass (*Thesium humifusum*) was wide open. Common Broomrape (*Orobanche minor*) was spotted in another meadow, and Sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia*) was examined Close-up in yet another. Finally walkers picked out Yellow Vetchling (*Lathyrus aphaca*) where the leader had walked by it!

Ten hardy folk made the journey to **Hilton and Milton Abbas churchyards** on Monday June 11th, when light rain fell for much of the afternoon. Common Spotted Orchids (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) were the gems at Hilton, amidst a splendid display of grasses and a few more colourful species. Journeying on to Milton Abbas, the party passed 60m of roadside bank with Grand-toothed Hawkweed (*Hieracium grandidens*), newly discovered for Dorset when prospecting for this walk last year. Milton churchyard and cemetery won the Bishop's prize for Dorset Churchyards in 2010 and 2011, and it lived up to its reputation, with its excellent leaflets and display boards introducing a wealth of wildlife. There are not many places where Common Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*) and Water Figwort (*S. auriculata*) grow so close together, and plenty of other native species grow intermingled with garden plants, like Dame's Violet (*Hesperis matronalis*), which was at its most colourful. Leader: Ted Pratt.

On Tuesday 12th June there was repeat of last year's walk through **Corfe Charity Meadows**, north of Corfe Castle. Ted Pratt led a party of fourteen (several more cancelled at the last moment, perhaps because of the weather - though the rain held off throughout the walk). On the fields that are reverting to heath the good displays included Heath Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*), Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*) and Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*). In the meadows alongside the "Corfe River" stream Corky-fruited Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe pimpinelloides*) (the English name never fails to amuse), also Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Catsear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*) and Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) were among the species providing colour. These hay meadows are some of the very few unimproved fields left in the county and are a beautiful treasure. In one there is an increasing colony of a puzzling Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza species*) - perhaps a hybrid. Near the end, at "Scotland", we saw the ferns Wall-rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*) and Black Spleenwort (*A. adiantum-nigrum*) and the stonecrop Wall Pennywort (or Navelwort) (*Umbilicus rupestris*).

DFG wish to thank Ted Pratt for organising Dorset Flora Week in 2012 and all volunteers who led walks. Andrew Branson organised printing the leaflets, which were sponsored by Wessex Water and Dorset ANOB.

Wildflower week will not be running in 2013, but four walks for beginners will be run in West Dorset. See the programme.



**National Federation for Biological Recording**

**Annual Conference 2013**

***Biological Recording  
from the Local Perspective***

**Royal National Lifeboat Institution College, Poole, Dorset  
Thursday - Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013  
(with optional field day to Studland NNR: Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>  
April)**



**NFBR c/o 3 Brookmead Close, Sutton Poyntz, Weymouth  
DT3 6RS Booking and Programme [www.nfbr.org.uk](http://www.nfbr.org.uk)**

## PROGRAMME

### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013 – Hectad Recording Strategy meeting**

Carolyn and Robin intend to hold a day to discuss the general recording of the county's flora on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> March, 10.00 - 16.00. We will base it on the idea of assigning responsibility for the hectads in the vice-county to individuals. Not all of you to whom this is sent have agreed to take on a hectad, so don't worry, we thought you could either contribute to the discussion or would like to know about it.

The agenda will be to meet at Robin's house (10 Old Brickfields, Broadmayne, DT2 8UY) at 10.00 and spend an hour or so discussing how best to keep track of the plants in the county, both rare and general flora. We would then go out and record somewhere (Thorncombe Wood has been suggested) and return to enter the data into Living Record, finishing around 16.00. At some point we will need some lunch. We will provide tea / coffee and biscuits, but you might like to bring a packed lunch if you wish to stay all day. Alternatively we can make use of our local pub.

The day can be entirely flexible, depending on how the discussion goes, the weather and who comes. IF you can only manage the morning or afternoon, let me know and we will arrange things appropriately. We would like to have an open discussion on the more serious side of identification and recording so that we can get it right. That is, keeping track of the flora (the VCR's responsibility) and ensuring that we enjoy doing so (the DFG's ethos) and find it rewarding.

Please let Robin know whether you can or cannot come so that we have an idea of numbers on 01305 852444 or [robin@rmwalls.plus.com](mailto:robin@rmwalls.plus.com).

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2013 Diver project.** All interest groups welcome to join the National Federation of Biological Recording and the National Trust in a survey to replicate Diver's work in the 1930s. Meet at the Discovery Centre, Knoll Beach SZ035835 at 10.00a.m. This is part of the on going Diver Project.

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April The Oaks NT Kingston Lacey Estate.** Meet 10.30a.m. at the Badbury Rings car park ST960032 with lunch. This woodland has been described as one of the finest ancient woodlands in Dorset. Bring lunch.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 10.30a.m. Meet at the southern Verne car park for High Angle Battery and Fancy's Farm SY691731** on the north side. We shall visit High Angle Battery – a coastal defence battery built around 1890 and then on to Fancy's Farm to hopefully see one of Dorset's best sites for Early Gentian.

### **Sat 8 June 1030 -1230 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. Two miles. Wellingtons advised. Meet at Scotland corner on Slepe Road, map ref SY961840. Leader: Ted Pratt. Bookings needed - 01929 427229. Donations to Dorset Flora Group welcome.

### **Saturday 15 June 2013, 10:30am. Martin and Pentridge Downs**

Leader: Jonathan Crewe 01202 549377 (evenings) [crewie3@btinternet.com](mailto:crewie3@btinternet.com) Joint meeting between Dorset Flora Group The "serious" part of this meeting is to cover all known sites in the area For Field Fleawort (*Tephroses integrifolia*). Naturally, on these downlands at this time of year, there will be many other delights and distractions, including a chance to see Burnt-tip Orchid (*Neotinea (Orchis) ustulata*).

Meet at the car park at the end of Sillen Lane, Martin, SU057191. **No booking needed**, in fact the more the merrier, but please bring any of the following you possess: GPS, mobile telephone, clipboard. Bring picnic lunch, suitable footwear and appropriate clothing for the day, given that this can be an exposed site.

**Sat July 13 - Middlebere** -1030 -1600. Heathland, farmland and edge of saltmarsh - a range of species on each. Discover how small the flowers of *Hypochoeris glabra* (Small Catsear) really are. See the native *Spartina maritima* (Small Cord-grass) in one of its two remaining Dorset sites - and perhaps find more! Explore the little-visited far reaches of Middlebere. Visit ponds with *Potamogeton pusillus* (Lesser Pondweed) and *Ruppia maritima* (Beaked Tasselwed). Meet on Slepe Road, at the start of the farm track, map ref. SY963854. Wellingtons advised. Bring lunch. Leader: Ted Pratt. Bookings needed – 01929 427229 Donations to Dorset Flora Group welcome.

**Sun July 21 - Seed collecting at Durlston** -1430 -1630. For Kew's Millenium Seed Bank - an introduction to collecting methods, and collecting Pale Flax (easy) and Yellow Vetchling (not easy). Meet outside the Learning Centre SZ031773. Leader: Ted Pratt. Bookings needed – 01929 427229

**Saturday July 27<sup>th</sup> Lulworth for Stair Hole and Fossil Forest** Meet at the West Lulworth Church at 10.00a.m. SY823806. We will walk down to the cove. Bring lunch and stout boots. The meeting will take place at this location only if the leaders consider the area safe. At the time of writing, there have been two incidents involving mud.

**Sat August 17 - Marsh Fern survey - Hartland Moor** 1030 -1600 A few years ago, whilst looking for a fern hybrid, a clump of Marsh Fern was discovered in the fen. This is only the second extant site in The Isle of Purbeck. The survey will search for more. It involves searching among Purple Moor-grass tussocks, so is not for the faint-hearted! Total walk c2 miles. Plenty of interesting species to be seen en route. Wellingtons, even if weather has been dry. Meet on Soldiers Road by Three Barrows SY940844. Bring lunch. Leader: Ted Pratt. Bookings needed - 01929 427229.

**Sat August 31 - Marsh Gentian survey - Stoborough Heath Natural England area (NE of A351)** -1030 -1600. Building on both the surveys of Godlingston and Studland Heaths in 2010 and the Hartland Moor area last year. Stoborough Heath (NE) contains the other good populations of this species, for which Purbeck is the national HQ. Bring lunch and wellingtons. Meet on Soldiers Road at SY942854. Leader: Ted Pratt. Bookings needed – 01929 427229

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013 Shermel Gate: Plant Gall recording:** Take the B3081 into Handley. Turn north towards Bower Chalke on the east side of the village and after 0.75km left into Dean Lane. We meet at the north end of Dean Lane at ST989193. Plant Gall Survey leader John Newbould

### **DIVER PROJECT BOTANICAL RECORDING AT STUDLAND**

Weather permitting Robin Walls is proposing to allocate each Thursday from 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013 meeting at the Discovery Centre at 10.00a.m. However, to sustain such an effort through the season will be very demanding. It will be best to contact Robin on 01305 852444 or [robin@rmwalls.plus.com](mailto:robin@rmwalls.plus.com). to confirm arrangements. All are welcome to contribute.

### **National Trust West Dorset – four meetings for people new to recording.**

Join our volunteer wildlife survey team on their regular surveys of properties in West Dorset during 2013. Numbers are limited to ten in order not to trample hay crops. Please book on 01297 489481. The start time is 10.00a.m. We will aim to return to the cars for lunch by 1.00p.m. The walks are undulating with a few steep slopes. You will need stout footwear, binoculars and a notebook with pencil. On these visits we will show you the work our volunteer surveyors undertake and how you can take part. If you wish to stay longer, the surveyors will be pleased to spend a couple of hours in the afternoon showing how to use the field guides and the equipment we use.

National Trust members go free but property car parking charges apply to non-members.

26<sup>th</sup> April 2013 **Westhay Farm for Green-winged Orchids and spring birds.** Meet at the Stonebarrow shop SY381933. Toilets and drinks are available.

6<sup>th</sup> May 2013 **Cogden Beach for wild flowers of the shingle spit and spring birds.** Meet at the Cogden car park SY502855. The nearest toilets are in Burton Bradstock and the café at Hive Beach.

12<sup>th</sup> June 2013 **Westhay Farm to survey the wildflower rich hay meadows.** Meet at the Stonebarrow shop SY381933. Toilets and drinks are available.

21st August 2013 **Cogden** a fairly flat walk across the pastures to Cogden S.S.S.I. On a sunny day butterflies abound and we will search for Grasshoppers and other insects amongst the wild flowers. Meet at the Cogden car park SY502855. The nearest toilets are in Burton Bradstock and the café at Hive Beach.

If you are interested in Wildflowers these books will help:

*Collins Flower Guide* David Streeter, C. Hart-David, A. Hardcastle, F. Cole and L. Harper for a comprehensive cover of wild flowers, grasses, sedges and rushes.

*The Wild Flower Key* Francis Rose published by Warne covers most wild flowers only

