



The Dorset Heath

Newsletter of the Dorset Flora Group 2014

Chairman and VC9 Recorder Robin Walls; Secretary Laurence Taylor

Editorial: *John Newbould*

It would appear that the group had no complaints about the layout and content of the *Dorset Heath* **2013** so once again you have me as editor. The year was somewhat difficult for me as somehow, whenever I had to leave the room in Yorkshire Naturalists' Union committee meetings in 2011, they managed to appoint me President for 2013 resulting in extra commitments in that county.

During April 2013, Dorset hosted the National Forum for Biological Recording's annual conference at the R.N.L.I. College at Poole. What a fabulous conference venue and the overnight accommodation was excellent. NFBR then joined Dorset naturalists with a joint meeting based at Studland helping to survey for the Cyril Diver project. Once again, duties took me away as I seem to be the conference administrator.

The Flora Group had an interesting year, with variable numbers at field meetings. Never-the-less some important recording has been achieved including members engaging with recording bryophytes for the first time, one meeting to record fungi near Hardy's Cottage, which thanks to the expertise of Bryan Edwards was very successful. We also had a few members try their hand at lichen recording

In June 2014, I have been tasked by the Linnean Society to organise their annual field trip, which will be in June starting with a day on Portland and Chesil on the Saturday with Ballard Down and Studland on the Sunday. Dr Alan Halliday of Chairman of the Dorset Geologists' Association Group is assisting with geological aspects.

I would also like to welcome Laurence Taylor who has taken over as Secretary from our founding Secretary Jon Crewe to whom we owe our thanks.

Chairman's comments

Wildflower Week

Last year we decided to rest the Wildflower Week, but it seems to be popular and we have had no difficulty in filling the week with interesting excursions this year. These are primarily designed for people new to botany, although there is much there for the more experienced. Please bring your friends and encourage anyone you think likes a nice day out to join a trip and learn about our county and its flora in friendly company and some delightful places.

Conifers and workshops

Those of you who came on Matt Parrott's conifer day in 2012 were impressed by the range of species in the Forestry Commission arboretum at Sugar Hill, between Bere Regis and Wareham. This is a collection that needs to be better known and used. We have been discussing with the local forester ways in which access could be improved and the possibility of the trees being labelled. We have agreed a route around the most diverse part and Ted Pratt, Laurence Taylor and I began clearing it. Ted and Laurence have since returned to complete the task and begin mapping the species accurately. The Forestry Commission's part is to do the heavy work of removing the larger trunks and branches that impede progress. Whilst it is not intended to make this fully accessible in the sense of a tarmac path, between us we will make it safe to walk around so that you can enjoy the trees without worrying about tripping over. We have fixed the first official work party for 20th of February.

John Poland is revising the key to conifers in the Vegetative Key¹ to make it much more comprehensive. With this and a well labelled conifer arboretum in the county there should be no excuse for omitting these trees from species lists.

Last year we intended to have a workshop on identifying plants when they did not have flowers open, but we failed because both John Poland and I were too busy to find a date. We will have to do better this year, so watch this space. In the meantime, if you have avoided identifying plants because their flowers are not out, don't be intimidated. Many are not any more difficult without flowers. Others can be. The game is all about knowing when to give up. John Poland and Eric Clement's key, like the Plant Crib and numerous articles in BSBI News before it, has greatly expanded the proportion of species that can be reliably identified vegetatively. This takes the urgency out of trying to get all the botany into a few short weeks of the year.



Lobelia urens - heath lobelia



Sugar Hill Arboretum © Robin Walls 2014

¹ The vegetative key to the British flora, Poland, J. & Clement, E.J (2009), BSBI

Heath lobelia

By the time you read this, we may have achieved our ambition of getting the main site for heath lobelia (*Lobelia urens*) in Dorset back in to a favourable condition. You might recall that two years ago a few of us met at the site with two of DWT's estate workers to clear the site and disturb the soil in an attempt to increase the size of the dwindling population. Whilst we cleared a lot of the above ground vegetation, we did not have the equipment to tackle roots and disturb sufficient soil to make much impression. In the two summers since there has been little change although the few plants that were evident were very healthy.

Fortuitously Phil Wilson, who lives in Devon, is researching this species for Plant Life and I took him to see the site. His confirmation that the area now dominated by bracken will be too dry and to concentrate on the winter wet part of the site was invaluable and this we intend to do. From a recce and a certain amount of scrub clearance in January we can see which parts to prioritise. But we still need a substantial machine to disturb the soil, and this is where our second stroke of luck comes in.

Will Bond of Alaska expects to lose a few days of productive work in the winter due to adverse weather. He has promised us the use of a digger and driver for a day, but this is likely to be at short notice. To make best use of his generous offer we are arranging with DWT to clear the bramble scrub and *Molinia* tussocks prior to the ground disturbance. At the time of writing, it looks as though we will only just manage it. The task was achieved 6th February 2014.

Robin Walls

An Arable Field Survey

The summer of 2013 was the fourth year of arable surveys in Dorset, carried out by volunteers on behalf of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). Teams operate in various parts of the county. A team of three of us surveyed a farm in Purbeck, which had eight arable fields, in July and August. We did them in order of harvesting - the barley fields first, then the wheat, and finally the maize. Usually we did two fields a day, each taking two to three hours.

We only examined the margins of the fields, so as not to damage the standing crops, and because in any case the margins are where most of the other arable plants are found. At the end of a field survey we marked each species we had found according to its frequency in the field, as abundant, frequent, occasional or rare - the last category is for species with five or less plants in the field.

The more interesting species have been given a score of one to nine by Plantlife. Adding up a field's score gives some idea of the botanical richness of that field. On this farm, on Purbeck and Portland Limestones, the best scores were from two fields in the mid-teens. Two fields in another Purbeck farm reached the twenties a few years ago, whereas I believe North Dorset fields on Chalk can reach the thirties. You never know what you are going to find. One field side can be boring, and the next totally different. It is fun! Usually north sides are best, as they get most sun, and shaded south sides are least interesting, but there are exceptions to both those generalisations. One field had a good population of Broad-leaved Spurge, an uncommon weed, along east and north sides. The two beautiful little toadflax-like *Fluellen* species also occurred occasionally; Dwarf Spurge was in three fields and

Stinking Mayweed in one. But the best finds were two single plants - a rare form of Scarlet Pimpernel with blue flowers, and Darnel. This latter is the grass mentioned in the Bible as "Tares" - a most undesirable grass, related to Rye-grass, which tends to harbour a poisonous fungus, and so contaminates flour. Darnel was almost eliminated by farmers eighty years ago. This one plant occurred in a field, which had not been ploughed for many years. It is now safely pressed and dried!

Edward Pratt

Living Record and Plant Data

Living Record is an online recording system developed by Adrian Bicker and promoted by DERC for collecting data on wildlife sightings and recording projects in Dorset. Look for **Living Record** on the DERC home page (www.derc.org.uk). Since Vascular Plants were added to Living Record in 2011 Adrian has continued to work on the development of the application to make it easier for recorders to use and easier for DERC to access the data collected. The following notes are just some of the new features which you may find useful.

More subjects

The list of subjects on the OPTIONS page has been extended to include lichens, bryophytes and fungi as well as several other invertebrate groups.

Changing scientific names

Most botanists will be aware that the scientific names for plants have changed and will continue to change. The most recent revision followed the publication of Stace's Flora (3rd edition) and some recorders are already familiar with the new names. However, in DERC we are limited by the slow upgrades to our database and still need to match plant records to older names. Adrian has resolved this by allowing recorders to find plants either under the current familiar name or under the newer Stace name. For example, Common Twayblade can be entered as either *Listera ovata* or *Neottia ovata*. If you use the former name a note will appear under your record telling you the new name, you can choose to click on the new name and it will amend the record.

For distribution maps you can select Common Twayblade or *Neottia ovata* and they will include records entered under the older name. Adrian is awaiting a finalised Stace 3 list to complete the work for plants.

Habitat information

During the summer and autumn Adrian has worked with DERC to create standard options for adding habitat data. These broadly follow Phase 1 categories but with some modification particularly in urban areas. You can select from different levels of detail eg Urban – gardens or Urban – churchyards or Woodland – Broadleaved – Plantation or Semi-natural.

Although a need for additional habitat data was instigated by work for other subjects, it can provide useful data for plant records too and has helped standardise information previously captured under Habitat notes.

Linear stretches

Most plant recording is done within patches, by area of habitat or by field, but there are occasions when a linear stretch works better. Traditional linear sites are hedgerows, road verges and stretches of river.

Living Record now allows you to add a linear stretch rather than a point location. Click on the map as usual to add a marker and then select "Linear stretch" from the

dropdown menu. Move the points at the end of the straight stretch to mark the limits of the site.

Just a reminder here that the Marker type will also allow you to choose the resolution i.e. recording within 100m, 10m etc, GPS location or you can use site centroid if you have a list for a larger area.

Data verification

One of the benefits of using Living Record is that your data can be seen by the county recorder/verifier as soon as it is entered during the season. Traditionally data has been collated at the end of the year but online recording is changing this. The majority of records are accepted but for some species the verifier may need more information and can contact you via your email address.

When you first log in to Living Record you can click on the line "Possible problems with my records for Dorset". It will either tell you that there are no problems, or highlight records currently being queried by the verifier. If you like to keep track of your data and see when it has been Accepted, Queried, Rejected or Batched use the OPTIONS page – Record Status and select Yes against "view current status". You can continue to amend your records until they are batched. The county recorder will batch records routinely allowing DERC to download blocks of verified data. If you change your mind about a batched record you will need to contact DERC or the county recorder for the record to be changed on the main database.

Record dates

As we are starting a new year, remember to extend the date range back to 01/01/2013 if you want to see last year's records listed.

Review Records

On the RECORDS page, you can expand the review section and review records for the period or for any day by selecting dates in drop-down list. This is a great way to look at all your records (for all subjects) for each location.

You can also reduce the number of markers on the map by selecting a single subject, or even a single species to see just those records - and amend them if required.

Living Record has collected nearly 180,000 records for Dorset so far, of which nearly 20,000 are for vascular plants. DERC are keen for others to use Living Record so if you need further advice or have trouble getting started, please do contact us directly

Carolyn Steele

c.a.steele@dorsetcc.gov.uk Tel. 01305 228519

Reference

Stace C. 2010 New Flora of the British Isles 3rd edition, Cambridge University Press

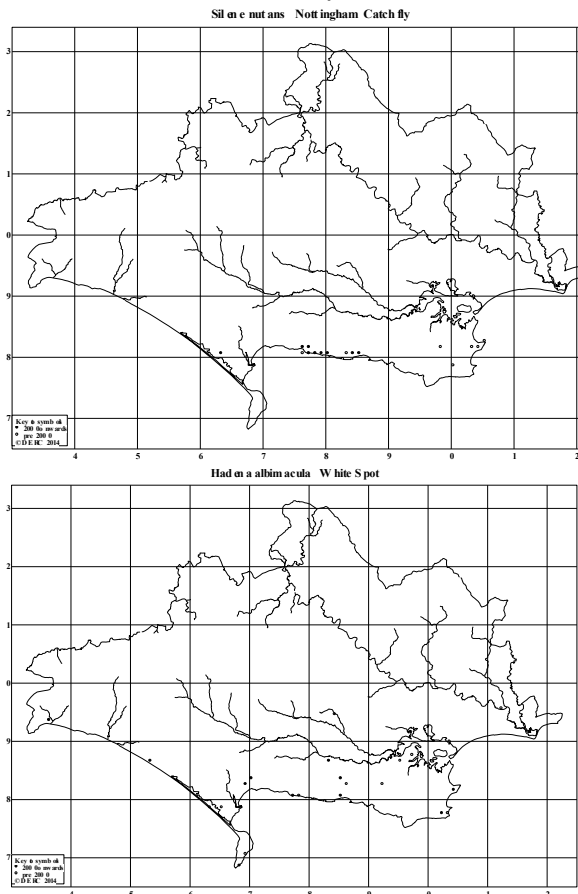
2013 AGM Competition

Once again DFG are indebted to Peter and Margaret Cramb for organising this year's competition, which was won by Jonathon Cox with 13 points out of 15. Ted Pratt was second with 12 points and third place to Marjorie Waters. Congratulations to all the above for their success in what turned out to be a rather tricky competition.

PLANTS AND MOTHS

At the AGM Phil Sterling gave a superb presentation dealing with plants and their associated moths. Frankly, I could have filled *Dorset Heath* with his accounts of moths associated with plants such as dyer's greenweed and butcher's broom. However, time and space precludes further discussion. I have picked the white spot moth *Hadena albimacula*, which is only found in England along the south-east coast from East Devon to Kent and I guess mainly on sandy chalk soils where Nottingham catchfly seems to thrive.

Distribution of White Spot in Dorset



Distribution of Nottingham Catchfly in Dorset: **Maps** © DERC. Photographs of White Spot © Dr Phil Sterling and Photograph of Nottingham Catchfly at Ringstead © John Newbould

John Newbould surveyed the cliff top path, extending into Lulworth estate land in front of White Nothe cottages for a National Trust Bio-survey prior to the Olympic Games in 2009-10. The area is home to six plants rated either nationally scarce; viz. Wild Cabbage, a grass *Bromus hordeaceus* ssp. *ferronii*, Nottingham Catchfly (IUCN NT), Sea Clover (IUCN NT); Shaggy Mouse-eared Hawkweed (IUCN NT) and Dorset scarce; and rated vulnerable: Field Garlic (IUCN VU). The latter is not particularly at risk here, except that it will be in flower during August when the coastal path is busiest. On National Trust property it is mainly found on the path edges. The Nottingham Catchfly is the larval food plant for the red data moth White Spot (*Hadena albimacula*), which may fly by day visiting other flower such as Viper's Bugloss also found on the cliffs. In 2010, the Nottingham Catchfly was extensively searched for larvae, but although many flower heads had been eaten off (by what species is not known) – no larvae were seen. I have also searched again in 2011 with no luck. The cliffs have many outcrops of chalk, often supporting Sheep's

Fescue, Common Thyme and Mouse-eared Hawkweed. There are small areas of European Gorse and other scrub.

Other plants seen here are: Bird's-foot Trefoil, Carlina Thistle, Common Rock-rose, Portland Spurge, Horse-shoe Vetch is quite scarce, Lady's Bedstraw, Ploughman's Spikenhard, Restharrow, Crow Garlic, Corn Parsley near the gate in False Oat-grass grassland, Glaucous Sedge and Quaking Grass. Lulworth Skipper was observed in 2009. Peregrine Falcon was observed three times in the area in 2009.

John Newbould

VC recorder's notes

Recording for Atlas 2020

We are now nearly half way through the decade leading up to a revision of the plant atlas the BSBI has planned for 2020. Although not specifically targeting squares for this purpose, we have not been idle, if the number of records I see on Living Record is anything to go by (around 18 000 records entered since 2010). More will have been sent to DERC directly, so the data below are minimum values and only indicative of the pattern.

Looking in more detail, the geographical distribution clearly indicates the concentration of records from the south and east of the county. Only one hectad has more than 500 species. This is Studland, which has undoubtedly benefited from the Cyril Diver Project. Six squares have more than 250 spp: Shaftesbury and the five squares between Portland and Bere Regis. The reason Shaftesbury stands out, as the only square north of Wimborne with over 250 species is a result of the activity of the U3A GROUP.

None of these squares is anywhere near its potential. Looking at records since 1970, of the 44 squares in the vice county, 31 have more than 500 and three of those exceed 1000. The Wareham square (SY98) with 1072 species was found to be the richest square in the British Isles when the records were analysed for Atlas 2000. So plenty to do and I would like to know if north Dorset is as impoverished as recent records suggest. There is unlikely to be much change in species richness of the well recorded squares at the hectad scale in twenty years, which is why we need to record by the monad (1km grid square), or finer unit, such as a site.

Recording days

This year there are two species that I would like to survey in some detail. The first is the bog orchid (*Hammarbya paludosa*) on Winfrith Heath. It has been known here for some time, but last year Laurence Taylor found it in a new site. So there may be more to be found by systematically searching, as we did on Godlingston Heath. It is not easy to see and we will have to do this when it is in flower. (see page 24)

The other species I am interested in, the smooth cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*) also has to be in flower to have a chance of estimating the population size. This is even trickier than the bog orchid, because it has a shorter season and even then, the flowers are only open in the mornings when the sun shines. Presumably it is pollinated by insects that go to bed early and only like going out on nice days. Diver's map of South Haven Peninsula from the 1930s shows more sites than we are aware of today. All these deserve a thorough search. If we can, I would also like to check all the other Dorset sites.

I've not worked out details yet, but I don't think we can do it all in a day. So I am thinking of meeting at Knoll Beach car park where we can find the plant with ease. Once we have reminded ourselves of it and can distinguish it from *Leontodon* we can search the rest of the Studland peninsula if the weather is suitable. I would then like volunteers who can agree to visit the other sites on suitable mornings during the following week.

Robin Walls, January 2014

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 two years 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. 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, 3rd March 2013

Recording for the next BSBI Atlas

When first asked by Robin if we would be prepared to take on various squares for the next atlas, we felt flattered but at the same time somewhat daunted. In common with, we imagine, many Flora Group members, we regard ourselves as improvers - more experienced than beginners, but a long way short of experts. No longer would we be able to walk past all those troublesome grasses and sedges with a clear conscience!

We were allocated no fewer than five 10km x 10km squares (ST 20 & 30, SY 39, 48 & 49), but allowing for the welcome presence of the sea and neighbouring vice-counties, we worked out that this was the equivalent of about 2½ full squares - still a substantial prospect.

Before starting any fieldwork, we sat down and divided the project between the (then) 8 field seasons remaining until recording stops in 2019. Our schedule enabled us to survey each square twice at an interval of four years and we reasoned that by the second lap we would have picked up a lot of knowledge on the way, so that by the end a more-or-less reasonable coverage would (we hope!) have been achieved. We were also much reassured that Robin and other highly experienced botanists were there to help us with identifications.

The recording process involves surveying one monad (1km x 1km square) in each of the 25 tetrads (2km x 2km squares) in every 10km square. We are free to choose which monad to survey and we try to select the one with the greatest likely diversity of species, combined with good permitted access. Before surveying each monad, we plan our route using the 1:25,000 OS map and when we do the survey find that we are usually able to complete the route in between 2 and 3 hours. Species known to us are noted down as we proceed, but where we are unable to identify something immediately, we take a sample (provided the plant is plentiful) for checking at home, rather than struggling with books in the field. For plants listed in the Dorset Rare Plant Register we also note the precise grid reference, population and habitat.

The process is repeated at least once later in the season to achieve as full as possible coverage of species. We find that our average species score for a monad is about 150, although the best squares can yield around 200. An important rule is to record only species where we are as sure as possible of the identification: an accurate list of 100 species is far more useful than a list of 150 containing 50 guesses - "dumb but honest" is definitely the message!

We have now completed our first two years of the project. Overall, we have found it a very enjoyable and instructive experience - we have already added almost 100 new species to our life list. By comparing our records with the *New Atlas* (published in 2002) we have found that some interesting results have already emerged; for example, Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is not shown in the *New Atlas* in either SY48 or 49, but we have recorded it in four monads in these squares, indicating an ominous spread of this highly invasive species - the plant is surely too large to have been overlooked! In addition, we have found a new record for SY48 of the nationally scarce Toothed Medick (*Medicago polymorpha*) on cliff top grassland near West Bay and for SY 49 of Common Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) - very rare in West Dorset - by the River Brit at Bridport.

By comparing our overall species list in each 10km square with that in the *New Atlas* (using the species list from the CD-ROM which accompanied it) we have been able to monitor our progress and carry out searches for individual species which have so

far eluded us - an enjoyable and productive end of season wind down! Other very useful resources are lists of post-1999 records for our squares kindly provided by DERC, showing what has already been found in the survey period for the next atlas, Humphry Bowen's *Flora of Dorset* and the *Dorset Rare Plant Register*.

In summary, we are finding the project both great fun and rewarding. It's good to have an external requirement to direct our botanising and although the prospect of the systematic recording of squares might seem monotonous, it becomes totally absorbing, as well as highly instructive. Why not give it a try yourself.

Peter & Margaret Cramb

FIELD MEETING REPORTS 2013.

compiled by John A Newbould, Stonecroft, 3 Brookmead Close, Sutton Poyntz, Weymouth DT3 6RS.

Early spring meetings were very difficult with March – May being substantially cooler than normal. The annual visit to the National Trust's West Dorset hay meadows at Westhay Farm for green-winged orchid *Anacamptis morio* usually takes place during the last week in April. During the last week of April 2013 there was no sign of the orchids and the visit was re-arranged for 2nd May when orchids had started to emerge into flower but many were only between 30-50mm high. We are pleased to report that the present haymaking regime is favourable to this orchid with the population growing.

Similarly a meeting was arranged for 18th May 2013 to visit High Angle battery and Fancy's Farm Portland, for the blue butterflies and early gentian *Gentianella anglica*. This meeting was re-arranged for 25th May when normally Portland, with its shallow soils is often a few degrees warmer than the rest of the County. We even struggled to find horse-shoe vetch *Hippocrepis comosa* in flower and at Fancy's Farm, it was suggested that we visited in 2-3 weeks for the early gentian. The sole butterfly seen during the day was a single wall *Lasiommata megera*.

27th April. 2013 The Oaks – Pamphill parish

Leader Dr Peter Hatherley and report John Newbould.

The Oaks is semi-natural ancient woodland managed by the National Trust located just north of Badbury Rings. Due to the number of pedunculate oak many with a diameter of over 2m and many pollarded in the past, the area is important for dead wood decay invertebrates. The bank of the Badbury – Bath Roman Road, forms the east margin of the wood.

Although the wood is dominated by oak, it is considered to be an ash – dog's mercury – field maple wood. NVC **W8** forming a primrose – ground ivy sub-community, which Rodwell (1991) describes as being typical of the heavier clay soils of the south east. An occasional hawthorn, more frequent hazel and holly form the scrub layer with traveller's joy *Clematis vitalba* draped over many trees. The ground flora was not particularly rich. There were patches of ransoms *Allium ursinum* in wet areas, whilst elsewhere dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* is present. However, in many areas the woodland floor was dominated by ivy *Hedera* sp.

Brenda Childs reported marsh tit calling in the woodland with linnet present in gorse scrub whilst walking from Badbury Rings. Skylark was present over the Downs and John Campbell reported a hare.

Field Meeting report, Saturday 15 June 2013, 10:30am. Martin and Pentridge Downs – Dorset parish of Pentridge and Hampshire parish of Martin.

Leader and Report Jon Crewe

Although the weather in 2013 was a vast improvement over the previous year the conditions for this walk were worse than forecast. 6 members met at 10:30; Mike Edwards was planning to devote his time to invertebrates so 5 of us set out to twitch burnt tip orchids *Neotinea [Orchis] ustulata* in Hants. The leader had GPS'd the locations of the largest colony a week before, although the decision by Hants CC to install permanent location markers nearby made them easy to find. We admired some good specimens and counted 55 flowering spikes altogether, some about 20 metres away from the first group.

The weather closed in at this point, prompting David and Margaret Godfrey to make an early retreat but Andrew Branson, Laurence Taylor and the leader headed on towards Bokerly Dyke. There we saw the promised Field Fleawort, still in Hampshire, and met a cheerful party from Hampshire Wildlife Trust led by Paul Toynton, the former warden of this site. After a brief chat we braced ourselves against the weather and walked on over to Pentridge Down, where the all Dorset flora failed to produce any notable highlights. As it was getting close to lunchtime at this point we decided to allow the weather the best of this trip and headed back to the car park, where Mike was still sweeping the vegetation! Not the best Martin Down trip ever, but the general good humour still made it a pleasure.

8th June 2013 - Corfe Charity Meadows – Corfe Castle parish

Leader and Report: Rev. E A Pratt.

Twelve of us set off across meadows that are being allowed to revert to heath, and which lead to the northern end of the hay meadows. The season was late, but a good number of species were seen, including heath speedwell *Veronica officinalis*. ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* was among the most colourful flowers in the first and later hay meadows. As we moved south through Long Meadow, a deviation to the bank of the Corfe River stream allowed us to see one of the almond willows *Salix triandra*, a species only known from this area in Purbeck. (Pratt, 2008)

In the next field ("Close next the barn") the early marsh orchids *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *pulchella* were in full flower together with a few southern marsh orchids *D. praetermissa*. Three meadows further on we diverted again, this time to see the leaves of grey globe-thistle *Echinops exaltatus*, a garden remnant that has persisted by the ruins of a cottage destroyed in the Second World War. Wall pennywort or navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris* on a bank concluded an enjoyable day.

13th July 2013 – Middlebere Heath – Arne parish

Leader and Report: Rev. E A Pratt and John Newbould

Twelve of us started on a very warm morning. Behind the modern barn we viewed some very large plants of horseshoe vetch, unexpected in this area. We went next to the shore near the old Middlebere quay. There we saw small cord-grass *Spartina maritima*, the native species, which has almost been eliminated nationally by its larger relatives. Nearby was reflexed salt-marsh grass *Puccinellia distans*, whilst amongst the Reeds brookweed *Samolus valerandi* was common. Jonathan Cox drew our attention to hard-grass *Parapholis strigosa* growing with a slight curve in its

stems, which has sometimes caused it to be taken to be its smaller relative, Curved Hard-grass *P. incurva*.



Dorset Flora Group at Middlebere © John Newbould 2013

After lunch we passed a large amount of climbing corydalis *Ceratocapnos claviculata* amongst gorse, before crossing fields to reach some pools. In one of these beaked tasselweed *Ruppia maritima* was plentiful. In the other pond small pondweed *Potamogeton berchtoldii* has largely been replaced by alternate water-milfoil *Myriophyllum alternifolium* in the other. From there we moved on to the salt-marsh, where the expected species were all present, including English (long-leaved) scurvy-grass *Cochlearia anglica*, spotted in seed by Janet O'Connor.

On the return walk the entomologists made for a cattle-trough - only to find it full of small pondweed, as was another trough further on! It was a good day for entomologists. We saw the emperor dragonfly *Anax imperator*, emerald damselfly *Lestes sponsa*, blue-tailed damselfly *Ischnura elegans* and azure damselflies *Coenagrion puella* by a pond with good waterside vegetation including greater bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre* and broad-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton natans*. We noted eight species of butterfly including Small Tortoiseshell, which seemed to be having a better summer. Orthoptera included field grasshopper and short-winged cone-head *Conocephalus dorsalis*. Waders seen on the marsh edges included grey heron, little egret and greenshank. Ten plant galls were recorded including the gall of the weevil *Apion rubens* on sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosa*.

21st July 2013 - Durlston seed collecting

The meeting was postponed until next year, as both the target species had had a poor year.

27th July 2013 - Lulworth – West Lulworth parish.

John Newbould

Heavy rain was forecast to hit the area around 2.00p.m. so Laurence Taylor and John Newbould abandoned the original plan, which was to survey Stair Hole for maritime plants before proceeding to the fossil forest below Radar Hill. Instead, we left West Lulworth Church and headed south climbing Bindon Hill from Bindon Road.



Dyer's Greenweed © John Newbould 2013



West Lulworth Churchyard looking south

With a 10.00am start we headed south first surveying the chalk grassland on the north-west facing lower slopes overlooking the village of West Lulworth. The upper slopes are dominated by gorse but it is here that we noted birds such as linnet and in the sheltered grassland is drooping tor-grass or heath false-brome *Brachypodium pinnatum*. The Lulworth skipper *Thymelicus action* was present in good numbers. Madder *Rubia peregrina* was quite scarce trailing on the gorse.

On the lower calcareous grassland slope, we saw a single chalk-hill blue *Polyommatus coridon*. The botany was quite rewarding with a few remnant pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, a few chalk fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*, clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, carline thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaule* and kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria* were scarce.

On reaching the top of the ridge, the south facing grassland slopes had perceptible different grassland look with plants such as viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* and sand cat's-tail *Phleum arenarium*.

Marbled white and meadow brown butterflies were plentiful. *Orthoptera* seen included field grasshopper *Chorthippus brunneus* and the dark bush cricket *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*. Amongst the tor-grass we noted a web of the funnel spider *Agelena labyrinthica*.

Around 12.45 p.m., rain could be seen approaching from Portland we made our way back to West Lulworth Church where a conveniently placed churchyard seat provided an ideal place for lunch. The Churchyard had received a recent mowing, but slopes had been left together with areas close to the churchyard monuments. Whilst there was little of note, we did add some extra species to the 1km square SY8280. We had not seen bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* on the hill nor wild clary *Salvia verbenaca*. We also took time to look at tor-grass or chalk false-brome *Brachypodium rupestre*, which has only recently been separated from drooping false-brome seen earlier in the morning. The rain arrived on time as we climbed in our cars.

17th August 2013 - Hartland Moor Marsh Fern search – Arne parish

Leader and Report: Rev. E A Pratt.



Marsh Fern © John Newbould 2013.

Four of us took on the challenge in the meeting description - "It involves searching among purple moor-grass tussocks and bog myrtle scrub, so is not for the faint-hearted!"

On the way out we enjoyed the colourful species of the fen arm. Stopping at Pillwort Pond we failed to find any pillwort *Pilularia globulifera*, but among other species we did see

betony *Stachys officinalis*, which was new for the tetrad.

The known colony of marsh fern *Thelypteris palustris* just east of the enclosure was larger than remembered. Then the fun started. There was a good deal of water in the fen, and freeing one wellington from the embrace of the mud meant driving our other wellington deep into it. All in vain - no more marsh fern was found. However, John Newbould did find a good early-flowering group of marsh gentian *Gentianna pneumanthe* in a site missed in last year's survey together with purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, bell heather *Erica cineria*, and bog ashphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*. Nearby a wet pool support a colony of bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*. Another new tetrad record was made on the return - sharp-leaved fluellen *Kickxia elatine* by the track to the former Isolation Hospital. A single silver-studded blue butterfly made a brief appearance just before a significant downpour of rain terminated proceedings around 1.30p.m.

Leader and Report: Rev. E A Pratt

August 31 - Marsh Gentian survey on Stoborough Heath (Natural England area) Arne parish



Seven members assembled on a beautiful last day of summer, and divided into three teams, to battle the rough terrain. The west side of the Heath proved most productive, but overall there were not nearly so many plants as on Hartland Moor to the east. We did not quite finish, and Laurence Taylor kindly returned to do so the following day. 397 plants were located and mapped. A new colony of dioecious sedge *Carex dioica* was also found.

Marsh Gentian © John Newbould 2013

**4th September 2013 Ringmoor and Turnworth Down (National Trust) –
Turnworth parish** John Newbould and Michael Edwards.

This National Trust property in north Dorset is well recorded for plant galls, but we were due to attend (on the 6th September) a Field Studies Council course on fungal galls. Our pre-workshop task was to collect some fungal galls to identify at the workshop. With gall development so dependent on both the invading species and the host being in the right condition simultaneously, repeat visits often yield new records and this visit was no exception (Redfern 2012).

In the car park is a large patch of ground elder *Aegopodium podaria*, which yielded both the scale insect gall of *Trioza flavipennis* but also the rarely found fungal gall *Plasmoparia nivea*. Bramble species have two fungal galls. The most common gall seen in August is *Phragmidium violaceum* but we also found the much scarcer *P. bulbosum*. We also found a smut rust on red campion *Silene dioica*. This black rust *Microbotryum lychnidis-dioica* is found on the anthers and has records from only five 10 km squares on the NBN Gateway. In 2012, oak galls were quite scarce but 2013 has been a good year. We were quite pleased to find the gall wasps *Cynips divisa* and *C. longiventris*, which have both been quite hard to find in recent years. The other fungal gall located of interest was the rust *Puccinia circaeae* on enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*.

26th September 2013 Chase Wood, Shermel Gate in Sixpenny Handley parish.
John Newbould and Michael Edwards.

Once again the main objective of the day was to record plant galls in under-worked 1km squares ST9819 and ST9919 just south of the Wiltshire border. The day was damp and overcast with poor light and few flying insects. Never the less we made 30 gall records with nearly 50 % of the records from oak *Quercus robur*. Again in addition to the common gall wasps associated with spangle and silk button galls we recorded *Andricus curvator* affecting the petiole and bottom of the leaf; the cola-nut gall *Andricus lignicolus* and *C. divisa* in both squares.

We also found *Stenacis convolvens*; one of only three galls found on spindle *Euonymus europaeus* and the gall mite *Phyllocoptes depressus*; one of just two galls found on dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*.

Whilst having lunch, Mike Edwards noticed around 20 large macro-fungi on a calcareous west-facing slope. This turned out to be the Parasol *Macrolepiota excoriata* described by Buckzacki *et. al* (2012) as uncommon but shown spread across the Midlands on the NBN Gateway. The field was rich in calcareous higher plants including salad burnet *Sanguisorbia minor* with the occasional leaf bearing the orange rust *Phragmidium sanguisorbae*. Autumn gentian, hairy violet *Viola hirta*, harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*, dwarf thistle and cowslips *Primula veris* were noted in the herb layer.

5th October 2013 Thorncombe Woods in Stinsford parish:
Recorder and report Bryan Edwards.

Three people met at Thorncombe Wood car park with the aim of looking at fungi, during one of the best fungal seasons for many years. As the British Mycological Society has visited the site in 2006 it was decided to visit the woodland to the north

of Hardy's Cottage, part of which is called Snail Creep which is quite apt for the pace that mycologists normally move!

Walking up the lane to Hardy's Cottage the rust *Puccinia chaerophylli* was noted on the leaves of Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* on the verge. Despite the frequency of the Cow Parsley it is rarely recorded in Dorset, with Sweet Cicely *Myrrhis odorata* the favoured host. Beech is the main tree species in the first block of woodland forming a deep litter. Porcelain Fungus *Oudemansiella mucida* was spectacularly abundant on one tree, with the boletes Red Cracking Bolete *Xerocomus chrysenteron* and Matt Bolete *Xerocomus pruinatus* found among the leaf litter. Looking among the litter more closely the tiny Beech Candlesnuff *Xylaria carpophila* and *Phaeohelotium fagineum* were found on old beech mass husks. Nearby the small brown Felted Twiglet *Tubaria conspersa* was notably abundant in beech litter with several troops of Butter Cap *Rhodocollybia butyracea*. Further up slope the woodland became more mixed with birch, oak and sycamore. Alder Bracket *Inonotus radiatus* was an unusual find on birch while an orange-brown crust on the underside of a rotting sycamore log proved to be *Tomentella bryophila*, a new record for the county.

Walking east into the conifer plantation Orange Mosscap *Rickenella fibula* was frequent among mosses, with Bay Bolete *Boletus badius*, False Chanterelle *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca* and Bleeding Bonnet *Mycena sanguinolenta* in the needle litter, the latter making a total of eleven *Mycena* species recorded during the visit. The small white bracket Blueing Conifer Bracket *Postia caesia*, which turns blue on bruising, was noted on fallen branches.

A good total of 75 species were found in the three hours, including one new to Dorset.

Nomenclature follows Buczacki (2012).

References:

- Buczacki, S., Shields, C and Ovenden, D. (2012) *Collins Fungi Guide*. Harper Collins, London.
- Pratt, E.A. (2008) *The Wildflowers of Purbeck, Brownsea and Sanbanks*. Bramberley Books, Luton.
- Redfern, M. (2012) *Plant Galls* Collins New Naturalist **117**. Harper Collins, London.
- Rodwell, J (1991) *British Plant Communities – Woodlands and scrub Vol 1*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

DIVER PROJECT BOTANICAL RECORDING AT STUDLAND

Weather permitting Robin Walls is proposing to allocate each Thursday from 27th March 2014 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 to confirm arrangements.

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

All are welcome to contribute.

Recording on a tablet or smart phone.



At a number of meetings I have attended recently, there has been a considerable discussion about the merits or otherwise of digital recording. Inevitably the discussion drifts towards using tablet computers and smart phones in the field with an app.

Well one has arrived developed by Bristol University in conjunction with The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to record ladybirds. The recorder can fix his/her position, photograph the specimen, use the embedded picture

gallery to make a correct identification and dispatch the resulting record to the Biological Records Centre at Wallingford for inclusion in the Ladybird Recording Scheme. However, most rural areas are still on 3G networks so you have to wait until you are in network range. You may also find transmission quite slow unless in an urban area with good coverage.

The University of Bristol has developed a portfolio of projects based on "crowd-sourcing software" including the Conker Trees Science: Leaf Watch to trace the distribution of the horse chestnut leaf-mining moth *Cameraria ohridella*. To find the software go into Apps on your iPhone. Ignore all the music icons and using the keypad search alphabetically for L. It is there. Try it out before you wish for such technology for plants with the bigger lists.



Harlequin Ladybirds © John Newbould
John Newbould

FIELD MEETING PROGRAMME 2014

26th April 2014 Filcombe Wood and St Gabriel's Wood. Leader John Newbould. We have special permission for car parking at Filcombe Farm SY407928. 10.30a.m. Filcombe Farm is located off Muddyford Lane, found on the south side of the A35 at the top of the hill west of Chideock. The lane is very narrow. Watch for a green National Trust sign on the left side of the lane. These woods are an ancient woodland site; replanted by the Forestry Commission in the 1950s. **Please note this is not a public car park and should only be used when visiting the Trust office.**

5th May 2014 Westhay Farm, Stonebarrow.

Join the National Trust's West Dorset survey team for our annual count of green-winged orchids. Meet at the Stonebarrow Shop SY383933 at 10.00am and/or 2.00p.m. The walk involves some steep slopes. Booking please on 01297 489481

Wednesday 7th May 2014 Veteran tree recording , Newlands Batch

Join the National Trust's West Dorset rangers and survey team recording veteran trees. Meet at the Stonebarrow Shop SY383933 at 10.00am with lunch. The survey will be assisted using four track vehicles. We may need to borrow extra transport so booking please on 01297 489481 or sarah.kennedy@nationaltrust.org.uk

Wednesday 7th May 2014 – Townsend DWT Reserve (Swanage) Rare Plant Recording (morning or all day)

We will be searching for and mapping the locations of a number of National rarities, starting with Hairy-fruited Corn salad (*Valerianella eriocarpa*) and moving on to other key species - targets likely to include (depending on the season): Early Spider Orchid, Early Gentian and Dwarf Mouse Ear. General recording will also be welcomed. The Dorset Wildlife Trust is embarking on a new phase of management at this interesting and floristically rich urban-fringe site, so our aim is to update the records we have and provide estimates of population size and extent, where possible, as a point of reference for ongoing management. Meet 10.30 am, main south-west entrance SZ022780. Bring lunch if wishing to stay on in afternoon (finishing by 4pm). Leaders: Amber Rosenthal (DWT) & Ted Pratt. Advanced booking (Amber) if possible please - 01305 217984. Contact on the day – 07917 171427.

24th May to 31st May Dorset Wildflower week. A series of public walks organized by Dorset Flora Group. A separate leaflet will be available from Libraries, Tourist Information Centres and National Trust outlets.

31st May 2014 Garden Bioblitz, Hardy's Cottage DT2 8QJ. Parking at Thorncombe Wood SY725922. 11.00a.m. to 5.00p.m. National Trust members free. Normal visitor charges. This is an event organised as part of a national garden bioblitz

Saturday 7th June 2014 – Fontmell Down DWT Reserve Early Gentian survey (all day)

We hope to repeat the 1997 full count of early gentian across the site (over 21 thousand counted then!). Meet 10.30 am, at the National Trust car park at the top of Spread Eagle Hill ST886187. Bring lunch and plenty to drink if wishing to stay on in afternoon (finishing by 4pm). Please be aware that we will be working on the steep slopes at Fontmell, shoes with good ankle support should be worn. Potential to retreat to the café at Compton Abbas Air Field in poor weather or for a cup of tea at the end the day. Leaders: Amber Rosenthal (DWT). Contact on the day – 07917 171427.

Sunday 8th June 2014 Farm Pollination Day. This is a Citizen Science project organised in conjunction with the NERC Biological Records Centre at Wallingford. Meet at Stonebarrow Shop SY383933 at 10.00am and 2.00p.m. Booking please on 01297 489481. We will be visiting two hay meadows at Westhay Farm. One is full of wildflowers, and the adjacent field is mainly grassland. You will be asked to use a net to collect and count insects with the help of experts.

Wednesday 11th June 2014 Lulworth for Stair Hole and Fossil Forest: Leaders John Newbould and Laurence Taylor.

Meet at the West Lulworth Church at 10.00a.m. SY823806. We will walk down to the cove returning to the cars by Bindon Hill. Bring lunch and stout boots. The meeting will take place at this location only if the leaders consider the area safe.

Monday 30th June, 2014 Durlstan Country Park - Yellow Vetchling survey.

This is a joint meeting with Bournemouth University to help survey this nationally scarce species in one of its best habitats in England. Meet at 2.30p.m at the Learning

Centre SZ032773 Leaders Ted Pratt and Anita Diaz Bookings 01929 427229 Car park Free put SURVEY in the window.

Date to be chosen 2.30pm Durlston Country Park - seed collecting for Kew

We will be collecting seeds of Pale Flax and Yellow Vetchling for The Royal Botanic Garden, Kew's Millennium Seedbank

Please ring Ted Pratt on 01929 427229 and leave your phone number and/or email if you are interested. The date will be phoned/emailed at fairly short notice, when the seeds are ready, and those who are free to come will be welcome. Meet at Learning Centre car park map ref. SZ032773
Car park free - put SEED COLLECTING MEETING in windscreen

Saturday 19th July 2014 – Winfrith Heath DWT Bog Orchid Count & General Recording (morning or all day)

The aim of the session will be to map the total distribution of Bog Orchid (*Hammarbya paludosa*) and/ or Brown Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora fusca*) across the site, both 'Dorset Rare Plant Register' species. For those who want to stay on this will be followed by general recording of this, and possibly the adjacent Tadnoll Heath reserve. Meet 10.30am by gateway to main track/ layby SY804863. Bring lunch if wishing to stay on in afternoon. Leaders: Robin Walls & Amber Rosenthal (DWT). Advanced booking (Amber) if possible please - 01305 217984. Contact on the day – 07917 171427.

Saturday 9th August 2014 Corfe Common Chamomile Survey:

Meet at 10.30am at West Street car park SY958818 with GPS meter. This species has declined massively in Dorset and the survey will help the National Trust to know the extent of the plant now and allow future comparisons. Bring lunch if staying all day. Bookings Ted Pratt 01929 427229

Saturday 16th August 2014. Survey of Eggardon Hill Leader John Newbould 10.30a.m. A chalk grassland hill fort site some of which, is owned by the National Trust. Meet at the end of the track at SY545943 with lunch.

Saturday 13th September 2014 Hawkchurch. Leader John Newbould. This is an opportunity to record in an under-worked area of VC9 (Dorset) although Hawkchurch is in the administrative County of Devon. For those who are members of the Dorset County Boundary Group, I propose to walk along the Monarch's Way to the Blackwater River, which forms the modern administrative boundary. Meet by the Church ST34250043 at 10.30a.m.

Saturday 11th October Fungus Foray: Filcombe Wood and St Gabriel's Wood. Car parking at Filcombe Farm. SY407928 . 10.30a.m. See note on 26th April.



For a pocket guide see:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6687439250784256?category=5856835374415872>

Linking the Ridgeway - a project led by FWAG and Dorset ANOB

Dear Robin and John

Thank you all for expressing an interest in conducting surveys as part of the Linking the Ridgeway project. As discussed, the two groups I am keen to survey are rare arable annual plants and farmland birds.

As far as the arable annuals are concerned, I shall be led by you Robin when it comes to survey methodology. I was thinking of keeping things pretty informal and simply recording the location of those more interesting species found whilst walking about the farm. I note your interest in looking over the more commercial arable farms, which might be expected not to accommodate interesting annuals amongst clean crops. We can also look at those areas where rarer species have been recorded in the past – if those species are no longer present I can try to encourage the farmer to put the appropriate management in place to see if we can bring anything back from the seed bank.

As far as farmland birds are concerned, I am keen to survey arable land as much as we do grassland. I suggest walking an easily accessible non-random transect along hedgerows and through fields representative of the wider area. I was going to suggest spring/summer but, on thinking about it, it would be interesting to do the odd walk in the autumn/winter. Where there are agri-environment scheme crops of wild bird seed mix it would be good to take these in on the transect when the crops are yielding seed to get some idea of which species are using them and in what numbers – potentially more interesting and encouraging for the farmer putting the management in place.

I shall be visiting farmers and will make them aware such surveys may be available. When a farmer requests a survey I will get in contact and we can arrange from there. Travel expenses will be available and if you can think of anyone else who might be interested in carrying out surveys please pass them my details (or pass their details to me and I will ring or email).

The Ridgeway project runs from Eggardon Hill in the west to Poxwell in the east. Details with a map of the area are in a separate .pdf file attached.

Any queries, suggestions etc please feel free to contact me.

Thanks for your help,

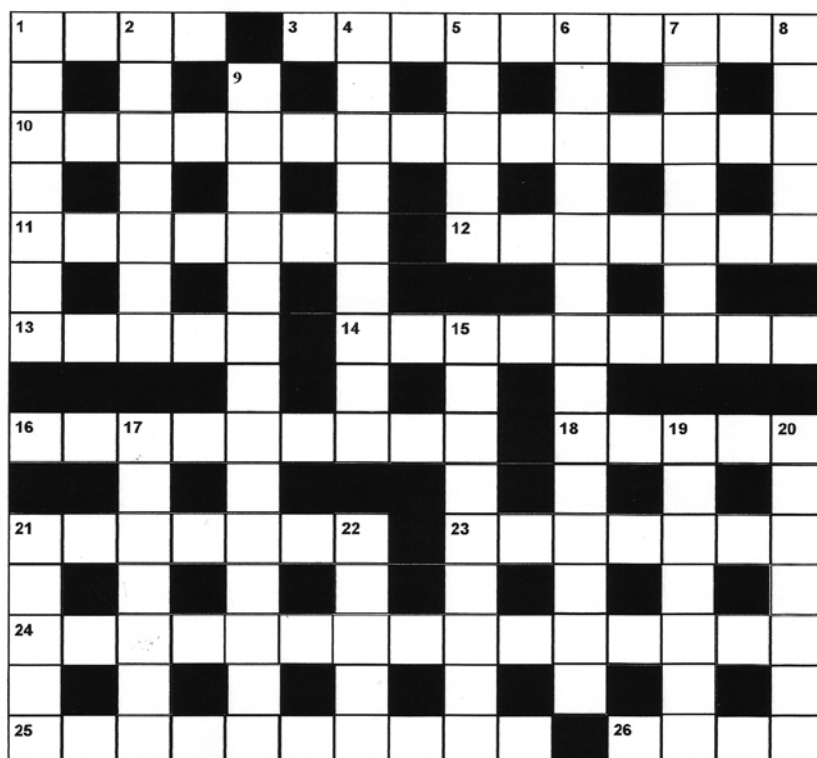
Alex Butler
Farm Conservation Advisor
FWAG SouthWest Ltd
Dorset History Centre
Bridport Road
Dorchester
DT1 1RP
(01305) 228913

The Ridgeway from Hardy's Monument © John Newbould 2011



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD set by Kales

Many of the clues and answers have a botanical theme. Solution on page 21



Across

1. Poisonous tree from South Africa, about a thousand (4)
3. Girl reduced ship's company on board 'The Flower' (10)
10. At the close of day, demure girl creates bloom (7,8)
11. Abandoned Cyril, nearly totally emotional (7)
12. Buttercup from a Tory with sex appeal and energy (7)
13. Make a brief visit to be bang up-to-date (3,2)
14. Note articles behind Ulster firm for plant (9)
16. Flattens poster on printing-machines (9)
18. Dad went back softly with the French fruit (5)
21. Dish teacher returned with oil made from the damask rose (7)
23. Lucerne a narrow-minded, ignorant man twice accepted (7)
24. Trailing house plant from travelling yachtsman (9,6)
25. Wild Rose has a pipe after pudding (10)
26. I get up without energy, flag (4)

Down

1. Kernel on edge of sower's basket (7)
2. To solve clue, rap criminal (5,2)
4. For example, grand works yield fruit (9)
5. Victors of 1066 lose non-smoker lady (5)
6. Ordinary old paddock has fibre plant and plant of waste places (6,8)
7. Former wife books Institute of Contemporary Arts for objects from foreign lands (7)
8. European vegetable (5)
9. Treat with contempt what's inside mix, creating lack of satisfaction (14)
15. Lettuce good in bones and a pain around the chest (9)
17. Peas, net, contrive to be weighty (7)
19. Acceptable in sedge to add argon as a little medication (7)
20. Confused caper exists to make small, heath-like plant (7)
21. Green new series: second mowings of grass in the same season (5)
22. Cockney sock seller used to make baskets (5)

ODDS and SODS



One of my most unusual records seen in August 2013 was to find in a gravel strewn Preston garden, yellow-horned poppy *Glaucium flavum*. This was located in square SY7083. I will leave it to our Vice County Recorder whether the record is acceptable.

John Newbould.



Bog orchid (*Hammarbya paludosa*)
© John Newbould

One of the 2014 target species is bog orchid (*Hammarbya paludosa*) on Winfrith Heath. It has been known here for some time, but last year Laurence Taylor found it in a new site. *Robin Walls*.

ARTICLES AND PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF DORSET HEATH, SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR
johna72newbould@yahoo.co.uk

If you are not a member of Dorset Flora Group and have received the Dorset Heath from a friend join by emailing Rhiannon Rogers (r.rogers@Dorsetcc.gov.uk).

Solution to crossword

1	S	A	2	C	K		3	P	4	E	N	5	N	Y	6	C	R	7	E	S	8	S
	E		L				9	D		G		O		O		X						W
10	E	V	E	N	I	N	G	P	R	I	M	R	O	S	E							
	D		A		S		P		M		M		T		D							
11	L	Y	R	I	C	A	L			12	A	C	O	N	I	T	E					
	I		U		O		A						N		C							
13	P	O	P	I	N			14	N	I	15	C	O	T	I	A	N	A				
							T		T		O		O									
16	A	D	17	P	R	E	S	S	E	S			18	A	P	19	P	L	20	E		
			E		N						T		D		I		P					
21	R	I	S	O	T	T	22	O			23	A	L	F	A	L	F	A				
	A		A		M		S		L		L		U		C							
24	W	A	N	D	E	R	I	N	G	S	A	I	L	O	R							
	N		T		N		E		I		X		A		I							
25	S	W	E	E	T	B	R	I	A	R			26	I	R	I	S					

BSBI NEWS January 2014.

More work: BSBI in partnership with other societies such as the British Lichen Society have been asked to monitor for ash dieback. If you are willing to take part, register for a monad by emailing: ash-survey@ceh.ac.uk

There is also a proposal to establish a new plant surveillance scheme using a stratified sample of 1km squares selected to have a high chance of containing semi-natural habitats. Recorders will be asked to record species abundance in small plots usually 10 sq.m. If you are willing to have a go, keep an eye on the BSBI website to register.

PLANT GALLS

John Newbould provided a poster on plant galls at the Flora Group AGM. He explains here how you can add value to your botanical recording.

Galls are growths on plants, formed of plant tissue, but caused by other organisms. They vary in size from small bumps, pustules, pimples or hairy patches to large swellings and unusual growths. (Redfern 2011). They can be caused by a variety of invertebrates, e.g. gall mites, gall wasps, fungi, bacteria, nematodes and viruses. A leaf mine is not a plant gall. Galls may also be found on fungi, lichens and mosses, which are outside the scope of this course. The easiest place to see a gall is usually on trees such as oaks, but I find galls on flowering plants very satisfying to find; there are some on grasses, sedges and also ferns.

What do you need to identify plant galls?

- *British Plant Galls* Margaret Redfern and Peter Shirley - an AIDGAP guide published by the Field Studies Council uses keys for both fungal and invertebrate galls based on the host plant species.
- A good botanical guide e.g. *Collins Flower Guide* David Streeter *et.al.*
- *British Plant Galls – a photographic guide* Michael Chinery www.wildguides.co.uk is not a complete list but helps to get the jizz
- *British Rust Fungi* Wilson and Henderson published by Cambridge University Press is out of print but worth getting hold of but can be expensive on Amazon.
- A magnifying glass x 10 and x 20
- GPS meter to geo-locate the record.
- A field note book and camera and a few small envelopes for samples.

Plant Galls Margaret Redfern published under the New Naturalist imprint **117** is not a field guide but describes the biology of galls. If you have access to a compound microscope at x 400 this helps considerably to identify spores on fungal galls.

What do you record?

1. The identification of the gall
2. The identification of the host with a note on where on the host e.g. leaf, stem, fruit *etc.*
3. The place with a good grid reference. I use 10 figures!
4. The date and name of the recorder and any person who helped with determination.

What do you do with the records?

If you wish your records to contribute to the growing database held by the National Biodiversity Network www.nbn.org.uk then it is essential to prepare your list electronically. Many people use a database such as Recorder 6 or Mapmate but these are flat databases, which allows a record of one species with the other in a comment field. Similarly with the NBN's on line recording system iRecord (www.brac.ac.uk/irecord) at present there is no way of recording both species at the same time in a relational database. I am quietly negotiating but money is tight. The beauty of the online system is that the database manager distributes the records to a responsible data custodian, such as a local environmental records centre or an approved national recording scheme. The online system runs some checks e.g. making sure that the grid reference is good and that the species does not need an expert to determine. The online iRecord can certainly be downloaded into Excel.

I use an Excel database using Vlookup to ensure that the spellings are correct and there is consistency throughout. A copy can be available if you want one. Another advantage of Excel is that it is possible to do data analysis using the data function area but that is for another day.

We do not think Diver recorded Plant Galls so this is an innovation in the already comprehensive recording and our knowledge of South Haven peninsula and the Studland NNR with some fifty records in 2013.

Some examples of plant galls:



A fungal gall on silver birch, which appears as a witch's broom
Taphrina betulina



Viruses and bacteria cause cankers on various trees. The exact species can be difficult to determine.



The asexual form of the marble gall *Andricus kollari* on oak *Quercus robur*



The gall wasp *Andricus aries* on *Quercus robur* discovered by Una Garland at Greenlands Farm

For more information on plant galls, visit the British Plant Gall Society website www.british-galls.org.uk Membership is a modest £10 per annum for which you receive two copies of *Cecidology* and the opportunity of field meetings.