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WINTER 2024

WILD FLOWER MAGAZINE

Published four times a year by the Wild Flower Society

Presidents: 1886-1948	Mrs E.V. Dent, O.B.E.
1948-1956	Miss H.S.A. Dent
1956-1994	Mrs C.M.R. Schwerdt, M.B.E. (nee V.V.C. Dent)
1994-1997	Prof. D. Bellamy, O.B.E.
1997-2000	Mr D. McClintock
2000-2002	Mr R.S.R. Fitter
2002-2003	Mr R.M. Burton
2003-present	Prof. Sir Ghilleen Prance, F.R.S.

WINTER 2024

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Our Editor Ken was in a panic about my letter for this issue as I wrote it at the last minute of proof checking! There were several reasons for the delay.

Firstly, a visit to Brazil in mid-November. What a joy it was to be travelling to South America again after such a long gap because of Covid. I went to attend and speak at the Brazilian Botanical Congress in the city of Belém at the mouth of the Amazon. It was a pleasure to see a gathering of 1,400 botanists, most of them young and enthusiastic about their research and deeply concerned about the environment and the loss of species and habitat in Brazil. I left Belém quite hopeful because the younger generation are speaking out about deforestation. The good news is that this is supported by President Lula da Silva, who took office in January and has already slowed down the rate of deforestation and increased the protection of the indigenous tribal people.

The second reason for the delay in writing is that we are in the process of moving from Lyme Regis to a flat in Plymouth to be near to our daughter. Anne's health is deteriorating, and it was time to downsize and be nearer to family. One problem has been the quantity of books I have accumulated

over the years. I have been sure to keep the very nice Floras of Devon and Cornwall to start doing more exploring of the wild flowers of these two counties.

The third reason for the delay is that the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has made the unfortunate decision to move the 7 million specimen herbarium to a science park near Reading. The herbarium should not be separated from the Gardens and the living plant collection or from the laboratories. Perhaps some of you have seen my name in the Times, Telegraph, Observer and Private Eye in various letters and comments as I join eighty percent of Kew staff in opposing this move, apparently led by Kew's Director and DEFRA, the ministry that sponsors Kew. To move the herbarium would take the heart out of Kew and is a shocking idea. It goes completely against the concepts of the founding Director, Sir William Hooker, who donated his personal herbarium to Kew to found one of the greatest herbaria in the world, that contains the type specimens of more than a quarter of a million plant taxa. In the next magazine I hope to write more about our wild flowers!

GHILLEAN PRANCE

Bill Hawkins

It is with great sadness that I have to announce the death of Bill Hawkins. Bill and his wife Carol have been active members of the WFS for many years, serving as meetings organizers, writing articles for the magazine and being such lovely people to know. They always made everyone feel so welcome. An obituary to Bill will follow in the next issue. Bill will be very much missed. Carol is holding a Memorial Meeting dedicated to Bill in May this year at New Buckenham Common, Norfolk, date to be decided. Please see page 47.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to my second issue of the WFS magazine. I've enjoyed putting it together and hope that you enjoy reading it. Personally, I love learning about all the exciting places that WFS members have visited during the year. Let's hope that this year will be just as good. I'm sure it will, as Janet's programme in the Year Book looks very tempting. I am looking forward to receiving reports, along with relevant photographs if possible, of the various meetings.

I have also enjoyed attending the various WFS meetings during the year, talking to fellow members and asking them for feedback about the magazine. On one particular meeting back in the spring, I was chatting to a fairly new member and the discussion left me feeling how very fortunate we are to be living in such a relatively peaceful and mostly

beautiful country. I learnt that the person I was talking to had moved from Ukraine to England for work seven years ago. When asked about how she was feeling about her relatives at home and the atrocities and bombing happening in her country, her reply was "Well, we're just used to it". It left me feeling extremely humbled and emotional for her.

On a happier note, I first met my fiancée, Sue, on a WFS meeting in Suffolk eleven years ago. We are to be married this January. Thank you Wild Flower Society for bringing us together. Are we the first to find our partners at the WFS? We believe so, but if you know differently, we'd be interested to hear from you.

KEN SOUTHALL

NOTICES

THE PRESIDENTS' AWARD 2023

The Presidents' Award is presented annually to acknowledge a publication which makes an outstanding contribution to the understanding of the flowering plants and ferns of Britain and Ireland.

It is given jointly by the WFS and BSBI, the publication being chosen alternately by the President of each Society. This year the award was made by BSBI President, Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, at the British and Irish Botanical Conference, held in Newcastle on 2nd December.

The recipients were P.A. Stroh, K.J. Walker, T.A. Humphrey, O.L. Pescott and R.J. Burkmar for the *Plant Atlas 2020*.

**Copy date for the Spring magazine:
1st February 2024**

NOTICES Continued

NEW GENERAL SECRETARY REQUIRED

After ten years as General Secretary, Sheila Wynn will be stepping down at the 2024 AGM. The Executive Committee has divided the job into four different roles, two of which have now been filled, and is looking for members who would be willing to take on either, or both, of the remaining two roles which are:

Executive Committee Secretary - This entails organising meetings and setting the agenda in consultation with other members of the Committee and acting as the central point of contact for the Society. It does not involve minuting the meetings, which is covered by one of the other roles already allocated.

AGM and Members' Weekend Organiser – This involves organising the event with help from local members. In future, it will be a shorter event than in recent years.

If you think you might be interested in either of these roles and would like to know what is involved, please get in touch with Sheila:
wfs.gensec@gmail.com

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES, JANUARY 2024

Please check the enclosed subscription leaflet for the new rates and how to pay.

If you already pay by standing order, you must contact your bank to change the amount. If your 2024 payment has already been made, you will need to pay the extra, either by making an online payment, by cheque or via our website.

SOUTH COAST AND CHANNEL ISLANDS BRANCH (BRANCH M) CHANGE OF BRANCH SECRETARY

Having been Branch Secretary since 2006, Gareth Bursnall will retire from the role at the end of February 2024, after writing the reports on the 2023 plant lists and diaries.

The new Branch Secretary will be Sue Denness. Her contact details are, 1 Fox Court, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 4JL. Email: susandenness7@gmail.com

Please note that the password for the Members' Page of the website can be found in the 2024 Year Book.

WFS MEMBERS' WEEKEND AND AGM

1st – 4th SEPTEMBER 2023

The Members' Weekend was based at Rye in East Sussex, the Branch and Competition Secretaries' Meeting and AGM being held at The Hub on Rye Hill Community Centre, which provided a delicious buffet lunch prior to the AGM.

Before the Secretaries' Meeting on Friday afternoon, those arriving early enjoyed a visit to Flatoppers Wood Nature Reserve near Peasmarsh. Field meetings were also held on Saturday morning, before the AGM, and on Sunday and Monday. Reports of all these meetings can be found on pages 9 and 15.

AGM

Only the main points of the AGM will be reported here, with the full minutes appearing on the website. If you are unable to access these via the website and would like to see a full copy, please contact Sheila Wynn, our General Secretary, sending a stamped, addressed A5 envelope. The AGM was attended by 50 members, of whom 14 hadn't previously attended a WFS AGM. Robin Blades, **our Treasurer**, reported that the 2022 accounts had been circulated with the Summer 2023 Magazine. Subscription income had again increased and we had had a successful sale of donated books. We had sold £3,000 worth of investments to help fund the remaining 70% of the cost of the new website.

Each year we give grants for training, education and research. Funding for

training and education is largely made through the Wildlife Trusts and Field Studies Council. A new initiative in 2022 was to offer the Trusts funds specifically for events for young people. We continued to provide funding for research work being carried out by the Teesdale Special Flora Trust as well as giving grants to students at three universities to support their research projects.

The total spent exceeded receipts, but remained within the limits set by our Reserves Policy. The value of our investments fell by 11.6%, due to market conditions in 2022, but has risen slightly since.

The meeting approved the adoption of the accounts.

In 2023 we received a very generous legacy from our former member David Albon.

Membership subscriptions will increase for 2024. Robin reminded members to update their standing orders before January. He hoped that the change would not cause too much extra work for our Membership Secretary, Sue Poyser, whom he thanked for all her work for the Society.

Robin thanked Bob Holder for carrying out the independent examination of the 2022 accounts and proposed his re-election. This was agreed.

Updating of Regulations and Activities Document.

Sheila Wynn, **our General Secretary**, said that the revised document could be found on the Members' Page of the WFS website. She reported that the main changes were: the reference text for plants recorded in members' Record Books is the 4th edition of Clive Stace's *New Flora of the British Isles*; there will no longer be an Autumn Day Hunt, so any plants seen on a day hunt should just be entered as part of the overall Autumn Hunt; all plants recorded for the seasonal hunts should be listed in Stace's *New Flora*.

Safeguarding Policy.

Sheila reported that, in line with Charity Commission guidance, the WFS now has a Safeguarding Policy, which can be found on our website under the Governance Tab.

Our two Safeguarding Officers are Chairman, Peter Llewellyn, and the Meetings Secretary, Janet John.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- set out the behaviour which we expect of our members, who we hope will abide by the following:
- being welcoming and inclusive of everyone, whatever their level of expertise; ensuring discussions and debates are carried out in a respectful manner; respecting the preferences and boundaries of others regarding personal space and physical contact; showing understanding

when dealing with sensitive issues.

- try to ensure that our meetings are a safe environment for everyone, including children and young people who may attend and any adult who may be at risk of abuse;
- encourage the use of risk assessments to raise awareness of potential dangers for all field meetings;
- set out the procedures that should be followed to report any incidence of inappropriate behaviour or bullying to one of the Safeguarding Officers. This should be done confidentially and in writing.

If you are unable to access either the new Regulations or the Safeguarding Policy via the website and would like to see a full copy, please contact Sheila Wynn, sending a stamped, addressed A4 envelope.

Ken Southall, **our Editor**, said that after agreeing to take on the role last year, he soon realised that the current Microsoft Publisher software is much more advanced than the package he had previously used. With a lot of help and guidance from the previous editor, Anne Kell, he quickly became more confident and was pleased to be able to say that those many hours spent at the computer had proved to be mostly very enjoyable.

He gave special thanks to Anne for

all her help and, on behalf of the Society, for her seven years of producing the excellent magazine that we all enjoy. Ken said that it is his intention to continue with Anne's style. He also thanked Peter Llewellyn for stepping in, despite his difficult circumstances, to produce the Summer Magazine. Ken thanked all those members who had contributed their reports in plenty of time for him to produce the Autumn issue.

Janet John, **our Meetings Secretary**, started by saying that her aim is to provide a selection of field meetings and online meetings that our membership – and people surfing the Web looking for an interesting and worthwhile organisation to join – will find irresistible.

She quoted this year's figures, which were: 47 field meetings and 7 online meetings; 170 individuals attended field meetings; 160 individuals logged into the live online meetings; 360 individuals watched the online meetings at their own convenience.

Janet said that the figures were encouraging and thought that they were a good ratio for a membership of 700-800.

Janet thanked the people who had sent in grateful emails in response to the online meetings, saying that they are always well received by the speaker. She went on to say that the talks are recorded and posted online on YouTube. They are not publicised, except to our members, so it is rewarding to see how many

are watched or re-watched later.

Janet then went on to report on the year's field meetings, saying that for most, availability and demand had worked well. There were just three meetings where demand had far exceeded availability. These were Cornwall, Teesdale and York. She hopes to put on further meetings in these areas in the near future.

She also noted that the season had started off with a few hiccups. For health reasons, a number of leaders were unable to lead. However, it was to the credit of our Society that other members had been prepared to step forward to fill in the gaps, for which she was very grateful.

This year Janet suggested to leaders that they write a risk assessment for their meeting and circulate it to the group, or read it out at the beginning of the meeting. This initiative seems to have been embraced without problem. Whilst it is not a legal requirement to have a formal written risk assessment, it is good practice.

Lastly, Janet appealed to field meeting participants to volunteer to write a brief report for the Magazine so that people unable to attend can get an idea of the location and flora. It doesn't have to be a literary masterpiece, just a personal account of a day of botanising. Due to a reluctance by people to volunteer, Janet feels that she has ended up writing far too many reports herself this year.

Nichola Hawkins, **our Publicity Secretary**, reported as follows on

the WFS presence on social media: the Facebook page has 4,010 members, while our Twitter account has 3,150 followers and Instagram 925. She thanked Peter Llewellyn, Moira O'Donnell and Helen Dignum for administering these sites. She thought that we could make more use of the sites by, for example, sharing information from Wildlife Trusts and adding photos of our field meetings to the Facebook page.

Nichola also said that we now have a new supplier for WFS T-shirts. As well as the original design, there is a new range with a different logo, also in different colours. There is also a new cotton tote bag bearing the WFS logo. These can be obtained from: <https://the-wild-flower-society.teemill.com>.

Nichola then reported on publicity materials, showing us the new WFS banner. There are also posters available as well as children's quiz sheets and colouring sheets for use at events. She asked members to take and distribute the new WFS leaflets, which show the new subscription rates.

Sheila Wynn, our **General Secretary**, thanked the people who had done the lion's share of planning for the Members' Weekend, with special thanks to Lys Muirhead, assisted by Jill Oakley, Sue Denness and Helen Dignum. By finding this venue, choosing and checking out all the field meeting sites and helping to find people willing to lead the walks, they made her job so much easier.

She also thanked Paul Harmes for agreeing to be the speaker at the AGM and for helping with the Saturday morning walk as well as leading a group at Rye Harbour on the Sunday. She then thanked the other people who had contributed to the afternoon's programme: Stephen Clarkson for the plant quiz (and John Poland for being willing to step in if necessary); Gareth Bursnall for the plant photo quiz; and Ken Southall for the splendid display of photo competition entries and for organising the 'Shoot and Show' photo competition. She said that after the AGM there would be a sale of some of David Albon's books by Steve Little and Gwyndaf John, with the proceeds going to the WFS.

Sheila went on to say that it isn't easy to find enough willing volunteers to lead all the different groups at AGM Weekend field meetings and she thanked all those who had offered or agreed to help out in this way: Gareth Bursnall, Jan Armishaw, Steve Little, Helen Dignum, Lys Muirhead, Sue Denness and Jill Oakley. She also thanked all the Branch and Competition Secretaries for everything that they do for the Society.

Finally, Sheila said that, having been General Secretary for 10 years, she intends to stand down at next year's AGM, so the Committee urgently needs to find someone who would be interested in taking on this role. She asked anyone who would like to know what is involved to get in touch, saying that there would be lots of help available.

Robin Blades thanked Sheila for her great contribution to all the Society's activities.

Ken Southall, **our Photographic Secretary**, thanked the eleven entrants, who between them had submitted 82 high-quality pictures for the competition. His report appears on pages 16 and 17.

Helen Dignum, **our Website Manager**, reported that following the launch of the new website in January 2022, this year had been a time of consolidation.

A password protected Members' Page has been created, which includes the contact details of officers and branch secretaries and links to the photos from previous photo competitions. The Safeguarding Policy and Privacy and GDPR notices are available on the website as a matter of good practice.

The grants application page has been revamped, with additional information about the WFS 2023 grant awards to Wildlife Trusts and for research. Future website plans include a page on the Teesdale Special Flora research project, which the WFS has supported with a five-year grant.

Helen went on to say that the Stripe online membership payment system had received 168 payments last year, 189 this year to date. Unfortunately, there had been two occasions this year when the payment system had failed. These occurred in May and again in July. The problems have been resolved by

Red Paint, the website developer, and transactions are being monitored by Helen and Sue Poyser, to flag up any future payment failures.

Helen then reported on the Newsletter, saying that last year the previous Gmail alerts system had been upgraded to Mailchimp, a professional email platform ensuring privacy and GDPR compliance. However, the WFS had outgrown the free Mailchimp version and changed to Email Octopus in March 2023. There were 539 subscribers at the last count (29/08/23), This figure included 235 members.

WFS Mailing List.

The current Newsletter is only sent to those who have opted to receive it and there are still many WFS members who have not signed up. Helen thought that an active society like ours should have a comprehensive mailing list of members to allow timely notification of important issues and to keep members informed and engaged about outdoor meetings and winter Zoom lectures.

This would involve some validation work as the WFS does not maintain a list of all members' email addresses. Furthermore, an invitation would need to be sent to members not on the current mailing list asking whether they wish to opt in or out. AGM attendees were asked for their views and indicated support for this initiative.

Helen is always keen to receive members' suggestions as to what they would like to see on the website

and how the website can be kept useful and relevant.

Election to the Executive Committee.

All officers were re-elected unopposed. This year Pauline Wilson retires as a General Committee Member. Sheila thanked Pauline for her contributions to the work of the Committee. Fay Banks was elected unopposed to fill the vacancy.

A.O.B.

Priscilla Nobbs suggested that everyone should attempt to recruit at least one junior member to the Society in the coming year.

Date and venue of next meeting:

The 2024 meeting will be held at the Village Hall, Old Hunstanton, Norfolk, on Saturday 7th September.

SHEILA WYNN

Post AGM

The meeting was followed by an enjoyable talk by Paul Harmes, titled 'Excursion to the Isles of Scilly, 2023'. This brought back many happy memories for those of us who had previously visited the islands and whetted appetites for future visits. There were then the Photo Competition winning entries to see, the 'Shoot and Show' photo competition to vote on, plant quizzes from Stephen Clarkson and Gareth Bursnall to try and books to buy.

WFS AGM AND MEMBERS' WEEKEND FIELD MEETINGS, SEPTEMBER 2023

FRIDAY 1st SEPTEMBER, FLATROPER'S WOOD, BECKLEY

On Friday morning, before the Branch and Competition Secretaries' Meeting in the afternoon, a group of us met to explore Flatropers Wood, which is a mixed woodland of oak and birch, many of the oaks having been planted in the eighteenth century for the shipbuilding industry. There are also areas of Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice, an unusual sight for those of us from the North!

As we walked along the woodland paths, we came across Goldenrod

Solidago virgaurea, Water-pepper *Persicaria hydropiper* (tasted by Jill to make sure!), Slender St. John's-wort *Hypericum pulchrum* and Slender Rush *Juncus tenuis*, in its usual path-side habitat.

In the open areas under the power lines, reflecting the underlying sandstone geology, were Heather *Calluna vulgaris* and Bell Heather *Erica cinerea*, together with Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, Green-ribbed Sedge *Carex binervis*, Wood Sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and Alder Buckthorn *Frangula alnus*.

A pond gave us the opportunity to examine a couple more rushes: Bulbous Rush *Juncus bulbosus*, which has some of its flower clusters replaced by small plantlets, and Sharp-flowered Rush *J. acutiflorus*, distinguished from Jointed Rush *J. articulatus*, by the shape of its fruits.

Nearby was the Common Cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense* that we'd been promised, always nice to see.

Walking back towards the cars, fruits on the ground alerted us to the presence of a Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*. Paul Harmes suggested that we put our hands round its trunk. Surprisingly, it was oval-shaped. Examination of the other trunks showed that they were all the same shape.

SHEILA WYNN

SATURDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER, PETT LEVEL

Pett Level is an area of drained marshland on the Sussex coast behind a shingle ridge. In common with the Romney Marshes, this area was reclaimed to provide farmland for sheep grazing. 24 acres of this land, adjacent to the Royal Military Canal, have been designated a local wildlife site and SSSI. It was purchased by the Pett Level Preservation Trust to prevent development in the 1970s. The Canal was constructed as a defence against the possible invasion of England during the Napoleonic Wars and follows the old cliff line bordering Romney Marsh. The large group of over 50 participants split into three smaller groups to explore further. Our route

took us along a short section of this canal.



Paul Harmes inspecting his haul

Photo: Anne Kell

Paul Harmes used a grapnel to gather some of the water plants from the canal for closer inspection. In amongst the Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* and Arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, the floating water plants mostly consisted of Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii* and Fennel Pondweed *Stuckenia pectinata*. Marginal vegetation included Branched Bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*, Common Reed *Phragmites australis* and Bulrush *Typha latifolia*.

Despite the site being actively managed to reduce the invasive Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, one of the plants that drew our attention was a *Prunus* species. After much debate it was concluded that this was the

hybrid between *P. spinosa* and *P. domestica*, the Wild Plum, and hence *P. x fruticans*. It showed intermediate characteristics with larger leaves and fruit than Blackthorn. Some members even applied the taste test, confirming that the fruit did not have the really bitter taste of Sloe. John Poland did stress the fact that these characteristics often show a continuum between the extremes of the two different species. Further down the canal we came across two more *Prunus* plants but these were the size of mature trees. We were told by the chairman of the PLPT, John Newton, that one of these had been identified as a Bullace, i.e. *P. domestica* ssp. *insititia*, by none other than Owen Johnson.

Scrambling amongst the hedgerows was a Hedge Bindweed *Calystegia sepium* with a beautiful pink tinge to the petals. This was later confirmed, by John Poland, as the coastal ssp. *roseta*, rather than the pink form of ssp. *sepium*, forma *colorata*. This was an excellent start to our botanical weekend with the added bonus of beautiful weather. Our thanks go to Gareth Bursnall, Judy Clarke and Jan Armishaw for leading these excursions.

ANNE KELL

SUNDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER, RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE

On a bright, warm day, we gathered in the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve car park where we were met by our leaders for the day, Paul Harmes and Barry Yates (former Rye Harbour Reserve Manager). Barry told us that the reserve covers an impressive 465ha and comprises a range of

habitats including saltmarsh, shingle ridges, sand, brackish marshland, scrub and woodland. Managed by the Sussex Wildlife Trust, the reserve is largely flat and open, and home to a diverse range of flora and fauna. At the time of our visit, there was much interest for birdwatchers as an osprey had recently been seen flying over the reserve.

The flora of the car park area diverted us for a short while, as Common Millet *Panicum miliaceum* and Common Amaranth *Amaranthus retroflexus* were identified. The walk along the lane toward the Rye Harbour Discovery Centre was festooned with numerous plants of Black Mustard *Brassica nigra*, displaying both flowers and its distinctive fruits. We then split into two groups. Paul Harmes' group, in which I was included, followed the footpath around the matrix of enclosed areas of saltmarsh, lagoons and shingle. It wasn't long before we encountered some pristine saltmarsh habitat with an accompanying flora that included Annual Sea-blite *Suaeda maritima*, Sea-purslane *Atriplex portulacoides*, Sea Aster *Tripolium pannonicum* and Sea Wormwood *Artemisia maritima*. Here we were shown our first Glasswort *Salicornia* of the day, Long-spiked Glasswort *S. dolichostachya* growing on the lower part of the saltmarsh. *Salicornia* is a notoriously difficult group of plants to identify, especially when they are immature. To help overcome the apprehension some of us expressed about identifying and splitting species within this critical group, Paul showed us which characteristics to look out for in the

terminal spikes, fruiting segments, central and lateral flowers and the angles where the flowering segments meet. Continuing, we noted more botanical interest on the grassy banks and open areas of compacted shingle and brackish marsh.

Saltmarsh Rush *Juncus gerardii*, Lesser Sea-spurrey *Spergularia marina* and Greater Sea-spurrey *S. media* drew our attention, along with some beautiful tufts of Flax *Linum usitatissimum*.

In the slightly drier areas of saltmarsh we were shown One-flowered Glasswort *Salicornia disarticulata*, a species easily identified by a single (sometimes two) central flower. Nearby, we encountered some flowering patches of Sea-heath *Frankenia laevis*, which is well-established across the reserve. Barry Yates had given us permission to divert from the footpath to explore a saltwater lagoon normally closed to the public. Here we were given to look for Beaked Tasselweed *Ruppia maritima*, which we quickly located in the brackish water. However, finding a flowering and fruiting spike eluded us, despite the large quantity of *Ruppia* in the lagoon. *Salicornia* plants again required our concentration, especially Purple Glasswort *S. ramosissima*, which had formed large red-purple colonies around the edge of the lagoon. A rarer species, Shiny Glasswort *S. emerici*, was identified by John Poland and Paul Harmes. Re-joining the footpath, we were soon captivated by an apple-green sward of Sea Barley *Hordeum marinum*, much of which was still flowering. Here, we were also shown the

seaside subspecies of Herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum* ssp. *maritimum* and the procumbent Bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara* var. *marinum*.

At this juncture, we approached a shingle area where Stinking Hawk's-beard *Crepis foetida* and Least Lettuce *Lactuca saligna* grow together. The *Crepis* is labelled as extinct in Stace (4th edition), but has been re-introduced to Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. The re-introduction programme has been very successful, as evidenced by the large quantity of this year's plants. Although the plant was well past flowering, its distinctive snow-white, spear-shaped, closed capitula were observed. Living up to its name, this species of *Crepis* exudes an odour reminiscent of TCP when fresh leaves are crushed. The more determined members of the group surveyed this stretch of shingle and were rewarded with a couple of flowers. Similarly, trying to find an open flower of Least Lettuce was challenging. Once we got our eye in, we started to see more of the plants' long linear-oblong leaves (with a single midrib) against the backdrop of the shingle. This year's population of plants appeared to be reasonably large, with many dried-up flowering spikes present. With a bit of luck, I managed to find an open flower on one plant for people to view and photograph. Soon after this, another flower was spotted on a plant nearby. Rye Harbour Nature Reserve is an important site for Least Lettuce, as it holds the majority of the British population, which is perhaps even more significant in the light of reports

that suggest it may have vanished from one of its other well-known sites at Fobbing, Essex. Encouragingly, due to sensitive management regimes, the future of Least Lettuce at Rye Harbour looks fairly secure.

After the pleasure of seeing two of the reserve's endangered plants, we reconvened with the other group for lunch on the crest of a shingle bank, looking out towards the sea. Behind

shingle, depending on how much disturbance is created by winter storms. The sides of the tarmac road were of particular botanical interest, as the disturbance created by vehicles has helped to sustain a suitable habitat for Red Hemp-nettle *Galeopsis angustifolia*. We managed to find numerous plants in flower, some only a few centimetres tall, while many others were bushy and much taller, having been afforded

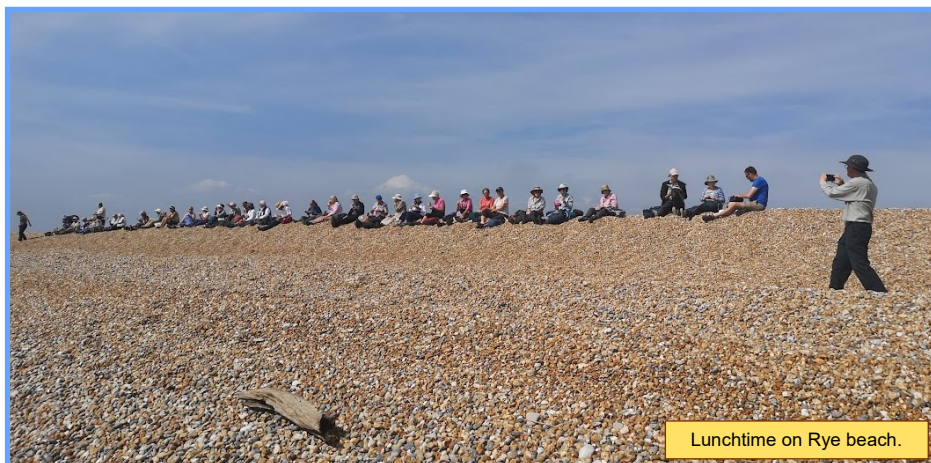


Photo: Ken Southall

us was a large colony of Sea Pea *Lathyrus japonicus*, a few plants of which still had flowers for us to admire. After enjoying lunch and the open view of the sea in the sunshine, the two groups parted ways again but with different leaders. Led by Barry Yates, we began the walk along the tarmac road toward the Discovery Centre. Traversing the shingle, Barry pointed out clumps of Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum*, while one member of the group found a few plants of Babington's Orache *Atriplex glabriuscula*. According to Barry, in some years this species of *Atriplex* can form a green carpet across the

protection by scrub plants.

As we came closer to the Discovery Centre, we explored a shallow area of seaward-facing sand dunes. In several damp hollows Barry pointed out Rottingdean Sea-lavender *Limonium hyblaenum*, a neophyte which has colonised this area of the reserve. On the sand, Hare's-foot Clover *Trifolium arvense* was spotted in flower as was a small colony of Sea Spurge *Euphorbia paralias*. In the damper areas were also a few plants of Prickly Saltwort *Salsola kali*. John Poland and Steve Little very helpfully pointed out the

distinguishing characteristics of Guernsey Fleabane *Erigeron sumatrensis*, which we compared with Bilbao's Fleabane *E. floribundus* growing nearby.

We finished the day at the Discovery Centre, the other group re-joining us for refreshments in the afternoon sunshine. This rounded off a glorious day's botanising. On behalf of everyone who attended this meeting, I want to thank Paul Harmes for guiding us around the reserve, ensuring we saw a great variety of plants and offering help when identifying both common and critical plant species. Similar thanks are extended to Barry Yates. His knowledge of the reserve was impressive and I'm confident that many of us left with a deeper understanding of this special part of East Sussex.

NICK ASTON

MONDAY 4th SEPTEMBER, DUNGENESS

GROUPS 1 AND 2: ARC PITS AND THE AREA NEAR THE LIGHTHOUSE

Our last day of the weekend was spent in warm sunshine at Dungeness Nature Reserve, the UK's largest shingle structure and a habitat classified as lichen heath. My group spent the morning at the area around the ARC pits, which had been formed by gravel extraction. Gareth Burnnall and Lys Muirhead led us along the Willow Trail where the bright yellow of Evening-primrose *Oenothera* sp. attracted the eye. This plant generated some discussion as to whether or not it was a Common

Evening-primrose *O. biennis* hybrid. A little further along the trail we came to a small pond occupied by two swans and supporting, near the edge, a dense mat of Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* still in flower. Unfortunately, the invasive New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii* was also growing here.

In a dry pit there were a good number of Gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus*. Gareth entertained us with a tale of how the juice from the plant was once used to darken the skin of Gypsy fortune-tellers, hence the name. Also in this area it was exciting to see Lesser Centaury *Centaureum pulchellum*, a first for me. After a brief stop in the Hanson Hide, we lingered by the Axell viewpoint where, whilst we examined Common Reed *Phragmites australis*, Dennis told us the tale of the 'Devil's bite'. At the beginning of creation the Devil lost a bet with God when they challenged each other to create the most beautiful plant on earth. Adam & Eve were asked to judge and chose the grain created by God, not the Devil's reed. In a rage, the Devil took a bite out of every leaf of the reed, proof of which can still be seen in the three small constrictions across the middle of the leaves.

After a brief stop for lunch by the Old Lighthouse at Dungeness, we met with Jacques, a warden of the reserve. He gave us a brief history of the area before we followed a faint path, one of the old railway lines, over the pebbles heading in a north westerly direction. The 30 metre deep shingle here is 10 metres above sea level and supports fresh water

aquifers.

We soon saw a few closed flowers of Nottingham Catchfly *Silene nutans* and in the distance was the surprise of a pear tree in this barren landscape; apparently the only fruit it produces are hard as bullets. Also struggling in this environment was a poor specimen of a Fig tree *Ficus* sp., whose leaves had been attacked by a leaf-mining mite.

In an area where the path was lined by scrub there were a few Autumn Lady's-tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* in full flower. We then headed off the main path and came to an area of pits formed by post WW2 ordnance disposal, some with water in them. It was here that we saw Knotted Pearlwort *Sagina nodosa*. It's easy to see how it gets its name with the leaves forming knot-like bunches up the stem.

As we headed back towards the lighthouse, the coastal, prostrate form of Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* var. *prostrata* was notable, as was Sea Campion *Silene uniflora*, which Jacques told us was known locally as 'Dolly Bells'.

Back at the lighthouse we had a short walk to see parasitic Dodder *Cuscuta epithymum* in flower, a new one for me. Here too there was an excellent example of a Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare* that had been attacked by the Blueweed Gall Mite *Aceria echii*. It looked like a miniature conifer.

A very interesting day finished, for some of us, with drinks outside at the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch

Railway station at Dungeness, watching the miniature steam trains come and go.

SUE SKARSTEIN

GROUP 3: THE RSPB DISCOVERY TRAIL

Thirteen of us met at the Dungeness



Photo: Ken Southall

RSPB reserve and were greeted by our leader, Heather Silk, who told us that the undulating landscape of the reserve had been left by the retreating sea, after longshore drift, and was home to a third of all UK flora species.

From the outset we were amused by the annual Hare's-tail *Lagurus ovatus*, a grass of Mediterranean origin growing freely, with fluffy flowerheads also known as Bunny Tails. We struggled to identify Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum officinale* which had gone over. We needed some good keying and help from Stephen Clarkson to identify Lesser Hawkbit *Leontodon saxatilis* and an Evening-primrose *Oenothera cambrica* (although this is now included under *O. biennis* in Stace 4). As we approached a pond we saw Weld *Reseda luteola*, Canadian Fleabane *Erigeron canadensis* and Carlina Thistle *Carlina vulgaris*. At the water's edge we found Water Forget-

me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*, Ivy-leaved Duckweed *Lemna trisulca* and Water Figwort *Scrophularia auriculata*, with its very distinct four-winged stems.

Further along we saw Tufted Forget-me-not *Myosotis laxa*, Brookweed *Samolus valerandi*, Knotted Pearlwort *Sagina nodosa* and Blue Fleabane *Erigeron acer*, and then Stella Taylor spotted the tiny Sea Stork's-bill *Erodium maritimum* adjacent to a Common Stork's-bill *E. cicutarium* for contrast. We also saw Golden Asparagus *Asparagus officinalis*, Great Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, Ploughman's-spikenard *Inula conyzae* and Yellow Horned-poppy *Glaucium flavum*. Passing some reeds, Stephen showed us the Devil's bite mark on Common Reed *Phragmites australis*, and I learnt that "sedges have edges, rushes are round, grasses are hollow down to the ground".

We ended the walk seeing Upright Hedge-parsley *Torilis japonica*,

Nottingham Catchfly *Silene nutans* and Hoary Ragwort *Jacobaea erucifolia*.

The group's favourite plant was the Knotted Pearlwort and to my particular delight, two stately Great Mulleins unmolested by moths. We



Photo: Ken Southall

enjoyed views from a number of hides and foraging the superabundance of blackberries.

Many thanks to the leaders of all three groups for a memorable day's botanising.

ROBERT KNIGHT

PHOTOGRAPH COMPETITION ORGANIZER'S REPORT FOR 2023 AGM AT RYE

Thank you to the eleven entrants, who between them, submitted 82 high-quality pictures for the competition. These figures are virtually the same as in previous years. I would like to see lots more members submitting their pictures in future. Now that I am only receiving images by email jpegs, it ought to be very easy for anyone to take and submit pictures for any of the five different classes. Please remember that modern mobile phones are very capable of taking excellent pictures.

This year I slightly altered the presentation of the exhibits. Using a nice black frame template, I believe this showed off those few pictures I received which were not the standard A4 size. Also, I showed within that frame, the entrant's name and the title of the picture.

The judging this year was kindly undertaken by our Chairman Peter Llewellyn, who, no doubt, had a very difficult task to decide on those winning pictures. Peter says he will

provide a report of his findings, hopefully to be published in the WFS Spring 2024 magazine.

'Sea Pea with Martello Tower. He was awarded the Violet Schwerdt trophy.

Congratulations to David Caals on winning with his best picture in show:

KEN SOUTHALL

Class 1 Habitat:

1 st	David Caals	Sea Pea <i>Lathyrus japonicus</i> with Martello Tower
2 nd	Jane Lowe	Herb-Paris <i>Paris quadrifolia</i>
3 rd	Jane Lowe	Fragrant Evening-primrose <i>Oenothera stricta</i> ,
H/C	David Caals	Hungarian Mullein, <i>Verbascum speciosum</i>

Class 2 Plant Portrait:

1 st	J. Diamond	Ivy-leaved Toadflax <i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>
2 nd	Sue Grayston	Soft Downy-rose, <i>Rosa mollis</i>
3 rd	Dennis Kell	Yellow Horned-poppy <i>Glaucium flavum</i> .
H/C	Peter Hilton	Autumn Lady's-tresses <i>Spiranthes spiralis</i>

Class 3 Close-up:

1 st	David Morgan	Cat's-ear <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i> seed-head
2 nd	Janet John	Ragged-Robin <i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>
3 rd	Anne Kell	Meadow Crane's-bill <i>Geranium pratense</i>
H/C	Janet John	Dragon's-teeth <i>Lathyrus maritimus</i>

Class 4 Foreign Fields:

1 st	Helen Dignum	Plains Acacia
2 nd	Anne Kell	Lava Cactus <i>Brachycereus nesioticus</i> , Sullivan, Galapagos
3 rd	Sue Grayston	Dwarf Spanish Foxglove <i>Digitalis minor</i>
H/C	Dennis Kell	Saguaro Cactus <i>Carnegiea gigantea</i> , Arizona, USA

Class 5 Human Element:

1 st	Dennis Kell	A warning to us all from the Grand Canyon
2 nd	Anne Kell	The Botanist
3 rd	Janet John	Out on the Range
H/C	Janet John.	Getting to grips with clovers

'IT'S A GOOD TIME TO THINK ABOUT SPREADING YOUR BOTANICAL WINGS A LITTLE'

A message from Jill Oakley (10km Square Secretary, South): Members who have been recording plants for

the One Kilometre Square Study will know that this is an excellent way to get to know the flowering plants and

ferns in their patch. This year why not think about expanding into another kilometre square (monad) nearby, or even joining the 10km Square Study; information is in the WFS Year Book. Of course, we would welcome any member who hasn't recorded a 1km square first and would like to jump straight into a 10km Square Study.

A 10km square, sometimes called a hectad, might seem a very large area but you don't have to cover it all; you can start by visiting just one extra monad. Increasing your search area will give you different habitats to explore and the chance to add many more species to your list. Botanising with friends is always enjoyable and records can be sent jointly or individually. Anyone who has already recorded in a 1km square will be off to a flying start as their 1km square list can be included and you can continue to record there.

Additional monads would need to be in the same 10km square as your first one. If you are unsure of how to check this there are some useful websites (see below) or contact your

Branch Secretary or a 10km Square Secretary. Their contact details are in the current WFS Year Book. Happy botanising! We look forward to receiving your new 10km square records.

Useful websites:

This Ordnance Survey site explains grid references clearly: <https://getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/guides/beginners-guide-to-grid-references/>

The Cucaera website shows OS maps if you click on the little T-like symbol on the lower right-hand side. Type a grid reference or a postcode in the search box in the top left corner, click on the repeated words just below and the map will zoom to the area shown with a greyed square. You can zoom in or out on the map. <https://www.cucaera.co.uk/grp/>

JILL OAKLEY

SPRING WEEK HUNT 2023

		Total
Ian Green	Highlands / Moray	47
Helen Jackson	Midlothian / East Lothian	36
Julie Clarke	Cumbria	24
Barbara Allen	Merseyside	37
Rita and Anthony Grainger	Leeds	65
Karen Fry	Nottingham	41
Christina White	Northamptonshire	21

SPRING WEEK HUNT 2023 (Continued)

Susan Grimshaw	Berkshire	29
Sue Kightly and Diana Stroud	Berkshire	50
Anne and Dennis Kell	Suffolk	52
Barbara Mathews	Suffolk	45
Jane Lowe	Streatham, London	46
Helen Ayres	Kent	58
Devina Ellis	Kent	27
Caroline Bateman	Surrey	33
Pippa Hyde	Surrey	42
Priscilla Nobbs	Surrey	27
Jackie Hardy	Warwickshire	32
Nicki Mottram	Warwickshire	46
Heather Colls	Monmouth	25
Sarah Beetham	Bristol area	35
Monica Davis	Bristol area	26
Pauline & Richard Wilson	Bristol area	21
Ro FitzGerald	Somerset	57
Suzanne Jones	South Devon	19
Sally Maller	South Devon	65
Anne Haden	Jersey	63
Total number of different species seen		221
Only found by one person		80

Three new people joined in the Hunt this year, so welcome to them. The cold winter featured in many people's comments, and the number of flower species was certainly down, and yet some people found more than last year! Plant species seen by almost everyone went down to 16. Despite

several plants being on the cusp of flowering, this year there were no Ransoms *Allium ursinum* and no Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. The number of species found by recorders ordered from north to south does not reflect climate as one might expect, but all sorts of other

variables, such as time spent looking and what people do or don't include. So, I'll just pick out a few things from everyone:

Ian Green said that he didn't have a very long list this year. However, Sticky Groundsel *Senecio viscosus* was a sole find and Field Pansy *Viola arvensis* was found by only two people.

Helen Jackson was disappointed that so many of her records were escapes or introductions. Native species just weren't out. However Hoary Cress *Lepidium draba* was an unexpected find. She also found Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium*, which a few other people found as well and which seemed very early.

Julie Clarke looked within a five-mile radius of Beetham in a very cold week. Like others, she didn't see several commonly encountered species but did find White Butterbur *Petasites albus*.

Barbara Allen said that many plants had been hunkering down to keep out of the cold wind and she had been lucky to find what she did. Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris* was only found by two people. Grey Poplar *Populus x canescens* was a sole find.

Rita and Anthony Grainger had their highest ever total in contrast to most people. However, many plants had just one flower. One of those was Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem *Gagea lutea*. They also found Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*.

Karen Fry did her first Spring Hunt. She found Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Hedge Mustard

Sisymbrium officinale and Changing Forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor*.

Christina White did all her recording within a five-mile radius of her home while walking the dog. She could not find Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* in flower, along with several other people, but was one of only three people to find flowers of Early Dog-violet *Viola reichenbachiana*.

Susan Grimshaw expressed surprise at seeing Sun Spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia* flowering all round her village and very little Petty Spurge *Euphorbia peplus*. I wonder if this is a trend, as we have seen Sun Spurge flowering all winter and in all sorts of places for a year or two now.

Sue Kightly and Diana Stroud did well to find Field Madder *Sherardia arvensis*, having found many fewer flower species this year. Only one other person also found Red Campion *Silene dioica*.

Anne and Dennis Kell joined the East Anglian Branch First Day Hunt. They failed in their annual challenge to find Alexanders *Smyrniolus olusatrum* but did find Springbeauty *Claytonia perfoliata* and Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*.

Barbara Mathews said that without gutters, pavements and churchyards her list would have been much shorter! Several species found on the Winter Hunt were no longer in flower in March due to the cold winds. Common Cudweed *Filago germanica* and Feverfew *Tanacetum parthenium* were good finds.

Jane Lowe hunted mostly around Streatham. She managed to find Climbing Corydalis *Ceratocarpus claviculata* and Cut-leaved Dead-nettle *Lamium hybridum* must have been a pleasing find.

Helen Ayres majored on trees in flower including Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, English Elm *Ulmus procera* and several Poplar *Populus* species. Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* was well spotted.

Devina Ellis is also new to the Spring Hunt. She found Larch *Larix decidua* in flower and was one of a few people to find Green Hellebore *Helleborus viridis*.

Caroline Bateman said that it was too cold and miserable for a productive list and she couldn't find things that she expected to. However, Yew *Taxus baccata* and Box *Buxus sempervirens* were in flower on the North Downs. She also saw Lesser Chickweed *Stellaria pallida* and Yellow Corydalis *Pseudofumaria lutea*, which were not found by many others.

Pippa Hyde said that many of the usual plants were not out. She alone found Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* and Wall Speedwell *Veronica arvensis*.

Priscilla Nobbs did the same local walk as last year but found five fewer species. She didn't find Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* or Danish Scurvygrass *Cochlearia danica*, but did find two Hellebores, Christmas-rose *Helleborus niger* and Lenten-rose *H. orientalis*, as well as Grey Field-speedwell *Veronica polita*.

Jackie Hardy hunted at Seaton, Devon, and in the Lickey Hills, Rednal, Birmingham. Her good finds were Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum* and Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*.

Nicki Mottram described using a bit

of forward planning to optimise the number of plants in bloom, given the considerable reduction from last year. She found Common Fumitory *Fumaria officinalis* and Field Pansy *Viola arvensis* in ground disturbed by HS2 excavations.

Heather Colls had a short list due to her circumstances but managed to find Smooth Hawk's-beard *Crepis capillaris* and Mistletoe *Viscum album*.

Sarah Beetham had a good hunt while out on her bike and found Field Forget-me-not *Myosotis arvensis* and Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*.

Monica Davis found that numbers were down on last year, but she managed to find Ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and Henbit Dead-nettle *Lamium amplexicaule*.

Richard and Pauline Wilson once again found a few flowering heads of Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina* in a wood full of plants.

Ro FitzGerald said, like others, that the cold spring had cut back many regulars. Only two people found Pellitory-of-the-wall *Parietaria judaica* and White Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria capreolata*.

Suzanne Jones also hunted for the first time, in the Dawlish, Devon, area. She found Greater Stitchwort *Stellaria holostea* and was one of three to find Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*.

Sally Maller reported several sole finds. Among them were Common Scurvygrass *Cochlearia officinalis*, Shining Crane's-bill *Geranium lucidum* and Oxeye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*.

Anne Haden again reported several sole finds. Herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Wood Sage *Teucrium*

scorodonia and one of the few grasses this year, Wood Melick *Melica uniflora*, were just a few of them.

As always it is very interesting to hear your accounts of the ways you go about your Spring Hunt. Most people who commented said that the

'regulars' had been hard to find and might then only have one or two flowers. These records will now be forwarded on to Prof. Tim Sparkes, who will add them to the rest of the Spring Hunt phenology records.

RICHARD AND PAULINE WILSON

TREBORTH BOTANIC GARDENS, 23rd AND 24th JUNE

This two-day meeting was somewhat out of the ordinary as a Wild Flower Society event in that it was based at a botanic garden and we had the use of a classroom with presentation facilities and microscopes. The idea was that we should learn a little more about bryophytes and crucifers, collecting specimens from the Garden and then taking them to the classroom for careful examination.

We thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Philippa Thompson, Vice-county Recorder for Bryophytes for Caernarvonshire, gave us a splendid introduction and launched us quickly into identifying some mosses and liverworts, which we analysed using the microscopes. It was fascinating to note just how many different bryophytes there can be on one tree, although it must be said that you might get some strange looks from people passing as you get close up and personal with a tree trunk!

The second day saw our attention turn to crucifers and Martin Godfrey, BSBI Referee for *Cardamine*, *Arabis* and *Draba*, put us through our paces using samples collected out in the

Botanic Garden.

I can recommend doing a workshop like this. Focusing in on specific botanical areas really gives you time to understand, ask questions and iron out any doubts and confusion - and it is fun. I think that there is definitely a place in our meetings schedule for workshops such as these.

Treborth was a brilliant location. The Botanical Garden is part of Bangor University, and the plants are mainly cared for by volunteers. It was splendid to be able to dip into the Orchid House, the Carnivorous Plant House etc. It really added a bit of wonder and amazement to our days. Professor Jon Drori told us in his Zoom talk about the Pitcherplant *Sarracenia* species that is used as a toilet by a small rodent. Well, the Pitcherplant was there with a photo of the small rodent using it!

The photos on the next page give a flavour of our experience.

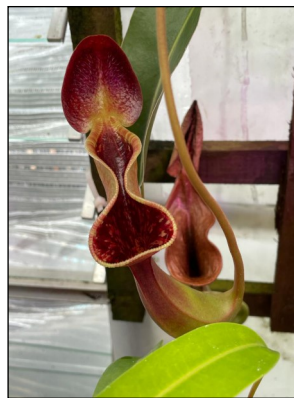
JANET JOHN



Looking at mosses on trees



Looking carefully



Pitcher Plant



Rodent using toilet



Using our microscopes

Photos: Janet John

CORRECTION TO BRANCH U, MIDLANDS REPORT IN SUMMER 2023 MAGAZINE

John and Monika Walton's records for White Rock-rose *Helianthemum apenninum* and the hybrid of Common and White Rock-rose *Helianthemum x sulphureum* were incorrectly stated as having been

found in Gloucestershire. The location should have read 'Purn Hill, Somerset'. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused and thank the sharp-eyed member who spotted the error.

MARY AND CLAIRE SMITH

FIELD MEETINGS 2023

UPPER TEESDALE, 8th and 9th JUNE

Day 1:

The first day of our Teesdale meeting was an Alchemilla workshop led by Margaret Bradshaw.

Margaret Bradshaw MBE has been recording the Teesdale flora for more than seventy years and is now 97 years old. Fifteen WFS members were privileged to spend a day with her in Teesdale, learning about Alchemilla species and walking along the River Tees to see other Teesdale plants. Our co-leader was Lizzie Maddison, who has botanised alongside Margaret for many years.

The day started in Margaret's garage in Eggleston with an explanation of the unique 'Teesdale Assemblage', which includes a mix of alpine species, southern species at the northern limit of their distribution and northern species at their southern limit. Next, Margaret ran through the key identification features of Alchemilla species, Soft Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla mollis* having equal calyx and epicalyx, the native species all with a smaller epicalyx compared to the calyx. We also learned to look for the presence and type of hairs on the petioles and upper and lower leaf surfaces, and the shape of the leaf lobes and incisions between the lobes. Then we shared cars to Hayberries Nature-reserve on the far side of the village. Stretching away from the car park was the remarkable sight of a meadow dominated by Alchemilla

plants, including the garden-escape Soft Lady's-mantle *A. mollis* and native species Smooth Lady's-mantle *A. glabra*, Pale Lady's-mantle *A. xanthochlora* and the endemic Velvet Lady's-mantle *A. monticola*.

We lunched at the Bowlees Visitor Centre before Margaret marched us down the lane towards the River Tees. On the way, we found Good-King-Henry *Blitum bonus-henricus* growing on the lane verge. Margaret confirmed that the leaves and shoot-tips were edible, though had 'a rather strong flavour'. She has also eaten Ground-elder *Aegopodium podagraria*, eats stewed Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* mixed with mashed potato, and described her recipe for mixed foraged shoots baked with oatmeal. We crossed a buttercup-covered meadow, heeding Margaret's instructions to keep to the path, not tread on the grass ("the sheep need the grass"). We walked down through woodland and then had to cross the Grade II listed Winch Bridge, one by one over the River Tees to join the Pennine Way, which leads upstream along the river. We stopped to admire the Low Force waterfall.

We saw three different species of willow: Tea-leaved Willow *Salix phylicifolia*, with its dark green shiny leaves, Goat Willow *S. caprea* and Creeping Willow *S. repens*, this

growing very low by the path. We also found Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, here at the northern edge of its range. The principal crane's-bill was Wood Crane's-bill *Geranium sylvaticum*. Water Avens *Geum rivale* was abundant, while Common Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* and Juniper *Juniperus communis* were growing on limestone areas near the water. We also found Northern Bedstraw *Galium boreale*, with its robust three-veined leaves, and Great Burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*.

Daring sedge enthusiasts enjoyed exploring the bankside and descending to rocky islands to find several species, including Water Sedge *Carex aquatilis* in its last remaining Teesdale location. Expert eyes noticed the Downy Birch subspecies *Betula pubescens* ssp. *celtibetica*, with its cuneate leaves and sessile glands on the leaf veins. Raspberries *Rubus idaeus* were invasive in some areas.

One area of meadow grassland was fenced off to reduce day-tripper footfall and allow better meadowland development. This area can flood when the river is in winter spate. Margaret showed us a couple of Clustered Lady's-mantle *Alchemilla glomerulans* plants just on the other side of the fence. We also found Alpine Bistort *Bistorta vivipara*, Common Twayblade *Neottia ovata*, Bird's-eye Primrose *Primula farinosa*, Ragged-Robin *Silene flos-cuculi*, Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and a male plant of the dioecious Shrubby

Cinquefoil *Dasiphora fruticosa*. There were Horsetails too: Wood Horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum*, with branched branches, and Shady Horsetail *E. pratense*, with unbranched branches.

Margaret pointed out a large Goat Willow *Salix caprea* that she has known for seventy years and which is now six times as large as when she first saw it. Several ferns were spotted on the next stone bridge, including Black Spleenwort *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* and Lemon-scented Fern *Oreopteris limbosperma*. Margaret left us here to return to the starting-point by car while the rest of the group retraced their steps, though not without noticing a hybrid dock, Broad-leaved x Curled Dock *Rumex obtusifolius* x *crispus* = *R. x pratensis*, tall and with crisped leaves, with tubercles on the underside mid-rib. Mountain Melick *Melica nutans*, with its delicate one-sided inflorescence, was the final joy on the northern bank as we crossed back over Winch Bridge.

The Wild Flower Society has given a five-year grant to support the Teesdale Special Flora Trust. Margaret Bradshaw has just published a book: 'Teesdale's Special Flora: Places, Plants and People'. More details of the work of the Teesdale Special Flora Group can be found at <https://teesdalespecialflora.uk> and the Wild Flower Society website.

HELEN DIGNUM

Day 2:

When UK botanists talk about their favourite places, Teesdale is often

right up there with the likes of Ben Lawers and The Lizard, so I signed up for this trip as soon as the WFS 2023 Year-book arrived on the doorstep! Then, six months later, my wife Carole and I found ourselves driving down the road to the Cow Green Reservoir car park, admiring the vastness of the Widdybank Fell scenery and beyond that just couldn't be captured in a photograph.

Lizzie Maddison, passionate plant recorder and Chair of the Trustees of the Teesdale Special Flora Trust, and professional ecologist, John O'Reilly, introduced us to the area and the work of the Trust, explaining how various factors such as situation, climate and grazing had led to the wealth of botanical treasures in this area, but none more so than the fine granular 'sugar limestone' soil. The morning would be spent exploring the wet sugar limestone habitat before focusing on the dry habitat after lunch.

We began by slowly making our way down Slapestone Sike, a gravelly flush with flowing calcareous spring water, where the shallow sugar limestone overlies an impermeable rock layer below. The species came thick and fast: False Sedge *Carex simpliciuscula*, which, although nationally rare, can be abundant here; Sheathed Sedge *C. vaginata*, which was discovered only during the foot-and-mouth epidemic in 2002, when large areas of fell were left ungrazed; and last year's flowering heads of Alpine Rush *Juncus alpinoarticulatus* along the water's edge, together with several patches of Scottish Asphodel *Tofieldia pusilla* just about to flower. There were

regular shoots of Lesser Clubmoss *Selaginella selaginoides* and patches of Variegated Horsetail *Equisetum variegatum*, with its white-edged teeth. I was delighted when we came across Bird's-eye Primrose *Primula farinosa*, one of my favourite plants. At the end of the sike there were several patches of another special sedge that can be found in quantity here, Hair Sedge *C. capillaris*. It was interesting to see some Thrift *Armeria maritima* protected by a cage not far from the water's edge. This is a plant that was severely affected by the creation of the reservoir and any unprotected flowers are soon eaten. We also found the leaves of the area's iconic Spring Gentian *Gentiana verna*. Although we were too late in the season to see the amazing deep blue flowers, we kept our eyes peeled after John informed us that one of the locals had told him that he had seen it in flower in every month of the year except February!

It was wonderful to see so many plants growing together. John told me that he had counted the plants at a site nearby using a 2m quadrat and recorded 63 species!

John then showed us one of his survey plots that comes within the area sponsored by the Wild Flower Society, with a grant of £1,000 per year over five years. This was one of two plots that had been harrowed four times, with two other sites having been harrowed twice, in order to see what difference this might make. This experiment is in its second year and the plot is due to be surveyed again following an initial baseline survey.

Nearby we found our first Teesdale Violet *Viola rupestris* leaves, which were characteristically scoop-shaped and blunt-ended with an obvious line of hairs running down each side of the petiole. They tend to flower quickly over a week or so, which means that you must be in the right place at the right time to see them in bloom.

After lunch, we examined an area with hundreds of Spring Sandwort *Sabulina verna*. This was an indication of soils contaminated by heavy metals, which this plant can cope with and even accumulate. We were also delighted to see several Moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* plants growing nearby.

The afternoon was spent examining the dry sugar limestone habitat. The yellow flowers of Tormentil *Potentilla erecta* were ubiquitous, together with the white star-like flowers of Heath Bedstraw *Galium saxatile* and Limestone Bedstraw *G. sternerii*, the latter with backward-pointing prickles on the leaf margins.

We walked around the outside of an enclosure that has been in place for many years. It looked markedly greener than the surrounding grassland and there were good populations of plants including Alpine Bistort *Bistorta vivipara*, Mountain Pansy *Viola lutea*, Mountain Everlasting *Antennaria dioica* and Common Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, the rare Hoary Rock-rose *Helianthemum oelandicum* ssp. *levigatum* only being found on Cronkley Fell.

On the opposite side of the enclosure John found a patch of the hybrid between Common Dog-violet x Teesdale Violet *Viola riviniana* x *V. rupestris* = *V. x burnatii*. We took it in turns to examine it closely, the petiole hairs of Teesdale Violet being retained but the leaves bearing more of the characters of Common Dog-violet. John pointed out that although this hybrid is rarer than the Teesdale Violet, there is still concern that hybridisation could diminish the latter's population as it has in Cumbria. We then searched an area of small rock outcrops for Dwarf Milkwort *Polygala amarella* and were delighted when Janet eventually found a few flowering plants with their characteristic basal rosette of leaves. It was a wonderful day with lots of botanical highlights. With my interest



Photo: Ken Southall

Mountain Everlasting

in invertebrates, I was concerned by the lack of insects. Although there

was a cool breeze, I was surprised to see only a few Small Heath butterflies and just a single hoverfly, horsefly and cranefly. I didn't see a bee all day! The plants, too, are facing challenging times, with surveys revealing a dramatic decline in the occurrence of many of these special species over the last 50

years. The Wild Flower Society is committed to help fund the vital work of Margaret Bradshaw, John, Lizzie and others and we all hope that it will help to make a big difference over time.

STEPHEN PLUMMER

NORTH YORKSHIRE, 10th AND 11th JUNE

DAY 1: THORNEY BANK FARM AND KIPLINGSCOTES CHALK-PIT

A glorious day - high twenties - what better than to spend it wandering through a stunning hay meadow. A carpet of yellow interspersed with pink, red and white, with the grasses gently waving in the breeze. Reed Buntings and Willow Warblers flitting here and there. OK? Scene set.

Martin Stringer, one of our leaders and himself the farmer who had created the meadow twenty-six years ago, gave us an introduction. The thirteen-acre patch had been seeded by laying hay cut from two nearby SSSI meadows onto different areas. The nearby small wood had been planted by Martin and his wife forty years ago and the large pond created as the finishing touch. When the meadow was set up there was an Arable Reversion Scheme in operation which had provided some funding. Altogether there are about two hundred species in the meadow, of which about thirty are grasses.

Ten species were ubiquitous: Lesser Trefoil *Trifolium dubium*, Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, Common Knapweed *Centaurea*

nigra, White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Red Clover *T. pratense*, Greater Plantain *Plantago major*, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*.

Others preferred the wetter or drier areas. Highlights and 'nice to see' plants for me included Pepper-saxifrage *Silene acaulis* in flower, Greater Spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*, several fantastic plants of Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and the lovely Meadow Barley *Hordeum secalinum*.

Sitting in the shade on Martin's patio with chairs and tables made for a rather more dignified lunch-stop than usual for the WFS. There in the garden were wild flowers growing as though they were special garden plants, amongst them Pheasant's-eye *Adonis annua* and Nottingham Catchfly *Silene nutans*.

The afternoon was spent at a local chalk-pit turned nature reserve, where favourites such as Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum*, Musk Thistle *Carduus nutans*, Changing Forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor* and Hoary Plantain *Plantago media* were seen together with a few more unusual

plants such as Dwarf Spurge *Euphorbia exigua* and Hairy Rock-cress *Arabis hirsuta*. Pale Toadflax *Linaria repens* would have been a 'nice to see' and we did see the leaves, but not the flowers.

A day full of flowers, birdsong, butterflies and good botanising. Many thanks to Martin Stringer and Roger Martin for leading the group.

JANET JOHN

DAY 2: ASKHAM BOG, YORK

Twenty of us gathered in the parking area of Askham Bog to explore this Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Roger Martin, our leader, explained to us that this wonderful site had been gifted to the Yorkshire Naturalists' Trust by Rowntree and Terry of chocolate fame in 1946. Askham Bog is a survivor of the ancient fenlands of Yorkshire, the lake being left behind by a retreating glacier 15,000 years ago. It is a mosaic of fen, woodland and meadow. The peat bog is sealed with a bottom-moist layer largely consisting of boulder clay, sand and gravel. On top there is a clear layering of organic deposits showing a series of biological and geological periods.

In 2010, a site on the edge of Askham Bog was earmarked by a developer for a plot of 500 houses. The community and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust enlisted the help of David Attenborough who said "It is our collective responsibility to save it." The development was denied by planning inspectors in May 2020.

In the calcareous ditches we found Fine-leaved Water-dropwort *Oenanthe aquatica*, notable for its spring-green 2-4 pinnate leaves. In another calcareous ditch we saw swathes of Water-violet *Hottonia palustris*, a very graceful aquatic plant with lilac pink flowers and a yellow throat. We were also fortunate enough to find Narrow Buckler-fern *Dryopteris carthusiana*, a striking yellow-green plant. Roger pointed out to us the uniformly pale brown scales. I was delighted to find some Skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata*, with its bright blue flowers in pairs, growing alongside some Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*, with its distinctive dull yellow flowers.

Roger told us that there was a large variety of sedges and rushes in Askham Bog, mainly because of the presence of peat. He wasn't wrong! I will list just a few of the more unusual ones: Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, with greenish-brown flowers and sharp tepals; Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus*, with its blunt tepals and 3-sided fruit; Star Sedge *Carex echinata*, with its distinctive spreading star-like fruit; Tawny Sedge *C. hostiana*, with bright yellow-green leaves, three-sided at the top; Elongated Sedge *C. elongata*, with dark red-brown flowers and a long pointed ligule; and Fibrous Tussock-sedge *C. appropinquata*, which has blackish scales at the base of the stem. Roger pointed out all these details to us.

Askham Bog was full of botanical delights, including Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, with its striking solitary purple flowers, and Tubular

Water-dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*, a greyish hairless perennial with hollow stems. Suddenly there was a shriek. I saw Roger and Steve Little, bums in the air, keying out a stitchwort. To Roger's delight, it was a new one for Askham Bog, namely Marsh Stitchwort *Stellaria palustris*. Another highlight was a magnificent Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis* at least three metres tall, in a large tuft with oblong leaves. The lingering resinous smell of Bog-myrtle *Myrica*

gale led us back to the car park past red and blue damselflies dancing above the ditches and pond and a Large Skipper butterfly winging its way. Around us we heard and saw a Blackcap and a Sedge Warbler.

Roger, thank you very much for an informative and most enjoyable day. Askham Bog is a must if you haven't already been there.

JAN ARMISHAW

SEDGES MEETING, ANGLESEY AND NORTH WALES, 19th - 22nd JUNE

Chris Metherell, BSBI Recorder for North Northumberland (VC68) and Referee for *Euphrasia*, kindly conducted this course/meeting, accompanied by his wife Hazel, herself an expert on ferns. She also proved a whizz at locating sedges!

We covered many sites in Anglesey and Snowdonia in the four days, which was a bonus as the scenery was stunning and the locations great. Altogether we bagged 38 sedge species! As each one was located, we went through our mantra of subgroup *Carex* or *Vignea*, number of stigmas, position of male and female spikes, shape of utricles, shape of ligule and colour of glumes. By the end of the four days, it had become second nature.

My knowledge of sedges has always been rather hit and miss, but with a process to go through and lots of practice, I made real progress.

Everyone felt more confident at the end and we all had a wonderful four days together, sharing learning, laughter and experiences. These experiences included a meal out together and for some of the group, a trip to listen to a lecture on the Flowers of Snowdonia in Welsh one evening. On the last evening a group of five of us went to a play, in Welsh, with sub-titles for those that needed them, on the problems that the plants in Snowdonia have faced, starting with Victorian plant-collectors up to the issues of climate change and mass tourism today.

To give a flavour of how each day went, below is a report for the first day written by Ruth Dawes and Margaret Reid: "We met in glorious weather at Cors Ddyga (aka Malltraeth Marsh) on Anglesey, an SSSI with a range of reed-beds, marshes, wet grassland and pools and important for its birdlife. Chris began by explaining the differences

in structure between grasses, sedges and rushes. In brief, grasses have nodes, sheathing leaves, two glumes, a lemma on the outside of the floret, with the flatter palea on the inside. Rushes have stems with pith and the flowers are reduced to tepals. Sedges have a single glume, no lemma or palea, a utricle with stigmas

Photo: Janet John



Chris Metherell

in twos or threes on female spikes, leaves in threes and stems often triangular. Sedges then split into two groups, with around 60% of species in the main subgroup *Carex*, with male and female spikes dissimilar and three stigmas, and around 40% in subgroup *Vignea*, with spikes all similar and two stigmas. Just a few have only a single spike.

A key devised by Chris was provided and we soon learned to pull the utricles out to see the glumes and to check in the early stages whether specimens had two or three stigmas. Using his key, we worked through

Greater Pond-sedge *Carex riparia*, Hairy Sedge *C. hirta*, Brown Sedge *C. disticha*, Oval Sedge *C. leporina* and Glaucous Sedge *C. flacca*. We had to look really carefully at the male and female flowers as sometimes the females can be sterile, so they look like males.

There were easier characters, such as walking along and being able to differentiate between Greater and Lesser Pond-sedge by 'JIZZ'. Lesser Pond-sedge *C. acutiformis* never has five males at the top, maybe only two. It came as a relief to see something distinctive such as Sea Club-rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (a sedge ally). Phew! We were occasionally allowed to look at something really pretty, such as Marsh Cinquefoil *Comarum palustre*.

The afternoon found us in a very different habitat at Cymyran Beach, near RAF Valley Airbase. Our total absorption in Chris's teaching meant that the fighter jet noise went unnoticed. We studied Sand Sedge *C. arenaria*, with its far-reaching rhizomes, and compared features of Distant Sedge *C. distans* with Long-bracted Sedge *C. extensa*. We also saw the comparatively rare Dotted Sedge *C. punctata*. We couldn't ignore some of the other coastal species, such as a lovely display of Sea-milkwort *Lysimachia maritima* and Golden-samphire *Limbarda crithmoides*.

A big thank you to Chris and Hazel Metherell for a rewarding and enjoyable week. We learned a lot!

JANET JOHN

ONE DAY MEETINGS 2023

CASTLE HILL NNR, SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK, WOODINGDEAN, EAST SUSSEX, 28th APRIL

After heavy overnight rain in the area, 20 members gathered complete with waterproofs, hats, gloves and scarves in a cold eerie mist. We were greeted by Priscilla Nobbs and Paul Harmes, BSBI Recorder Emeritus for Vice-county 14 (East Sussex). Paul explained that we were visiting an NNR designated for its unimproved chalk grassland, with diverse and special flora, fauna and geological features and home to uncommon butterflies and declining bird species. Botanical experience varied from several people on their first WFS meeting to descendants of the late renowned Hampshire botanist, Lady Anne Brewis, and her second cousin, Elizabeth Norman.

We set off along a chalk farm-track through arable fields and open downland. Paul pointed out the problems with invasive plant species that the National Park authority has to deal with, including Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*. He also referred to the misidentification by horticulturalists of Spanish Bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanicus*, explaining that the introduction we mainly see in the wild is the Hybrid Bluebell *H. x massartiana*, a very fertile cross between our native Bluebell *H. non-scripta* and the Spanish Bluebell. Remnants of crops escaping beyond their fences were discussed, including Oil-seed Rape *Brassica napus* ssp. *oleifera* and Garden

Radish *Raphanus sativus*, but we were keen to get to our special site. Along the way, we looked at the differences between Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana* and Hairy Violet *V. hirta*. We paid special attention to the patent hairs, lack of stolons and shape of the stipules in the latter, as quoted in the BSBI Viola Handbook.

A very timely lunchtime arrival at the first Early Spider-orchid *Ophrys sphegodes* site, a steep, dryish bank, allowed folk to take as much time as they chose for either photography, eating or both. At the same location, Chalk Milkwort *Polygala calcarea* was also emerging.



Photo: Ruth Dawes

By now the mist had lifted and we could see the view towards Rottingdean. Other orchid species that we saw included the basal rosettes of Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Chalk Fragrant-orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*.

The ground at our feet was thick with

herbage, indicating a mouth-watering range of plants still to flower, including Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* and Sainfoin *Onobrychis viciifolia*. The latter is considered to be possibly native on chalk and limestone but is introduced in many other places. All too soon, it was onwards and upwards to see more Early Spiders-orchids. As promised, these were bigger than the ones we'd seen earlier and again very plentiful once you got your eye in. Equally special, the sun came out, the temperature rose and a blue sky was revealed. There was stunning downland scenery and a tranquil atmosphere all around us on the remainder of our circular route.

Butterflies were in short supply, but bird species included Skylark, Kestrel, Buzzard, Stonechat and Common Whitethroat. We arrived back at the car park pleasantly tired from our undulating walk, but full of gratitude for all the wonderful flora and fauna we had been shown. We can only say "Thank you Paul and Priscilla and when will you take us again at another time of year?" I would also like to say a big thank you to National Rail, National Express and Brighton and Hove Buses for successfully getting me all the way from the North-east Welsh border with Shropshire to the meeting place and back on time.

RUTH DAWES

TINY FLOWERS IN THE WHITE PEAK, DERBYSHIRE, 13th MAY

There was a cool north-easterly wind as eight of us met Claire and Mary Smith on 13th May at Thorpe. Our task was to look at small flowers in the sward towards the base of Thorpe Cloud. Once we had left the road and the traffic (tourists on the country road to Dovedale) we were on a public footpath. On entering a field we saw a good number of Speedwell *Veronica* species, enabling us to discuss the differences between them. Nearby there was a patch of Pink Purslane *Claytonia sibirica*. The conversation was regularly interrupted by gunshots as we were on the edge of a rifle-range. We moved slowly to a south-facing bank with many low-growing, creeping flowers. We were looking for



Photo: Ken Southall

Dove's-foot Crane's-bill, *Geranium molle* and Small-flowered Crane's-bill *G. pusillum*. In the absence of seeds we had lenses at the ready to look for hairs on the *G. molle*. On hands and knees, we spotted Field Madder

Sherardia arvensis, with Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium* growing through it. Knotted Clover *Trifolium striatum*, which hadn't been recorded in the monad since 1969, was spotted by Claire, although it wasn't yet in flower and was identified by its softly hairy leaves and red veins on the stipules. There was a tiny Early Forget-me-not *Myosotis ramosissima*, which some people thought was Wall Speedwell *Veronica arvensis* until they looked at it carefully. There were numerous other plants to see including Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, Spring-sedge *Carex caryophylla*, and Fern-grass *Catapodium rigidum*, all growing happily and in abundance. There was also Thyme-leaved Sandwort *Arenaria serpyllifolia*, as well as Little Mouse-ear *Cerastium semidecandrum*.

We sat with our backs against an old quarry face to have our lunch. Of course, we were still observing plants as there were some growing in crevices in the rock-face: Wild Thyme

Thymus drucei, Wall-rue *Asplenium ruta-muraria* and Maidenhair Spleenwort *A. trichomanes*. We watched queues of people climbing Thorpe Cloud in the blazing sun. They looked like a procession of ants which were dressed up!

After lunch we walked on to look for another small white flower, Fine-leaved Sandwort *Sabulina tenuifolia*, which has always been rare in Derbyshire, and we duly found it. Nearby there was an unusual-looking grass which no one recognised, single stems with very few leaves at the base. There ensued much discussion, consultation of books, reading of descriptions and careful inspection of the base of the plant, which was conspicuously bulbous. Bulbous Meadow-grass *Poa bulbosa* was the conclusion by Claire and Brian. This was later confirmed to be a completely new find for the county.

We all saw new plants, so thank you Claire and Mary of the Midlands Branch.

JUDITH LEE

HOMEFIELD WOOD AND WARBURG NATURE RESERVES, HENLEY-ON-THAMES, 13th MAY

The cold, wet spring had led to some doubt as to whether the Military Orchids *Orchis militaris*, which were the star attraction of the day's meeting, would in fact be in flower. Janet and Gwyndaf John had visited the wood the weekend before to find very few plants poking through. However, what a difference a week makes. Janet had managed to organise Phillip Pratt, a Berkshire,

Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) volunteer, to open the reserve gate and show us around. This was wonderful as he had an intimate knowledge of the whole reserve, having been a volunteer for 30 years, and he was very willing to share his knowledge with us.

Once mustered, we were given a



short talk about the Military Orchid. Military Orchids were thought to be extinct in Britain but were rediscovered by the enthusiastic botanist, J. E. Lousley, at Homefield Wood in 1947 while he was visiting for a picnic with his family. However, it was not until the 1960s that any effort was made to protect the plants and ensure the survival of this colony. This was particularly important as there are only three sites in the UK where these orchids can be found.

BBOWT lease the site from the Forestry Commission and manage it. Their strategy is to periodically clear a few acres of woodland. Once clearings have been created the orchids spread into them naturally. The colony is now thriving thanks to regular cutting of scrub and a grazing regime using sheep later in the year.

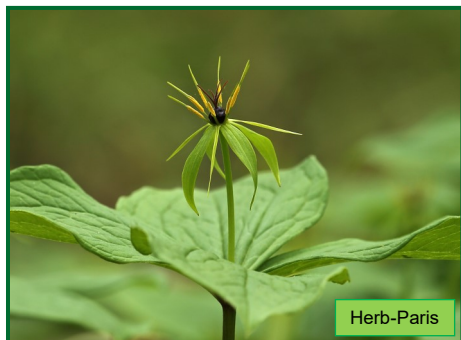
No sooner had we set out than we found Common Twayblades *Neottia ovata* in the grassland, from where

we moved on to the first Military Orchid site.

There were many orchids to be seen and care had to be taken not to trample emerging plants. Most were still in bud but enough were sufficiently open to show off their beauty.

The wood is also home to several other orchid species and thanks to Phillip we were able to see a single Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* plant. It was very difficult to see, even when pointed out, being the same colour as the leaf litter it was growing in. In addition, we found Fly Orchids *Ophrys insectifera* scattered around the woodland rides. Again, these were difficult to spot and always seemed to have their flowers pointing away from us. I found these plants very endearing. To put the icing on the cake there were also several patches of Early-purple Orchids *Orchis mascula* still flowering so we had been treated to five members of the orchid family in one morning.

We had spent rather longer at Homefield than originally intended so after a late lunch in the picnic area at the Warburg site, we set off to see what plants could be found there. We were not disappointed. The woodland is crossed by wide rides which allow in light. Not far from the visitor centre, along a shady ride, we found a flowering patch of Green Hellebore *Helleborus viridis*, which held our attention for some time. We then went on to discover several areas of Herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia*, which gradually became more and more abundant as we got accustomed



to spotting the plants among the abundant Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*. Eventually, we came across a patch where some plants had five leaves rather than the usual four and one even had six. Again, we

found a few Fly Orchids dotted around and a patch of Early-purple Orchids. The woodland rides boasted a nice collection of spring flowers: Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Woodruff *Galium odoratum*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Yellow Archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, Greater Stitchwort *Stellaria holostea*, Wild Strawberry *Fragaria vesca* and Barren Strawberry *Potentilla sterilis* to mention but a few.

Many thanks to Janet, Gwyndaf and Phillip for a wonderful day's botanising.

FAY BANKS

LOWER SLOPES OF INGLEBOROUGH, YORKSHIRE, 18th MAY

Nine enthusiastic participants and our leader, Alan Schofield, gathered at the Yorkshire Dales National Park car park at Horton-in-Ribblesdale on a cloudy but dry and mercifully calm morning. We soon set off, carefully crossing the railway tracks at the station, and began our ascent. Some had to be reined in quite quickly as they were setting off at 'lifer pace' leaving others trailing. A steadier, more inclusive pace soon produced our first special plants – Blue Moor-grass *Sesleria caerulea* amongst the first, abundant here, but with a restricted distribution centred on the limestone of the North of England. Nearby were the first Early-purple Orchids *Orchis mascula*, still looking splendid, but our leader urged us to keep going as we would see swathes of them later. We quickly added Brittle Bladder-fern *Cystopteris fragilis*, Green-ribbed and Pill sedges

Carex binervis and *C. pilulifera* and Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*. The last was demonstrated by Sheila Wynn in order to get our eyes in for a much rarer target. Reaching some broken ground, we let our leader go ahead and after a careful search he called us over to see the very rare Teesdale Violet *V. rupestris*. The last flowers were just hanging on and we were told that the first week of May is the usual peak of flowering. The plants were truly tiny and easy to miss, with the rather cup-shaped leaves and hairy petioles noted.

The group then voted to extend the trip slightly, to some limestone pavement about half a mile off the main route, to look for Holly-fern *Polystichum lonchitis*. Success - four healthy clumps of this arctic-alpine were found, with fresh new leaves sprouting. The area was rather good for ferns, with Rigid Buckler-fern

Dryopteris submontana, Limestone Fern *Gymnocarpium robertianum* and Green Spleenwort *Asplenium viride* all present nearby. Common Juniper *Juniperis communis* was also present in good quantity. Alan told us that, although *Phytophthora* had killed some of the population a few years ago, the situation now seemed more hopeful with no more recent casualties. Yet another good plant here was Lesser Meadow-rue

Thalictrum minus, after which we settled behind a large stone wall to eat our packed lunches.

Suitably fortified, we continued our ascent to a plateau, where Early-purple Orchids were indeed amazingly abundant along with swathes of Bird's-eye Primrose *Primula farinosa* -

quite a picture! We looked for, but couldn't spot, two white Early-purple Orchids that Alan had seen on his recce but eventually found one in another area. Passing Wheatears, Curlew and droppings of Red Grouse, we stopped to admire Mossy Saxifrage *Saxifraga hypnoides* just

coming into flower near a gateway.

It was then all eyes to the broken ground of the track we were on, where we soon spotted the (relatively!) large white flowers of Spring Sandwort *Sabulina verna*, (but remembered better as *Minuartia verna* by some of us). We had a good look, as our next target was rather similar, English Sandwort *Arenaria norvegica* ssp. *anglica*. Alan

explained what to look for and once we had found our first, right in the middle of the track, we got our eye in and found it at several more places along the same track. It evidently likes the bare, broken ground, which is often wet in winter but was dry on our visit. The flowers are surprisingly large, but the anthers and



Bird's-eye Primrose

leaf-shape distinguish it from Spring Sandwort, which was helpfully growing right alongside in some places. As it is a British endemic with a very restricted distribution, being only recorded in two hectads (10km squares) of this area of Yorkshire, it was a new plant for most of the



Photo: John Martin

group and probably the highlight of the day.

There was still time to visit another flush system, also with a population of the magic Sandwort along with Marsh Valerian *Valeriana dioica*, Common Butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*, Bitter-vetch *Lathyrus*

linifolius and some vegetative Northern Bedstraw *Galium boreale*. It was then time to head back down, passing a fine show of Mossy Saxifrage on the way, after a memorable day on the Yorkshire limestone.

JOHN MARTIN

ASTON UPTHORPE DOWNS, OXFORDSHIRE, 2nd JUNE

Just imagine..... blue sky, skylarks singing, grasses waving in the soft breeze, the heady perfume of flowers, swathes of yellow and blue all around us, no traffic noise, no other people but us..... just perfect. A stunning location, a beautiful day, flowers in abundance.

The day started well with Small Nettle *Urtica urens* right there where we had parked the cars. We knew that to see everything was going to be a challenge as we needed to cover about five miles altogether - a big ask



Photo: Janet John

given that a WFS group can spend a whole day in a car park finding plants. It was like kids in a sweet-shop. So much to see, so much to enjoy. However, we did have one particular goal in mind, which kept us focused and moving. Would we or wouldn't we find them? The Burnt Orchids *Neotinea ustulata* of course! Our route took us past crowds of Dame's-violet *Hesperis matronalis*, Long-stalked Crane's-bill *Geranium columbinum* (the sepals of which have bristles on the end), Dropwort

Almost lost in the long grass at lunchtime



Photo: Janet John

Filipendula vulgaris, Bladder Campion *Silene vulgaris* and then, in a wood off to our left, Nick Aston spotted an abundance of White Helleborines *Cephalanthera damasonium* at their best. Wonderful. Roger Heath-Brown, who had given us directions for the meeting, had said that we would see lots of "bread-and-butter plants but nothing really exciting" on our way to find the Burnt Orchids. Well, we got pretty excited about quite a lot that we saw!

Butterflies were everywhere, causing frequent stops to admire and photograph...which is tricky as, unlike plants, they have a habit of flying off. We saw lots including Grizzled Skipper, Adonis Blue, Brown Argus, Brimstone and Burnet Moths.

Lunch was on a grassy bank and so tall and wavy was the grass that we were almost lost in it. After lunch, onward with our quest. Once again, Nick proved to be of great value to the meeting! He found them. Not one, not two but at least a dozen. There amongst the Common Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, Quaking-grass *Briza media* and Hoary Plantain *Plantago media* were the Burnt Orchids. Fantastic. Small, perfect, sweet-smelling. We took our time to sit and to enjoy the moment.

On our return journey we took a different path down another dry chalk valley and were delighted to see Wild Candytuft *Iberis amara*, Common Juniper *Juniperus communis* bushes with berries, Field Mouse-ear *Cerastium arvense*, which is a surprisingly showy plant, and Deadly Nightshade *Atropa belladonna*, all the while walking through Bulbous Buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, Field Forget-me-not *Myosotis arvensis* and Germander Speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*.

Many thanks to Freda Miller for stepping in to lead the meeting and to Roger Heath-Brown for his detailed instructions. This is an amazing chalk downland site with so much to see and enjoy. Thoroughly recommended.

JANET JOHN

WOLSTONBURY HILL, WEST SUSSEX, 5th JUNE

Around twenty or so WFS members were warmly greeted by Gareth Bursnall and Priscilla Nobbs on a fine sunny day near Wolstonbury Hill. Before we left the car park, Gareth started the meeting with a description of the site, in particular its geological profile, referring us to photographs of chalk and limestone microscopy. From Gareth's informative talk, we learned that Wolstonbury Hill is steeped in history that extends back to the Bronze Age, evidenced by excavations of flint work dating from this period. The hill is currently owned by the National Trust and designated a biological site of special scientific interest. It is a prominent feature in the surrounding landscape, with commanding views from the summit over the South Downs and beyond, and the mood of the group was punctuated by excitement as Gareth and Priscilla whetted our appetites for what turned out to be an excellent day of botanising.

After leaving the car park, we walked to a roadside verge, where Gareth and Priscilla pointed out a number of plants including Hedgerow Crane's-bill *Geranium pyrenaicum*, Dewberry *Rubus caesius*, Bladder Campion *Silene vulgaris* and the leaves of Nettle-leaved Bellflower *Campanula trachelium*. Gareth commented upon a number of Dog-rose *Rosa canina* bushes, the blooms of which were in

pristine condition and ranged in colour from almost white through to brilliant pink. Reaching the base of the hill, which is covered in ancient beech woodland, Gareth and Priscilla set us the task of finding White Helleborine *Cephalanthera damasonium*. It took only a short while before some flowering plants were spotted, with what would be the first of many sightings throughout the day of Common Twayblade *Neottia ovata*. Moving onwards and upwards, we slowly ascended the steep lower slopes of the hill in order to reach the open chalk grassland studded with calcicoles for which Wolstonbury Hill is famous.

Here we were shown, amongst others, Salad Burnet *Poterium sanguisorba* ssp. *sanguisorba*, Quaking-grass *Briza media*, Mouse-ear-hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum*, Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum* and Glaucous Sedge *Carex flacca*. Gareth pointed out how the egg-yolk yellow flowers designate the 'eggs', while the plant's reddish buds and yellow petals with red stripes refer to the 'bacon'. As we explored the lower slopes of the hill, we were rewarded with the flowering spikes of Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Chalk Fragrant-orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*. We undertook a search for Man Orchid *Orchis anthropophora* at one of its

sites on the hill but to no avail, so we forged ahead and began to climb toward the summit to settle for lunch. On the way up, we stopped to admire a small number of Field Fleawort *Tephrosieris integrifolia* ssp. *integrifolia* plants. Field Fleawort is particularly rare in West Sussex and is a nationally scarce species, so the plants generated much interest from the group, especially the photographers.

Lunching near to the summit of the hill, surrounded by a profusion of Common Spotted and Fragrant-orchids, we took in the view of the surrounding landscape stretching down to Brighton and the coast as well as the South Downs. Once rested and refreshed, we made the final ascent, noting some handsome plants of Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum officinale* in perfect bloom. Walking down the hill enabled us to botanise at a more leisurely pace, with yet more calcicoles in flower such as Dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*. At the bottom of the hill, we walked toward Wellcombe Bottom, arguably the botanical jewel in the crown of Wolstonbury Hill. On a warm, sheltered chalk grassland slope, we were treated to the spectacle of an abundance of Greater Butterfly-orchids *Platanthera chlorantha*, more Twayblades and Common Spotted-orchids. The orchids were at their best and we had plenty of time to appreciate them. Gareth set the group another task: to

find Fly Orchid *Ophrys insectifera* on the upper part of the slope bathed in dappled shade from the beech woodland. Despite being notoriously difficult to spot, even where they are known to flower in a specific area, the Fly Orchids did not elude us for too long, as one member of the group spotted a single flowering spike in the grass. After that, we managed to find a small number hiding in plain sight. Crucially, orchids were not the only star-quality plants of Wellcombe Bottom. Gareth pointed out one subspecies of Common Valerian *Valeriana officinalis* ssp. *collina*, which has a more restricted distribution than the commoner ssp. *sambucifolia* and often favours chalk or limestone grassland. Additionally, I found Slender Bedstraw *Galium pumilum* to show the group, undoubtedly the rarest plant of the day. Well known from Wellcombe Bottom and classified as endangered in the British Isles, Slender Bedstraw prefers to grow on thin calcareous soils. It looked to be thriving at this site, with many flowering plants amongst the orchids.

This rounded off a wonderful day's botanising in West Sussex. On behalf of the group, I would like to thank Gareth and Priscilla for taking the time to lead the meeting, sharing their wealth of botanical knowledge and ensuring that everyone managed the steep ascent of the hill at their own pace.

NICK ASTON

SEEDBANKS OF LIMESTONE PAVEMENTS

REPORT BY WILD FLOWER SOCIETY'S RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT, MICHAEL JONES

As a part-time MSc student at Lancaster University, I have spent much of the last two years studying the flora of a rare and unique habitat, the limestone pavements of Cumbria, Lancashire and North Yorkshire. In the first year, I assisted Professor Carly Stevens in her major re-survey of pavements originally surveyed in the early 1970s. From the re-survey, it became clear that some sites had suffered major declines in species richness and that many pavements had become colonised by woodland and scrub over the intervening four decades. In my second year, aided by a grant from the Wild Flower Society, I was able to carry out further research to investigate the potential for these sites to regain some of their former species richness.



Figure 1. Open pavement at Hutton roof in different stages of woodland colonisation.

there must be a local seed source, as well as suitable conditions for seed to germinate. My research focused on two potential seed sources, the existing vegetation and the soil seed-bank. The seed-bank is often thought of as an insurance policy, with species surviving as dormant seeds, awaiting the return of conditions suitable for germination and growth, but I wanted to investigate just how realistic a prospect this was.

After identifying those sites that had lost a number of species between the two surveys, I used aerial photographs to determine which of them were now extensively wooded, identifying twenty such sites spread across the region. After obtaining permission from the landowners, I visited each pavement in the early spring of 2023 in order to collect soil samples.

Back at home, I spread the soil samples thinly on sterile compost in trays and placed them in a series of mini-greenhouses. The first seedlings started to germinate around three weeks after sowing, after which it became a daily round of watering and monitoring. As the weeks progressed and the seedlings grew stronger, they were potted on individually and labelled with the pavement number. When the first true leaves started appearing, it became possible to

In order for a site to recover naturally,

identify the species, and these were duly recorded.



Figure 2 The mini-greenhouses used in the germination experiment



Figure 3 Seedlings emerging in tray 20 (Colt Park, Ingleborough)

In May and June, I revisited each pavement and relocated the sample sites, this time carrying out a full vegetation survey, counting and recording all forbs (herbaceous flowering plants other than grasses), grasses, shrub and tree species. Bryophytes were not included in the survey.

By August, all the seedlings in the trays had been identified and it was possible to start on the statistical analysis. Measures of species richness and diversity were calculated for each site, both for the

existing vegetation and for the contents of the soil seedbank. Similarity indices were calculated to determine how closely the contents of the seedbank matched the existing vegetation. Other analytic techniques were used to explore any correlations between current tree cover, the extent of landscape change and species richness.



Figure 4 Quadrat layout: Whitbarrow Scar.

The results showed that, while there was some overlap between the soil seedbank and existing vegetation, these were two distinct communities, i.e. the soil seed-bank contained significantly different species from those visible above ground. If it had turned out that these species were the rare limestone specialists that had been lost over time, this would have supported the notion of a remnant population preserved in the soil, just waiting for the opportunity to recolonise the site when conditions were suitable - most likely by removal of the tree-cover. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Overwhelmingly, the seedlings that emerged were common species such as Bramble,

Herb-Robert, Common Nettle, Yorkshire-fog, Goat Willow, Broad-leaved Willowherb and Hairy Bitter-cress. Only two limestone associates, Shining Crane's-bill and Limestone Bedstraw, were discovered in the seedbank and neither of these are particularly rare or threatened.

What are the implications of these findings for habitat management or for future research? Firstly, this was just one study, carried out as an MSc dissertation. A larger-scale study, sampling more grikes in more pavements might discover variations in the pattern, with limestone specialists surviving better in some seedbanks. However, what this particular study seems to show is that once these species are lost from a habitat, simply removing tree-cover would not lead to their recovery. Limestone woodlands are a scarce and valuable habitat in their own right, of course, so once a pavement has become extensively wooded, it would seem sensible to treat it as

woodland rather than expending a lot of effort and resources in trying to turn it back into open pavement. Keeping pavements open and in a good ecological state is clearly a difficult land management task - too little grazing and the site becomes wooded over, too much and it can seriously impact the ability of plants to set seed and regenerate. This, however, is where conservation management should be focused, if these precious habitats are to be preserved.

Thanks are due to the Wild Flower Society and the BSBI, both of whom contributed towards the expense of carrying out this research, and also to Professor Stevens of Lancaster University for her help and guidance. If anyone would like to obtain a copy of the full dissertation, please email me at mikejonesburnbanks@gmail.com

MICHAEL JONES

BOOK REVIEWS

***Planting with Nature – a Guide to Sustainable Gardening*; Kirsty Wilson; Birlinn Ltd & Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (2023); ISBN 978 1 78027 804 9; Softback £14.99**

This book is not at all just about wild flowers, but as so many of us garden as well as botanising I think it might interest many members. Of course, 'wild' is a big buzz-word in the gardening world just now, to the

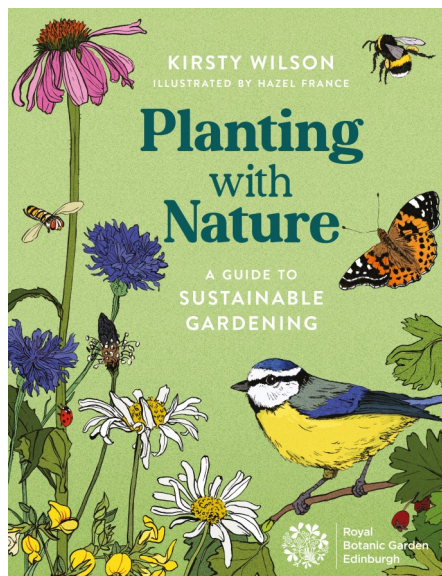
extent that a very plant-aware friend visiting the 2023 Chelsea Flower Show sent me a one line email just saying 'Too much Ragged-Robin'! But it is good that at last native plants are losing the dreaded 'weed' label and are being recognised for their essential part in our frighteningly threatened biodiversity as well as their beauty.

Kirsty Wilson is a Garden Manager at the great Royal Botanic Garden

Edinburgh (RBGE) and she has become deeply interested in the positive contribution which native species can make to ornamental gardening. As a child, I used to enter local flower shows, where my grandmother arranged beautiful Constance Spry vases, while I was in the very humble class for 'Bunch of wild flowers'. These would usually be wilted from clutching a hot hand, and shown in a jam jar, so seeing some elevated to Chelsea realms gives me an exhilarating feeling of hope which is supported by this new publication. It's anyway a most pleasant book to handle and has delightful illustrations by Hazel France. There are plenty of birds and other creatures pictured, and the flowers are an artist's view rather than an ID aid, but they are also absolutely correct. In a chapter on 'Creating a Nectar Border', the section on 'Selecting the Plants' has the compulsory bee just coming in to land on some Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica* in flower, and Common Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, which I would never have picked as a good garden flower, is on the recommended plant list! So, our wild friends have a reassuringly realistic position in the book.

The chapters include most of the subjects encompassed by this genre and cover 'Planting a Wildflower Meadow' (a proper perennial one!) and starting a 'Native Hedgerow', but one intriguing addition comes in a chapter on 'Creating a Rain Garden'. Apparently RBGE have suffered disruptive flooding as well as droughts in our modern violent weather swings and they have developed a method of planting a

selection of species in shallow 'basins' of free-draining soil which are placed in key areas. The species are planted to form 'an area of vegetation that catches rainwater and then releases it very slowly', which reduces flood risk, and the plants include both wet-tolerant selections and some which can cope with any following dry conditions. It's an idea which could be marvellously developed and adjusted to local conditions, with importance beyond our gardens and into town planning, and more than half the suggested plants are natives!

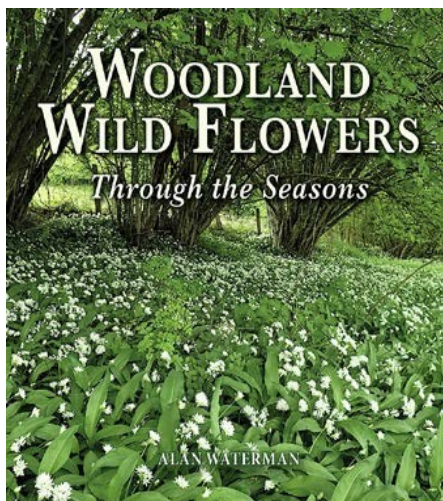


There are chapters with practical advice on compost, 'Creating New Plants for Free – Propagation', 'Green roofs and Living Walls' and of course various facilities for encouraging birds and insects and making a pond, and I was pleased to find a comprehensive list of specialist

nurseries. Searching the web, it's so difficult to tell if a nursery or seed merchant is reputable and knowledgeable, so it's a great help to have a list of businesses with RBGE approval. It's altogether an approachable book and Kirsty's writing gives complete confidence

that she knows what she is talking about! And for a gift rather than a working copy it is charmingly produced. I'm finding it a good addition to a library which has to be useful on both sides of the garden fence.

***'Woodland Wild Flowers Through the Seasons'* Alan Waterman, Merlin Unwin Books (2021); Hardback £20; ISBN 978-1-913159-25-2**



I felt quite ashamed when notice of this lovely book came to me because it's already been out for two years, and I had no previous knowledge of the publishers. They are specialists in countryside books and the firm is based in Ludlow in the heart of Shropshire, a botanical county known and important to many of us. If like me you are interested in all elements of nature and country life, and can't

resist beautifully produced books, please have a look at their list at www.merlinunwin.co.uk. Woodland Wild Flowers is a delightful introduction to their work.

Alan Waterman was Director of the East Anglian Field Studies Centre for 25 years so has long been familiar with plants and habitats which interest us, and he and his wife now manage a small woodland of their own in the Forest of Dean. This book came into being as 'a diary which included a lot of photographs' as they dealt with considerable management problems in a site which had almost been ruined by conversion to a conifer plantation. The photographs, mostly by the author, are superb, and tell a fascinating and encouraging tale of habitat restoration. Having said that, this is a book to appreciate for itself, not as a handbook of woodland flowers. The 'woodland' of the title includes wood edges, tracks, grassy clearings and verges and chance introductions include plenty of non-native species. So some plants included are quite unexpected such as White Crocus *C. vernus*, Ploughman's-spikenard *Inula conyzae* and Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis* all of which I would think of as being more typical of open habitats. Introductions

include Giant Butterbur *Petasites japonicus*, Welsh Poppy *Papaver cambricum* and Martagon Lily *Lilium martagon*, so there are frequent surprises which give quite an exotic feel to the list.

The plants are presented in six seasonal divisions – Early and Late Spring, Early and High Summer, Autumn and Winter. Each plant or genus has several photographs, some notes on appearance, and the author's personal observations and anecdotes. After the species pages there is a thoughtful section of short essays discussing topics such as 'Woodlands: why they look like they do today', 'The effect of light on woodland', 'Survival methods of woodland plants' and 'The origin of plants' names'. The whole compilation is very approachable and the author offers his ideas in an easy conversational style. Some of the close-up photographs are really enlightening and open new ways of looking at familiar plants. I'm specially taken with one of Cleavers (Goosegrass) *Galium aparine* showing not only the stiff spiky hairs

which enable it to clamber so efficiently in both the wild and gardens but a dramatic procession of blackflies and an ant on one of the stems. The notes here record a local name of 'sweethearts', and how to make coffee out of the ground seeds if anyone might be energetic enough to collect sufficient!

Throughout the book there are fascinating details, interesting observations and personal anecdotes. It's not laying down a stern definition of 'woodland plants' (although it does of course include a list of Ancient Woodland indicator species) but telling how the Watermans' wood came to support a wide variety of plants and how some introductions adapted to woodland conditions. The story revealed is heartening, it's a delight to dip into when a certain plant comes to mind, and I can see that I will keep it to hand during the winter months when the photographs could bring back images of kinder seasons.

RO FITZGERALD



Photo: Ken Southall

1st June 2016

On a very happy week-long WFS meeting on Guernsey. Here, Bill and Carol Hawkins are pictured standing 6th and 7th from the right in the middle row.

2023 AGM MEMBERS' WEEKEND AT RYE, EAST SUSSEX



1 & 4, Viewing the
Photograph Competition

2, Start of Rye Harbour
Nature Reserve walk

3, Stephen Clarkson
conducting his plant quiz

5, Half of the members
being led anti-clockwise
around the reserve by
Paul Harmes

Photos: Ken Southall



