

FLORA GROUP NEWSLETTER



SPRING 1997

Dear Flora Group Member

The Flora Group Committee Members hope that you enjoyed the events held in 1996. A number of events have been arranged for 1997 and we hope to see you at some of them. If you have any ideas for future events, including training sessions please let Catherine Chatters (Secretary of Flora Group) know. Catherine's address and telephone number are given at the end of this newsletter. The Committee already has ideas for events to be held next year, for example a training day on the identification of grasses, sedges and rushes.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 9 April 1997 - 7.30pm for 8pm

Talk on Flora of Australia

Flora Group members Dr Sarah Ball and Peter Billingham are giving a talk on Australian flora at Whitchurch Town Hall. The talk is being arranged by the North West Area Group of the Wildlife Trust and Flora Group members will be most welcome to attend. The talk will be held in an upstairs room but unfortunately there is no lift so access for wheelchair users is not convenient. Entry fee £1 per person. Do come along to hear about this fascinating subject.

Saturday 26 April 1997 - 10am

Coastal Habitats of Hurst Spit

Leader - Robin Walls

Robin Walls has kindly offered to lead a visit to Hurst Spit to look at the shingle and saltmarsh habitats of this important coastal site. Most of the Spit is a Wildlife Trust or Hampshire County Council nature reserve. The recurved shingle ridges of Hurst Spit (which is part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest) are of particular botanical importance; though partially obscured with shingle the substrate is clay and the ridges and intervening lows support a very rich saltmarsh

community in which sea purslane Halimione portulacoides, glasswort Salicornia spp, the nationally scarce golden samphire Inula crithmoides and seablite Suaeda maritima are co-dominant. The golden samphire population is amongst the largest on the south coast. Other plants of interest include sea pea Lathyrus japonicus and little Robin Geranium purpureum. The area around and beyond Hurst Castle offers the best plant hunting. This is remote, with no car access, and is about 2 miles from Keyhaven village. The Hurst Castle ferry runs from the car park at Keyhaven to Hurst Castle on the hour, returning on the half hour throughout the day. We will be catching the 10am ferry from Keyhaven car park near The Gun public house (grid reference SZ 306915). Late comers will either have to walk or wait for next ferry. (This will also apply if the meeting is heavily attended). Bring whatever you need for the day - there is no fresh water or food on the Spit. The formal part of the day will be in the morning but you will be welcome to stay and explore the area. The last ferry will leave the Spit at 5.30pm.

Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 May 1997

Atlas 2000 Recording Meeting in the Stockbridge Area

During November 1996 a letter was sent out to Flora Group members letting them know how to get involved in the Atlas 2000 project being organised by BSBI. In this letter we mentioned that Dr Trevor Dines (Atlas 2000 Principal Organiser) was arranging an Atlas 2000 recording weekend to be held in Hampshire during 24/25 May 1997, possibly on Hayling Island. However it has been decided that this event will now be based in the Stockbridge area in the Test Valley. During the weekend a wide range of habitats will be recorded, including base-rich water meadows and rivers, chalk grassland, chalk heath, arable fields and woodland. The area is very species rich with specialities such as chalk milkwort Polygala calcarea, field fleawort

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tephrosia integrifolia and bastard toadflax Thesium humifusum. Meet outside the Grosvenor Hotel, High Street, Stockbridge at 10am on Saturday, 24 May 1997.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ADVANCE BOOKING FOR THIS MEETING IS ESSENTIAL TO ENABLE THE LEADERS TO FINALISE MEETING PLANS, AS IS NOTIFICATION OF ANY BOOKING CANCELLATIONS.

If you would like to attend this event you will need to book on a postcard clearly stating: BOOKING FOR THE BSBI MEETING AT XXX, ON XXX, PLUS YOUR NAME, ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NO. It is also very helpful to indicate if coming by car and, if so, the number of spare seats available. The postcard, together with a stamped self-addressed envelope for reply, should be sent to Dr T D Dines, Rhyd y Fwch, Bethel, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 3PS.

There may be a small charge to cover expenses.

Saturday 31 May 1997 - 10.30am

Flora Group AGM - Butter Wood and Area

The Viscount FitzHarris has kindly agreed to a Flora Group visit to Butter Wood which is an important ancient pasture woodland with adjacent copses near Greywell. The Wood straddles the London Clay, Reading Beds and the edge of the Chalk and this varied geology is reflected in the wide range of stand-types and diverse structure and ground flora. The Wood supports a rich invertebrate fauna (including 25 species of butterfly) associated with the presence of glades, rides and ancient trees.

The morning will be spent studying the flora of Butter Wood and the AGM will be held in the Wood during the lunch break.

In the afternoon people will be able to explore nearby nature reserves such as Warnborough Greens, Bartley Heath and Greywell Fen. We hope to provide advice on botanical recording methods. Meet at 10.30am at Nap Pond (grid reference SU7165 5175) which can be reached via the public bridleway. If you would like a map to show the location of Nap Pond, please send Catherine Chatters a SAE. Parking near Butter Wood is limited so please allow plenty of time to find

somewhere safe to park. Bring a packed lunch. If you would like to be collected from railway stations at Basingstoke or Hook, please leave a message for Clive Chatters at the Trust office on 01703-613636/613737.

Sunday 6 July 1997 - 10.30am

Visit to New Forest with Wiltshire Botanical Society

Leader - Vera Scott

Flora Group member Vera Scott is leading a visit to the New Forest on behalf of the Wiltshire Botanical Society. Our friends from Wiltshire have invited Flora Group members to join them. Vera expects we shall see species of calcareous mire including marsh helleborine Epipactis palustris, the fragrant orchid Gymnadenia conopsea spp. borealis. There will be acid wet heath plants including pale butterwort Pinguicula lusitanica and by Avon Water we will see lesser water-plantain Baldellia ranunculoides and tubular water-dropwort Oenanthe fistulosa.

Meet at grid reference SZ 262984. Bring lunch and footwear for boggy conditions.

Sunday 10 August 1997 - 10am

Porton Down Conservation Area - Advance Notice

The North West Area Group has arranged a visit to Porton Down Conservation Area which lies about 7 miles North East of Salisbury. This is a rare opportunity to see this important site which belongs to the Ministry of Defence. The visit will start at 10am and will finish about 4pm. The number attending is restricted to a maximum of 30 people. Anyone wishing to take part in this visit should contact Peter Billingham on 01264 736359 to book a place on a first come first served basis. As the area belongs to the MoD a list has to be submitted to the establishment prior to the event and only people on the list will be allowed to enter the area.

Sunday 17 August 1997 - 10.30am

Wet Heath Flora Identification

Leader - Neil Sanderson

The wet hollows of well grazed heaths contain very rich and important habitats. They are typified by species

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

that are rather difficult and unfamiliar to many botanists. Such species include bog hair-grass Deschampsia setacea, many-stalked spike-rush Eleocharis multicaulis, white beak-sedge Rhynchospora alba and brown beak-sedge Rhynchospora fusca.

We wish to encourage the systematic survey of these species and to assist those who may have them in their Atlas 2000 squares.

This walk in the New Forest to look at peat hollow species will be led by Neil Sanderson. Please be prepared for a reasonably long hike over wet and uneven terrain. You may find a notebook and a X10 hand lens helpful.

We will set out from Ipley Bridge car park (grid reference SU 381 068) at 10.30am. The formal training will occur in the morning but those who wish to continue to look around this part of the New Forest may find a packed lunch helpful as there are very few places to obtain food within walking distance from Ipley.

If you would like to attend but need picking up from the nearest railway station (Beaulieu Road) please leave a message for Clive Chatters at the Trust Office (01703 613636/613737).

Refer also to events which have been included under Atlas 2000 in the "News and Views" section of the newsletter.



NEWS AND VIEWS

Coulters Dean Nature Reserve

Coulters Dean is a downland bank amongst the hills south of Petersfield. After many years of managing the site under a gentlemen's agreement the Wildlife Trust was very fortunate in being able to secure the freehold a few months ago.

This small, but remarkably rich, chalk grassland was subject to detailed studies in the early decades of this century by Sir Arthur Tansley. He knew it as land recently ploughed in a landscape of chalk grassland and scattered woods. The site has been studied on and off over the years and provides a superb example of natural recovery of a chalk grassland sward. If anyone is interested in repeating Tansley's detailed quadrat recording please do let us know.

The purchase of the land was only made possible through the generous support of the National Heritage Lottery Fund. There is a shortfall in our income for the purchase and we are appealing for funds to make up the difference and secure its future management.

Special Projects

At various times Flora Group members pursue special projects which then get reported back to the Wildlife Trust and other interested groups. These projects can be part of much larger studies such as small fleabane Pulicaria vulgaris or cut leaved germander Teucrium botrys or they can stand alone. If you are studying any place or species we are always interested in hearing from you. If you would like to pursue a project but are looking for ideas please contact Clive Chatters or Patrick Cloughley at the Wildlife Trust office. A project need not be complicated or difficult; simple things like annual counts and mapping of a single species or a single site really do add to our knowledge of the county's flora.

Atlas 2000

Following the meeting in Winchester on 2 October 1996 when Dr Trevor Dines introduced us to Atlas 2000, Pete Selby and Mike Wildish have agreed to be the Atlas 2000 co-ordinators for South and North Hampshire respectively. Pete and Mike are keen to encourage Flora Group members to become involved in this important project. If you have not already made contact with Pete and Mike and would like to help with botanical recording, please get in touch with them at the following addresses:-

Pete Selby (South Hampshire Co-ordinator, vice-county 11), 12 Sedgwick Road, Bishopstoke, Eastleigh SO50 6FH, Tel: 01703 644368
E-Mail pete.selby@zetnet.co.uk

Mike Wildish (North Hampshire Co-ordinator, vice-county 12), 3 Watson Acre, Andover, SP10 3YB
Tel: 01264 356427

Progress Report on Atlas 2000 in North Hampshire

Mike Wildish

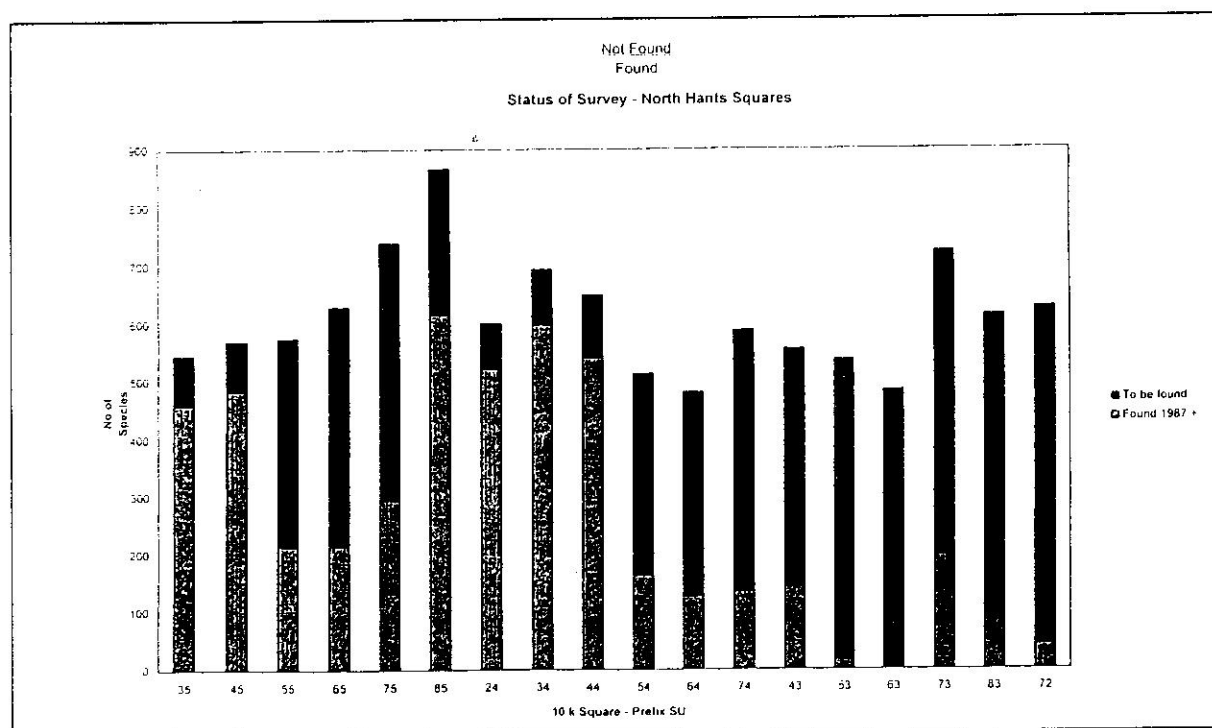
To get the project underway I have created a table on computer cross-referencing all known taxa in North Hampshire (still expanding!) and the 18 10km squares for which I am responsible. Into this table I have put the appropriate status code for a 1987+ record, '?' for a pre-1987 or undated record, or # for very common species that might be expected to occur in all squares.

From this information, lists of the current status for any 10km squares can be produced as well as statistics that act as a 'barometer' to the state of the project. A graph showing the state of each 10km square at the time of writing is shown below.

I have received offers of help from many Flora Group members and, in some cases, data they already had to hand have been supplied. Information has also been extracted from the Hampshire Flora and obtained from Lady Anne Brewis (with promises of more to come).

It is perhaps not surprising that existing coverage of squares and distribution of volunteers follows a similar pattern. The north-west, north-east and south-east corners of the vice-county are well researched and populated with botanists (especially the Fleet area). Potential holes in coverage appear to be a central north-south band from Kingsclere through Overton and east-west between Winchester and Alton. Volunteers for these areas would be particularly welcome.

I suspect most of the problems facing field workers will involve hybrids, subspecies and garden escapes that are now being given more emphasis. Certainly these are areas I admit to having paid scant attention to in the past. There are many hybrids that are more common than supposed and it should be possible to discover some new ones. The truth is out there - happy hunting in 1997.



Atlas 2000

Progress Report on Atlas 2000 in South Hampshire

Pete Selby

Records for Atlas 2000 are being made on a 10km square basis and 22 of these squares have been allocated to South Hampshire. Some of the squares overlap into other counties and into North Hampshire. In these areas the records will still be gathered on a vice-county basis but will be passed to the co-ordinator in the adjacent area. Thus records for the area north of Stockbridge, VC 12, will be passed to me by Mike Wildish while I will send records from North Hayling to other co-ordinators for Sussex.

A number of meetings have been arranged for people interested in helping with recording for Atlas 2000.

Wednesday 2 April 1997 - 7.30pm

Preliminary Meeting

The purpose of the meeting is to enable everyone to get to know each other and also to answer any questions about the project and about filling in survey cards. The meeting will be on Wednesday 2 April 1997, starting at 7.30pm. It will be held in Bishopstoke Community Centre via St Mary's Road and Sydney Road. Contributions towards the hire of the hall will be welcome.

Saturday 3 May 1997 - 10am

Training/Recording Meeting

To be held at Owslebury Recreation Ground (grid reference SU 521239) in order to provide records for Hectad SU52 which currently has no recorder. This will be a "Training Meeting" so experienced botanists will be grouped with the less experienced to hopefully improve the range of taxa recorded. The meeting will last all day and you can expect to record in at least two different tetrads.

Saturday 14 June - 10am

Training/Recording Meeting

Meet at the car park off B3078 (grid reference SU 193165) near Stone Bottom Quarry. People will be split into small groups and sent off to a particular tetrad with the aim of recording at least two tetrads per group.

Please also refer to the recording weekend in the Stockbridge area (24/25 May 1997) details of which are given in the section on Forthcoming Events.

Gardens and Allotments

In a recent edition of the Flora Group newsletter we asked members to send in records of interesting plants (eg unusual arable weeds) found in their garden or allotment. Mary Platt (FG Committee member) has received a number of interesting records and would be glad to receive further records in the future. If you have recorded any interesting "weeds" in gardens or allotments please send them to Mary at Chalk Cottage, Soames Lane, Ropley, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 0ER.

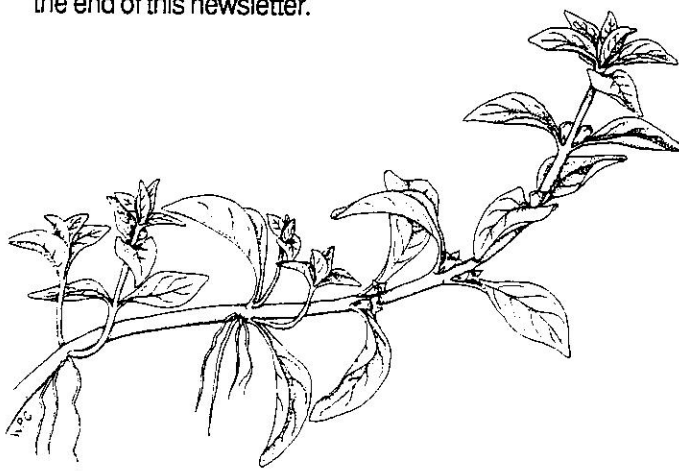
Hampshire ? Purslane

Ludwigia palustris

There are very few plants that one can say are definitely special to Hampshire. The Hampshire purslane *Ludwigia palustris* has been one of these. Odd plants used to turn up elsewhere (such as in Essex, Sussex and near Liverpool) but these populations were either short lived or clearly introductions. Last summer, Jonathan Cox of English Nature in Dorset discovered a colony "on the muddy banks of a tiny pond" on the edge of a hayfield which was grazed in late summer. The site is in the heathland area of South East Dorset and the habitats and other plants growing there seem to indicate this is a truly native station.

In 1997 we hope to arrange for all the sites of *Ludwigia* to be revisited to assess how it is doing in its home county.

A more detailed account of the Dorset population has been written by J H S Cox and a copy is available by sending a stamped addressed envelope (at least 25cm x 17cm) to Catherine Chatters at the address given at the end of this newsletter.



What is Rare?

Much time and effort is expended in debates as to what we mean by "rare". "Rare" is a much misused term. In general conversation this should not be a problem but difficulties do arise where a more precise use is needed.

Neil Sanderson and Clive Chatters have drawn up a list of notable plants occurring in Hampshire. This list includes all those plants in the county which are in the national Red Data Book (rare) and Scarce Plants book. To help to reveal which species are rare or scarce in the county (Hampshire) and the two vice-counties (VC 11 and 12) a further set of lists was produced. Rather than invent new criteria for identifying rarity the national criteria have been applied. So if a plant is found in 1% of tetrads it is considered rare and if it occurs in between 1% and 4% of tetrads it is considered scarce. A provisional set of lists for Hampshire and the two vice counties has been produced. In total 389 species found in Hampshire may be regarded in one context or another as rare or scarce. Comments are invited on the lists. They represent Neil and Clive's best efforts to date but could benefit from further work.

If you would like a copy of the lists for the county as a whole or for North or South Hampshire, please send an A4 size stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters at the address at the end of this newsletter.

If anyone would like to repeat this process for the Isle of Wight we would be interested in hearing from you. The Island is rather smaller than Hampshire and it will be interesting to see how the criteria of 1% to 4% would reflect true rarity on the Island.

Cut-grass

Leersia oryzoides

Congratulations to Geoffrey Field and Elizabeth Young who have re-found the colony of cut-grass which was re-introduced to the New Forest some years ago. The material used in the re-introduction had been originally collected from a native New Forest population and grown on at Cambridge Botanic Gardens. All of the native sites of this nationally rare plant in Hampshire now seem to have been lost. The exact location of the New Forest population is treated as confidential. Anyone with a great desire to see this species may prefer to

see the plants which grow in abundance (and which grow taller than the New Forest plants) at Amberley Wild Brooks in Sussex.

Interesting Records

We have received a lot of botanical records for 1995/6. Here is a selection:-

Leersia oryzoides - New Forest 1996. G Field/E Young

Tilia cordata - New Forest 1996. More trees have been reported from the grazed wood pastures. Two specimens are reported from the Swan Green/Lyndhurst Hill area. How many more are out there?

Aster lanceolatus - Narrow-leaved Michaelmas Daisy. River Bourne, South of South Tidworth.

Aster x salignus - Common Michaelmas Daisy. River Bourne, South of South Tidworth.

Back crossed Aster lanceolatus x salignus - Hybrids. All Aster records J Oliver conf Dr P F Yeo.

Lycopodiella inundata - Bramshill Common. C R Hall.

Lycopodium clavatum - Heath Warren. C R Hall.

Kickxia spuria, K. elatine, Euphorbia exigua, Legousia hybrida, Chaenorhinum minus - Five Lanes End. C R Hall.

Ranunculus circinatus - Claycart Flash. C R Hall.

Pinguicula lusitanica, P. vulgaris - Eelmoor Marsh. C R Hall.

Galium parisiense - Old Basing. C R Hall.

Pilularia globulifera - Wellington Country Park. C R Hall.



Flora Group Secretary: Catherine Chatters, Ivy Cottage, Ashurst Bridge Road, Totton, Southampton SO40 7EA

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, 8 Romsey Road, Eastleigh SO50 9AL. Telephone 01703 613737

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