

FLORANews

HAMPSHIRE
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Newsletter of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Flora Group

Spring 1999

Dear Flora Group Member

The Flora Group Committee look forward to seeing you at some of the events planned for summer 1999. If you have any suggestions for future events, tasks or training days please let Catherine Chatters (Flora Group Secretary) know. Catherine's address and telephone number are given at the end of this newsletter.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 22 May 1999 - 10am Flora Group AGM and visit to Rushmore and Conholt Downs

Leaders: Peter Billingham and Mike Wildish
Rushmore and Conholt Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) comprises a range of chalk grassland, scrub and woodland habitats. As no public rights of way pass through the SSSI this is a rare opportunity to visit this part of the north west corner of the county; we are grateful to Mrs Tisdall for giving us permission. Meet at 10am at Mid Conholt Farm (signed Mid Conholt Cottages) at SU 329 553. Mid Conholt Farm is best approached by the road junction to the west as Conholt lane is a single land road without passing places. Cars can be left at Mid Conholt Farm; it is about 1km walk from here to the nearest part of the SSSI. After the lunch break (bring sandwiches) we shall hold a short AGM. You will be able to continue exploring/recording the SSSI during the afternoon.

Mondays at 7pm 27 May, 21 June, 19 July, 16 August Evening Walks on Magdalen Hill Down, Winchester

Leaders: Lynn Fomison and/or Phil Budd

Butterfly Conservation have invited Flora Group members to join them on evening walks during the summer. The walks will cross their Magdalen Hill

Down Reserve which is a mixture of old chalk downland and chalk grassland being re-created from arable land. Of particular interest last year was the discovery of corn flower, corn cockle and night flowering catchfly. Meet at 7pm at SU 511290 on 24 May, 21 June, 19 July and 16 August.

Saturday 26 June 1999 - 10.30am Visit to Salisbury Plain

Leader: Paul Toynton
The Trust's North West Area Group have invited Flora Group members to join them for a fascinating visit to Salisbury Plain, led by the extremely knowledgeable naturalist and conservationist Paul Toynton. Meet at 10.30am at SU 203 525 by the right angle bend on the Everleigh to Haxton road, 1km south of the Crown Hotel, Everleigh. From there we shall travel on in some form of convoy to the start of the walk. Bring a packed lunch if you would like to stay on in the afternoon, otherwise you will be welcome to come just for the morning.

Sunday 4 July 1999 - 10am Micheldever Spoil Heaps

Leader: Clive Chatters
Micheldever Spoil Heaps were created through the dumping of large heaps of chalk spoil from the railway cutting and tunnel at Micheldever in the 1840s. The site has developed an extremely interesting flora including cut-leaved germander *Teucrium botrys* and red hemp-nettle *Galeopsis angustifolia*. Part of the spoil heaps is managed as a Trust reserve, situated one mile north of Micheldever Station. From the A303 take the minor road north towards Overton. Parking is through the gate on the left, several hundred metres north of SCATS Grain Store.

Wednesday 7 July 1999 - 10am Visit to Middleton Down with Wiltshire Botanical Society

Leader: Barbara Last

The Wiltshire Botanical Society have kindly invited Hampshire Flora Group members to attend a joint event close to the Hampshire/Wiltshire border with Barbara Last (01722 790368) who will lead a visit to Middleton Down. Meet at 10am at SU 046 226 on the Ox Drove track which leaves the public road at SU 038 223. Please note that this event is on a Wednesday and will be for the morning only.

Sunday 5 September 1999 - 10.45am Joint event with Sussex Botanical Recording Society

The Sussex Botanical Recording Society have kindly invited us to join them for a joint field meeting in SU 72, the aim being to add vascular plant records for Atlas 2000. Part of the day will be spent in the West Sussex part of the recording unit and the other half of the day will be spent in the Hampshire part of the square. Meet at 10.45am at SU 776 239 in the layby on the northern side of the A 272. Bring a packed lunch.



ATLAS 2000

Atlas 2000 Progress Report - North Hampshire

Firstly, very many thanks to all those who have provided field cards, site lists and individual records over the past two years. I estimate that the fieldwork is at least 90% complete and that we may be within 1000 records of completion. A master card has now been submitted for each of my 18 squares. This has triggered a huge amount of printouts from Monk's Wood for checking, including a download of pre-Atlas records, so pity me as I sit shackled to my computer all weekend!

1999 is to be the last season for working on the Atlas. I have to get any remaining records to BSBI by 1 November 1999 so I would ask you please to get your records to me by mid-October at the latest to ensure they are submitted in time.

Coverage of squares varies from very well done to virtually complete; the squares with most to do being in the centre roughly from Kingsclere through Basingstoke to Alton. By the Spring I should have produced a troubleshooting list for each square. I shall automatically send lists to those who have been working in specific squares but anyone else who wants to join the treasure hunt is welcome to 'phone me for lists. If you wish to work on specific species or groups, rather than an area, I can also generate lists for these.

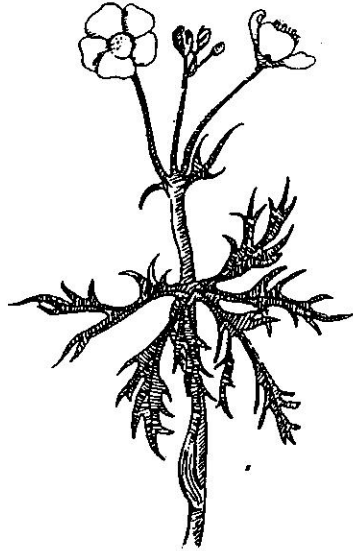
So it's eyes down and happy hunting for the last great push!

Mike Wildish
Atlas 2000 Co-ordinator, North
Hampshire
3 Watson Acre
Andover
Hampshire, SP10 3YB
Tel: 01264 356427

Atlas 2000 Report - South Hampshire

The number of 10km squares in South Hampshire, as far as Atlas 2000 is concerned, is 24 and submissions have now been made for all these squares. In

addition, submissions have been made for squares which are part of VC 11 but which are the responsibility of other counties. Thus I can confidently predict that *Bellis perennis* will be shown as present in all the squares in South Hampshire when the final book is published in late 2000.



The total species counts are all in excess of 600 except for some of the maritime squares that only contain a small area of land. There are 94 species which have been recorded in all the squares and a further 226 species recorded in almost all squares (20 or more). Of course the records have been gathered at a tetrad or 1km square level and so there are many records for some species from the same square. The most recorded species are *Achillea millefolium*, *Bellis perennis*, *Cirsium arvense*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Dactylis glomerata*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Galium aparine*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Plantago major*, *Quercus robur*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Rubus fruticosus* agg., *Sambucus nigra*, *Taraxacum* aggregate and *Urtica dioica*. Of these the most recorded species is *Rubus fruticosus* agg., so if you sprawl around, trip people up and are a bit prickly you are sure to be noticed.

I will again be making up the submissions this year during September and would welcome your final bulk submissions before this, with a final list of additions during October so we don't miss out on the *salicornias* and other late plants.

All records are welcome, in any form. A letter to me with date, grid reference and name of species will do and I am particularly interested in aliens, street weeds and casuals in arable fields.

Other analyses are now possible from the database of South Hampshire records. For example *Lactuca virosa* appears to be increasing. In 1997 there were two records and in 1998 there were four. Does this signal a rapid spread? All the records have been distributed over the area so there are no trends there. The plant is huge so it can hardly be ignored. Any records next year will be welcome.

Another analysis has been undertaken to locate dry, acid grassland sites. The Flora of Hampshire (page 49) indicates that the following 15 species are typical of such habitats: *Briza media*, *Carex pallescens*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Genista tinctoria*, *Lathyrus linifolius*, *Oenanthe pimpinelloides*, *Orchis morio*, *Pedicularis sylvatica*, *Polygala serpyllifolia*, *Senecio erucifolius*, *Serratula tinctoria*, *Silvaum silaus*, *Stachys officinalis*, *Succisa pratensis* and *Thymus pulegioides*. This list may not be the best possible list of indicators but can be readily changed. The database can, on the basis of this list, produce a map showing those tetrads for which there are five or more of these plants recorded. Such squares are shown as circles and are darkened as the species count rises to 15. Thus circles with no shading indicate 5 of the species are recorded and black circles indicate all 15 are recorded. Incidentally the map also indicates that the recording effort in the New Forest for Atlas 2000 is a bit patchy, mainly because unlike most of the county access is so open and there is so little building, agriculture and roads. The map is an analysis of Atlas 2000 records only and takes no account of records in the Flora of Hampshire, though it would be better if modified to do so. Once a tetrad has been identified a list of the actual records for any particular tetrad and from this the location of the site can usually be determined.

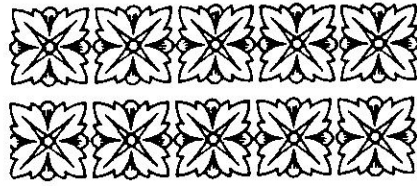
Other ecosystems could be mapped in a similar fashion if plant profiles can be derived eg ancient woodland, chalk grassland, major rivers, damp meadows. If anyone would like such a map please contact me, with your list of species.

In order to encourage more recording in certain parts of South Hampshire a number of recording days have been arranged. We have now reached the stage where the gaps in distribution are so scattered that I can no longer find suitable central sites from which to start. I know individual tetrads which need more work but they are not close together. Therefore we plan to hold a series of "Away Days" in a particular part of South Hampshire. These are days when you can record away from your normal area, in the company of others. Please put the Away Day dates in your diary and contact me at least one week before each one. I can then provide lists and directions to get to particular tetrads which require more work. I will also act as a "dating agency" and arrange suitable places to meet up with others recording on the same Away Day. I hope that we can get teams of two or three people examining a wide range of habitats and locations spread over the area ranging from Browndown (SZ 59) and Lepe (SZ 49) up to Ashley (SU 33) and Cheriton (SU 52). If you are unavailable on a particular Away Day I can always arrange a private Away Day, though you may have to team up with me! I hope that we can do as well as last year and record at least 25 tetrads in this way. I am planning to distribute a summary of finds for each Away Day to each participant, probably with the list for the next one, so you will see how we are getting on

Away Days 1999

Eastern Away Day 16 May
Northern Away Day 30 May
Central Away Day 6 June
Western Away Day 4 July
Southern Away Day 31 July

Pete Selby
Atlas2000 Co-ordinator, South Hampshire
12 Sedgwick Road
Bishopstoke
Hampshire
SO50 6FH
Tel: 01703 644368
e-mail pete.selby@mcmail.com



NEWS AND VIEWS

Tower Mustard

On Sunday 21 February 1999 three Flora Group members travelled to Woolmer in East Hampshire to undertake management aimed at benefiting the population of tower mustard *Arabis glabra*. This is one of only two populations of this plant in Hampshire. The work involved cutting invasive bracken and raking out the mat of grass and other vegetation which had accumulated beneath the plants. It is hoped that this work will help the plants to germinate; we will keep an eye on the site to monitor how successful the work has been. We are grateful to the Ministry of Defence for giving Flora Group members permission to undertake this task.

Oak Dieback

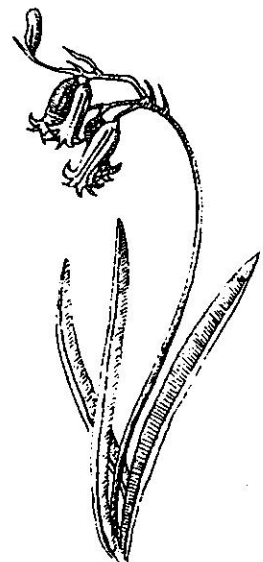
There has been recent interest in a new form of oak dieback. This primarily affects trees in south England, though examples do turn up elsewhere. It has been known for about 10-15 years but the precise causes are not known. If anyone would like a copy of an article about this disease, by J Gobbs and J Grieg of the Forestry Commission Research Agency, please send a large (A4) stamped addressed envelope to Catherine Chatters. Please mark your envelope "Oak Dieback".

Key to New Forest Roses

At the very successful rose identification training day held in the New Forest on 20 September 1998 the leader, Paul Stanley, handed out copies of his guide to the roses we were likely to find. Since then the (handwritten) guide has been kindly typed by the Trust staff and copies are available from Catherine Chatters on receipt of a large (A4) stamped addressed envelope. Please mark your envelopes "Roses".

Surveys for Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan

Volume One of the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan was published in September 1998. This document lists 446 species which are of conservation concern in Hampshire, including 320 which are of national concern. This list includes 114 flowering plants including a number which are already the subject of monitoring and conservation work by the Flora Group such as red-tipped cudweed *Filago lutescens*. The Trust has taken responsibility for co-ordinating work on the species element of the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan and is asking members of the Flora Group to add to their considerable efforts by supplying records of red hemp-nettle *Galeopsis angustifolia* across the county and of juniper *Juniperus communis* in the New Forest. The survey of juniper in the New Forest will help to supplement the efforts being put in by Plant Life to further the conservation of this species. Red hemp-nettle is extremely rare in Hampshire and so every record is valuable. Hopefully it is one of the species which will be seen on the Flora Group trip to Micheldever Spoil Heaps. Please send any records to Debbie Wicks at the Trust office (address at end of newsletter).



Interesting Records

South Hampshire Records

Myosurus minimus - Near Moors River, Blackwater 1296, H J M Bowen 1996.

Atriplex x gustafssoniana - Near Beaulieu River, Keeping Copse 4000, R P Bowman 1997, conf J R Akeroyd; also confirmed at four further localities. First VC record.

Atriplex longipes - Near Beaulieu River, Sims Wood 4001, R P Bowman 1997, conf J R Akeroyd. Second VC record.

Silene armeria - North Baddesley 3920, R M Veall 1998.

Silene gallica - Sandy Down 3199, P A Budd 1998; refound, Sowley Brooms, 3696, Mrs A E Bolton 1998

Rumex x dufftii - Meadowview, Upham 5318, P D Stanley 1998. First VC record.

Tilia cordata - Lyndhurst Hill 2808, P A Budd 1998.

Trifolium squamosum - Great Salterns Lake 6701, G Farwell 1998.

Erodium maritimum - Meadcroft Meadows grass verge, Highcliffe 2093, Mrs V Scott 1998.

Limosella aquatica - Ibsley Water 1509, G D Field 1998.

Gaudinia fragilis - Claylands, Bishop's Waltham 5418, P D Stanley and J A Norton 1998; Moorgreen Road, West End 4714, P D Stanley 1998.

Gastridium ventricosum - Mumby Road, Gosport 6299, E T Clement and Ms D Allan 1998.

Polypogon monspeliensis - Knowle Lane, Fair Oak 5018, P D Standley 1998.

CORRIGENDA

Flora News Autumn 1997
Discovery of Greater Yellow Rattle
The record of little robin *Geranium purpureum* ssp *forsteri* is an error.

Broad-leaved cudweed *Filago pyramidata*
Reported as discovered in 1996 in a sand pit a few miles east of Southampton, the plant was subsequently redetermined by Dr T C G Rich as *Filago vulgaris*, a species relatively frequent on acid soils.

Flora News Spring 1998
Interesting Finds in South Hampshire
Asarum europaeum - Langstone Harbour. This is now known to have been planted on a wooded bank at Farlington Marshes many years ago, where it continues to flourish.

Lathyrus hirsutus - Meon Hill, Stockbridge. The site was north of the A30 road and therefore in VC 12.

Myriophyllum alterniflorum - Beckford east. This was a transcription error for *M aquaticum*.

Royal Botanic Gardens: Millennium Seed Bank

Very many thanks to those who helped in gathering seed for the Millennium Seed Bank in 1998. We have had a letter of thanks from Kew together with a list of species they would like seed from in 1999. A full list is available from the Flora Group Secretary. If you think you can help gather seeds please do let us know as soon as possible and we will put you in contact with the right people at Kew.

Butser Hill

A survey of the lower plants of Butser Hill was undertaken over the last winter by Ron Porley of English Nature and Dr Francis Rose. This survey has confirmed the exceptionally rich nature of parts of the Hill both for lower plants of warm and wet conditions and also of Mediterranean conditions. Notable

species recorded included *Weissia cundensa*, *Tortella tortuosa*, *Phascum curvicolle*, *Pottia recta* and *Entodon continnus*. As well as being very rich in bryophytes the lichens also proved to be of great interest. These lichens grow on the stones, scree and bare ground. Of particular interest was the confirmation of the population of *Cladonia convoluta*. This species is now protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

A copy of the report of survey is available from the Catherine Chatters on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope marked "Butser Hill".



The Search for Red Clover

Red Clover *Trifolium pratense* is a relatively common plant in the countryside and large populations of it have never really been of special interest to botanists. We have been contacted by Dr David Sheppard who is organising surveys of rare and threatened bumblebees. One of the best habitats for bumblebees are fields with abundant Red Clover. If you know of any sites with lots of this plant, either as a natural habitat or a rye grass and clover mix, please let Debbie Wicks at the Trust office know.

Braemore Marsh

Braemore Marsh, on the Hampshire/Wiltshire borders of the Avon Valley, has been very well recorded over the last two decades for Brown Galingale. There are however very patchy records for the Mudwort *Limosella aquatica* and the Pennyroyal Mint



Mentha pulegium. The Pennyroyal Mint is believed to be extinct from this site and the records of Mudwort are erratic. If any Flora Group member has records of either of these species over the last twenty years, please do get in touch with Clive Chatters at the Trust office.

Fungi Are Not Plants

Fungi are not plants but we know many Flora Group members have an interest in them. Last winter saw a concerted effort to survey the Tooth Fungi *Hericium erinaceum* and *Hericium coralloides* in the New Forest. The survey was part of our research into the ecology of the New Forest and has been supported by English Nature's Species Recovery Programme.

Hericium erinaceum is now protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

The surveyors found 12 sites for *H. erinaceum* and 5 sites for *H. coralloides* in the New Forest, together with a "chance" discovery of *H. erinaceum* in Harewood Forest near Andover.

These fungi are in a healthier condition than we initially feared with a reasonable distribution across the New Forest. What the challenge for the future will be is to ensure their habitat is maintained and enhanced. We hope to be working with Forest Enterprise and English Nature in building the needs of these rare species into the forthcoming Forest Design Plans and Special Area of Conservation Management Plan.

Man Orchids

Our congratulations to Trust members around Bishop's Waltham for adopting the road verge at Exton where the Man Orchid grows. Several years ago the Flora Group undertook various scrub clearance and other conservation works on the verge in an attempt to maintain the population. We are very pleased to see this work now being carried on. As with other conservation work we will report whether or not it is successful and how members can help in the future.



Harewood Forest: Arable Weeds

The Harewood Forest area has long been known for being important for arable weeds and the Flora Group has visited the area in the past to see Cut-leaved Germander and Ground Pine. In recent years the core area for these species has gone into set-aside with an initial advantage to the weeds which then tails away as the bare ground of the set-aside becomes grown in. Dr John Moon has taken a close interest in the site and has worked with the landowner to help conserve the species. One of the difficulties we have experienced is the rule relating to set-aside; the ploughing which is essential to conserve rare arable weeds has not been permitted. One of the first jobs of Damian Offer, the Trust's Habitat Management Advisory Project Officer, was to cut through this red tape. We are delighted to find that the Ministry of Agriculture has allowed a more helpful interpretation of the rules. The field has now been cultivated and we look forward to seeing the crop of weeds next year.

Catherine Chatters
Hampshire Flora Group Secretary
Ivy Cottage
Ashurst Bridge Road
Totton
Southampton
Hampshire SO40 7EA
Tel: 01703 863920



Hampshire Wildlife Trust
8 Romsey Road
Eastleigh SO50 9AL
Tel: 01703 613636/613737
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust Ltd
Regd Charity No 201081