

Flora News



Newsletter of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Flora Group
Autumn 2002



Dear Flora Group Member

The Flora Group AGM this year was held during May on the Linkenholt Estate whilst we sheltered from torrential rain under a conveniently sited marquee! A number of suggestions were made for future Flora Group events and the Committee are already taking forward these ideas. The Committee are always keen to hear of ideas from Flora Group members so please contact Catherine Chatters (Flora Group Secretary) whose address and telephone number are given at the end of this newsletter. Since the last newsletter (Spring 2002) a lot of people have joined the Flora Group and we particularly welcome new members to our events this Autumn.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 21 September 2002
10.00 am
Joint Flora Group/Plantlife
marsh clubmoss day in the
New Forest

Leader: Andy Byfield

The new Atlas has highlighted a major decline in the national distribution of marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*. However we think it is still abundant in the New Forest and this meeting will launch the year long joint Flora Group/Plantlife marsh clubmoss survey to assess its current status. Meet at 10 am at the car park near Burley at grid reference SU 198041. Andy Byfield of Plantlife (who is well known to many Flora Group members) will give an introduction to this clubmoss and help people to recognise it in the field. The party will then split into three groups to survey the major mire system at Cranesmoor and Valesmoor. The ground is uneven and very wet so come prepared for a strenuous walk and bring a picnic lunch.

Saturday 5 October 2002
10.30 am – 4.30 pm
Moss identification training
day

Leader: Rod Stern

Following the instructive and enjoyable moss training session led by Rod Stern in March last year, Rod has kindly agreed to lead another training day based in Andover. Last year we had hoped to visit Anton Lakes Local Nature Reserve in Andover to look for mosses but due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease the reserve was closed. Hopefully in October we will be able to spend some time in the morning at Anton Lakes LNR studying mosses in their various habitats. In the afternoon we will use the microscope and laboratory facilities at Cricklade College to help us identify the specimens. Meet at 10.30 am at Cricklade College, Charlton Road, Andover. Bring a packed lunch. If you would like a location map, please send a SAE to Catherine Chatters.

Saturday 2 November 2002
10.00 am – 4.00 pm
Waxcap identification
workshop and site foray
Lyndhurst Community Centre
Leader: Shelley Evans

Join Shelley Evans of the British Mycological Society and learn about this fascinating group that are amongst the most brightly coloured of the fungi kingdom. In the morning there will be a workshop to look at basic fungi identification techniques and in particular the waxcaps *Hygrocybe*. Shelley would like people to bring waxcaps they have found for identification. The best places to find them are unimproved grasslands especially churchyards. All you need is the date and grid reference for where they were collected. A site in the New Forest will be visited in the afternoon to put what has been learned into practice. The exact location will be decided nearer the date so we can find one with lots of species to identify. Numbers are limited to 25. If you would like to take part please contact Naomi Ewald on 023 8068 8923 or email NaomiE@hwt.org.uk.

Saturday 30 November 2002

2.00 pm – 4.30 pm

**BSBI Winter Exhibition
meeting**

**Bishopstoke Community
Centre**

Organiser: Pete Selby

Pete has arranged another get-together at Bishopstoke to which all Flora Group members are invited. This will be a good opportunity for everyone to talk to each other, plan next year's plant-hunting trips and review last season's finds. Any exhibits or specimens for identification will be welcome. The meeting will be held at Bishopstoke Community Centre (grid reference SU 467198) on Church Road. Approach via St Margaret's Road and Sydney Road. An admission fee of £2.00 will be charged to cover the cost of hiring the hall. For further details, contact Pete on 023 8064 4368 or email him on pete.selby@ntlworld.com.

of biological data relating to Hampshire

- to make data available to all those who require them, including local authorities, government agencies, voluntary bodies, consultants, landowners, educational establishments and the public, subject to agreed policies on access and charging
- to service the information needs of the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan
- to provide guidance and support for local recorders and recording groups
- to encourage more people to appreciate Hampshire's biodiversity and obtain enjoyment from biological recording in the county
- to conform to nationally agreed standards and contribute to the National Biodiversity Network.

- the species name or a list of species present, including some idea of the abundance of each species
- a short description of the site and habitat types present
- a map showing the site and species location.

Standard site recording cards are available on request for the main habitat types in Hampshire – woodland, chalk grassland, heathland, acid/neutral meadows and saltmarsh.

The Centre is very grateful to landowners for allowing access onto their land and would urge all recorders to obtain access permission before undertaking any habitat or species survey on private land.

The Centre recognises the effort and time spent by naturalists in collecting data and will endeavour to ensure their data are used to aid decision-making processes for the benefit of wildlife. It will respect the views of contributing organisations and individuals regarding access to their data and ensure the confidentiality of sensitive records.

Data can be supplied on request or can be viewed at the Centre by prior appointment. All requests should be by letter, fax or email. For data enquiries please contact the Senior Ecologist on 01962 846858; fax 01962 846776; and by email: enquiries.hbic@hants.gov.uk. For all other information please contact the Centre Manager on 01962 846741 (email: nicky.court.hbic@hants.gov.uk). A useful leaflet has been produced about HBIC and can be

NEWS AND VIEWS

Launch of the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre was officially launched on 30 July 2002. HBIC is hosted by Hampshire County Council and managed by a Strategic Management Group whose partners are drawn from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre Partnership. Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is a member of this Strategic Management Group.

The Centre has been established

- to provide a focus for the collection and management

HBIC holds information on habitats and species from over 5000 sites. The information is held on record cards and a biological database. A Geographic Information System (GIS) links the biological database to other environmental databases enabling a wide range of maps to be produced.

HBIC is continually updating these records and would like to hear from all individuals and organisations holding or collecting biological data. Species and habitat records should include as much of the following as possible:

- grid reference (6 or 8 figure) of the site or species location
- name of surveyor or observer
- date of survey or record

obtained from Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre at Ashburton Court West, The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UE.

The Flora of Magdalen Hill Down butterfly reserve

Magdalen Hill Down is a 55 acre reserve east of Winchester (in VC 12) that has been managed by the Hampshire branch of Butterfly Conservation since 1990. The main habitat here is dry, unimproved chalk grassland and scrub surrounded by boundary hedges on a steep south-facing slope. Most of the eastern half of the reserve known as 'the extension' was arable until six years ago when an ongoing project commenced to restore this land to its pre-war glory as butterfly-rich grassland.

The prime concern on the reserve has been to record butterflies and moths but since 1997 an annual 'audit' of the progress of the vegetation changes in the area which is being converted from arable to grassland, under the guidance of experts in ecology and agriculture, has taken place. There are also species-rich grasslands along the headlands and a small triangle of land for scarce arable flowers. This is maintained by re-ploughing each spring and weeding out aggressive species. The grassland habitats throughout the reserve are maintained by grazing with sheep, cattle or naturally by rabbits. Also the laborious, but necessary, task of systematically controlling pest species such as dewberry, bramble, buddleia, privet, clematis, creeping thistle and ragwort is carried out.

A complete list of vascular plants, including over 300 taxa,

has been produced for the reserve and attempts have also been made to record other groups such as fungi, lichens and bryophytes. It is a curious fact that no species of ferns or horsetails occur on the reserve, although this is not particularly surprising given the dry, rather open chalky habitat.

The scrubby areas of the reserve contain most of the species that would normally be expected in such habitats with *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ligustrum vulgare* and *Clematis vitalba* particularly abundant and species diversity increasing eastwards across the reserve. The main large trees on the reserve are *Fagus sylvatica*, *Fraxinus excelsior* and invasive *Acers*. Many true chalk woodland species are absent as are certain species that are often found in scrubland on chalk such as *Campanula trachelium*, *Hypericum hirsutum*, *Valeriana officinalis* and *Atropa belladonna*. There is a patch of the rare *Symphytum asperum* however.

The established chalk grassland has a very good population of certain species such as *Helianthemum nummularium*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Polygala calcarea*, *Primula vulgaris*, *Origanum vulgare* and locally *Gentianella amarelle*, *Succisa pratensis* and *Anacamptis pyramidalis* – the latter two species are rapidly increasing in quantity. Orchids are in very short supply on the reserve; the only three species recorded are *Ophrys apifera* (rarely), *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and *Spiranthes spiralis*. The area being reverted to grassland has particularly high quantities of legumes as well as *Primula veris*, *Reseda lutea* and *Galium* spp.

Less common chalk grassland species recorded include *Thesium humifusum* (on the edge of its range here), *Clinopodium acinos*, *Salvia verbenaca* and *Cerastium semidecandrum*.

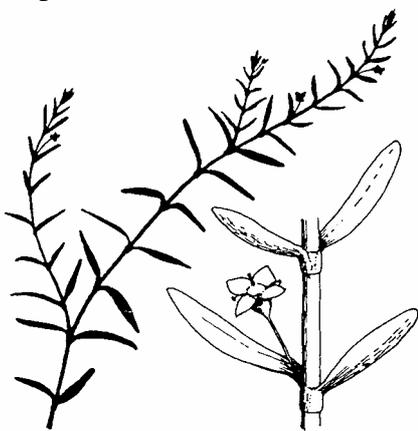
When the 'extension' was first ploughed prior to the sowing of wild flowers/grass mixtures a number of interesting and seldom seen arable flowers appeared including *Agrostemma githago*, *Centaurea cyanus*, *Silene noctiflora* and the more common *Papaver hybridum*, *Papaver argemone*, *Kickxia* spp, *Legousia hybrida* and *Fumaria densiflora*. Most of these species are being maintained in the triangular 'arable patch'. Also a number of 'escapes' from the adjacent cemetery or the former bulb fields north of the reserve have appeared. The latter include *Anemone blanda*, *Alchemilla mollis*, *Brunnera macrophylla*, *Persicaria amplexicaulis* and an assortment of *Narcissus* spp. A final unusual feature of the flora of Magdalen Hill Down is the sheer number and variety of white forms of normally blue, purple, magenta or pink flowers. Interesting examples regularly appearing include white *Gentianella amarelle*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Carduus nutans*, *Centaurea scabiosa*, *Clinopodium vulgare* and, confusingly, *Lamium purpureum*.

Anyone who is not a member of Butterfly Conservation (Hampshire Branch) can find out about events on the reserve, or how to find the site, by contacting me on 023 8039 4807 or by emailing me at philbudd@ukonline.co.uk.

Phil Budd

***Crassula helmsii* focus on control – an update**

A leaflet titled “*Crassula helmsii* focus on control – an update” has been produced by the Natural Environment Research Council and the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology on behalf of English Nature and the Environment Agency. It covers identification and habitat, control strategy, control methods and has suggestions for further reading. Copies can be obtained from English Nature at Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA, telephone 01733 455000.



Crassula helmsii

Warning : invasive alien pond plants

The Centre for Aquatic Plant Management has produced a leaflet titled “Warning : Invasive Alien Pond Plants” which gives advice and information on how to control nuisance aquatic plants. Species covered include water fern *Azolla filiculoides*, parrot’s feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*, floating pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* and Australian swamp stonecrop *Crassula helmsii*. If you would like a copy of the leaflet please contact IACR – Centre for Aquatic Plant Management, Broadmoor Lane, Sonning, Reading RG4 6TH, telephone

0118 969 0072 or email: capm@freeuk.com.

Churchyard Lecanactis : old walls can harbour secrets

The above leaflet on the lichen Churchyard Lecanactis has been produced as part of Plantlife’s “Back from the Brink Management Series”. It can be obtained from Plantlife at 21 Elizabeth Street, London SW1W 9RP, telephone 020 7808 0100 or email enquiries@plantlife.org.uk

***Limosella aquatica* – notes on a temporary pond during 2000 to 2001.**

The crustacean *Triops cancriformis* is a rare species in Britain, classified as endangered in the British Red Data Book and protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The distribution of this species was once widespread but has always been rare and sporadic in its appearance. Currently, it is known to exist in only two ponds in the UK, both of which are within the same 10 km² in the New Forest.

Triops cancriformis is adapted to a temporary pond environment. Hatching occurs some time after the pond has wetted when temperatures reach between 15 and 20°C. The species then reaches sexual maturity and reproduces within 2-3 weeks in the absence of predatory species. During the years 2000 to 2001 an in-depth study was undertaken at the above ponds to determine why *Triops cancriformis* should be so restricted in its range.

During this period, weekly visits were made to the ponds to record biotic and abiotic factors that may have an impact on the species. This included a record

of the flora present and their abundance based on a percentage cover of the pond area.

The pond was in a habitat typical of the neutral lawns found on settlement and road edges in the New Forest, characterised by a perennial rye-grass, crested dog’s-tail, sweet vernal-grass NVC community with distinctive mats of chamomile *Chamaemelum nobile*. Sanderson (1998) has made a provisional classification of temporary pond communities. The pond in question fell within the creeping bent, marsh foxtail, knotweed community. Creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*, marsh cudweed *Gnaphalium uliginosum*, water pepper *Persicaria hydropiper* and knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare* were all present.

Chamomile *Chamaemelum nobile* and knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare* dominated throughout the dry period being replaced by floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*, common water-starwort *Callitriche stagnalis* and lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* during the wet period. It was interesting to note that during the wet period only three or four species dominated the surface area of the pond. Other plants were only present as a few individuals. This was reversed in the dry period, with many plants being equally dominant.

It is also worth noting that during the dry period from 10 June to 19 September the pond was over 75% bare ground for eight weeks. It was heavily grazed by horses and was being used as a dust bath for much of the time. At its peak the pond was 315 m²

but was only 30 cm at its deepest point.

Limosella aquatica was first discovered at this pond in 1991 (Bowman, R P) despite it having been studied previously for its population of fairy shrimp *Chirocephalus diaphanus*. The reason for the lack of identification in the past is not surprising. During the year 2000 to 2001, *L. aquatica* was first recorded on 28 September and persisted until 15 October. Only five plants were recorded but they were heavily grazed during this time, and only two of the plants produced flowers. These plants were located on the pond edge nearest the road, in an area which held water for the longest period of time.

Threats to the pond include its proximity to the road; litter was observed in the pond on every visit. Although there was no evidence of pollution from road runoff throughout the survey, this must be considered a significant risk. There is also the threat of maintenance of underground pipes, which supply cottages behind the pond. However, the Forestry Commission and English Nature are aware of the significance of this pond and as a result work should be supervised to have the least impact. The owners of the cottage are also aware of the pond's importance and maintain a watchful eye over the pond.

If you would like more information on this study please contact Naomi Ewald, Biodiversity Projects Officer, at Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust on 023 8068 8923 or email NaomiE@hwt.org.uk.

Boletes in the New Forest

In the last four years, Hampshire Wildlife Trust has been increasingly involved in the conservation of fungi. This was initially prompted by the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire, which lists the following species as priorities for action:

Boletus regius
Boletus satanas
*Hericium coralloides**
*Hericium erinaceus**
*Hydnellum concrescens**
*Hydnellum ferrugineum**
*Hydnellum scrobiculatum**
*Hydnellum spongiosipes**
Hygrocybe calyptriformis
Microglossum olivaceum
*Phellodon confluens**
*Phellodon tomentosus**
Poronia punctata
Sarcodon imbricatus
(=*squamosus*)*

* Species studied by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

To date we have made significant progress in increasing the knowledge base and influencing the management of tooth fungi. This has been achieved with funding from English Nature but also the outstanding efforts of volunteers from the Hampshire Fungus Group. It has been suggested that the Trust can continue to develop work in this sphere by moving on to the Boletoid species.

The Biodiversity Action Plan objectives for *Boletus regius* and *Boletus satanas* are set out in 4.1 and 4.2 of the relevant Species Action Plan as follows:

“Maintain populations at all extant sites, and increase the extent of populations at these

sites where feasible”, and *“Ensure a continuity of suitable host trees at all extant sites”*. The project aims to fulfil the proposed actions set out in the Species Action Plan to meet these objectives including establishing the current distribution and status of these fungi, improved site protection and improved site management. The study will also include species which are listed in the British and European Red Data Lists and species for which there is a current lack of information.

The following species have been selected for survey.

UK BAP

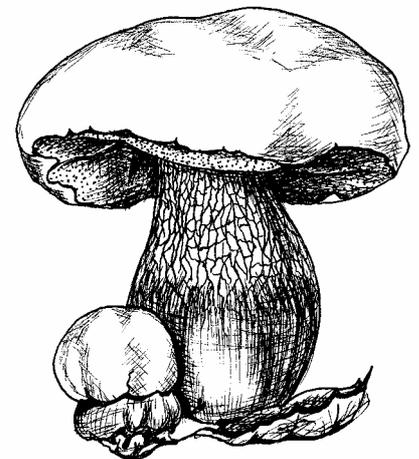
Boletus regius
Boletus pseudoregius
Boletus satanas
Boletus purpureus

UK RDL

Boletus fragrans
Boletus junquilleus
Boletus leoninis
Boletus satanoides
Uloporus (Gyrodon) lividus

Eur RDL (gp A and B)

Boletus fechtneri
Boletus queletii
Boletus impolitus
Pulveroboletus gentilis



Devil's bolete *Boletus satanas*

Bern Convention proposed list
Phylloporus rhodoxanthus

Local stronghold species
Gyroporus cyanescens

If you would like more information on this survey or the previous surveys undertaken by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust then please contact Naomi Ewald, Biodiversity Projects Officer, at Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust on 023 8068 8923 or email NaomiE@hwt.org.uk.

SURVEY NEWS FROM PLANTLIFE

Plantlife – The Wild-Plant Conservation Charity invites Hampshire Flora Group members to contribute to four flower surveys underway at the present time.

The **Common Plant Survey**, part of a three year programme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and undertaken as a partnership between the Botanical Society of the British Isles and Plantlife, is planned as the first phase of a long-term survey to monitor what is happening to the wild flowers of our countryside.

The programme utilises the expertise of volunteers and asks them to survey 65 common and distinctive plant species within random plots near where you live. The list includes familiar plants such as yellow flag and marsh marigold from wetlands, buck's-horn plantain and thrift from the coast, and red dead-nettle and common poppy from arable land. In time it is hoped that the results will provide some powerful arguments to help

conservationists protect our wild plants, much as the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey has done for birds.

One particular group of flowering plants has been selected for detailed survey. Plantlife is seeking volunteers to record colonies of three crane's-bill species – *Geranium pratense*, *G. sanguineum* and *G. sylvaticum* – across the UK to form the basis of Plantlife's **Counting Crane's-bills Survey**.

For those interested in lower plants, the **Pink Waxcap Survey** seeks volunteers to record three distinctive members of genus *Hygrocybe* – the pink waxcap (*Hygrocybe calyptiformis*), parrot waxcap (*H. psittacina*) and blackening waxcap (*H. conica*), all at their best from the middle of August through until mid-December, depending on rainfall. The unmistakable and attractive pink waxcap is thought to be more abundant in the UK and Ireland than anywhere else, but has suffered from the improved or neglect of its favoured dry acid grassland habitat. Accordingly it has been selected as a priority species for the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

For details of these three surveys or other aspects of Plantlife's work, contact Emma Pilgrim on 0207 808 0120 or email her on emma.pilgrim@plantlife.org.uk.

Finally, to commemorate H M The Queen's Golden Jubilee, and in celebration of the natural beauty to be found in every part of the UK, Plantlife is inviting members of the public to vote for their **County Flowers** and put wild flowers on the map. County

Flowers give you the chance to have your say about which flower would make the most appropriate emblem for your own county and every other county you visit. Voting closes on Sunday 1 December 2002 so vote now either on Plantlife's website, www.plantlife.org.uk, or by visiting any Laura Ashley store.

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Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Company limited by guarantee
and registered in England No. 676313
Registered Charity No. 201081

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of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust

