

# Biodiversity Management at the BAS

Jonathan Shanklin

British Antarctic Survey, NERC, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge  
England, CB3 0ET

The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) along with all publicly funded bodies has a duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act to manage its grounds to promote biodiversity. BAS has a Ground Management Plan which aims to achieve appropriate management of different areas. The “front of house” has been planted with a variety of native (mostly) shrubs, and there are blocks of local “clunch”, which represent ice-bergs. Many of these are melting! The central courtyard is mostly formal, but orchids are catered for. The east lawn is managed for nature. I have been opportunistically monitoring the flora and fauna of the site to assess progress. Species noted to date are shown on the printout. Botanically there are some interesting plants here, though in the main these have been introduced. The only red-listed species is *Euphorbia exigua* Dwarf Spurge, though this is common around here. If you spot any additions during your visit, please add them to the list!



The central courtyard has a pond with introduced water plants, along with some that have arrived naturally. The introduced *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* Corky-fruited Water-dropwort has spread into the lawn area. The invasive *Crassula helmsii* New Zealand Pigmyweed has arrived of its own accord in the pond, along with *Lemna trisulca* Ivy-leaved Duckweed. The four grassed quadrants are surprisingly species rich, and this may be a relict grassland from before the site was built on. *Ophrys apifera* Bee Orchid grows in the lawn and plants are marked out each spring, with the area around them being left uncut until late summer, when the above image was taken. *Torilis nodosa* Knotted Hedge-parsley appeared in one area of the lawn in 2010.



The east lawn is designated as a “nature” area. Several years ago a number of plugs were introduced, however the majority were predated by Rabbits and only a few *Succisa pratensis* Devil’s-bit Scabious survived. Some “wild-flower” seed was sown in 2011, but the only plant to have appeared so far is *Clinopodium vulgare* Wild Basil. *Cynoglossum officinale* Hound’s-tongue seeds gathered from elsewhere in Cambridgeshire have been scattered in the area and a few plants have come up. The grass should be mown once or twice a year with the arisings removed, though this was neglected a couple of years ago, making part of the area much ranker. There are information signs giving details of some of the species that can be seen, and this area forms part of the exhibit.

The BAS building lies in tetrad TL45J, which is one of the BSBI Local Change squares. To date Jonathan Shanklin and the Cambridge Natural History Society have recorded 726 species in the tetrad since 2003, compared to 241 in 1987 and 358 in 2003/4 by the Local Change Project. A few more species are usually added each year. Notable species in the tetrad include *Aristolochia clematis* Birthwort, *Euphorbia platyphyllos* Broad-leaved Spurge, *Fumaria parviflora* Fine-leaved Fumitory, *Fumaria vaillantii* Few-flowered Fumitory, *Hyoscyamus niger* Henbane, *Lathyrus aphacca* Yellow Vetchling, *Torilis arvensis* Spreading Hedge-parsley, *Verbascum pulverulentum* Hoary Mullein and *Vicia parviflora* Slender Tare.



*Hyoscyamus niger* Henbane on the West Cambridge campus



*Lathyrus aphacca* Yellow Vetchling on the Cotton Footpath



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