



Cambridgeshire Flora Group

Spring Newsletter 2014

News

Nick Millar stood down as BSBI co-recorder for Cambridgeshire during the year, with Jonathan Shanklin taking his place. Jonathan has created a vc web page, which is already producing benefits in the form of additional records being submitted. This page includes a list of meetings in the vice-county that have a botanical component, so do send him details of others if you would like them included. Alan Leslie is making good progress with his work on the new county flora. Sadly, Peter Sell died in October; it is hoped that there will be a memorial event at the Botanic Garden in the summer. There is an obituary of him in the BSBI Yearbook for 2014.

The BSBI is starting to plan for an Atlas 2020, which aims amongst other things to map changes in our flora since the last Atlas in 2000. The exact strategy for recording is still being debated, but will include full surveys of at least three tetrads in each hectad during the period 2000 to 2019. We should manage to do better than that, and I would hope that most tetrads will receive at least one visit. The north of the county is still poorly covered, but coverage should improve as the Fen Flora project progresses. Jonathan is filling in some of the under-recorded tetrads in the south, and also plans to pay some visits to the Littleport area during the year. If you want to see how we are progressing have a look at the map on the web page, which is updated monthly. If you happen to be in any poorly recorded area do make records and send them in.

Altogether to date 23826 records for 2013 have been added to the database, but several individuals have still to submit their records. Jonathan Shanklin made over half of the total. In pursuit of their Fen Flora project Owen Mountford and Jonathan Graham contributed over 7000. The Flora Group collected 2418 records during the meetings and the Cambridge Natural History Society contributed 813 records. Several other individuals or groups have also submitted records. James Cadbury has continued to follow up records of some of the scarcer plants in the county.

Notable records for the year included:

Thelypteris palustris and *Epilobium palustre* from Chippenham Fen: neither has been recorded on the fen before. Marsh Fern otherwise only now occurs on Wicken Fen and there are no other extant sites in the county for the willowherb.

Carex binervis refound at its last site county at Middle Moor, Whittlesford, where it was last seen in 1975

Rumex crispus x *R. maritimus* recorded for the first time, along Morton's Leam in the north of the county

Conyza floribunda x *Erigeron acris* on a roadside with both parents near Fordham: perhaps the first British record. The third X *Conyzigeron* recorded in Cambs!

Rubus boudicca added to our bramble list from Chippenham

A second naturalised record for the Sea Lavender lookalike *Goniolimon tataricum* (near Fen Drayton), and the first sites for a white-flowered variant of *Cymbalaria pallida* (at Conington) and for *Pratia pedunculata* (as a lawn weed at Gamlingay) *Quercus x cerrissoana* (*Q. canariensis* x *Q. robur*) self-sowing in hedges at Quy from planted roadside trees.

Review of 2013 excursions

Our meetings in 2013 began with a visit to Burwell in April, where we explored the churchyard, cemetery, castle and the swamp as well as parts of the village. May saw a visit to Whittlesford, where we found several plants of interest in Middle Moor. We went west in June to Gamlingay where the acid sandy soils produced many species not seen elsewhere in the county. Our July visit was to the fens, exploring the area around Elford Closes near Stretham, which was overall rather devoid of interest. Hayley Wood and its environs in early August produced some interesting records, perhaps most notably Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria*. At the end of the month it was back to the fens for a walk along Moreton's Leam, where a few sea-side plants remained. The final fens visit in September was to the far north of county, where the old railway gave added interest. The intention is to produce rather more detailed accounts for our 2014 excursions and we hope that you will be able to join us.



The inflorescence of Carex binervis [Source Wikipedia commons, author Stemonitis].

Excursions 2014

Please take careful note that our excursions this year vary both in the day of the week on which they take place and in the time at which we meet on each occasion. Participants are welcome to join us for all or part of any excursion. A packed lunch will be required for all meetings and we will generally finish towards the end of the afternoon, although on 12 June we may be a bit later if we want to return to Wild Tracks to get access to that part of the site used for biking. Meeting places have been chosen as having some parking space, but this can not be guaranteed. Our meetings often produce some surprising and interesting records so do come along if you can.

1. **Saturday** 26 April: Waresley and Gransden Wood. **Meeting time 10.00am.**

Meet in the official car park for the wood on the south-east side of Waresley Road (TL256550). Only the south-eastern corner of this boulder clay wood is in v.c.29, but we will aim to enjoy the spring flora of the rest of this boulder clay wood as well. If time permits we may also explore the footpath down to Fullers Hill Farm to the south.

2. Saturday 31 May: Eversden. Meeting time 10.00am.

Meet by the church in Great Eversden (TL367533). We will aim to check up on a site for *Sambucus ebulus*, which may be one listed by Relhan (1802), and then visit Eversden Wood, where we might hope to refind the *Rosa micrantha* seen here by Chris Preston and Derek Wells in 1997. Time permitting we might return via field paths over Thorn Hill and through Little Eversden.

3. Thursday 12 June: Chippenham and Kennett. Meeting time 12.00am.

Meet at the Wild Tracks Offroad Activity Park on the B1085, north-west of the A14 at Chippenham (TL68316864). We have permission to record in this old sand pit site now used for various offroad activities. The site once held *Herniaria glabra* (not seen since 1990) and there was a record for a single plant of *Trifolium glomeratum* in 2004, but this has not been seen since. *Hypochaeris glabra* and *Medicago minima* certainly still occur there. We should also have permission to walk down the shallow stream valley on the other side of the A14, below Dane Hill Farm, to investigate the fate of the *Populus nigra* that used to occur there.



Medicago minima at RSPB Lakenheath

4. Sunday 20 July: Bourn and Hardwick. Meeting time 11.00am.

Meet by the church at Bourn (TL32455630). We should have permission to investigate the grounds of Bourn Hall and to check up on the population of *Dipsacus pilosus* first recorded here by Jane Bulleid in c.1972. We will then walk over to the fields by Hardwick Wood to see if we can refind *Bromus arvensis* which used to occur here in the 1970s.

5. Sunday 24 August: Horsley Fen, south of Chatteris (Tetrad TL48B). Meeting time 11.00am.

Meet at the junction of Stocking Drove, Dean Drove and Pickle Fen Drove, south of Chatteris (TL391835). This will be the first of two meetings to help in the recording for a Flora of Fenland. Our previous meetings in what may have seemed like some unpromising areas in Fenland have proved to be surprisingly productive. If you have a device for hauling vegetation out of deep drains this would be a good day to bring it with you.

6. Sunday 14 September: How Moor and Curf Fen, south of Doddington (Tetrad TL38Z). Meeting time 11.00am.

Meet at Primrose Hill, south-west of Doddington, just north of the junction of Dykemoor Drove and the old A141 (the Doddington to Chatteris road), TL385899. This is our second meeting to support the recording for the Flora of Fenland.

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