

Somerset Rare Plants Group: Summer Meetings 2019

Please email or ring the leader before each meeting to say you are coming. This helps with planning and can be useful if there are changes to the programme. Parking is sometimes limited so **please lift share where possible. Please bring your GPS/Mobile phone if you have one. Meetings usually start at 11am. Please note that the Meeting on 1st April at Taunton Herbarium starts at 9.45am. Meetings on 9th June at Fivehead Arable Fields and on 31st August at Shapwick Heath NNR will start at 10am and Meetings on 1st June at Flax Bourton and on 11th August at Holford Combe will start at 10.30am.**

Monday 1st April Taraxacum meeting (Taunton Herbarium; Somerset Heritage Centre) (VC5)

Aimed at those currently collecting/recording dandelions or those wishing to do so. Although dandelions are often seen as difficult (and it's true: they're not easy!) they nevertheless have a significant number of identification features that, with the help of keys and an 'expert eye', make them readily identifiable to species level. Collecting and pressing dandelions can be a tremendously satisfying pastime – an art as much as a science – and a nicely mounted and correctly named specimen is always a source of tremendous satisfaction.

This meeting will comprise a short introductory talk on Taraxacum, followed by a visit to the Herbarium (same building). In the afternoon we will venture onto road verges and waste ground adjoining the Heritage Centre to collect specimens, then return to the Centre to work through keys and press plants for eventual determination/confirmation by the national expert John Richards. Ultimately, some of these specimens may be mounted and added to the Herbarium collection.

Meet 9.45 am at Heritage Centre reception (ample parking outside front of building). Location: Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, TA2 6SF. Please bring packed lunch; tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided. Should be finished by 4 pm.

Numbers limited to 14, to book a place please send email to Simon Leach:

simonleach@phonecoop.coop. Booking opens 1st March. Last date for booking is 22nd March, as we have to provide list of attendees' names in advance to the South West Heritage Trust.

Leaders: Simon Leach, Jeanne Webb, Graham Lavender

Saturday 6th April 'The Warren' woodland at Clevedon (VC6)

Mixed woodland and open areas in large woodland block behind Clevedon Court which is an under-recorded area. Note: There is a steep, zigzag path to the top, so not easy walking at the beginning and end.

Meet at 11am the All Saints Church BS21 6AU (ST41697182). Street parking in nearby roads, particularly Valley Road and The Croft

Leaders: Dee Holladay dee.holladay@tiscali.co.uk (07879 693432) & Pam Millman

Please contact Dee to let her know you are coming

Saturday 27th April Cheddar Wood, Cheddar (VC6)

Species-rich ancient woodland and unimproved limestone grassland. We will see a wide variety of woodland and grassland species including Purple Gromwell (*Lithospermum officinale*) and Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*)

Meet at 11am at First Ecology, Callow Rock Office car park, Shipham Road BS27 3DQ ST44775598

Leaders: Liz McDonnell lizmcdonnell2005@gmail.com & Clive Lovatt

Sunday 28th April Woodland recording at Hedgecock Hill Wood (VC5)

Starting at Ham Hill Country Park we will walk to woodland to search for ancient woodland indicators

Meet at 11am at Ham Hill Country Park car park (ST47781685) Post code TA14 6RW

Leaders: Steve Parker stepheniparker1710@gmail.com & Simon Leach

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Sunday 12th May SRPG/WFS. East Quantoxhead (VC5)

To record two important woodlands and update records in these monads. Target species include Greater Butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*), Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) and Green-winged orchid (*Anacamptis morio*). No limit on numbers.

Meet at 11am in East Quantoxhead village car park opposite pond, ST 1372 4354 (TA5 1EJ). Leave A39 using eastern (Frog Lane) approach which runs due north to village. Parking 50p donation to church funds. Both woods within reach of excellent Kilve Chantry Tea Gardens!

Leaders: Ro FitzGerald ro@lilstock.eclipse.co.uk (01278 741519) & Graham Lavender

Saturday 18th May Clatworthy Meeting (VC5)

In 2018 Greater Broomrape (*Orobanche rapum-genistae*) was refound here after 17 years and indeed 2001 was the year that we last had records for the main monads for this meeting. A dual-purpose meeting to cover under-recorded squares not visited since 2001 and to survey promising habitat for more Greater Broomrape, with access granted to farmland west of Clatworthy Reservoir.

Meet at 11am on verge of Syndercombe Lane ST028321. Parking limited so please share if possible.

Leaders: Ellen McDouall (mcdouallem@gmail.com; 01761 241268) and Graham Lavender

Saturday 1st June Flax Bourton, North Somerset (VC6)

Recording in woodland and/or urban in this under-recorded area. The main woodland site is Bourton Combe, with a small area of limestone grassland within it. Another group could record on the north side of the A370, in the urban fringes of Flax Bourton and across the fields to the Clevedon Road.

Parking is difficult, so meet at 10.30am at the Backwell Lake car park BS48 1TN (ST47846942) to car share to Flax Bourton.

Leaders: Liz McDonnell lizmcdonnell2005@gmail.com and Margaret Webster

Sunday 2nd June River Tone and the site of the former Grand Western Canal, Greenham

The meeting will take in sloping meadows beside the Tone, and then cross the bridge to look at the marshy areas either side of the old GWC. These areas are obviously flat but potentially very wet once you leave the well maintained footpath beside the canal itself.

Alternative parking is available near the start of the canal path for those who would prefer a shorter, flatter walk. There are stiles and some rough ground to access the path.

Meet at 11.00 am at Appley Pavilion ST 0728 2093. Post code TA21 0HH. (Numbers needed for car park so booking essential).

Leaders: Christine Loudon christineloudon@hotmail.com & Linda Everton

Sunday 9th June Fivehead Arable Fields SSSI (VC5)

The aim of this meeting is to train potential volunteers on the identification of key species for the "Colour in the margins" project (a Back from the Brink project led by Plantlife). The day starts with an indoor session as an introduction to the project, key species and survey methodologies followed by a practical session in the field. Target species will include Corn Buttercup (*Ranunculus arvensis*), Spreading Hedge-parsley (*Torilis arvensis*) and Broad-fruited Cornsalad (*Valerianella rimosa*).

Meet at 10am at Fivehead village hall (ST3511 2269) Postcode TA3 6PP. We can then walk/car share to Fivehead Arable Fields SSSI (ST3383 2246).

Leaders: Alison Mitchell alison.mitchell@plantlife.org.uk (07960 150184) & Cath Shellswell Please book by contacting Alison in advance as places may be limited.

Sunday 16th June Carex (Sedge) workshop at Yarty Moor (VC5)

In 2018 we had a meeting in September at Yarty Moor but such is the size of this site only surveyed one of the two monads it is in. This year with an earlier visit we not only hope to record Sedges but in doing so have a workshop to look closely at their identification. (The BSBI Sedge book may be useful). There will also be a target to re-find Oblong-leaved Sundew (*Drosera intermedia*) as well as recording the second monad at the site.

Meet at 11am Staple Hill car park (ST2466 1598) before car sharing to selected site.

Leaders: Steve Parker stephenjparker1710@gmail.com & Liz McDonnell

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Sunday 23rd June White Sheet Down (VC6)

An opportunity to explore this large area of chalk grassland (in Wiltshire but VC6), where we should see Frog Orchid (*Coeloglossum viride*), Chalk Milkwort (*Polygala calcarea*) and Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*). We will also search for Field Fleawort (*Tephrosieris integrifolia*), last seen here in 2010.

Meet at 11am in the small car park (ST79763501) off White Sheet Lane (NT members might meet at Stourhead (toilets!) and lift-share from there. Maybe tea at Stourhead!

Leader: Helena Crouch helenacrouch@sky.com (01761 410731)

Saturday 6th July Weston-super-Mare sewage treatment works, Bleadon (VC6)

By popular demand! A visit to a STW with a good ruderal community, adjoining saltmarsh and created grassland. We may also explore the new access across Brean Cross sluice to the south. N.B. The meeting is on Wessex Water land and gates will be locked behind us.

Meet at 11am at parking area at ST312566 on Wayacre Drove. Caution: turn onto Wayacre Drove is on a blind corner at ST324567. Follow lane through gates to its end.

Leaders: Ellen McDouall (mcdouallem@gmail.com; 01761 241268) and Helena Crouch.

Sunday 21st July Pinkery Exploration Centre (VC5)

This is a follow-on meeting from the Indoor winter meeting talk by Conrad Barrowclough and Morag Angus of the Exmoor Mires Partnership (EMP). The objective of this meeting is to visit restoration work undertaken in 2013 by the EMP that was aimed at raising the water table of blanket bog drained by 19th century ditches. The site we will visit has proven particularly successful with the number of botanical species recorded on the monitoring transect more than doubling in the five years since restoration. On approach to the site we will pass through good areas of unimproved acid grassland with streams. No limit on numbers.

Meet at 11am at Pinkery Exploration Centre (SS723412) Post code TA24 7LL

Leaders: Conrad Barrowclough cbarrowc@southwestwater.co.uk (07453 066972) & Morag Angus

Sunday 11th August SRPG/WFS/SAHNS Holford Combe (VC5)

Recording meeting inspired by 1933 SAHNS Botany Section report which noted exciting species including Hay-scented Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris aemula*), Allseed (*Radiola linoides*), Heath Pearlwort (*Sagina subulata*) and Cornish Moneywort (*Sibthorpia europaea*). An introduced population of Great Butterwort (*Pinguicula grandiflora*) also needs to be searched for. No limit on numbers,

Meet at 10.30am please – it's a big area! Holford Bowling Green car park (ST15444106) (TA5 1SA) – plenty of spaces hidden among rocks and trees – beware pot-holes!

Leaders: Ro FitzGerald ro@lilstock.eclipse.co.uk (01278 741519) & Graham Lavender

Sunday 18th August Curry Rivel (VC5)

A general recording meeting with a chance of finding rare arable species.

Meet at 11am at St Andrews Church (ST391253) Post code TA10 0HQ.

Leaders: Cath Mowat & Steve Parker stephenjparker1710@gmail.com

Saturday 31st August SRPG/RoAM Water plants workshop at Shapwick Heath NNR (VC6)

Starting in the classroom with an introduction to aquatic plants of the Somerset wetlands, then a site visit to Ashcott Plot. We expect to find a wide range of species including Marsh cinquefoil (*Comarum palustre*), Water Violet (*Hottonia palustris*) and Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*).

Meet at 10am at the Avalon Marshes Centre, Shapwick Road, Westhay BA6 9TT (ST425414)

Leaders: Steve Parker stephenjparker1710@gmail.com & Julie Merrett

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Friday 6th September Tyntesfield (VC6)

A day exploring the grounds of this National Trust estate and garden, where Pam has been recording for many years. Tea afterwards!

Meet at 11am near the entrance (and toilets!), just east of the car park (ST501716) (BS48 1NX)

We hope to arrange free parking and entry for non-members of the NT, but need to know numbers so please let Helena know you are coming

Leaders: Pam Millman & Helena Crouch helenacrouch@sky.com (01761 410731)

Sunday 6th October Langport (VC6 / VC5)

A meeting to record in the town, riverside and surrounding moors of Langport.

Meet at 11am in the free car park, south side of Bow Street (ST419266)

Leaders: John Poingdestre & Helena Crouch helenacrouch@sky.com (01761 410731)

Sunday 27th October Bridgwater (VCC 5 & 6)

A repeat of the meeting held in late October 2018, but this time in Bridgwater. Coinciding with the Wild Flower Society's 'Last Week Hunt', we will aim to see how many species we can find in flower. If there is enough interest and a decent turnout, we will give the day a competitive edge by dividing into two teams, one in VC5, the other across the river in VC6. We will end the day in a tea shop where team totals will be calculated!

Meet outside Morrison's supermarket at 11 am. ST2987 3664. Post code TA6 3LN. Parking available in nearby streets.

Leaders: Simon Leach & Helena Crouch/Liz McDonnell. Bookings please to Simon simonleach@phonecoop.coop

Contacts: Liz McDonnell: 01934 712649 or 07732 689703 lizmcdonnell2005@gmail.com
Helena Crouch: 01761 410731 or 07773 037001 helenacrouch@sky.com
Simon Leach: 01823 323782 or 07419 373833 simonleach@phonecoop.coop
Steve Parker: 07876 146112 stephenjparker1710@gmail.com