

SOMERSET RARE PLANTS GROUP

Recording all plants growing wild in Somerset, not just the rarities



Meeting Report

Sunday 8th June 2025, Leigh upon Mendip (VC6)

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Report: Barbra Lakin

On a lovely sunny morning a group of nine botanists met at a field on Stocks Lane, Leigh upon Mendip to explore the lanes, fields and copses of this area and to visit Tadhil Fields, a Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

Leaving Stocks Lane, passing the drystone wall edging the garden of Pitten House with its Rustyback ferns (*Asplenium ceterach*), we continued along Pitten Street, pausing to admire the truly beautiful mature Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) in the hedge. Carrying on past the slocker, where Virginia Creeper grows up the fence and until recently, Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) also grew, we walked down the hedge-shaded lane with the company of the small stream and species such as Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) and Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). We followed this route to the junction with Leigh Lane.

From here we walked up Blacker's Lane with its large hedgerow Oak trees (*Quercus robur*) and Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), then on past the few houses, and stone walls capped with White Stonecrop (*Sedum album*), to the entrance to Tadhil Fields LWS.

Entering the Local Wildlife Site, which initially appear more of a lawn, bordered to the south with a tall hedge and small stream, we strolled past the bramble that has encroached some the slopes down to the stream. Continuing through the field, more varied and interesting species started to emerge, particularly on the slopes, perhaps indicating what other parts of this overgrown site, might have looked like in the past.

Here, amongst the mosaic of drier neutral grassland and wet flushes, we found species such as Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Betony (*Betonica officinalis*), Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria alsine*), Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*), Ragged-Robin (*Silene flos-cuculi*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), with Mint beetles, Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*), likely introduced, and Glaucous Sedge (*Carex flacca*), Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*), and Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).



Tadhil Fields LWS © Helena Crouch

This was a perfect place to stop for lunch (and snooze of course) before exploring the copse on the other side of stream and the remains of a small steep field that becomes marshy where it meets the stream. In these habitats we found such as species Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*), Moschatel or Townhall Clock (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Lady-fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*), Wood Sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *motanum*), Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*).



Tadhill Fields LWS © Barbra Lakin

Leaving the LWS, we walked back down the lane and through the field gate into a small pasture where we were greeted by a group of Shetland sheep in the adjoining field. Walking through the little pasture with masses of Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and on through a gap in the hedge, Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*) was spotted. In the next field, before we emerged back onto Pitten Street, we found more Devil's-bit Scabious, Betony, Common Spotted-orchids and also Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*).

We then followed the footpath into the field to the north, which has a mosaic of tumpy ground and anthills, neutral grassland and patches of calcareous grassland. Here we recorded Crested Hair-grass (*Koeleria macrantha*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), Quaking-grass (*Briza media*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Parsley-piert (*Aphanes arvensis*), Upright Brome (*Bromopsis erecta*) and a tiny patch of Wild Thyme (*Thymus drucei*). Some of the group explored the small copse, which yielded Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*), Moschatel, Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) amongst the old Field Maples (*Acer campestre*), Blackthorns (*Prunus spinosa*) and coppiced Hazels (*Corylus avellana*).

We finished the walk by crossing back onto Stocks Lane to our starting point. Sadly, no ice-cream van had found its way to us, however a beautiful rose in a planted field hedge was identified as Sherard's

Downy-rose (*Rosa sherardii*), a joyful end to a lovely day.



Sherard's Downy-rose in a field hedge at Stocks Lane © Fred Rumsey