

PEOPLE AND PLANTS 2019

These eight events took place within the areas of the Camlad, Rea Valley and Upper Onny Wildlife Groups and were open to anyone interested in plants, whether a complete beginner, an experienced botanist or somewhere in between. A leaflet was produced with the help of Cassy Clayton from Natural England. These were distributed as hard copies and electronically and the events were advertised through the Community wildlife groups and the AONB. The events were all well attended with a mixture of 'old hands' and some new recruits. This combination meant that there were always several experienced botanists to help the newcomers.

Sunday 7th April Ancient Trees, Linley

Our first walk of the year was to visit the wood pasture called Old Mores wood near Linley. This is a hillside area of ancient oaks which were revealed some 10 years ago upon felling after having been hidden in a Spruce plantation for 50 years. Some had died due to being shaded out but many survived and form a remarkable and unusual habitat. We walked from Lydham to Linley looking at other ancient trees in the landscape and then measured and recorded some of the old pollards.



Photograph by Sarah Jameson

Saturday 27th April

Gittinshay Wood is a private woodland managed by the Forestry Commission situated to the east of the Stiperstones

After a night of torrential rain and gale force winds this event was nearly cancelled but five people turned up and we went ahead and the day was dry.

This was a session on woodland plant identification and we produced a species list for this woodland which was species rich. The young Habberley Brook runs through it and there is an understorey of Bird cherry and also several small ponds

Early grasses, Hurdley

Wednesday 15th May

An introduction to early grasses following on from a request from last year. We looked at woodland and meadows paying particular attention to grasses but also looking at early flowering Spring ephemerals.

Wildflower Verges, Prolley Moor

Wednesday 22nd May

Identifying the plants to be found in roadside verges. This turned out to be a very large group bolstered by a further party of 12 National Trust volunteers who helped monitor the progress of last year's verge management.

Meadows and Grassland, Stapeley

Monday 10th June

Exploring and recording some of the flower-rich grasslands in the area.

Species rich fields with unusual plants such as Dyers greenweed and a profusion of Heath spotted orchids.



Rush pasture, east side of the Stiperstones

Monday 24th June

We were looking at area adjoining the Stiperstones national nature reserve
A day surveying species-rich grassland and rush pasture and looking out for the Small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly. The east side of the Stiperstones is a stronghold for this rapidly disappearing species. They need Marsh violet for the caterpillars to feed on and we found it here in large quantities and saw a few of the butterflies on the wing and feeding on marsh thistle.

Tuesday 9th July

Rush pasture, east side of the Stiperstones

A day surveying species-rich grassland and rush pasture further north than the last site. This was a local wildlife site but had not been surveyed for some years. Eight keen eyed botanists found several new species were found and it was in excellent condition.

Grasses, Sedges and Rushes, Stapeley

Wednesday 17th July

An ID day, looking at grasses, sedges and rushes. Met at the car park near Mitchell's Fold and slowly worked our way down into the valley to the west.

Slowly over several hours

These sessions were popular, with a total of eighty attendees made up of forty two different people putting in a 264 hours of recording time.

Records were sent to Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the survey results and species data from the training sessions will also be shared with NBN and other projects, such as Stepping Stones, Restoring Shropshire Verges project to update habitat and species data and allow projects to target their activities.

As well as plants we recorded birds and insects where possible

I am grateful for funding from the AONB Conservation Fund, Shropshire Hills AONB Trust and match funding of £300 from Upper Onny Wildlife Group.

