

Glamorgan Botany Group

2016 Excursions

Welcome to the 2016 excursion listing for the Glamorgan Botany Group. As always, we've tried to cover a range of habitats from across the eastern half of vice-county 41, as well as focusing on those areas that have received less attention from botanists in recent years.

As well as being a forum for sharing plant identification tips, the records we gather each year are compiled and submitted to SEWBREC (the regional botanical records centre), and the BSBI's Big Database. Although we've submitted well over 3000 records since we started the group in 2013, East Glamorgan (and specifically the Valleys) need better coverage for the BSBI's *Atlas 2020*. So if you are interested in doing some recording yourself – for example by 'adopting' a square – please just let us know!

Excursions are free, and there is no need to book in advance, but please note the following:

- 🍃 All excursions will start promptly at **10am**, and will end in the late afternoon.
- 🍃 Please bring a packed lunch, hand-lens, field-guide(s), and a GPS if you have one.
- 🍃 Excursions will be cancelled only if heavy rain is forecast to last all day – please check with David if in doubt.
- 🍃 Be aware that some sites may be wet, rocky, or overgrown – we've indicated below if we expect the going to be particularly tough, but please come appropriately attired.
- 🍃 If you require (or can offer) a lift, contact David and he'll let you know if anyone can help.

We look forward to seeing you on one or more of our excursions this year!

David Barden, Karen Wilkinson and Julian Woodman

Saturday 26 March **Cwm Dare & Daren y Dimbath**

Meeting place: Upper car park, Dare Valley Country Park (SN975.027, CF44 7RG).
Note that access is via Cwmdare, not Aberdare town centre.

This excursion, as a 'pre-season special' led by Tim Rich, will examine thoroughly the population of *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* (Wilson's filmy-fern) at Cwm Dare, which he found in 2014. Plants are known to grow by about 1 cm a year, and so the size of each patch provides a proxy measure of age, which should be interesting to assess in light of the former industrial pollution in this valley (known to be unfavourable to *H. tunbrigense* (Tunbridge Filmy-fern) at least). In the afternoon, we hope to visit the well-known populations of both species at Daren y Dimbath near Glynogwr.

Please note that the site at Cwm Dare is on rough scree that although mostly stable poses a risk of slipping. Those preferring easier access are welcome to join us at Daren y Dimbath – please contact Tim directly for details (07799 620035 or tim_rich@sky.com).

Saturday 9 April **Dyffryn woodlands**

Meeting place: Dyffryn Close, St Nicholas (ST092.739, CF5 6SS).
Please park responsibly on the side of Dyffryn Close or Duffryn Lane.

The woods and fields to the north-west and north-east of Dyffryn have received little attention of late. We have obtained permission to enter Coed Siôn Hywel and Coed Nant-brân, where we should see a range of species of calcareous woodland.

Sunday 15 May **Newton Burrows**

Meeting place: Newton Burrows car-park (SS837.769, CF36 5NE) (*parking fee payable*).

Newton Burrows and the extensive area towards Merthyr Mawr offer a variety of habitats including dunes, old concrete hard-standing, scrub and sandy grassland. At this time in the year, we'll be keeping an eye out for rare annual clovers like those that have recently turned up at Ogmore-by-Sea. *Polygonum oxyspermum* ssp. *raii* (Ray's Knotgrass) was also seen here in 1992, while we may be lucky and re-find *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated Horsetail), last seen in 1972.

Sunday 5 June **Morfa Ystradowen**

Meeting place: Section of old A-road just north-east of Rhydhalog (ST023.795, CF72 9FH), S of Brynsadler along the Cowbridge Road (A4222).

Morfa Ystradowen comprises about 20 hectares of peat-based valley mire, draining into the Nant Dyfrgi to the south of the M4. The area was delisted as an SSSI due to a falling water table, but still supports areas of *Sphagnum* and *Molinia caerulea* (Purple Moor-grass). As well as updating the species list here, we may have time to examine the damp woodlands towards Talygarn.

Sunday 10 July **Cwmaman**

Meeting place: Small gravelled car-park opposite no. 118 Glamaman Road, Cwmaman (ST000.995, CF44 6HY).

The Cwmaman area is in need of a few records, and offers a typical upland mixture of forestry, quarries, old mine-workings, and steep valley sides with screes. For the grid-square geeks amongst us, it will also afford the opportunity to stand at S000000.00000 and record in four hectads without moving! On this excursion, David will bring along specimens of a range of large ground-dwelling ferns (*Dryopteris*, *Polystichum* etc.) for an opportunity to get to know this group better.

Saturday 6 August **Machen**

Meeting place: Bridge over River Rhymney, Green Row, Machen (ST210.890, CF83 8NU).
Please park responsibly on the roads south of the river.

This little-recorded corner of the vice-county has a good network of footpaths, which should allow us to explore its habitats including riverside banks, lanes, woodland and rough pasture.

Sunday 18 September **Merthyr Common**

Meeting place: Dowlais Top Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil, south-east end of minor lane to Pengarnddu (SO075.086, CF48 2TA).
Parking is available nearby in CarpetRight.

On this excursion, we'll head into the little-botanised area of limestone and millstone grit on Merthyr Common, which we ran out of time to investigate in 2013. Here we should find a typical upland flora, as well as the vice-county rarities *Carex lepidocarpa* (Long-stalked Yellow Sedge), *Empetrum nigrum* (Crowberry) and *Sparganium angustifolium* (Floating Bur-reed). We'll also take a look at Pitwellt Pond, now apparently drained. *Come prepared for some rough moorland walking.*

Any enquiries about these excursions to:

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