

Warwickshire Flora Group

Newsletter No. 7 March 2014.

FIELD MEETINGS

The Spring Field Meetings programme (attached to this e mail) includes some new features for the WFG this year:

- An out-of county visit to Devil's Dyke near Newmarket. Brian Laney has offered to lead the walk in late June, when we can just enjoy the flowers without to worrying about recording everything!
- A chance to visit the Green Hellebores at Mays Wood
- A visit to one of the Wildlife Trust's newest reserves at Cuttle Pool
- A joint meeting with the conservation group at Dosthill Park
- An outing to see some meadows near Henley-in Arden that are run as an educational trust

We will also be hosting a national field meeting for the BSBI at Sutton Park led by Ian Trueman and other members of the team who contributed to the new Birmingham and Black Country Flora. Booking details to follow.

WFG INDOOR MEETING 2014

This year's indoor meeting will be held on Sunday 6 April in the Barn, Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve, CV3 3GW.

The afternoon session will feature:

Dr. Richard Gornall: Collecting Chinese Saxifrages
Sarah Brooks from the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
Louise Marsh: Publicity Officer for the BSBI
Brian Laney, The Devil's Dyke
John Roberts, The Flowers of Kenilworth

Meet at 1 p.m. for tea and biscuits, talks to start at 1.20 p.m.

We will aim to finish by 4 p.m.

Admission is free.

Warwick Herbarium is safe.

Warwickshire's entire Museum Collection, which includes the Herbarium, has been successfully re-housed in new premises at Montague Road, Warwick and concerns about funding and whether the building would be ready on time were unfounded. There is limited space to work in the herbarium itself, but the books are housed in a larger, warmer room nearby which could be used for workshops. Those of you who like us, have warm memories of its previous home, the Butts round the back of Northgate Street, will be saddened to know that this has now been demolished.

Warwickshire-on Sea: what next? Seaweeds?

The January edition of *BSBI News* contained an article with possibly one of the most intriguing and certainly most unwieldy titles that I have ever seen; “Would anyone believe us if we said we had seen *Suaeda vera* (Shrubby Sea-blite) on the M6 in Warwickshire?” Simon Leach and John Martin who both work for Natural England first saw the plants in August when they were travelling east at 70 mph on the north side of the crash barrier about 0.7 miles east of the Rugby junction. They drove back the next day and had a better look peering underneath the crash barrier from the west bound carriageway. Later, in October, Simon drove past again in very light traffic and was able to have a closer look at about 30 mph.

The big question is “Should this record be accepted?”

On the minus side, as *S. vera* is as rare inland as our other rare coastal plant *Frankenia laevis* (Sea Heath), it would be unreasonable to accept it without a voucher specimen to confirm it. On the plus side, the two botanists who spotted the plant were familiar with the species which is quite distinctive. Our final decision is that the record will be sent to the BRC in Warwick and appear in our Rare Plants Register as “Unconfirmed”, but will not be sent to the BSBI database to be included in the forthcoming atlas.

Please don't cause any accidents on the M6 looking for it!

More Botanical News

- At the WINTER WILDFLOWER CHALLENGE in Nuneaton on 29 December we found 37 different species in flower out of a total of 95 species seen on the walk.
- Those of you who regularly take a camera out on your walks, may be interested in an excellent book called *Digital Plant Photography* by Adrian Davies, which I requested from my local library a few months ago. The Warwickshire Library has now actually bought this book, so if you live in Warwickshire, just put in a request.
- We have received a brochure of courses from the Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxford which this year include workshops on how to identify Aquatics, the Apiaceae and Grasses. Last year we attended a course on willows and can recommend them. Details can be found at www.anhso.org.uk

If you are not already on our e mail list, or if you would like any more information about the Warwickshire Flora Group or would like to discuss things botanical, please e mail us at johnwalton46@tiscali.co.uk or ring us on 01827 712455. You do not have to be a member of the BSBI or anything else to join in our activities.

John and Monika Walton (BSBI Plant Recorders for Warwickshire/Vice-county 38).