

Glamorgan Botany Group

2023 Excursions

Welcome to our 2023 excursion listing! This year, we're not only marking the launch of the BSBI's 2020 Atlas, to which so many of us have contributed records over the years, but we're also celebrating the 10th anniversary of our group with a special visit to the Gower.

Of course, we don't always find what we set out to see, but we invariably come across something interesting. Naturally, we'll be sharing identification tips too, so if you want to hone your skills at identifying the plants of Glamorgan, then this is the place to be!

As always, excursions are free and open to all interested, but please note the following:

- 🌿 All excursions will start promptly at **10am**, and will end in the late afternoon (although on most excursions there is opportunity to head back earlier if you want to).
- 🌿 Please bring a packed lunch, hand-lens, field-guide(s), and a GPS if you have one.
- 🌿 Excursions may be cancelled 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. There's always opportunity to head back early if you wish.

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

David Barden, Karen Wilkinson and Julian Woodman

Sunday 16 April

Cefn Mably Woods (near Cardiff Gate)

Meeting place: Forestry entrance off Cefn-porth Road, along the lane 1.25 km NW of J30 of the M4 (ST209.841, approx. CF14 0LE). *We'll confirm this location in advance of the excursion – please check for emails or on our Facebook page.*

The intention on this excursion is to cover this large woodland, which is a mix of ancient broad-leaved woodland and 'PAWS' (plantation on an ancient woodland site). Apart from two records of *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia) as a probable introduction, nothing of particular interest has ever been found in the wood itself, although previous visits have not been timed to catch spring-flowering species. However, *Paris quadrifolia* (Herb Paris), *Neottia ovata* (Twayblade) and *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks Buttercup) have all been seen in nearby woodlands, so we may get lucky!

Saturday 13 May

Port Eynon, Gower

Meeting place: Port Eynon car park (SS467.851, SA3 1NN). *Note parking charges will apply. If you can offer (or would require) a lift, please check on our Facebook page, or alternatively contact David no later than 1 May.*

Given that 2023 is the 10th anniversary of the group, we're celebrating with a trip out of our usual area – we're heading west! The coastline between Port Eynon and Overton is a well-botanised area of calcareous grasslands, heaths and coastal habitats, but even so there is still scope to find something new. We'll spend some time investigating annual species of the more droughted, calcareous soils, including species in the genera *Viola* (Violets) and *Trifolium* (Clovers) that will hopefully be in flower. *Scilla verna* (Spring Squill) should also be looking at its best, and carpeting large areas. The habitats and scenery along this stretch are quite magnificent, and on a sunny day in May, there is no better place to be! Celebratory cake will be provided 😊.

Sunday 11 June

Blaengarw

Meeting place: Parc Calon Lân, Gwendoline Street, Blaengarw (SS899.931, CF32 8AU). *As you come into the N end of Blaengarw on the A4064, look out for the brown sign marked 'Parc Calon Lân'.*

The hillsides to the W of Blaengarw have had virtually no records in recent years, and we'll aim to put that right on this excursion. Starting off from the redeveloped colliery site of Parc Calon Lân, with its lake, we'll head NW along forestry tracks before swinging back S towards the cliffs and screes of the landslip known as Darren Fawr. *The going should be easy in the first part of the day, but the ground of Darren Fawr will be difficult, and we're likely to encounter mountain bikes using the trails.*

Sunday 9 July

Nash Point & Vale coast – Tuberous Thistle survey

Meeting place: Nash Point car park, Marcross (SS916.683, CF61 1ZH). *Note parking charges will apply.*

Cirsium tuberosum (Tuberous Thistle) is assessed as Vulnerable in Wales, and its populations on the coast of Glamorgan, between Southerndown and St Donats, represent one of only two strongholds in the UK, the other being Wiltshire. As a result, this excursion will be different from usual – rather than staying in one location, we'll probably split up in order to visit its previously known locations and so update the results of the last comprehensive survey, completed in 1993 by Geoff Norman. We'll also keep an eye out for hybrids of this species with *C. acaule* (Dwarf Thistle) and *C. palustre* (Marsh Thistle), and should also see the vice-county rarities *Campanula glomerata* (Clustered Bellflower), *Hippocrepis comosa* (Horseshoe Vetch) and *Hypericum montanum* (Pale St John's-wort).

Saturday 12 August

Cwmbach, Aberdare

Meeting place: Upper of two T-junctions, Bryn Hir, Cwmbach, Aberdare (SO028.017, CF44 0ES). *There is plenty of roadside parking between the two above-mentioned T-junctions.*

On this excursion we will explore the hillside above Cwmbach and Cefnpennar. We'll begin with a small network of fields where we hope to see the unusual white form of *Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell), alongside the more typical blue form. We'll then investigate forestry tracks and ridge en route to an open area known as Penwaun Iago. This area of former boggy habitat was burnt in 1990 but is developing into an interesting mix of wet and dry heath habitats, together with acid grasslands and birch and willow scrub. We'll keep an eye out for *Huperzia selago* (Fir Clubmoss) and *Lycopodium clavatum* (Stag's-horn Clubmoss), which may still be present in the area.

Saturday 16 September Sarn, Bridgend

Meeting place: Sarn Railway Station, Heol Persondy, Sarn (SS898.833, CF32 9RL). *If there is no parking space in the (small) station car park, there should be space further along Heol Persondy.*

On this excursion, we'll attempt to navigate the access routes in the valleys of the Llynfi River and the Ogmore River on the N side of Bridgend. With luck (and permission), we may be able to look at some damp areas of riverside grassland, but failing that, we'll take solace in species of roadsides, scrub, amenity grassland and churchyards. There is also a (remote) possibility of refinding *Carum verticillatum* (Whorled Caraway) at Pen-y-fai (last seen in 1986), and *Filago germanica* (Common Cudweed) at Aberkenfig (last seen 2004).

Any enquiries about these excursions to:

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