

Warwickshire Flora Group

Newsletter No. 4 November 2012

WINTER MEETING – Tuesday 20 November at 10 a.m.

Open Morning at Warwick Herbarium, Warwickshire Museum.

John Radley and Jane O'Dell, who are presently in charge of the herbarium, with volunteers Ray Langdon and Barbara Davies, will be there to:

- show us the range of plant specimens in the collection
- tell us about the Museum's current collecting policy
- show us how specimens are mounted and preserved
- discuss how we can make the most of this valuable local resource.

The herbarium will have to move to a new venue some time in Spring 2013 and this will be the last opportunity to visit the old collection at The Butts.

The Herbarium is in The Butts (a road) in the centre of Warwick. From the small roundabout at the north end of Northgate Street walk round the corner in to The Butts. The herbarium is through the gateway on your right (you can see the Punch Bowl pub opposite). Ring the bell on the wooden door on the right.

There is no parking available at the Herbarium.

FIRST INLAND SEA-HEATH (*Frankenia laevis*) FOUND IN WARWICKSHIRE

The first inland site in the UK for this plant was discovered by entomologist Robert Homan at Marlcliff in August while he was walking the lanes looking for leaf mines. He did not recognize the plant and sent a photo to the iSpot website for identification. He then e mailed us and we went with John and Val Roberts to look at the plant a few days later. A small specimen was sent off to a referee to be checked to make sure it wasn't a rare rock garden species being grown locally in someone's garden.

You can see Robert Homan's photos on <http://www.ispot.org.uk/node/288195>
iSpot is a resource well worth investigating.

BOTANICAL TALKS AROUND LOCAL NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

16 November 2012	Brian Laney	Hunting for Orchids	Coventry Natural History Society
6 December 2012	John Roberts	Argentina	Warwick NHS
10 January 2013	Hugh Jones	Woods and Woodlands	Warwick NHS
16 January 2013	Steve Woodward	Mosses	Atherstone NHS
21 February 2013	Steve Woodward	Mosses and Lichens	Warwick NHS

Further details of these meetings can be found on the Societies' own websites.

LATEST NEWS

Warwickshire botanists have been very busy during 2012 and nine new species have been added to the county list this year.

Spring Snowflake (*Leucojum vernum*), Green Snowdrop (*Galanthus woronowii*), Forsythia (*Forsythia x intermedia*), Wall Bedstraw (*Galium parisiense*), Mat-grass Fescue (*Vulpia unilateralis*), Hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*), Sea-heath (*Frankenia laevis*), Broad-leaved Bamboo (*Sasa palmatum*) and Hairy Bamboo (*Sasaella ramosa*).

Full details to follow in the 2012 Botanical Report.

THANK YOU. Thanks to Yvonne Everitt, Steven Falk, Ross James, Brian Laney, Bill Pearson, David Porter, John Roberts, Jane Sells and everybody else who helped to make the 2012 series of **Field Meetings** run so smoothly. We are already looking at suitable sites for 2013 and we would like to

- take an urban walk in Coventry, Bedworth or Leamington,
- visit a farm,
- visit a large allotment site.

If you think you could help us to find a suitable site or lead a meeting, or you would like to make any suggestions for visits in 2013, please contact us.

Thanks also to Nik Aspey, Phill Clayton, Mike Dixon, Brian Laney, Camille Newton, Louise Sherwell, John and Val Roberts and everybody else who supported the **Threatened Plants Project**. All of the paperwork has now been forwarded to the BSBI.

In 2012 surveyors managed to find:

Man Orchid (*Orchis anthropophorum*) one site

Green-winged Orchid (*Anacamptis morio*) five sites, including over 25,000 at Draycote.

Corn Buttercup (*Ranunculus arvensis*) no sites at all. This was disappointing as twelve sites where it had been seen previously were surveyed.

Slender Tare (*Vicia parviflora*) one new site.

This five year project has now ended. We will have to wait and see what the BSBI comes up with next!

PLANT RECORDS 2012

Please send in your 2012 records to johnwalton46@tiscali.co.uk, or by post to John and Monika Walton, 46 Hill Top, Baddesley Ensor, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 2BQ.
Our phone number is 01827 712455 if you have any queries.

CANADIAN FLEABANE – ARE YOU SURE?

Canadian Fleabane is a common plant of disturbed ground in Warwickshire with its multi-branched heads flowering right into late October and November.

We have been recording this plant quite happily for a long time until one day in September when we actually decided to pick one and examine it underneath the microscope. Oh dear! We have a confession to make – this one wasn't Canadian Fleabane (*Conyza canadensis*), it was Bilbao Fleabane (*Conyza floribunda*) instead. Below is hopefully a helpful key to help you sort out the four *Conyza* species which have been spreading across the Midlands during the last few years.

If the flowerheads are 3-5 mm wide and the stem leaves have straight sticking out hairs at the base and curved hairs at the top, your plant is either Canadian or Bilbao Fleabane. If your flowerheads are hairy, 5 -11 mm. wide, and the stems leaves have only curved hairs you have found either Argentine Fleabane (*C. bonariensis*) if it has red-tipped involucral bracts or Guernsey Fleabane (*C. sumatrensis*) if it hasn't.

To sort Canadian Fleabane (*Conyza canadensis*) from Bilbao Fleabane (*Conyza floribunda*), pull out a disc floret (individual flower) from the middle of a flowerhead and look for a ring (corolla) of small petals at the top of the flower. If there are four you have *C. canadensis* and if there are five you have *C. floribunda*.

BEST OF LUCK. If you are stuck press your specimen and pass it on to us when you see us or via Warwickshire Museum.

P.S. In Leicester town centre there is a mythical planter that is supposed to hold all four species!