

**Kings Worthy, Top Field
Botanical Survey & Plant Recognition
Sunday 20th July, 2006**



Today's task was a little out of the usual, comprising a joint botanical survey of Top-Field and a practical entry-level flowering plant recognition training session. Before the session there had been some discussion between Michael Edwards and the farmer, Nigel Bright of Hookpit Farm, to seek his tacit approval for the meeting. Much of Top Field is leased from the owner-developers by Hookpit Farm as set aside land and is cut on an annual basis. Normally the cut would have been made in late June or early July but Nigel Bright has seemingly and kindly delayed this work to suit our needs.

Some seventeen members met along Hookpit Farm Lane behind Tesco, near the footpath entry up to Top Field. Five recent new members and twelve regulars attended, a good turn out by any standards. The day was extremely warm, around 29° c, posing a potential risk, especially of dehydration or minor heat-stroke. Sensibly very nearly all participants wore suitable head-gear and were equipped with water for refreshment.

Before commencing our task Michael inspected the various plant books that some members had with them, some seemingly specially purchased and all at least reasonably fit for basic plant recognition. Michael also handed out 4 suitable plant books and some hand-lenses on loan for the task. We considered the risk assessment for Top Field, took the customary register and then went up the path to Top Field.



There followed an intensive but elementary plant recognition training session combined with several simple transects of the site to record as many apparent flowering plant species as possible. It was decided to keep together as a group to avoid the otherwise almost inevitable running hither and thither by the leader being called to recognise plants picked out by individuals in various groups, possibly all across a large field. As knowledge builds in the future so the reins will be able to be freed and later surveys can perhaps be run on a more relaxed and individual basis.

Sadly one participant felt a trifle unwell shortly after we started, possibly overcome by the heat, and Bruce kindly excused himself and drove them back home. I understand she recovered very quickly after a couple of hours out of the sun.

Towards the end of the afternoon we did a brief survey of the scrub wood at the eastern end of Top Field and then, at the invitation of Iris and Jeremy, we repaired to their garden which backs onto Top Field for a very welcome beer or soft drink and a pleasant conversation. My gratitude goes to Iris and Jeremy for their hospitality.

The day resulted in the listing of some 50 plant species, mostly common grassland or scrubland plants but with a few slight exotics. This was very much as expected and could of course be augmented by many other species not found at this time of year. It gives us a mid-summer snapshot of the flora of Top Field and associated areas. *A brief initial report is attached.* It is intended that a more thorough-going assessment of Top Field will be produced and issued as soon as possible. This will include additional information available from previous studies and an assessment of the "Carr" definition for part of the site as well as photographic and other evidence.

By the way, teacher was quite proud of his pupils who seemed to be getting the hang of this plant recognition business even on such an oppressively hot day when they could have been relaxing by a pool or under a sunshade in the garden with their favourite tipple.

Task leader: **Michael Edwards**

Plant Survey

The following list of flowering plants was found on Top Field and neighbouring areas. There were also a number of grasses but these will be recorded shortly as time did not permit during the main survey. Attention was paid to the general condition of the field and to the layout and geography. This will be the subject of a later more comprehensive report. No signs of “Carr Woodland”. Further studies will be made.

Common Name	Species	Comment
Ground Elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	
Agrimony	<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	
Garden Lady's Mantle	<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	1 plant seen
Mugwort	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	
Musk Thistle	<i>Carduus nutans</i>	
Rough Chervil	<i>Chaerophyllum temulum</i>	
Rosebay Willowherb	<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	In patches and extensive to north edge of field
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	
Spear Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	
Traveller's Joy	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	
Wild Basil	<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	
Field Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Extensive thicket to eastern edge of field (mixed)
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	
Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	
Great Willowherb	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	
Broad-leaved Willowherb	<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	
Hedge Bedstraw	<i>Galium mollugo</i>	
Wood Avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum spondylium</i>	
Perforate St. John's Wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	
Smooth Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	
Autumn Hawkbit	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	
Toadflax, common	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	
Pineappleweed	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	
Ribbed Melilot	<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	
Red Bartsia	<i>Odondites vernus</i>	
Evening Primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>	
Wild Marjoram	<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	
Wild Parsnip	<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	
Greater Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	
Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Extensive thicket to eastern edge of field (mixed)
Plum Species	<i>Prunus spp</i>	

Common Fleabane	<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	Very local to east
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	
Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>	In mixed thicket to eastern edge and elsewhere
Dog Rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	
Sweet-briar	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg</i>	
Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	
Common Ragwort	<i>Senecio Jacobaea</i>	Scattered throughout in open field
Canadian Goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	In patches and extensive to north edge of field
Dandelion	<i>Taraxum agg</i>	
Goat's-beard	<i>Tragapogon pratensis agg</i>	
Hop Trefoil	<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	