



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Stoborough Heath Walk

Date: 11th September 2018
 Weather: Overcast, 19 degrees
 Walk Leaders: Lyn and Gerry Traves
 Attendees: 16

The majority of Stoborough Heath is a National Nature Reserve, also designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Area of Conservation (SPA) and Ramsar. The reserve is located two miles south east of Wareham turning off the B3075 at Stoborough onto Nutcrack Lane which leads onto Arne Road, parking at Sunnyside Farm. The species list is very impressive and it contains a series of sub-habitats that adds variety to the underlying heath which consists of lowland heath made up of dry heath, mire and acid grassland reverting to heath. Once farmed the area has no crops nowadays and has been returned to its natural habitat although areas of acid grassland still remain from the era of heavy grazing by livestock.

Our walk took us along the long since abandoned tramway built by Pike Brothers in 1840 and ran from clay pits at Furzebrook to a quay on the River Frome at Ridge. This pit is now known as Blue Pool, a visitor attraction. The gradient of the line was such that loaded trucks could descend by gravity to the wharf, where the clay was tipped into barges. The empties were pulled back by horses. The first of a series of steam locomotives replaced horses in 1866; by now the line was edge rail, with a gauge of two feet eight inches and ran until 1940 when the area was taken over by the army. This track, now bordered on both sides by hedgerow, provides easy walking through the centre of the reserve from where the surrounding bog and mire can be safely surveyed. We ventured off this path continuing on the track over heath and grassland where we saw rare Dorset Heath and Marsh Gentians before returning to the car park along minor roads.

Flowering Plants	Flowering Plants cont.	Butterflies	Birds
Common Mallow	Honeysuckle	Speckled Wood	Collard Dove
Red Clover	Herb Robert	Small Heath (recce)	Rook
White Clover	Hemp Agrimony	Small Copper (recce)	Pied Wagtail
Nipplewort	Birdsfoot Trefoil	Meadow Brown (recce)	Wood Pigeon
Prickly Sow-thistle	Wood Sage		Jackdaw
Stinging Nettle	Common Centaury	Others	House Sparrow
Hogweed	Bell Heather	Crane Fly	Magpie
Marsh Cudweed	Dwarf Gorse	Grey Squirrel	Dunnock
Knotgrass	Ling	Sika Deer	Gadwall
Redleg	Tormentil		Teal
Silverweed	Broad-leaved Willowherb	Fungi	Meadow Pipit
Scarlet Pimpernel	Rough Hawksbeard	Giant Puffball	Goldfinch
Autumn Hawkbit	Dorset Heath	Fleecy Milkcap	House Martin
Common Mouse-ear	Cross-leaved Heath	Blushing Bracket	Green Woodpecker
Water Mint	Creeping Cinquefoil	Birch Polypore	Mistle Thrush
Self-heal	Sheepsbit		Great Tit
Shepherd's Purse	Bog Myrtle		Buzzard
Hedge Mustard	Bramble	Fruits	Redstart
Common Field Speedwell	Marsh Gentian	Alder	
Pineappleweed	Oblong Sundew	Haws	
Agrimony	Blue Fleabane	Blackberry	



Marsh Gentian and Dorset Heath on Stoborough Heath by Gerry Traves