



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Stoborough Heath Walk

Date: 29th September 2024
 Weather: Sunny and warm
 Walk Leaders: Lyn and Gerry Traves
 Attendees: 13

Stoborough Heath is a National Nature Reserve, declared on 21st February 2020 as part a new NNR which covers which 3,331 hectares (8,231 acres). It stretches from Grange Heath in the west to Studland in the east and from the Arne peninsula in the north to Norden in the south, and is making it the largest area of lowland heath managed as a single nature reserve in England. It envelops three existing NNRs at Hartland Moor, Stoborough Heath and Studland & Godlingston Heath and adds new land to form the new ‘super’ National Nature Reserve at landscape scale. Its also designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Stoborough Heath is located two miles south east of Wareham turning off the B3075 at Stoborough onto Nutcrack Lane, leading into Arne Road and parking at Sunnyside Farm. The underlying heath which consists of lowland heath is 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 the areas of acid grassland still remain, grazed 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 empty trucks were pulled back by horses. The first of a series of steam locomotives replaced horses in 1866; the line now rail with a gauge of two feet eight inches and ran until 1940 when the area was taken over by the army. The track has now gone, the footpath is bordered on both sides by hedgerow, and provides easy walking through the centre of the reserve. After a mile we turned left off this path and followed the track over heath, mire and grassland where we saw the rare Dorset Heath and Marsh Gentians before returning to the car park, walking along Soldiers Road then Arne Road.

Flowering Plants	Flowering Plants cont.	Butterflies	Birds
Stinging Nettle	Ling	Large White	Collard Dove
Hogweed	Cross-leaved Heath	Small White	Greylag Geese
Hedge Bindweed	Dorset Heath	Gatekeeper	Buzzard
Marsh Cudweed	Dwarf Gorse	Speckled Wood	Wood Pigeon
Common Centaury	Sheepsbit	Grayling	Starling
Water Mint	Catsear		Sand Martin
Purple Loosestrife	Heath Milkwort	Others	Wren
Hemp Agrimony	Common Fleabane	Meadow Grasshopper	Robin
Creeping Thistle	Lesser Skullcap	Carder Bumblebee	Red Kite
Honeysuckle	White Clover	Harvestman	Pied Wagtail
Dog Rose plus hips	Cotton Grass	Garden Spider	
Agrimony	Round-leaved Sundew	Robin's Pincushion (gall)	
Bittersweet	Oblong Sundew		
Yarrow	Self Heal	Fungi	
Groundsel	Eyebright	Brown Birch Bolete	
Bog Myrtle	Haresfoot Clover	Panthercap	
Knotgrass	Enchanter's Nightshade	Moss Bell	
Redleg	Wood Sage		
Rough Hawksbeard	Chickweed		

Pineappleweed	Sand Spurrey		
Common Field Speedwell	Ribwort Plantain		
Autumn Hawkbit	Red Bartsia		
Tormentil	White Beak-sedge		
Bramble plus fruits	Marsh Gentian		
Birdsfoot Trefoil	Ferns		
Common Ragwort	Royal Fern		
Bell Heather	Common Polypody		



Marsh Gentian by Gerry Traves