



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Stoborough Heath Walk

Date: 3rd September 2026
 Weather: Overcast warm and humid
 Walk Leaders: Lyn and Gerry Traves
 Attendees: 12

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; with a narrow rail 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 right to view Marsh Gentians growing in the mire, there were lots to be seen. Then crossing over the footpath we followed a footpath to the east over heath, mire and grassland, where we saw the rare Dorset Heath and more Marsh Gentians before returning to the car park, walking along Soldiers Road then Arne Road.

Flowering Plants	Fungi	Birds	Butterflies
Knot Grass	Birch Polypore	Robin	Speckled Wood
Perforated St. John's Wort	Willow Bracket	Spotted Flycatcher	Clouded Yellow
Ribwort Plantain	Dung Roundhead	Carrion Crow	
Ivy	Puffball	Wood Pigeon	Dragonflies
Narrow-leaved Hawkweed	Bleeding Bracket		Black-tailed Skimmer
Dwarf Gorse			Southern Hawker
Dorset Heath (Heather)	Ferns		
Ling	Royal Fern		Moths
Bell Heather	Common Polypody		Fox Moth Caterpillar
Cross-leaved Heath			Grass Moths
Marsh Gentian	Fruits		
Marsh Cudweed	Rose Hips		Others
Tormentil	Blackberries		Wood Ants & nest
Lesser Bladder-wort			Robin;s Pincushion (Gall)
Devilsbit Scabious			
Agrimony			
Butterfly Bush			

Prickly Lettuce			
Guernsey Fleabane			
Wild Carrot			
Spear Thistle			
Hemp Agrimony			
Common Ragwort			



Dorset Heath by Lyn Traves



Marsh Gentian by Gerry Traves