

Anthriscus

Botanical Consultancy

THE FLORA OF BESSELSLEIGH WOOD 2014/5

REPORT FOR THE BESSELSLEIGH WOOD GROUP

FRANCES WATKINS

Anthriscus, 17, Norreys Road, Cumnor, Oxford, OX2 9PT.

Phone: 01865 863660

Email: frances.watkins@anthriscus.co.uk

Aim

The aim of this work was to conduct botanical surveys of Besselsleigh Wood and to produce a plant list for each area. The surveys were carried out with members of the Besselsleigh Wood Group since the work had an educative aim as well as an information-gathering purpose.

Method

All three surveys covered the areas known as Gow's and sections 1 and 2. These are marked on the map in Appendix 1. For the purposes of this work the area 3a (a damper part) was included in section 2 as was the pond on the eastern boundary of the wood.

The surveys took place on 17th May 2014, 13th July 2014, 26th April 2015.

The plants we found were listed on field recording sheets, both Latin and English names.

Results and Discussion

The wood comprises a variety of habitats. There is broad-leaved woodland, and some stands of conifers, a small pond, a stream, rides and clearings.

The underlying geology is mainly acidic. The flora did not indicate any calcareous habitat.

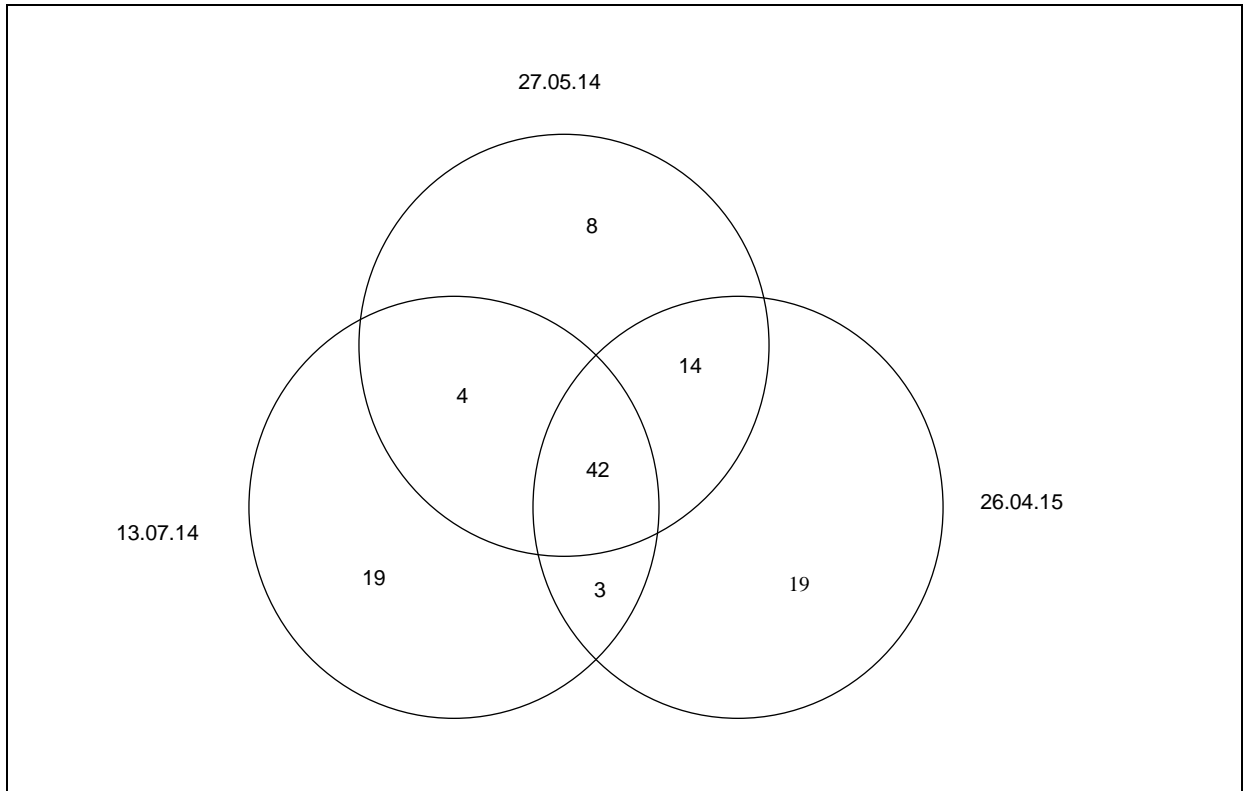
There is a pleasing number of ancient woodland indicators, including Bluebell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Wood Sorrel, *Oxalis acetosella*, Pignut, *Conopodium majus*, Wood Anemone, *Anemone nemorosa*, Enchanter's Nightshade, *Circaea lutetiana*, Three-nerved Sandwort, *Moehringia trinervia*, Dog's Mercury, *Mercurialis perennis*, Yellow Pimpernel, *Lysimachia nemorum*, Moschatel, *Adoxa moschatellina*, Creeping Soft-grass, *Holcus mollis* and Goldilocks Buttercup, *Ranunculus auricomus*.

Other plants which were found include many typical of woodland edge habitats, such as Hedge Woundwort, *Stachys sylvatica*, Red Campion, *Silene dioica* and Lords and Ladies (among many other vernacular names), *Arum maculatum*. The pond and its edges contained a good array of water plants. The trees, of course, were also recorded.

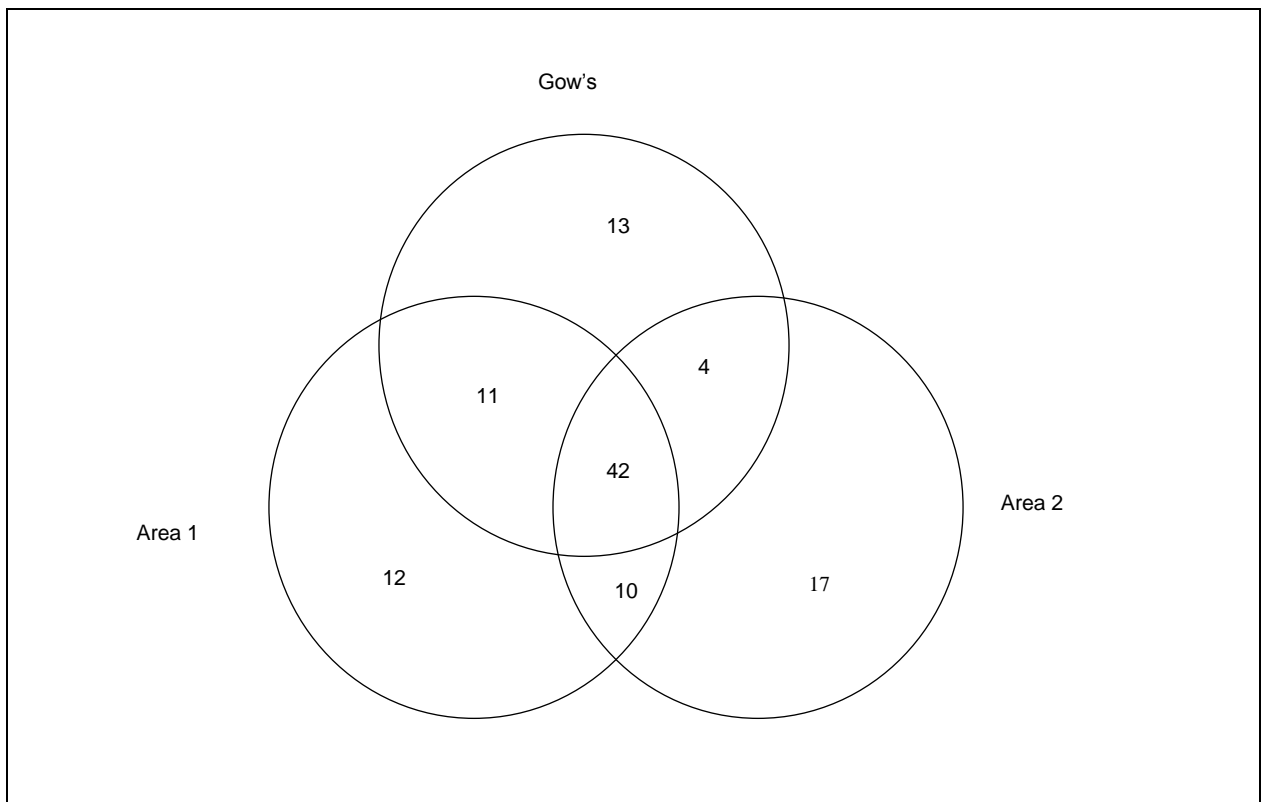
Local habitats which are not well represented in the list are, as might be expected, arable and ruderal ones. There is Nettle, *Urtica dioica*, Broad-leaved Dock, *Rumex obtusifolius* and Cleavers, *Galium aparine*, but they are not numerous.

Over all three surveys, the total number of plants found was 109 and the following Venn diagrams show the overlaps both for the different surveys and the different areas.

The first diagram shows that many species were picked up on every visit and that the early visit (April) and the late visit (July) picked up a number of species which were not found on other visits. These observations are as might be expected but it is also worth bearing in mind that the number of species listed on a site visit is always dependent on the time spent.



The second diagram shows that there is a considerable overlap between the species found in the three separate areas but that area 2 has the largest number of species which do not appear anywhere else. This is probably because that area contains the pond and the wet area in the west.



The Plant Lists

After checking, the plants were listed using the program Microsoft Excel. These tables are listed in Appendix 2. The plants have numbers assigned to them which refer to the order in which they were found.

The Excel sheets have also been provided in electronic form so that the data can be processed by the members of the group. They can be sorted:

- alphabetically by Latin or English name (columns A and B)
- in the order in which the plants were found (column D)
- in systematic botanical order. This follows the order in the New Flora of the British Isles by Clive Stace 2010 and uses the page number of that book (column C).

Invasive Plants

There is *Impatiens glandulifera*, Indian Balsam, in all parts of the wood and in some areas, particularly near the south gate, it is dominant. It should at least be monitored but the group may feel that controlling is a good idea. Contrary to some beliefs, this is not impossibly difficult as the seed longevity is low. Also of concern is the patch of *Allium triquetrum*, Three-cornered Garlic, in Gow's on the north side of the stream. In south-west England this plant is common and increasing and is extremely difficult to eradicate. Even though it is rather pretty, removal might be considered and at least it should be monitored. At the southern edge of the wood, near the entrance gate, is a stand of *Prunus laurocerasus*, Cherry Laurel. This plant can be invasive and is difficult to eradicate. It can spread to occupy a huge area where no other plants can grow. There are a few small clumps of *Narcissus* species, Daffodils etc. but at the moment these do not appear to pose any threat.

Colchicum autumnale, Meadow Saffron

There is one plant of this species in the vicinity of the pond. The nearest site I know of for it is Wytham Woods, not all that far away, though I have never seen it there. It is native in Wytham Woods and it is quite possible that it is also native in Besselsleigh Woods though it could also have been planted. The group might want to propagate from this plant to ensure its continuing presence though I understand this is not easy.

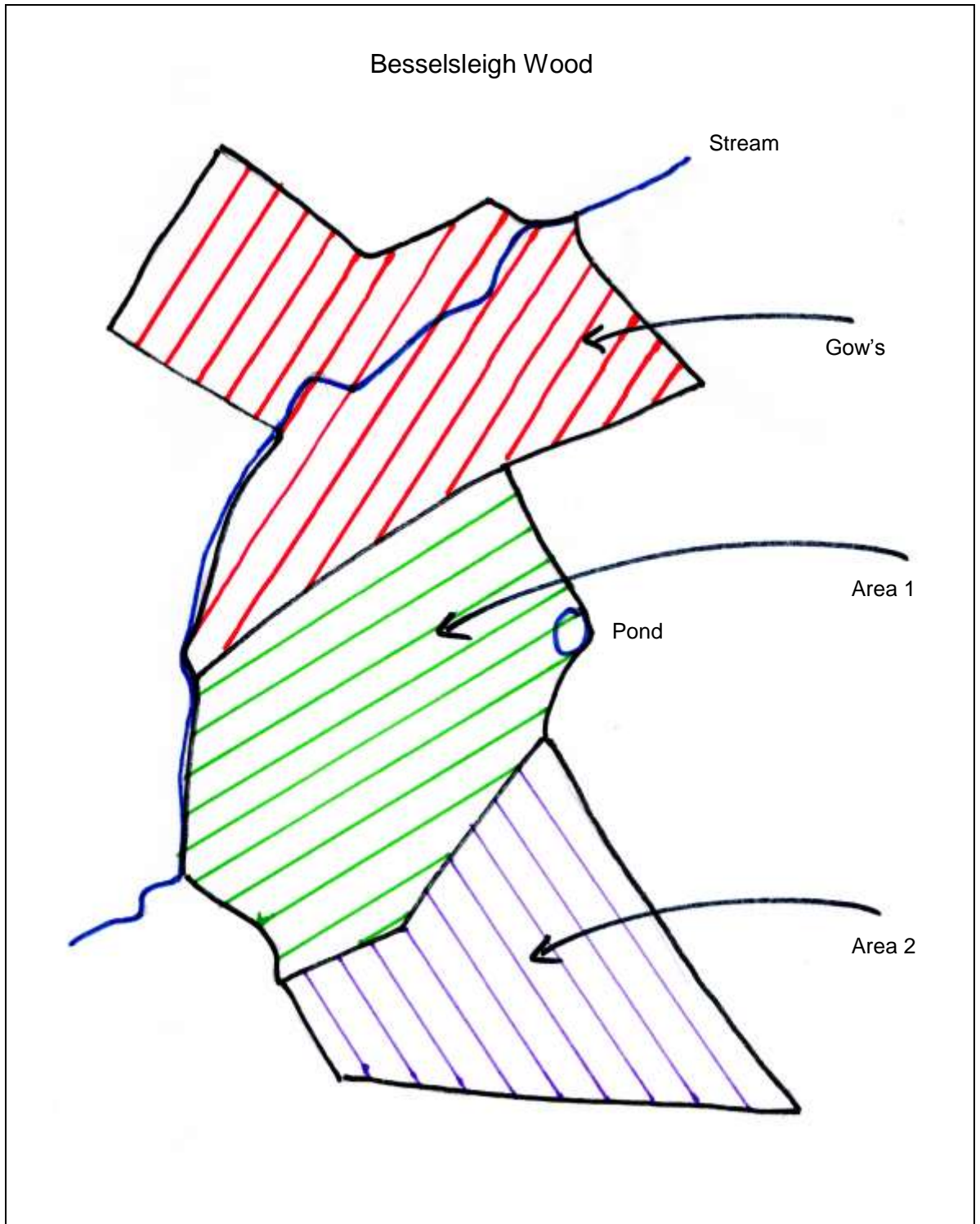
Conifers

The wood contains some planted conifers. A large number of conifers would not be desirable but I think the small number here do not detract from the woodland.

Conclusion

Besselsleigh Wood is a large site with diverse and numerous plants. Many of these are ancient woodland indicators. There are some open areas but I think the wood would benefit from some management, for example a coppice rotation in order to always have open areas which do increase plant and therefore invertebrate diversity. In addition, attention should be paid to the invasive species.

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Besselsleigh Wood - Plant list

A = Gow's

B = 2

C = 1

Scientific name	English name	Page in Stage 3	Order found in	Dates			A	B	C
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	920.9	1	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	19.1	2	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	Wood-sorrel	305.1	3	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg</i>	Bramble	246.5	4	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	542.4	5	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	290.5	6	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	372.4	7	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	Wood Anemone	107.1	8	17.05.2014		26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved dock	451.6	9	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	285.1	10	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	Dandelion	712	11	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	287.3	12	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	784.2	13	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	624.4	14	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	259.3	15	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	293.1	16	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	240.2	17	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	582.1	18	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ficaria verna (ex R. Ficaria)</i>	Lesser Celandine	118.5	19	17.05.2014		26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Moehringia trinervia</i>	Three-nerved Sandwort	456.7	20	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓		✓
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion	473.4	21	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser Burdock	690.2	22	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	827.1	23	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓		
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut	812.4	24	17.05.2014		26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugle	623.1	25	17.05.2014		26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle	790.3	26	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male Fern	35.1	27	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	297.1	28	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Circea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's Nightshade	366.1	29	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder	296.1	30	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Dog's Mercury	306.1	31	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Carex pendula</i>	Pendulous Sedge	966.3	32	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	348.7	33	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	811.1	34	17.05.2014		26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler-fern	38.2	35	17.05.2014		26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	669.3	36	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-Ladies	832.2	37	17.05.2014		26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Wood Dock	451.2	38	17.05.2014	13.07.2014		✓	✓	✓
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort	460.2	39	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Indian Balsam	512.4	40	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Yellow Pimpernel	519.1	41	17.05.2014	13.07.2014		✓	✓	
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort	616.4	42	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	800.1	43	17.05.2014		26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain	598.3	44	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Wood-sedge	966.4	45	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	184.6	46	17.05.2014		26.04.2015		✓	✓
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple	201.1	47	17.05.2014				✓	
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass	1012.2	48	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Downy Birch	293.3	49	17.05.2014				✓	
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush	937.4	50	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	372.3	51	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓		✓
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry	197.1	52	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove	585.1	53	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015			✓
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	296.5	54	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015		✓	✓
<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Raspberry	244.6	55	17.05.2014		26.04.2015		✓	✓
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rose-bay Willowherb	361.6	56	17.05.2014					✓

Scientific name	English name	Page in Stage 3	Order found in	Dates		A	B	C
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Flag	885.3	57	17.05.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Carex remota</i>	Remote Sedge	961.7	58	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	✓	✓	✓
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow	328.4	59	17.05.2014				✓
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Wild Angelica	824.2	60	17.05.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	113.1	61	17.05.2014	13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	Brooklime	588.5	62	17.05.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	Reed Sweet-grass	1038.1	63	17.05.2014				✓
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	695.5	64	17.05.2014				✓
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not	564.6	65	17.05.2014				✓
<i>Salix fragilis</i>	Crack Willow	323.1	66	17.05.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	196.4	67	17.05.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Bulrush	926.4	68	17.05.2014				✓
<i>Galeopsis bifida</i>	Bifid Hemp-nettle	620.5	69		13.07.2014	✓		
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass	1018.1	70		13.07.2014	✓		
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	1014.1	71		13.07.2014	✓		
<i>Schedonorus giganteus</i> (was	Giant Fescue	996.3	72		13.07.2014	✓		
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	1012.3	73		13.07.2014	✓	✓	
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	998.1	74		13.07.2014	✓	✓	✓
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome	1047.3	75		13.07.2014	✓	✓	✓
<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	American Willowherb	360.3	76		13.07.2014	✓		
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort	702.4	77		13.07.2014		✓	
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	624.5	78		13.07.2014		✓	
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Wavy Bittercress	401.2	79		13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	
<i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i>	Lawson's Cypress	54.2	80		13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓
<i>Larix decidua</i>	European Larch	47.1	81		13.07.2014	26.04.2015	✓	✓
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	459.2	82		13.07.2014		✓	✓
<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	Water-pepper	439.5	83		13.07.2014		✓	
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box	122.2	84		13.07.2014			✓
<i>Milium effusum</i>	Wood Millet	995.2	85		13.07.2014			✓
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	Creeping Soft-grass	1022.4	86		13.07.2014			✓
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	509.2	87		13.07.2014			✓
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	50.2	88		13.07.2014			✓
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry Laurel	199.1	89		13.07.2014			✓
<i>Salix alba</i>	White Willow	323.4	90		13.07.2014			✓
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet	332.4	91		26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Narcissus sp.</i>	Daffodil	910.3	92		26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Adoxa moschatellina</i>	Moschatel	783.1	93		26.04.2015	✓	✓	✓
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Jack by the Hedge	420.4	94		26.04.2015	✓		
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose	515.1	95		26.04.2015	✓	✓	
<i>Allium triquetrum</i>	Three-cornered Garlic	902.1	96		26.04.2015	✓		
<i>Ranunculus auricomus</i>	Goldilocks Buttercup	114.3	97		26.04.2015	✓		
<i>Ulmus sp.</i>	Elm	281.1	98		26.04.2015	✓		
<i>Ribes spicatum</i>	Downy Currant	124.2	99		26.04.2015	✓		
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh Marigold	102.1	100		26.04.2015	✓		
<i>Rosa sp.</i>	Rose	273.3	101		26.04.2015	✓		
<i>Tilia x vulgaris</i>	Lime	381.2	102		26.04.2015		✓	
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	241.2	103		26.04.2015		✓	
<i>Stellaria alsine</i> (ex <i>uliginosa</i>)	Bog Stitchwort	460.5	104		26.04.2015			✓
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	202.2	105		26.04.2015			✓
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Common Figwort	609.1	106		26.04.2015		✓	
<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	Meadow Safron	855.3	107		26.04.2015		✓	
<i>Pyrus pyraster</i>	Wild Pear	200.2	108		26.04.2015		✓	
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	1022.3	109		26.04.2015		✓	
				68	67	79	70	75 73