

Wednesday Group Field Meeting 6th December 2017

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Wyre Forest Study Group met on the first Wednesday in December at Blackstone Riverside Park on the west bank of the River Severn. We had a dry and chilly circular walk through fields, lanes and woodlands to see what we could find in the Ribbesford area.

Birds seen and noted included Blackbird, Blue Tit, Cormorant, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Great Tit, Grey Heron, House Sparrow, Jay, Kestrel, Long-tailed tit, Robin, Sparrow-hawk, Woodpigeon and Wren.

Bryophytes were not the main interest of the day but we still managed to record 33 bryophytes (26 mosses and 7 liverworts) during the field meeting. Two bryophytes of special interest recorded during the day were the moss *Hennediella stanfordensis* Stanford Screw-moss and liverwort *Microlejeunea ulicina* Fairy Beads.

Scattered plants of *Hennediella stanfordensis* (circa 5mm high) were found on bare soil on the bank of the River Severn. *Hennediella stanfordensis* is a small green acrocarpous moss with lingulate to spatulate leaves that form rosettes in open patches. The plant was discovered in Cornwall in 1958 and is relatively widespread in Britain but is likely to be overlooked because of its small size and occurrence in what are regarded as bryologically unpromising habitats (Smith 2004). The species is considered "Scarce" in Wyre (The Nature of Wyre 2015) and has been previously recorded on the banks of the River Severn at Ribbesford by Richard Fisk in 1978 and by Lorna Fraser and Mark Lawley in 2006 and at Seckley by Mark Lawley in 2004.

The epiphytic liverwort *Microlejeunea ulicina* Fairy Beads was found growing on the trunk of a deciduous tree in a sheltered humid valley in Ribbesford Woods. *Microlejeunea ulicina* is a very small (shoots up to about 6mm long and 0.25-0.35mm wide) pale green leafy liverwort with minute oval leaves. It is a pollution sensitive species that is thought to be spreading (Blockeel, Bosanquet, Hill, and Preston 2014). The species is "Rare" in Wyre (Westwood, Shirley, Winnall et al. 2015) and has not been found in Ribbesford before. The two previous records in Wyre were both made by Mark Lawley: one record was in Skeys Wood in 2004 and the second record was in a woodland at Far Forest in 2011.

References

Blockeel, T.L., Bosanquet, S.D.S., Hill, M.O. & Preston, C.D. (2014). Atlas of British and Irish Bryophytes: Volumes 1 and 2. Newbury: Pisces Publications.

Smith, A.J.E. (2004). The Moss Flora of Britain and Ireland 2nd Edition (reprinted 2008). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Westwood, B., Shirley, P., Winnall, R. & Green, G. (eds) (2015). The Nature of Wyre. Newbury: Pisces Publications.



Hennediella stanfordensis

Graham Hill



Microlejeunea ulicina

Graham Hill



Group checking horse dung, Ribbesford, From left: Denise Bingham, Frances Finch, John Cox, Susan Limbrey, Jane Scott, John Bingham, 6 Dec. 2017. Rosemary Winnall