

Trimpley Hill

MARIAN DAVIDSON

Trimpley Hill

*Go, ramble through wild Eyemore Wood
Upon the western side
And view from out its leafy shades
The silvery Severn glide;
And mark the forest stretching out
Beyond its shore, until
It seems to mingle with the skies
Afar from Trimpley Hill*

From: Trimpley Hill, Noah Cook 1876

This is the view that Noah Cook had 145 years ago standing somewhere in the region of where I was standing. In the car park above Trimpley Reservoir on a chilly August morning we gathered ready for our floral survey. Joining me were Jackie Hardy, Denise and John Bingham, Jane Scott, Jane Pope, Francis Finch and Tom Ward who joined us on his first WFSG outing. The car park at Trimpley reservoir has woodland on two sides with a meadow and grassland on the others. This is where we started our survey which included the main car park, then down the grassy footpath to where it cuts across the south west corner of the wood, across the railway line, past the sedimentary pool and finally down to and along the bank of the Severn up to the border of the land belonging to the reservoir.

Trimpley Reservoir can be seen to the west of the railway line between Bewdley and Arley. The reservoir, which is managed by Severn Trent Water, was opened in 1968 and covers 29 acres. It is mostly around 3ft deep, although around 40ft deep near the valve tower in the main reservoir. A settling pool is located to the south of the main reservoir and a little below it (SVR, 2022). The soils over the area of our survey are much the same as Wyre Forest itself to the west, that is, generally acid, well drained over sandstone bands though with poor drainage on the mudstone, which tends to waterlogging.

We wanted to record all plants identifiable and also note which were in flower (Table 1). In spite of it looking an unpromising site, we found 60 species in the car park, some flowering but most non-flowering. A late *Viola riviniana* Common Dog Violet and *Centaureum erythraea*, Common Centaury among them. Car parks and other places of transit such as railway stations, moorings on canals seem to have a greater diversity than areas surrounding them, probably due to the boots, tyres and dogs that bring both seed and minor earth disturbances.

Further down towards the reservoir, the grass had been allowed to grow on either side of the path and had made a thick, high sward. There *Torilis japonica* Hedge



Dipsacus pilosus in flower

Marian Davidson



Dipsacus pilosus in fruit

Marian Davidson

Wyre Forest Study Group

Parsley and *Agrimonia eupatoria* Agrimony overtopped the grass. Though the Agrimony was coming to the end of its flowering period its spiny, top-like fruit now downward pointing, *Odontites vernus* Red Bartsia on the other hand was almost at peak flowering and very numerous. This plant is a partial root parasite on grass. It can be difficult to spot until it is in flower or after flowering when the stalk and leaves become red as the season progresses, presumably from accumulation of anthocyanins which is the plant's defensive response to heat or cold.

We turned left descending into Eyemore Wood. This wood is a part of Wyre Forest, separated by the Severn, and more recently, the reservoir. The darkness was brightened by the small, white flowers of *Circaea lutetiana* Enchanter's-nightshade, a native plant related to the Willowherbs. From its common name one might infer that it has hallucinogenic property which it does not, neither is it especially toxic. According to *Plantlife* it has though been used as a wound wash in the past, and now there is some research from Polish scientists that supports this traditional usage (Granica *et al.*, 2013) The flower of this plant needs to be examined closely to appreciate its beauty. Its two, white, deeply lobed petals and two pink sepals, reflexed when the flower is fully open, resembles a butterfly, the raceme, a cloud of tiny butterflies. The scientific name, *lutetiana*, comes from the Latin name for Paris, Lutetia, which was sometimes referred to as 'Witch City'. Parisian botanists, ('Lutetiani') favoured this species over the previous choice of other botanists of *Solanum dulcamara* Bittersweet, said to be the charm that the

goddess Circe, miffed with Ulysses, used to turn the crew into pigs (Mabey, 1996), from this we have the name *Circaea lutetiana*.

We were happy to spot a small colony of *Dipsacus pilosus* Small Teasel in full bloom a little further down the track. It differs from *Dipsacus fullonum* Wild Teasel, in that in that its maximum height is around 1.5 metres as opposed to up to 3 metres. But its common name refers, not to its height but, to the flower heads which are smaller and globular in shape as opposed to the egg-shaped Wild Teasel capitula. It has not been put to the same use as Common Teasel to, 'tease', cloth as its long hairs are not prickly but woolly. It likes damp, shady places so a wood by a river is a perfect habitat. Its status is, 'locally common', so a nice find.

By the SVR track a patch of *Equisetum arvense* Field horsetail, had been sprayed with weed killer but there were a few stalks that had escaped the spray that we identified as the shade form of this ancient plant. The shade form has branches which are downturned rather than upturned and have a slightly wrinkled appearance.

In the dense vegetation by the smaller, lower settling pool, there were a few *Angelica sylvestris* Wild Angelica, and a fair amount of *Symphytum x uplandicum* Russian Comfrey and *Epilobium hirsutum* Great Willowherb. Also, *Typha latifolia* or Bulrush, and *Lycopus europaeus* Gypsywort.

Suddenly we realised that we were in danger of being late to meet the other two groups for lunch. (However slowly entomologists move, botanists will move yet more slowly!), so we hurried to join them on the bank of the main reservoir for our picnic.

The weather warmed while we sat, and reinvigorated we made our way down to the river side, along there we found a single plant of *Senecio inaequidens* Narrow leaved Ragwort. This perennial seems to be making a comeback in recent years. It was first recorded in the British Isles in the wild in 1834 (BSBI, 2020) arising from the shoddy of imported wool. But there are few historical records in Worcestershire, even around Kidderminster where it might be expected, and none recently. Yet I have seen this and three other plants in the last year. It seems likely that this later incursion may be a result of a natural extension of its alien range in mainland Europe, its original native territory is South Africa.

We found a fair few *Stellaria aquatica* Water chickweed plants growing in the vegetation too. It lolls lazily using



Senecio inaequidens

Julie Berk

Wyre Forest Study Group

any convenient plants as support and grows up to one metre. Its flowers have white, deeply bifurcated petals giving it a starry look as its scientific name implies, its anthers, changing colour with age from a pastel blue, duck egg blue through to a pinky mauve, contrast with the white petals.

Near the eastern border of the property there is a fishing peg, down the steep river bank which looked promising from a botanical point of view. A fisherman was already occupying the spot though his line was not in the water. So, I took a chance and slipped quietly down to ask if he would mind if a few of us came down to take a look. He was most obliging and also interested in what we were doing. Some of the group came down and we found a single, very battered *Bidens tripartita* Trifid Bur-Marigold and a few *Persicaria hydropiper* Water Pepper. The fisherman, who was fishing for Chubb and Barbel was polite but looked a little disappointed!

Walking back along the well-trodden mown grass closer the reservoir we found several low growing plants of *Gnaphalium uliginosum* Marsh Cudweed and also of *Lepidium coranopus* Swine-cress.

At the South-East corner of the site there was a colony of tall Willowherbs. John Bingham identified them as *Epilobium ciliatum* American Willowherb, pointing out the long capsule with many crisped, glandular hairs that help identify this species and differentiate it from *Epilobium hirsutum* Great Willowherb which we had seen earlier growing nearby.

It was a very enjoyable day. Mutual admiration of plants, discussing, puzzling over and sharing information about them was very satisfying. All this with still and running water to walk and sit beside, and we counted round about 180 species. Not bad!

I would like to think that Noah Cooke would still find plenty to recognise and enjoy despite the many changes this spot has seen in the intervening years.

Excerpt from 'Trimpey Hill', 'Wild Warblings', by Noah Cooke - A Kidderminster Weaver, Published in 'The Shuttle', 1876. (Thanks to Dr S. Apetrei.)

References

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) (2021). *Species Accounts*. [On line] accessed at: <https://bsbi.org/species-accounts>.

Granica, S., Piwowarski, J. and Kiss, A. (2013). Polyphenol Composition of Extract from Aerial Parts of *Circaea Lutetiana* L. and its Antioxidant and Anti-Inflammatory Activity in Vitro. *Acta Biologica Cracoviensia. Series botanica*. 55. 1-8. DOI:10.2478/abcsb-2013-0005.

Mabey, R. (1996). *Flora Britannica*. Chatto & Windus / Sinclair Stevenson.

Severn Valley Railway (SVR) (2022). *Welcome to the Severn Valley Railway Wiki*. [On line] accessed at: <https://www.svrwiki.com/>.

Table 1: Plants recorded on 14th August 2021 by members of WFSG

Taxon	Vernacular	Comment	Flowers
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple		
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	Near River Seven	
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow		Yes
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground-elder		
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Horse Chestnut		
<i>Aethusa cynapium</i>	Fools Parsley		Yes
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony		
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent		Yes
<i>Agrostis gigantea</i>	Black Bent grass		Yes
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent		Yes
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugle	Car Park	
<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	Garden Lady's-mantle	Garden escape	Yes
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder		

Wyre Forest Study Group

Taxon	Vernacular	Comment	Flowers
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Angelica		Yes
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome		
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal grass		Yes
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley		
<i>Arctium lappa</i>	Greater Burdock		Yes
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser Burdock	Track between trees	Yes
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass		
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort		Yes
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lord's and Ladies	Fruits	
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady Fern		
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy		Yes
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch		
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Downy Birch		
<i>Bidens tripartita</i>	Trifid Bur Marigold		Yes
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome		Yes
<i>Buddleia davidii</i>	Buddleia		
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed		Yes
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherds Purse		
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Wavy Bitter-cress		Yes
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckoo flower		Yes
<i>Carduus crispus</i>	Wetted Thistle		Yes
<i>Carex pendula</i>	Pendulous sedge		Yes
<i>Carex remota</i>	Remote Sedge	Return path to car park	Yes
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Wood Sedge		
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut		
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed		Yes
<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	Common Centaury		Yes
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Mouse-ear		Yes
<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb		Yes
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's Nightshade		Yes
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle		Yes
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle		Yes
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle		Yes
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed		Yes
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood		
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel		
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn		
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawksbeard		Yes
<i>Cynosaurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dogstail		Yes
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's foot		
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel		
<i>Dipsacus pilosus</i>	Small Teasel		Yes
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male Fern		
<i>Elymus repens</i>	Common Couch grass		Yes

Wyre Forest Study Group

Taxon	Vernacular	Comment	Flowers
<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	American Willowherb		Yes
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb		Yes
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved Willowherb		
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail	Over Railway line	
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp Agrimony		Yes
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge		
<i>Euphrasia</i> sp.	Eyebright		Yes
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech		
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue		
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet		
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry		
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash		
<i>Galeopsis tetrahit</i>	Common Hemp-nettle		Yes
<i>Galium album (mollugo)</i>	Hedge Bedstraw		
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers		
<i>Galium palustre</i>	Marsh Bedstraw		Yes
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut leaved Cranesbill	By Reservoir	Yes
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's foot Cranesbill		Yes
<i>Geranium pratense</i>	Meadow Crane's-bill		
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert		Yes
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens		Yes
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground Ivy		
<i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i>	Marsh Cudweed		Yes
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy		
<i>Helminthotheca echinoides</i>	Bristly Oxtongue		Yes
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed		
<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	Dames Violet		Yes
<i>Hieracium</i> sp.	Hawkweed		Bud
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog		Yes
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	Creeping Soft grass		Yes
<i>Hypericum pulchrum</i>	Slender St.John's wort		
<i>Hypericum x desetangii</i>	<i>H.perforatum</i> x <i>H.maculatum</i>		Yes
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's ear		Yes
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly		
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Himalayan Balsam		Yes
<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	Common Ragwort		Yes
<i>Jacobaea aquatica</i>	Marsh Ragwort		Yes
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush	Fruits	
<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	Hard Rush	Fruits	
<i>Juncus tenuis</i>	Slender Rush		Yes
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort		Yes
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling		
<i>Leontodon saxatile</i>	Lesser Hawkbit		Yes
<i>Lepidium coronopus</i>	Swine-cress	Fruits	

Wyre Forest Study Group

Taxon	Vernacular	Comment	Flowers
<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>	Garden Privet	No hairs	
<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	Common Toadflax		Yes
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Rye grass		Yes
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle		Yes
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Bird's foot Trefoil		Yes
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's foot Trefoil		Yes
<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	Great Wood-rush		Yes
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>	Gypsywort		Yes
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Yellow Pimpernel		Yes
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple Loosestrife		Yes
<i>Malva moschata</i>	Musk Mallow		Yes
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed		Yes
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick		Yes
<i>Melampyrum pratense</i>	Common Cow-wheat		Yes
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Wood Melick		Yes
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint		Yes
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Perennial Dog's Mercury		
<i>Odontites vernus</i>	Red Bartsia		Yes
<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>	Amphibious Bistort		Yes
<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	Water Pepper		Yes
<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>	Redshank		Yes
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy		Yes
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scot's Pine		
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain		Yes
<i>Plantago major</i>	Broadleaved Plantain		Yes
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow grass		Yes
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass		Yes
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed		
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil		Yes
<i>Potentilla sterilis</i>	Barren Strawberry		
<i>Potentilla x italica</i>	Hybrid P. erecta x P. reptans		Yes
<i>Poterium sanguisorba</i> Ssp. <i>sanguisorba</i>	Salad Burnet	Posibly sown	
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose		
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal		Yes
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry		
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn		
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	Douglas Fir		
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken		
<i>Quercus cerris</i>	Turkey Oak	seedling	
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak		
<i>Quercus x rosacea</i>	Hybrid Oak	Q. petraea x Q. robur	
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup		

Wyre Forest Study Group

Taxon	Vernacular	Comment	Flowers
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup		
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup		Yes
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble		Yes
<i>Rumex obtusifolia</i>	Broad leaved Dock		
<i>Sagina procumbens</i>	Pearlwort		Yes
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow		
<i>Salix fragilis</i> agg.	Crack-willow		
<i>Salix viminalis</i>	Osier		
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder		
<i>Scorzoneroide autumnalis</i>	Autumn Hawkbit		
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Common Figwort		
<i>Senecio inequidens</i>	Narrow leaved Ragwort		Yes
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel		Yes
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion		Yes
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet		Yes
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sowthistle		Yes
<i>Stachys palustris</i>	Marsh Woundwort		Yes
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort		Yes
<i>Stellaria aquaticum</i>	Water Chickweed		Yes
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort		Yes
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort		
<i>Symphytum x uplandicum</i>	Russian Comfrey		Yes
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black Bryony		Yes
<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	Tansy		Yes
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion		
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Wood sage		
<i>Thuja plicata</i>	Western Red-cedar		
<i>Torilis japonica</i>	Upright Hedge Parsley		Yes
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover		Yes
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover		Yes
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	Scentless Mayweed		Yes
<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	Western Hemlock-spruce		
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Coltsfoot		
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Bulrush		Yes
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	European Gorse		
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Perennial Nettle		
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell		
<i>Veronica officinalis</i>	Heath Speedwell		
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Speedwell		Yes
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder rose		
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch		Yes
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Dog Violet		Yes