

BBS Spring Meeting 2010

South Lincolnshire & East Nottinghamshire

17–24 March 2010

The 2010 Spring meeting visited under-worked areas of South Lincolnshire (v.-c. 53) and East Nottinghamshire (v.-c. 56) within an approximately 30 km radius of Newark-on-Trent. The majority of participants stayed in B&Bs in or close to Newark, with a few hardy souls camping. Forty-one participants attended for part or all of the meeting: they included Caroline Pannell, Ian & Alexandra Atherton, Chris Preston, Mark Hill, Robin Stevenson, Jonathan Graham, Richard Fisk, David Chamberlain, Jeff Duckett, Mary Ghullam, Bob Ellis, Jo Denyer, Alison Jukes, Tom Blockeel, Mark Seaward and his wife, Ken Adams, Mrs Adams, Colin Wall, David Holyoak, Nick Hodgetts, Mark Pool, Jonathan Sleath, Liz Kungu, Sue & Les Knight, Joan Egan, Mark Lawley, Jonathan Shanklin, Nick Law, Jenny Rowntree and Joan James. The weather was favourable for the greater part of the week, with many days of sunshine following rain during the night making ideal conditions for field bryology.

The numbers of bryophytes recorded per site were relatively low, due to a combination of eastern geography and site condition. It was realized early on in the week that individual sites (especially smaller sites) had between 20 and 40 species, and even by the end of the week, only six sites with more than 50 species had been visited. This fact necessitated the need for rapid ground coverage and some serious square bashing. The society met this challenge head on. Each day, a large site was selected for the morning where the majority of participants assembled, and we then split into smaller groups in the afternoon, each visiting a good

number of sites each day. In the evenings, a number of hired rooms in the unusually named 'Unique Scrap Store' were available for microscope work. Here, much coffee and biscuits were consumed in the process of updating the day's record cards and a technological advancement was the transfer of records directly to electronic recording cards using a lap-top computer. The result of all this work, and a true measure of the success of the meeting, was the following total of 45 vice-county records:

South Lincolnshire (v.-c. 53): *Bryum pseudo-triquetrum* var. *bimum*, *Conocephalum conicum*, *Didymodon nicholsonii*, *Diplophyllum albicans*, *Fossombronia incurva*, *Hypnum andoj*, *Microlejeunea ulicina*, *Oxyrrhynchium pumilum*, *O. speciosum*, *Pohlia annotina*, *Racomitrium aciculare*, *R. ericoides*, *Sanionia uncinata* and *Taxiphyllum wissgrillii*

North Lincolnshire (v.-c. 54): *Didymodon nicholsonii*

Leicestershire with Rutland (v.-c. 55): *Cololejeunea minutissima*

Nottinghamshire (v.-c. 56): *Barbula convoluta* var. *sardoa*, *Campylopus flexuosus*, *Cephaloziella divaricata*, *Conocephalum conicum*, *Fissidens pusillus*, *F. viridulus*, *Grimmia trichophylla*, *Hennediella heimii*, *H. stanfordensis*, *Hygroamblystegium varium*, *Isothecium myosuroides*, *Leucodon sciuroides*, *Lophocolea semiteres*, *Marchantia polymorpha* subsp. *ruderalis*, *Microlejeunea ulicina*, *Orthotrichum cupulatum*, *O. stramineum*, *Pleuri-dium acuminatum*, *Pogonatum aloides*, *Pohlia annotina*, *Polytrichastrum longisetum*, *Ptilidium ciliare*, *Radula complanata*, *Rhytidiadelphus trique-*

trus, *Schistidium crassipilum*, *Syntrichia papillosa*, *Tortula amplexa* and *Zygodon conoideus*

WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH (v.-c. 56)

The meeting got off to a good start when Robin Stevenson and Richard Fisk recorded 94 species around Newark town, Newark Castle and the River Trent (SK9953). Amongst a large number of commoner species recorded from the town centre, *Encalypta streptocarpa*, growing in cracks between granite cobbles in a car park, and *Brachythecium mildeanum* were of interest. A modest number of riparian species were recorded from the River Trent with *Scleropodium cespitans* the best find along with *Leskea polycarpa*, *Syntrichia latifolia* and *Platyhypnidium riparioides*. The civil war earthworks, 'The Queens Sconce', provided contrasting acid habitat and a small number of additional species were found, including *Dicranum scoparium*, *Hypnum lacunosum* and *Pohlia nutans*.

Sharon Pilkington and Mark Pool recorded 18 common species from disturbed soil and amenity grassland at North Muskham services (SK7959).

THURSDAY 18 MARCH (v.-c. 56)

Main site

During the morning, we visited Clumber Park (SK67), a large National Trust property consisting of house and grounds, artificial water courses, lakes, mixed woodland and grottos. This site comprises four tetrads (SK67B, C, G & H) which were recorded separately by four groups. Many of the open areas of the site turned out to be rather poor bryologically, consisting of species-poor grassland on acidic, sandy soil, and with large areas of waterside grassland heavily grazed by geese. Of interest, however, was an abundance of *Pseudocrossidium revolutum* on old walls and stonework, and Chris Preston found a *Cephaloziella* in short acid grassland. Searches of scattered groups of mature birches produced *Cephalozia bicuspidata* and abundant *Dicranum tauricum*. *Cirriphyllum crassinervium* was noted from a lake margin, and *Conocephalum conicum* s.s. turned up on rocks by a grotto.

A group visiting a larger area of mixed woodland (tetrad SK67G) fared much better and recorded

a large number of additional epiphytes, including *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Metzgeria violacea*, *Orthotrichum lyellii*, *O. pulchellum*, *O. stramineum*, *O. striatum*, *Radula complanata* and *Ulota bruchii*. These boosted the site total to 99 species (Clumber Park turned out to be the richest site visited during the entire meeting).

Subsidiary sites

Richard Fisk led a group to Bothamsall village (SK6773) where 33 species were recorded, the most notable being *Acaulon muticum* on a roadside bank. They then visited Haughton (SK67), recording 21 relatively common species.

A small group led by Nick Hodgetts visited Eaton and Gamsden Woods Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

◁ *Dicranum tauricum* on a rotting birch stump, Clumber Park. *Caroline Pannell*

▽ Lunch at Clumber Park. *Left to right:* Alison Jukes, Jo Denyer, Richard Fisk, Robin Stevenson, Rachel Carter, Nick Hodgetts, Mark Pool, Colin Wall, Nick Law, Joan Egan, Mary Ghullam and Joan James. *Caroline Pannell*

(NWT) reserve (SK71). These two roadside ash woods were found to have a typical base-rich ground flora dominated by *Thamnobryum alopecurum*, *Eurhynchium striatum* and *Cirriphyllum piliferum*. Relatively few species (41) were recorded, but they included *Plagiochila asplenioides* from a ditch bank and *Chiloscyphus pallescens* from damp soil near to a ride. The nationally common moss *Isoetes myosuroides** was, amazingly, new to the vice-county. The party then visited Eaton Church (SK7177) where only 17 common species were noted. An area of wet secondary woodland with large pools nearby (SK7077) proved much more interesting, with epiphytes such as *Frullania dilatata*, *Microlejeunea ulicina*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum*, *Ulota bruchii* and *U. crispa*.

Rachel Carter's group visited Laxton Church (SK76) where 33 species were recorded, including *Didymodon nicholsonii* and *Fissidens incurvus*. Mark Pool's group found 30 species at Walesby church and village (SK6870), including *Cirriphyllum piliferum*, an interesting record for a churchyard, and *Didymodon nicholsonii* on a shaded pavement.

A trio consisting of Chris Preston, Robin Stevenson and Nick Law recorded 38 species from the village and churchyard at Gamston (SK7076). *Dicranum scoparium*, *Gyroweisia tenuis*, *Marchantia polymorpha* subsp. *ruderalis* and *Scleropodium cespitans* were the most interesting species seen. After making a short list of species at Milton Mausoleum (SK7173), they visited a derelict poplar plantation with adjoining willow carr, Gosling plantation (SK6672), where many poplars had fallen but were regenerating as tall, straight saplings arising from the prostrate trunks. This site was particularly rich in epiphytes, many growing on fallen as well as standing poplars. Species of interest included *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Orthotrichum* spp. (including *O. pulchellum*, *O. striatum* and *O. tenellum*) *Ulota crispa* and *Zygodon conoideus* and. A particularly good find, by Nick Law, was *Sanionia uncinata*.

Mary Ghullam led a group to ancient coppiced wet ash woodland at Treswell Woods NWT Reserve (SK7679), where 33 species were recorded.



FRIDAY 19 MARCH (v.-c. 56)**Main site**

The main party visited Sherwood Heath LNR (also known as Ollerton Corner), a 22 ha area of acidic grassland, heath, birch and conifer woodland owned by the Forestry Commission. Three groups visited the three tetrads that comprise this site: SK66P (conifer and birch woodland), SK66J (overgrown heath and birch woodland) and SK66N (dry acidic heath). Much of the open areas of the site consisted of species-poor acidic heath vegetation dominated by *Hypnum jutlandicum* and *Pleurozium schreberi* as well as *Campylopus introflexus*, *Ceratodon purpureus*, *Dicranella heteromalla* and *Polytrichum juniperinum* in bare, recently cleared areas. Despite the dominance of a small number of common acid bryophytes, careful searches of this vegetation provided a number of records new to the vice-county, including *Pogonatum aloides* (found by Nick Hodgetts), *Pleuridium acuminatum* (Jonathan Graham) and *Pohlia annotina* (Richard Fisk).

Tracks surfaced with limestone chippings were an unusual feature of tetrad SK66P. Where these tracks were damp, *Bryoerythrophyllum recurvirostrum*, *Cratoneuron filicinum*, *Hygroamblystegium varium*, *Leiocolea turbinata* and *Pohlia wahlenbergii* provided a sharp contrast to the surrounding heathy vegetation. A number of additional epiphytes were recorded only in the woodland in tetrad SK66J, including *Dicranum tauricum*, *Orthotrichum lyellii*, *O. pulchellum*, *O. striatum* and *Ulota bruchii*.

Despite a slow start, by the end of the morning 72 species had been recorded with several new vice-county records. A number of Forestry Commission employees and volunteers accompanied the BBS members around the site and were keen to learn a few bryophytes, so for many the morning happily doubled with some introductory bryophyte tuition. While carrying out *Orthotrichum* instruction, Mark Pool found a single tuft of *Cryphaea heteromalla* on a sycamore, the only place it was seen on this site.

A smaller group, led by Rachel Carter, visited Dukes Wood and Pudding Poke Wood (SK66V) where 45 species were recorded.

Subsidiary sites

Chris Preston, Robin Stevenson and Nick Law started by visiting visited Kirton Wood NWT Reserve (SK7068), an ancient woodland with a stream cut into a deep channel. Stands of *Plagiochila asplenioides* were suggestive of the ancient status of the woodland. A good total of 45 species was recorded, including an impressive suite of small *Fissidens* species – the ‘best’ being *F. viridulus**. After this, the group separated: on his way home Nick recorded 23 species from Edwinston Church (SK6266) and 21 species from Egmarston Church (SK7368), whilst Chris and Robin went on to visit Farndon Willow Holt NWT Reserve (SK7652), a willow holt (or plantation). The 24 species included frequent *Hygroamblystegium varium**, *Leskea polycarpa*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum*, *Scleropodium cespitans*, *Syntrichia latifolia* and occasional vigorous tufts of *Sanionia uncinata*.

Nick Hodgetts, Jonathan Graham and Liz Kungu visited Haslam Church (SK6754) and recorded 32 species, including *Cephaloziella divaricata* on a wall top with *Ceratodon purpureus*. At Oxton Church, 36 species were recorded, including an interesting looking pleurocarp which later proved to be *Cirriphyllum crassinervium*. Unusually, *Frullania dilatata* was noted on graves. Nick spotted a small patch of *Gyroweisia tenuis* on a wall and *Platyhypnidium riparioides* was found on the adjoining river bank. Later, the group visited Robin Hoods Hill (SK6353), an area of acidic hill grassland with a conifer plantation. The area proved to be unremarkable with the possible exception of Nick’s find of *Bryum klinggraeffii* in open grassland with ant hills. The group then visited a series of small, wooded ravines near Thurgarton Quarters Farm (SK6551), an area that proved to be much more interesting. Forty-seven species were recorded. A good patch of *Plagiochila asplenioides* was noted on a stream bank, and Nick found *Fissidens pusillus** on a stone in a stream. An odd feature was a grass horse gallop along an arable field margin. *Brachythecium mildeanum* was noted while



◁ David Chamberlain looks closely at short grassland, Oxton Gravel Pits. Caroline Pannell

damp, base-rich sections had *Campyliadelphus chrysophyllus* and *Drepanocladus aduncus*.

David Chamberlain led a group to Oxton (SK 6251) where they visited a colliery tip, a stream, woodland, arable land and gravel pits. From this range of habitats, an impressive 65 species were recorded, including *Cephaloziella divaricata*, *Dicranella staphylina*, *Didymodon tophaceus*, *Pogonatum aloides*, *Pohlia nutans* and *Trichodon cylindricus*. A particularly good find was *Calypogeia fissa*. *Riccardia chamedryfolia* was also found growing on the edge of mine spoil, and an unusual record was *Hennediella heimii**. Bob Ellis and Mary Ghullum visited Kneesal (SK7064) where they looked at the church and surrounding area before moving on to Tuxford windmill (SK7371).

Sharon Pilkington’s group recorded an impressive 65 species at Ossington village and church (SK7564, SK7565), including *Orthotrichum lyellii*, *O. pulchellum*, *Plagiomnium cuspidatum*, *Brachythecium mildeanum* and *Gyroweisia tenuis*, along with a good sized patch of *Hygrohypnum luridum* on a shaded wall.

SATURDAY 20 MARCH (v.-c. 56)**Main site**

On a colder morning with patchy rain, the main party visited Besthorpe Pits NWT Reserve (SK81 64), a former site of gravel extraction. Much of the site consisted of slightly acidic short grassland with open sandy areas that in places had the look of a stabilized dune system. Initial impressions were not good as bryologists searched through uniform stands of *Ceratodon purpureus*, *Syntrichia ruralis* var. *ruraliformis*, *Brachythecium albicans* and *Pseudo-*

crossidium hornschurchianum. A telling mark of this initial lack of glamour was shown by a group discussion about evening dining arrangements. However, once an Indian restaurant had been agreed, and with the weather worsening, water-proofs were donned and the party split into several groups to comb the area. A good many finds resulted: *Aloina aloides* (by Nick Hodgetts), *Brachythecium mildeanum*, *B. velutinum*, *Bryum gemmiferum* and *Weissia longifolia* var. *longifolia*. David Holyoak made much the most interesting and unexpected find of the week here, *Tortula amplexa** mixed with *Barbula unguiculata* in light shade under willows (*T. amplexa* is a rare alien restricted to a few Midland counties where it characteristically grows on disturbed ground). Rich epiphyte communities associated with marginal areas of elder and willow scrub added considerably to the species total, and included *Hygroamblystegium varium*, *Leskea polycarpa*, *Metzgeria violacea*, *Orthotrichum lyellii*, *O. pulchellum*, *Sanionia uncinata*, *Syntrichia latifolia*, *S. papillosa*, *S. virescens* and *Zygodon viridissimus* var. *viridissimus*. After several hours, a total of 76 species had been recorded, the third highest total of the week.

Subsidiary sites

Chris Preston and Robin Stevenson skipped Besthorpe pits, deciding instead to attack one of the under-worked squares near Nottingham. They started by walking along the banks of the Trent, investigating a weir and neighbouring sandstone cliffs. The long species list obtained here had many familiar riparian species, including *Leptodictyum riparium*, *Leskea polycarpa*, *Scleropodium cespitans* and *Syntrichia latifolia*, as well as interesting finds of *Cirriphyllum crassinervium* and *Hygrohypnum luridum*. It was refreshing to note *Didymodon nicholsonii* growing on silty rocks as described in earlier literature, before its recent escape to tarmac and car parks. The best finds

were *Cinclidotus riparioides* and *Hennediella stanfordensis**. Tom Blockeel, arriving for the evening Council meeting, also visited a section of the Trent in this area and found a number of additional species, including *Neckera complanata* and *Syntrichia virescens* (on a pavement). He then recorded 30 species from scrubby woodland and track at Gonalston (SK6847).

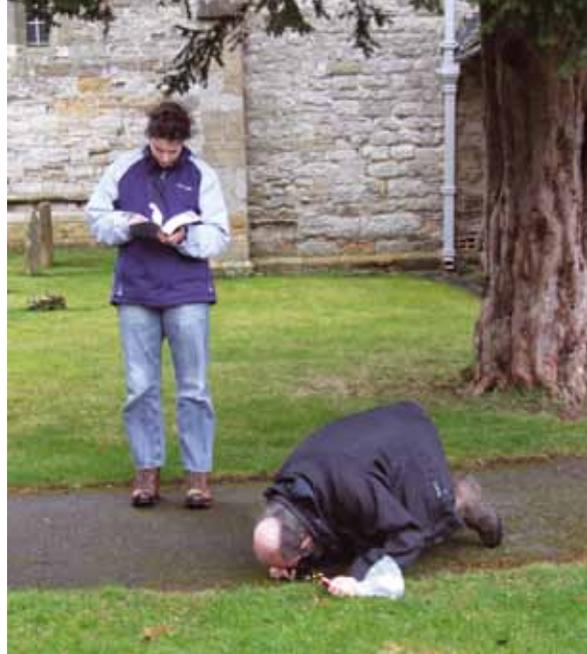
Chris and Robin's next destination was the large cemetery of East Bridgford Church (SK6943) where the best find was *Hygrohypnum luridum* in a gutter. A stop at Thurgarton Priory (SK6949) and village provided 33 species, after which they went on to the Calverton area (SK6048, SK6348), recording 46 species, including *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum*, *O. stramineum* and *Radula complanata* (mostly on sycamore). Their day finished at Arnold (SK6144), an area with old mine workings, plantings and closed grassland where 28 common species were recorded, before heavy rain sent them scurrying to Southwell in search of tea and buns.

Mark Hill and Jenny Rowntree visited Cotham (SK74) and recorded 28 species, including *Didymodon nicholsonii*, *D. sinuosus*, and *Scleropodium cespitosum*. They then explored the churchyard and steep river banks at Kneeton (SK74), where the best of their 38 species was *Tortula marginata*.

Ian Atherton led a small group to visit churchyards at Norwell (SK7761) and Cromwell (SK7961). The latter was rather lacklustre, with *Syntrichia latifolia* and *S. virescens* the only species of interest. In contrast, the church at Norwell had twice as many (41) species, including one of the star finds of the week, *Leucodon sciuroides** (seen on two headstones).

Jonathan Sleath recorded 15 species from Claypole (SK8449), and then searched woodland at Stubton (SK9749) where he found *Sciuro-hypnum populeum*. After this he visited Beckingham Church (SK7790) to record 27 species, including *Encalypta streptocarpa* and *Orthotrichum cupulatum**.

David Chamberlain's group looked at woodland, river and urban habitats at Long Bennington (SK84).



Nineteen species recorded included another record of *Sciuro-hypnum populeum*. They then went on to Westborough (SK84) where 32 species were found.

Rachel Carter and friends recorded 22 species from the church and village (SK8857) at Stapleford (SK85) before visiting Stapleford Wood (SK8556). This was a mainly acidic woodland with typical calcifuge bryophytes, such as *Campylopus pyriformis*, *C. introflexus*, *Dicranella heteromalla*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Orthodontium lineare* and *Plagiothecium succulentum*.

Spalford Warren (SK86 H & I) was visited by groups led by David Chamberlain, Andrew Branson and Jonathan Shanklin, and Tom Blockeel. This site is a large (37 ha) area of blown sand heath with planted conifers and birch scrub, similar to Besthorpe Pits. Open, 'blown' areas were dominated by *Brachythecium albicans*, *Ceratodon purpureus*, both *Syntrichia ruralis* var. *ruralis* and *S. ruralis* var. *ruraliformis* and *Pseudocrossidium hornschurchianum*. Searches of the scrub and tracks through the conifers provided more variety, and ultimately 54 species were found on the site. The more interesting of these included *Lophocolea semiteres*, *Plagiothecium denticulatum*, *Polytrichastrum longisetum* and several clumps of *Ptilidium ciliare**, which was seen on a track side.

A group led by David Holyoak visited churchyards at Kettlethorpe (SK8475) and Newton-on-Trent (SK8374). Thirty-four species were recorded from Kettlethorpe, including *Syntrichia virescens* (on tarmac). A similar number of species (31) was recorded at Newton-on-Trent churchyard, but this total included *Weissia longifolia* var. *longifolia* and a number of other ruderal species associated with disturbed areas of lawn by graves. The group then visited Torksey Lock (SK8378) for riparian species. An adjoining stubble field was sighted and as a

habitat not much seen during the week, the group excitedly climbed a fence to survey its margins. A good number of characteristic arable species were found, including *Dicranella staphylinia*, *Leptobryum pyriforme*, *Trichodon cylindricus* and a single plant of *Riccia sorocarpa*. The party then visited an old railway and river edge (SK8379), also in the Torksey area, where the 33 species found included *Eurhynchium striatum* and *Plagiomnium rostratum*, both interesting as railway bank colonists. The best find was *Aloina ambigua* by Nick Hodgetts on calcareous railway slag. To finish the day, and in horrible weather, the group visited Wigsley Wood (SK8570), a site which was described afterwards on the recording card as a 'very dull conifer plantation'.

Richard Fisk led a group to Old Wood (SK9071). They recorded 37 species from this broad-leaved woodland, including *Dicranum tauricum*, a good range of the small *Fissidens* species (*F. bryoides*, *F. exilis*, *F. incurvus*) and *Plagiochila asplenoides*. They then visited Skellingthorpe church (SK9272), recording 24 species. *Orthotrichum affine* growing atypically on a stone provided the only interest in this unremarkable churchyard.

Bob Ellis led a group to Skellingthorpe Big Wood (SK9072). This site, by Nottinghamshire standards, proved to be rich, and 55 species were recorded. This total included several species not seen thus far on the meeting, for example *Cololejeunea minutissima* and *Syntrichia laevipila*.

SUNDAY 21 MARCH (v.-c. 53)

Main site

After a wet night, good weather returned and the society changed its attentions from Nottinghamshire to Lincolnshire with a visit to Ancaster Valley (SK94). The society was joined by Professor Seaward, doyen of Lincolnshire bryology, who gave an introduction to the valley and explained that the area had become bryologically poor in recent years for reasons that were not clear, but might be due to nutrient enrichment. A large group led by Mark Lawley then set off to explore the main valley. The

◀ Nowell churchyard. Top: Alex Atherton and Mark Pool. Middle: *Orthotrichum diaphanum* on a gravestone. Bottom: *Leucodon sciuroides*, complete with characteristic branchlets on a gravestone. I. Atherton



△ *Oxyrrhynchium speciosum* on the banks of the River Witham.
Jonathan Graham

▷ Jonathan Sleath and Liz Kungu searching an elder orchard in the grounds of Belvoir Castle. Caroline Pannell

site did prove to be relatively poor bryologically with only 37 species recorded, but it was encouraging to note the persistence of a number of characteristic calcareous grassland species, including *Campyladelphus chrysophyllus*, *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Fissidens dubius*, *Trichostomum brachydontium* and *Weissia brachycarpa* var. *obliqua*.

A smaller group led by Chris Preston visited Ancaster Church (SK9843) where 29 species were found, including *Cirriphyllum piliferum* in the lawn and *Didymodon umbrosus* growing at the base of a damp, shaded, north-facing church wall. The group then moved to the Barkston & Syston area (SK94), following a footpath along the banks of the River Witham. Bryophytes were hard to find in this area of intensive agriculture. By searching all available habitats, including small plantation woodlands and field ditches, 37 species were eventually found. The group briefly lost Chris Preston who later emerged triumphantly from thick bramble and elder scrub reporting a single tuft of *Cryphaea heteromalla* from an elder. A better find was *Oxyrrhynchium speciosum** (by Jonathan Graham) from a shaded muddy margin of the River Witham, under a bridge. The group then visited both Barkston (SK9341) and Syston (SK9240) churches.

The Leadenham area (hectad SK95) was historically poorly recorded and was rumoured bryologically to be 'very dull indeed' with only 36 species known. Despite this reputation, a dutiful

group of stalwarts led by David Chamberlain were sent 'over the top' for a full day to improve this tally. They searched all habitats in the area, including rough grassland, sandstone walls, the swampy margins of a balancing pond and a car park. Fifty-two mostly common species were found, including fruiting *Hypnum andoi*. The star find, by Jo Denyer, was *Hylocomium splendens** in rough grassland. The group then searched river edge and mixed woodland habitat east of Carlton-le-Moorland (SK951) where 22 species were recorded, adding *Metzgeria violacea* to the tally. Finally, they visited Welbourn Church and the adjoining fields and woodland stream (SK95S) where *Orthotrichum stramineum*, *Pellia endiviifolia*, *Plagiothecium succulentum* and *Syntrichia latifolia* were added to the list. Independently, Peter Martin looked at Leadenham Church, recording 29 species. The group led by David Chamberlain was last back that day, seen walking slowly and quietly away from the Newark car park (notable signs of bryophyte fatigue) and perhaps unable to realize their achievement of 63 species recorded for the hectad.

Subsidiary sites

A large party, led by Jonathan Graham, visited Wilsford Heath Quarry SSSI (SK9841). This large former limestone quarry now consists of semi-mature ash woodland, but still has open rock faces and wet, flushed areas. The owner was keen to chat to members and informed us that the quarry had provided stone for Lincoln Cathedral. Much of the bryophyte flora of the woodland floor was typical of a calcareous woodland with abundant *Cirriphyllum piliferum*, *Thamnobryum*

△ Liz Kungu, Richard Fisk and Mark Hill admire *Racomitrium aciculare* (see right-hand photograph) on a flat tombstone at Sedgebrook Church. Caroline Pannell

alopecurum and occasional *Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus*, while a few flat, open areas supported calcareous grassland with *Ctenidium molluscum*. Both *Plagiochila asplenoides* and *P. porelloides* were present on woodland banks. Members spent a considerable time on site as it proved to be the third richest site for bryophytes visited during the week (77 species), and included many notable species. *Diplophyllum albicans** was found in small quantity on acidic clay under the overhang of the quarry, while abundant *Riccardia chamedryfolia* was seen on dripping seepages nearby. *Eucladium verticillatum* was found on a damp limestone rock face, and the tiny *Fissidens gracilifolius* was found to be abundant on small oolite stones on the base of the quarry. Epiphytes were particularly abundant and *Cololejeunea minutissima* (with perianths) and *Microlejeunea ulicina* were both seen. Other interesting species included *Bryum moravicum*, one big tuft of *Brachythecium glareosum* (found by Mark Pool), *Tortula lanceola* and one of the best finds of the meeting, by Mary Ghullam, *Taxiphyllum wissgrillii**. Another interesting find, by David Holyoak, was fruiting *Scleropodium purum*.

Mark Hill led a group into v.-c. 55 (Leicestershire with Rutland) to search the grounds of Belvoir Castle (SK8132). An unusual feature was an elder orchard that provided flowers for elderflower cordial. They found 51 species that included *Dicranum tauricum* and the epiphytes *Cololejeunea minutissima**,

Cryphaea heteromalla, *Hypnum andoi* and *Zygodon conoideus*.

At Sedgebrook village and church (SK8537) *Didymodon nicholsonii* (on tarmac) and *Syntrichia virescens* were noted. South Lincolnshire is not renowned for its *Racomitrium* species, so a very good find, by Caroline Pannell, was *Racomitrium aciculare** growing along a 2 m length of a flat tombstone.

The group then visited Stenwith bridge near Maston (SK8336) and found 47 species, and then the church, river and garden at Westborough (SK8544) where they recorded 40. Finally, they stopped at a roadside wood north-east of Dry Doddington (SK8647). The wood was not bryologically rich, but there was an adjoining arable field where *Bryum ruderales*, *B. violaceum*, *Dicranella schreberiana* and *Weissia longifolia* var. *longifolia* were found. This brought a tally of 30 species for this last stop.

Rachel Carter's group visited churches at (1) Houghton (SK8844), (2) Marston (SK8943) and (3) Houghton-on-the-Hill (SK9246), recording 24, 19 and 28 species, respectively. Species of interest included *Rhynchostegiella tenella* and *Rhynchostegium murale* (1), *Didymodon nicholsonii* (2), *Thamnobryum alopecurum* and *Weissia longifolia* var. *longifolia* (3). Pete Martin visited Colby church (SK9760) and recorded 21 species, including *Syntrichia virescens*.

Jeff Duckett led a small group to a disused quarry north-east of Ropsley (TF0036) where they found a number of interesting species such as *Aloina aloides*, *Aneura pinguis*, *Microbryum curvicolle* and *Didymodon umbrosus* (on damp, calcareous clay in

a shallow unshaded depression in the floor of the quarry).

MONDAY 22 MARCH (v.-c. 53)

Main site

The main site for the morning was Whisby Nature Park (SK96), a South Lincolnshire site consisting of a complex of small, medium and large, flooded gravel pits. After 40 years of natural colonization, much of the site has now developed into dense willow and birch scrub, to the point that there are little signs of an industrial heritage. Three groups searched the varied habitats present on the site in two tetrads (SK96D, Thorpe Lake; SK96I, Teal Lake) and produced the second longest list of species for the week (an impressive 89 species). Searches of the mature lake margins resulted in *Drepanocladus aduncus* and two vice-county records: *Sanionia uncinata** and *Bryum pseudotriquetrum* var. *bimum**

(found with young capsules). In places, open grassy areas supported the calcareous acrocarps *Aloina aloides*, *Bryoerythrophyllum recurvirostrum*, *Didymodon tophaceus* and *Encalypta streptocarpa*. This contrasted with mildly acidic, sandy areas where a number of rare or unrecorded species were found, including *Cephaloziella divaricata* and *Pohlia annotina** and (most notably) *Racomitrium ericoides**. Other key finds were *Lophocolea semiteres* (with male inflorescences) and *Riccardia incurvata* growing with *Marchantia polymorpha* subsp. *ruderalis* on sand by a lake margin.

Jonathan Graham visited Smeatons Lakes (SK 7955, SK7956), a similar area of post-gravel extraction lakes near Newark-on-Trent. The improved amenity grassland and tracks of the site only provided a short list of 29 species – the most interesting of which was non-fruiting *Bryum pseudotriquetrum* found on wet mud at the edges of a lake.

Subsidiary sites

A small group visited Norton Disney Church (SK8858) before moving on to look at the spoil heaps and tracks of an active oolite quarry, north-east of Coleby (SK9961) where the 22 species recorded included *Aloina aloides* and *Brachythecium glareosum*. A walk along a track with mature elder scrub beside an old quarry at TF0559 yielded 22 species, including *Aloina aloides*, *Cryphaea heteromalla* and *Metzgeria violacea*. After this the group looked at Blanckney Church (SK05U & Q), recording 21 species. To finish, they visited an oolite quarry west of Metheringham (SK0561), recording 17 species.

Mark Hill led a group to Hartsholme Country Park (SK96) which had large areas of wet woodland dominated by *Rhododendron* and birch. A search of these wet, wooded lake margins resulted in an impressive 63 species, the most exciting of which was the presence of six *Sphagnum*

species (*S. compactum*, *S. cuspidatum*, *S. denticulatum*, *S. fallax*, *S. fimbriatum* and *S. squarrosum*) associated with *Polytrichum commune*. Other interesting finds included *Brachythecium rivulare*, *Dicranum*



△ Mark Hill, 'The persistence of the Sphagnum hunter', Hartsholme Country Park (*Polytrichum commune* in foreground), Jo Denyer

tauricum, *Pellia endiviifolia* and a second vice-county record of *Ptilidium ciliare**. This group then visited Swanholme Lakes Nature Reserve (SK9368), an area of old gravel pits, where they recorded 29 species, including *Cephalozia bicuspidata*, *Polytrichum commune* and more epiphytes, including *Ulota bruchii* and *U. phyllantha*.

Richard Fisk led a group to look at three woods in tetrad TF07X. At Hardy Gang Wood, a mainly acidic woodland, they recorded 36 species, including both *Calypogeia fissa* and *C. arguta* on banks, and *Tetraphis pellucida* and *Orthodontium lineare* on stumps. On less acidic banks they noted *Plagiochila asplenioides* and *Pellia endiviifolia*. At Newall Wood, they noted *Bryum moravicum* amongst the 41 fairly common species recorded, and at Rand Wood the 44 species included *Brachythecium velutinum* and *Fissidens exilis*.



◁ Far left. Chris Preston, Rachel Carter, Joan Egan and Joan James getting to grips with *Cephaloziella divaricata*, Whisby Nature Park. Jo Denyer

◁ Left. *Racomitrium ericoides*, a new south Lincolnshire record, Whisby Nature Park. Caroline Pannell

TUESDAY 23 MARCH (v.-c. 53)**Main site**

The main morning site visit was to Rauceby Warren (TF04), a Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Reserve which lies on sandy warrens overlying limestone, formed by glacial melt waters which carried sand through the Ancaster Gap. Few patches of the old heathland turf of these deposits now remain. Much of the reserve consists of abandoned sand and gravel pits. Separate groups searched two tetrads covering the main warren (TF04H & I) as well as adjoining Rauceby High Wood (TF04D), a broad-leaved woodland site. The warren was flooded, hampering recording efforts, and only 34 species were found. The majority of species recorded were similar to Besthorpe Pits and Spalford Warren seen earlier in the week with frequent *Ceratodon purpureus*, *Hypnum lacunosum*, *Pseudocrossidium hornschurchianum* and *Syntrichia ruralis* var. *ruraliformis*. A small number of ruderals were also noted, such as *Bryum rubens* and *Tortula truncata*. Twenty-eight species were recorded from Rauceby High Wood of which the main interest were the epiphytes *Cryphaea heteromalla* and *Orthotrichum pulchellum*.

Subsidiary sites (v.-c. 56)

To cover more poorly recorded ground, Chris Preston and Robin Stevenson led a group to the Skylark NWT Reserve (SK6139), a disused gravel pit, and recorded 36 species. This site had calcareous elements with *Cratoneuron filicinum*, *Didymodon fallax*, *Didymodon tophaceus* and *Homalothecium lutescens*, as well as scattered epiphytes such as *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Frullania dilatata*, *Orthotrichum lyellii*, *O. pulchellum*, *Radula complanata* and *Ulota phyllantha*.

After the Skylark site they moved on to Cotgrave, where they looked at the Church and cemetery (SK63M) and some nearby woodland (SK63L). The 34 species recorded from the cemetery included *Dicranum scoparium*, *Didymodon luridus*, *Didymodon tophaceus*, *Orthotrichum anomalum* and *O. cupulatum*. *Syntrichia virescens* was



△ Fruiting *Ctenidium molluscum* at Cotgrave Woods.
Robin Stevenson

found on an asphalt path. Thirty-eight species were recorded from the woodland, including *Fissidens exilis*, *Plagiothecium curvifolium* (on the base of a hawthorn), and, unusually, fruiting *Ctenidium molluscum* on a bank. Half the party, encouraged by Chris Preston, descended through thick bramble, wild rose and hawthorn scrub to enter a stream where *Platyhypnidium riparioides* was recorded – the other half of the party wisely retreated. A good number of epiphytes included *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Orthotrichum pulchellum*, *Ulota bruchii* and *Zygodon conoideus*. After lunch the group went on to Langar Church (SK7234), where they recorded 26 species, and then to Plunger (SK7634) where, after recording only 20 common species from the church, they fared much better in Plunger Wood. Here, they climbed up a north-facing slope with open, ash-dominated woodland. Chris Preston and Jo Denyer scaled a limestone scarp, while others rested, suffering from

CMF (Cumulative Moss Fatigue)! Although only 34 species were recorded, the woodland had a range of different niches for bryophytes, and an interesting mix of species were seen, including *Dicranella schreberiana*, *D. staphylina*, *D. varia*, *Hypnum andoi*, *Pohlia melanodon* and *P. wahlenbergii*. Abundant gemmae were admired on *Plagiothecium curvifolium*, and a particularly good find was *Fossombronia pusilla* with mature capsules.

Mark Pool visited North Muskham church (SK7958) and recorded 19 species, a list that included an unusual record of *Bryum gemmiferum* on sand in an open sack.

Rachel Carter led a group to Cultherthorpe Park (TF0139, TF0239). Fifty species were recorded, including *Bryum pseudotriquetrum* on a lake side, and a rich epiphyte community included *Cryphaea heteromalla* and *Frullania dilatata*. They then visited Heydour Church (TF0039) recording 32 species, after which they visited the Newton area (TF03) recording 38 common species from the church and surrounding area, including *Syntrichia virescens* from an ash. In a small field quarry, calcareous species included *Fissidens incurvus*, *Homalothecium lutescens* and – the best find – *Eucladium verticillatum*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank all those people without whose help this trip would not have been possible. Denise Richardson and the team at the Unique Scrap Store provided us with excellent accommodation and facilities; Adrienne Bennett at the Forestry Commission pulled out all the stops to provide us with a wealth of site maps and the relevant permissions. John Ellis, of the Nottingham Wildlife Trust, and Dave Bromwich of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, were similarly helpful in supplying permits, details of sites, and copies of existing records, whilst Stuart Chappell at Clumber Park, and Ian Major at Sherwood Forest Park were equally welcoming and helpful. We apologize to them for not having been able to visit all the sites on offer, but hope that what we have recorded will offer some recompense for their efforts.

▷ Robin Stevenson suffers CMF (Cumulative Moss Fatigue)! Jo Denyer

Finally, we thank Chris Preston for providing an electronic compilation and interpretation of the records, and Mark Hill for producing a list of vice-county desiderata.

Jonathan Graham

2 Cross Road, Whittlesey PE7 1LX
(e jonathan.graham@ntlworld.com)

Robin Stevenson

111 Wootton Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk
PE30 4DJ (e crs111@talktalk.net)

