

Joint meeting of BBS Southern Group and Wessex Bryology Group at Hyde Bog on 2nd November 2008

Leader Bryan Edwards

Despite heavy overnight rain and forecast for more, nine members met at Stroud Bridge (SY888916) to explore the watery vastness of Hyde Bog. This is an extensive area (approximately 40ha) of valley mire surrounded by the forestry plantations of Wareham Forest which lies to the west of Wareham itself. Suitably shod in boots and waterproofs we splashed out initially across an area of wet heath, where we quickly found typical species such as *Sphagnum cuspidatum* (both the aquatic and terrestrial forms), *S. tenellum* and *S. denticulatum*. A search for the rare *Lophozia capitata*, in its only Dorset site, had to be abandoned as most of the area in which it had previously been found was under water! The hepatics *Gymnocolea inflata* and *Cephalozia bicuspidata* were, however, found. On moving out to the main area of bog we soon encountered extensive carpets of *Sphagnum pulchrum* (it covers an area of about 20ha of the mire here) looking particularly striking in its bright orange colours and contrasting with the pale *S. cuspidatum* and *S. compactum*. Other *Sphagna* included *S. papillosum*, *S. capillifolium rubellum*, and *S. magellanicum*. An excellent hummock of *S. molle* was found showing its 'blushing' colours. Further hepatics included *Kurzia pauciflora*, *Odontoschisma sphagni* and *Cladopodiella fluitans*. Bryan demonstrated the characters of *Campylopus brevipilus*, with its neat cushions of dark upright leaves.



Part of the group on the large expanse of Hyde Bog. Photo by Neil Sanderson

After a lunch on a dry bank, we made our way out further onto the bog to see an area where in 2006 Bryan had discovered *Sphagnum fuscum*, making this its only extant southern English site. We found it growing well, forming its characteristic chocolate-

brown tightly packed hummocks, in a M21 community. The sun even came out as we set about photographing this striking moss. On our way back, additional species were added to our list from along the edges of the forestry tracks and the occasional concrete post. A large puzzling *Geastrum* fungus near the car park caused some excitement, but subsequent checks confirmed it to be an abnormal *G. triplex*. Bryan was thanked for so ably leading the group and safely navigating us back through the complex of forestry tracks to the cars.

Andrew Branson