

Introduction

DARSHILL & BOWLISH CONSERVATION SOCIETY HERITAGE PROJECT:

BIODIVERSITY INVESTIGATED

Natural History has always been part of the conservation society's interest, and the neighbours of Darshill, Ham and Bowlish have been encouraged to contribute their own sightings as part of the annual national surveys of birds and butterflies. The results from these, together with member's photographs, have been recorded on the original DBCS website, since 2012 and this resource of local information has provided the foundation on which the exciting biodiversity component of the heritage project has been built.

The hamlets of Darshill, Ham and Bowlish are rich in flora and fauna. The environments of each hamlet are quite different:

- **Darshill** has wetlands fed by natural springs, Orledge Spring being the main one, with associated plants and trees, known as the 'Mill Pond Site', and is flanked by a row of cottages. Adjacent to this is 'The Spring Site' covered by native bushes and trees. These areas are owned by the Conservation Society, and are managed by volunteer members. Biodiversity surveys conducted in these areas have established just how rich in wildlife Darshill is, including some gardens, which have also been surveyed.
- **Ham** by contrast is predominantly built on gentle slopes leading down to, and along the River Sheppey. Many of the properties are detached, have large south facing gardens, with very diverse layouts, ranging from formal shrubs, lawns, flower borders, wild parts, paddocks, and copses.
- **Bowlish** comprises large individual houses, terraced cottages and individual cottages which are parallel to the River Sheppey. Some houses are separated by the Shepton Mallet to Wells main road, the A371. Bowlish Meadows, to the East of Bowlish have been recently poorly managed, overgrazed at times and mechanically cut back, resulting in ecological damage. The result is a loss of flowers, insects and invertebrates.

The hamlets are linked by lanes, many with grassed verges which support some interesting species of flora and insects.

The biodiversity component has been based on a number of surveys and residents have embraced them with enthusiasm, contributing to the six month winter garden bird survey, summer garden invertebrate observations, camcorder filming (*trail camera*) in six different gardens, 'river dipping' in the River Sheppey/freshwater springs, paw print recording at five locations, and local 'nature watching'. Both experts and amateurs have been welcomed, to carry out surveys, into their gardens and outbuildings.

Professionals have led the well-supported bat and botany walks and carried out some of the surveys, which have led to some amazing discoveries, such as:

- The identification of an unexpected and notable Greater Horseshoe Bat roost, in a ventilation tunnel in Darshill, where they also hibernate.

- The discovery of a spider which had not been recorded in Somerset before, a member of the Theridiidae family, (Comb-footed spiders), Cryptacea blattea, by County Recorders for Somerset. SERC (Somerset Environmental Record Centre) now has the Arachnid and Botany Survey results for 2019.

Between September 2018 and October 2019, ten areas of biodiversity have been thoroughly surveyed. Collectively, the surveys will form the basis of a future Biodiversity Plan for the locality.

Attachments:

- Biodiversity Survey Calendar
- Biodiversity Survey Volunteers
- Index of Biodiversity Reports

Biodiversity Survey Calendar

BIODIVERSITY SURVEY CALENDAR - 1ST SEPTEMBER 2018 to 31ST OCTOBER 2019						
Month		1	2	3	4	5
Sept	Date ->	12/09/18	Postponed 22/09/18	Postponed 23/09/18		
	Name ->	Becca Brown	Adel Avery	Three Members & Jane		
	Classification ->	Greater Horseshoe Bats	Bat Walk	Water/Land Invertebrates		
Oct	Date ->	21/10/18	06/10/18	14/10/18	All of October	October/date TBC
	Name ->	Becca Brown	Adel Avery	Three Members & Jane	D&B Volunteer Group	Phil Shirley
	Classification ->	Mammal Paw Prints	Bat Walk	Water/Land invertebrates	Garden Birds	Arboretorial
Nov	Date ->				All of November	Throughout November
	Name ->				D&B Volunteer Group	D & B Residents
	Classification ->				Garden Birds	Anything
Dec	Date ->				All of December	Throughout December
	Name ->				D&B Volunteer Group	D & B Residents
	Classification ->				Garden Birds	Anything
Jan	Date ->				All of January	26 to 28/01/19
	Name ->				D&B Volunteer Group	D&B Residents
	Classification ->				Garden Birds	RSPB GARDEN BIRD WATCH
Feb	Date ->	14/02/19	24/02/19		All of February	Throughout february
	Name ->	Becca Brown	Adel Avery		D&B Volunteer Group	D&B Residents
	Classification ->	Paw Print Survey	Bat Survey		Garden Birds	Anything
Mar	Date ->				All of March	Throughout March
	Name ->				D&B Volunteer Group	D&B Residents
	Classification ->				Garden Birds	Anything
Apr	Date ->		24/04/19	15/04/19	From 01/04/19	
	Name ->		Helena Crouch	Three Members & Jane	Alan Fisher	
	Classification ->		Botany Walk	Water/Land invertebrates	Birds/Butterflies/Moths	
May	Date ->	23/05/19	31/05/19	04/05/19	May 2019	
	Name ->	John Butler	Adel Avery	H.Crouch/V. Graham	Alan Fisher	
	Classification ->	Bumblebee Survey	Bat Walk	Botany Survey	Birds/Butterflies/Moths	
Jun	Date ->			From 17/06/19	June 2019	
	Name ->			Alan Fisher/Jane Williams	Alan Fisher	
	Classification ->			Moths/Moth Trap	Birds/Butterflies/Moths	
Jul	Date ->	06/07/19	01/07/19	Continuing from 02/07/19	July 2019	20/07 to 12/08/19
	Name ->	Becca Brown	D&B Volunteer Group	Alan Fisher/Jane Williams	Alan Fisher	D&B Residents
	Classification ->	Mammals/Amphibians	Garden Survey	Moths/Moth Trap	Birds/Butterflies/Moths	BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT
Aug/Sept	Date ->	August/September 2019	01/08/19	19/08/19	August 2019	
	Name ->	Darhill Member	D&B Volunteer Group	Three Members & Jane	Alan Fisher	
	Classification ->	Paw Print Survey	Camcorders	Water/Land invertebrates	Birds/Butterflies/Moths	
Oct	Date ->	08/10/19				
	Name ->	F Farr-Cox & J McGill				
	Classification ->	Spiders/Insects				

Biodiversity Survey Volunteers

<u>BIODIVERSITY SURVEY VOLUNTEERS</u>		
<u>OBSERVATIONS AT DARSHILL & BOWLISH</u>		
<u>2018 - 2019</u>		
<u>CLASSIFICATIONS</u>	<u>STUDYING</u>	<u>VOLUNTEER</u>
<u>Ornithology</u>	Seasonal Birds	Alan Fisher <i>Local Ornithologist</i>
<u>Botany</u>	Plants/Flowers/Grasses/Mosses/Ferns	Dr.Helena Crouch & Val Graham <i>Somerset Botany Group</i>
<u>Arboretorial</u>	Trees/Shrubs	Phil Shirley <i>Local Tree Surgeon</i>
<u>Lepidopterology</u>	Butterflies	Alan Fisher <i>Local Lepidoptetrlist</i>
	Moths	Alan Fisher/Jane Williams John Bebbington ID Assistant <i>Butterfly Conservation</i>
<u>Entomology</u>	Dragonflies	Alan Fisher
	Bees/Hoverflies/Flies/Beetles	James McGill <i>British Arachnological Society</i>
	Bumblebees	John Butler <i>Bumblebee Conservation Trust</i>
<u>Water Invertebrates</u>	Caddis Fly Larva/Mayfly/Fish etc	DBCS Members & Jane Williams
<u>Land Invertebrates</u>	Woodlice/Centipedes/Millipedes etc	DBCS Members & Jane Williams
<u>Arachnology</u>	Brititsh Spiders/Daddy Long Legs	Francis Farr-Cox & James McGill <i>British Arachnological Society</i>
<u>Herpetology</u>	Lizards/Grass Snakes/Slow worms	DBCS Members & Jane Williams
<u>Amphibians & Reptiles</u>	Frogs/Toads/Newts	
<u>Mammalogy</u>	Badger/Fox/Hedgehog/Roe Deer	Rebecca Brown BSC (HONS) <i>Somerset Mammal Group</i>
	Grey Squirrel/Field Mice/Bank Vole	DBCS Members & Jane Williams
	Other Mammals	
	Bats	Adel Avery & Peter Gulliver <i>Somerset Bat Group</i> Rebecca Brown & Jane Williams