

British Pteridological Society

South Wales and the Borders Regional Group

Programme for 2009 – August Update

Firstly, many thanks for the support for the July weekend in Machynlleth – we hope that all who attended will agree that this was a fine start to the new group's activities. A write-up has been prepared and will be submitted for inclusion in the next edition of the Bulletin.

Here is a further update to the 2009 programme with details for the arrangements for the weekday visit to the Wye Valley. Also included are some first thoughts about a meeting in October the date for which we propose to be **Wednesday the 28th October**. Please put this date in your diary and we will send out further information after the September event.

The Wye Valley – Thursday the 10th September

As previously described, George Peterken has offered to lead us on a days introduction to the varied ecologies of the Wye Valley, providing us with the opportunity to see a wide range of ferns. Several of you will know George, he's a renown woodland ecologist who has lived in the area since the early 90's. He has co-authored the chapter on the Habitats of Monmouthshire in the recent flora of the region and earlier this year his volume on the Wye Valley was published by Collins in the New Naturalist series.

Outline of the day.

The plan is for George to introduce us to the ecology of the area and to guide us to some varied habitats. He will also lead us to see the pachyrachis form of *A.trichomanes* but, in the main, finding and identifying the ferns is up to us!

Meeting at the **Doward** (directions below) we will walk via Kings Arthur's Cave and the Seven Sisters rocks to the Biblins, where we can look around a calcareous flush, then cross the bridge to look around the Lady Park Wood area. This will provide the chance to see both the north and south-facing aspects of the limestone gorge with its rock towers, flushes, tufa deposits and riverside, all within ancient woodland of beech, sessile oak, ash, small-leaved lime, large-leaved lime, wych elm, hazel, yew, whitebeams, etc. Please note that what goes down will need to get back up, and some may find the walk back up to the car park quite tiring.

Later we hope to move on to **Cleddon Shoots**, about 20 minutes drive away near Llandogo. The site is a small stream draining from a bog on the plateau into a shaded cataract down sandstone on the side of the gorge.

Arrangements.

You will need to bring a **packed lunch**.

We will **meet at 10.00am at the Doward small car park** – map ref 547156 which is reached from the A40 via an exit approximately 4 miles northeast of Monmouth. Although we are seeking permission to use the facilities at Biblins campsite, you should assume that there are no toilets at the sites. Services are available on the A40 both north and south of the exit and between the Doward and Cleddon.

Coming from the south. From the roundabout just northeast of Monmouth, continue approximately 4 miles and take the exit marked Ganarew/Crockers Ash/Doward/Lewstone.

Follow this road over the A40 and then turn left, signed Doward/Crockers Ash.

In about a third of a mile there is a narrow crossroads and we take the right hand turn signed Biblins and Doward (point A).

The road from here is single track. Follow this for about a mile, at each junction taking the road signed to Biblins. You will then see a sign on the LHS which says "Forestry Commission/Biblins/Turn right 50M".

Take this right turn and follow the rough track for a few hundred yards to the parking, just prior to a barrier and sign saying “No Access Beyond This Point”.

From Ross in the north, travel southwest on the A40 as far as Whitchurch. Take the exit signed Stoney Hill Ind Estate/Crockers Ash/Doward just prior to a service area on the far outskirts of Whitchurch. Almost immediately, turn right to pass behind the service area. Follow this road for approximately half a mile to a narrow crossroads, where you turn left, signed Biblins and Doward. This is point A, and the directions above should be followed after that.

For the visit to Cleddon Shoots we will car-share, returning to the Doward car park at the end of the day.

If you haven't already done so then it would be appreciated if you would let us know if you expect to join the meeting.

Social get together – proposed date Wednesday the 28th October

As agreed at our inaugural meeting, we hope that we can meet and chat over the years events and come up with suggestions for 2010.

The first thing to say about plans for this event is that, although we're making some suggestions, we're completely open to any other ideas that you might have. At present we're thinking that we could arrange to meet for lunch in a pub somewhere, but that it would be much better if we can also include a chance to get out and see some ferns. Given the time of year Polypodies seem to be a good target and this is confirmed by the write-up of the visit to East Glamorgan in September 1990, which says about them “later autumn and winter are the best times for serious work, in South Wales at least”. Several good Polypody sites are documented in South Glamorgan, and could be a location for the meeting. If you are familiar with any of these, or have any other suggestions then please let us know. Once we have your comments, we will send out more details after the Wye Valley meeting.

Finally, we are delighted to have already had some suggestions for 2010, but if you have any ideas, particularly if you can't come in October, then please get in touch.

Looking forward to meeting you at one or more of these events and thanks for your ongoing support for the group.

Best Wishes,

Brian & Sue Dockerill