

Plant survey
Bradlaugh Fields
Northampton
May & June 2021

By Dr R G Field

Site description

Three areas previously either ponds or areas of wet grassland were surveyed in May and June 2017. Areas 1 and 2 were surveyed again in May and June 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. Plant species observed were recorded plus any other species present were noted. The three areas are now dry. This has been the case for the last several years since Anglian Water repaired a leak nearby. It is presumed that these areas will remain dry in the future and this was the fifth year the study was conducted so future management could be agreed. Three surveys were carried out this year. Also the conditions were unusual this year. Very wet early on and then cold for 6-8 weeks, so some species seem to have been badly affected by this.

Area 1

Small area which formally was a pond just to the north of the main building. Was cleared of vegetation (including scrub) in the winters of 2016/7, 2017/8, 2018/9, 2019/2020 and 2020/21. This has been colonised by a range of wildflowers and grasses.

Area 2

Area formally a pond with ditch area to the south of the main building. Was cleared of vegetation in winters of 2016/7, 2017/8, 2018/9, 2019/2020 and 2020/21. Edges of the pond and ditch were colonised by wildflowers, while the central section is more nutrient rich and is dominated by grasses and nettles. Some of soil was removed from this centre section over the winter of 2020/21.

Area 3

Area formally a pond with wet grassland. To the south of the main building and within 50m of Area 2. Overgrown with grasses and scrub species. No management work carried out on this site for several years. A full survey of this area was not carried out but several interesting species were noted in 2017 such as: Pignut, meadow buttercup, Cuckoo flower, Garlic mustard and Gorse.

Area 1 survey

Sweet vernal grass and Hedge mustard were not seen again this year. Several new species were recorded for the first time but none were indicator species.

Area 2 Survey

Hedge woundwort, Ragged Robin and Velvet brome were not recorded this year. Eight new species were recorded for the first time. Several Ringlet, Meadow brown butterflies were seen in this area as well as larvae of the 6 spot burnet moth.

Suggested Management

The management for areas 1 & 2 is to cut and clear all the vegetation in late autumn each year. This will slowly reduce any nutrient levels and encourage wildflowers to spread. The central area of 2 could be cleared of the top layer of soil which is nutrient rich. Cuttings from the banks should be spread on the lower area once it has been cut and cleared. Area 1 has a problem with creeping thistle which needs to be dealt with before the main cut back (AM already informed).

Area 3 needs a lot more work and it is suggested that it should be kept short for at least 12 months using a cut and collect mower. After that it may need extra cuts each year or can move to one late cut and collect each year.

Species list 2017 to 2021

Table 1	Area 1	species	
Smooth stalked meadow grass	Yorkshire fog	Red fescue	Small leaved timothy
Rough meadow grass	Hedge woundwort	Soft rush (not 2021)	Bittersweet
White clover	Sedge sp.	Greater plantain	Mugwort
Reed canary grass	Perennial rye grass	Sterile brome	Crested dogstail
Ribwort plantain	Cowslip	Yellowrattle	Common speedwell
Cow parsley	Cocksfoot	Common ragwort	Spear thistle
Common nettle	Bush vetch	Cleavers	Barren brome
Broad leaved dock	Creeping buttercup	Herb bennet	Hogweed
Birdsfoot trefoil	Dandelion	Ox-eye daisy	Great willowherb
Ragged Robin	Meadow buttercup	Crack willow	Black knapweed
Red campion	Yarrow	Creeping thistle	Creeping buttercup
Sterile brome	Meadowsweet	Great willowherb	
	New 2018 species		
Salad burnet	Hedge mustard	Sweet vernal (not	Glaucous sweet

	(not 2020 and 21)	2020 and 21)	grass
Tufted vetch	Wild sage	Meadow cranesbill	Cut leaved cranesbill
Field scabious	White campion	Wild carrot	Sow thistle
Greater knapweed			
	New Species 2020		
Ground Ivy	False oat grass		
	New Species 2021		
Weld	Wild rose	Hedge bindweed	Common ragwort
Jack go to bed at noon			
Table 1a	New Species 2019		
Daisy	Ladies bedstraw	Rough hawksbit	Pendulous sedge
Table 2	Area 2	2017/8/920 species	
Red fescue	Yorkshire fog	Red fescue	Soft rush
Rough meadow grass	Hedge woundwort (not 2021)	Lesser stitchwort (not 2020)	Lesser trefoil (not 2020)
White clover (not 2020)	Yellow oat grass	Greater plantain	Mugwort
Red clover	Perennial rye grass	Sterile brome	Crested dogstail
Ribwort plantain	Meadow foxtail	Salad burnet	Common speedwell
Cow parsley	Cocksfoot	White dead nettle	Spear thistle
Common nettle	Bush vetch	Cleavers	Barren brome
Broad leaved dock	Creeping buttercup	Common sorrell	Hogweed
Birdsfoot trefoil	Dandelion	Ox-eye daisy	Great willowherb
Ragged Robin (not 2021)	Meadow buttercup	Germander speedwell	Black knapweed
Red campion	Yarrow	Creeping thistle	Spiked sedge
Yellowrattle	Meadow foxtail	Goatsbeard	False oat grass
Soft rush	Cut leaved cranesbill (not 2020)	Dovesfoot cranesbill	Tufted vetch
	New 2018 species		
Small leaved timothy	Mouse ear	Bulbous buttercup (not 2020)	Common ragwort
Hedge mustard (not 2020)	Sweet vernal	Garlic mustard	Field bindweed

Germander speedwell	Velvet brome	White campion	Greater knapweed
Reed sweet grass	Soft brome	Cowslip	
Table 2a	New species 2019		
Field scabious	Ladies bedstraw	Sow thistle	Nipplewort
Rough hawksbit	Hairy St. John wort		
	New species 2020		
Wall barley	Hairy tare	Common couch	Herb bennet
	New species 2021		
Wild sage	Bittersweet	Willowherb	Small-flowered cranesbill
Ribwort plantain	Hairy tare	Ground ivy	Sheeps sorrell