**Greenhills Cemetery, Church Stretton SO448928**

**A Wildlife Survey by Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group (SACWG)**

Report by Caroline Uff

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Image: C.Uff

**Introduction**

Greenhills Cemetery, Church Stretton, is situated on the edge of town on a quite lane adjacent to the Church Stretton Allotments, but otherwise surrounded by woodland and pasture and bounded by hedges and trees.

**Survey details**

The site was assessed by members of SACWG on 17/5/2014.

**Ground Flora**: Species were recorded from a general walkover. Diversity was assessed in one or two quadrats (2x2m). This was used to trial a ‘churchyard companion’ being developed by CfGA which aimed to classify the type of grassland present.

**Trees**: As SACWG were unaware of existing surveys, the trees of the churchyard were both listed and mapped

**Mammals**: a baited hedgehog tunnel was left for two nights to collect mammal footprints. Tracks and signs of other mammals were also recorded.

**Birds**: Any birds seen or heard within cemetery were recorded. Those seen in flight were only recorded if it seemed likely they were using the site. Signs of nesting were noted.

**Invertebrates**: Most species encountered/ netted within the cemetery were identified.

**Reptile mats**: Two mats (felt roofing tiles) were left *in situ* for approx. 1 month around the period of the visit to act as refuges for reptiles.

**Results and comments**

In all, 114 species were recorded and summarised below – the full list is given at the end. Much of the cemetery was kept mown quite short, but the banks, particularly those adjacent to the woodland had been left unmown at the time of survey to allow spectacular show of flowering forget-me-not.

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|  | **# Species recorded** | **Comments** |
| **Ground Flora** | **56** | Along the woodland edge, woodland species such as bluebell, ramson and enchanter’s nightshade were nice to see. Within the open grassy areas, some species indicative of traditional old grasslands were present including the delicate mouse-ear hawkweed. |
| **Trees** | **14** | The hedgerows surrounding the cemetery contained mostly native tree species, with some ornamental planting in the centre. |
| **Birds** | **18** | This site was particularly rich in birdlife, with nesting nuthatch and nesting greater spotted woodpecker in the boundary trees. |
| **Invertebrates** | **25** | The banks of forget-me-not supported the uncommon forget-me-not shieldbug. Unusually, this burial ground included some wetland species (stoneflies and damselflies) which are likely to have come from the nearby wetland area. |
| **Mammals** | **1** | Mouse/vole footprints were plentiful in the tunnel placed along the woodland edge, but it was not possible to say which species. |
| **Reptiles** | **0** |  |
| **Grassland category** |  | The ground flora was categorised as semi- improved neutral grassland of moderate diversity, using the churchyard companion (CfGA). |

The grouped plantings of shrubs and thick hedgerows found here will benefit wild birds. It is important to leave standing deadwood in the hedgerows as it is of great value to wildlife, including many of the species recorded here.

Leaving areas of longer grass can also be very important for wildlife, as well as providing a colourful display as seen with the forget-me-nots on the bank here. In order to maintain species richness is it important that grass cuttings are raked off. Details of managing longer grassland can also be downloaded in the ‘*managing churchyards &burial grounds’* action pack available from the Caring for God’s Acre website <http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>



Nuthatch (left) and great spotted woodpecker both nest in holes in trees around the cemetery.

Images: <http://northeastwildlife.co.uk/>

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| --- | --- |
| Tree No. | Common Name |
| 1 | Copper Beech |
| 2 | Silver Birch |
| 3 | Hawthorn |
| 4 | Holly |
| 5 | Ash |
| 6 | Elder |
| 7 | Lime |
| 8 | Cherry |
| 9 | Sycamore |
| 10 | Oak sp |
| 11 | Beech |
| 12 | Blackthorn |
| 13 | Hazel |
| 14 | Viburnum |

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Sketch map of Greenhills Cemetery (not to scale) showing positions of trees

Detail of tree positions around memorial area at southern end of path

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Entrance

Plants recorded 2014 (English names used where possible)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Plant name** |
| Ferns | Bracken |
| Ferns | Buckler-fern, broad |
| Flowers | Bluebell |
| Flowers | Burdock |
| Flowers | Buttercup, bulbous |
| Flowers | Buttercup, creeping |
| Flowers | Campion, red |
| Flowers | Cat's-ear |
| Flowers | Celandine, greater |
| Flowers | Celandine, lesser |
| Flowers | Cleavers |
| Flowers | Clover, white |
| Flowers | Creeping Thistle |
| Flowers | Daisy |
| Flowers | Dandelions |
| Flowers | Dock, broad-leaved |
| Flowers | Dog/field Rose |
| Flowers | Dog's mercury |
| Flowers | Dog-violet, common |
| Flowers | Enchanter's-nightshade |
| Flowers | Field/wood forget-me-not |
| Flowers | Fox and cubs |
| Flowers | Foxglove |
| Flowers | Garlic mustard |
| Flowers | Ground ivy |
| Flowers | Hawkweed, mouse-ear |
| Flowers | Herb-Robert |
| Flowers | Hogweed |
| Flowers | Ivy |
| Flowers | Lord's-and-ladies |
| Flowers | Mouse-ear, common |
| Flowers | Nipplewort |
| Flowers | Pimpernel, scarlet |
| Flowers | Plantain, ribwort |
| Flowers | Primrose |
| Flowers | Ragwort |
| Flowers | Ramsons |
| Flowers | Sorrel, common |
| Flowers | Speedwell, germander |
| Flowers | Speedwell, thyme-leaved |
| Flowers | Speedwell, wall |
| Flowers | Stinging nettle |
| Flowers | Strawberry, barren |

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| **Group** | **Plant name** |
| Flowers | Thistle, marsh |
| Flowers | Thistle, spear |
| Flowers | Vetch, bush |
| Flowers | Wavy bittercress |
| Flowers | Welted Thistle |
| Flowers | Willowherb, broad-leaved |
| Flowers | Wood avens |
| Flowers | Wood-rush, field |
| Flowers | Yarrow |
| Flowers | Yellow archangel |
| Grasses | Cock's foot grass |
| Grasses | Sweet Vernal Grass |
| Grasses | Timothy |
| Grasses | Yorkshire-fog |
| Trees and Shrubs | Ash |
| Trees and Shrubs | Beech |
| Trees and Shrubs | Blackthorn |
| Trees and Shrubs | Cherry |
| Trees and Shrubs | Copper Beech |
| Trees and Shrubs | Elder |
| Trees and Shrubs | Hawthorn |
| Trees and Shrubs | Hazel |
| Trees and Shrubs | Holly |
| Trees and Shrubs | Lime |
| Trees and Shrubs | Oak |
| Trees and Shrubs | Silver Birch |
| Trees and Shrubs | Sycamore |
| Trees and Shrubs | Viburnum |

Animals recorded 2014 (English names used where possible)

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| **Groups** | **Animal name** |
| Bird | Greater Spotted Woodpecker (nest) |
| Bird | Nuthatch (nest) |
| Bird | Black cap |
| Bird | Blackbird |
| Bird | Blue tit |
| Bird | Bullfinch |
| Bird | Carrion crow |
| Bird | Chaffinch |
| Bird | Chiff chaff |
| Bird | Dunnock |
| Bird | Goldcrest |
| Bird | Great tit |
| Bird | Greenfinch |
| Bird | Jackdaw |
| Bird | Redstart |
| Bird | Robin |
| Bird | Wood pigeon |
| Bird | Wren |
| Mammal | mouse/vole (footprints) |
| Coleoptera (Beetles) | ladybird, 14-spot |
| Coleoptera (Beetles) | ladybird, 7-spot |
| Coleoptera (Beetles) | cardinal beetle, *Pyrochroa serraticornis* |
| Coleoptera (Beetles) | beetle, *Byturus tomentosus* |
| Diptera (Flies) | cranefly, *Tipula oleracea* |
| Diptera (Flies) | hoverfly, *Merodon equestris* |
| Diptera (Flies) | hoverfly, *Syritta pipiens* |
| Hemiptera (bugs) | Sheildbug, forget-me-not |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Andrena haemorrhoa* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Andrena nigroaenea* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Lasioglossum calceatum* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Nomada fabriciana* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Nomada flava* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Nomada ruficornis* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | bumblebee, Common carder |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | bumblebee, *Bombus vestalis* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | Honey Bee |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | bumblebee, Red-tailed |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | bumblebee, White-tailed |
| Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths) | butterfly, green veined white |
| Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths) | butterfly, large white |
| Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths) | butterfly, orange tip |
| Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths) | butterfly, small white |
| Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) | Large red damselfly |
| Plecoptera | a stonefly |