**The Old Cemetery, Church Stretton SO452935**

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

**Report by Caroline Uff**

****

Image: C.Uff

**Introduction**

The Old Cemetery, Church Stretton, is situated on the edge of town on the corner of Cunnery Road and High Street. The churchyard is bound by stone walls. It is mostly open, but shaded in the southwest adjacent to the wooded hillside. Much of the site is regularly mown to medium height. The shaded area and part of the grassland was un-mown at the time of survey allowing spring flowers to bloom. There have been a couple of previous reports.

* Report on the trees at Church Stretton Old Cemetery 2000. Shropshire Hills Countryside Unit / Caring for God’s Acre.
* Church Stretton Cemetery. John Thompson 1999.

**Survey details**

On 30/4/2014, members of SACWG were joined by staff from Caring for God’s Acre (CfGA) to assess the site.

**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. Ferns on the walls were also identified.

**Trees**: The existing tree survey and map from 2000 was updated.

**Mammals**: a baited hedgehog tunnel was left for two nights to collect mammal footprints. Tracks and signs of other mammals were also recorded. Bats were not assessed.

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

**Invertebrates**: Any species encountered within the churchyard were identified as far as possible. Sweep nets and beating trays were used.

**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, 108 species were recorded and summarised below – the full list is given at the end. The existing tree survey and churchyard map was updated below. Parts of the grassland were quite diverse and should remain so, providing grass clippings are removed. Leaving some areas of longer grass to flower can be very important for wildlife as well as providing a colourful display. Details of managing longer grassland in churchyards can be found on the Caring for God’s Acre website. <http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **# Species recorded** | **Comments** |
| **Ground Flora** | **55** | The shaded area (uncut) had a woodland flora and was a carpet of bluebells, lesser celandines and ramsons. The grassy areas included ladies bedstraw and oxeye daisy which are indicators of species rich grasslands which are becoming increasingly uncommon in our countryside. |
| **Trees** | **13** | The trees were mainly native broad leaved species. The largest trees present were and oak, lime and Wych Elm. |
| **Birds** | **11** | A range of widespread species including one of the first chiff chaffs of the year. |
| **Invertebrates** | **28** | A very nice range of invertebrates. Two finds were of particular significance. **Scarlet tiger moth** caterpillars were feeding on the green alkanet. This south western species was recorded as an adult for the first time in Shropshire here in Stretton in 2013, and this find confirms breeding. Another uncommon species, the **bordered shieldbug**, was found in good numbers under the reptile mat adjacent to the woodland wall. It is a burrowing species associated with cleavers. |
| **Mammals** | **1** | Mouse footprints were recorded from the tunnel. |
| **Reptiles** | **0** |  |
| **Grassland category** |  | Semi- improved neutral grassland of moderate diversity (as determined by CfGA’s churchyard companion) |

****



Image: C.Uff



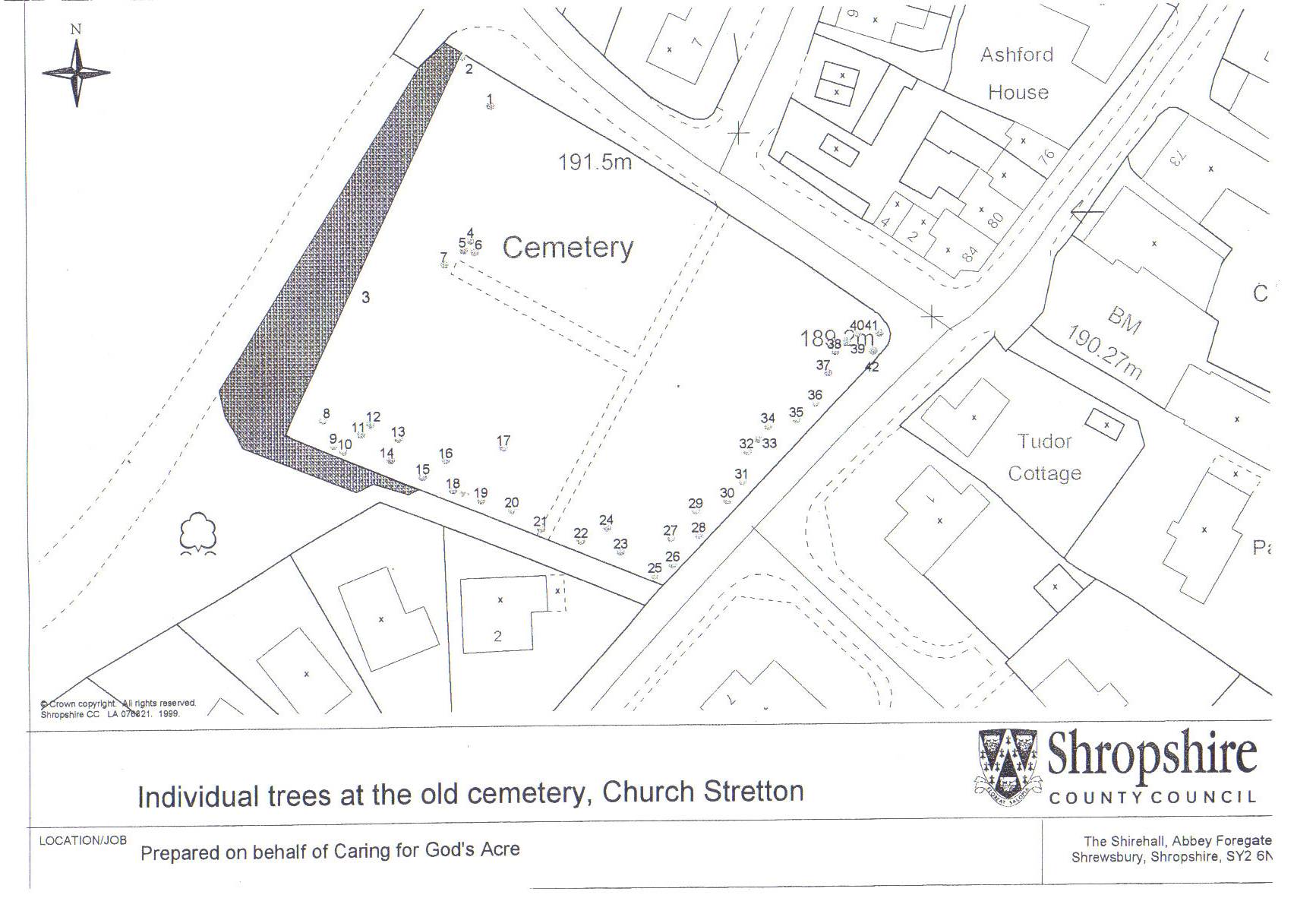
Image: G.Wenman

Image: G.Wenman

Bluebells and Scarlet Tiger moth were worthy of note

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tree No. | Common Name | Age | Height(m) | Circumference cm | Canopy  Width m | Notes |
| 1 | Lime – no longer present |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Sycamore – no longer present |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Sycamore/ Thuja/ Ash/ Horse Chestnut/Laurel | Mature | 25 |  |  | Mixed mature deciduous woodland with Thuja infringing.-. Much growth encroaching over the cemetery boundary |
| 5 | Box Holly | Mature | 38 |  |  | Overgrown form Growing in the centre of dense growth |
| 6 | Sycamore | Young/ Mature | 12 |  |  | Growing in the centre- of dense growth |
| 7 | Sycamore | Young/ Mature | 13 |  |  | Bifurcates at 0.5m. 2x dominant leaders, 1x sub-dominant |
| 8 | Lime | Mature | 38 | 380 | 8 | Dense epicormic growth at base, bifurcates at 6m. |
| 9 | Oak | Mature | 35 | 386 | 12 | High canopy developing at 12m. Form suppressed by T8 |
| 10 | Yew | Young/ Mature | 10 | 97 | 9 |  |
| 11 | Thuja – no longer present |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Sycamore – no longer present |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | Sycamore – no longer present |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | Portuguese Laurel | Young/ Mature | 7 |  |  |  |
| 15 | Oak – dead |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | Variegated Holly | Young/ Mature | 7 | 77 | 3.5 |  |
| 17 | Variegated Holly | Young/ Mature | 7 |  |  |  |
| 18 | Holly | Mature | 20 | 190 | 7 | Forming a screen from private residence |
| 19 | Holly | Mature | 12 |  |  | Forming a screen from private residence |
| 20 | Yew | Young | 6 | 110 | 4 |  |
| 21 | Oak | Mature | 30 | 200 | 13 | Ivy covered throughout canopy, pollarded in past |
| *22* | Sycamore – no longer present |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23 | Yew | Young/ Mature | 8 |  |  |  |
| 24 | Wych Elm | Young/ Mature | 7 | 27 |  | Many stemmed |
| 25 | Holly | Young/ Mature | 7 |  |  |  |
| 26 | Holly | Young/ Mature | 7 |  |  |  |
| 27 | Sycamore | Young/ Mature | 15 | 70 | 6 | Ivy covered throughout crown |
| 28 | Sycamore | Young/ Mature | 14 |  |  | Excessive fruiting, early leaf drop. |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tree No. | Common Name | Age | Height(m) | Circumference cm | Canopy | Notes |
| 29 | Sycamore | Young/ Mature | 14 |  |  |  |
| 30 | Sycamore | Young/ Mature | 16 |  |  |  |
| 31 | Sycamore | Young/ Mature | 16 |  |  |  |
| 32 | Sycamore | Mature | 16 |  |  | 2x stems. One dominant stem growing towards cemetery |
| 33 | Norway Maple | Mature | 30 |  |  | 6 stems |
| 34 | Norway Maple | Mature | 28 |  |  | Very fine |
| 35 | Sycamore – no longer present |  |  |  |  |  |
| 36 | Sycamore- dead |  |  |  |  |  |
| 37 | Norway Maple– dead |  |  |  |  |  |
| 38 | Goat Willow– dead |  |  |  |  |  |
| 39 | Hawthorn | Young/ Mature | 8 |  |  |  |
| 40 | Ash - dead |  |  |  |  |  |
| 41 | Sycamore | Mature | 20 |  |  | 3 stemmed, Standing at the roadside corner |
| 42 | Holly | Mature | 11 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 44 | Laurel | Young | 3 | 2 |  |  |
| 45 | Ash | Young | n/a |  |  | Suckers growing from old stump |
| 46 | Laurel | Young | 2 | 10 | 4 |  |
| 47 | Yew | Young | 4.5 | 105 | 3 |  |
| 48 | Yew | Young | 5.6 | 125 | 4 |  |
| 49 | Hawthorn | Young | 2 | 23 | 2 |  |
| 50 | Holly/Laurel | Young | 2 |  | 4 |  |
| 51 | Sycamore | Young | 12 | 70 | 5 |  |
| 52 | Sycamore | Young | 12 | 70 | 5 |  |
| 53 | Norway Maple | Young | 15 |  |  |  |
| 54 | Norway Maple | Young | 15 |  |  |  |
| 55 | Holly | Young | 5 |  |  |  |



44\*

\*51

\*52

\*53

\*54

\*55

\*49

\*50

\*48

\*21

19\*

47\*

46\*

20\*

\*45

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

Plants recorded 2014 (English names used where possible)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Plant name** |
| Ferns | Wall Rue |
| Flowers | Alkanet, green |
| Flowers | Bedstraw, lady's |
| Flowers | Bluebell |
| Flowers | Bramble |
| Flowers | Buttercup, creeping |
| Flowers | Buttercup, meadow |
| Flowers | Cat's-ear |
| Flowers | Celandine, lesser |
| Flowers | Cleavers |
| Flowers | Clover, red |
| Flowers | Clover, white |
| Flowers | Cow parsley |
| Flowers | Dandelions |
| Flowers | Dog/field Rose |
| Flowers | Dog-violet, common |
| Flowers | Field/wood forget-me-not |
| Flowers | Ground elder |
| Flowers | Ground ivy |
| Flowers | Groundsel |
| Flowers | Bittercress, hairy |
| Flowers | Herb-Robert |
| Flowers | Hogweed |
| Flowers | Ivy |
| Flowers | Lady's mantle |
| Flowers | Lady's smock |
| Flowers | Trefoil, lesser |
| Flowers | Lettuce, wall |
| Flowers | Lord's-and-ladies |
| Flowers | Mouse-ear, common |
| Flowers | Oxeye daisy |
| Flowers | Parsley piert |
| Flowers | Plantain, ribwort |
| Flowers | Poppy, Welsh |
| Flowers | Primrose |
| Flowers | Ramsons |
| Flowers | Stonecrop, reflexed |
| Flowers | Speedwell, slender |
| Flowers | Sorrel, common |
| Flowers | Sow Thistle, smooth |
| Flowers | Speedwell, germander |
| Flowers | Stinging nettle |
| Flowers | Strawberry, barren |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Plant name** |
| Flowers | Vetch, bush |
| Flowers | Wild strawberry |
| Flowers | Willowherb, broad-leaved |
| Flowers | Willowherb, rosebay |
| Flowers | winter cress |
| Flowers | Wood anemone |
| Flowers | Wood avens |
| Flowers | Wood-rush, field |
| Flowers | Yellow pimpernel |
| Grasses | Foxtail, meadow |
| Grasses | Sweet Vernal Grass |
| Mosses | Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus |
| Trees and Shrubs | Ash |
| Trees and Shrubs | Box holly |
| Trees and Shrubs | Hawthorn |
| Trees and Shrubs | Holly |
| Trees and Shrubs | Horse Chestnut |
| Trees and Shrubs | Laurel, Cherry |
| Trees and Shrubs | Lime |
| Trees and Shrubs | Maple Norway |
| Trees and Shrubs | Oak |
| Trees and Shrubs | Sycamore |
| Trees and Shrubs | Thuja |
| Trees and Shrubs | Wych elm |
| Trees and Shrubs | Yew |

Animals recorded 2014 (English names used where possible)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bird | Black cap |
| Bird | Blackbird |
| Bird | Blue tit |
| Bird | Carrion crow |
| Bird | Chaffinch |
| Bird | Chiff chaff |
| Bird | Dunnock |
| Bird | Great tit |
| Bird | Robin |
| Bird | Wood pigeon |
| Bird | Wren |
| Coleoptera (Beetles) | ladybird, 14-spot |
| Coleoptera (Beetles) | leaf beetle, *Phaedon armouraciae* |
| Coleoptera (Beetles) | leaf beetle*, Altica lyrthri* |
| Coleoptera (Beetles) | ladybird, orange |
| Diptera (Flies) | hoverfly, *Rhingia campestris* |
| Diptera (Flies) | hoverfly, *Myathropa florea* |
| Diptera (Flies) | hoverfly, *Eristalis pertinax* |
| Hemiptera (bugs) | Shieldbug, bordered |
| Hemiptera (bugs) | Shieldbug, forget-me-not |
| Hemiptera (bugs) | Shieldbug, green |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Nomada flava* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | ant, *Formica fusca* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | ant, Myrmica rubra |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | bumblebee, common carder |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | Common wasp |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | Bumblebee, *Bombus sylvestris* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | bumblebee, early |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | Honey Bee |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mason Bee, *Osmia bicornis* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | solitary bee, *Andrena carantonica* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | solitary bee, *Nomada marshamella* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Andrena fulva* |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | bumblebee, tree |
| Hymenoptera (Ants, bees and wasps) | mining bee, *Lasioglossum calceatum* (nesting aggregation) |
| Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths) | butterfly, green veined white |
| Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths) | butterfly, Holly blue |
| Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths) | butterfly, orange tip |
| Lepidoptera (Butterflies and moths) | moth, scarlet tiger |
| Mammal | mouse/vole |