

ONGAR WILDLIFE SOCIETY

FLOWERS OF SOUTH EAST ENGLAND by Sue Buckingham

The OWLS group were treated to a wonderful evening of packed information about flowers of South East England, by Sue Buckingham who organises trips for Botanists and teaches Botany to adults.

She is from Kent, where the land is predominantly chalk and there are different habitats from Essex which is predominantly clay.

Her fascinating talk which was supplemented by the use of slides, covered various areas where wild flowers are prominent - for example, woodlands and heathlands in the Spring, where the soils are rich, moist and sandy. Here, there are many types of different species and pollenisation from Bluebells, Sweet Violets, Lily of the Valley and beautiful Orchids, to name but a few.

In downlands, the soils are very poor and plants tend to be more aromatic such as marjoram and thyme, whereas grassland meadows you are more likely to find perennial plants.

She mentioned disturbed field sites, such as waste land and areas on sides of roads where flowers such as poppies, cornflowers and scarlet pimpernel abound - these plants rely on their soil being turned over. Some habitats have declined especially in grassland. In acidic land, heathers are dominant and gorse is abundant.

Around rivers, ponds and lakes, you will find plants which thrive on this position and marsh marigold and loosestrife are very common.

Finally, she mentioned coastal paths, salt marshes, shingle beaches and clifftops; areas where plants have difficulty in growing, although samphires and glassworts can be found.

Bob Jenkins

The next Meetings of OWLS are:

Monday 15 November, 8pm - 'Otters' - Darren Tansley

Monday 13 December, 8pm - 'Wildlife of Southern Japan' - Paul Hale