

Spring Visit to Armstrong's Wood 12/05/2019.

We were a small and select group this spring with the two Paul's leading the bat roost surveys and just a few people from LAPWG. The meadows were blue and white with Bluebell, Stitchwort and Pig-nut. The orchids are later this year so just one early purple was seen. Honey-bees were feeding from a patch of Ground Ivy. Plenty of Violet Oil Beetles counted and rescued along the paths.



Bat numbers were quite small to begin with, just Pipistrelles were counted. But along the top path, a roost box was half-filled with Noctules, at least 8 with more hidden behind.



Droppings from the Noctule bats were quite large and coarse due to their diet, beetles I assume?

And then it was our grasses workshop on May 16th ~

Ten of us turned up for a morning session on grass structure as a means to identification led by Ian Bennallick from Botanical Cornwall and plant recorder for this half of the county. Using keys and looking at drawings of common species, 'ligule' 'auricle' 'spikelet' 'glume' 'lemma' 'palea' 'lodicule' are all terms that we tried to learn....!

We discussed the wider topic of grasses in agriculture and how they make up the main foods for most of the world population. And we have all received a file from Ian describing most of the grasses to be found in Cornwall.

Walking out from the hall in Lezant, we explored a local field with old pasture and walked along local lanes to find other grasses in the hedgerows.

Hopefully, we now feel a little more confident and able to explore further. My idea to take a grass and describe it as best I can without opening a book. Then look through a key and see if I have picked out the characteristics correctly; only had time to try this out once but I think it worked so thank you to Ian N for the idea and to Ian B for teaching us.



Was this the Barren Brome? (*above*)



Meadow Foxtail with purple anthers. (*left*)

Slightly off topic, one of the fields was full of Bulbous Buttercup with its reflexed sepals, (see *right*)



The list of the grasses that Ian B noted included: Common Bent-grass, Fiorin, Meadow Foxtail, Barren Brome, Sweet Vernel-grass, Onion Couch, Slender False Brome, Soft Brome, Crested Dog's-tail, Cock's Foot, Common Couch, Red Fescue, Flote-grass, Yorkshire Fog, Perennial Rye-grass, Annual, Spreading & Rough Meadow-grasses.