

Fobney Island Botanical Study 2014-2015

David Morris, November 2015

The flora of Fobney Island was surveyed on 8th August 2014 and again over several visits from May to July 2015. It had been my intention to map habitats and assign them to NVC communities, but other commitments prevented my completing this design.

In total 198 plant taxa (species, hybrids etc.) were found, a list of which is appended. Included are nine locally rare or scarce species and listed on the Berkshire and South Oxfordshire Rare Plants Register (Crawley, 2005). These are discussed below. For such a small area, 198 is a large number of species, reflecting the diversity of habitats seen on the island. More surely remain to be found, though they are likely only to be common or ruderal species.

Parts of the island were sown to create new wet meadow and riparian habitat. A list of species included in the mixes used was provided to me. Almost all of the species used in the mix can be found somewhere on the island. Many of these could have arisen naturally from the seed bank or have been carried in on flood water from the river, as indeed must have the species not specified in any of the seed mixes.

Rare Plants

Great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* is a rare plant in Berkshire (Crawley, 2005), but as it appears on the wet meadow seed mix species list it must be regarded as an introduction to Fobney Island. The remaining eight locally rare species, however, are not included in any of the seed mixes.

The three most interesting of the rare species are golden dock *Rumex maritimus*, nodding bur-marigold *Bidens cernua* and orange foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis*. The latter has not been seen in Berkshire for decades, while there are very few records for golden dock. These species are associated with the muddy, seasonally inundated edges of waterbodies, and the scrapes created at Fobney provide the perfect habitat.

Flowering rush *Butomus umbellatus*, perfoliate pondweed *Potamogeton perfoliatus* and lesser pondweed *P. pusillus* are aquatic plants. Small pondweed is a characteristic species of newly created water bodies, and is found in abundance with the alien Nuttall's waterweed *Elodea nuttallii* in the main scrape/pool. The other pondweed is found in silt banked up against the wall of the canal lock. Flowering rush is frequent with water plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica* around the western-most scrape on the island.

The remaining two species are of least interest. Rye brome *Bromus secalinus* was once a frequent agricultural weed and is now rather scarce in the county. It is not a natural part of any of the vegetation types found on the island and is unlikely to persist. Sweet-briar *Rosa rubiginosa* is a characteristic plant of scrub and hedges on chalky soils, and in Berks is therefore confined mostly to the north-western parts of the county. However, it is increasingly planted in new hedges and is easily spread by birds. The individual at Fobney was presumably introduced in such a manner as it did not appear to be planted.

The hybrid *Veronica x lackschewtizii* between the blue and pink water-speedwells (*V. anagalis-aquatica* and *V. catenata*, respectively) was also found in some numbers on Fobney. It is considered a rare plant in Berkshire by Crawley, but it may simply be mistaken for either of its parents. In any case, the size of hybrid population is an interesting feature of Fobney.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Distribution	Comment
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow		
<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>	sneezewort		
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	agrimony		
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	common bent		
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	creeping bent		
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	water plantain		
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	alder		
<i>Alopecurus aequalis</i>	orange foxtail	Many plants at SU7008971133	RPR, thought extinct in Berks
<i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i>	marsh foxtail		
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	angelica		
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	barren brome		
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	cow parsley		
<i>Apium nodiflorum</i>	fool's watercress		
<i>Arctium lappa</i>	greater burdock		
<i>Arctium minus</i>	lesser burdock		
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	false oat-grass		
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	mugwort		
<i>Atriplex prostrata</i>	spear-leaved orache		
<i>Avena fatua</i>	wild oat		
<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	common winter-cress		
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	daisy		
<i>Bidens cernua</i>	nodding bur-marigold	Frequent around the western-most scrape	RPR
<i>Bidens tripartita</i>	trifid bur-marigold		
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	soft brome		
<i>Bromus secalinus</i>	rye brome	Two plants with other arable grasses at SU7026071134	RPR; casual
<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	buddleja		
<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	flowering rush	Frequent around the western-most scrape	RPR
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	bindweed		
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	shepard's purse		
<i>Carduus crispus</i>	welted thistle		
<i>Carduus nutans</i>	musk thistle		
<i>Carex acutiformis</i>	lesser pond-sedge		
<i>Carex flacca</i>	glaucous sedge		
<i>Carex hirta</i>	hairy sedge		
<i>Carex otrubae</i>	false fox-sedge		
<i>Carex riparia</i>	greater pond-sedge		
<i>Centaurea nigra subsp. nigra</i>	black knapweed		

Scientific Name	Common Name	Distribution	Comment
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	common mouseear		
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	fat hen		
<i>Chenopodium rubrum</i>	red goosefoot		
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	creeping thistle		
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	marsh thistle		
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	spear thistle		
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	field bindweed		
<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	Canadian fleabane		
<i>Conyza sumatrensis</i>	Guernsey fleabane		
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	dogwood		
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn		
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	smooth hawksbeard		
<i>Crepis vesicaria</i>	beaked hawksbeard		
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cocksfoot		
<i>Daucus carota subsp. carota</i>	wild carrot		
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	tufted hair-grass		
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	teasle		
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	common spike-rush		
<i>Eloдея nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's water-weed		
<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	couch grass		
<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	American willowherb		
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	great willowherb		
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	broad-leaved willow-herb		
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	field horsetail		
<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>	water horsetail		
<i>Equisetum palustre</i>	marsh horsetail		
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	hemp agrimony		
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	red fescue		
<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	common cudweed		
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	meadowsweet		
<i>Galium album</i>	hedge bedstraw		
<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers		
<i>Galium verum</i>	lady's bedstraw		
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	cut-leaved cranesbill		
<i>Geranium molle</i>	doves cranesbill		
<i>Geranium pratense</i>	meadow cranesbill		
<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>	hedge cranesbill		
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	ground ivy		
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	floating sweet-grass		
<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	reed sweet-grass		
<i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i>	marsh cudweed		
<i>Hedera helix</i>	ivy		
<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	prickly ox-tongue		
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	hogweed		
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog		

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<i>Hordeum murinum subsp. murinum</i>	wall barley		
<i>Hordeum secalinum</i>	meadow barley		
<i>Humulus lupulus</i>	hops		
<i>Hypericum tetrapterum</i>	square-stemmed St John's wort		
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	cats ear		
<i>Impatiens capensis</i>	orange balsam		
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Himalayan balsam		
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	yellow iris		
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	jointed rush		
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	soft rush		
<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	hard rush		
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	field scabious		
<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	prickly lettuce		
<i>Lamium album</i>	white deadnettle		
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	nipplewort		
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	meadow vetchling		
<i>Lepidium draba</i>	hoary cress		
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	oxeye daisy		
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	perennial rye-grass		
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	birds-foot-trefoil		
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	greater birds-foot-trefoil		
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>	gypsywort		
<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	creeping jenny		
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	purple loosestrife		
<i>Malus pumila</i>	cultivated apple		
<i>Malva moschata</i>	musk mallow		
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	pineapple weed		
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	black medick		
<i>Melilotus albus</i>	white melilot		
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	common melilot		
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	water mint		
<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	corn mint		
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	water forget-me-not		
<i>Myosoton aquaticum</i>	water chickweed		
<i>Odontites vernus</i>	red bartsia		
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	hemlock water dropwort		
<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>	amphibious bistort		
<i>Persicaria lapathifolia</i>	pale persicaria		
<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>	redshank		
<i>Petasites hybridus</i>	butterbur		
<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	reed canary-grass		
<i>Phleum bertolonii</i>	lesser cats-tail grass		
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy grass		
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain		

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<i>Plantago major</i>	greater plantain		
<i>Poa annua</i>	annual meadow grass		
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	rough meadow grass		
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	knotgrass		
<i>Polypogon monspeliensis</i>	annual beard grass		
<i>Populus alba</i>	white poplar		
<i>Populus tremula</i>	aspen		
<i>Potamogeton pectinatus</i>	fennel-leaved pondweed		
<i>Potamogeton perfoliatus</i>	perfoliate pondweed	By the canal lock	RPR
<i>Potamogeton pusillus</i>	lesser pondweed	In the main scrape with <i>Elodea</i>	RPR
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	cinquefoil		
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	self-heal		
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	blackthorn		
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	fleabane		
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	meadow buttercup		
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup		
<i>Ranunculus sceleratus</i>	celery-leaved buttercup		
<i>Reseda luteola</i>	weld		
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	yellow rattle		
<i>Rorippa amphibia</i>	great yellow-cress		
<i>Rorippa palustris</i>	marsh yellow-cress		
<i>Rosa canina</i>	common dog rose	In hedge & along fence	RPR as data deficient; some planted
<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	sweet briar		RPR; if not planted, then likely a bird-sown garden plant
<i>Rubus caesius</i>	dewberry		
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	bramble		
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	clustered dock		
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	curled dock		
<i>Rumex hydrolapathum</i>	water dock		
<i>Rumex maritimus</i>	golden dock	Frequent around scrapes in the western, e.g. at SU70067113	RPR
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock		
<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>	arrow root		
<i>Salix caprea</i>	goat willow		
<i>Salix cinerea</i> subsp. <i>oleifolia</i>	rusty willow		
<i>Salix fragilis</i>	crack willow		
<i>Salix viminalis</i>	osier		

Scientific Name	Common Name	Distribution	Comment
<i>Salix x reichardtii</i>	hybrid sallow		
<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>	great burnet	Scattered across western half, e.g. three plants at SU7021671093	RPR, but likely sown
<i>Schedonorus arundinaceus</i>	tall fescue		
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	water figwort		
<i>Senecio erucifolius</i>	hoary ragwort		
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	ragwort		
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	groundsel		
<i>Silene dioica</i>	red campion		
<i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>	ragged robin		
<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	hedge mustard		
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	bittersweet		
<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	field sowthistle		
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	prickly sowthistle		
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	smooth sowthistle		
<i>Sparganium emersum</i>	unbranched bur-reed		
<i>Sparganium erectum</i>	branched bur-reed		
<i>Stachys palustris</i>	marsh woundwort		
<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	comfrey		
<i>Symphytum x uplandicum</i>	Russian comfrey		
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	dandelion		
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	lesser trefoil		
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	red clover		
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover		
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	scentless mayweed		
<i>Triticum aestivum</i>	bread wheat		
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	coltsfoot		
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	reedmace		
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	stinging nettle		
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	valerian		
<i>Valerianella locusta</i>	common cornsalad		
<i>Veronica anagallis-aquatica</i>	blue water-speedwell		
<i>Veronica arvensis</i>	wall speedwell		
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	brooklime		
<i>Veronica catenata</i>	pink water-speedwell		
<i>Veronica x lackschewitzii</i>	hybrid water-speedwell		RPR
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	tufted vetch		
<i>Vicia sativa ssp segetalis</i>	common vetch		

RPR: Berkshire and South Oxfordshire Rare Plant Register (Crawley, M., BSBI, 2005)