

Bracknell Forest Borough's Wild Orchids 2014

Overall, 2014 has been a good year for Bracknell Forest's wild orchids. Below is a summary of sightings of which I am aware.

BMW grass bank (SU 857 684). There were good numbers of **Twayblade** on the grass bank outside BMW on the Southern Industrial Estate, many of them fine specimens. On the same bank, several hundred flowering spikes of **Common Spotted Orchid** were as spectacular as ever.

Running Horse Roundabout (SU 883 691) and Lily Hill Park (SU 888 693). At the beginning of June there were 15 flowering spikes of **Early Marsh Orchid** on the grass banks at the Running Horse roundabout. However, by the end of the month every single spike had been trimmed off. The Borough Council is fully aware of this site, but the landscape management is still inconsistent and not of the required standard. In the hay meadow at Lily Hill Park about 10 **Early Marsh Orchid** were present, as were some 300 **Common Spotted Orchid**. About 40 to 50 hybrids between the two species were also counted.

Grass Bank behind Old Manor and Roman's (SU 873 694). About 50 flowers of **Pyramidal Orchid** were present on the bank behind the Old Manor, (18 spikes of *Orobanche minor* and two **Common Spotted Orchid** were also present). Four **Pyramidal Orchid** also appeared on the next bank towards Easthampstead House.

Twin Bridges Roundabout complex (SU 863 689). No **Pyramidal Orchid** flowered at Twin Bridges Roundabout, as all the central banks were mown this year, despite the fact that they should be protected. However there was some good news from the Twin Bridges Roundabout complex. Up to six spikes of **Bee Orchid** were present near the Mill Lane road sign (it is understood that these were found by Grahame Walshe). A further 7 spikes of **Bee Orchid** were present on the grass bank next to Subway 32 (found by landscape operative; bravo!!).

Harvest Ride (SU 862 706). Five **Pyramidal Orchid** were found by Des Sussex on the north side of Harvest Ride near Garth Meadows.

Crowthorne Woods (SU 853 649). At Crowthorne Woods, two **Southern Marsh Orchid** and three **Common Spotted Orchid** appeared, all on dry ground alongside rides.

Crown Wood (SU 882 673). A single **Common Spotted Orchid** was reported by Denise Butler on the bank of the pedestrian subway by the Crown Wood pub.

Swinley Road (SU 900 685). Approximately 7 spikes (one robust, the rest rather weedy) of **Green-flowered Helleborine** (*Epipactis phyllanthes*) and a single robust spike of **Broad-leaved Helleborine** were counted on the western side of Swinley Road, opposite to and north of the entrance to Englemere Pond car park.

Early Purple Orchid. The count of 97 **Early Purple Orchid** at their main Bracknell site was the lowest for ten years, but no cause for concern.

Gormoor Valley, a known site for **Southern Marsh Orchid**, was not checked this year.

John Ward-Smith email: teamws@o2.co.uk

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PS. If anyone knows of other records which are not reported here, I would be pleased to be informed.