

The Importance of Grimley's Natural History



Within its area of almost 1000 hectares, Grimley Parish has an exceptional range of ecological assets. The river Severn, the former gravel & brick pits wetland of the Grimley Reserve, Monkwood and Monkwood Green Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the new Green Farm reserve area, ancient hedgerows and pastureland combine to provide residents and visitors with an eye-watering wealth of wildlife interest which, in these days of climate change, agricultural intensification, pollution and overdevelopment, it is essential to preserve for future ecological health and helping avoidance of environmental catastrophe.

Organisations such as the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, West Midland Bird Club, Butterfly Conservation and Worcestershire Naturalists' Club are all very active in the Parish. These groups provide a wide range of walks, access, information and nature conservation activities for local residents and visitors. I have also been involved in the ecological aspects of extending St. Bartholomew's church burial ground and the surveys for the MHDC Hallow Fields project with the RSPB.

Recently, central government seems to have lost its way in its thinking over the environment with regulatory changes such as the Planning and Infrastructure Act and areas of less than 2,000m² to be exempt from delivering the mandatory 10% biodiversity uplift. This is despite strong objections from wildlife and nature conservations. Such thinking erodes our national wildlife assets and ecosystem health which are already under severe threat. No need to take my word for it, just ask yourself how many times you have to clean insects of your car nowadays, or how reduced are the numbers of songbirds, newts, frogs and toads.

It is against this background that I and other ecologists and conservationists work. I list below, for anyone interested who is attending the Malvern Hills District Connected Communities Recognition Scheme's Community Celebration Event, some of the results of studies by myself and colleagues which are accessible to download from our web site. I am still working on several animal groups (invertebrates especially) and will be updating as I progress.

To receive an email of this document so you can click on the links, please just email me (christopherbetts@bettsecology.com). If any of the links don't work, it is probably because of updates or title changes

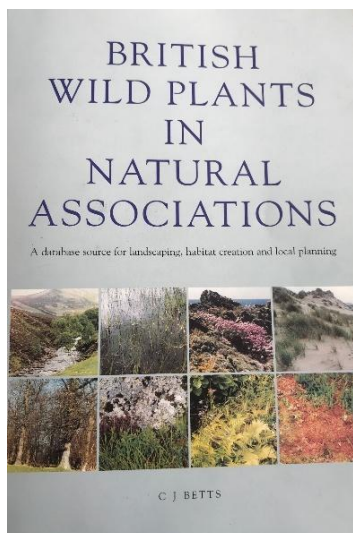
Monkwood Green SSSI

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This is a database source for landscaping, habitat creation and local planning compiled by Dr Betts. Those who have used this resource since it was first produced in 1998 have recognised its value to environmental professionals who are responsible for vegetation work, and to all those who have an interest in creating, repairing or caring for habitats and natural assemblages of native British flora. Organised to conform with the arrangement of the *National Vegetation Classification*, with cross-referencing to CORINE biotopes, the Palaearctic habitats classification, Natura 2000 and other classification systems, it covers Woodland, Scrub, Heathland, Moorland, Saxicolous Communities, Grassland, Sea Cliffs, Beaches and Sand-Dunes, Freshwater Marshes, Salt-Marsh, Aquatic Vegetation and Open/Weedy Habitats. It has summaries of over 200 different plant communities and provides indicative templates for establishing native plantings by giving Tables of the core species which are most likely to be found in the wild under the specific environmental conditions prevailing at a site. It can be used to guide selection of the basic plant assemblages which, under suitable management, will have the greatest chance of success at a particular locality as well as fitting the native British landscape. The database contents, introduction, classifications and index are available to download below (Vegbase intro index etc. web version 2019 update). For the individual community tables and text (listed in the

Contents), please email me as above or Eileen Baty eileenbaty@bettsecology.com, indicating which are of interest to you.

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Miscellany

Hartlebury Common Local Nature Reserve

I have decided to provide my PhD thesis on the phytosociology of Hartlebury Common Local Nature Reserve as a free download. Although it was written in 1990 as a result of field research work in the 1980s, there is much of relevance today which I hope may be taken up by the Common's managers or a new generation of students. A recent walk over the Reserve makes it clear that there are significant opportunities for work to halt, reverse and restore elements of the vegetation's ecology as an exceptional inland lowland heath which have suffered in the years since I wrote this paper.

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Dr Betts holds a first class honours degree in ecology, land-use and biology and a doctorate in phytosociology. He is a Chartered Biologist, Fellow of the British Naturalists' Association and a Member the Institution of Environmental Sciences. He has twenty years' experience in heavy industry and over three decades in ecological professional practice with expertise in the UK, EU, USA and South Africa, a lifetime's experience in a range of environmental science and natural history subjects and is a fluent francophone. He has served as a member of the London Natural History Museum's Identification Qualification (IdQ) Advisory Board and is involved in various wildlife and nature conservation projects. He is also Editor of the Worcestershire Naturalists' Club's *Transactions*, one of the oldest natural history societies in Britain. He was a lecturer for a time at Worcester College of HE before it became a university and led degree students on fieldwork to southern France, Switzerland and Tunisia.

A list of Dr Betts' publications can be found at <https://www.bettsecology.co.uk/cjb-published-papers>.