

Walk Report: 18th June 2026, St Nicholas Churchyard, Brockenhurst led by Julia Race and Andrea Janssens

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— Stock Dove on the weathervane © Richard Smith

Meeting in the car park of St Nicholas Church, Brockenhurst, a Stock Dove was observed on the church weather vane, and Firecrest, Blackbird and Robin seen. Many wild flowers were recorded as we climbed the steps to enter the churchyard, with Lady's Bedstraw by the gate. Beautiful lichens were examined on the gravestones in front of the church, where a Parasol Mushroom was also found.



— Parasol mushroom © Richard Smith

Taking a path to the left of the church, we stopped to examine the hollow trunk of the 1000 year old Yew. Continuing downhill through trees, on the left hand side of the churchyard, many woodland wild flowers were observed: Some such as Primrose, Lords-and-Ladies, Bluebell and Wood Anemone were in leaf/seed. However many were in flower including Meadow Buttercup, European Golden Rod and Common Spotted Orchid.



— Common Spotted Orchid © Richard Smith

Coming out of the trees into open, long grass, there was a carpet of wildflowers including Ox-eye Daisy, Creeping Cinquefoil and Meadow Vetchling, together with further Common Spotted Orchid. The group spread out, with some observing and recording insects found in the long grass, while others turned off to the left onto a side path to view a large number of Common Spotted Orchids growing in profusion amongst the graves.



— Red Longhorn Beetle *Stictoleptura rubra* – male © Richard Smith



— Migrant Hoverfly – *Eupeodes corollae* © Richard Smith

Continuing into the Commonwealth War Graves section, disappointingly few pollinators were found on the Salvias, perhaps because the weather remained overcast.



— Large Skipper – male © Richard Smith

However, on returning to the long grass, a Large Skipper was seen on a Common Knapweed, and the open view provided an opportunity for bird watching, with various birds spotted / heard including a Goldcrest, Carrion Crow and Coal Tit.



— Tree creeper juvenile – © Richard Smith

Continuing downhill to the bottom of the churchyard, taking a coffee break, then turning right, the group passed a large area of long grass on damp ground, which was rich in wildflowers such as Marsh Thistle and Lesser Stitchwort.



— *Zophomyia temula* © Richard Smith

It was also abundant in insect life, the Marbled White butterflies were too many to count, while Small Skipper and Silver Y were also found. Adjacent short grass was carpeted in Self-heal and Bird's-foot Trefoil in flower.



— Marbled White butterfly © Richard Smith



— Common Blue butterfly © Richard Smith

Leaving the churchyard by a gate on the right onto a shady lane, a short detour left (downhill) revealed Starlings nesting in a hole in the trunk of a mature Ash tree. Turning back uphill, a gentle ascent through trees led back to the car park: Shade loving plants such as Enchanter's Nightshade, Common Figwort and Harts Tongue Fern were seen.

Species List

Flora

- Wood Sage
- Herb Bennett
- Herb Robert
- Nipplewort
- Common Ragwort
- Ribwort Plantain
- Yarrow
- Lady's Bedstraw
- Mouse Eared Hawkweed
- Ox-eye Daisy
- Ground Ivy (in leaf)
- Sheep Sorrel
- Bramble

- Stinging Nettle
- Cleavers
- Cat's Ear
- Dandelion
- Creeping Buttercup
- Meadow Buttercup
- Germander Speedwell
- Common Spotted-orchid
- Wood anemone (in leaf)
- Bluebell (in seed)
- Bugle
- Honeysuckle
- Primrose (in seed)
- Dog violet (in leaf)
- European Goldenrod
- Lily of the Valley (in leaf)
- Lords-and-Ladies (in seed)
- Brown Knapweed
- Bird's-foot Trefoil
- Red Clover
- Tormentil
- Creeping Cinquefoil
- Meadow Vetchling
- Crested Dog's-tail
- Yorkshire Fog
- Creeping Jenny (in leaf)
- Common Knapweed
- Horsetail
- Silverweed
- Self-heal
- White Clover
- Daisy
- Lesser Stitchwort
- Lesser Hop Trefoil
- Marsh Thistle
- Kidney Vetch
- Common Chickweed
- Lady's Mantle
- Lesser Trefoil
- Hanging Sedge
- Enchanter's Nightshade
- Common Figwort
- Hart's Tongue Fern
- Wall Pennywort

Insects

Butterflies / moths

- Common Blue
- Large Skipper
- Marbled White
- Meadow Brown
- Red Admiral
- Small Skipper
- Silver Y
- Garden Grass-veneer

Other insects

- Migrant Hoverfly
- *Stictoleptura rubra* – Red-brown Longhorn Beetle
- *Zophomyia temula* – Jet-black Parasite Fly
- *Empis livida*

Birds

- Robin
- Firecrest
- Blackbird
- Wood Pigeon
- Stock Dove
- Goldcrest
- Tree Creeper
- Carrion Crow
- Coal Tit (heard)
- Pied Wagtail
- Starling
- Mediterranean Gull (heard)
- Greenfinch (heard)
- Swift
- Wren
- Blackcap (heard)
- Great Spotted Woodpecker

Fungi

- Parasol Mushroom
- *Macrolepiota excoriata*