



# St Andrew's Church

Norton, nr Presteigne, Powys, LD8 2EY SO 305 672

# Churchyard Grassland Management Brief

Written as part of the Biodiversity Hotspots in Mid Wales Project Funded by Natural Resources Wales





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Plant survey 2019 by Caring for God's Acre and the local community

# 1. Introduction

Since 1945, 97% of flower rich grassland, that was once widespread in the countryside, has vanished. Many burial grounds act as havens for this flower rich grassland because they have not been artificially fertilised or ploughed. The resulting community of plants will have taken many years to establish.

Managed sensitively, this lovely old meadow grassland can enhance the burial site for visitors, as well as for wildlife, making it a more peaceful and beautiful place for quiet reflection and remembrance. Burial grounds can be well placed to become seed donor sites which means this historic habitat has the potential to be restored elsewhere in the local area.

Conservation management in burial grounds is about active management, not neglect. It is very important to draw up a management brief that is appropriate for your site, realistic for your resources and welcomed by your community.

This management brief focuses on the grassland only. All management suggestions should be reviewed periodically to make sure they remain appropriate.

# 2. St Andrew's Churchyard

This beautiful churchyard is under half a hectar in size, is well managed and has three notable yews. It has a slight gradient and is surrounded by hedgerows and dry stone walls. It is open for burials. The immediate habitat surrounding the site is gardens, woodland and roads.

A search of the biological records within the National Biodiversity Network Atlas from the 1km square that encompasses this churchyard contains 143 species. There are 13 fungi species listed including the Parrot Waxcap and the Golden Waxcap. The species of bird listed include swallow, pied wagtail, goldcrest, nuthatch, kestrel, tawny owl, redwing. In the past few years, moth, butterfly and plant surveys have been undertaken in the churchyard by local surveyors.

See Action Pack Sheet B 10, Surveying for plants and animals.

## 3. Grassland – management advice

St Andrew's churchyard has areas of both species rich and species poor grassland.

The species rich area of grassland is located on the South side of the church (marked area A on the map, page 8). The sward is characterised by species such as harebell, pignut, knapweed, yarrow and bush vetch. For the past two years this area has been managed as a summer meadow. It is regularly cut through the year and then left to grow long and flower for around 12 weeks over the summer.

The species poor area is located on the North side of the churchyard (marked area B on the map, page 8). This area is dominated by willowherb, brambles and nettles.

There are not many trees on site which is good as they would cast shade on the grassland and decrease the number of flowering species. It would be beneficial to continue a policy of not planting new trees in the churchyard. The hedge needs maintaining so that it does not encroach the grassland or damage the dry stone wall. The churchyard has two lengths of dry stone walls which are well maintained and have a variety of wall flora including valerian and spleenwort.

#### Advice

A mosaic of grass at varying heights will help wildlife to flourish, while also ensuring the churchyard is managed appropriately for visitors.

See Action Pack sheet A2, Caring for grassland for details on grass heights.

The variety of grass heights to consider are:

Short – like a lawn.

**Medium** – cut regularly whilst keeping the mowers blade height to about 10 cm to enable the low growing plants to flower.

**Long and flowery** – left for 10-12 weeks over the summer months and then cut regularly after that.

Long and tussocky – cut once a year, or every other year.

Golden Rule: always pick up your grass cuttings, regardless of the length of the grass.

Species rich grassland depends on the soil having low fertility. High residual soil fertility allows competitieve grasses to grow fast and crowd out the smaller species.

This is why cutting and removing the grass is important and why we advise the introduction of yellow rattle.

For St Andrews we recommend incorporating all heights of grass. More detail about what and where can be found on the map (page 8).

### Area A

**Currently** this area is managed as a summer flowering meadow (long and flowery). Grass clippings are removed.

#### **Recommended changes**

We recommend continuing with the current cutting regime and keeping this area as a summer flowering meadow. In order to keep the competitive grasses in check the area would benefit from an extra cut in the autumn or spring and the addition of yellow rattle.



#### Tasks to do in Area A

- Keep regularly cutting and removing the clippings up until around the end of March/beginning of April
- Leave whole area to grow long for around 12 weeks between mid/end of March and the end of July
- At the end of 12 weeks cut and remove the grass using strimmers or scythes. Avoid cutting the patches of harebells while they are flowering cut these later
- Continue to cut and remove clippings for the rest of the growing season keeping the grass to a height of either short or medium
- Sow yellow rattle in the summer or autumn (more information on page 8)
- Consider incorporating a long and tussocky section along the area of hedge (marked on map, page 8) Cut this once a year or every other year after August so that butterfly eggs can hatch. *See Action Pack Sheet B 6, Butterflies, moths and other insects*
- Keep at least 1m width along the edge of the path short
- Cut paths through the area so people can enjoy walking among the flowers
- Undertake plant survey with CfGA June/July 2019 and repeat each year if possible
- Look out for grassland fungi, for example waxcaps in the autumn. See *Action Pack sheet B8, Wonderful waxcaps and other fungi*
- Have a small sign on display to explain management (CfGA can provide wording for this)

## Area B

On speaking with those responsible for managing the churchyard it is clear that the wish is for this area to be better managed. At the moment it is undermanaged, species poor and not visually fitting for the churchyard.

#### **Recommended changes**

Due to the steep slope this area would be hard to regularly mow so the best solution would be to manage it as a summer meadow area. First the brambles, nettles and willowherb need to be brought under control. The vegetation needs to be removed, roots pulled or dug up, and a different cutting regime put in place.

Manage as the 'long and flowery' grass height outlined above. To do this simply plan for about 12 weeks without cutting anytime between mid March and the end of July. Cut areas of long grass before the end of July/beginning of August if possible. If you cut later than August the area will look untidy and the nutrients of the grass will go down into the roots (which will give the grass a competitive advantage over the flowers in the next growing season).

#### Tasks to do in Area B

- Keep regularly pulling nettles, brambles and rosebay willowherb and cutting and removing any vegetation until around the end of March/beginning of April
- Leave area to grow long for around 12 weeks anytime from mid March/beginning of April until the end of July. During this time control nettles/brambles and willowherb as required
- At the end of 12 weeks cut and remove the grass using strimmers or scythes
- Continue to cut and remove clippings for the rest of the growing season keeping the grass to a height of either short or medium
- Continue to pull nettles/brambles and willowherb and ensure willowherb does not set seed in late summer
- Sow yellow rattle in the lower section in summer or autumn
- Before Area A is cut at the end of summer collect seed from it and scatter on Area B to introduce more wildflowers
- Undertake plant survey with CfGA in June/July 2019 and repeat each year if possible to monitor changes
- Look out for grassland fungi, for example waxcaps in the autumn. See *Action Pack sheet B8, Wonderful waxcaps and other fungi*
- Consider having a small sign on display to explain management (CfGA can provide wording for this)

## **Yellow Rattle**

This plant is very useful in creating and restoring wildflower meadows. It is a semi-parasitic, meadow annual which attaches itself to neighbouring grasses through the root system and reduces the vigour of the grass.

Where yellow rattle is present you can see that the grass is shorter and less dense. Sow yellow rattle seed in the summer or autumn, so that it over- winters in the soil.

It needs to reach bare soil so it is best sown after cutting and you may need to scarify the soil with a rake to expose soil. After sowing, tread the seed in but do not cover it with soil. Sometimes it doesn't germinate well, so keep trying for several years!



Yellow Rattle is an annual, so it must be allowed to flower and set seed before being cut.

It flowers early in the summer (usually June) so cutting the grass that it is in needs to take place before it grows (March/April depending on location) and after it seeds in June.



# Area C

This area is currently well managed as a spring meadow.

#### **Recommended changes**

A spring meadow area is perfect for this part of the churchyard that has visited memorials. It has a good show of spring flowers such as cyclamen, snowdrops and daffodils. The patches with spring flowers should continue to be left uncut until the bulb foliage has begun to turn yellow. This could be as late as May/June. After this the area can then be cut regularly throughout the growing season.

Consider cutting to a medium height by keeping the mower blade about 10 cm above the ground. This will allow the low growing plants such as clover, speedwell and self heal to flower. This will in turn benefit a whole range of invertebrates including butterflies and bees, whilst still maintaining a neat appearance.

#### Tasks to do in Area C

- When the spring flowers are over (possibly May/June) begin regularly cutting and removing the grass clippings throughout the growing season
- Consider raising the height of the mower blades/strimmer to 10cm above the ground for every cut
- Keep the grass path cut short
- Look out for grassland fungi, for example waxcaps in the autumn
- Undertake plant survey with CfGA June 2019 and repeat each year if possible

# Area D

This area currently has a mixed cutting regime with the grass being kept short at the front of the church and left long around the side.

#### **Recommended changes**

On speaking with those responsible for managing the churchyard it is clear that the wish is for this whole area to be kept short or medium. This is appropriate for this part of the churchyard.

# Area E

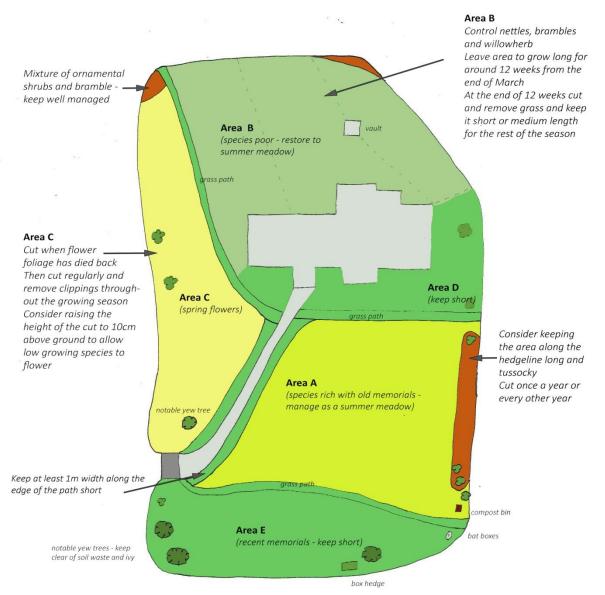
This area is where burials currently take place. It is currently kept short.

#### **Recommended changes**

The current management is appropriate for this part of the churchyard.

## 4. Map with management recommendations

This map is not to scale or exactly accurate, it is meant to inform management rather than precisely record location.



#### St Andrew's Churchyard, Norton

# 5. Plan – annual and three yearly

#### PLAN what you want to do

The Map in section 4 and these tables show the changes which could take place over the next few years. The map shows <u>where</u> and the Annual and Three Year Work Plan show <u>when</u>.

### **Annual Work Plan**

Кеу	What	Action	J	F	м	Α	Μ	J	J	Α	S	0	Ν	D
GRASS Area A	Increase the diversity of this species rich area	Keep regularly cutting and removing the clippings up until around the end of March/beginning of April												
		Leave whole area to grow long for around 12 weeks between mid/end of March and the end of July												
		At the end of 12 weeks cut and remove the grass using strimmers or scythes. Avoid cutting the patches of harebells while they are flowering – cut these later												
		Continue to cut and remove clippings for the rest of the growing season – keeping the grass to a height of either short or medium												
		Sow yellow rattle in the summer or autumn (more information on page 8)												

	Increase the value to invertebrates Ensure a	Consider incorporating a long and tussocky section along the area of hedge – (marked on map, page 8) Cut this once a year or every other year Keep at least 1m width along												
	cared for appearance is maintained	the edge of the path short												
		Cut paths through the area so people can enjoy walking among the flowers												
			J	F	м	Α	м	J	J	Α	S	0	Ν	D
Grass Area B	Increase the diversity of this species poor area	Keep regularly pulling nettles, brambles and rosebay willowherb and cutting and removing any vegetation until around the end of March/beginning of April												
		Leave area to grow long for around 12 weeks anytime from March/April until the end of July												
		At the end of 12 weeks cut and remove the clippings												
		Continue to cut and remove clippings for the rest of the growing season – keeping the grass to a height of either short or medium												
		Continue to pull nettles/brambles and willowherb and ensure willowherb does not set seed in late summer												
		Sow yellow rattle in the lower section in summer or autumn												

			J	F	м	Α	М	J	J	Α	S	0	N	D
		Before Area A is cut at the end of summer – collect seed from it and scatter on Area B to introduce more wildflowers												
Grass Area C	Continue to manage for spring flowers	When the spring flowers are over (possibly May/June) begin regularly cutting and removing the grass clippings throughout the growing season												
	Allow low growing plants in this species rich area to flower	Consider raising the height of the mower blades/strimmer to 10cm above the ground for every cut Always remove the clippings												
	Ensure a cared for appearance is maintained	Keep the grass path cut short												
Grass Area D	Ensure a cared for appearance is maintained	Keep area to a short or medium height and remove clippings												
Grass Area E	Ensure a cared for appearance is maintained	Keep area to a short height and remove clippings												

			J	F	М	Α	Μ	J	J	Α	S	0	Ν	D
General														
	Find out what species are in the grassland	Undertake plant survey in June/July – CfGA will organise this Look out for grassland fungi, for example waxcaps in the autumn												
	Visitors	Have a small sign on display to explain management												

			J	F	Μ	Α	Μ	J	J	Α	S	0	Ν	D
MONUMENTS	Add colour and wildlife value	Consider planting low growing native sedums within the kerbstones of unvisited graves												

## Three Year Work Plan

Activity	Year	Year	Year
•	1	2	3
Grass, Area A continue with current mowing regime, introduce			
yellow rattle			
Grass, Area B initiate new cutting/pulling/mowing regime			
Grass, Area C manage for spring flowers			
Grass, Area D keep area short or medium height			
Grass, Area E keep area short			
General, grassland species survey training (with CfGA)			
General, grassland species identification (each year if possible!)			
Monuments, consider planting low growing native sedums within			
the kerbstones of unvisited graves			

## 6. Involving the community

Let the community know how special your churchyard is, what you are doing to enhance it and also how they can get involved. Some ideas:

- Put a copy of the Management Brief in the church for visitors to see.
- Laminate the map from the Management Brief so people can understand what mangagement is taking place in the different areas.
- Submit articles about your churchyard and notifications for people to get involved in local publications.
- Run an event as part of National 'Love your Burial Ground' Week hosted by CfGA and held in the second week of June every year.
- Ensure there are signs during the summer months to explain why the grass is long. This can consist of simple temporary A4 laminated signs on a low post.
- Encourage visitors to write the species they see in a visitors' book.
- Have a wildflower identification session every year and invite local people to come and help identify the flowers in your churchyard. We would love to know what you find. Please see *Action Pack sheet B 10, Surveying for plants and animals.* You can e-mail us your records or submit them directly onto our website at www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/our-beautiful-burial-grounds-project/share-yourrecords.
- Involve people in volunteer work parties *Action Pack sheets D1, Involving volunteers and D2 Health and safety.*

# 7. Useful information provided by Caring for God's Acre

# Churchyard and Burial Ground Action Pack (sheets in bold have been mentioned in this brief)

#### A Managing Churchyards and Burial Grounds

- A 1 The five steps to churchyard and burial ground care
- A 2 Caring for grassland
- A 3 Cutting long grass and dealing with grass cuttings
- A 4 Inspecting and caring for trees
- A 5 Yews and other veteran trees
- A 6 Practical management of trees and shrubs
- A 7 Caring for hedgerows
- A 8 Creating a wildflower meadow and helping wildlife
- A 9 Pesky plants and animals
- A 10 Caring for stonework, metalwork and woodwork
- A 11 Caring for stone walls

#### **B Havens for Wildlife**

- B 1 Slow worms and other reptiles and amphibians
- B 2 Hedgehogs and other mammals
- B 3 Bats in the belfry
- B 4 Swifts and other birds
- B 5 Bumblebees and other bees, wasps and ants
- B 6 Butterflies, moths and other insects
- B 7 Learn about lichens
- B 8 Wonderful waxcaps and other fungi
- B 9 Mosses, liverworts and ferns
- B 10 Surveying for plants and animals
- B 11 Burial sites across Britain

#### **C Burial Grounds Through Time**

- C1 Archaeology and historic built features
- C 2 History, folklore and traditions
- C 3 Social history of burial grounds

#### **D** Involving People

- D 1 Involving volunteers
- D 2 Health and safety
- D 3 Recreation and learning things to do
- D 4 Telling the story interpretation
- D 5 Applying for grants
- D 6 Sustainability

#### **Risk Assessment Template**

Action Pack sheet D2 explains how to do a risk assessment and the blank form acts as a template to undertake your own.

## **Education Pack**

If you are involving the local primary or pre-school please encourage them to take a look at our Education Pack which is linked to the national curriculum. It is available on our website (under Resources Information). Although you do not currently have schools using your churchyard, it contains lots of fun activities that are also good for children if you have a local cub group, messy church or an event.

#### **Mini Films**

You may find our minifilms on our website useful. https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/our-work/films/

#### The following are available:

Cherishing Churchyards Week (now renamed Love your Burial Ground Week) The Five Steps The Importance of Grasslands How to Use the Hand Haybailer

More will be released soon.

#### **Ancient Yew Group**

To find out information on your yew trees take a look at www.ancient-yew.org which has an amazing map and descriptions of all the fabulous specimens from across the UK. https://www.ancient-yew.org/

#### We Would Love your Records

Churchyards and cemeteries provide a rich but often overlooked haven for wildlife. There is an urgent need for this wildlife to be surveyed and recorded. If you do record the plants or animals in your site please let us know what you find. To make a record simply let us know your name, what you saw, what burial ground you saw it in and the date you saw it. Then post or e-mail the records to us or use the online recording form on our website. Contact us on info@cfga.org.uk or visit our webpage which explains how to share your records:

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/our-beautiful-burial-grounds-project/share-your-records

To see a list of the species recorded in your burial ground, please visit our new Burial Grounds Portal on the NBN Atlas (National Biodiversity Network): https://burialgrounds.nbnatlas.org/

Caring for God's Acre can continue to advise and support you in the management of your churchyard. Please let us know how it is going and if we can help in any way.

## **Natural Resources Wales**

Natural Resources Wales have kindly funding this Management Brief as part of our *Biodiversity Hotspots in Wales* project.

It's Natural Resources Wales' job to look after Wales' natural resources and what they provide: to help reduce the risk to people and properties of flooding and pollution; to look after special places for people's well-being and wildlife; to provide timber; and to work with others to help manage them sustainably. The staff at Natural Resources Wales have the knowledge, expertise, and passion to help make the sustainable management of natural resources a reality.

> Caring for God's Acre 11 Drovers House, The Auction Yard, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9BZ <u>www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk</u> info@cfga.org.uk 01588 673041

# Appendix 1 Plant species list (grassland) by Caring for God's Acre and the local community 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Species found during the training session - not a complete list

#### Latin Name

#### Welsh Name

Achillea millefolium Aegopodium podagraria Agrostis capillaris Alopecurus pratensis Anthoxanthum odoratum Anthriscus sylvestris Aquilegia vulgaris Arabidopsis thaliana Arrhenatherum elatius Arum maculatum Asplenium ruta-muraria Asplenium trichomanes Athyrium filix-femina **Bellis** perennis Briza media Buddleja davidii Calystegia sepium Campanula rotundifolia Cardamine flexuosa Cardamine pratensis Carex caryophyllea Centaurea nigra subsp. nigra Centranthus ruber Ceterach officinarum

Gwilffrai Llysiau'r Droedwst Maeswellt Cyffredin Cynffonwellt y Maes Perwellt y Gwanwyn Cyfardwf Rwsia Troed y Golomen Berfain Cyffredin Ceirchwellt Tal Pidyn y Gog Duegredynen Muriau Duegredynen Gwallt y Forwyn Marchredynen Fenyw Llygad y Dydd Crydwellt

Clych y Perthi Clychau'r Eos Chwerw'r Coed Blodyn Llefrith Hesgen Gynnar Y Bengaled Triaglog Coch

#### **English Name**

Yarrow Ground-elder Common Bent Meadow Foxtail Sweet Vernal-grass **Cow Parsley** Columbine **Thale Cress** False Oat-grass Lords-and-Ladies Wall-rue Maidenhair Spleenwort Lady-fern Daisy Quaking-grass Butterfly-bush Hedge Bindweed Harebell Wavy Bitter-cress Cuckooflower Spring-sedge **Common Knapweed** Red Valerian Rustyback

Chamerion angustifolium Circaea lutetiana Cirsium arvense Conopodium majus Crocosmia spp. Cyclamen hederifolium Dactylis glomerata Deschampsia cespitosa Dryopteris filix-mas Elytrigia repens Epilobium montanum Epilobium parviflorum Festuca rubra Fragaria vesca Galium aparine Galium saxatile Geranium robertianum Geum urbanum Glechoma hederacea Hedera helix Heracleum sphondylium Holcus lanatus Holcus mollis Hypericum perforatum x maculatum = H. x desetangsii Hypochaeris radicata Lapsana communis Lathyrus pratensis Leontodon hispidus Leucanthemum vulgare Leycesteria formosa Lolium perenne Lotus corniculatus Luzula campestris Mycelis muralis Myosotis arvensis Pentaglottis sempervirens Pilosella aurantiaca Pimpinella saxifraga Plantago lanceolata Poa annua Poa pratensis Poa trivialis Polygonum aviculare Potentilla reptans Potentilla sterilis Primula vulgaris Prunella vulgaris **Ranunculus** acris Ranunculus bulbosus Ranunculus repens

**Helyglys Hardd** Mochlys Swynyddlys **Ysgallen y Maes** Cneuen y Ddaear **Mwsglys** Bara'r Hwch **Byswellt Brigwellt Garw** Marchredynen Wryw Helyglys Llydanddail Helyglys Rhosynnaidd Peiswellt Coch Llwyn Mefus Gwyllt Llau'r Offeiriad Briwydd Wen Y Goesgoch Llvs Bened Eidral lorwg Efwr Maswellt Penwyn Maswellt Rhedegog Melynydd Cartheig Ytbysen y Ddôl Peradyl Garw Llygad-Llo Mawr **Rhygwellt Parhaol** Pysen-y-Ceirw Milfyw Gwylaeth y Fagwyr Sgorpionllys y Maes Llysiau'r -Gwrid Gwyrdd Gwreiddiriog Llyriad yr Ais Gweunwellt Unflwydd Gweunwellt Llyfn **Gweunwellt Garw** Pumnalen Ymlusgol Llwyn Coeg-Fefus Briallen Y Feddyges Las Blodyn Ymenyn Blodyn-Ymenyn Bondew **Blodyn-Ymenyn Ymlusgol** 

Rosebav Willowherb Enchanter's-nightshade **Creeping Thistle** Pignut Montbretia Sowbread Cock's-foot **Tufted Hair-grass** Male-fern **Common Couch Broad-leaved Willowherb** Hoary Willowherb **Red Fescue** Wild Strawberry Cleavers Heath Bedstraw Herb-Robert Herb Bennet Ground-ivy lvy Hogweed Yorkshire-fog **Creeping Soft-grass** Des Etangs' St John's-wort Cat's-ear Nipplewort Meadow Vetchling Rough Hawkbit **Oxeye Daisy** Himalayan Honeysuckle Perennial Rye-grass Common Bird's-foot-trefoil Field Wood-rush Wall Lettuce Field Forget-me-not Green Alkanet Fox-and-cubs Burnet-saxifrage **Ribwort Plantain** Annual Meadow-grass Smooth Meadow-grass **Rough Meadow-grass** Knotgrass Creeping Cinquefoil Barren Strawberry Primrose Selfheal Meadow Buttercup **Bulbous Buttercup Creeping Buttercup** 

Rhinanthus minor Rosa canina Rubus Rubus idaeus Rumex acetosa Rumex obtusifolius **Rumex sanguineus** Sagina procumbens Sedum anglicum Sedum rupestre Senecio jacobaea Senecio vulgaris Sonchus asper Sonchus oleraceus Stachys sylvatica Stellaria graminea Symphoricarpos albus Taraxacum Trifolium campestre Trifolium dubium Trifolium pratense **Trifolium repens Trisetum flavescens** Urtica dioica Veronica arvensis Veronica chamaedrys Veronica hederifolia Veronica serpyllifolia Vicia cracca Vicia sepium

Cribell Felen Rhosyn Gwyllt Llwyn Mwyar Duon Mafonen Suran y Cwn Dail Tafol Tafolen y Coed Corwlyddyn Gorweddol Briweg y Cerrig

Llysiau'r Gingroen Creulys Llaethysgallen Arw Llaethysgallen Lefn Briwlys y Gwrych Serenllys Bach

Dant y Llew Cyffredin Meillionen Hopysaidd Meillionen Hopysaidd Fach Meillionen Goch Meillionen Wen Ceirchwellt Danhadlen Boeth Rhwyddlwyn y Fagwyr Llygad Doli Rhwyddlwyn Eiddewddail Rhwyddlwyn Dail Teim Ffacbysen y Berth Ffacbysen y Cloddiau Yellow-rattle Dog-rose Bramble Raspberry **Common Sorrel Broad-leaved Dock** Wood Dock Procumbent Pearlwort **English Stonecrop Reflexed Stonecrop Common Ragwort** Groundsel Prickly Sow-thistle Smooth Sow-thistle Hedge Woundwort Lesser Stitchwort Snowberry Dandelion Hop Trefoil Lesser Trefoil **Red Clover** White Clover Yellow Oat-grass **Common Nettle** Wall Speedwell Germander Speedwell Ivy-leaved Speedwell **Thyme-leaved Speedwell Tufted Vetch Bush Vetch**