



FLORA

All the photographs shown were taken in the Hurst Water Meadow. All species have been identified using the new flora Wild Flowers of Britain & Ireland by Marjorie Blamey, Richard Fitter and Alastair Fitter, A & C Black 2003.

Blackthorn

Flowers in March, before the leaves come out. The sharp thorns have made this a favourite plant for hedging. The fruit, sloes, are a commonly used to make into sloe gin.



Cocksfoot

So-called because the flower head resembles a cock's foot. The best grass for chewing, very sweet - pull a nice clean length of the stem out of the leaf-base.



Common Comfrey

Flowers May to July. Still used as a healing poultice for sprains, bruises and abrasions.



Cowslip

Flowers March to April. Cowslips were strewn on bridal paths and worn as a head-wreath on May Day. Specimens in the Hurst have been re-introduced from the Sinodun Hills.

Dogwood

Flowers June to July, fruits a black berry. Used to be used for butchers' skewers.



Speedwell

Flowers April to July. Said to speed you on your journey, the flowers sometimes being sewn into clothes for good luck.



Goat's Beard

Flowers May to August, but the dandelion-like flowers open only in the morning. The seed 'clock' is as elaborate as an astrolabe.



Hogweed

The commonest tall wayside plant of the summer and autumn. Children used to make pea-shooters out of the large, hollow stems.



THE HURST WATER MEADOW TRUST

Meadow Crane's-bill

Flowers June to September. A very striking flower, and a distinctive seed case shaped like a bird's bill.



Meadow Foxtail

A perennial grass that flowers from April until June.



Ox-eye Daisy

Flowers May to September. One of the first meadow flowers to colonise unsprayed grassland.



Red Clover

Flowers May to November. Cultivated varieties of this species are used as fodder crops and frequently become naturalised.

Ribwort Plantain

Flowers April to October. Used by children in the game of soldiers or as a substitute for conkers.



Silverweed

Flowers April to October.



Snake's-head Fritillary

Flowers April to May. Introduced in 2000 from Iffley Meadows, near Oxford, it flowered for the first time in 2003. Was so common in Oxfordshire that the flowers were picked in return for money for charity on Fritillary Sunday.



Tall Fescue

Flowers May to July.

Water Plantain

Flowers June to August. Found in wet ditches.



Wintercress

Flowers May to July. Leaves have been eaten as a vegetable but are very bitter.

