

BLS Field Meeting, Petersfield

6 October (Friday)

Arrival at centre (set up microscopes from 13.00).

PM: Local survey of Petersfield Heath and Lake – small area of lowland heath, broadleaved woodland and wetland. Park at centre (easy walking distance) or at Heath Pond car park (free; GU31 4LB/grid ref SU754226). Group to leave for site from centre at 14.00 but feel free to arrive/depart at any time. 19.00 Short introduction to the sites/general admin.

7 October (Saturday) – Selborne Common and environs

Selborne was the home of Gilbert White (1720–1793), the well-known naturalist whose book *The Natural History of Selborne* could almost be considered as inventing local natural history in Britain. His house is now a museum (which is also devoted to Captain Lawrence Oates of Antarctica fame). His garden has never been properly surveyed for lichens. Selborne Common is an area of broadleaved hanger woodland to the west of the village, up a steep “zig-zag” path that Gilbert White established while he was curate-in-charge of the parish. Neither the Common or the churchyard (in which Gilbert White is buried) have been surveyed since 1969.



Selborne village from the top of the zig-zag path

The Common has been badly hit by ash die-back and there has been recent felling for this reason, but sufficient remains to make a new survey well overdue. The soil is clay over chalk, and wellingtons are strongly recommended...



There is a car park behind the Selborne Arms pub (GU34 3JR/grid ref SU741335); a small part is free with a larger paying area (free for visitors to the museum). Toilets at the car park, also at the museum café (patrons also get free car parking but only for a limited period). Meet at 10AM (approx. 20 mins drive from the centre in Petersfield).

Trees on Selborne Common

Alternative access to the Common from Newton Valence via narrow roads from Selborne (small parking area by church (GU34 3RB/grid ref SU723327) – avoids steep path but equally muddy!

We also expect to pay our respects to the Reverend White in the churchyard at Selborne, and view his (very modest) gravestone.



8 October (Sunday) – Hinton Ampner

Hinton Ampner originated as a manor house in the 16th century, but has been extensively enlarged and altered over the years, not least after a major fire in the 1960s. It is owned by the National Trust. The garden contains trees dating back to the early eighteenth century, and the estate is a large area of park woodland with a veteran tree trail and far-reaching views over the South Downs. It was the site of the Battle of Cheriton in the Civil War (March 1644).

The estate churchyard was last surveyed about 30 years ago, but it seems that the wider estate and gardens have never had an organized lichen study.



Hinton Ampner House from the estate (image © National Trust)

Meet at Hinton Ampner car park (SO24 0LA/ grid ref SU595276) at 10AM (approx. 25 mins drive from the centre in Petersfield). All usual NT facilities available.

9 October (Monday) – Shortheath Common

Please let Duncan and Paul know if you intend to come here...

A lowland heath community, dominated by semi-natural oak and birch woodland, but with wet and dry heath, pools and unusual inland 'sand dune' type communities. It has SSSI status mainly as a nightjar habitat and its diverse range of invertebrates. The BLS has only four records from the site, dating from 1971. If time allows, an extension to Binswood to the north, an area of pasture woodland on gault clay (wellingtons!) with a good range of pinhead lichens and other interesting species.



Meet at Shortheath Common car park (no obvious postcode, grid ref SU774369) at 10AM. No facilities...