

Salvia pratensis (Meadow Clary) at Holly Court Bank

Survey on 25 June 2025



Members of Wychwood Flora Group present:

Genny Early, Joe Grainger-Hull, Christine Marsh, Anne Miller, Susan Paice

Holly Court Bank is the site of the largest population of Meadow clary (*Salvia pratensis*) plants in the UK, on a bank that is home to a high diversity of other calcareous meadow specialist plants, see species list below. There are hundreds of long-established *S.pratensis* plants, on a well-drained calcareous bank.

For the last few years, the deer population has had a deleterious effect on the numbers of Meadow clary flowers. Over 90% of flowers have been eaten. In 2020, the last year that flowers set seed in any number, the bank was a cloud of flowers, ranging in tone from dark violet purple, blue, pale blue to white. Since 2020, barely any plants have been able to set seed. The flowering stems are very tasty to deer, the site is remote and deer can graze undisturbed.

Otherwise, the field is grazed with sheep, who are kept to the bottom during the summer with electric fencing. It would be good if electric fencing could be used during the summer to safeguard part of the site for the Meadow clary flowers, while the deer population remains high.

We enjoyed watching a slow worm hunting across the bank, and the large number of plant species to be found, see list below. Thank you to Joe Grainger-Hull for this list.

Table 1. Species list from the whole bank, including areas of longer *Arrhenatherum* grassland

Species	Common name
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping bent
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal orchid
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren brome
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet vernal-grass
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False oat-grass
<i>Astragalus glycyphyllos</i>	Wild liquorice
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking-grass
<i>Bromus erectus</i>	Upright brome
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft brome

<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Harebell
<i>Carex flacca</i>	Glaucous sedge
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common knapweed
<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>	Greater knapweed
<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	Common centaury
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common mouse-ear
<i>Cirsium acaule</i>	Dwarf thistle
<i>Cirsium eriophorum</i>	Woolly thistle
<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	Wild basil
<i>Conium maculatum</i>	Hemlock
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field bindweed
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth hawk's-beard
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested dog's-tail
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red fescue
<i>Galium mollugo</i>	Hedge bedstraw
<i>Galium verum</i>	Ladys bedstraw
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved crane's-bill
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy
<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>	Common rockrose
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St-John's-wort
<i>Jacobaea vulgare</i>	Common ragwort
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	Field scabious
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow vetchling
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	Rough hawkbit
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye daisy
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Fairy flax
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye-grass
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot trefoil
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black medick
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Dog's-mercury
<i>Ononis spinosa subsp. Procurrens</i>	Common restharrow
<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	Wild parsnip
<i>Pentanema squarrosum</i>	Ploughman's-spikenard
<i>Pimpinella saxifrage</i>	Burnet-saxifrage
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain
<i>Plantago media</i>	Hoary plantain
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough meadow-grass
<i>Potentilla sterilis</i>	Barren strawberry
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Salvia pratensis</i>	Meadow clary
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad burnet
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	Small scabious

<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion
<i>Thymus praecox</i>	Wild thyme
<i>Torilis japonica</i>	Upright hedge-parsley
<i>Trifolium medium</i>	Zigzag clover
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover
<i>Trisetum flavescens</i>	Yellow oat-grass
<i>Vica hirsuta</i>	Hairy tare
<i>Vica sativa</i>	Common vetch

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copies to:

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