

Botanical recording at the Shadwell Estate, vice-county 28 (west Norfolk), June 2015

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In June 2015, ten botanists were permitted to access private areas of Shadwell Park and Seven Hills for the purpose of surveying wildflowers for the forthcoming third *Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*, coordinated by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI).

Neither area had plant records on the BSBI's database, so the team were eager to gain access to previously un-recorded sites. The morning was spent in the grounds of Shadwell Park within extensive areas of calcareous-influenced grass heath which supported species such as **Meadow Oat-grass**, **Downy Oat-grass**, **Quaking-grass** and **Crested Hair-grass** with locally abundant areas of **Field Mouse-ear** and **Large Thyme**: all species that suggested that the area was well managed and had had minimal inputs of fertilisers and herbicide. This hunch was justified by the discovery of several notable species for the locality, including the Breckland speciality **Purple-stem Cat's-tail** and several flowering spikes of **Common Broomrape**.

In the afternoon we headed to a very promising area to the south-west of the main grounds of Shadwell Park. It is notable for containing several tumuli within an arable landscape, and it was immediately apparent that the thin soils and areas of apparently unimproved grassland on the edges of the arable crops and by the tracksides were worth closer scrutiny.

Many species typical of disturbed sandy soils were found, including **Sand Spurrey**, **Little Mouse-ear** and **Knotted Clover**, and rare or nationally declining arable weeds including **Corn Chamomile**, **Slender Sandwort** and **Flixweed**.

To our great surprise there were also extensive patches of **Purple Milk-vetch**, an 'Endangered' species in Great Britain, and impressive colonies of the **Breckland specialities Tall Rocket** and **Tower Mustard**, with the latter locally common across the grassland areas.

Over the course of the day we recorded **310 flowers, grasses, sedges and rushes** – an outstanding total for an outstanding Estate.

Many thanks are due to Martin Wixey, estate manager at Shadwell, for kindly granting us permission to visit the Estate.

Species found on the Estate land assessed as Threatened or Near Threatened in England. NT = Near Threatened; VU = Vulnerable; EN = Endangered

<i>Anthemis arvensis</i> (EN)	Corn Chamomile
<i>Astragalus danicus</i> (EN)	Purple Milk-vetch
<i>Briza media</i> (NT)	Quaking Grass
<i>Cerastium arvense</i> (NT)	Field Mouse-ear
<i>Knautia arvensis</i> (NT)	Field Scabious
<i>Potentilla argentea</i> (NT)	Hoary Cinquefoil
<i>Spergula arvensis</i> (VU)	Corn Spurrey
<i>Succisa pratensis</i> (NT)	Devil's-bit Scabious
<i>Turritis glabra</i> (EN)	Tower Mustard
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i> (NT)	Common Valerian

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