

## Bracknell Forest Borough's Wild Orchids 2016

Overall, 2016 has been a mixed year for Bracknell Forest's wild orchids. Below is a summary of sightings of which I am aware.

BMW grass bank (SU 857 684). This bank outside the ex-BMW site on the Southern Industrial Estate once again produced over 100 **Twayblade**, many of them fine specimens. On the same bank, just under three hundred flowering spikes of **Common Spotted Orchid** were as spectacular as ever.

Running Horse Roundabout (SU 883 691) and Lily Hill Park (SU 888 693). At the beginning of June there were 19 flowering spikes of **Early Marsh Orchid** on the grass banks at the Running Horse roundabout, equalling the best year ever. In the hay meadow at Lily Hill Park some 300 **Common Spotted Orchid** were present. About 60 hybrids between **Common Spotted Orchid** and **Early Marsh Orchid** were also counted. However, for the first time since 2004 not a single pure specimen of **Early Marsh Orchid** was found.

Grass Bank behind Old Manor and Roman's (SU 873 694). About 90 flowers of **Pyramidal Orchid** were present on the bank behind the Old Manor, (14 **Common Spotted Orchid** were also present) both being highest counts for the site. The next bank towards Easthampstead House, where four **Pyramidal Orchid** appeared in 2014, was unfortunately mown during the 2016 flowering season.

Twin Bridges Roundabout complex (SU 863 689). It is pleasing to report that all the banks at this site were left unmown during the flowering season in 2016, although no **Pyramidal Orchid** were found. There were two **Bee Orchid** present this year.

Harvest Ride (SU 862 706). Six **Pyramidal Orchid** were found along the south side of Harvest Ride, near Garth Meadows. The north side, where **Pyramidal Orchids** mainly occurred in previous years, has been damaged by housing development.

Long Hill Meadow (SU892 693) Three **Southern Marsh Orchids** were found this year.

Early Purple Orchid. The count of 45 **Early Purple Orchid** at their main Bracknell site was the lowest for many years, and the trend of falling numbers over the years is now becoming a cause for concern.

Sainsbury's Roundabout, Bagshot Road. A **Pyramidal Orchid** was reported (thanks to Denise Butler), a new site record.

Grass Bank by Crown Wood Pub. Three **Common Spotted Orchid** were reported by Denise Butler, but unfortunately this site was mown during the flowering period.

Crowthorne Woods. Two **Southern Marsh Orchids** flowered at the identical location to two years ago.

Gormoor Valley, a known site for **Southern Marsh Orchid**, was not checked this year. Sites where **Green-flowered Helleborine** has previously flowered were not checked this year.

John Ward-Smith      email: teamws2@btinternet.com.

16 August 2016

PS. If anyone knows of other records which are not reported here, I would be pleased to be informed.