

## SHARPHILL WOOD FLORA SURVEY 2023

### Introduction

This report summarises the results from a survey of the flora observed in Sharphill Wood during a number of visits made in 2023; the report follows similar surveys carried out by the author in the six previous years, 2017-2022.

Sharphill Wood is a native mixed, primarily deciduous, woodland and a designated Local Wildlife Site (formerly known as a SINC) for its important flora and fauna. In terms of flora, the canopy of the wood comprises large mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), oak (pedunculate (*Quercus robur*) and sessile (*Quercus petraea*)), lime (*Tilia x europaea*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), with a range of other species in the understorey layer and at ground level. Around the wood is a species-rich field margin. The soil has been described by others as comprising a small portion of sand and gravel to the North Westerly corner of the wood, whilst the remainder is heavy red clay; the pH has similarly been described as variably neutral to slightly acidic, registering between 7.0 and 5.6. Generally, the woodland has a diverse structure.



**Lords-and-Ladies (Cuckoo-pint), *Arum maculatum*, at Sharphill Wood**

### Scope and Methodology

The data in this report are based on 12 visits to the wood between 21<sup>st</sup> February and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2023. Each visit lasted between 2 and 3 hours; the time of day varied. As described in previous reports, the methodology comprised walking south from the Peveril Drive entrance, down to the southern extremity of the wood, before returning north to the starting point, noting species which were present at any particular time. The precise transects taken on any particular visit varied, so that as far as possible all areas of the wood were covered. These included the northern, eastern, southern and western boundaries outside the wood, and the northern, eastern, southern, central and western footpaths inside the wood, as well as less frequent diagonal transects between footpaths.

As part of mitigation measures associated with the ongoing housing development to the north and east of the wood, a post and rail fence encircling the wood was constructed in the summer of 2018. Following this, a 30 metre wide 'buffer' zone in between the post and rail fence and the housing development was planted up by the developers in autumn 2018, on land (formerly agricultural) adjoining the north and east boundaries of the wood. This planting is described on the developer's landscape plans as comprising 'woodland edge core' species, for example pedunculate oak and field maple, and 'woodland edge' species, for example hawthorn and dog-rose. In addition, a range of other species have populated the buffer zone at ground level. However, the extent of this flora survey was limited to the wood itself and the immediate boundaries outside the wood; specifically, including the post and rail fence but not the buffer zone.

Identification was generally based on the observed flower, aided by other salient botanical features such as leaf, stem and fruit, where appropriate. Reference was also made to the expected flowering period and geographical distribution, as detailed in two reference documents: (1) 'The Wild Flower Key', Francis Rose, 2006, for wild flowers and trees, and; (2) 'Collins Pocket Guide. Grasses, Sedges, Rushes and Ferns of Britain and Northern Europe', R. Fitter, A. Fitter and A. Farrer, 1984, for grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns. The survey also drew on the list of species previously identified.

Based on the above methodology, a particular species was simply recorded as present on a spreadsheet; each record comprises the first confirmed sighting of the year for that particular species. The confirmed sighting would normally be triggered by the first observation in that year of a prominent botanical feature, typically the flower. Subsequent sightings of a particular species (for example, elsewhere in the wood on the same visit, or on a different visit at a different time) were not recorded; because of the size and complexity of the task, no attempt was made to categorise frequency (for example, by a 'DAFOR' scale), or to indicate distribution locally within the wood. The methodology used is not precise and on any particular visit some species may have been missed for a variety of reasons, such as missing the flowering period, not being in the right place at the right time, inexperience and/or simply a failure of observation. All visits were made by the author.

## Results

The species recorded during the 2023 survey are listed in alphabetical order in Appendix 1 at the end of this report. The complete data from the 2023 and previous surveys by the author are located in worksheet '2017-23' in the accompanying Excel Spreadsheet: 'Flora Survey\_2023\_NC'. The Excel Spreadsheet includes all species which have been documented in Sharphill Wood from 2001 until the present time. A confirmed sighting of any particular species in 2023 is identified on the spreadsheet by an entry of '23' in column H (entitled '2023'). The data from the previous six years are shown alongside column H, in columns B, C, D, E, F and G, using a similar methodology. The results from surveys carried out by others, in 2015 and before, are located in a separate worksheet entitled '2001-15'. From 2021, a 3<sup>rd</sup> worksheet was included in the spreadsheet detailing the actual date on which the sighting was made; this additional information was included so that the data could be input onto Nature Counts, an online recording system for wildlife sightings which Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust started using in 2021: (<https://record.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/#:~:text=About,Nature%20Recovery%20strategy%20in%20Nottinghamshire>). Accordingly, for any 'new' species sighted for the first time in 2023, the 3<sup>rd</sup> worksheet, entitled '2023 NC', contains the same 'new' 2023 species sightings as in worksheet '2017-2023', but with the actual date of the sighting recorded. For completeness, worksheet '2023 NC' also includes any 2023 sightings which

were first recorded by the author prior to 2021, but not sighted subsequently until 2023 (and therefore not previously uploaded to NC).

In terms of weather, there were several relatively cold periods during the early part of the year, which was characterised by a very dry February and early March. The latter part of March and early spring was very wet, but the spring flowers were delayed by the cold. The weather from mid-May until early July was dry. Heavy showers followed later in July; the remainder of the summer/autumn was wet, October particularly so. The summer was generally warm, but not as hot as in 2022, with some woodland plants continuing to flower though September and into October.



**Herb-Robert, *Geranium robertianum*, at Sharphill Wood**

### **Commentary and Conclusions**

The reader is referred to Appendix 1 below for details of the individual plants identified in 2023 (and to the accompanying Excel Spreadsheet: 'Flora Survey\_2023\_NC' for the complete data from the 2023 and previous surveys). In summary, 89 species of wildflower, 29 species of tree and 16 species of grass, sedge, rush and fern were identified in 2023 (a total of 134 species), including some not previously recorded. As in previous surveys, some species which have been recorded in earlier years were not identified in 2023 (these are shown by a blank entry in column H). It is likely that the reasons for this include the observational issues outlined above, species variability and the ongoing development (rather than any significant change in composition).

It is intended to carry out a repeat survey in 2024.

Richard Elliott, on behalf of Friends of Sharphill Wood.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **SPECIES RECORDED DURING SHARPHILL WOOD FLORA SURVEY 2023**

### **Wild Flower Species Recorded as Present, 2023**

Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*)  
Anemone, Wood (*Anemone nemorosa*)  
Avens, Wood (*Geum urbanum*)  
Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*)  
Bindweed, Field (*Convolvulus arvensis*)  
Bluebell, Spanish (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*)  
Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)  
Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*)  
Bryony, Black (*Tamus communis*)  
Bryony, White (*Bryonia dioica*)  
Burdock, Lesser (*Arctium minus*)  
Buttercup, Bulbous (*Ranunculus bulbosus*)  
Buttercup, Creeping (*Ranunculus repens*)  
Buttercup, Meadow (*Ranunculus acris*)  
Campion, Bladder (*Silene vulgaris*)  
Campion, Red (*Silene dioica*)  
Celandine, Lesser (*Ranunculus ficaria*)  
Charlock (*Sinapis arvensis*)  
Chickweed, Common (*Stellaria media*)  
Cleavers (*Galium aparine*)  
Clover, Red (*Trifolium pratense*)  
Clover, White (*Trifolium repens*)  
Cowslip (*Primula veris*)  
Crane's-bill, Cut-leaved (*Geranium dissectum*)  
Crane's-bill, Dove's-foot (*Geranium molle*)  
Crane's-bill, Hedgerow (*Geranium pyrenaicum*)  
Crane's-bill, Meadow (*Geranium pratense*)  
Crane's-bill, Small-flowered (*Geranium pusillum*)  
Crocus, Spring (*Crocus vernus*)  
Cuckoo-pint (*Arum maculatum*)  
Currant, Flowering (*Ribes sanguineum*)  
Daisy (*Bellis perennis*)  
Daisy, Oxeye (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)  
Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*)  
Dandelion (*Taraxum agg*)  
Dead Nettle, Red (*Lamium purpureum*)  
Dead Nettle, White (*Lamium album*)  
Dock, Broad Leaved (*Rumex obtusifolius*)  
Dock, Clustered (*Rumex conglomeratus*)  
Dock, Curled (*Rumex crispus*)  
Dock, Wood (*Rumex sanguineus*)  
Dog-violet, Common (*Viola riviniana*)  
Dog-violet, Early (*Viola reichenbachiana*)  
Enchanters Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*)  
Forget-me-not, Early (*Myosotis ramosissima*)  
Forget-me-not, Field (*Myosotis arvensis*)  
Ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*)  
Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*)  
Hawkweed (*Hieracium agg*)  
Hedge-parsley, Upright (*Torilis japonica*)  
Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)  
Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*)

Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*)  
Honesty (*Lunaria annua*)  
Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*)  
Ivy (*Hedera helix*)  
Lettuce, Prickly (*Lactuca serriola*)  
Mallow, Common (*Malva sylvestris*)  
Mayweed, Scented (*Matricaria recutia*)  
Medick, spotted (*Medicago arabica*)  
Mustard, Garlic (*Alliaria petiolata*)  
Mustard, Hedge (*Sisymbrium officinale*)  
Nettle, Common (*Urtica dioica*)  
Orchid, Early-purple (*Orchis mascula*)  
Oxtongue, Bristly (*Picris echioides*)  
Parsley, Cow (*Anthriscus sylvestris*)  
Pineappleweed (*Matricaria discoidea*)  
Plantain, Greater (*Plantago major*)  
Plantain, Ribwort (*Plantago lanceolata*)  
Ragwort, Common (*Senecio jacobaea*)  
Redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*)  
Scabious, Field (*Knautia arvensis*)  
Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*)  
Shepherd's-purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)  
Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*)  
Sow-thistle, Smooth (*Sonchus oleraceus*)  
Sow-thistle, Perennial (*Sonchus arvensis*)  
Sow-thistle, Prickly (*Sonchus asper*)  
Speedwell, Common Field (*Veronica persica*)  
Speedwell, Germander (*Veronica chamaedrys*)  
Speedwell, Ivy-leaved (*Veronica hederifolia*)  
Thistle, Creeping (*Cirsium arvense*)  
Thistle, Marsh (*Cirsium palustre*)  
Thistle, Spear (*Cirsium vulgare*)  
Vetch, Common (*Vicia sativa*)  
Violet, Sweet (*Viola odorata*)  
Willowherb, Great (*Epilobium hirsutum*)  
Willowherb, Rosebay (*Chamerion angustifolium*)  
Willowherb, Broad Leaved (*Epilobium montanum*)  
Woundwort, Hedge (*Stachys sylvatica*)

**Grass, Sedge, Rush and Fern Species Recorded as Present, 2023**

Barley, Wall (*Hordeum murinum*)  
Brome, Barren (*Bromus sterilis*)  
Brome, Hairy (*Bromus ramosus*)

Brome, Meadow (*Bromus commutatus*)  
Brome, Smooth (*Bromus racemosus*)  
Cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*)  
Couch Grass, Bearded (*Elymus caninus*)  
Couch Grass, Common (*Elytrigia repens*)  
Fern, Broad Buckler (*Dryopteris dilatata*)  
Fern, Male (*Dryopteris filix-mas*)  
Meadow-grass, Annual (*Poa annua*)  
Meadow-grass, Rough (*Poa trivialis*)  
Oat-grass, False (*Arrhenatherum elatius*)  
Oat-grass, Yellow (*Trisetum flavescens*)  
Rye-grass, Perennial (*Lolium perenne*)  
Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*)

### **Trees Species Recorded as Present, 2023**

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)  
Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)  
Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)  
Cherry, Bird (*Prunus padus*)  
Cherry, Wild (*Prunus avium*)  
Chestnut, Sweet (*Castanea sativa*)  
Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)  
Dog-rose (*Rosa canina* agg.)  
Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*)  
Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)  
Elm, Wych (*Ulmus glabra*)  
Field-rose (*Rosa arvensis*)  
Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*)  
Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)  
Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)  
Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)  
Lime (*Tilia x europaea* (*T. x vulgaris*))  
Maple, Field (*Acer campestre*)  
Maple, Norway (*Acer platanoides*)  
Oak, Pedunculate (*Quercus robur*)  
Oak, Red (*Quercus rubra*)  
Oak, Sessile (*Quercus petraea*)  
Plum, Cherry (*Prunus cerasifera*)  
Pine, Scots (*Pinus sylvestris*)  
Privet, Wild (*Ligustrum vulgare*)  
Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)  
Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)  
Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)  
Yew (*Taxus baccata*)