

Pattishall - visit May 5th 2011

Judith Line and Matt Johnson

It was a great pleasure to meet you, and to see the knowledge and enthusiasm you are bringing to your plans for the churchyard. You already have a well-established meadow which now needs careful management; if you can extend your operations to the other side of the pathway, the meadow will be less isolated. There are already some interesting plants in this additional area, which will flower for you, given the chance.

We discussed planting a hedge of native species along the road boundary. You might like to consider whips of hazel, thorn (black and white), guelder rose, spindle (if you are at all limey), field maple, holly, crab apple. Field maple can look coarse in a hedge if you want to keep it fairly low, which I think you may wish to do. The spindle berries are glorious if you can get the whips to take. Beech would add a touch of winter colour, and the spring leaves are lovely. Do remember that planting a substantial hedge along the top of a wall can lead to problems. If you reconsider, and still wish to present a tidy boundary, you might consider lavender, or for a more natural look, honeysuckle can be interwoven with a framework to produce a very attractive low flowering boundary. You can always establish a native hedge or spinney elsewhere.

We also discussed widening the path through the meadow, and perhaps adding another path; both would make the area more accessible, as would another seat. When the willow arbour is back under control you will have a very attractive place to rest and meditate. The addition of a seat in the area you propose to develop next would provide a vantage point from which to consider the results of all your hard work.

If you do decide to lift the tree canopy, remember to proceed cautiously. Oak trees in particular grow slowly, and branches cut off can never be put back. Better to do a little at a time and consider over time which way to go next. It is true that to lift the canopy in places would give you a better range of plants in spring, but each tree has its own individual character which we need to respect.

You might like to look at Christopher Lloyd's book on meadows. His writing is always a joy to read, so if you can get hold of a copy of Meadows, published in 2004, do take a look. It is expensive, so try the library, or Amazon. The important thing is to close mow when you do, to give meadow plants a chance to grow in the odd bare patches that will result, and to remove all the grass, otherwise the thatch will encourage the coarser grasses at the expense of those you want to see. You can control your more thuggish plants similarly: cut them before they seed!

We suggested that you might post up a simple management plan so that other people can understand why you do what you do. A map is helpful, and indications of what has been seen or what is to be seen at any season/in any month is also good for PR. Pictures which illustrate what to look for are good.

Do consider approaching the school to offer them the use of the area. You may like to invite staff to a guided tour to begin with, so that they can see what you have to offer. My own school gardening club used to have a summer picnic, bug hunt and scavenger hunt in the church yard. Large groups in your meadow would of course not be appropriate, but well drilled children who understand what they are about will be very careful and this is an excellent way to teach them and keep them on-side!

I hope this summary is helpful to you, and will encourage you to become part of the scheme. Remember that you can get in touch with the Trust at any time, for advice or encouragement; we are always happy to advise/visit.

There will be an open afternoon at Stoke Doyle on July 17th 2-5pm. This date should already have been circulated via diocesan mail, with a note of encouragement from Bishop Donald, who is backing our endeavours. Remember to tell people that! I am also organising an open forum for all those involved at Lings House on September 8th. This will be an opportunity to meet the judges, ask questions, exchange ideas with other churchyard managers, make suggestions to the organisers. Do please consider coming; we would be delighted to see you.

Other web sites you might look at are www.northantschurchvardgroup.org.uk or www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

Enclosed is the promised species list, which is not exhaustive, but gives you a good start. I have included both cultivated and wild species.

With best wishes,

Judith Line

Pattishall, May 2011

Field bindweed

Stinging nettle

Cow parsley

Hogweed

Sweet cicely

Sun spurge

Caper spurge

Grey field speedwell

Common field speedwell

Germander speedwell

Hedge bedstraw

Goosegrass

White dead nettle

Red dead nettle

Yellow archangel (Garden variety, but est in wild)

Hedge mustard

Garlic mustard

Shepherd's purse

Redshank

Knotgrass

Broad leaved dock

Fat hen

Common sorrel

Silver weed (*Potentilla anserina*)

Creeping cinquefoil

Dog rose

Hawthorn

Wild strawberry

Salad burnet

Lady's mantle

Self heal

Ground ivy

Marjoram

Cut leaved cranesbill
Herb Robert (incl white form)

White bryony

Common mallow

Dandelion
Groundsel
Smooth sowthistle
Prickly sowthistle
Nipplewort
Mouse ear hawkweed
Smooth hawk's beard
Creeping thistle
Lesser hawkbit
Dog daisy
Daisy Yarrow
Greater knapweed

Ribwort plantain
Greater plantain

Greater periwinkle

Sweet violet
Dog violet

Primrose
Cowslip

Field scabious

White campion
Red campion
Soapwort
Common Chickweed
Common mouse-ear

Creeping buttercup
Bulbous buttercup
Columbine

White clover
Red clover

Black medick
Common vetch
Bird's foot trefoil

Bluebell

Tutsan

Field forget me not
Early forget me not
Green alkanet
Common comfrey

Honeysuckle

Perennial flax

Red valerian

Ivy-leaved toadflax

Ivy

Grasses

Cocksfoot
Wall barley
Poa annua
Barren brome

Trees/bushes

Oak
Ash
Lilac
Holly
Elder
Scots pine
Lime
Buddleia
Yew
Winter jasmine
Birch
Leylandii
Flowering currant
Willow
Cistus
Rose