

Bryophyte report on visit to Chedington Woods 23/02/2023



The top ridge of Flaxley Coppice.

I surveyed an area of steep north-facing woodland along the southern edge of Chedington woods. These are mapped as Wyke Coppice (Compartment 8) and Flaxley Coppice (Compartment 3) and are shown as wooded on the 1901 OS Map. The geology is Gault Clay, a type of mudstone, which is transitional from the acidic Upper Greensands of Crook Hill, to the more calcareous Frome Clay. The Frome Clay forms the bulk of the slopes of Flaxley Coppice. There are a few springs on the slopes and the area above the ride edge at the entrance to Wyke Coppice is noticeably flushed (see below). The drainage ditch beside the ride at the bottom of the Flaxley Coppice slope still had running water despite the recent dry weather. The wood appears to be W8 ash-field maple woodland, with some large oaks, hazel, occasional holly, and presumably planted beech. Interestingly, a few large alders were along the top edge of the wood, indicating possible areas where there is a perched water table, presumably a result of the geological transition. The slopes have large areas of conifer plantation (Norwegian Spruce and others).

I walked mostly along the top edge of the wood and, lower down, along the main ride. The bryophytes along the top edge of the wood, particularly where there had been disturbance and the soils had become leached, are those typical of neutral to slightly acid conditions. This community includes species such as *Mnium hornum*, *Dicranella heteromalla*, *Fissidens bryoides*, *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans* and *Polytrichum formosum*. On some decaying oak stumps where the conditions were more humic, there were more specialist species such as *Orthodontium lineare*, and occasional *Pleuridium acuminatum*. The epiphytes on the ash and field maple were mostly common species of basic bark, such as *Homalothecium sericum*, *Neckera complanata* and *N. pumila*, *Zygodon*

conoideus and *Pulviger a lyellii* (this especially on the larger trees), as well as ubiquitous species such as *Hypnum andoi*, *Isothecium myosuroides*, and *Frullania dilitata*. On some upturned stumps (these are often interesting as they provide a habitat for species of well-drained, steep and sometimes shaded surfaces, unlike the surrounding soil) in Wyke Coppice I found a species of *Weissia* (a small moss that has narrow, parallel-sided leaves that curl up into a tight ball when dry) that is probably *Weissia brachycarpa* subspecies *brachycarpa*. However, I need to have mature capsules to be sure, so have a small clump growing at home under a cold frame to see if I can get the plant to mature. If it is this species, that will be a significant record, as it has been recorded in Dorset only a half a dozen times before. It is a specialist of moist, slightly acid clay soils. We shall see. Over much of the site, the ground flora was characterised by species typical of neutral to slightly basic soils. The vascular plants testify to this, with much ramsons and pendulous sedge, and also with bluebells and wood sorrel picking out the more acid areas. Bryophytes, such as *Calliergonella cuspidata* and *Eurhynchium striatum*, also indicate these conditions, and are common throughout.

Near the ride at the bottom, I had a look at some of the decaying conifer logs in the shaded plantations. Here I found some plants of *Sematophyllum substrumosum* (Bark Signal-moss). This was first found in Dorset near Wootton Fitzpaine in 2017 and, just a few years later, has become almost an expected species to find in this habitat. Until recently, it was considered a very rare plant in the British Isles, found only in southern Ireland, the Isles of Scilly and one site in Sussex. It was thought of as a Macaronesian species found only on the Atlantic coast and island groups such as the Canaries and Azores. But recently it has spread rapidly, perhaps as a result of climate change. It produces large numbers of capsules, which has probably helped its spread. Beside the ride in a hollow were some decaying remains of an old oak, and here there were a few plants of more humid acid substrates. These include the lovely little liverwort *Cephalozia curvifolia*, often a deep golden orange colour, with arching leaves along the stem. Until recently, it was named *Nowellia curvifolia* after John Nowell, a 19th-century Lancashire hand-loom weaver. He was a highly accomplished field bryologist who discovered several species new to Britain, and Sir William Hooker offered him a post at Kew, However, he preferred to remain in Lancashire. Also growing on the oak was a small patch of another liverwort, *Lepidozia reptans*, with its distinctive three-toothed leaves, looking like tiny claws.



Sematophyllum substrumosum (Bark Signal-moss), growing on a rotting conifer log. A big name for a small moss.



***Cephalozia curvifolia*, with its unusual golden leaves, growing with *Lophocolea bidentata* (green plant in the centre) on a decaying oak stump.**

As is often the case with bryophytes, the wetter areas were the most interesting. In some of the sheltered wet flushed areas above the ditch, there are some patches of the attractive *Hookeria lucens* (Shining Hookeria). This translucent species, with rows of flattened leaves, has strikingly large cells., which can easily be seen with a hand lens. It is named in honour of the same Hooker that invited Nowell to work at Kew. It is a plant of slightly acid wet places and has a scattered distribution in Dorset.

The left-hand bank as you enter Wyke Coppice is flushed with calcareous water and has an interesting community. This includes a number of calcicoles, such as the liverworts *Pellia endiifolia* and *Riccardia chamedryfolia*, as well as *Ctenidium molluscum* (Chalk Comb-moss) and *Campylium protensum* (Dull Starry Feather-moss), mixed with the more common *Calliergonella* and *Eurhynchium* mentioned earlier. The *Ctenidium* and *Campylium* are more often found on unimproved, humid, chalk and limestone grassland, so it is quite rare to find them along a woodland edge. Also growing here is the small 'forklet-moss', *Dicranella howeii*. This has only recently been recognised in the UK and we are now finding that it is widespread on calcareous habitats. The total number of species recorded for this section of the wood is 72.



The calcareous flushed bank at Wyke Coppice.

Postscript. I also found an odd *Orthotrichum* (bristle-moss) which I think may be quite exciting, but cannot name it as the specimen needs mature capsules. I have taken a small piece and am hoping it may fruit, but this could take months. I will let you know what happens.

Species list for Wyke Coppice and Flaxley Coppice

Taxon	Vernacular	Site	Gridref	Date	Recorder	Comment
Amblystegium serpens	Creeping Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Atrichum undulatum	Common Smoothcap	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Barbula unguiculata	Bird's-claw Beardmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Brachythecium rivulare	River Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Brachythecium rutabulum	Rough-stalked Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Bryum capillare	Capillary Threadmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	

Bryum dichotomum	Bicoloured Bryum	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Bryum rubens	Crimson-tuber Threadmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	confirmed tubers
Calliergonella cuspidata	Pointed Sparmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Campylium protensum	Dull Starry Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	Some patches on basic flushed slope at ST4982 6703
Campylopus introflexus	Heath Star Moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Ceratodon purpureus	Redshank	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Cirriphyllum piliferum	Hair-pointed Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	on ditchside at base of slope
Cryphaea heteromalla	Lateral Cryphaea	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Ctenidium molluscum	Chalk Comb-moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	few patches on basic flushed slope at ST4982 6703
Dicranella heteromalla	Silky Forklet-moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Dicranella howei	a moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	checked cross section micro
Didymodon vinealis	Soft-tufted Beardmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	checked micro
Didymodon insulanus	Cylindric Beardmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Eurhynchium striatum	Common Striated Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Fissidens taxifolius	Common Pocketmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Fissidens pusillus	Petty Pocketmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	on edge of gully
Fissidens taxifolius	Common Pocketmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Homalothecium sericeum	Silky Wall Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Hookeria lucens	Shining Hookeria	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	in flushed gully at ST4919 0673
Hypnum andoi	Mamillate Plaitmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	confirmed capsule

Hypnum cupressiforme var. cupressiforme	Cypress-leaved Plaitmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Hypnum cupressiforme var. resupinatum	Supine Plaitmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Isothecium alopecuroides	Larger Mouse-tail Moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Isothecium myosuroides	Slender Mouse-tail Moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Kindbergia praelonga	Common Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Mnium hornum	Swan's-neck Thyme-moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Neckera complanata	Flat Neckera	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Neckera pumila	Dwarf Neckera	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Orthodontium lineare	Cape Threadmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	on decaying oak stump
Lewinskya affinis	Wood Bristlemoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Pulviger a lyellii	Lyell's Bristlemoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Orthotrichum pulchellum	Elegant Bristlemoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Oxyrrhynchium hians	Swartz's Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Microeurhynchium pumilum	Dwarf Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Plagiomnium undulatum	Hart's-tongue Thyme-moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Plagiothecium denticulatum var. denticulatum	Dented Silk moss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Rhynchostegium riparioides	Long-beaked Water Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	small patch near spring
Pleuroidium acuminatum	Taper-leaved Earthmoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Polytrichum formosum	Bank Haircap	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Pseudoscleropodium purum	Neat Feathermoss	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	

<i>Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans</i>	Elegant Silkmoos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Rhynchostegium confertum</i>	Clustered Feathermoos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	Springy Turf-moos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Hylocomiadelphus triquetrus</i>	Big Shaggy-moos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	on slope above ride ditch
<i>Sematophyllum substrumulosum</i>	Bark Signal-moos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	on decaying spruce log at ST4920 0673, but probably frequent under conifers
<i>Thamnobryum alopecurum</i>	Fox-tail Feathermoos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Thuidium tamariscinum</i>	Common Tamarisk-moos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Ulota bruchii</i>	Bruch's Pincushion	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Plenogemma phyllantha</i>	Frizzled Pincushion	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Zygodon conoideus</i>	Lesser Yokemoos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	confirmed gemmae and capsules
<i>Zygodon viridissimus</i>	Green Yokemoos	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	confirmed gemmae
<i>Calypogeia arguta</i>	Notched Pouchwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Myriocoleopsis minutissima</i>	Minute Pouncewort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Conocephalum conicum</i> s.str.	Great Scented Liverwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	by stream
<i>Frullania dilatata</i>	Dilated Scalewort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Lepidozia reptans</i>	Creeping Fingerwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	on decaying oak at ST 4944 0677
<i>Lophocolea bidentata</i>	Bifid Crestwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Lophocolea heterophylla</i>	Variable-leaved Crestwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
<i>Metzgeria consanguinea</i>	Whiskered Veilwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	

Metzgeria furcata	Forked Veilwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Cephalozia curvifolia	Wood-rust	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	on decaying oak at ST 4944 0677
Pellia endiviifolia	Endive Pellia	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	in gully and flushed slope
Plagiochila asplenioides	Greater Featherwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Radula complanata	Even Scalewort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	
Riccardia chamedryfolia	Jagged Germanderwort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	on flushed slope at ST4982 6703
Porella platyphylla	Wall Scalewort	Chedington Woods (Wyke Coppice & Flaxley Coppice)	ST4906	23-Feb-23	Branson, A J P	

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1/3/2023