

Flora and Fauna Of the Churchyard



This booklet contains photos and information about the flora and fauna to be seen in our churchyard. All the photographs of the flowers have been taken in the churchyard. We manage the maintenance of the churchyard to provide a diverse range of habitats for our native species and monitor the churchyard environment regularly. We aim to provide a place which reflects the beauty of God's creation and provides a peaceful and reflective space for our visitors. Our new churchyard extension provides a particularly quiet place for contemplation. You are welcome to enter the area through the little gate, but please be careful on the steep slopes – the ground in this part of the churchyard can be very wet.

Please feel free to take this booklet outside to help you identify or find a flower which interests you.

New pages will be added as plants are photographed. If you have any interesting contributions for this booklet, please contact Mary Hallett (01403 732874, email itchingfield@tiscali.co.uk).

January 2008



The above plan shows the areas of the churchyard which are managed as meadows.

Area A is cut in late June/early July and has been managed in this way for many years and is well established.

Area B is being allowed to grow longer to provide a new meadow area. The cutting regime will be finalised once we have established which species grow here, but we hope to cut this area later in the year to enable a different habitat to develop.

Area C is a part of the churchyard we cannot use as it is close to the stream. The bottom of this area is very marshy and is being allowed to grow as a marsh habitat. Once we have established which species grow here we will finalise our management plan for this area.

In other areas of the churchyard the grass is cut regularly but is not close mown. This allows low growing plants to flower and thrive. Pathways through the churchyard will be closely mown.

The churchyard maintenance plan is drawn up based on advice from the Council for the Care of Churches and local wildlife organisations. It is designed to be beneficial to the local environment and a pleasant reflective place for the congregation and visitors to the churchyard.

If you have any queries or concerns about the management of the churchyard please speak to Mary Hallett.

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Meadow Buttercup



Latin Name: *Ranunculus acris*

Flowers: May onwards

Height: 30 - 90 cm (12 - 36 ins)

The name Buttercup dates back only to the late 18th century. Prior to this the flower was known as butterflower or crowfoot.

Buttercups are poisonous to cattle and will cause a stomach upset if eaten by humans.

Celery leaved Buttercup



Latin Name: *Ranunculus sceleratus*

Flowers: May onwards

Height: 30 -90 cm (12 -36 ins)

This plant has much smaller flowers than the more common meadow buttercup. Celery leaved Buttercups are particularly poisonous to cattle and will cause a stomach upset if eaten by humans and blisters on the skin if handled. The Latin name 'sceleratus' means vicious.

Birdsfoot Trefoil



Latin Name: *Lotus corniculatus*

Flowers: May -September

Other common names; Lady's shoes; crow-toes; God Almighty's thumb and finger; bacon and eggs.

Pollinated by: bees and wasps

Butterflies: caterpillars of the green hairstreak and dingy skipper feed on the plant.

Bugle



Latin Name: *Ajuga reptans*

Flowers: May - July

Pollinated by: bees and wasps

Bugle has been used as a medicinal herb for centuries and was widely regarded as a "cure all".

Dandelion



Latin Name: *Taraxacum officinale*

Flowers: March – October

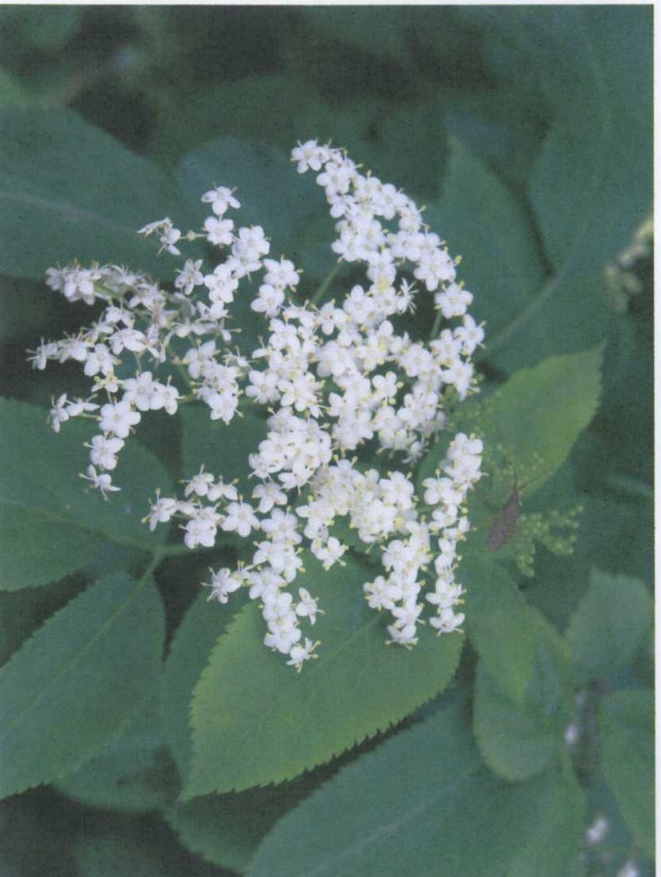
Height: 5 –30 cm (2 –12 ins)

The toothed leaves of the plant gave it the common name which derives from the French 'dent de lion' (teeth of a lion).

The young leaves are rich in vitamins A and C and can be eaten raw. Wine can be made from the flowers and the dried roots can be ground and used as a coffee substitute.



Elderflower



Latin Name: *Sambucus nigra*

Flowers: May – June

Height: 4.5 – 10m (15 – 30ft)

This common hedgerow shrub can colonise an area very quickly if left unchecked, but the uses of elder are many and varied. The scented creamy flowers are followed by shiny black berries. Both can be used for wine making, but the berries can cause illness if eaten raw. Dyes can be obtained from all parts of the plant, black from the bark, green from the leaves and blue or lilac from the flowers. The wood can also be used to make small items such as combs and spoons.

Cow Parsley



Latin Name: *Anthriscus Sylvestris*

Flowers: April – June

Height: 60 – 120 cm (24 – 48 ins)

Other common names: Queen Anne's lace; devils' meat; bad mans oatmeal.

Cow parsley is the commonest of the hedgerow parsleys and the earliest one to flower. It is very similar in appearance to other plants which are poisonous (hemlock and fool's parsley).

Chervil is a close relative of cow parsley.

Cuckoo Flower



Latin Name: *Cardamine pratense*

Flowers: April – June

Height: 15 – 60 cm (6 – 24 ins)

Other common names: milkmaid; lady's smock

Cuckoo flowers range in colour from deep pink to white. The plant contains mustard oil and is rich in vitamin C. The leaves may be eaten as a substitute for watercress.

Cat's-ear



Latin Name: *Hypochoeris radicata*

Flowers: June – September

Height: 20 – 60 cm (8 – 24 ins)

Cat's-ear attracts many kinds of insects, but particularly bees. The flower grows on a tall stem above a rosette of low growing leaves which are similar to dandelion leaves, but Cat's-ear leaves are wavy rather than toothed.



Red Clover



Latin Name: *Trifolium pratense*

Flowers: May – September

Height: up to 60 cm (24 ins)

Pollinated: mainly by bees.

Red clover is a nitrogen fixing plant and is very beneficial to the soil in which it grows. Its delicate scent attracts many insects including long tongued flies, butterflies and moths as well as bees.

Red clover flowers can be made into a potent wine and in the past, they were made into a syrup to relieve whooping cough.

Daffodil



Latin Name: *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*

Flowers: February – April

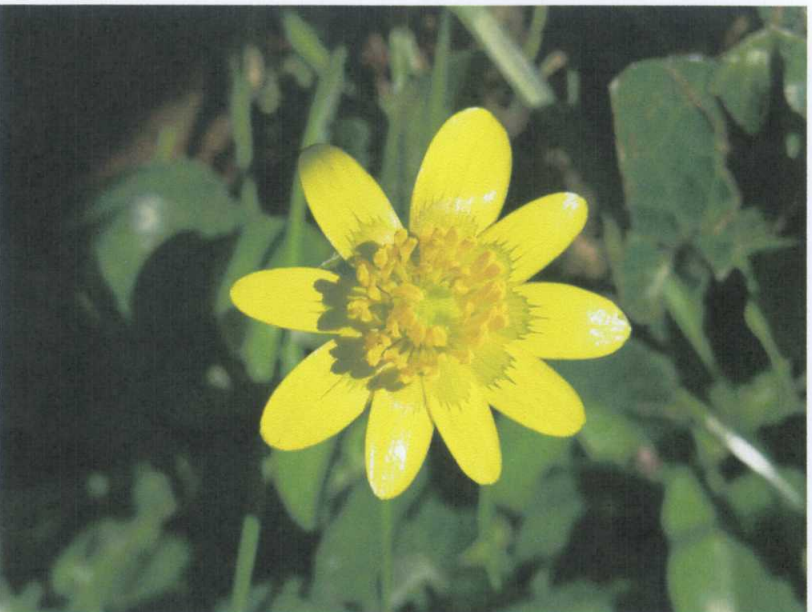
Height: up to 36 cm (14 ins)

Where: all around the churchyard.

Other common names: Easter lily, primrose peerless

The wild daffodil has a yellow trumpet surrounded by a single whorl of slightly paler petals. Many daffodils in the churchyard are cultivated varieties but some wild specimens can be found.

Lesser Celandine



Latin Name: *Ranunculus ficaria*

Flowers: Mar – May

Height: 6 – 15 cm (2 – 6 ins)

Where: in the new area to the west of the church.

One of the earliest of our spring flowers, lesser celandine can create a gold splashed carpet in woodlands and beside hedgerows, when sunshine tempts the flowers to open. William Wordsworth wrote a poem about lesser celandine, it begins;

There is a flower, the lesser celandine

That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain

And, the first moment that the sun may shine

Bright as the sun himself 'tis out again.

Marsh marigold



Latin Name: *Caltha palustris*

Flowers: Mar – July

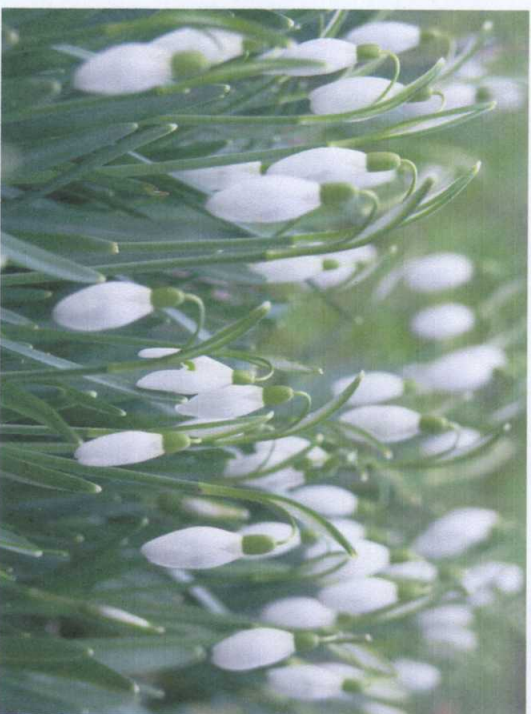
Height: 30 –60 cm (12 – 24 ins)

Where: in the marshy area at the bottom of the west field

Other common name; kingcup

Kingcup perfectly describes the large golden flowers of marsh marigold which can be up to 2 inches (5 cm) in diameter. Many insects are attracted to the flowers. It is believed that Shakespeare was referring to marsh marigolds when he wrote in *Cymbeline* that 'winking Mary-buds begin to open their golden eyes.'

Snowdrops



Latin Name: *Galanthus nivalis*

Flowers: January – March

Height: 15 – 25 cm (6 – 10 ins)

Other common name; milk flower, fair maid of February, snow-piercer

Nodding snowdrops can be seen in various locations around the churchyard. Snowdrops are an important early source of food for bees who pollinate the flowers during their visits to collect nectar.



Common spotted orchid



Latin Name: *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*

Flowers: June – August

Height: 15 –45 cm (6 – 18 ins)

Where: on the bank area at the bottom of the west field.

This beautiful flower is a magnet for many types of insects including bees, hoverflies and other flies who feed on the sugary nectar.

This orchid can be distinguished from the early purple orchids by the more compact flower head and the very light pink colour. Early purples have much looser flower spikes and the individual flowers are a deep pinky purple. As the name suggests, the early purple orchid flowers first, I've never seen them in flower together, but this year (2008) they followed each other very closely (just a week apart)!

Hawthorn



Latin Name: *Crataegus monogyna*

Flowers: May

Height: up to 14m (45 feet)

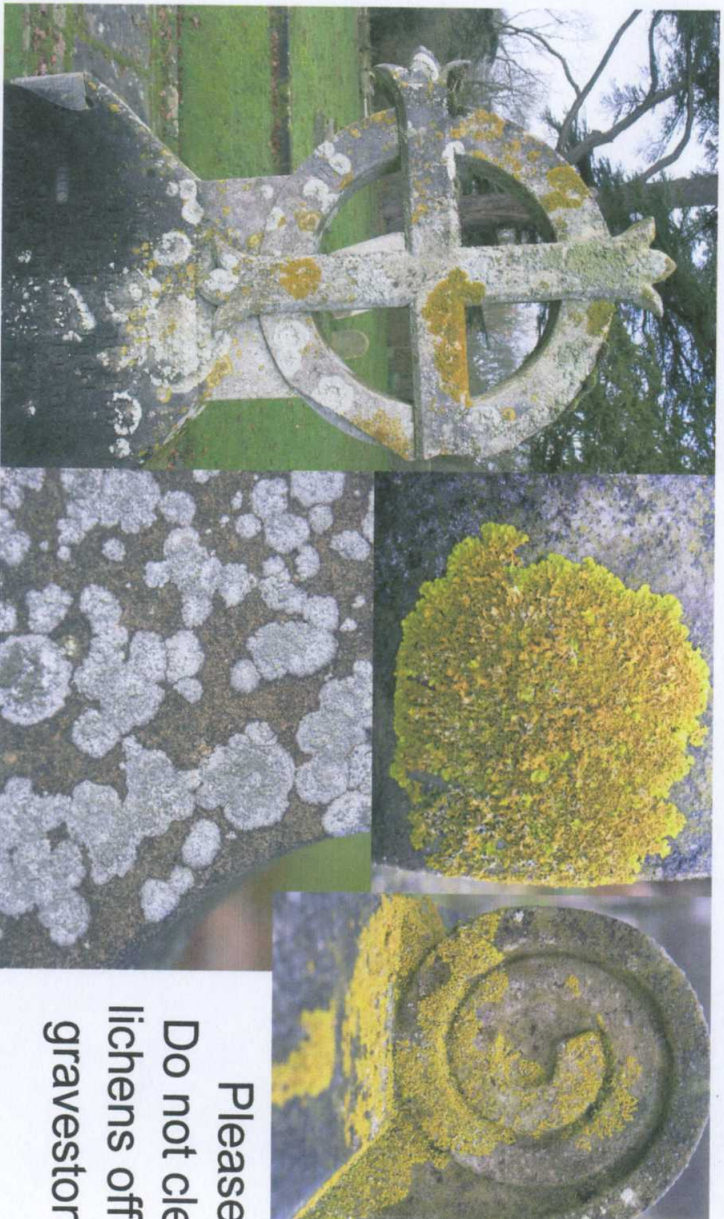
Where: In hedges all around the churchyard

Other common name: May, quickthorn

It was Joseph of Arimathea's hawthorn staff which, when planted in the ground, sprouted to produce 'Holy Thorn' which blooms at Christmas. Holy Thorns (*Bittflora*) is still found in the Glastonbury area.

Hawthorn berries are an important winter food for many birds, look out for visiting redwings and fieldfares feasting on the berries.

Lichens



**Please
Do not clean
lichens off the
gravestones**

Unlike trees, grasses and flowers, a lichen is not a single plant. Instead, it consists of two partners that live together symbiotically – with both of them benefiting from the alliance. One partner is a fungus. The other is a green alga or cyanobacterium, often called a blue-green alga.

Lichens are incredibly useful because they tell us about the health of our environment. The more lichens there are the cleaner the environment is. Lichens are also useful to their neighbours, recycling nutrients used by other plants and providing homes for spiders, mites, lice and other insects. Humans extract the most incredible range of wool dyes from lichens and also eat some of the edible species, while drug companies use lichens to make antibiotics or sunscreen cream.



Dog's Mercury



Latin name: *Mercurialis perennis*

Flowers: Feb – April

Height: Up to 40cm (16 ins)

Where: Shady places around edge of churchyard.

This plant is one of the first to appear in spring in the shady areas of the churchyard. It is highly poisonous and smells unpleasant. Annual mercury was used medicinally as an emetic, until it was discovered to be just as poisonous as perennial mercury!

(Opposite-leaved) Golden Saxifrage



Latin name: *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*

Flowers: April – July

Height: Up to 5 – 15 cm (2 – 6 ins)

Where: the boggy area beyond the western fence.

This tiny creeping plant creates a yellow haze in the boggy area in springtime. The tiny crispy leaves were once eaten as a vegetable.



Ground Ivy



Latin name: *Glechoma hederacea*

Flowers: Mar ~ May

Height: 10-30cm (4-12 ins)

Where: in any grassy area.

These plants grow pretty much according to how long the grass is! They give a lovely splash of purply blue and the leaves are faintly minty when crushed.

Bracken



Latin name: *Pteridium aquilinum*

Height: up to 120cm (up to 4ft)

Where: Rough areas around edge of churchyard.

Bracken is a lower plant which reproduces by spores and also underground runners which can lead to very large dominant clumps of bracken.

Hairy Bittercress



Latin name: *Cardamine hirsuta*

Flowers: April – June

Height: Up to 10cm (4 ins)

Where: in any grassy area.

This diminutive relative of the cuckoo flower appears at the same time as its larger cousin but it is much smaller and more delicate. The leaves can be eaten, they have a peppery taste, but their hairy texture and bitter aftertaste are not to everyone's liking.

Low Mallow



Latin name: *Malva neglecta*

Flowers: June – September

Height: Up to 20cm (8 ins)

Where: Various locations.

A close relative of the more showy common mallow, seen in many gardens around the village. This smaller plant is also called the country mallow or cheese flower.

Barren strawberry



Latin name: *Potentilla sterilis* or *fragariastrum*

Flowers: January–May

Height: 5–30cm (2–12 ins)

Where: Sunny places around edge of churchyard, especially on banks.

Also called the strawberry leaved cinquefoil, it is easily mistaken for a wild strawberry plant. The barren strawberry flowers are slightly different as they have gaps between each petal and the leaves are blue green, rather than bright green of the strawberry.

Forget-me-not



Latin Name: *Myosotis avensis*

Flowers: April – September

Height: 15 – 30 cm (6 – 12 ins)

Forget-me-not is so named after a German legend in which a drowning knight threw a posy of the flowers to his beloved and cried "Vergisz mein nicht" (forget me not). The incident was popularised by Samuel Taylor Coleridge who wrote a poem based on the legend called 'The Keepsake'. He described the flower thus 'That blue and bright eyed flowerlet of the brook/Hope's gentle gem, the sweet Forget-me not!'

Garlic Mustard



Latin Name: *Alliaria petiolata*

Flowers: April – June

Height: 20 –120 cm (8 –48 ins)

Other common names: hedge garlic; jack-by-the-hedge, poor mans mustard.

Butterflies: the caterpillars of the orange tip butterfly feed on the seed pods.

This is the only plant to give off the odour of garlic which is not part of the allium (lily) family. It is a member of the cabbage family! Its leaves can be used as a tasty condiment.

Greater Stitchwort



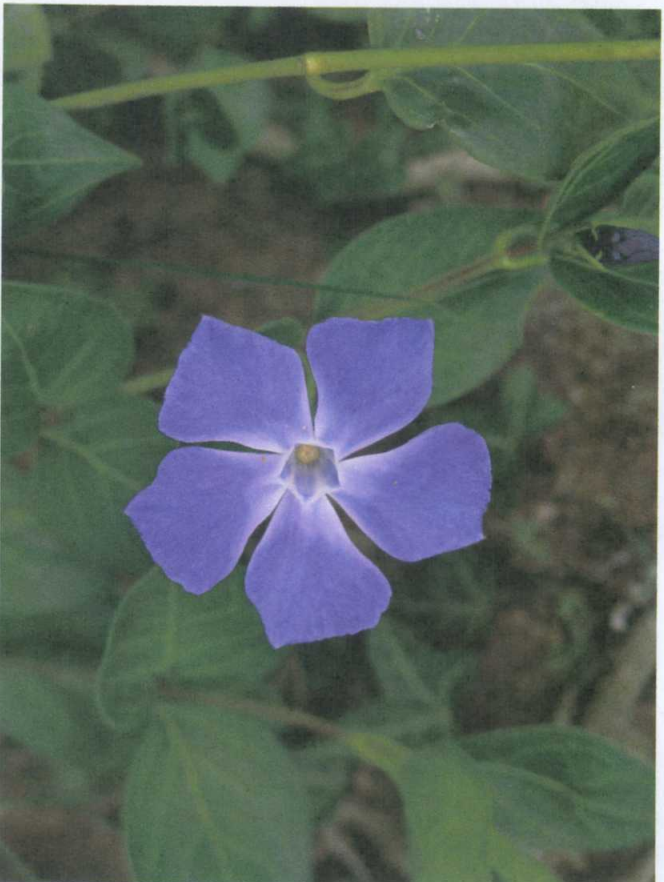
Latin Name: *Stellaria holostea*

Flowers: April – June

Height: 15 – 60 cm (6 – 24 ins)

Reputed to help heal broken bones, this plant was most commonly used to relieve a 'stitch' in the side. It was also regarded as a 'thunder flower' – if you picked it, a thunderstorm would surely follow.

Periwinkle



Latin Name: *Vinca major* and *minor*

Flowers: March – May

Height: 30 –60 cm (12 – 24 ins)

Where: Look around the base of trees and hedges for this shade tolerant plant.

Greater and lesser periwinkle are very similar, the flowers of Greater periwinkle are larger than those of the lesser variety. In Medieval times this plant was believed to stem a nosebleed in a Christian if made into a garland and hung about the neck!

Self-heal



Latin Name: *Prunella vulgaris*

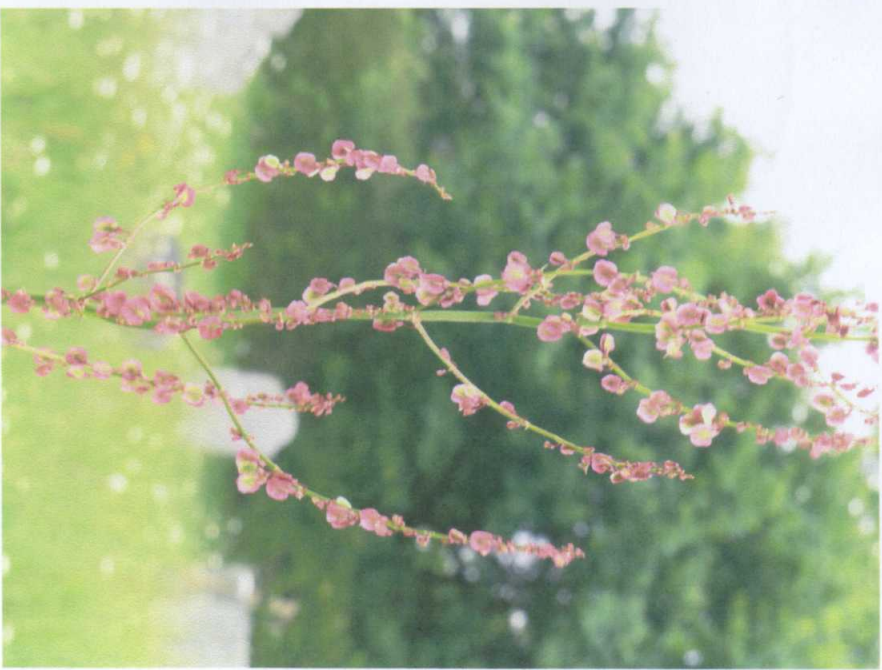
Flowers: June – September

Height: 5 –30 cm (2 – 12 ins)

Where: in any sunny grassy spot growing low amongst the grass. The flowers may occasionally be pink or white.

The plant is very attractive to bees who acts as pollinators. In the past self-heal was reputed to heal wounds, both internally and externally.

Sorrel



Latin Name: *Rumex acetosa*

Flowers: May – June

Height: up to 100 cm (40 ins)

Where: in the long grass areas of the churchyard.

Another edible plant, although the taste is very sharp. The Romans would suck the leaves to assuage thirst.

Yew



Latin Name: *Taxus baccata*

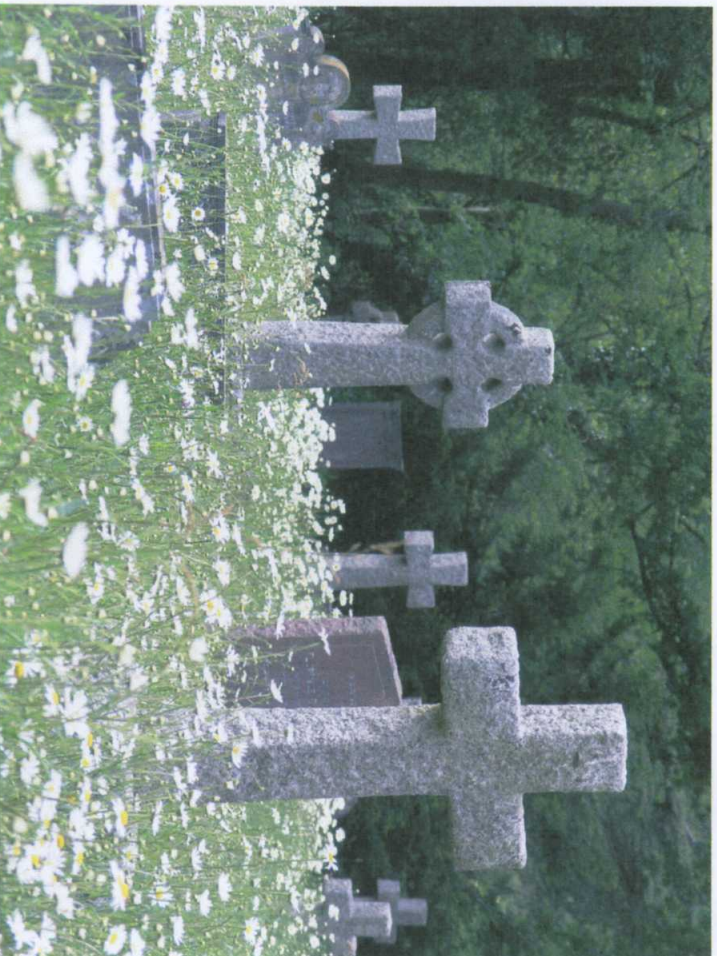
Flowers: Summer followed by red berries on female trees in the Autumn
Height: up to 15m cm (50ft)

There are several yew trees in the churchyard. The ones behind the church are the oldest, but none of these are more than 250 years old. Yew wood is elastic and highly prized for making English long bows. Virtually all yews were felled during the Middle Ages for bow making and wood had to be imported to keep up with demand.

Yews are an important habitat tree for bats and birds and birds also feast on the berries in the Autumn.

Yew bark, leaves and berry seeds are all poisonous, but yield Taxol a medication used to treat cancer.

Ox-eye Daisy



Latin Name: *Leucanthemum vulgare*

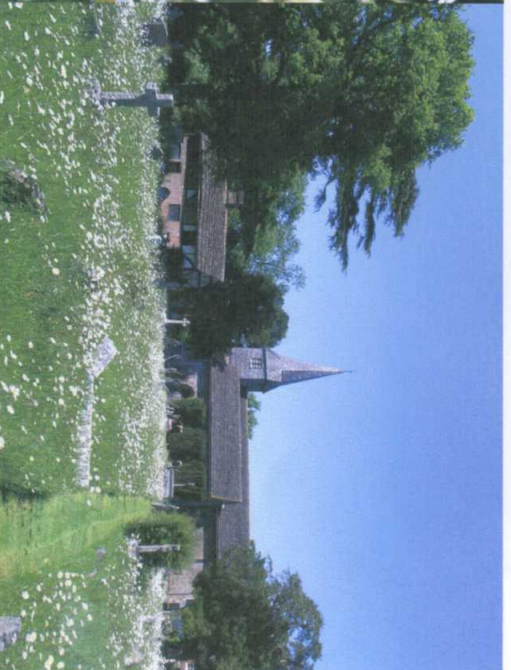
Flowers: June – August

Height: 20 – 60 cm (8 – 24 ins)

Other common names: moon daisy, dog daisy, marguerite

Where: in the meadow area opposite the church

These lovely flowers carpet the meadow area in summer and provide a haven for butterflies and hoverflies.



Lawn Daisy



Latin Name: *Bellis perennis*

Flowers: March - October

Height: up to 60 cm (24 ins)

Where : anywhere in the grass!

This humble but beautiful little flower grows everywhere. The name derives from 'day's eye' which reminds us that the flower opens early in the morning and closes as the sun goes down.

Germander Speedwell



Latin Name: *Veronica chamaedrys*

Flowers: Mar – July

Height: 10 – 30 cm (4 – 12 ins)

Where: in the shorter grass areas of the churchyard.

This is one of several species of speedwell to be found in the churchyard. All have the lovely blue flowers that peek from amongst the green grass.