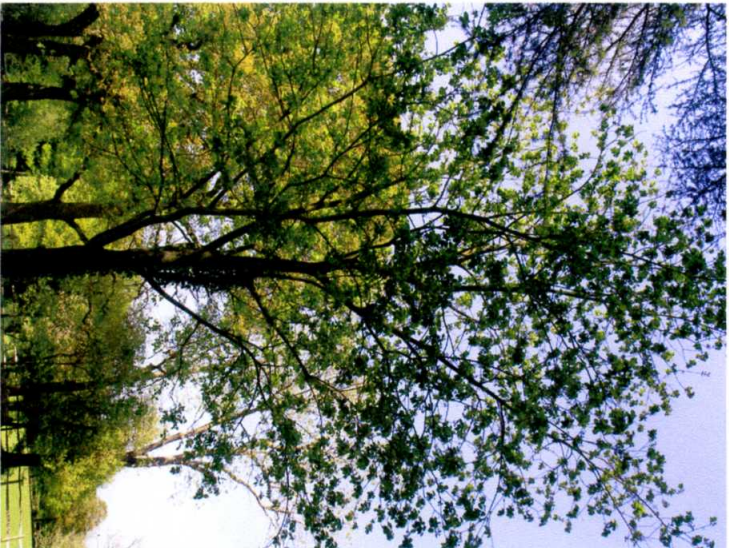


# Goat Willow



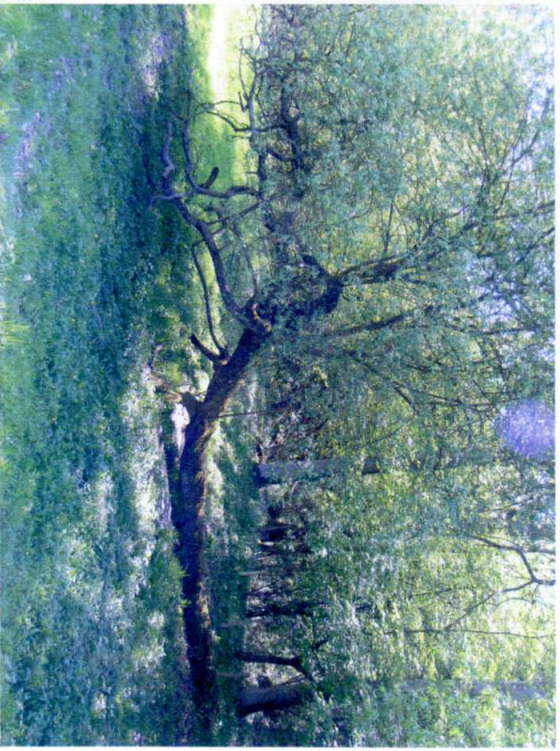
Latin name: *Salix caprea*

Height: 15m (50ft)

Where: Beside the path into the new churchyard and by the stream at the bottom.

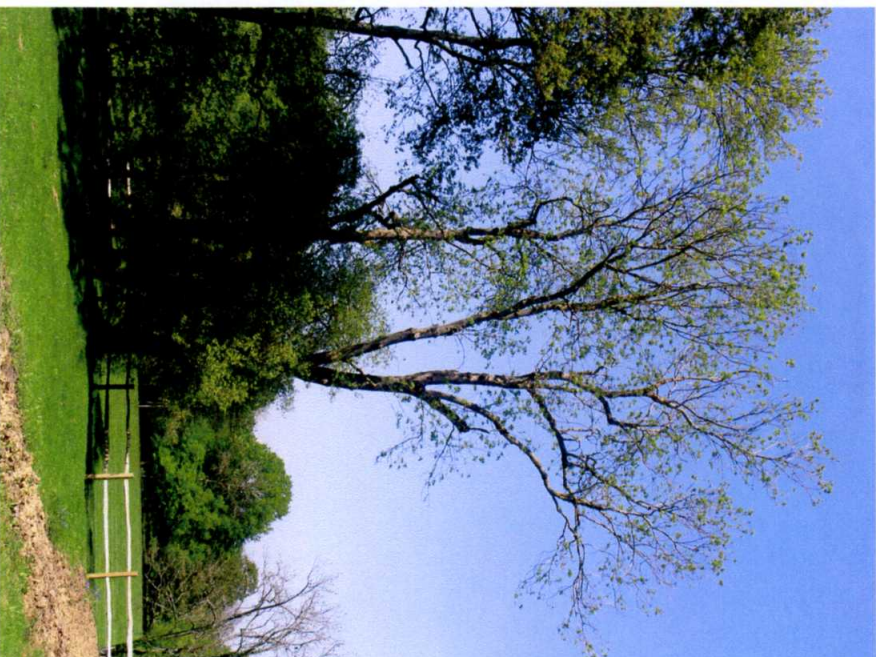
The male tree provides us with the familiar golden catkins in spring. The tree by the path is a female and the flowers are less conspicuous at first, but have a smooth silky surface as they open giving rise to the nickname of pussy willow. The willow family are a primary source of salicylic acid (aspirin) and for centuries the bark has been used to treat fever and rheumatic conditions.

The willow family are useful trees which for centuries have provided withys (sticks) for fencing and basket making and the Cricket Bat Willow (*salix alba* v. *caerulea*) is used to make – cricket bats!





# Ash



Latin name: *Fraxinus excelsior*

Height: 40m (130ft)

Where: Particularly on the northern edge of the churchyard

Ash was a sacred tree to the Scandinavians and in Norse mythology, Odin, carved the first man from the wood of the ash tree. Ash was the *Tree of the World* whose roots reached to the depths of hell and whose branches touched the heavens. Superstition, maybe, but the wood of the ash is strong and pliable and much in demand for a wide variety of products such as, oars, handles for tool, tennis racquets, hockey sticks and skis.

# Pendulous sedge



Latin name: *Carex pendula*

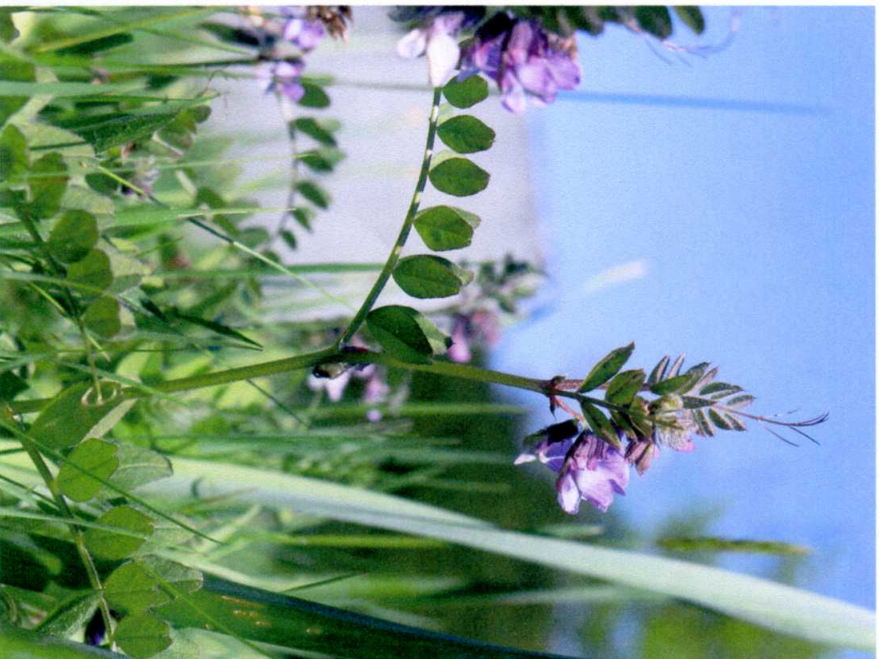
Height: 90-140cm (36-54 ins)

Where: Behind the Priest House

A distinctive and handsome plant often found in shady and damp places. The sword like leaves start to droop over as they mature and the flower spikes which hang gracefully down resemble large red catkins when mature.



# Bush Vetch



Latin name: *Vicia sepium*

Height: 30-100cm (12-40 ins)

Where: On the southern side of the churchyard

The vicia family has given us the broad bean, an important food crop, it was one of the earliest plants to be cultivated by Iron age man. Bush vetch, however is not edible to man, but can be used as fodder for livestock. Larger bumble bees can force their way into the tightly enclosed flower bases.

This is very similar to common vetch which also grows in this area.

# Dock



Latin name: *Rumex crispus*

Height: 50-100cm (20-40 ins)

Where: Potentially anywhere!

Often found growing close to stinging nettles, dock leaves can be crushed and applied to a sting to help neutralise it. Historically dock leaves were used as a dressing for burns, scalds and blisters.

Young dock leaves are edible, but rather bitter and its other common name of Butter Dock reminds us that its leaves were once used to wrap butter.



# Biting stonecrop



Latin name: sedum acre

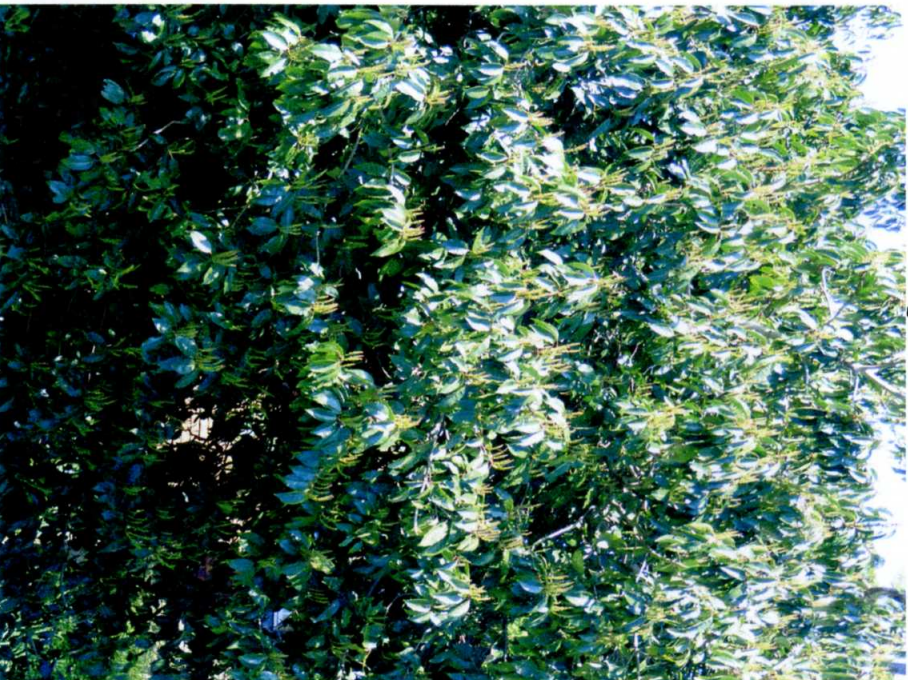
Height: 2-10cm (1-4 ins)

Where: On some of the old kerbed graves on the south side.

Also called wall pepper as the leaves have a peppery taste. Once regarded as a cure all, was used to prevent fevers, relieve ulcers and to stop bleeding. It was also planted on house roofs to ward off thunderstorms. In June and July, yellow star like flowers appear.



# Cherry Laurel



Latin name: *Prunus laurocerasus*

Height: up to 6m (20ft)

Where: To the east of the church

Not a laurel at all, but a cherry!. Introduced in medieval times it is second only to the rhododendron as the second commonest introduced species in Britain, much favoured for hedging and as ground cover for game birds.

The cherry like fruits are much loved by birds, but the leaves when crushed give off prussic acid (cyanide), and were used by butterfly collectors to kill the butterflies they caught.

# Lesser Trefoil



Latin name: *Trifolium dubium*

Height: 20-50cm (8-20in)

Where: in the longish grass

A relative of clover, the yellow flower heads look like tiny yellow clovers. Reputedly this is the original shamrock, but it is one of several contenders for this honour. The Irish word *seamróg* means 'little clover' and Lesser trefoil certainly fits that description! This is one of a number of plants known as "hop" trefoils because the fruiting heads look like tiny heads of hop. The showier Birds Foot Trefoil can be found in the meadow are of the churchyard.



# Early Purple Orchid



Latin name: *Orchis Mascula*

Height: 15-60cm (6-24in)

Where: in the new churchyard on the bank beyond the fence.

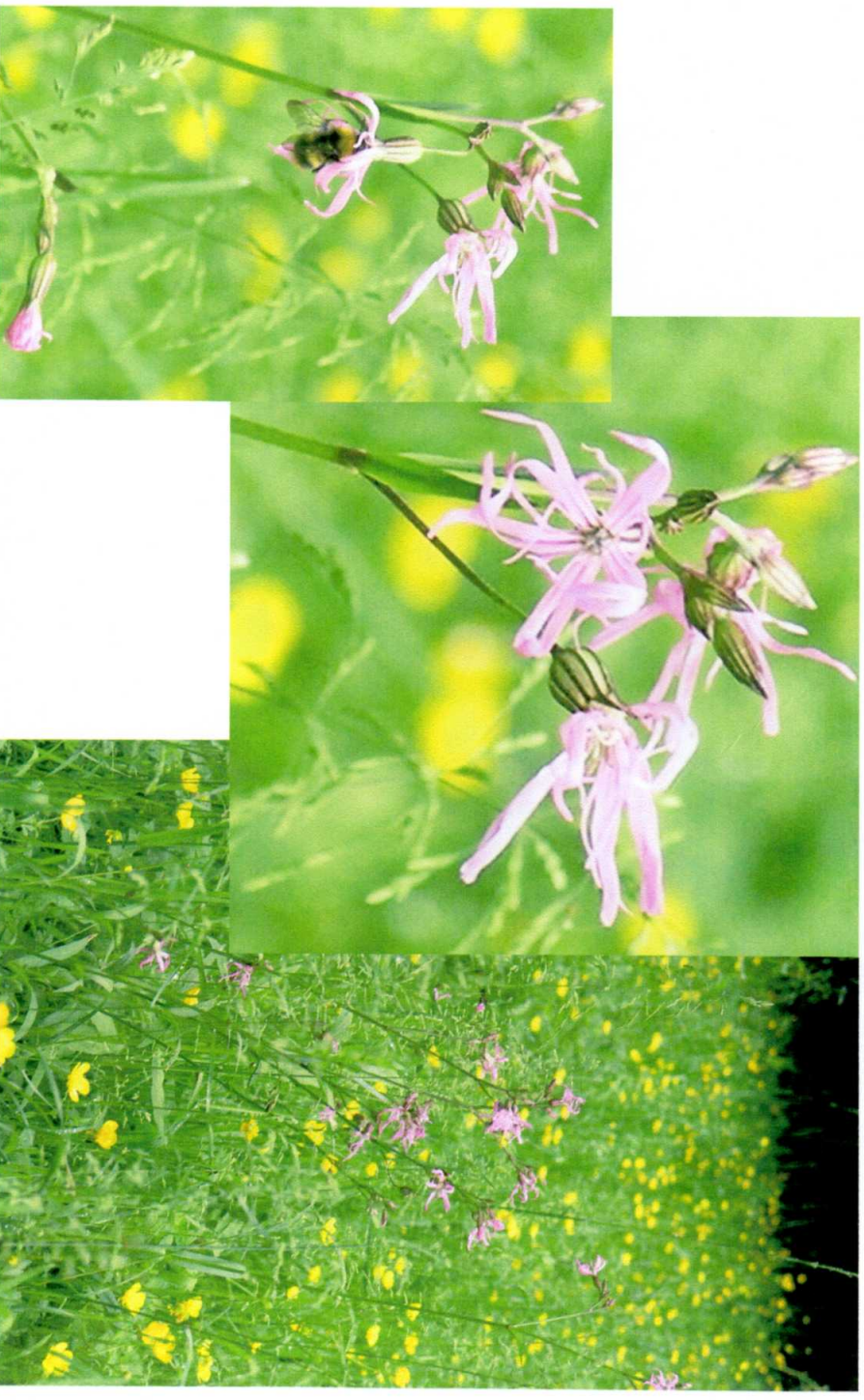
Long associated with love and reproduction this plant was used in love potions in Ireland and the Shetland Isles.

The plant was reputed to have been growing beneath the cross at the time of the crucifixion and the purple spots on the leaves were made by drops of blood which fell from Christ as he was crucified.

Common spotted orchid also has spotted leaves, but the flowers are pinky rather than purple and grow in a tighter more pyramidal spike.



# Ragged Robin



Latin name: *Lychnis flos-cuculi*

Height: 30-76cm (12-30in)

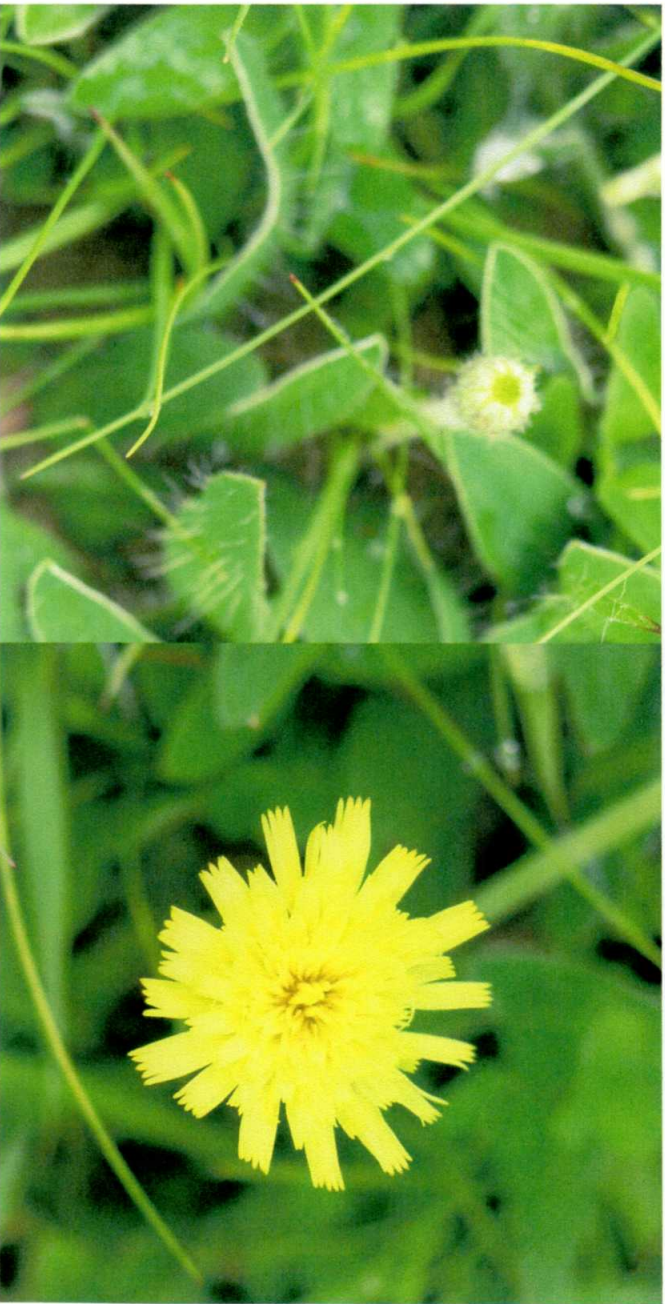
Where: in the new churchyard in the boggy area at the bottom of the slope. (Please keep off the boggy area, it can be *very* marshy in places)

Usually pink, just occasionally you may see a whiter variety. Bees love this flower. The garden flower, Rose Campion is a close relative.

Ragged robin is also known as batchelor's buttons, thunder flower and cuckoo flower.



# Mouse-eared Hawkweed



Latin name: *Hieracium pilosella*

Height: 5-36cm (2-15in)

Where: beside the gate into the churchyard.

Mouse eared hawkweed is a smaller relative of the more common hawkweed. The flowers are lemon yellow borne singly on a leafless stalk. The leaves are small and have pronounced white hairs.

# Creeping Tormentil



Latin name: *Potentilla reptans*

Height: 30-100cm (12-40in)

Where: anywhere in the longer grass.

A close relative of Tormentil (which has four petals, but is otherwise very similar) this form grows prostrate along the ground and has five or six petals. The flowers are highly attractive to insects, but in wet weather (when they do not open) they have the ability to self pollinate.



# Foxglove



Latin name: *Digitalis purpurea*

Height: 60-152cm (24-60in)

Where: Around the hedgerows

A beautiful but poisonous plant. The medicinal effects of digitalis were discovered in 1785 but over dosing with the drug is still potentially fatal. The common name of the plant derives from the Saxon words for fairy bells (volks gIEW) and in some parts of the British Isles the plant is still known as fairy bells.

# White Clover



Latin name: *Trifolium repens*

Height: up to 50cm (up to 20in)

Where: Anywhere in the grass.

White clover, whilst considered a weed by avid lawn keepers, is a valuable source of nectar for bees of all sizes as it produces nectar early in the year. Several plants have the name "trifolium" indicating that the leaves grow in groups of 3 (see also red clover, lesser trefoil).



# Honeysuckle



Latin name: *Lonicera periclymenum*

Height: Up to 6 m (Up to 20ft)

Where: In the hedges

Honey suckle climbs its way through several of the hedges around the churchyard showing itself with the exotic looking blooms and the beautiful scent on a summer evening. Old superstitions give romantic associations to honeysuckle saying that is it is brought into a house, a wedding will follow.

# Dog Rose



Latin name: *Rosa canina*

Height: up to 3m (up to 9ft)

Where: amongst the shrubs to the east of the church

Dog in the name of a plant usually indicates that the plant is useless, but dog rose is the exception. The hips are a valuable source of vitamin C and it was believed that the roots could cure the bite of a mad dog. This is actually the source of its name, the Greeks naming wild rose as dog rose and this was translated into Latin by the Romans, hence *Rosa canina*.

The field rose is similar in habit and growth, but has white flowers.



# Plantain



Latin name: Plantago

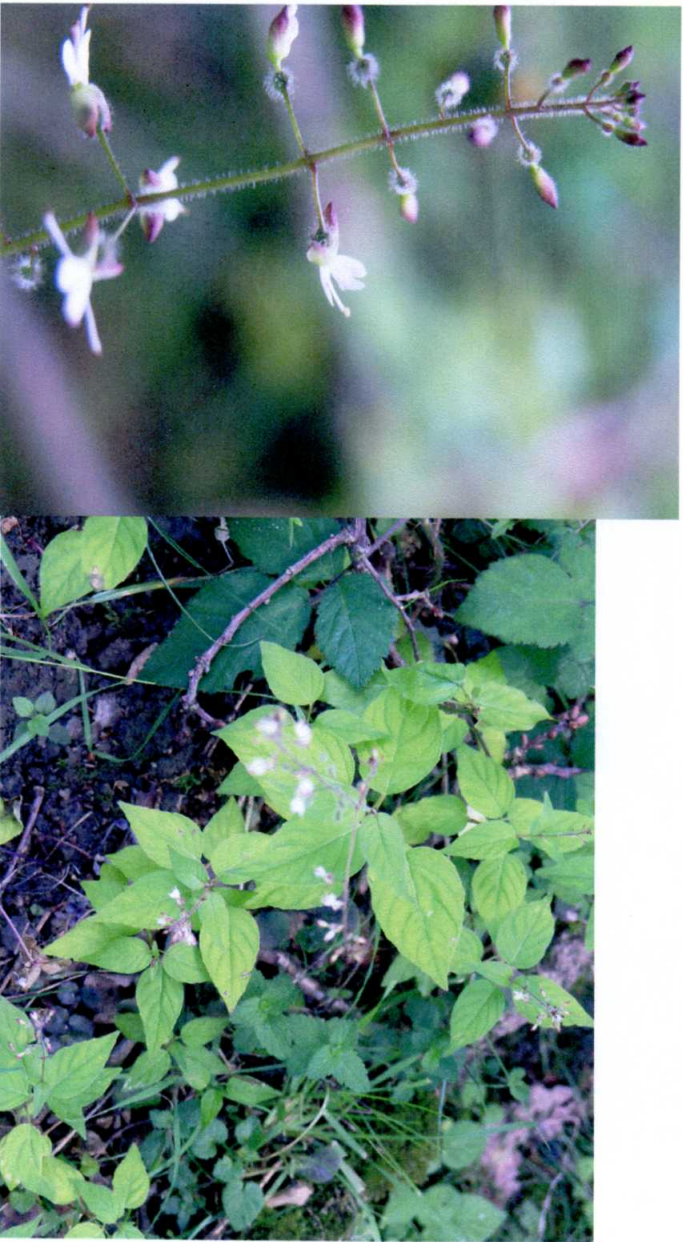
Height: up to 45cm (up to 18ins)

Where: anywhere!

The hated weed of gardeners, the various varieties of plantain provide nectar for bees (Hoary plantain), winter food for birds (Greater plantain), a host for a number of species of butterflies and food for rabbits and deer.

Plantain leaves are also mildly astringent and are a useful alternative to dock to relieve nettle stings – so plantains are not all bad!

# Enchanters Nightshade



Latin name: *Circea lutetiana*

Height: 20-70cm (8-28ins)

Where: in the shady areas of the churchyard extension

This is actually a member of the willowherb family and was used in ancient times as a protection against the spells cast by elves.

The tiny white flowers seem to shine against the shade in which the plant grows. The name *circea* comes from the mythical sorceress Circe after whom the plant was named by the Greek physician Dioscorides.

The fruits of the flowers have small hooks which catch on animal fur or clothes of passers by.



# Wall Hawkweed



Latin name: *Hieracium murorum*

Height: 25-120cm (10-48ins)

Where: mainly to the east of the church

Hawkweeds are very variable family of plants with hundreds of species but I believe this one is Wall hawkweed although it could be a variation of common hawkweed.

The name comes from the belief that hawks ate the plant to obtain the milky juice they contain which is reputed to sharpen the eyesight.

# Wood Betony



Latin name: *Stachys betonica*

Height: 30-60cm (12-24ins)

Where: in any of the meadow areas

This plant is closely related to the woundworts and is a member of the mint family. The very pretty purple flower head is borne on a single stem with several small pairs of softly hairy leaves with no stalks scattered on the stem. The flowers are very similar to those of the hedge woundwort, but they have no white markings and are more pinky in colour.



# Agrimony



Latin name: *Agrimonia eupatoria*

Flowers: June – August

Height: Up to 30-60cm (12-24 ins)

Where: Mainly in the churchyard extension in the meadow area.

Agrimony was held to be a remedy for many ills, including liver complaints, loss of memory, poor eyesight and snake bites to name a few. It also yields a strong yellow dye.

In some parts of England it is called fairy's wand, another reminder of its past associations with magic.

The flowers are pollinated by flies and bees and smell faintly of apricots.

# Meadowsweet



Latin name: *Filipendula ulmaria*

Flowers: June-Aug

Height: 60 – 120cm (24 – 48 ins)

Where: In the marshy area at the bottom of the churchyard.

Used in medieval times as a strewing herb, the flowers give a sweet scent and the leaves (when crushed) a sharper fragrance.

Its name is a corruption of its older name of *medesweet*, given because the plant was used to flavour mead (an anglo saxon drink made from fermented honey).

Infusions of meadowsweet were used to soothe the fevers, ease pain and reduce swelling – and modern testing shows that meadowsweet contains chemicals similar to salicylic acid, an ingredient of aspirin.



# Ragwort – Common



Latin name: *Senecio jacobaea*

Flowers: June – Oct

Height: Up to 30 – 120 cm (12 – 48 ins)

Where: anywhere.

An enemy of farmers, this plant is poisonous to livestock. Animals will not graze it whilst growing, but if it is cut with a hay crop, even when dried it retains its poisonous quality.

However, ragwort is an important nectar and food plant for bees and butterflies, so we do let it grow in the churchyard.

The *jacobaea* in its name is in honour of St James, as ragwort is reputed to begin flowering on St James' Day (July 25th).

# Devil's-bit Scabious



Latin name: *Succisa pratensis*

Flowers: June-Oct

Height: 15-100cm (6-40 ins)

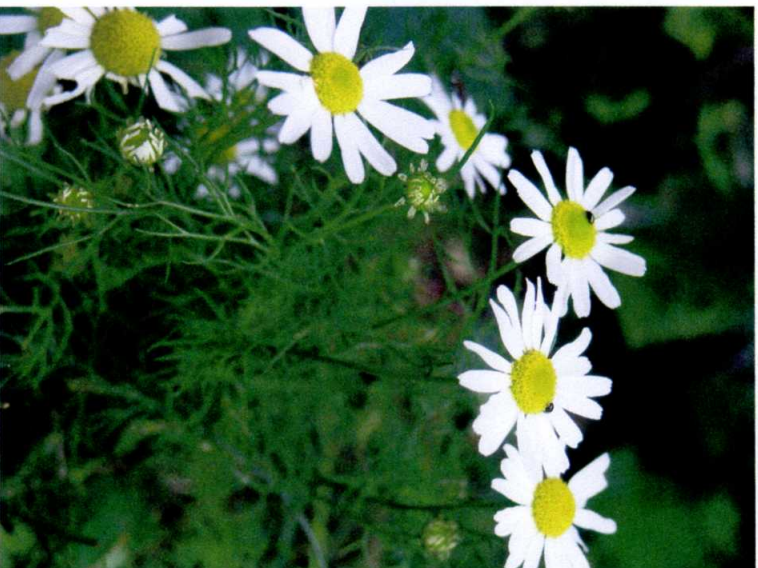
Where: Go to the fence at the bottom of the churchyard for an impressive display of these plants. (Aug – September).

Reputedly the Devil was furious at this plants "cure all" success, so he bit away part of the root to try and destroy its curative properties. Culpeper prescribed a concoction of boiled root to treat snake bites, sore throat, wounds and plague.

The caterpillars of several butterflies and moths use it as a food plant and bees love the nectar from its composite flower heads.



# Sea Mayweed



Latin name: *Matricaria maritima*

Height: 15 – 60cm (6 – 24 ins)

Where: near the door of the church.

This plant does not flower in May or grow on the coast! It belongs to group of plants where the first specimen to be identified was a coastal variety, hence *maritima*. The *May* derives from an old English word for maiden and *Matricaria* is from the Latin word *matrix* meaning womb. These both allude to the plants medicinal use in treating female complaints.

Sea mayweed tends to pop up on disturbed ground, such as agricultural set aside, embankments and the like.

# Prickly Sow-thistle



Latin name: *Sonchus asper*

Flowers: June – Aug

Height: 20 – 150cm (8 – 60 ins)

Where: in any grassy area.

This close relative of the dandelion contains the same white milky fluid or latex which was reputed to improve the milk yield of lactating sows.

The prickly leaves are quite succulent when young and have been used in salads.

Bees and hoverflies both visit the plant for its nectar.



# Smooth Hawk's-beard



Latin name: *Crepis capillaris*

Flowers: June – September

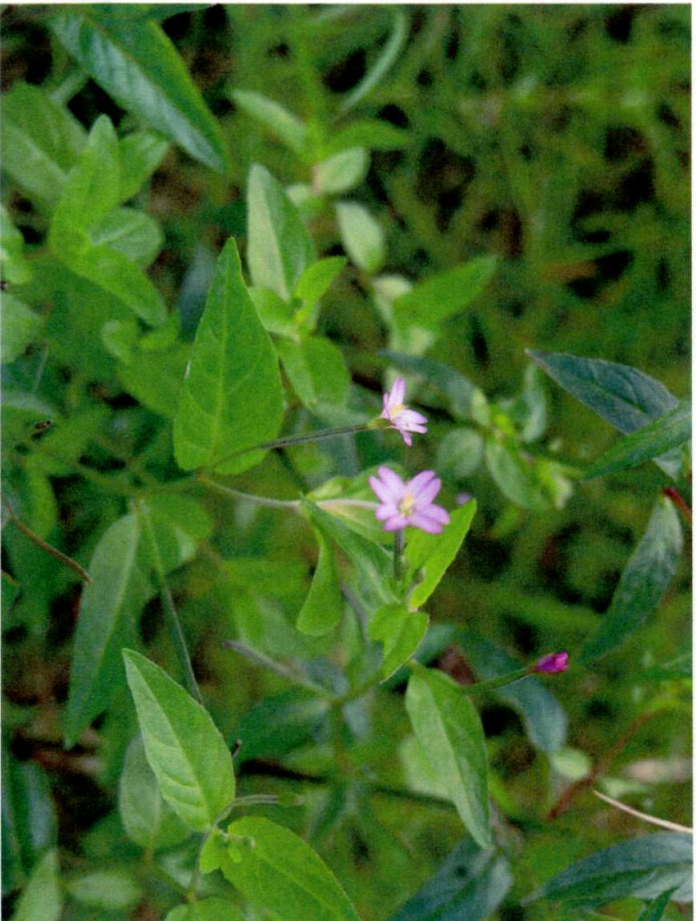
Height: 20 – 90cm (8 – 36 ins)

Where: Various locations.

This is the most common of the British hawk's-beards and is very similar to the hawkweeds and Cat's Ear already described in this book.

This plant is smaller than the hawkweeds with much smaller flower heads. A related form of this flower (*Crepis rubra*) has pink flowers instead of yellow. This pink relative is often grown in gardens.

# Broad Leaved Willowherb



Latin name: *Epilobium montanum*

Flowers: June – August

Height: 5–30cm (2–12 ins)

Where: various

Widely regarded as a weed these plants did have medicinal properties according to Culpepper who prescribed dried and powdered roots as a remedy for haemorrhages.



# Bees and wasps



Several species of bees and wasps visit the churchyard throughout the year.

This picture above shows a Common Carder Bee on a cuckoo flower. These bees are solitary and nest above or below ground.

Below are a variety of bees and wasps.

