

## A post-war Worcestershire record for Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris*

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Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris* was formerly a rare plant in Worcestershire, virtually confined to the Wyre Forest, where according to Jordan (1864) it was abundant in a few spots. Having previously reviewed all the available literature, and examined the specimens in the herbarium of the Worcester Museum, the latest records I could find were from Stanklyn Pool, Kidderminster in 1905, and the Wyre Forest in 1916 (Maskew 2014).

I was therefore surprised to find inside an old botanical book a cutting from a local newspaper referring to a recent field meeting at Malvern. Which newspaper is unknown, but at least a date of 26<sup>th</sup> July 1957 is at the top of the cutting. It states that a meeting of the Worcestershire Naturalists' Club had taken place on the previous Thursday, and at some point the party arrived at Hollybush where the

leader, the BSBI county recorder at the time F.M. Day of Colwall, 'led the way to a marshy area where the Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris*, an orchid which is far from common, was in flower'. It is worth mentioning that another local rarity, Flat-sedge *Blasmus compressus* was also seen, along with a few other typical marsh plants.

It is likely the marshy area was one or other of the flushes on Swinyard Hill which when surveyed some thirty years later during the Worcestershire Flora Project had already begun to dry out and become overgrown, much of the flora having apparently disappeared.

### References

Jordan, G. (1864). *Flora bellus locus or the botany of Bewdley and its environs*. Unpublished manuscript.  
Maskew, R. (2014). *The Flora of Worcestershire*. Privately published, Tenbury Wells.