



**St Michael's Church
Hawkshead
Survey Report
2008**

**Wildlife In Sacred Places Project
Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Sergent's Barn, Lowther, Penrith
Cumbria, CA10 2HH**

ST. MICHAELS CHURCH, HAWKSHEAD SD 353980

Survey 4th June, 2008

Weather : Sunny

Site Description

Situated on elevated land on the Western side of the village of Hawkshead St. Michaels churchyard is a large, long and narrow site running on a North South axis. It is bounded by a mix of hedge and low walls with metal railings . The site is a mix of flat areas, slopes and steep banks. Trees are generally found along the boundaries e.g. beech, ash, hawthorn, sycamore. All the gravestones are in situ with approximately 75% demonstrating lichen cover and approximately 25% with kerbstones.

Compartment Descriptions

Compartment A

This area surrounds the church and is a mix of level and gently sloping land which is bounded by pathways and walls – which are low and also by a stretch of beech hedge on the Western boundary. It is a close cut area with Heath Bedstraw, Common Bistort, Red and White Clover, Fox and Cubs and Common Mouse-ear frequent.

Compartments B

This area is a south facing steep slope surrounded by pathways and designated as 'spring meadow' being cut twice a year. Pignut is abundant and creeping and meadow buttercup, dandelion, germander speedwell and bush vetch are frequent. Yorkshire-fog and Cock'sfoot are also frequent.

Compartment C

This area is a north facing steep slope surrounded by pathways and low wall with railings on the Eastern side. It is also designated as 'spring meadow' being cut twice a year. Wood anemone, common bistort, pignut, common sorrel, germander speedwell are abundant and creeping and meadow

buttercup, dandelion, bush vetch are frequent. There is also an abundance of cock'sfoot and sweet vernal-grass.

Compartments D & E

This area is elevated from the rest of the site. It is gently sloping to the North with a pathway through the centre and low wall topped with railings surround it. There are some trees on the East and West boundary. This area is designated as 'country park' and is cut 4 times a year. Wood anemone, pignut, germander speedwell are abundant with common bistort, creeping buttercup, dandelion, fox and cubs, ribwort plantain being frequent. Cock'sfoot, false oat-grass are frequent and Yorkshire-fog is abundant.

Current Management

See separate attached sheets.

Existing conservation features

Where the grass is left to grow long (areas B,C,D,E) good ground cover for small mammals and insects is provided. However the grasses, particularly in compartment B are becoming coarser with cock'sfoot and Yorkshire-fog, typical of nutrient rich, ungrazed grassland. As grasses increase in vigour, smaller more delicate herbs are shaded out.

Some of the mature trees provide a range of nest sites and the rowan tree, holly and elder will provide berries.

Lichen covered headstones are a good conservation feature.

Suggestions for enhancement of the site to increase biodiversity

Grassland

The grasses are to some extent becoming coarse as noted by the frequency of cock'sfoot and Yorkshire-fog and could shade out some herbaceous species particularly in areas B and C. Keeping an eye on this trend and

possibly considering removing the 'habitat' cut in October (areas B & C) could be an alternative.

Logs and dead wood

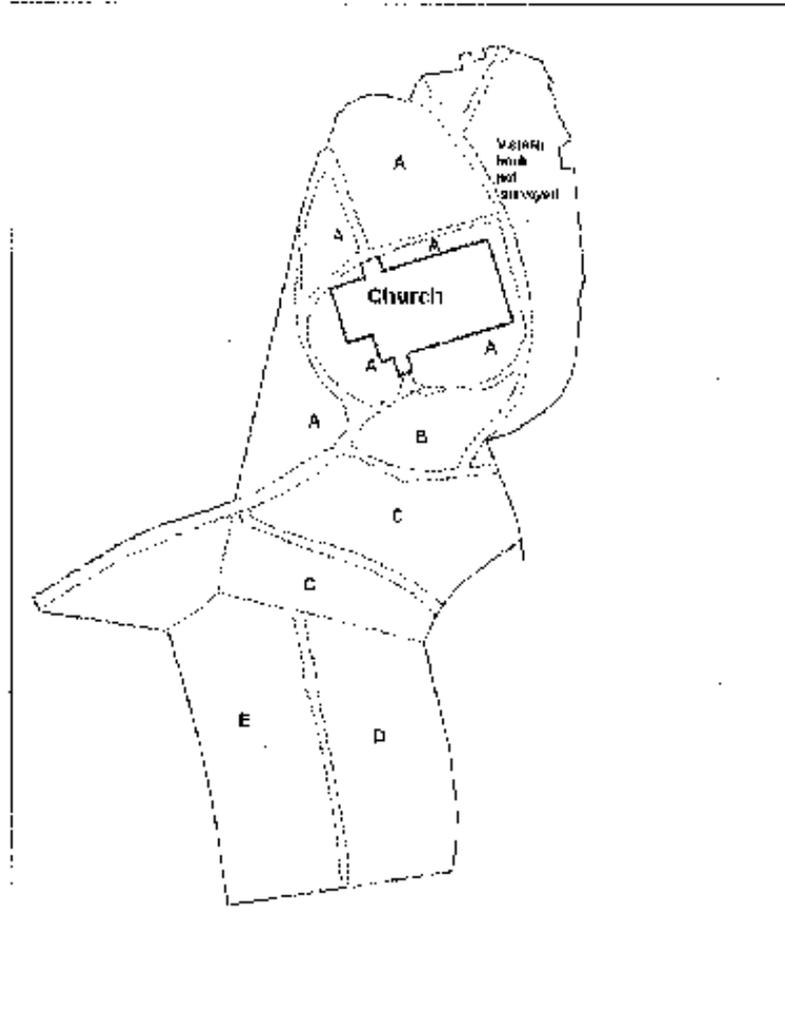
A log pile/dead wood pile in an out of the way place would provide a useful habitat.

In autumn, leaves could be collected into a pile and left to rot down to provide feeding areas for birds and habitat for invertebrates.

Bird boxes could be attached to trees in order to encourage a wider range of species.

The grass cuttings could be composted in a heap in a specific area – rather than being taken away. The composted grass heap will provide habitat for invertebrates and food for birds.

Hawkshead Church (246)
Hawkshead (SD353980)



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Species list:-

Anemone, Wood (*Anemone nemorosa*)
Bedstraw, Heath (*Gallium saxatile*)
Betony (*Stachys officinalis*)
Bird's foot-trefoil, Greater (*Lotus pedunculatus*)
Bistort, Common (*Persicaria bistorta*)
Bitter-cress, Large (*Cardamine amara*)
Bitter-cress, Wavy (*Cardamine flexuosa*)
Bitter- vetch (*Lathyrus linifolius*)
Bluebell, Spanish (*Endymion hispanicus*)
Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.)
Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*)
Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)
London Pride (*S. x urbium*)
Burnet, Great (*Sanguisorba officinalis*)
Buttercup, Creeping (*Ranunculus repens*)
Buttercup, Meadow (*Ranunculus acris*)
Cat's-ear, Common (*Hypochaeris radicata*)
Celandine, Lesser (*Ranunculus ficaria*)
Cleavers (*Galium aparine*)
Clover, Red (*Trifolium pratense*)
Clover, White (*Trifolium repens*)
Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*)
Daffodil, Cultivated (*Narcissus* sp.)
Daisy (*Bellis perennis*)
Daisy, Oxeye (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)
Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)
Dock, Broad-leaved (*Rumex obtusifolius*)
Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*)
Forget-me-not, Field (*Myosotis arvensis*)
Fox and Cubs (*Pilosella aurantiaca*)
Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)
Ground-elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*)
Hawkbit, Rough (*Leontodon hispidus*)
Hawkweed, Mouse-ear (*Pilosella officinarum*)
Herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*)
Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*)
Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
Knapweed, Common (*Centaurea nigra*)
Lady's mantle (*Alchemilla vulgaris* agg.)
Mouse-ear, Common (*Cerastium fontanum*)
Nettle, Common (*Urtica dioica*)
Pignut (*Conopodium majus*)
Plantain, Ribwort (*Plantago lanceolata*)

Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*)
Ragwort, Common (*Senecio jacobaea*)
Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*)
Sorrel, Common (*Rumex acetosa*)
Sorrel, Sheep's (*Rumex acetosella*)
Sorrel, Wood (*Oxalis acetosella*)
Speedwell, Germander (*Veronica chamaedrys*)
Strawberry, Barren (*Potentilla sterilis*)
Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*)
Vetch, Bush (*Vicia sepium*)
Vetchling, Meadow (*Lathyrus pratensis*)
Violet, Common Dog (*Viola riviniana*)
Willowherb, Broad-leaved (*Epilobium montanum*)
Willowherb, Rosebay (*Chamerion*)
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
Feverfew
Bitter Vetch
Garden Narcissus
Moss (sp)
Garden Sedum
Woodrush (sp)

GRASSES, RUSHES AND SEDGES

Cock'foot (*Dactylis glomerata*)
Fescue, Meadow (*Festuca pratensis*)
Fescue, Red (*Festuca rubra* agg.)
Meadow-grass, Annual (*Poa annua*)
Meadow-grass, Rough (*Poa trivialis*)
Oat-grass, False (*Arrhenatherum elatius*)
Rye-grass, Perennial (*Lolium perenne*)
Vernal-grass, Sweet (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*)
Wood-rush Field *Luzula campestris*)
Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*)

FERNS

Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*)
Buckler-fern, Broad (*Dryopteris dilatata*)
Lady-fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*)
Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*)
Male-fern, Scaley (*Dryopteris affinis*)
Spleenwort, Maidenhair (*Asplenium trichomanes*)
Wall rue

TREES AND SHRUBS

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)

Cherry, Wild (*Prunus avium*)
Elder (*Sambucus Nigra*)
Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
Whitebeam, Common (*Sorbus aria* agg.)
Willow, Goat (*Salix caprea*)
Yew (*Taxus baccata*)
Viburnum
Cyprus

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