

Reptile and Amphibian Survey on Land in Old Marston

In 2005 a reptile and amphibian survey was carried out on land owned by the Parish Council by the planning department at Oxford City Council. Below is the result of the survey.

Site 9.4 - Old Marston Village, Grassland Behind Cemetery

Habitat Description

This is an L shaped area of rough mown grassland including two damp ditches with a few species typical of wetter habitats. It had been mown recently, and all cuttings left in situ. The area appears to be being managed for management's sake, certainly not for good nature conservation reasons. A few of the species present suggest that remnants of the previous unimproved flora still survive. The smaller section of meadow, closest to Elsfield Road had recently been rotovated (reason unknown). Three of the boundaries are lined by a mix of scrub and trees including Willows, Elder, Alder and Oak.

Survey Methods and Personnel

The site was surveyed for herpetiles, primarily reptiles, using a series of 5 refuges, which were checked on four occasions in August and September 2005. Other incidental records for herpetiles and other species were also recorded.

Survey Dates.

30 May 2005 - Initial site visit and assessment. (RdA).

23rd August. 09.00 and 12.00 hours. Weather conditions not recorded. (MT)

31st August between 15.15 and 18.15 hours. Hot (c.30C). Cloudy and humid. Wind 3-4. Dry. (MT)

8th September between 15.15 and 19.15 hours. Dry, warm and sunny. Wind 2-3. (MT)

22nd September between 14.30 and 18.00 hours. Dry. Warm and sunny. Wind 1-2. (MT)

Herpetile Records

There were no historic records for any species of herpetile for this site, and none were found in this survey either. The disturbance caused by ecologically unnecessary management of this grassland and other areas nearby (e.g. 9.3) will not help herpetiles and could contribute to their scarcity or absence. This tallies with the findings of the detailed and overall surveys on other parts of Site 9 as a whole. There are no obvious overall explanations for this apparent overall paucity of herpetiles in Old Marston.

Other Species Records

No rare or otherwise interesting species were recorded in this survey.

Site Management Recommendations

This meadow, although apparently not very species rich has some botanical interest and if allowed to grow and was re-surveyed it might prove to be more rich - as it is low lying and supports several damp loving species of plant. The current cutting regime is ecologically unfriendly, and there appears to be no particular rationale for it to take place. It would be better to cut it later in the year and/or less frequently. It could potentially be a good site for pond creation, as in the open spaces around Old Marston there is very little open water habitat, with no functional ponds seen in this survey. (Only an apparently dry and/or leaking artificially lined pond in the adjacent sub-site 9.3.)

Other Recommendations

There are no other recommendations.

Site 9.18 - Old Marston Allotments Parish Site (beside ring-road).

Habitat Description:

Only part of this allotment has active plots, these are located in the southern part of the site and they are generally kept tidy with the linking paths regularly mown. The remainder of the site consists of rough grassland with occasional scrub, the grass being mown during the summer. The southern part of this is an area of non cultivated allotments whereas the northern part is an older more established grassy paddock.

An extensive belt of Bramble separates these two areas of grassland. The external site boundaries consist of hawthorn hedges, with some of these being cut and others being taller and more mature. The site is bounded along its northern margin by the Oxford Ring Road and residential development to the south. There is other open undeveloped land to the west.

Survey Methods and Personnel

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Survey Dates

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Herpetile Records

No herpetiles were recorded in this survey either under or on the refuges or as casual or incidental records. These results reflect those from other parts of Site 9.

Other Species Records

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No significant or otherwise interesting records of species were made for this site.

Site Management Recommendations

The regular uniform management of the unused areas of grassland on the site mean that the site is much less value for herpetiles (should any be present and/or colonise) and nature conservation as a whole,. Adopting some form of rotational management such that there is long grass cover at all times of year, with some areas left entirely alone and rarely if ever cut, with others cut at various times of year and on different cycles would be ideal. The mosaic produced by this kind of regime will support and allow many more species to use the site.

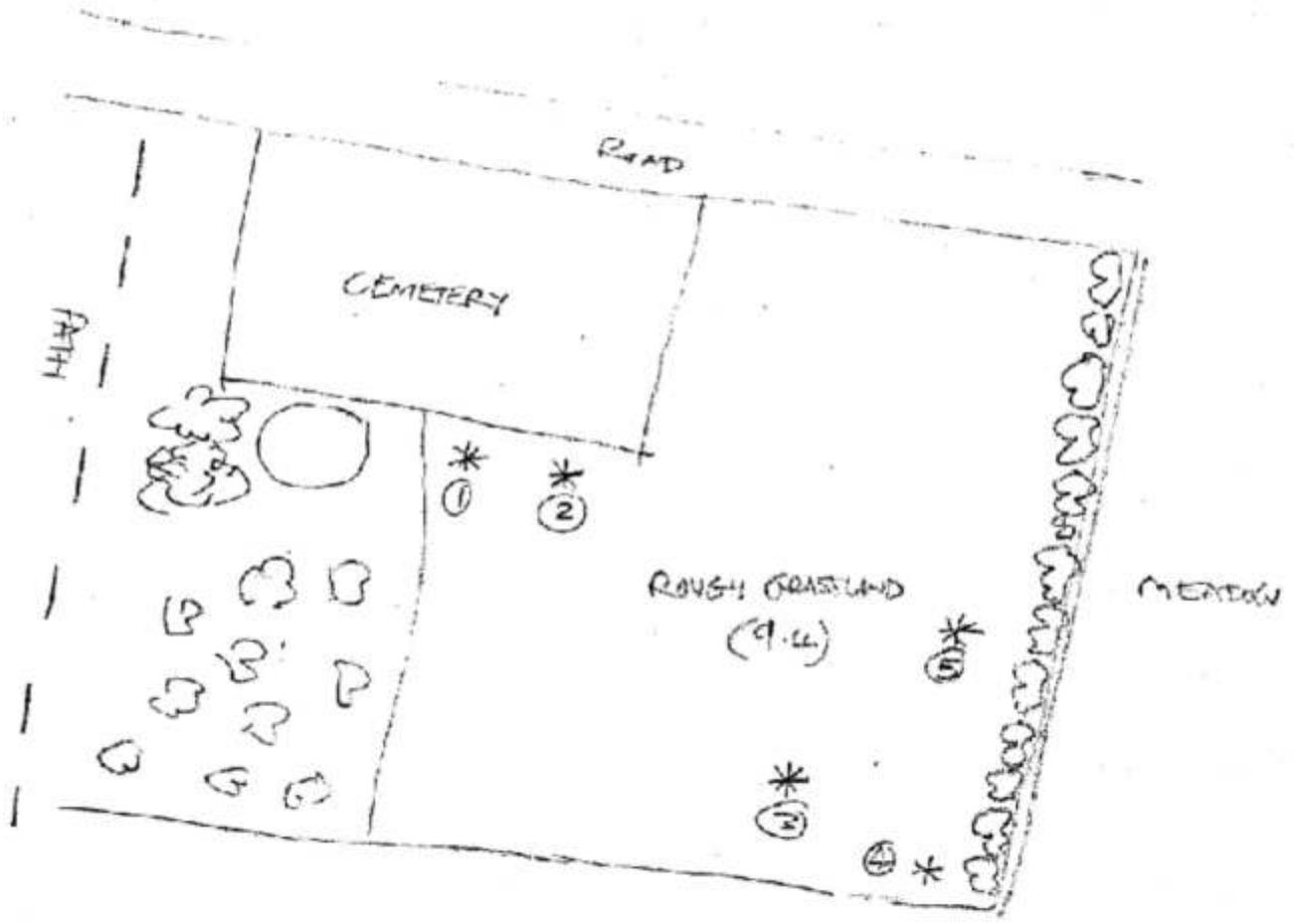
Other Recommendations

There are no other recommendations.

SITE 9.4 - OLD MARSTON VILLAGE - GRASSLAND BEHIND CEMETERY

SITE SKETCH MAP SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF SURVEY REFUGES (*)

NOT

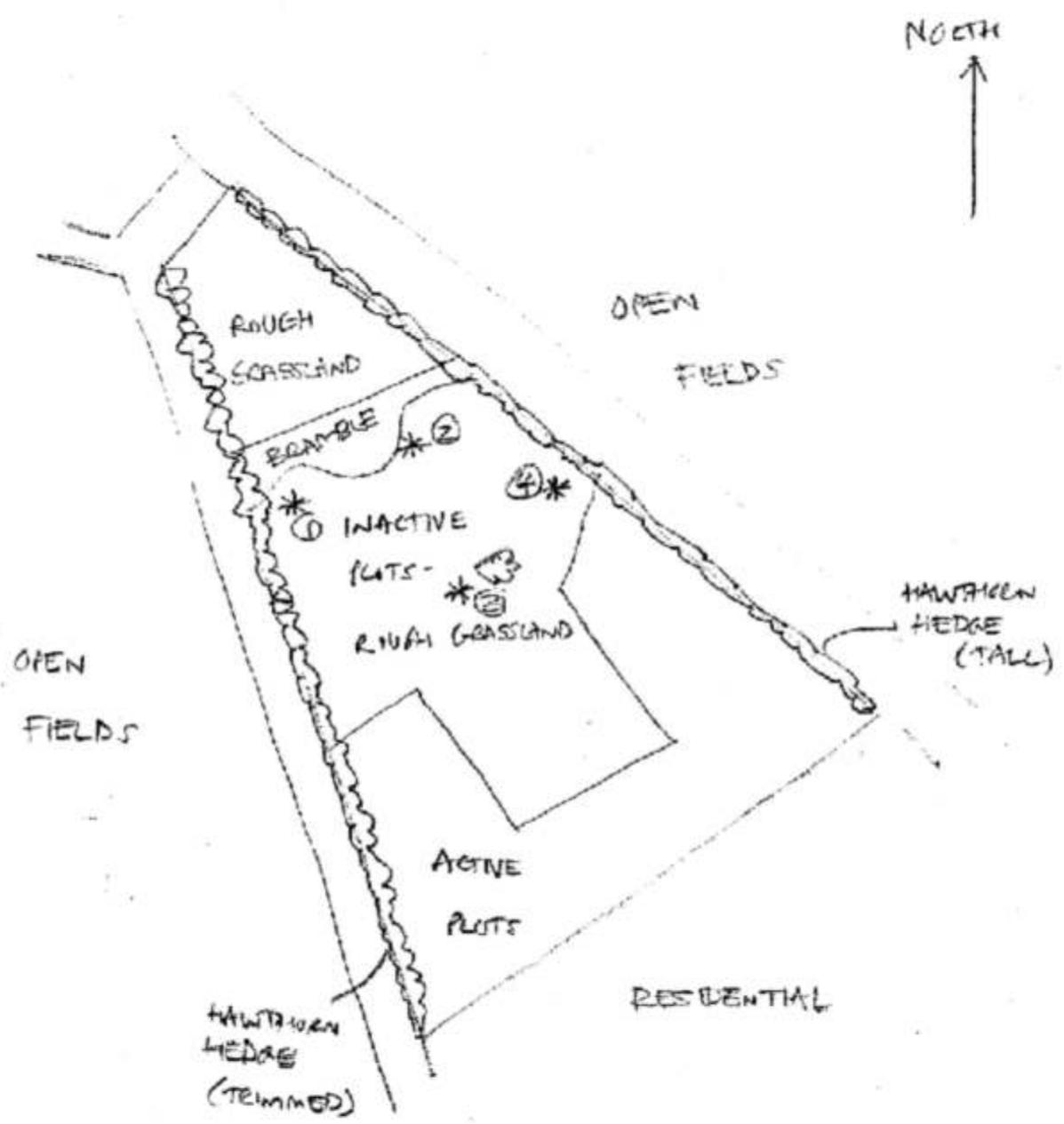


ALLOTMENT (9.5)

DIAGRAMMATIC, NOT TO SCALE

SITE 918 - OLD MARSTON ALLOTMENTS PARISH SITE

SITE SKETCH MAP SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF SURVEY REFUGES (*)



NOT TO SCALE, DIAGRAMMATIC