

## Woolhope Club visit to Brampton Bryan Park 22 June 2018



Twenty-one members started out from the village hall park and proceeded past the Lodge House to assembled for a group photograph at one of the fine ancient Sweet Chestnuts that comprise the main avenue. These were reminiscent of the Sweet Chestnut avenue at Croft Castle and recently dated to the mid/late 17th century. After an ascent over the main north-south ridge members stopped to admire a fine multi-stemmed ancient lime (below) on the western flank of the hill, recently made more visible by the removal of a 20th century conifer block.





The lunch stop was near the top of a valley, where the Small Heath butterfly (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) was seen earlier in the year (below); the picnic site overlooked the Teme valley around Lower Stanage.



We then descended one of the west facing valleys to a small area of marshland with characteristic plants such as Skullcap *Scutellaria minor*.



After which we visited an ancient oak (next page) which had been 'hiding' up a steep slope surrounded by lime and birch trees and whose existence had only recently become noticed. We then ascended the adjacent valley to join the ridge further south entering Heathy Park, the highest part of the park and an area of species-rich montane heather moorland home to one of the only sites in the county for the day flying moth, the Small Argent and Sable *Epirrhoe tristata* (below).



Returning to the lower ground we passed a number of mature and veteran oaks showing various degrees of die-back on their upper branches. This is a recent development also affecting other

parkland ancient oak populations and whose diagnosis is the subject of on-going research. Members present from the Club geology section remarked that the geology of the park's landform had never been studied and they visited a quarry to study the exposures there. This was the first organised visit by the Club to Brampton Bryan Park since the excursions there in 1870 and 1882. The Club is grateful to our hosts Edward and Victoria Harley for their help in arranging a most interesting and enjoyable visit.

