

Strange people lurking on our greens

In the last few months you may have noticed people hanging about the open spaces in Shamley Green staring intently at the ground then getting into awkward positions and taking photos. Don't worry, it's not a strange cult invading our village, it's the Wildflower team from the Shamley Green Environment Group doing a survey of our greens- the count is now well over 100 species of wild flowers and increasing every time we look closer!

With the new mowing regime we wanted a database of our existing wild flowers so we can see what changes happen as time goes on with more opportunity for them to bloom and set seed.

It's been a fascinating exercise, getting to know our local flora in more detail - none of us are experts but we're getting better at it, and learning so much! For instance did you know that young bluebell plants have roots which contract, so although the seeds germinate on the surface of the soil, the bulb gradually gets pulled downwards into the protecting earth! Or that the stripey cinnabar moth caterpillars you often see feeding on ragwort absorb poisonous chemicals in the plant to become poisonous themselves so they don't get eaten!

Next year we are hoping to enlist the help of the Surrey Botanical Society to cast some more experienced eyes over our greens in the spring, so you might see lots more people lurking around then.