



Wyre Forest Study Group

Historic Wyre, Friday, 9th August, 1861

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Bewdley, Ribbesford, Horse Hill, Gospel Oak, Liveridge Farm, Heightington, Mopson's Cross, Rock and Bower Court

The fourth and last meeting for the season 1861 was held on Friday, 9th August, at Bewdley. Taking their course southward, the members passed in front of *Ticknell House*, and went up the coal-measure hills to the heights covered by the woods of *Ribbesford*, making a halt in the lovely dell known as the *Golden Valley*, to search for the beautiful gland moss (*Hookeria lucens*). Crossing the woods, they emerged in the open country at *Horse Hill*, where tradition says the great archer lived, who, shooting at a buck, killed a salmon with a ring in its mouth, and thereby won the fair daughter of the Lord of *Ribbesford*. Having viewed the Gospel Oak, they pressed on to *Liveridge Farm*, where Mr. Jones kindly refreshed them. Between this spot and *Heightington* a band of Old Red Cornstone is quarried, and in one point fossil fish remains have been several times met with. Success, however, did not attend the labours of the geologists present, though a tolerably perfect head shield of *Pteraspis*, and a tail spine, of more than usual size, belonging to that

curious crustacean the *Ceratiocaris* (Podded Shrimp), were discovered. From thence the Club now turned their way to *Mopson's Cross*, and on their road several exposures of coal-measure sandstones were tried, but found for the most part barren. Here one or two of the naturalists branched off and paid a visit to the recently restored and splendid church of *Rock*, calling at the old half-timbered mansion of *Bower Court*, where Mr. Churchwarden *Lingen*, in the genuine old English style, produced pigeon-pie and various other creature comforts. From *Mopson's Cross* a detour was made into *Wyre Forest*, and under the guidance of a woodman of Robin Hood looking type, the Whitty Pear Tree, now almost obscured by the growth of the forest, was reached, and ascended by some zealous explorers. *Convallaria majalis*, abundance of the Sweet Mountain Fern (*Lastraea Oreopteris*), marvellous fine specimens of *Blechnum boreale* = *Lomaria Spicant*, *Polystichum angulare* and *lobatum*, *Aspidium dilatatum* = *Lastraea dilatata*, and several other rare ferns, were bagged. *Osmunda regalis* was said to be there, but not found. From thence the naturalists made towards *Bewdley*, arriving at the *George Hotel* about five o'clock, for dinner, after which the members returned home.



Hookeria lucens, Brand Wood, 7th November 2007

Rosemary Winnall

Mark Lawley comments about the current distribution (2009) - *Hookeria* is reasonably frequent (if local) in Wyre. Although common in Wales, it fades out in the Midlands, where the damp, shaded, earthy banks that it favours by watercourses and cliffs become rarer. In this respect, as with the forest's other bryological specialities, Wyre is an easterly outlier of the humid conditions found in western Britain.