

	Level		Days	Shared occupancy cost		
FM	I	23-25 Aug	Fri- Sun	£270	£220	£170
Centre		Date		Sole occupancy cost	Non-Residential cost	

Identifying Lichens at Intermediate Level



The location of many of John Constable's paintings, Flatford Mill runs over 120 Natural History and Arts courses in a unique and tranquil learning environment.

Course Overview

This weekend course on lichen identification is for anyone with a basic knowledge of this group who would like to take their interest further. There will be a combination of field excursions, laboratory work and the use of keys to help you with lichen identification.

Course Description

The emphasis of this course is the teaching of techniques of lichen identification, using both compound (high power) and stereo microscopes. We will use these techniques to help with the navigation of identification keys such as those in 'The Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland' (2009).

The first evening is a review of common lichens and the terminology used in describing them, the aim being to ensure that all participants are at roughly the same level.

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The Saturday starts with an introduction to some basic microscope techniques from calibrating the eyepiece graticule to cutting apothecial sections, the techniques taught being dependent on participants' knowledge. This is then followed by a fieldwork session. Rather than an organised introduction to common lichens, this is arranged as a recording trip. An area is chosen and the range of likely habitats are identified and then visited, the idea being to produce a lichen list for the area concerned. On return to the laboratory, participants identify any collected material to produce a master lichen list for the site.

Sunday is mainly devoted to the series of exercises described below as this is what course participants usually want to concentrate upon. The day will also include a field excursion but this will be shorter and more local than the one on Saturday.

Interspersed with all the fieldwork are a number of exercises based upon different lichen genera, using especially collected lichen material and instruction sheets. All but one of these exercises involves the use of the compound microscope.

The balance between fieldwork and laboratory work very much depends on the weather. There are enough lab exercises to keep everyone busy for weeks but so far this course has been blessed with fine weather allowing some superb sites to be visited.

It should be emphasised that this is a course concentrating on techniques, applying them to common lichens. We will not be searching out rare species of lichens.

Microscopes are provided but participants are very welcome to bring their own if they wish.

The content is also appropriate for anyone wishing to contribute to their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements.

About the Tutor

John Skinner has been studying lichens for 40 years concentrating on recording the lichens of Essex. He has been leading successful courses at Flatford Mill for several years and is looking forward to helping people extend their knowledge and to encourage more recording of lichens.

What to Bring

- A x10 magnification hand-lens. Your local optical supplier may be able to help you with this. (We have x12 wide view lenses, which can be borrowed from the Centre if you do not bring your own.)
- Small plastic bags and/or boxes, or envelopes are needed for storing specimens to take home. It is important that the packets can be written onto
- A strong non-folding or locking knife to collect lichens. The blade should be less than three inches long.
- A small pair of secateurs is useful (but not essential) for gathering specimens of twig lichens causing minimal damage
- It is essential to bring suitable outdoor clothes and footwear. It is particularly important that you bring really warm clothing as lichenology involves a certain amount of standing still while examining habitats and Essex in early autumn can be cold! Wellingtons or walking boots are both suitable footwear.

Stereo and compound microscopes are available at the Centre and simple chemical reagents will be provided. Participants are welcome to bring their own compound microscopes if they wish. *The Centre is secure but participants are advised to see if their house contents insurance covers their possessions in this situation and, if not, to arrange temporary cover.*

Recommended Reading

The following books and website are useful and can be recommended although they are not essential as handouts are provided:

Lichens: An Illustrated Guide to the British and Irish Species 7th edition (2018) by Frank S. Dobson. British Lichen Society

A Field Key to Common Churchyard Lichens... by Frank Dobson (2003) Published privately by the author (57 Acacia Avenue, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3BU)

A Field Key to Lichens on Trees by Frank Dobson (2013). Published privately by the author (57 Acacia Avenue, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3BU)

The Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland (2009). British Lichen Society.
Essential for serious study but the course may be experienced without it.

The British Lichen Society Website www.britishlichensociety.org.uk has useful information and links.

What the fee includes

Residential course fee includes:

- Full board accommodation including cooked breakfast, picnic lunch, homemade cakes and an evening meal. Vegetarian and other dietary option available.
- Up to 8 hours teaching time a day, plus relaxing breaks for meals and refreshments.
- Tea and coffee making facilities available throughout the day.
- Use of resources including library, workrooms, studios and the Centre grounds.
- Transport during the courses.
- Insurance to cover cancellation, personal belongings, personal accident, legal liability and medical emergency.

If you choose to be a non-resident on a residential course, the fee will include all the above except accommodation and breakfast.

Special Offer

Bring a friend!

If you are attending a course at Flatford Mill at the sole occupancy price, we are offering a special rate for a friend or partner not enrolled on the course to also stay at £50 per night for dinner, bed and breakfast.

Start and finish times

Afternoon tea on Friday is available from **1600**, but the first formal activity is dinner at **1900** (with the bar open from **1845**).

Residents: Please aim to arrive between **1530 and 1800** on Friday to allow us sufficient time to show you to your accommodation and around the communal areas.

Non-residents: You do not need to arrive quite so early but please can you be here by **1800** as we need to show you the communal areas as well.

The course ends at **1600** on Sunday.

How to book

Bookings can be made by telephoning the Centre; we are open 0930 – 1700 weekdays and most weekends. Alternatively, bookings can be made via our website: www.field-studies-council.org.