

Wildlife Walks in Gedling Country Park 2019—6th April

On a cloudy cool day only 14 of us met at the Visitor Centre—but what a day for sightings! As we started, two buzzards circled overhead as we dropped down to the woods behind the Friends' container. Spring



flowers were everywhere—wood forget-me-nots, dog violets, lesser celandines—whilst chiff-chaffs and black-caps were heard above us. Further on in the meadow area, white blackthorn blossoms overlooked lesser periwinkle and ground ivy. Further on, Jenny revealed English bluebells in the roadside hedgerow, a rare sight in urban gardens now. Up the path we spotted a long-tailed tit's nest, then a newly-budded cowslip in the grass.



Dog Violet



Wood forget-me-not



English bluebell



Emerging cowslip

Dandelions were already common, to be followed soon by colts-foot. Near the exhibition garden, red dead nettles competed with hoary bittercress and the introduced 'Abraham Isaac Jacob' plant, just emerging, along with hundreds of hawthorne buds.



Ground Ivy



Red dead nettle



Abraham Isaac Jacob plant

Near the exhibition garden, red dead nettles competed with hoary bittercress and the introduced 'Abraham Isaac Jacob' plant, just emerging, along with hundreds of hawthorne buds.



Hoary bittercress



Emerging colts-foot



Andrena barbilabris

Passing the solar panels we heard larks and meadow pipits. Further on, down a side path we stopped to look at the small grey-blue patches that mark in this area the excavated soil of miner bees (*Andrena barbilabris*), one of which we found close by. Only one fresh 'mini-volcano' was spotted. Close-up video of these bees can be found on the Wildlife DVD that Mark and Brian have made.



Hawthorn buds



Storksbill

On the way down, storks bill, common fumitory and speedwell were found nearer the ponds where a coot family was feeding, not far from a male tufted duck. Up a grassy bank (where Mark had seen a green hairstreak butterfly much earlier) we spotted a male Goodens nomad bee, an orange tip butterfly, then this cold and motionless bee fly (*bombylius major*). It seemed at first covered in fungus, but its 'fur coat' was partly white, as a close-up revealed. Despite the ferocious proboscis, it is harmless.



Bee fly



We finished the walk at the Miners' Memorial Garden enjoying the rare beauty of this Pasque-flower. Our thanks to Jenny and Rod Fillingham for their help in putting on these walks.

