

Wild Things Visit to Jillywood April 4th 2022



Bumble bee queens ruled the day as we walked the circular route through Jillywood Lane, farmland and the golf course. The dominant species was the Buff-tailed bumblebee, like those pictured here. Regally circling the ground looking for nesting spaces to set up their brood, they soon tire and need energy. This one pictured was nectaring on the



flowers delivered by Beryl. The other species we saw in numbers was the Red-tailed bumblebee.

Only queens survive the winter, hibernating pregnant from the previous year, emerging in early spring to set up new colonies, often in abandoned rodent nests.

Birds were retiring in the cool wind, but spring flowers were in abundance. Jillywood Lane is a strip of ancient woodland, formerly the 'outgang' for Skidby, used by villagers to access their strips of farmland. Flora of ancient woodland like Bluebells, Wild Garlic, Greater Stitchwort and Dog's Mercury were emerging where sunlight broke through, and on the drain banks of the farmland beyond were Primroses.



Left: Primroses; Below: the flowers of Ash trees





Left: Willow catkins and an oilseed rape field.

Below clockwise: *Arum maculatum* (Cuckoo pint), with a reproduction strategy as weird as its appearance, involving a central heating system, the smell of meat, and hairs which trap insects in the spathe until they've done their job of picking up pollen.

Bluebells

Greater Stitchwort

Lesser Celandine (Wordsworth's favourite plant, about which he wrote more poems than the famous daffodils. Sadly, the stonemason who inscribed the plant on Wordsworth's gravestone picked the wrong plant, the completely unrelated Greater Celandine). (Pictures by Helen Kitson, Mervin Nethercoat, Paul Sears and Beverley Toon). HK

