

**SGU3A Natural History Group - 22nd February 2023 - ST7912 - Overcast and cold**

**Piddles Wood, near Sturminster Newton**

9 group members were led on a tour of this ancient woodland (an SSSI) by a knowledgeable guide. He told us of its wildlife, especially butterflies, birds and wildflowers. The rare White Admiral butterfly depends on the honeysuckle. He shared his observations of the various management strategies used over the years. We visited areas of standard oak with hazel coppice, areas with conifers for cropping and coupes of recent plantings such as cherry. The remains of a cottage were surrounded by double snowdrops and daffodil varieties. Our guide discussed some of the issues with fencing, hunting, grey squirrels and deer.

**Some of the tree species seen**

Beech  
Cherry  
Douglas Fir  
Hazel  
Holly  
Hornbeam  
Larch  
Oak  
Pine  
Silver Birch  
Sweet Chestnut  
Western Hemlock  
Wild Service  
Yew

**Birds seen or heard**

Great Spotted Woodpecker  
Nuthatch  
Raven  
Sparrowhawk  
Tree Creeper

*Hazel catkins were about to shed their pollen, though the tiny female flowers were not yet open to be fertilised for hazel nuts to develop.*



**Wildflowers in bloom**

Celandine  
Dog's Mercury  
Greater Stitchwort  
Primrose  
Snowdrop  
Wild Daffodil  
(plus Bluebell leaves)



Photos by Marion & Jeremy