

Visit 11th May 2025

A warm day in what has become a long dry spell (we've had no rain since March except for a light shower on April 21st). Swallows have arrived in numbers and accompanied me as I walked through the village towards the Green, I saw no House Martins or Swifts though.



The uncut areas of the Green are a mass of white flowering Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and the areas that were dominated by Dandelions last month are now covered with Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*). After passing through the gate into the Wildlife Area I walked slowly down towards the bridge, on the way noting a Hogweed plant promising to look quite spectacular when fully grown. Other plants that I saw flowering were Lady's Smock, some fine clumps of Ribwort Plantain and good displays of Stitchwort. All common plants but good to see, benefitting from the light at the edges of the mown paths.



I noted the occasional white butterfly, unfortunately flying too fast for me to be sure whether I was seeing Orange Tip, Small or Green-veined White. The fertile Field Horsetail stems that I'd looked at last month by the bridge were dying back being replaced by abundant 'feathery' sterile shoots



Due to the lack of rain the level of the beck was low. It was solid with Burr-reed and Reedmace shoots above the bridge and was showing a bare muddy base lower downstream.



I stopped for a while on the bridge and listened to birds singing. I was particularly pleased to hear both Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting calling from the reed bed, I also heard (but did not see) a Moorhen giving a soft 'clucking' from the thick vegetation at the edge of the pond, the water in which was at a low level. The reed bed is now quite extensive covering much of what was once wet grassland. Habitats are changing and it is good to know that species like the Sedge Warbler and the Reed Bunting are taking advantage. The paths had recently been mown and provided an inviting walk through quite dense vegetation. Regular mowing will be necessary to keep the reeds back.

The path continues invitingly around the pond where a good variety of pond margin plants are beginning to appear. Sedges are sometimes quite difficult to identify without taking a specimen. I think this is Lesser Pond Sedge (*Carex acutiformis*). Some of the Dock leaves were showing small batches of the yellow eggs of the Dock Beetle (*Gastrophysa viridula*) which has always been quite common in the Wildlife Area.



As well as the Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting and Moorhen I noted the following birds:

Greenfinch, Dunnock, Wren, Whitethroat, Crow, Jackdaw, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Rook, Wood Pigeon, Robin, House Sparrow, Blackcap, Goldcrest, Swallow, Willow Warbler, Collared Dove.
No doubt some of these were calling from surrounding gardens, fields and hedgerows.