

# Bealeswood Local Nature Reserve

## April 2026

As reported by Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group (BWRG)  
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Alex Potts, Roger & Jill Trout, and Anne Tutt

### Announcing Spring (AC)

The first birds to arrive in Spring are males that immediately announce their presence by singing throughout the day. Once settled, their persistent song is confined to the early morning hours and then paused until late afternoon. Arrival dates vary little year-on-year and 2026 has been typical at Bealeswood and nearby as follows: Chiffchaff (Mar 6th), Blackcap (Mar 24th), Swallow (Apr 6th), Whitethroat (Apr 13th), Cuckoo (Apr 19th) and Garden Warbler (Apr 23rd). The all-day singing induces females overflying the area to make home here and find a mate. The early morning/evening cycle attracts females to the songster of her choice and, once paired, the male will stop singing.



Male Blackcap- Nestbuilding? (photos Alex Potts) Female Blackcap in early flowering *Prunus*

Conversation thereafter is by calls which are distinctive from song. Taking the Blackcap as an example, its all-day **singing** is a brief, exploratory burst of its first few melodious notes. The late April **song** is more refined and prolonged but the subsequent **calling** of paired birds quite different - a repeated, guttural, chiding *chack!, chack!*

April is a month of concerted song throughout the Common with the most vocal resident birds being: Blue and Great Tit, Firecrest, Blackbird, Mistle and Song Thrush, Dunnock, Robin, Wren and Nuthatch all charming the audible landscape. This year our upcoming dawn chorus recorders (3rd May) have these numbers of songsters to match or beat: 30 in 2025 and 29 in 2024.



Firecrest ( photo Alex Potts)

## Butterflies (PH, AB, AP)

So far, this seems a good year for the Holly Blue. Peter Eeles (in his *Life Cycles of British Butterflies*) states that the populations fluctuate over a 4 to 6 year cycle. This is driven by the parasitic Ichneumon Wasp which lays its eggs on the larvae and emerges from the pupae. As the wasp becomes more numerous and successful, the Holly Blues decline, which in turn leads to a decline in Ichneumon numbers giving the Holly Blue a chance to recover.

Similar complementary fluctuations in natural populations of predators and prey are well known to ecologists. When food is abundant there is an increase in the numbers of prey which then leads to an increase in predators. The increased predator populations then reduce the numbers of available prey.



Holly Blue on Holly flower buds (photos Alex Potts)    Holly Blue egg on laid on flower bud

The Holly Blue is the only British Butterfly where different broods have different larval food plants – the spring brood laying on holly and the summer brood on ivy (although other food plants may also be used). The summer brood can be confused with the Common Blue if the underwing is not easily visible, but as a rule of thumb, a blue butterfly flying high is a Holly Blue and one low to the ground is a Common Blue.

## Wildlife Walks on the Common

All walks start at the information and notice boards at the end of the lane past the garden of the Bluebell pub (GU10 4EX). Contact the leader if you wish to join the walk, so that we can keep a track of numbers and contact you in case of bad weather etc.

**Searching for Spiders-** May 21<sup>st</sup> (Thursday) 10 am, led by Darren Hill, contact: [darren.hill@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:darren.hill@waverley.gov.uk)

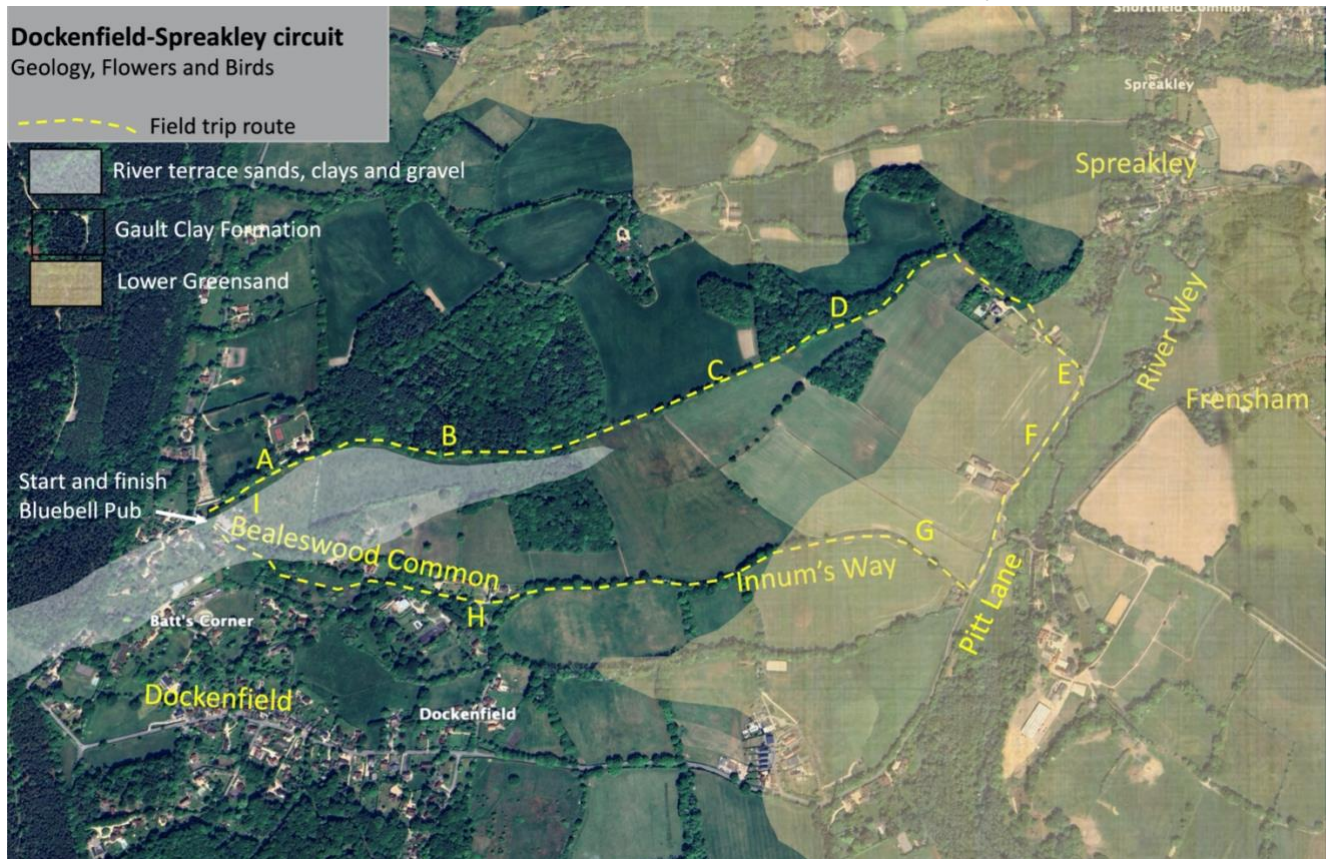
**Butterflies and Bees-** July 5<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) 11 am, led by Philippa Hall and Alex Potts, contact: [phall3422@aol.com](mailto:phall3422@aol.com)

**Small Mammals** (wood mice, voles etc)- September 26<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 10 am, led by Roger Trout, contact: [rabbitwise@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rabbitwise@hotmail.co.uk)

**Mushrooms-** October 17<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) 10.30 am, led by Manda Adolph, contact: [amandaadolph@gmail.com](mailto:amandaadolph@gmail.com)

## Local Wildlife-rich Walks (DB, AC)

We recently organised a fieldtrip on Spring Flowers, Geology and Birds of Dockenfield for BWRG and the Alton Natural History Society. This was both enjoyable and educational as we bathed in the spring sunshine and saw over 100 species of wildflowers and trees in bloom, saw/heard some 50 birds and the geology was displayed in far reaching views over the Weald. We therefore thought our walk was worth summarising here for those who do not already know this circular route or have not appreciated the diversity of its wildlife.



Referring to the letters on the map, these were the highlights in late April:

- A-** Footpath verges with many spring wildflowers and flowering trees.
- B-** Mixed woodland with Bluebells and Wood Anemones and birdsong.
- C-** Southerly views over the scarps of the Lower Greensand escarpments and Chalk of the North Downs (beyond Guildford) and South Downs (Butser Hill).
- D-** Oak woodlands with spring flowers and birdsong.
- E-** Grassland, river meadow and river birds.
- F-** Grassy bank rich in wildflowers with good views over fields and water meadows.
- G-** Verges to bridlepath rich in wildflowers and hedges and bushes host song birds.
- H-** Bealeswood Common, Local Nature Reserve with lower grasslands, wooded areas and pond.
- I-** The Main Common with early spring flowers, butterflies and birdsong.

For a list of species seen, see below

Dockenfield\_Spreckley Circuit Checklist late April 2026

**Birds seen or heard**

Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
Egyptian Goose	<i>Atopochen aegyptiaca</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Carriion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Dunnoek	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>

**Trees/Shrubs in flower 22nd and 25th April 2026**

Acer campestre	Field Maple
<i>Aeschulus hippocastanum</i>	Horse Chestnut
<i>Choisya ternata</i>	Mexican Orange Blossom
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry
<i>Prunus domestica</i>	Wild Plum
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English Oak
<i>Sambucus niger</i>	Elder
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Mountain Ash
<i>Spiraea arguta</i>	Bridle Wreath
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	White Lilac
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse

**Wild and non-native flowers in bloom 22nd and 25th April**

<i>Adoxa moschatellina</i>	Townhall Clock/Moschatel
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugle
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail
<i>Anchusa arvensis</i>	Buglos
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	Wood Anemone
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal Grass
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsley Piert
<i>Arabidopsis thaliana</i>	Thale Cress
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords and Ladies
<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	Wintercress
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Wavy Bittercress
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Lady's Smock
<i>Carex divulsa</i>	Grey Sedge
<i>Carex pendula</i>	Pendulous Sedge
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Wood-sedge
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear
<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>	Sticky Mouse-ear
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Celandine, Greater
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-bill
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry
<i>Fumaria officinalis</i>	Common Fumitory
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff
<i>Geraneum dissectum</i>	Cranesbill, Cut-leaved
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Cranesbill, Dove's-foot
<i>Geranium phaeum</i>	Dusky Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-Ivy
<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i>	Bluebell, Spanish
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell
<i>Hyacinthoides x massartiana</i>	Bluebell, hybrid
<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i>	Yellow Archangel
<i>Lamium album</i>	Deadnettle, White
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	Deadnettle, Red
<i>Lathyrus linifolius</i>	Bitter Vetch
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Birds-foot-trefoil
<i>Lunaria annua</i>	Honesty
<i>Luzula campestris</i>	Wood-rush, Field
<i>Luzula pilosa</i>	Wood-rush, Hairy
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Yellow Pimpernel
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Wood Melick
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Dog's Mercury
<i>Myosotis ramosissima</i>	Forget-me-not, Early
<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>	Forget-me-not, Wood
<i>Narcissus sp.</i>	Daffodil
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early-purple Orchid
<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i>	Star of Bethlehem
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	Procumbent Yellow-sorrel
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Green Alkanet
<i>Petasites pyrenaicus</i>	Winter Heliotrope
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i>	Soloman's Seal
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Buttercup, Meadow
<i>Ranunculus auricomus</i>	Buttercup, Goldilocks
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Celandine, Lesser
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Buttercup, Creeping
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel
<i>Schedonorus arundinaceus</i>	Tall Fescue
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion
<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	Hedge Mustard
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle
<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	Perennial Sow-thistle
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed
<i>Symphytum asperum x officinale</i>	Russian Comfrey
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black Bryony
<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	Dandelion
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Speedwell, Germander
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	Speedwell, Ivy-leaved
<i>Veronica montanum</i>	Speedwell, Wood
<i>Veronica persica</i>	Speedwell, Field
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>	Speedwell, Thyme-leaved
<i>Vicia hirsuta</i>	Hairy Tare
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Vetch, Common
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Vetch, Bush
<i>Viola arvensis</i>	Field Pansy
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog Violet