

# Bealeswood Common, Wildlife Records May 2021

As prepared by the Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group (BWRG)  
Previous monthly records and notes are posted at  
[www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife](http://www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife)

## Flowers

There are many comments made in the media on the cold, the late and the long spring of 2021. How have our Bealeswood wildflowers responded? In terms of numbers of plants flowering we are almost the same as the average for the last 10 years. The last count in May yielded 46 different species flowering as against an average since 2010 of 45 species. More information on this comes from what flowers make up the total.

As we write, we still have our early spring plants flowering (e.g. Celandine, Violet and Primrose) which boosts the numbers. However if we look at the first flowering times of 10 common May flowers (Red Clover, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Ox-eye Daisy, Speedwell, Red Campion, Common Tormentil, Sorrel, Pignut, Meadow Buttercup and Solomon's Seal) these are 2-3 weeks later than for the last 2 years (2019-20) but have the same first flowering dates as for 2018.

Our Common Spotted Orchids are yet to flower but the Early Purple Orchid can be seen in some neighbouring woodlands.

Some wildflowers currently flowering on the Common (Photos, Alan Cox)



Bugle

*Ajuga reptans*



Lady's-smock or  
Cuckooflower

*Cardamine pratense*



Greater Stitchwort

*Stellaria holostea*



Wood Anemone

*Anemone nemorosa*

**Butterflies** are recorded on a fixed set of transects each year and our records for this year seem to reflect the cold and wet spring (even though the flowers were out). During April and May just 12 butterflies were recorded (in order of decreasing abundance: Orange-tip, Speckled Wood, Brimstone, Holly Blue and Comma. This compares with 33 recorded for last year. This is approximately the same number each year since 2012 except for 2013 when only 8 individuals were recorded. So, its been a bad year for our lepidopterist, but not the worst.

## Birds

In May we have recorded nesting and fledging of birds on the Common and are pleased to record two local successes. There is national concern over the decline of Mistle Thrushes but this is not reflected in Dockenfield, based on this year's surveys. Young Greenfinch are a heartening sight as they have suffered from a disease known as Trichomonosis over the last 14 years and this decline shows 'no sign of slowing down', according to the 2019 Breeding Bird Survey.



Juvenile Mistle Thrush (Alan Cox)



Juvenile Greenfinch (left) and Goldfinch in garden adjacent to Common (Alan Cox)



Left, Nuthatch feeding young in Oak tree on Main Common.  
Right, juvenile Robin on Lower Common.  
(Photos, Alex Potts)