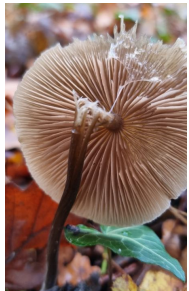


Bealeswood Common Wildlife

November 2022

Fungi (AA)

14 mushrooms, bracket fungi and a puffball were recorded in a survey this month, compared with 16 for October. These are illustrated and named below. Note some of these are highly toxic:



Garlic
Parachute



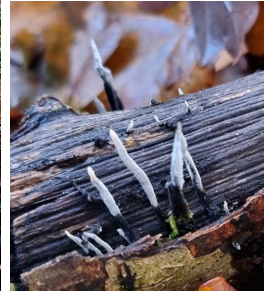
White Saddle



Dewdrop Mottlegill



White Brain



Candlesnuff



Clouded Funnel



Common Puffball



Buttery Collybia



Yellow Fieldcap



Hairy Curtain Crust



Wood Blewit



Jelly Drops



Oak Mazegill



Leaf Parachute

Flowers (DB)

The following 18 flowers were recorded in bloom during November: Meadow Buttercup, Bush Vetch, Tormentil, Bramble, Herb Robert, Oxford Cranesbill, Yarrow, Cyclamen, Michelmas Daisy, Catsear, Prickly Sowthistle, Nipplewort, Groundsel, Ragwort, Earthnut, Hogweed, White Deadnettle, and Self-heal. This is an unusually long list of flowers for this time of year.

Our records show it is more than three times the weekly average of the numbers counted for November (5 flowers) when averaged over the last 10 years. These increased numbers reflect flowers that had finished blooming but then started again in October and November and flowers that continued to bloom longer than is normal, possibly due to the mild November weather.

Birds (AC)

Most birdsong into December will be on contact calls rather than songs. Nevertheless, on a bright winter's day from mid month we may hear the see-saw song of the Great Tit - what therapy at the turn of the year to hear these imitations of spring.

Perhaps the first stirrings from the Mistle Thrush too, the earliest of the three resident thrushes into song. Our forebears coined the name Storm-Cock based on its persistence into its song cycle on the wettest, windiest days. Chris Packham says it's his favourite bird song. He has a point: the flutey beautiful phrasing, like many of the thrushes, but delivered from a lofty perch on Bealeswood seemingly in a reflective mood, with pauses between each phrase that create a sense of anticipation and melancholy - it bewitches me at least. In sharp contrast to the coarse, wooden rattle-like call when defending its hoard of holly berries from interlopers.

Scrub Clearance on Common (RW)

In November our Waverley Borough Council Ranger, Vicky Keller led a small group of volunteers to clear scrub and coppice hazel and blackthorn at the southerly corner of Bealeswood Common. This brings advantages which include reclaiming grassland and encouraging the regeneration of small trees in a more compact bushy form that benefits nesting birds. Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management dating back to Neolithic times; young tree stems are repeatedly cut down near to ground level. The result is new growth of many smaller shoots from the base (coppice stool) giving the opportunity for other species to thrive as light reaches the woodland floor. Through a management plan of coppicing a different area in the common every few years, a variety of scrub ages and structures increases the diversity of habitats for wildlife.

Many of our woodlands have been shaped by coppicing or pollarding (cutting new growth above grazing height). Different trees have a different interval to coppice on rotation, hazel is typically 7 years and chestnut is typically 15 years. As this is now rarely practised, these old coppice stools are out of rotation and form large multiple branches growing out from the base of the tree. Look out for them as they can be an indicator of ancient woodland.



Volunteers coppicing hazel and blackthorn to increase habitat diversity



Old coppice stool in ancient woodland

And, finally, a poem and a quiz (CJ)

As part of Dockenfield's recent exhibition of "The Arts and Crafts of our Parish" Clare Jackson wrote some words on our local wildlife. Referenced in the poem are the twelve species of wildlife. Can you name them all? Answers at bottom of page.

Snoozing is on sabbatical
– the tightest bud exhales
A brimstone burns into memory
igniting familiar anticipation.
Soon, the peacocks will stir.
Property developers are taking over
(feathering their own nests)
A cuckoo call sets branches atrembling
'Hang spring cleaning', said the Mole
as light overcomes domesticity.
The village awakes

In Abbots Wood, the stake-out begins
Impatiently, we bait Him, rewarded only
by a pause,
A comma idly munches shrimp paste.
Oak canopies hide our purple leader, who
prepares for private descent.
A swallow ballet opens
over a yellow and pleasant land
Our scorched-earth policy attracts exotic
visitors
– a hummingbird probes The Bluebell's
hot lips



Photo: Alex Potts

There are mutterings – murmurs –
change is in the air
What if we hadn't sung all summer?
The door revolves. A revived décor fit for
Farrow and Ball
Spaniel's Breath; Frensham Fire; Holly
Bush Green
Imitation is flattering and necessary:
Spiders in wasp drag; butterflies dressed
as leaves
Hedgerows plump their wares:
Everything Must Go!
The cloak draws itself around summer's
afternoons
On the common, a flash of yellow –
A cloud passes

A train ticket in a pocket
– a facemask –
these artefacts of a near and forgotten
time.
The first frost is obstinately absent –
she's a grownup child whose visits are
increasingly revered.
Others move in: an acidic green-feather
and piercing squawk provide
confirmation.
A robin puffs an orange chest, trilling into
an empty tree
Mistletoe chandeliers hang
Unnoticed by the couple below

Bealeswood Wildlife Reporting Group (BWRG) www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife

Amanda Adolph, Dan & Alison Bosence, Alan & Pauline Cox, Philippa & Colin Hall, Clare Jackson, Steve Lockett, Phil Nangle, Alex Potts, Christina Rasmussen, Anne Tutt, and Raf & Karen Wane. 1/12/2022.

(Brimstone (butterfly), Peacock (butterfly), Cuckoo, Mole, Purple Emperor (butterfly), Comma (butterfly), Swallow, Hummingbird Hawkmoth, Wasp spider, Clouded yellow (butterfly), Parakeet, Robin)