



Friends Of The Craggs

CRAGGS NEWSLETTER

Issue 2

May 2020

The Craggs are alive... with the sounds of springtime!

WITH the country still in lockdown over Covid-19, there has been little chance to capitalise on the efforts made by the Friends of The Craggs in recent months, to improve this area of beauty.

Our secretary, Alan Brocklehurst, has kindly put together a second newsletter, with contributions from Craggs lovers, to keep up the momentum at this very difficult time.

Carol S writes:

A few days ago, Tony and I had a walk through what is commonly called the "ancient woodland". What a delight this was.

Smell

The first thing that greeted us was the smell.

As we entered the woodland, there was a strong smell of wild garlic, and this was evident throughout the woodland, and the beautiful delicate white flowers of this plant added to the awakening of our senses.

What a great beginning to a wonderful test of the senses.

Sight

Bluebells, whitebells, buttercups, dandelions, daisies, a delicate small lilac flower, (I still have to identify this), and the newly formed buds and leaves.

What an amazing collection of colours, shapes and sizes.

Sounds / Hearing

Whilst we stood for a short while in a siding, gazing at the variety of beautiful plants and the colours of all the

wildflowers, the birds began to react to the silence.

They flew from branch to branch and tree to tree, talking to each other.

Something we have rarely taken notice of in the hustle and bustle of life without lockdown.

Watching and listening to the birds was such a wonderful experience; we tried to identify some of the birds we saw.

We identified robins, starlings, blackbirds, blue tits, and we are almost certain, after looking it up, a chaffinch. Such beauty!

We will need an app to recognise the birds by sound.

Touch & Taste

This was a cup of coffee and a shortbread biscuit when we arrived home!

There is no wonder people are finding the Craggs again, and using

the area to awaken the senses, which, due to our busy lives, we have not done very often.

Awakening our senses helps us to realise that nature is a true healer of anxiety, boredom, and - if one keeps social distance - a great place to go.



Chaffinch

Unfortunately, there is an element of selfishness when it comes to social distancing, so we ask that everyone who decides to take a walk, whether on the Craggs or elsewhere, remember that social distancing remains vital.

Alan B writes:

Do you know Jack-by-the-hedge? No, I don't mean the person, I mean the wildflower.

Jack-by-the-hedge is growing at the side of the uphill path, a short distance from Hillside Academy. "Jack" is not an eye-catching flower.

It has a rosette of small white flowers, at the end of an upright stem.

The leaves distinguish it from other flora. The heart shaped leaves are a lighter green than the darker green of neighbouring and

more abundant nettles and cow parsley.

The name Jack-by-the hedge fascinates me, as do its other names. It is also known as garlic mustard, hedge garlic, or poor man's mustard. (I only know this from my wildflower books!).

The crushed leaves smell of garlic.

What has delighted me more during my recent walks on the Craggs has been the sight of carpets of bluebells beneath the trees, and the overflowing, gently curving long branches of hawthorn blossom.

There are, of course, many other wildflowers to spot.

I have seen white deadnettle, white stitchwort, red campion, as well as the daisy, dandelion and buttercup.

I was glad to see the apple blossom in bloom.

This tree probably grew from a miner's discarded apple core, thrown away many years ago.

If you haven't already done so, do go and look at the bluebells and the hawthorn blossom before they fade.

And do say "hello" to Jack-by-the-hedge!



*Clockwise from left:
Red Campion
Jack-by-the-hedge
White Stitchwort
Wild rabbit*



CRAGGS FLOWERS AND ANIMALS



Antonia S writes:

Hi, it's me again. I took Page, my guide dog, up onto the Craggs on May 5.

It was very peaceful, with the sound of the breeze in the trees.

I could hear the birds singing in the trees. There seems to be more

birds this year.

This could be because they are not being disturbed.

Even the wildlife is coming out to play.

A rabbit scampered across my path and into the overgrowth. (I was told it was a rabbit.)

In the distance, I could hear children playing in

their gardens.

I could hear parents taking their children for a walk, and talking about spiders in the trees.

Closer by, I heard people saying "hello" as they passed me, at a distance, of course.

It seems that people are making the Craggs how it used to be in the

70s and 80s, when everyone said hello, even if they did not know you.

When you go onto the Craggs, it takes you away from the news, and you feel you are in a new world.

I'm writing this back home, with my feet up and a cup of coffee.