



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Snowdrops at Moor Crichel and Didlington Walk

Date: 15th February 2018
 Weather: Sunny, 10 degrees C
 Walk Leaders: Lyn & Gerry Traves
 Attendees: 14

The village of Witchampton is a sub district of Wimborne Minster in East Dorset and is a civil parish, situated by the River Allen and is 5 miles north of Wimborne Minster. To the north of the village lies The Crichel Estate which was most recently held by the Marten family, prior to that it was held by the Matraver family, the Earls of Arundel, the Cole family, the Napier family and the Sturt family. In 1765 Humphrey Sturt re-modelled the house and extended the park by including the village of Moor Crichel which is now submerged into the lake and re-locating the villagers to New Town half a mile out of Witchampton. The house and estate was sold in 2013 to American billionaire Richard L Chilton, a conservationist, who is restoring both the house and estate. Historically agriculture was the primary occupation in the area, however two flour mills were located at New Town since the Domesday survey of 1085 and continued in one form or another until 20th century. One of which was converted to a paper mill in the early 1700's. The paper mill ceased to exist 2002 when it was developed into residential housing.

Our walk started from Witchampton Sports Ground car park, crossing the playing field and along the entrance drive of Crichel House. The entrance to the drive is marked by a lodge and arched gateway designed by William Burn and McVicar Anderson in 1874 in a neo-Norman style. Leaving the drive we followed the public footpath past Crichel House grounds with views of the house and lake peeking through the woodland and with a carpet of snowdrops beneath. Then walking beside the River Allen, the banks also covered with Snowdrops until we reached Didlington Farm where we returned crossing farmland, a stile, the river and the new houses where the paper mill was sighted at New Town back to the car park.

| Flowering Plants | Birds | Fungi |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Snowdrop | Great Tit | Turkeytail |
| Lesser Celandine | Wren | |
| Dog's Mercury | Grey Wagtail | |
| Daisy | Pheasant | |
| Butterbur | Robin | |
| Hazel Catkin | Long-tailed Tit | |
| Alder Catkin | Blackbird | |
| Petty Spurge | Mute Swan | |
| Daffodil | Grey Heron | |
| Grey Field Speedwell | Buzzard | |
| Primrose | Great Spotted Woodpecker | |
| Dandelion | Mallard | |
| Crocus | House Sparrow | |
| | Rook | |
| | Wood Pigeon | |
| | Jackdaw | |
| | Magpie | |
| | Black-headed Gull | |



Snowdrops at Didlington by Lyn Traves