

Nature Notes

From the Altrincham and District Natural History Society

14th April 2020

Pat:

Lots of gardening thankfully I have a small one. I feel for people who do not have one.

28th March - 2 comas; a neighbour saw a cuckoo on my hedge (early?).

Wren , 2 dunnock , 2 blackbirds m /f , 2 robins , goldfinch, blue and great tits.

Pam and Phil:

We saw a treecreeper in Wythenshawe Park on Tuesday (31st March?)

Dave Higginson-Tranter:

More natural history videos at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCExiQdkx1BRWRo_STJAn3uA?fbclid=IwAR3pfeEPp9sGoaqMqy2AATJCyZocQsIT5fl_SVqGoYt96clm-GyVRVhUaQ0

Hilary Hampar: 25th March - Mersey Vally

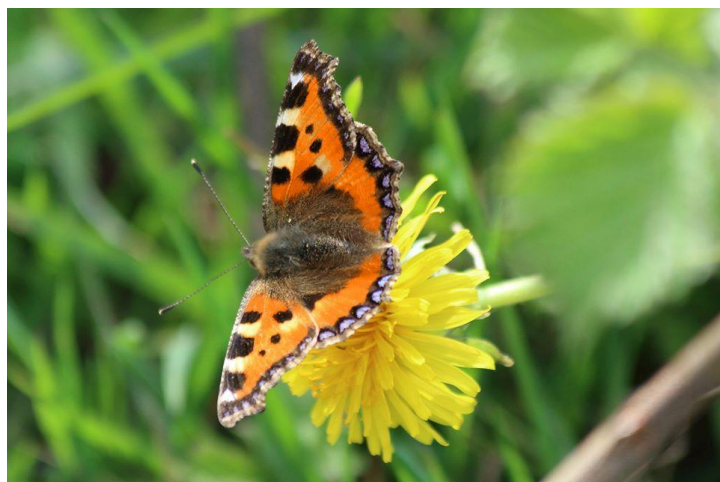
Blackthorn in full flower



Julie Samuels: 6th April at King George V Pool
Grey Wagtail



Small Tortoiseshell



Carrion Crow



Colin: 28th March - Bulrush/Great Reed Mace in River Bollin

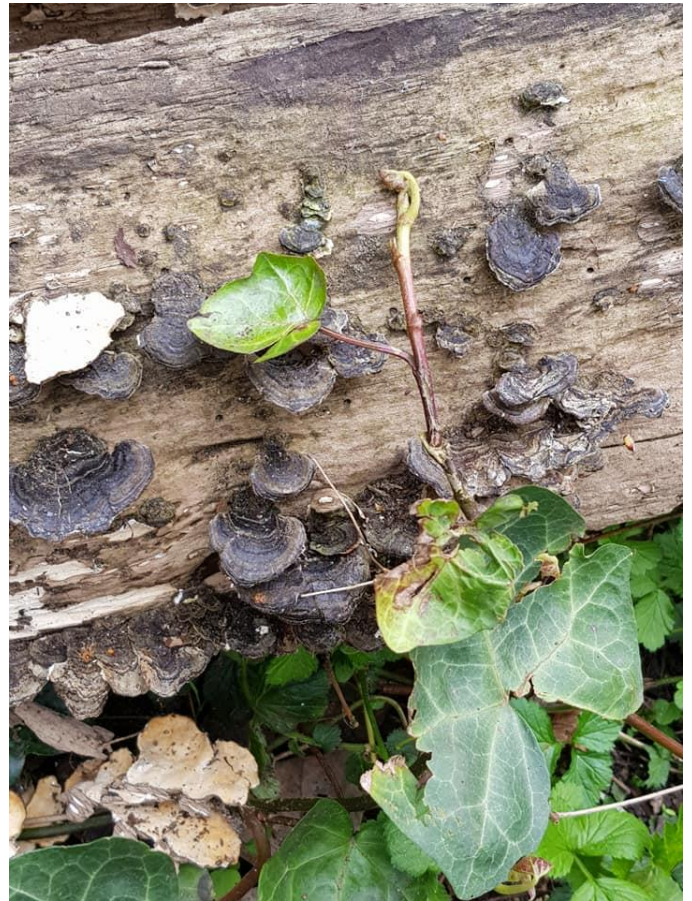


Jacky: at Stamford Park

Primrose



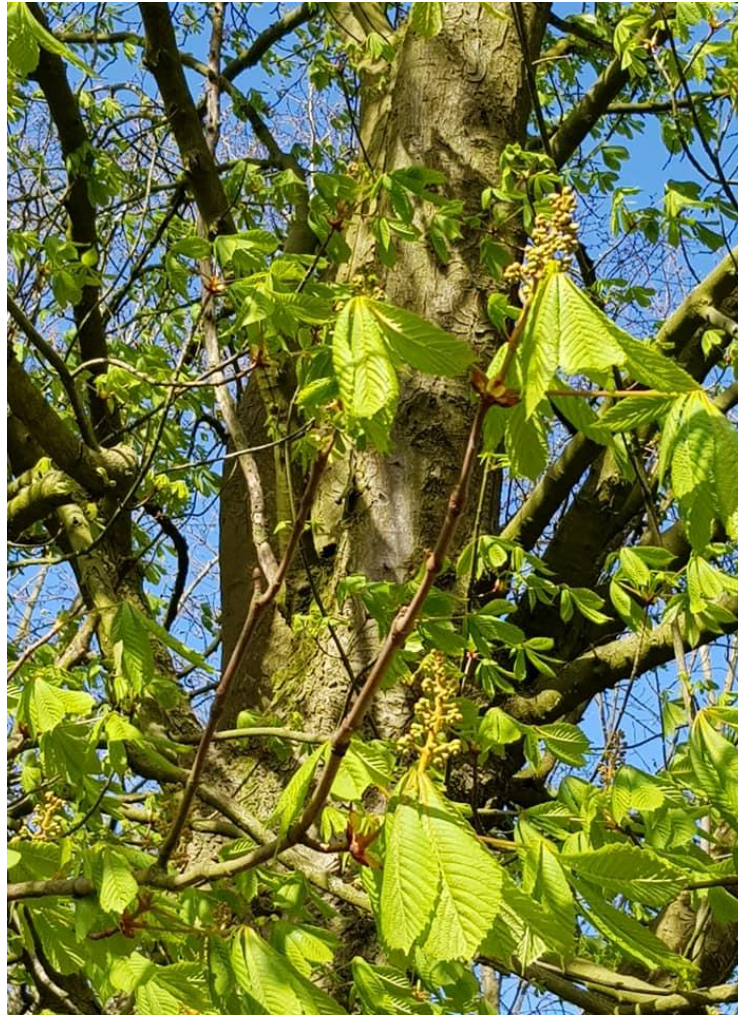
Ivy with fungus – possibly Turkeytail



With 4 wngs, this cannot be a true fly. One for Mike Ashworth.



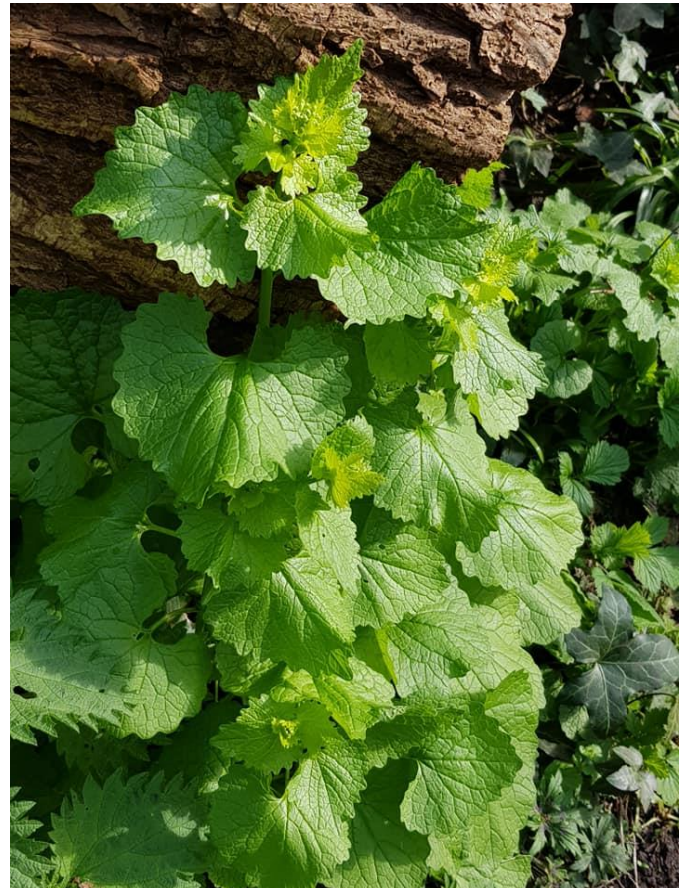
Horse Chestnut, with candles



Good to see social distancing in operation.



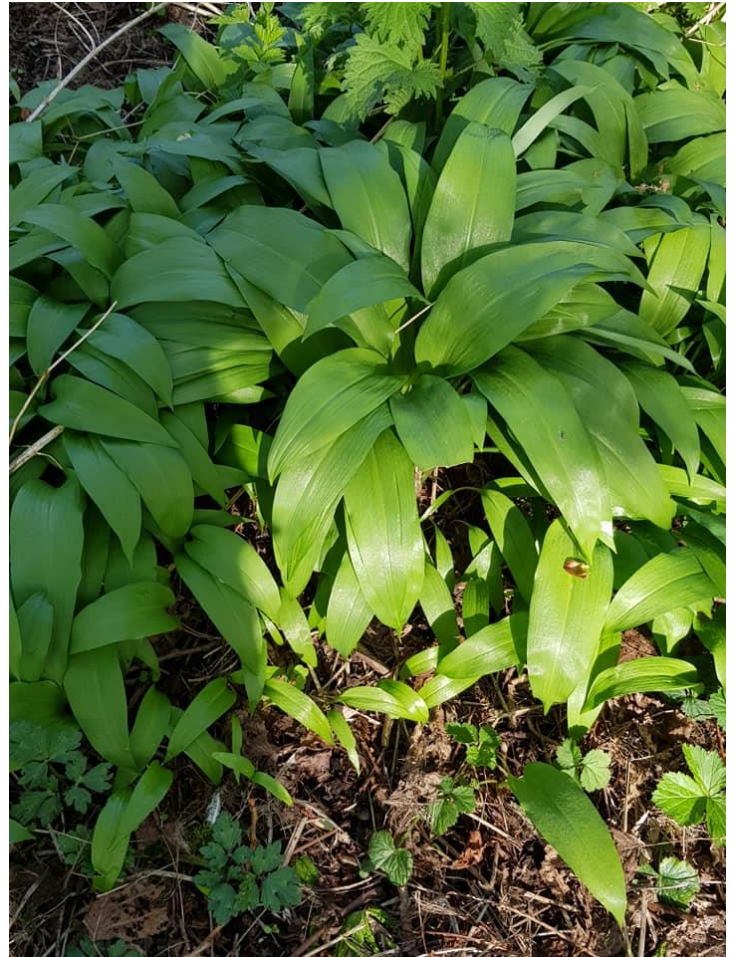
Jack by the Hedge



Wood Anemone



Wild Garlic



Marsh Marigold



Fritillary



Stretford Garden: A good time for amphibians.

25th March - This local resident was unimpressed with the recent, unexpected activity in (what it thought was) its territory. Trying to stamp it out.



Looks risky!

26th March - It would probably take a young newt about 6-8 weeks to reach this size (about 2") from an egg, which would mean hatching by mid February. This is much earlier than usual – the newts seem to start mating here in April. Subsequently learnt that tadpoles can overwinter in a pond. Suspect this newt had done so, and then continued development early this year. Note the strange shape just to the left of the newt



Riskier



Foolhardy?
No more photos....



4th April - Frog Tadpoles. Note external gills which will be absorbed in about a week, leaving internal gills only. The newts have suddenly become more active as well!



Not far from the pond, found this Grey-haired (or Ashby) Mining Bee. Mining bees (also known as digger bees) are solitary bees that build nests in underground tunnels. This species is more frequently found in southern England, but seem to be spreading north. Mike Ashworth informed me this one is a male. The males are smaller and don't have pollen baskets on their hind legs (because they are lazy and don't collect pollen!) If you want to be really nerdy, male bees have 13 antennal segments whereas females have 12.



Longford Park, 11th April – Catkins on Hornbeam. Of 7 Hornbeam trees nearby, only 2 have catkins this year. One which had many catkins in February last year has none this year – the buds were small and did not open until late March, with leaves only. Have you seen any Hornbeam trees with catkins? Do they have them every year? Hornbeam is the same family (Betulaceae) as Hazel and Birch, both of which also have catkins, and I think they occur every year.



Mersey Valley, 2nd April – Meadow Foxtail. One of our earliest flowering grasses. A silky smooth flower head, providing good grazing early in the year. Found especially in damp areas such as flood meadows. Here it is in Stretford Ees ('Ees' being the local dialect word for flood/water meadow) which used to flood regularly. It is found widely around the Mersey valley.



Found a heronry! This is one of a number of Grey Herons using the tops of these tall conifers, catching the last sunlight at dusk. Nest are typically well hidden just a little lower in the trees.

