

Nature Notes

January 2021

Despite the lockdown, there is always something of interest.

Bowdon Garden, January 2021

Up to a dozen Siskin.



Redpoll (possibly Lesser). Only one seen so far.



Bullfinch



Goldfinch



20th January 2021. You may recall it rained a little this month. Contrast with 9th April 2020
Chorlton Brook joining the River Mersey



20th January 2021. Sluice Gates to Sale Water Park, shortly before they were opened. 29th March 2020



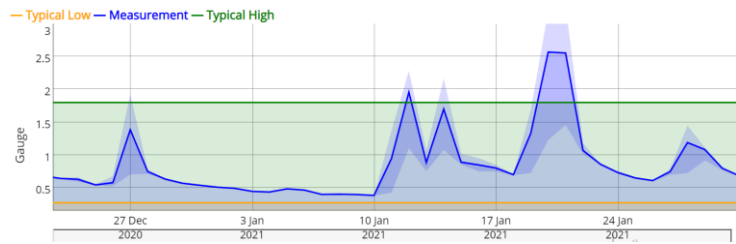
20th January 2021. Near Stretford flood meadows.



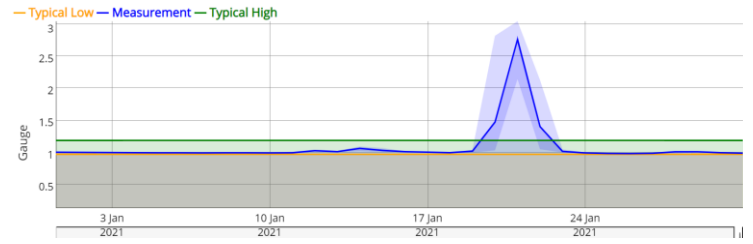
26th April 2020. Slightly different position, but same pylon.



River Mersey levels at Northenden in January 2021. Reaching 3.27m, the highest recorded since 2011 and possibly ever. (www.riverlevels/uk)



Level at Sale Water Park. Always around 1m unless sluice gates are opened. The level drops quickly, but now there is much pondweed draping vegetation and fences.



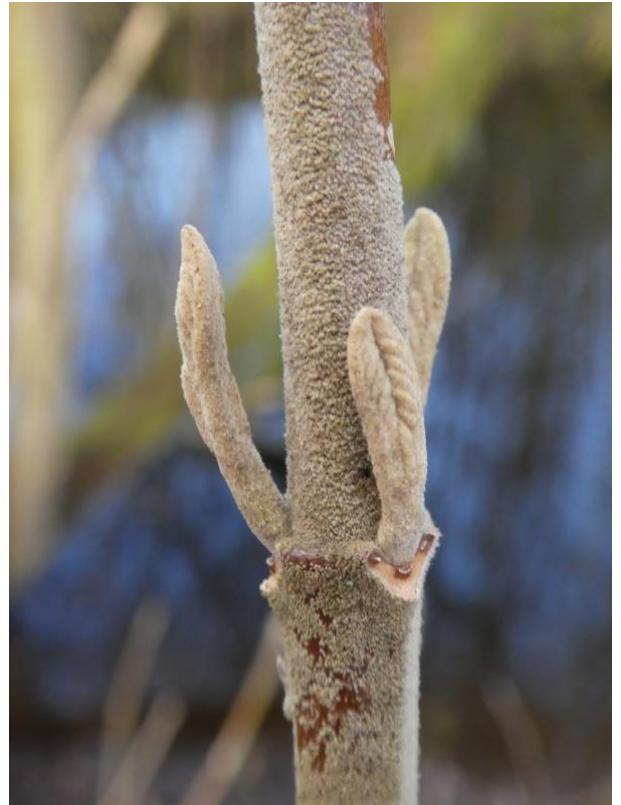
Longford Park, 19th January 2021. Attractive, naked (no scales) bud of Caucasian Wingnut tree. Buds without scales are frequently densely covered in hairs, which provide some protection to the emerging leaves or flowers.



Carrington Moss, 24th January 2021. Naked bud of Alder Buckthorn. More common further south but increasingly found closer to home (found some in Gorse Hill recently). It is one of the two foodplants of the Brimstone butterfly, and also a foodplant for 'The Tissue' moth. It was a result of seeing numerous Brimstone butterflies in this area that encouraged to search for this plant.



Sale Water Park, January 2021. More naked buds! The Wayfaring tree. The twig on the left has a pointed terminal bud, which means it is a leaf. There is frequently a globose bud, which will open into a flower cluster. The twig on the right is unusual in having three buds whorled round the stem – twigs of this species normally have two opposite buds.



By River Mersey, 12th January 2021.

The controversial Rose-ringed (or Ring-necked) Parakeet. This one seems to be waiting for a woodpecker to return and enlarge the hole in the tree.



Sale Water Park, 30th January 2021

We are waiting for the herons to start nest building. This one seemed quite content, standing and preening. (I am sure herons are not designed for standing in trees!)



31st December 2020, Sale Water Park. Fine pair of Goosanders



31st December 2020, Sale Water Park. Watched this hungry cormorant for at least 15 minutes. It swallowed the eel at least three times, but twice the eel re-emerged, once escaping into the water before being caught again! Stayed down for at least 5 minutes before we left.



Crossford Bridge Playing Fields, Sale, 25th January 2021.

The world's biggest tree (species). The Giant Redwood/Giant Sequoia. May need a little more time to reach its potential.



The cones start green and subsequently turn brown, taking two years to ripen. They remain on the tree for a few years here, but up to twenty years in California.



Salford Quays, 30th January 2021.

An evergreen flowering tree in January. Easy to recognise as Eucalyptus, but with over 700 species it is difficult to be sure which one (any suggestions?). Worth taking a closer look....



When the cap comes off, numerous stamens appear tightly rolled. They may be white, cream, yellow, pink, or red.



The flowers are enclosed in capsules, with a the cap formed from fused sepals or petals or both.



The stamens unroll giving a fluffy appearance. The seeds then develop in the conical cups.

