

Walk from Chesterfield along the Drone Valley Way – 04 February 2018

5 members travelled by the 0932 hours No. 43 bus into Chesterfield to start at the Crooked Spire to walk the Drone Valley Way in reverse!

Linda & Mick Fairest, Eileen & Graham Gill and Malcolm Swift.

The weather was very cold but dry as we began our walk down past Chesterfield Railway Station to take the path alongside the River Rother and towards the Chesterfield Canal and the Cuckoo Way. We noted House Sparrow, Dunnock, Great Tit, Blue Tit and Blackbird along the way. We continued alongside Chesterfield Canal from Tapton Lock to Bluebank Pool. In the hope of seeing more birds we decided to take the Bluebank cycle track instead of taking the path towards Old Whittington. Not many birds to be seen but as we reached the end of the path we did get 2 Treecreepers and a Nuthatch. Our flower list continued to grow with Snowdrops, White Dead Nettle, Lesser Celandine and Hairy Bittercress.

We eventually arrived at the path to Old Whittington along Bilby Lane. Here we saw Greenfinch, Long-tailed Tit and Great Tit.

Our walk took us through New Whittington and we climbed to the highest point on the walk up towards Grasscroft Wood. Two Buzzards soared in the distance and 2 Ravens flew overhead. For our packed lunch stop we took advantage of a derelict building. The sun was shining and the sky was blue but the temperature was freezing so we didn't linger long over our lunch! From this point there were good views and in the distance we identified the Chesterfield Crooked Spire (where our walk had begun) and also Bolsover Castle. After lunch we continued through Grasscroft Wood where we noticed the green shoots of Bluebells starting to appear but not much else. The paths were very muddy.

We came out of the wood opposite Hundall Mast, crossed the lane and took the left hand path down towards Unstone. Over in a right hand field towards Hundall we noted a Buzzard standing on the ground. On our approach it flew off but whether it had prey or not we never found out. We reached the start of the Unstone Line and recorded Scarlet Elf Cup, *Trametes versicolor*, *Piptoporus betulinus* and Tinder Fungus along this path.

Further along we found that the path was in disrepair and totally flooded so Malcolm decided to backtrack to take the path up to the main road to catch his bus back into Dronfield. After a bit of improvisation by Graham in placing some discarded planks of wood over the water the other 3 members managed to carry on with care!

As we reached the River Drone Eileen & Graham continued on towards Metapic Wood, Callywhite Lane and home while Linda & Mick returned to their car. Whilst changing their boots back at the car a Brown Rat ran along the hedgerow.

Birds 28 Flora 15 Mammals 1 (plus Mole hills) Fungi 6 Amphibians 1 (dead Frog)

Reporter: Linda Fairest

BirdsFloraFungi

Blackbird
Black-headed Gull
Blue Tit
Buzzard
Carrion Crow
Chaffinch
Coal Tit
Collared Dove
Dunnock
Feral Pigeon
Great Tit
Greenfinch
Grey Heron
Herring Gull
House Sparrow
Jackdaw
Long-tailed Tit
Magpie
Mallard
Moorhen
Nuthatch
Raven
Redwing
Robin
Song Thrush
Starling
Treetreeper
Woodpigeon

Hairy Bittercress
Snowberry
Hedge Mustard
Hart's Tongue Fern
Hazel Catkins
Snowdrop
White Dead Nettle
Viburnum Farreri sp.
Chickweed
Pussy Willow
Gorse
Lesser Celandine
Daisy
Red Dead Nettle
Groundsel

Scarlet Elf Cup
Tinder Fungus
Trametes versicolor
Coral Spot Fungus
Birch Polypore -
(Piptoporus Betulinus)
Hairy Stereum



BLACK-HEADED GULLS



CORAL SPOT FUNGUS



**ONE MILE MARKER STONE
ON THE CHESTERFIELD CANAL**



LONG TAILED TIT



HAIRY STEREUM



SCARLET ELF CUP