



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Snowdrops at Moor Critchel and Didlington Walk

Date: 7th February 2023
Weather: Sunny
Walk Leaders: Lyn and Gerry Traves
Attendees: 16

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 1770 Humphrey Sturt re-modeled 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.

On a beautiful sunny day although cold, our walk started from Witchampton village at the arched gateway entrance to Crichel House, designed by William Burn and McVicar Anderson in 1874 in a neo-Norman style, and walking along the entrance drive. 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, the river and the new houses where the paper mill was at New Town, then back to our cars.

Flowering Plants	Birds	Birds Cont.	Others
Daisy	Rook	Long-tailed Tit	Red Admiral
Snowdrops	Wood Pigeon	Coot	Bee sp.
Hazel Catkins	Carrion Crow	Wren	Roe Deer
Alder Catkins	Blue Tit	Blackbird	
Butterbur	Coal Tit	Skylark	
Dandelion	Great Tit	Nuthatch	
Mistletoe	Mistle Thrush	Meadow Pipit	
Common Field Speedwell	Jackdaw	House Sparrow	
Red Dead-nettle	Robin	Pheasant	
Groundsel	Chaffinch	Jay	
Lesser Celandine	Mute Swan	Collard Dove	



Snowdrops at Didlington by Lyn Traves