

Looking at the Countryside – Newchurch, Tuesday 26 April 2022

Four members turned out for this walk, weather conditions were fine, with clear blue sky and a light easterly breeze. This was a repeat of a walk held in November 2021.

The walk started from the car park in School Lane, and took footpath NC13 toward Skinner's Lane. A Yellowhammer was seen in a tree where the footpath meets the Lane. We then climbed up Skinners Lane towards Queens Bower, and a Pheasant's 'rasp' call was heard. A recently used badger sett was seen, so recent the badger's paw prints were still visible in the soil!



At Queen's Bower, we turned left into footpath NC42, where a Bumblebee and a Swallow were seen. Black Briony were seen in the hedges and verge, not yet in leaf. Holly Blue butterfly were spotted. The footpath leads to the outskirts of Alverstone Garden Village, where we turned left into footpath NC12. This footpath skirts the Garden Village, and much 'garden escape' plants and flowers were seen. A Great Tit was heard nearby, and Speckled Wood butterfly spotted.

After the garden village, we turned right into footpath NC11b, which leads past woodland and open fields to Hill Heath. Scots Pine trees lined the route, which were coming into flower. Shaking one of the flowers resulted in quite a spectacular pollen shower!



Half-way along the footpath, we stopped to admire the view along the eastern Yar valley, where the Yarborough monument could be seen on the top of Culver Down, and the sea in the distance. At Hill Heath, footpath NC11b meets NC11, which we took the left turn and headed into the woods. Bluebells carpeted the woodland floor.



A Red Squirrel was spotted high in the trees. The footpath crosses a small stream (a tributary of the Eastern Yar), which was full of red-brown deposits of the Ferruginous Sandstone. We carried on on footpath NC11 towards Martin's Wood, past the daffodils of the Field of Hope, now past their flowering best. A Red Admiral butterfly was seen. We continued through Martin's Wood, returning to the car park.

Al Blenkinsop