

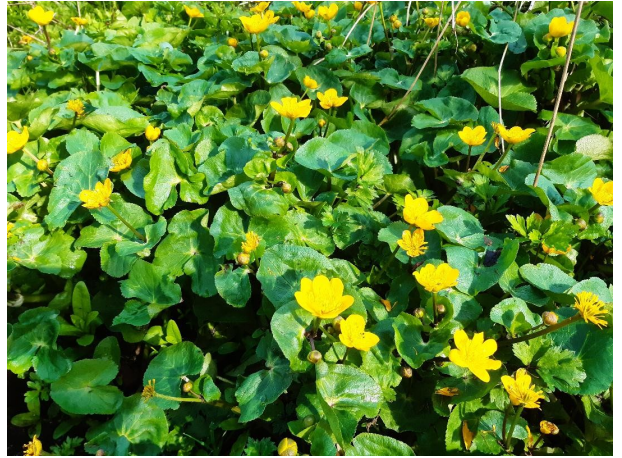


A Month by Month Look at Millie Bank - May 2021

Millie Bank - May

What a difference a month makes! Just four weeks ago, we were struggling to find flowering plants on Millie Bank; now we are spoiled for choice.

It's difficult not to see bright yellow **Marsh Marigolds** (aka Kingcups) in the first wet flush next to the path, but you might have to look more carefully for the delicate **Cuckoo Flower** (aka Lady's-smock) nearby. This is another formerly common plant which has disappeared from many places as silage production has increased exponentially. The special feature of this picture is the Orange Tip Butterfly having a little snack!



Wild Garlic leaves have already featured in a previous report, and here is the plant in full flower. Carpets of wild garlic in ancient woodlands are almost as attractive as bluebells, but millions of both species have been destroyed by the UK's most futile development: HS2, with millions more to follow.



Just as wood anemones are beginning to retreat, the unmistakable leaves of **Wood Sorrel** (aka Cuckoo's Meat!) appear. Although seemingly white from a distance, many plants have subtle purple veins, and you might be lucky to find the odd plant which is completely pinky-purple. However, its leaves don't vary in appearance.





Another quite common white flower at this time of the year is **Greater Stitchwort**. An unusual feature is the five cleft petals, making it look as if the flower has many narrow ones. It will grow in woodland, but likes to see some sunshine. Once you have spotted the flowers, take a look at the leaves, as they are quite distinctive.



Moving away from white flowers, **Bugle** is a very noticeable plant, which people might recognise as it is often found as a ground-cover garden plant. At first glance, it looks a bit like an orchid, but don't be fooled - there are no blue orchids in the UK. You will often find quite big clumps of bugle, as it is another species which spreads via runners.



There are quite a lot of crane's-bills, and they can be tricky to identify. As mentioned last month, quite a few species of plant have managed to cope with the austere conditions of the hard-standing area, and here is one of them, possibly a stunted **Hedgerow Crane's-bill**, but you will have to measure the length of the hairs on its stem to confirm this ID!



No Moss of the Month this month, as we had to include this fungus growing on the underside of the fallen ash just above the gate into Common Wood, as it is **King Alfred's Cakes**. Folklore has it that they were created when an embarrassed King Alfred scattered the cakes he had let burn, to try to hide his ineptitude. Apparently, they make good tinder for fire-lighting.

Nigel and Lois Harbron