



A Month by Month Look at Millie Bank - January 2021

In 2021, we intend to spend an hour around the middle of each month, making a note of just a few things going on. We paid our first visit on a cold January the 14th, and were surprised by the number of people we encountered. Sadly, we were disgusted by the amount of dog-muck lying around, although this wasn't surprising given that dogs outnumbered people during our visit.

Starting from the gate, the alder trees and the hazel trees by the beck are all covered in catkins, the former a delicate shade of purple.

Alder catkins



Hazel catkins



If you take a look at the grassy slope opposite the trees, you will see small holes everywhere indicating a very good population of voles. They thrive in grassland like this and provide ready-meals for owls and other predators, but are absent in most farmed fields where the grass is eaten down to ground level all year round.

Vole holes



As the scrub starts on the left, there is one flower on the gorse. Quite a few wild flowers do appear during a mild January, but this one has been too cold for them. Only the gorse is tough enough to brave the cold. It is one plant which often has flowers during every month.

Gorse with single yellow flower



Along the edge of the path, there are lots of green leaves appearing, and look out for clusters of golden saxifrage - the opposite-leaved variety - and celandine. Either or both might well be showing flowers in a month's time. On your right opposite the scrub, look out for a hazel tree above the beck with a lovely display of polypody fern. This looks like the 'intermediate' variety, the hybrid between common and southern polypodies.

Golden saxifrage



Although not a species growing on Millie Bank, we were impressed by this lichen, the English name being oak moss. It was on a twig which had probably blown out of the small plantation, but it was found on Millie Bank!

More in February

Celandine



Lichen

Polypody fern

