

A walk along the Almond in early January

It was interesting to see that a few plants were still in flower--such as White Dead Nettle, Groundsel, Daisy, Chickweed, Shepherd's Purse and Hogweed-- not that they were readily noticeable!

White Butterbur (*Petasites albus*) is beginning to sprout and will soon be flowering at the bottom of Peggy's Mill Road. This is a non- native species imported as a garden ornamental in 1683 and now naturalised in the UK.



White Butterbur January 2014



April

The native Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) has pinkish flowers will soon be seen at Dowie's Mill. Very large leaves are produced after flowering and it is thought that these may have been used in the past to wrap butter.



Butterbur leaves at Dowie's Mill (June)

Ivy (*Hedera helix*) covering the ground in many places and climbing trees was thriving. It is not a parasite and is rarely a threat to healthy trees. It provides shelter and nesting sites for birds where they are able to find a supply of insects. It flowers late in the year (September to November) and is an important source of nectar and pollen for bees. The berries are a

favourite winter food for blackbirds and may remain on the plant until spring providing an important source of food for young birds.



Ivy Berries by Cockle Mill (January 2014)

Bulbs and bulbils of Flowered Leek (*Allium paradoxum*) were beginning to sprout, the bulbils originating from last year's inflorescences. We will soon see this invasive covering much of the woodland floor and producing its characteristic smell of garlic.



Sprouting bulbils (January 2014)



Flowering (April)

Last year we assisted with the removal of Cherry Laurel. This is an invasive species which casts a dense shade that excludes other plants. Regrowth from treated stumps will require further treatment.



Regrowth of Laurel (January 2014)

One of the noticeable things on my walk was that there were many holly trees but no berries. In fact I found one berry on a tree by the Boat Yard! In order to produce fruit both male and female trees are usually required. It may be that berries on female trees had already been eaten by birds! As flowering does not occur until trees are about 20 years old some trees may have been too young.

Finally, do keep a look out for the daffodils we have planted by the paddock at Braehead and the bluebells, snowdrops and primroses we have planted at various points along the walkway which hopefully will provide some colour in the spring!

If you have any questions or observations on wildlife please do not hesitate to contact us.