

A walk along the Almond in early May

It was wonderful to see so many plants in flower and with little difficulty I counted over thirty species!

Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) grows near Dowie's Mill. The flower emerges first and is followed by very large leaves. In an old photograph of Jock Howison's Cottage (when it had walls and a roof!) this plant can be seen on the slope towards the river. It is no longer there but Ramsons, Few-flowered Leek, Cow Parsley and Ground Elder could be seen.



Butterbur

The non-native and invasive Few-flowered leek (*Allium paradoxum*) was widespread but was beginning to die back. It will quickly be superseded by other plant species such as Jack-by-the-Hedge, Ground Elder and Creeping Buttercup. The native wild garlic or Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*) was more prevalent towards Cramond, especially in the vicinity of the Salvesen Steps



Ramsons

Between Dowies Mill and Peggy's Mill a beautiful white violet (*Viola odorata*) emerged from a stump covered in ivy. Nice to see that something can grow amidst the ivy!



Sweet Violet

At the bottom of Peggies Mill Road there was a large patch of Variegated Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon ssp argentatum*). This was an interesting find, probably a garden escape. It was first recorded in the wild in Oxfordshire in 1974. According to the organisation 'Plantlife' it is increasing rapidly in the wild, carpeting the area to the exclusion of other plants and should be considered among the top 17 plants presenting a risk to species of conservation interest.



Variegated Yellow Archangel

The holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) was now flowering and all trees examined were male--no doubt the reason why there were so few berries last winter.



Male Holly flower showing stamens and no ovary

Towards Fair a' Far Wood Anemonies (*Anemone nemorosa*) were an attractive sight.



Wood Anemone

Bluebells were frequently seen but were not the native Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) which has narrow tube – like flowers with the tips curled back and which droop to one side. The hybrid between our native Bluebell and the Spanish Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*) is commonly grown in gardens and those along the Walkway are no doubt escapes from gardens in the vicinity. In view of their presence in so many gardens in the area and the fact that the species readily hybridise I suspect it would be impossible to maintain a population of native Bluebells along the Walkway. A study on bluebell populations and the risks to the genetic integrity of our native Bluebell can be seen at

<http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uploads/documents/Blubells-for-Britain-report.pdf>



Hybrid Bluebells near Dowie's Mill

The Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) which had been a beautiful sight, especially on the slopes between Fair a' Far and Caddell's Row, had nearly completed flowering.



Lesser Celandine

How lucky we are to have such a beautiful Walkway in our doorstep! Do contact us if you have any questions or observations on wildlife.

Isla Browning