

## Saturday 18th February Malvern Group walk around Old Storridge looking for signs of spring.

The leader was Garth Lowe. From the Knapp & Papermill Reserve car parking area we set off up Sandy Lane, an old parish route to Alfrick Church, and after looking at the badger diggings we turned right along a footpath and then right again into a brookside meadow behind Brook Cottage.

After crossing the footbridge and the road, we followed another footpath and also the drive to what was Brookpatch farm but now derelict, and the buildings converted.

From here footpaths were followed southwards into the apple orchards then a pear orchard, with the turning point being a new half timbered building built in the style of one from many years ago, with all the beams pegged and an overhanging front. The route here briefly touched the Worcs Way before heading northwards along a bridle path below some extensive grass banks, thro' a wood anemone copse, then emerged on Old Storridge.

By using some narrow footpaths we continued downhill and reached Papermill footbridge, then went up into the reserve and turned right to follow the main path through the reserve back to the starting point.

### Species seen:

Birds: Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*); Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*); Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*).

Plants: Cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*); Crow garlic (*Allium vineale*); Dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) (male – in flower); Field speedwell (*Veronica persica*); Goosegrass (*Galium aparine*); Mallow; Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*); Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*).

Ferns: Hart's tongue fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*); Male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*); Soft shield fern (*Polystichum setiferum*).

Shrubs/Trees: Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) (catkin - male, small bud with red tip - female).

Fungi: Slime mould, pore stage; Turkey tail bracket fungus (*Trametes versicolor*).

Mammals: tracks of Muntjak deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*).

Insects: Looper caterpillar (small moth).



Here a Looper caterpillar is shown to the walking group near The Knapp and Papermill Nature Reserve. This is an early sighting of a Looper. And just one of many flora and fauna beginning to appear earlier in the calendar. Photo by Roger Plant.



This green lane, close to the Knapp and Papermill Nature Reserve, is legally open to vehicular traffic. However badgers have recently made the lane practically impassable for all but the most determined petrol heads driving 4x4s (yes there have been some)! Photo by Roger Plant.