

## I-Spy on Hocombe Mead in February 2017



### Cuckoo Pint or Wild Arum

*Arum maculatum*

The leaves of this plant can be seen now and they will be followed later by a greenish white flower with a purplish brown centre and in the autumn by bright orange berries that are very poisonous. The centre of the flower is liked by rodents that often eat it.

The plant likes growing in moist, shady places; Where would you look for it on Hocombe Mead?



### Scarlet Elf Cap

*Sarcoscypha coccinea*

The fungus grows on decaying sticks and branches in damp spots on woodland floors, generally buried under leaf litter or in the soil. The cup-shaped fruit bodies are usually produced during the cooler months of winter and early spring. The brilliant red interior of the cups is due to five types of carotenoid pigments (colouring matter).

Can you think of any other plants or parts of plants that might have carotenoids in them?



### Hart's Tongue Fern

*Asplenium scolopendrium*

The leaves of this fern, unlike others, is not made up of fronds but has single, tongue-shaped leaves. It grows in shady, moist woodland places, on banks and sometimes on damp walls.

It is clear where the tongue part of its name comes from but do you know, or can you find out, what a hart is?,



### Soft Rush

*Juncus effusus*

If you look in the meadow you will notice large dark green clumps of plant that look like stout grass. If you take a closer look you will notice that the stems are rounded and very glossy. This plant belongs to the rush family and likes wetlands and acid soils where it forms clumps or tussocks. It is very hardy and survives being trampled very well.

What or who is likely to trample the rushes in the meadow?



## .Tree Guards

These tree guards are protection around Oak and Hazel trees that were planted at the beginning of last winter. Most of them survived the dry weather last summer and will grow to form new trees in the woodland and provide homes and food for animals.

From what do you think the guards are protecting the new small trees?



## Siskin

*Carduelis spinus*

Siskins are small birds that are members of the finch family. They are very active and group together in flocks while they feed on seeds of birch and alder trees. This picture is of a female siskin; the males are brighter and have a black crown and are a streaky yellow/green colour. You may not siskins as clearly as this picture but if you look up into the tall trees at the end of the boardwalk at Hiltingbury Road you make see and hear noisy flocks of them feeding. What type of trees do you think they are?



## Jay

*Garrulus glandarius*

Jays are shy woodland birds and tend to remain in the cover of woodland. At this time of year it is easier to see them as they fly from tree to tree. They may also let you know that they are on the move by their screaming as they go. Jays like to eat acorns and in the autumn store them in the ground for winter food.

Which trees produce acorns?



## Nuthatch

*Sitta europaea*

They are small birds that live in woodland. They can be seen running headfirst both up and down tress whilst gathering insects. They also eat seeds and nuts which they smash onto the tree and split it open with their beak. They nest in holes in trees and, if the entrance hole is large, they make it smaller by plastering it with mud so that other birds cannot enter.

What sort of seeds or nuts do you think a nuthatch would find in Hocombe Mead?