

Wild Botanical Delights of Danehill Parish

This article came about because of a Facebook post. The post was asking for places to go to see bluebells. I was astonished by the comments which this brought, which were suggestions for visiting places miles away, when we have some of the finest bluebells here in this parish. So I thought a short botanical guide to local wild flowers might be of interest. Danehill parish is very well endowed with ancient woodland species not only in the remaining ancient woods but also in the many ancient hedgerows along the roads and footpaths.

Too late for this year, but first up are the 'Fair Maids of February' snowdrops (S on the map). These grow in abundance along the stream and footpath which runs down from Portmansford Farm, Furners Green to the Angling Centre. They are closely followed by the wild daffodils

(Lenten lilies, D) which are less brash than the domesticated varieties but a more refined spectacle. The place for these is on the footpath through Dilys Messenger's field. The footpath runs from School Lane just below the southern entrance to Coach and Horses Lane (not the pub entrance). Pass through the first field, where there may still be a few daffs left after recent turmoil, cross the bridge and look right as you climb the steep hill. They are at their best from late March. Wood anemones (A), celandines and primroses (P) are everywhere in April, but a great place is the bottom end of Sheffield Mill Lane at Furners Green as you approach the mill.

The spectacle finishes in late April/early May with the bluebells (B), again at many locations, but the best are at Buttocks Bank, off Box's Lane, the woodland beyond Sheffield Mill pond and of course, for a small fee, Heaven Farm. For Buttocks Bank take the footpath, just beyond the house called 'The Drum', which goes straight down to the stream. The bluebells (and anemones) are along the footpath. The bluebells further up Buttocks Bank are absolutely amazing, the best I have seen anywhere, but there is too much shooting in the woods nowadays to safely sneak a peek. It is safe on the footpath and still a fine view.

