

Easter 2020, no churches open, no garden centres open, no restaurants open to meet friends and have a natter, yet the natural world continues and if we keep a watch gives us many hours of enjoyment.

In March I told you about the 'hungry' hedgehog at Slaley Park – unfortunately it died; another dead hedgehog was reported on the Lead Road between Hill Top and Glen Lodge please send me some 'good' hedgehog sightings.

At Reaston, where I check James' Belted Galloway stock the wild flowers are confirming that spring is here; Primroses flowering have replaced the wild snowdrops in the west section of the old Glen garden, while the delicate white petals of the Barren Strawberry and the blue-violet petals of the Common Dog-Violet are flowering on the south-facing side of the north bank of the Reason Burn. The black headed gulls continue to follow the farmers as they fertilise, plough, harrow, seed and roll the land.

Back at home the garden birds at the feeders have included the small Siskin with its bright yellow wing feathers and the much larger Greenfinch. The Jackdaws I mentioned on March 26th have finished building and I assume sitting on their eggs inside our owl box. A pair of blue-tits are nesting in the nest-box fixed to our Oak tree and further up on a dead branch the Starlings have once again made their nest. Blackbirds squabble in the shrubs and on the lawns – not sure if this is territory or partner disagreements? Social distancing came into the garden when I noticed a Sparrowhawk sitting on the bird bath watching John's Budgies in their flight with one eye and the bird feeders with the other.

Keith Robson telephoned and said he had heard his first Cuckoo over the Easter weekend, then I also heard one calling on Easter Monday late afternoon. Keith also told me that he frequently sees a Green Woodpecker, apparently, they love ants.

The TV is now reporting that watching wildlife is very good for us as we continue with the restrictions Coronavirus has imposed on us all. We look forward to hearing about what you have seen.