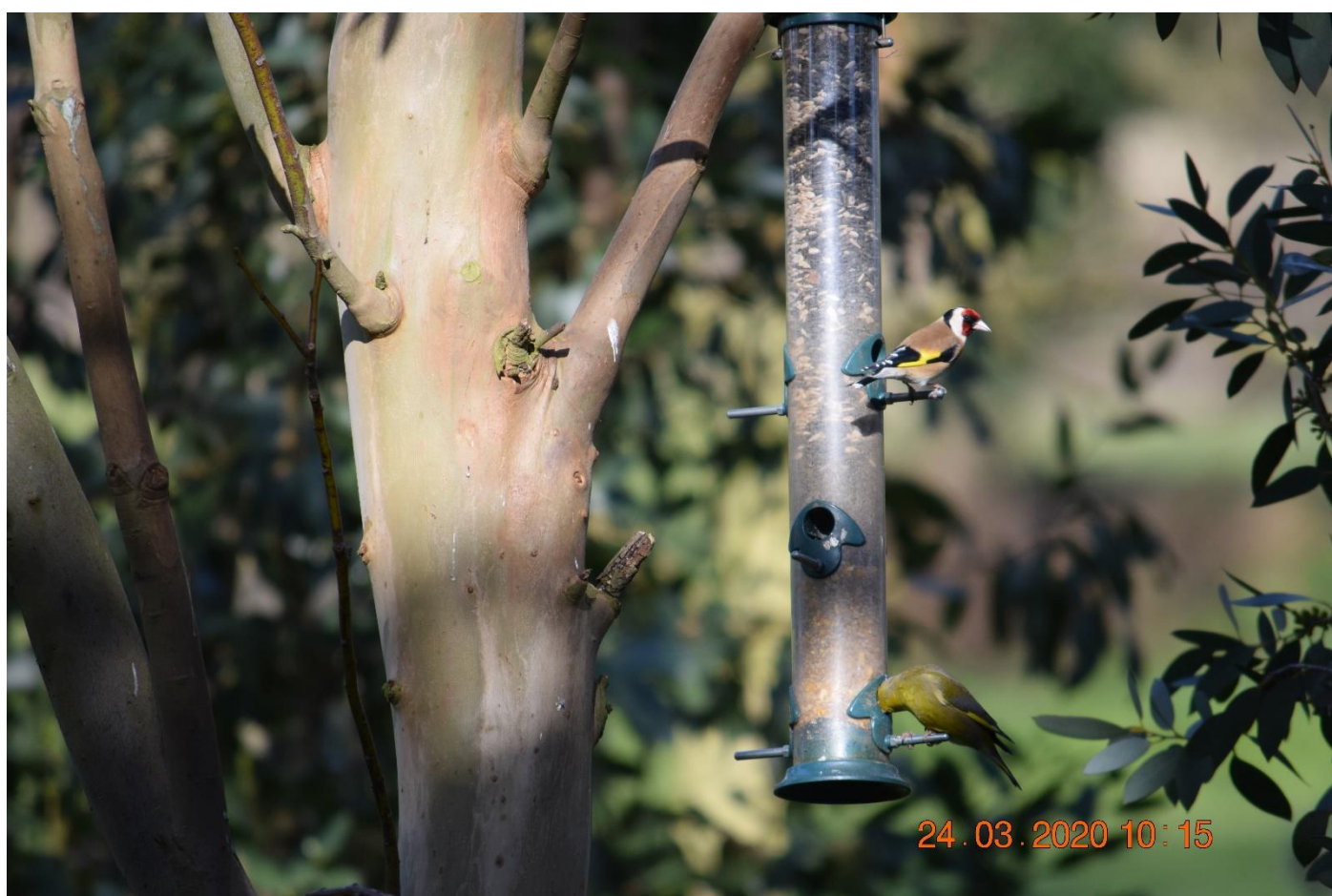


Over the last 4 months we have all had to adjust to working from home, self-isolating and social distancing and things we have always taken for granted were taken from us. The upside has been quieter roads and skies and time to reflect what's important to us. One thing that stands out for me is seeing people out there walking with their families on their allowed daily exercise. It is amazing how many people have realised how beneficial this has been to their well being both physically and mentally. Getting out there in the fresh air and feeling the sun on your face, or observing nature going about its daily routine has been a great help to many people's mental health.

Much as we like to imagine we live in a green and pleasant land, the truth is that the UK is currently one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. In my lifetime nearly 50% of wildlife species in the UK have declined rapidly and many effect vital ecosystems. Birds, moths, insects, bees, hedgehogs, I could go on and on.

I was fortunate enough however, under my Greens chairman role, to still be allowed to walk around the course during lockdown and checking on things and continue to monitor the wild life. I just want to share a few memories as I walked around a very quiet and eerie golf course, void of golfers but full of wildlife.



Whilst the winter was not too harsh this year most birds still make use of the feeders on the course. Here we have Goldfinch and Greenfinch feeding at the 12th.



The dry stone walls around the course are home to many creatures, especially during the winter, and hence why we cannot work on the rebuilding of the walls during this time. We started to clear the debris away from the 17th wall in early March and anyone who has played recently will see that we have now got off to a good start rebuilding it.

This pygmy shrew, UK's smallest mammal, jumped out last week when taking the 17th wall down.



We have many Pied Wagtails on the course and often seen flitting across the 18th picking up flies and insects. There are many young ones flying about in groups at the moment, it must have been a good year for them.



had to seek guidance on this one but believe it to be a meadow pipit.



Its not been a great year for barn owls because of the wet winter which has meant not so many voles about to eat with the flooding. Ours seems to have survived so far however and has been seen on a number of occasions around the 4th.

We have had visitors this year with Egyptian geese spending some time on the flooded areas.



Another visitor has been Oystercatchers. Very distinctive features and a very noisy bird which you may have heard its loud piercing call. Normally found on the coast, they have spent most of their time on the practice area.



Not many days go by without seeing the magnificent buzzard hovering above us.





The small bird boxes have been successful again with 122 chicks fledging from the 27 boxes. This box was full to capacity!



One of my favourites is the Treecreeper seen here creeping up a tree trunk on the 12th.





Whilst we often get a roe deer wandering on the course from the fields along side holes 2-4 we do have some resident muntjac. This pair I found running around the pit at 18.



Another one of my favourites is the long-eared owl. They have bred for the 4th year running and 2 fledged this year, this being one of them.



We also have an abundance of moths and butterflies, here is a Ringlet butterfly.



In the last 3 weeks you may have seen 3 young kestrels flying between trees on holes 6,7 & 8. Not having mastered the art yet of hovering and catching mice they have been diving down onto the fairways for insects.

I took this picture below without really thinking what it was only to find out later when I looked in the book it is a Common Spotted Orchid. I can't remember however where on the course I took it !



There are quite a lot of logpiles now out there around the course. Not only a good use of fallen trees but also a great home for many things. Stag beetles are becoming very rare and live most of their life cycle underground as a larva. Deadwood is a great place for them to live under.



Just a sample of what is out there on our great golf course. Please keep me updated if you see anything and better still send me a picture if you can.

I am trying to build up a small team of volunteers to help me with the wildlife and environmental work and if anyone can spare an odd hour or two please let me know. Nothing too physical just topping up feeders, cleaning out bird boxes, managing plants and trees etc.

Mobile 07774 966105

E-mail nick.lawson@casfin.co.uk