



# MIDDLETON HALL

RETIREMENT VILLAGE



A GUIDE TO PLANT LIFE ON THE WALKS FOR ALL  
— SPRING —



# MIDDLETON HALL

RETIREMENT VILLAGE



We hope you enjoy this booklet! It accompanies the 'Walks for All' guide, highlighting the many unusual and noteworthy plants along the way.

Three walking routes are outlined in the guide: Red ■, Blue ■, and Yellow ■. Together, they link 12 location points, detailed below with route indicators.

Most of the plants recorded on the walks are wild ones. As well as the highlighted

plants, you will see others in several locations such as **snowdrops** and **daffodils** that were formerly cultivated but now naturalised.

If you spot a plant you are curious about, do ask one of the gardeners or leave your question for them with the reception team. They enjoy a challenge!

Reception is the start point for all the walks. Please start by walking down the path to **Point 1** on the map.



# A GUIDE TO PLANT LIFE ON THE WALKS FOR ALL

---

## SPRING

---



On the way, look to your left for three **birch trees** near the edge of the lawn, grown for their white bark. Like all birch trees they bear catkins in the springtime.

If you look closely at the bark, you will see faint horizontal lines: these are the breathing pores of the tree trunks.

Almost opposite the three birches, at the car park entrance, is a **beech tree**. This tree suffered a lot of damage some years ago,

almost certainly from an attack by fungi. The damage has caused the growth of small, normally dormant buds to grow and develop into branches.

Some of these have grown out then rejoined the trunk so that they look like jug handles, while other branches have fused with each other. The tree has been pruned so that the tangle of branches can be clearly seen.



1



Here, if you will stand on the decking which overlooks the pond, you will see:

**King-cup (also known as Marsh-marigold) and Cuckooflower (or Milkmaid or Lady's-smock )**

**Did you know?** The names of several different types of flowers begin with the word 'Lady's'; the lady is in fact the Virgin Mary. Such names have been used since the Anglo-Saxon period.



**Marsh-marigold**



**Cuckooflower**

2



Near **Point 2** on the map, you will find:

**Primrose, Violet and Bluebell**

Many of the wild, native bluebells have hybridised with the Spanish bluebells, which have paler, more open flowers and no scent. You can recognise British bluebells even from a distance as they have all the flowers on one side of the stalk and are strongly scented.



**Bluebell**

3



At **Point 3** you can find:

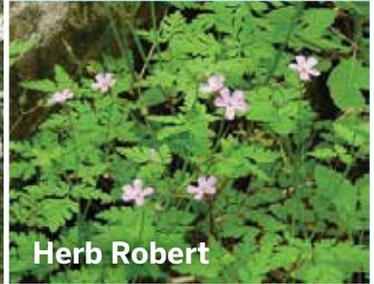
**Jack-by-the-hedge (or Garlic Mustard), Herb Robert, Lesser Celandine, Bluebell, Currant bushes and Hawthorn (or May)**



**Jack-by-the-hedge**



**Hawthorn**



**Herb Robert**

4



As you cross the trade drive and re-enter the wood, you will see that the closest trees have narrower trunks as they are younger than those you have left behind.

At **Point 4**, look out for:

**Lesser Celandine, Cowslip, Violet, Primrose, Bluebell, Wild Garlic, Cow Parsley and Holly**



**Cow Parsley**



**Holly**

5



Where you turn right onto another path, the wood ends and allows more light to reach the ground. Here you can find:

### **Bush Vetch, Black Medick and White Deadnettle**

Retrace your steps and walk along the path to the gate leading to the allotments. Go through this gate and along the path to the wetland area beside the bird hide.



**Bush Vetch**



**Black Medick**

6

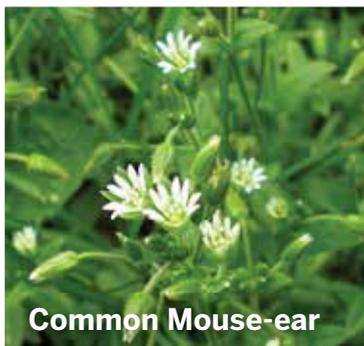


In the wetland area and around the ponds, look for:

### **King-cup (Marsh-marigold), Cuckooflower (Milkmaid or Lady's-smock), Bush Vetch, Common Mouse-ear and Horsetail**

Horsetails look like small 20-30cm high Christmas trees. They are not flowering plants, but this species is a remnant of the plants which existed on Earth before flowering plants evolved. It has survived for over 260 million years, so it deserves to be included in the list!

If following the red route, please make your way back to reception.



**Common Mouse-ear**



**Horsetail**

7



Do not turn right through the allotments but carry straight on. The plants you will see on either side of the path are those you have met earlier.

8



On emerging through the two gates into the newly planted woodland, at **8** you can find:

**Cow Parsley, Bird Cherry, Alder, Hawthorn  
(or May), Oak, Mountain Ash, Daffodil and Horsetail**



**Alder**



The field probably does not contain as many wild flowers as you might expect, due to it being used as winter grazing by sheep. After the sheep are removed in early spring, the field is sprayed with a grass fertilizer. While this encourages the different species of grass to grow strongly, their roots out-compete most wild flowering plants. Plants which tolerate competition and can survive in a variety of habitats

manage to maintain a toe hold across the field.

These include:

**Cow Parsley, Jack-by-the-hedge, Garlic Mustard, Dandelion, Buttercup**

Plants which are more exacting in their requirements are confined to the field edges where the fertilizer has not reached them:

**Cowslip, Violet, Cuckoo-pint (or Lords-and-ladies)**



**Buttercup**



**Cuckoo-pint**



**Horse Chestnut**



**Ivy Leaved Speedwell**

From the gate in the far corner of the field, use the drive crossing to walk up the path which runs parallel to the main drive, leading to the start point at reception. Here you will find:

**Primrose, Violet, Bluebell and Ivy (the ground cover benefits many small animals)**

The following three trees here may all be in flower. Limes once formed a row on each side of this drive, but in the nineteenth century,

the owner of the hall felled many and sold their wood.

**Horse Chestnuts, Cherry and Lime**

\* As you continue to walk to reception, you will see:

**Lesser Celandine, Cuckoo-pint (Lords-and-ladies), Blackthorn, Dog's Mercury, Ivy Leaved Speedwell and Jack-by-the-hedge (Garlic Mustard)**



**Dog's Mercury**

10



The ground of this area has been disturbed because of the recent building of The Waterside. As yet, not many species of wild plants have managed to become established, but you should find:

**Horsetail, Dock, Buttercup, Blackthorn, Jack-by-the-hedge (or Garlic Mustard) and Lesser Celandine**



**Blackthorn**

11



The ground here has also been disturbed by building but the following have managed to colonise the wetter area:

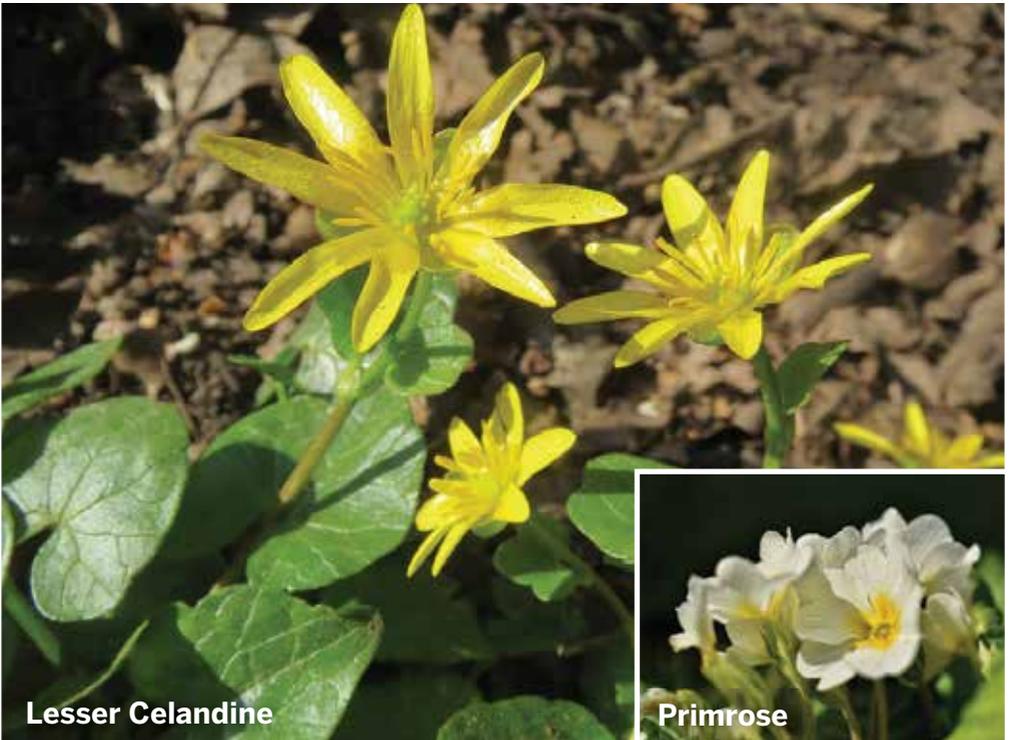
**King-cup (or Marsh-marigold) and Cuckooflower (or Milkmaid or Lady's-smock)**



This location borders a trail in 2016 to create a wild flower meadow. Here, you may spot:

**Forget-me-not, Violet, Bittercress, Cowslip and Dandelion**

As you leave the path at the top of the lake, turn right and make your way towards Reception, picking up the guide at Point 9 \*. On the way, you will see some of the flowers and trees you have met before. Perhaps you can name some of them for yourself!



Explore our scenic grounds and discover  
the fascinating variety of flora and fauna

Circular routes to suit people of all mobilities,  
from 0.5 to 1.75 miles in length

All walks are easy to follow, with clear  
way markers

Plentiful benches on which to sit and  
appreciate the surroundings

No stiles

Please ensure dogs are kept on their leads

Dog bins are installed on all routes



Many thanks to Christine Wright for researching  
and editing this booklet, assisted by Pat Gibbons  
and members of our photography group.



Like us on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter @MHRetirement

Middleton Hall Retirement Village,  
Middleton St. George, Darlington DL2 1HA

Tel: **01325 332207** Email: [info@mhrv.co.uk](mailto:info@mhrv.co.uk)  
Website: [www.mhrv.co.uk](http://www.mhrv.co.uk)