

each with its short, straight spur surrounded with a ring of stamens which consist of little nut-like achenes with a single seed.
Flowering from March to June
4.4.40 BEAMINSTER
5.8.40 EAST HORN DON

hairs.
The carpels, or divisions, are keeled but not wrinkled.
The flowering period is in September.
5.5.40 DORKING

The usually straight spur is in the ovary. The lines and dots on the petals are in strength of colour.
Flowering from June—occasionally to as late as August.
9.6.40 NEWDIGATE

1940	3 March	Coleshill	Barren Strawberry *
	10	Shoreham	Lesser Celandine *
	11	Eype	Sweet Violet *
	31	-	Coltsfoot *
		-	Daisy *
		-	Primrose *
	2 April	-	Lady's Smock *
		Lyme Regis	Broom *
		-	Furze *
		-	Ground Ivy *
	3	-	Dandelion *
	4	Beamminster	Daffodil *
		-	Wood Anemone *
		-	Wood Sorrel *
		Eype	Viper's Bugloss *
	14	Cholesbury	Red Dead-nettle *
	21	Betchworth	Cowslip *
		-	Lesser Periwinkle *
	27	Westerham	Bluebell *
		-	Greater Stitchwort *
		-	Jack-by-the-Hedge *
		-	Mouse-ear Chickweed *
		-	Yellow Rattle *
	5 May	Dorking	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill **
		-	Greater Celandine *
		-	Yellow Archangel **
		Friday Street	Forget-me-not *
		-	Germander Speedwell *
		Westcott	Beaked Parsley *
		Wootton	Marsh Marigold *
	12	Leigh	Bugle **
		-	Bush Vetch **
		-	Buttercup **
		-	Common Sorrel **
		-	Crab Apple **
		-	Cuckoo-pint **
		-	Hop Trefoil **
		Mynthurst	Red Campion **

1940	12 May	Walton Heath	Needle-whin **
	19	Newdigate	Bird's-foot Trefoil **
		-	Charlock **
		-	Milkwort **
		-	Red Clover **
		-	Water Crowfoot **
		Parkgate	Wild Strawberry **
		Banstead	Bladder Campion **
		-	silverweed **
	26	Newdigate	Ox-eye Daisy **
		Ockley	Honeysuckle **
	2 June	Greater Hampden	Fumitory **
		-	Pimpernel **
		-	Wild Pansy **
		Speen	Lamb's-tongue Plantain †
	9	Charlwood	Purple Loosestrife †
		-	Ragged Robin †
		Newdigate	Bittersweet †
		-	Dog Rose †
		-	Spotted Orchis †
	16	Bedmond	Bramble *
		-	Common Red Poppy *
		-	Cuckoo-pint *
		-	Foxglove *
		-	Hedge Bedstraw *
		-	Hog-weed *
		-	Nipplewort *
		-	Rose-bay Willow-herb *
		St Albans	Common Mallow *
		-	Field bindweed *
		-	Field scabious *
		-	Lucerne *
		-	Scentsless Mayweed *
		-	Traveller's Joy *
	30	Ewhurst	Perforated St John's Wort *
		-	Ragwort *
		-	Yellow Toadflax *
		Holmbury Hill	Cross-leaved Heath *

1940	7 July	Headley	Hardheads *
		-	Yarrow *
1941	21 March	Penn Street	Coltsfoot *
		-	Groundsel *
	25	Little Missenden	Barren Strawberry *
		-	Daisy *
		-	Dandelion *
		-	Sweet Violet *
		Penn Street	Furze *
		-	Primrose *
	5 April	Coleshill	Lesser Celandine *
	14	East Horndon	Red Dead-nettle §
	15	-	Ground Ivy §
	19	-	Moschatel §
	28	Childerditch	Ragwort §
	3 May	Ingatstone	Greater Stitchwort §
	5	East Horndon	Wood Anemone §
	6	-	Jack-by-the-Hedge §
	10	Long Acre	Wild Pansy §
	12	Childerditch	Red Campion §
		East Horndon	Bluebell §
	14	Long Acre	Hop Trefoil *
		Childerditch	Shepherd's Purse §
	15	-	Yellow Archangel §
		Runsell Green	Common Sorrel §
	17	-	Beaked Parsley §
	30	Long Acre	Red Clover *
	31	-	Broom *
	2 June	-	Bird's-foot Trefoil *
	7	Childerditch	Bladder Campion *
	13	-	Cinquefoil *
		Runsell Green	Common Red Poppy *
	14	-	Fumitory *
	1 September	Childerditch	Wild Teasel *
	25 December	-	Furze *
1942	23 March	-	Coltsfoot *
		-	Primrose *
	29	-	Lesser Celandine *

'Spotting' is the slightly pejorative term given to the activity—or hobby, typically—of monitoring a group of special interest with what might be called triumphant observation. It is collecting at its most existential, free of the sentiment, fetishism or acquisitiveness which can taint the accumulation of objects. The end product, a bland list of names or numbers, has no decorative or marketable value and, even in an information-driven age, a very small cache of meaning.

What is recorded are the clinching moments when observer and observed coincide. The thrill of the chase is sustained by calculating the probability of those coincidences, to distinguish 'rare' from 'common' sightings,

and by managing the chances of observing whatever things—flowers, aeroplanes, seashells—remain unseen, un-'spotted'. The pursuit functions too as a means of bringing order to a personal sense of disorder, of taming the psychological Wild West.

The value of the information on offer proliferates when the ticking and underlining are annotated with details of date and place. A compendium of such observations could contribute to an ecological database, perhaps, or be swapped for something in a brown envelope on a park bench, depending on what we have been watching. But these outcomes are beyond the territory, and purpose, of the amateur. And the truth is the spotter's testi-

mony is in a way the antithesis of science or of espionage. It is rather more an article of faith, a collection of sightings which are unwitting and unprovable, of moments which shine in the memory with the greater or lesser intensity of stars. Because it would be so easy and so pointless to cheat, we take it on trust that charlock flowered at Newdigate in the May of 1940; and that someone turning away from observing the war in the air noticed it, jotted something in a notebook, and made that moment permanent.

The birth of a collection is often ill-defined. A few casual memoranda appear, to no apparent purpose, before a signature on the fly-leaf suggests an intention has been formed. The

records fill out, marginal notes proliferate, the seasons pass in the changing colours of ink. A unique entity is evolving, whose substance speaks of the persistence, dedication and opportunities of the observer. Its ultimate goal—to have spotted everything—is the desired yet dreaded moment of death, when the record is blanked, its power to motivate gone, and there is nothing left to observe. But this point may not be reached: the momentum of collecting slows, the later successes are the hardest, the rewards fewer. Some time later, we realise the lesser celandine spotted at Childerditch marked the end of an episode.
—John Bevis, June 2002.

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