

The Symphony in the Woods

22nd April 2017

The weather was calm and dry as a dozen insomniacs turned up to witness the dawn chorus at Weelsby Woods Park, which is a Local Nature Reserve owned and managed by North East Lincs Council.

Modern life has blinded us to many a wonder just beyond our doorstep. How many of the revellers staggering home after a night on the town even notice such a thing as birdsong? At this time of year, throughout the land there they all are, pouring their little hearts out, long before the sun is up. Some might say it's a sin to pass them by.

The bittersweet song of robins, and the more fluty tones of blackbirds, were soon harmonised with other voices. Tits, chaffinches and wrens were amongst everyday species proclaiming their territories. Later we added mistle thrush and song thrush to the list. Other birds noted included sparrowhawk, kestrel and great spotted woodpecker (drumming), and both goldcrest and tree creeper were audible to those with a refined ear. Like well-behaved kids, a pair of beautiful bullfinches, were seen but not heard. If you look as good as that, maybe you don't need to sing – as one observer pointed out!

Not all the members of an avian choir are necessarily local lads. The chiffchaffs and blackcaps were the new kids on the block, having flown all the way from the African continent, as like as not. It's an inspiring thought – such tiny creatures flying so far to bring us such delight. What vitality! Take note, ye revellers!

Why not set your alarm to 4 am and get out there. The dawn chorus is at its fullest and best during the month of May – so there's still plenty of time.

Ray Hume
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