

A photograph of a winter landscape. The foreground is a vast, flat field covered in a thick layer of snow. In the middle ground, a small, green, A-frame structure, possibly a shed or a small cabin, stands alone. The background is a dense forest of bare trees, their branches heavily laden with snow. The sky is a pale, overcast blue.

Unscented Spring

Stephen Turner



The snow began to fall shortly before arriving at the Saracen's Head in Southwell on Friday March 22 at approximately 6pm and continued heavily the following morning until abating locally around midday when I could set out to cover a short eight miles to Duke's Wood.

A bitter easterly wind, blowing powdery white flurries across already impressively thick snow, impeded progress. Initial reconnaissance suggested that the entirety of the woodland floor was blanketed, locking up any scent of the earth and any evidence of the fresh fragrance of springtime. No prints by man nor beast disturbed the virginity of the surface around woodland marker no.2 and the first of the oil rig Nodding Donkey's @ +53° 8' 4.17 -0° 59' 19.00



With the Donkey as a central loci, twelve bore holes were sunk along a five metre radius with a clear acrylic drill, exposing the ground to olfactory sensation and visual observation through 55mm nozzles (nose holes), sunk to an average depth of 180mm. This improvised and qualitative study revealed little evidence of specific springtime flora reputed to flourish at this location and will necessitate a further survey when winter has released its grip. However, nozzle six revealed a small primrose leaf pressed down beneath grasses.





Southwell Minster revived wilting spirits, and ideas for a summertime leafy shelter in the wood were conjured up by an abundance of carving in the octagonal stone bower of its Chapter-house. Leaves of rose, maple, hawthorn, hop, bryony and oak envelop capitals and creep up every arch to foliate ceiling bosses; a spiritual green rhapsody created over 700 years ago by an unknown sculptor extolling the commonplace plants of his parish and sharing a deep intelligence with nature. Back at the Saracen's Head to check out, the only thing blooming was the side of a large white van.



Blooming