



# ABINGTON NATUREWATCH

The Record  
2010-2011

Records the activities of Abington Naturewatch from Autumn 2010 to Autumn 2011. Includes records of sightings of the fauna and flora in Great and Little Abington, Cambridgeshire, as noted by members and covering several sectors: Life in the River Granta, Birds, Amphibians & Reptiles, Invertebrates, Mammals, Flora





1: Velvet Shank at Cambridge Road (*Flammulina veluptipes*) (Derek Turnidge, 4 March)



2: Fungi at Granta Park (George Woodley, 16 November)

## FOREWORD

A year of erratic or eccentric weather can have the great merit of giving the writer of a Foreword something bright and breezy to kick his piece off with, but this doesn't work half as well when the abnormal becomes the usual thing. Here goes, however: the droughts of spring and early autumn were enjoyable enough for us humans, but not such fun for other species of animal, still less for the world of plants, while a wretched summer did not even manage, here in the East at least, to bring enough rain to put our aquifers back into good order. In the end it was the insects that seemed to come off worst. Butterflies had a poor year and dragonflies and damselflies an even worse one, while populations of most types of river fauna were down throughout the year.

Yet in spite of this, and of a few particular disappointments, Naturewatch had a good time, as the section reports in this Record show clearly enough. Membership and participation in events are holding up, interest in bees of all kinds and knowledge about them are increasing among the membership, birdwatchers enjoyed some very successful outings, and a new opportunity appeared for collaboration with the management of Granta Park and with kindred souls there (see below).

Of special satisfaction to me personally has been the response to my decision to step down from the administrative part in Naturewatch which I have played up till now, with the result that we now have a strong team which promises well for the future. David Farrant is taking over the general coordination of the programme, June Waring is our meetings and membership secretary, Jennifer Hirsh and Anne Dunbar-Nobes have taken over recording of invertebrates and reptiles with amphibians, while Diana Wingfield and Robin Harman will be exploring ways of developing our relations with the School. Peter Brunning will continue his invaluable work on this Record and our website as well as sharing with Anne a special interest in our river, Derek Turnidge will still be our birdwatch section leader and outings organiser, and Diana will continue developing our mammals sector.

Finally, I want to say both a special thank you to Marion Rusted, Audrey Bugg and Jasmine Miller for the example they have set of commitment and good reporting, and a general thank you to all the members who have made my time as coordinator so rewarding and so stress-free. I shall not forget this, and if I were ever tempted to I have to remind me a beautiful portrayal of one of our favourite chalk-loving plants engraved on glass by Peter Miles, and a copy of *Wildflower Wonders of the World* by Bob Gibbons, leading photographer of flora and one of my heroes.

Thank you, Naturewatchers!

PD





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[This branch was often dry in 2011]

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## 1. GENERAL NEWS

### *I. Organisation*

In the Foreword, our founder Pat Daunt mentions some changes as he has stepped down from some of his multiple roles. The current contacts are noted at the end of the document.

### *II. Granta Park*

The development of Granta Park has added an additional environment to that within the Abingtons and formed a large circular area linked by the river Granta and the path from the village. The Park has been careful to include several key areas around the buildings such as the lake, where we have been monitoring the birdlife, the wildflower meadow and several small woodland sites. They have also produced a biodiversity plan to manage the current areas and look at future developments within the Park. These include managing the number of fish in the lake, nest boxes, establishing lake side plants and creating several short walks for staff. There were plans to improve the flow of the river through the site but these have been put on hold as native crayfish were found in their stretch (good news as we seem only to have signal crayfish near the bridge). The local Wildlife Trust has been advising them on the plans for the river and they have recently found signs of otter spraint which is great news and encouraged us to look closely along our banks.

Naturewatch has maintained a close dialogue with Granta Park over the last year and exchanged our individual programmes. They also invited us to comment on the draft of the biodiversity plan. We plan to develop discussions further during the next year and look at some possible joint activities along the river.

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4: Geese at Granta Park (George Woodley, 19 March)

## 2. RIVERCARE

### I. Overview



*Abington RiverCare* has two main interests: looking after the 'home' stretch of the river Granta and surveying its flora and fauna. *RiverCare* is a member of the national *RiverCare* organisation <http://www.rivercare.org.uk/> (see below).

On the last Saturday of each month, we take a walk along the river through the cricket and recreation fields and check its condition, while picking up litter along the bank and, if possible, from the river itself. [Volunteers are always welcome at the road bridge at 9:30 a.m.] The national *RiverCare* organization has provided equipment and safety guidelines. They can also help us to arrange clearance of larger debris by the *Environment Agency*, which is responsible for the river through Abington. They usually respond quickly to requests to clear fallen trees and other blockages.

Membership of *RiverCare* has many benefits including insurance supplied by *BTCV* (<http://www.btcv.org.uk/>), with whom they are affiliated. They are also in touch with many of the national bodies and can help us to make the right contacts. We have a supply of leaflets giving further information.

The river surveys use equipment supplied by the *Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Biological Records Centre*. We continued our surveys this year (see below) and explored one or two new areas. We have yet to find a site with more aquatic biodiversity than those at the ford and near the Millennium footbridge – and they are both open, unshaded and easily accessible.

News this year is that we caught Signal Crayfish; we have been advised that we should not return them to the river as they endanger the health of the native crayfish, which have been seen a short way downstream. We have also been advised that there are signs of otters in our stretch of the river. We expect to continue the surveys again this year.





### About Abington RiverCare Group

Abington Rivercare group carries out regular litter-picks along the River Granta in the parishes of Great and Little Abington; any more serious issues are noted and the appropriate authorities alerted. The group aims to enhance the river and its immediate surroundings both for the enjoyment of local people and for the benefit of wildlife. It also conducts regular flora, fauna and fish surveys.

The group meets at the ford (road bridge) at 09.30 a.m. on the last Saturday of each month. New members always welcome.

### Group Photos



Abington RiverCare Group

Please Note: Location information is provided by Abington RiverCare Group's RiverCare Manager.

5: Abington RiverCare's page on the main RiverCare web-site



Naturewatch members have now met on three or four occasions in each of the six years 2006-2011, conducting between three and five samplings at one or two sites on each occasion. In all over the six years we took 99 samplings on 24 occasions. Pat Daunt has compiled a summary of these 6 years of our river sampling, which is available as a separate report.

## **II. RiverCare Network Meeting**

We were invited to the second Network Meeting on 18 January 2012. Representatives from twenty groups around East Anglia converged on the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre at Rutland Water to share ideas and experiences.

*Robin Harman writes:*

On 18th January 2012, I represented Naturewatch at a networking and training day at Rutland Water. The day began with presentations by all Rivercare groups attending from all over the Anglian Water region which was interesting to know what other groups do which was quite varied. The rest of the time was taken up by the group leaders advising us of sightings of wildlife in the Anglian region and also invasive species to look for and deal with.

The day finished with an outside tour to look for water vole; we saw evidence of them but not the voles themselves!

## **III. Contact with Granta Park**

We have had some contact with the Granta Park Biodiversity Group about a river survey and plans – please see separate section. An Environment Agency Survey in Sluice Wood showed crayfish, brown trout, loach, minnows, and sticklebacks.

## **IV. Invasive species - See [NNSS web-site](#)**

Rivercare sent us a new information pack with details of 8 invasive species: Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Floating Pennywort, Parrot's Feather, Canadian Waterweed, Signal Crayfish and Killer Shrimp. In most if not all cases, it's an offence to introduce these or put them back!

We again met one summer evening to remove Himalayan or Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), which is spreading along our river. Some has been removed in Hildersham and it's also in evidence downstream in Babraham.

We had a single Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) around 2.5 m tall, growing near the scout camp site, which was also removed.

This year, we have seen Signal Crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) near the ford and trapped them for the first time. After contact with the local Wildlife Trust, we went on a foray to check and destroy them!



6: Giant Hogweed (Jennifer Hirsh, 30 May)  
[The person in the foreground is about 1.75m tall]

## V. River Sampling 2011

### i. Overview

The river was low almost all year, especially for the later sampling, when the foundations of the old water pump by the ford were very clearly visible. This year was notable for seeing first-hand evidence of, and catching, Signal Crayfish and learning that, as an invasive species, they should not be returned to the river.

### ii. First Sampling – 16<sup>th</sup> April – Ford

All 3 samples taken at ford above road bridge. Water level quite high. Each sample obtained in net using 30-second kick-shuffle technique.

#### Sample 1, mainly gravel bottom with weed and decaying leaf detritus

1 Demoiselle Damselfly nymph (photo), 1 caseless Caddis Fly larva - distinctively yellowy-green (photo), 1 freshwater Hoglouse (photo), 1 Leech, c. 10 Freshwater Shrimps (various sizes), c. 5 small Hairworms, 1 Flatworm (grey), Various other small nymphs.

#### Sample 2, rocky bottom, less weed than sample 1

No nymphs, 1 very long hairworm (c. 150mm – see photo), Lots of small, thin red hairworms, c. 10 shrimps, Tiny watermites

#### Sample 3, gravel/sandy bottom, closer to bridge

1 small fish (c. 3 cm long – see photo) – Minnow or baby Trout, 1 burrowing Mayfly nymph, *Ephemera vulgata* (c. 2 cm long – see photo), Various other small nymphs – too small for easy identification, No shrimps.

A shoal of tiny fish was seen close to bridge, probably Minnows. On large submerged stones removed from river for inspection, Ramshorn Snails and Freshwater Limpets observed.



7: Demoiselle damselfly nymph



8: Hairworm (c. 150mm)



9: Young minnow + freshwater shrimp



10: Caddis fly larva



11: Burrowing mayfly nymph (right) + freshwater hoglouse (top left)

**iii. Second Sampling – 28<sup>th</sup> June – Ford****Overview**

Flow was quite good for full summer, but neither abundance nor diversity impressive. First sighting of signal crayfish: 4 seen, 3 from under the bridge; the key diagnostic item (a white spot at the junction of the claw) was not clear on all. Minute Mayfly larvae and shrimps were abundant. A few large Mayfly larvae, a fine 3cm Demoiselle nymph and a mature Minnow of ca 10cm. There was no sign of molluscs, caddis larvae or water hog lice.

**Details**

**Samples 1 & 2:** two samplings on gravel ca.10 m above the bridge:

**Crustaceans**

- A few good-sized Freshwater Shrimps (*Gammarus* genus), many small/v.small ones.

**Insects**

- Mayfly larvae: very many minute nymphs; 3 large (2cm) top gill nymphs, probably *Ephemera* genus; 3 stubby nymphs, possibly *Caenis* genus (Angler's Curse).

- One good-sized (2cm) Beetle larva (*Dytiscidae* family).

**Worms (Annelida)**

- Leeches: 2 good-sized Leeches (*Hirudinea* class), one large (3.5 cm extended).

- Sludge Worms: 1 v. small Sludge Worm (*Tubifex* genus).

**Sample 3:** Results in muddier water near or under the bridge

**Fish (Pisces)**

- 1 adult Minnow (*Phoxinus phoxinus*).

**Crustaceans**

- 4 American Signal Crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*), all small (largest 5cm body length, full-grown being twice this), one with one claw missing.

**Insects**

- I fine large Demoiselle nymph (*Calopteryx* genus).

**iv. Third Sampling – 24<sup>th</sup> September – Ford****Overview**

We sampled above the ford only. The river was lower than any of us could remember, exposing the foundations of an old water pump used to load wagons supplying the upland farms. So it was no surprise to hear a few days later that the Gunner's Hall pond had dried out, something not known since 1975.

Diversity was moderate, size and numbers generally rather poor. There were a few Mayfly nymphs of quite good size. Live Pea Mussels were abundant, reminding us of the large numbers we found further upstream in the Lodge's reach last year. The reappearance of several mites (*Acari*), our only known arachnid, was also welcome.

Small (3 cm) three-spined Stickleback, a little way upstream. Large Signal Crayfish, close to the bridge (white patch in the claws clearly visible).

### **Details**

Three samplings, two in gravel at different points a few metres above the bridge, one (a new site) further upstream from the bank of the Old House meadow.

### Pisces

- One small Three-spined Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*), netted from the Old House meadow.



12: Three-spined Stickleback (Peter Brunning, 24 September)

### Crustaceans

- One good sized alien Signal Crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*), body ca 8 cm; claws ca 6cm.
- Not v. many Freshwater Shrimp (gen. *Gammarus*), mostly small.
- One small Water Hog Louse (*Asellus aquaticus*).

### Molluscs

- Numerous live Pea Mussel (gen. *Pisidium* or *Corbicula*).
- One minute, bluish, live Pond or Spire Snail (probably fam. *Hydrobiidae*)
- One small Ramshorn shell (fam. *Planorbidae*)

### Arachnids

- Several Water Mite (gen. *Acarus*).

### Insects

- Several pale, back-gilled Mayfly Nymph (probably gen. *Ephemera*, possibly sp. *danica*), mostly small, one larger ca 2cm.

### Annelid Worms

- One large Leech (class *Hirudinea*), 5cm extended.
- Several Sludge Worm (gen. *Tubifex*), one 3cm, others minute.



13: Signal Crayfish under bridge (PB, 18 October)



14: Foundations of water pump at Ford (PB, 24 September)



### 3. BIRDWATCH

#### *I. Outings*

##### **i. 11th June – RSPB Lakenheath**

Only 6 members were able to get to RSPB Lakenheath Fen on 11 June but those who did had an enjoyable morning, seeing or hearing almost 40 species of bird.

##### **ii. 16th July – WWT Welney**

10 optimistic souls made the trip to Welney on Saturday 16th July. Their arrival was in heavy rain but after walking across the exposed bridge the sanctuary of the Main Observatory awaited.

Their optimism was rewarded since 26 species were recorded during the morning. Both species of Martin were very spectacular, swooping low over the water and, in the case of the House variety, flying up to their nests above the windows.

Two even harder souls set off to look at plants and reached the next hide to the south, the Reed-bed Hide. Some other plant identification took place thanks to the remote-controlled camera out on the reserve.

The weather did prevent any prospect of looking for butterflies and dragonflies.

#### **II. RSPB Garden Birdwatch (January 2011)**

Thanks to all who submitted the results of their surveys: there were 15 returns this year compared with 10 last year, with 28 species (compared with 25) recorded.

##### **i. The Abingtons Results**

1= Blue Tit  
2= Blackbird  
2= Great Tit  
2= Dunnock  
2= Robin  
6 Woodpigeon  
7 Chaffinch  
8 Longtailed Tit  
9= Jackdaw  
9= Collared Dove  
9= Coal Tit

##### **ii. National Results**

1 House Sparrow  
2 Starling  
3 Blackbird  
4 Blue Tit  
5 Chaffinch  
6 Woodpigeon  
7 Great Tit  
8 Goldfinch  
9 Robin  
10 Collared Dove

There are significant differences: neither the House Sparrow nor the Starling appears in our top ten though they are first and second nationally.

### **III. Members' Reports**

I am very grateful for all the reports I have received from a large number of people. All reports are logged in detail. The following is a month by month summary.

#### **November 2010**

Waxwings were reported as having been seen in October in Bourn Bridge Road. A Black Redstart was seen in very windy conditions in South Road; Fieldfares were reported, as were a Buzzard and a Kingfisher.

#### **December 2010**

Two reports of a Barn Owl. Redwings and Fieldfares were seen and several sightings of up to 2 Little Egrets. Pied Wagtails visited gardens and a male Bullfinch, a Goldcrest, Goldfinches, Coal and Longtailed Tits were all seen. Green Woodpeckers were in evidence including one drinking standing on ice at the edge of the river. 9 low-flying Barnacle Geese were seen en route to Granta Park Lake on 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### **January 2011**

Granta Park Lake yielded reports of Cormorants, Canada Geese, Mallard, Coot, Great Crested Grebe and Mute Swan during the month.. A Barn Owl was seen twice in the old A11 area. Fieldfares were noted. The 15 returns for the RSPB Garden Birdwatch on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> produced 28 species including 3 Siskins. On 31<sup>st</sup> a huge flock of Bramblings was seen over the Coach Road.

#### **February 2011**

Bramblings were seen again on 3<sup>rd</sup> in Church Lane and 2 Little Egrets on the river. Following day 6 Goldfinches, 2 Chaffinches, 13 Longtailed Tits, Coal Tits, Blue Tits, Great Tits and 2 Treecreepers all seen in one garden. Mid-month, Tits examining nest boxes, Song Thrush in almost full voice, Skylarks singing over Bourn Bridge Road fields, Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming in oak on Cambridge Road and 3 Greenfinches on peanuts. In the last week a Kestrel in tree behind houses in Cambridge Road, a Goldcrest on water and a male Siskin on nyjer seed.

#### **March 2011**

Early in month, Redwings, Siskins, Redlegged Partridges and male Pheasants (with and without white neck ring) were seen and there were several reports of Buzzards soaring. In mid-month, 2 House Sparrows at North/Cutting Road junction, Skylarks, Lapwings and on 12<sup>th</sup> about 10 Fieldfares towards Abington Park. On 17<sup>th</sup> a Kingfisher (and on 28<sup>th</sup>) and a Little Egret were seen from Millennium Bridge and a number of Redwings in trees nearby. 3 Yellowhammers behind houses in Cambridge Road. 20+ Canada Geese, 7 Greylag Geese, 2 Mute Swans and a Great Crested Grebe seen on the Lake. Later disputes on Lake between Swans and Geese. At month end Rooks building on Cambridge Road (fewer this year) and Bourn Bridge Road - 10 nests in all.

#### **April 2011**

Corn Bunting seen on 3<sup>rd</sup>. On 4<sup>th</sup> a Swallow on LSA, birds including House Sparrows collecting pony hair for nesting, Swan on nest on Lake and Yellowhammers visiting bird-table at Grange Farm. More Swallows reported on 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Wheatears, Blackcaps, Whitethroat, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush and Goldcrest were seen, 85+ Rooks nesting in South Grove Wood. 12 House Martins seen over Cricket Field on 26<sup>th</sup>. Following day a Buzzard, possibly with injured right wing, on fences and on

ground behind 19-23 Cambridge Road, being mobbed at times by Corvids. Very active Wren very near house in Bourn Bridge Road.

### **May 2011**

Swifts reported on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. On 11<sup>th</sup> a family of 12 Longtailed Tits seen and on the following day numbers of House Martins in centre of village. On 16<sup>th</sup> numbers of Swifts round Little Abington Church and report of a dead one a few days earlier inside the church. Probable Spotted Flycatcher in Chalky Road area on 10<sup>th</sup> but confirmed return of regulars on Cambridge Road reported on, 3 days earlier than 2010. Pied Wagtails and Blackbirds have fledged, young Great Spotted Woodpeckers seen, Great Tits and Blue Tits nesting. From 25<sup>th</sup>, reports of Cuckoo being heard in south of Great Abington.

28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> Naturewatch Spring Survey: 11 recorders noted 44 species.

### **June 2011**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> House Martins seen to be building under eaves of Post Office and Cuckoo seen flying across old railway line. Early in month young Greenfinches and Goldfinches. More reports of Cuckoo calling on LSA and near allotments. On 17<sup>th</sup> Barn Owl on old A11 flew off after apparent slight collision with a car. Several reports of Redlegged Partridges in gardens, including nests. Jays, Great Spotted and Green Woodpeckers noted and Cuckoo calling (not having changed its tune) on 19<sup>th</sup>. On 21<sup>st</sup> Midsummer Walk (Roman Road etc): Yellowhammers, Swifts, Corn Buntings, Swallow. Windy conditions. Red Kite reported at Abington Park. Corn Buntings seen in last week of month. 28<sup>th</sup> River Sampling – Ford 1900: 2 separate Mallard families: 1 female and 2 small ducklings, another female and c7 ducklings.

### **July 2011**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> a Spotted Flycatcher feeding young bird in garden in Cambridge Road. 23 Swifts wheeling above High Street, Little Abington from where a Tawny Owl was heard on 11<sup>th</sup>. Barn Owl reported from South Road. 12 eggs in Redlegged Partridge nest in front garden in Cambridge Road, later abandoned. On 22<sup>nd</sup> 12+ Swifts above Church Lane and two days later 2 Swifts and a House Martin near Great Abington Church. Young Goldcrests and Wrens noted and pairs of Green Woodpeckers.

### **August 2011**

Remarked how good a year for both Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers. 3 Lapwings in field to west of drive to Grange Farm. On 22<sup>nd</sup>, many House Martins in centre of village. Kingfisher on river on 24<sup>th</sup>. Flock of c.100 Starlings in South Road area; 4 Herons seen flying from Granta Park direction. On 29<sup>th</sup> Swallows low over football field and at the Lake a Cormorant, c.10 Barnacle Geese and Canada Geese.

### **September 2011**

Kingfisher on river on 5<sup>th</sup>. Mid-month Buzzard seen above Cambridge Road. House Martins were seen on 21<sup>st</sup> behind houses on Cambridge Road. On 26<sup>th</sup> good view of Sparrowhawk on ground.

### **October 2011**

Reports of sick Woodpigeons. At end of month, 30 Lapwings and 40 smaller birds with the same habit (Golden Plovers?) on Grange Farm. At Members' Meeting on 29th reports of flock of Fieldfares in LSA area, flock of Lapwings on Grange or Ley

Rectory Farm, 30 Canada Geese in field next to Bourn Bridge Road and Tawny Owls calling on LSA. Also a male Bullfinch.

DLT, 19.1.2012



15: Swans on Granta Park lake (George Woodley, 2 April)



16: Swans' nest (George Woodley, 22 May)



17: Swan on nest (George Woodley, 4 April)



18: Grey Heron (George Woodley, 2 April)



19: Red-legged Partridge chicks (Julia Martin, 19 June)



## **4. REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS**

### ***I. Summary: Autumn 2010–Autumn 2011***

Reports were received over the year from five different respondents in the Abingtons, with the following four species observed: common frog, common toad, smooth newt, grass snake.

The first report after the harsh winter was of toads on the move in the Chalky Road area, in late February, with some found squashed on the road. During March reports began filtering in of toads and smooth newts in garden ponds, and, in late March of frogs active in ponds. The first grass snake of the year was seen in early April in a garden pond.

Through April and May there were no reports of frogspawn, toadspawn or tadpoles in ponds – perhaps a result of only small numbers of adults surviving the winter. However, the grass snake population appears to be healthy with reports through spring and summer of snakes being seen in compost heaps and garden ponds.

Over the summer, smooth newts were seen in garden ponds, at various stages of maturity, and also young frogs. By late summer there were reports of very young grass snakes being seen – one, no thicker than a boot lace, was found dead on Chalky Road with no apparent injuries, possibly dropped by a bird.

The final report of the year was of a mature grass snake, 1.3 metres (4 feet) in length, basking in October sunshine close to a house wall in South Road. It was observed on numerous days searching for a hibernation place against the house wall under leaves and a small log, and there it now rests.

### ***II. Detailed Reports: 2011***

#### **Late February**

Report of toads in the Chalky Road area (Gareth Jones: reported to Derek Turnidge)

#### **23 March**

Smooth newt in pond, Cambridge Road, Little Abington

Adult toad in garden 41 South Road, Great Abington

#### **25 March**

About 6 frogs active in pond, 41 South Rd, Great Abington

#### **6 April**

30 inch grass snake seen in the Turnidges' pond, Little Abington

#### **Mid-late May**

Reports of large (2 feet long) grass snakes in compost heap (40 South Road) and in ponds (40 South Road, 41 South Road, Cambridge Road); common newt in the Turnidges' pond

Very few reports of frogs, toads and tadpoles – possibly been eaten by grass snakes, or perhaps the ponds froze solid over winter and decimated the frog and newt populations

#### **7 June**

Report of grass snake skin sloughed off in Audrey Bugg's pond

## **9 June**

2 smooth newts in Turnidges' pond

## **11 June**

3+ smooth newts, plus young newts in 41 South Rd pond. Also one small yellow frog, with brown markings in vegetation near pond

## **3 July**

Small newt-let (still with gills) in pond at 41 South Road

Grass snake seen in Little Abington (Jennifer Hirsh, 34 High St) – 1 foot long

## **31 July**

Young and very slender grass snake found squashed on Chalky Road

## **1 August**

4 young smooth newts in Turnidges' pond.

## **22 August**

2 young smooth newts in Turnidges' pond

## **29 August**

1 common frog seen in Sluice Wood (Derek Turnidge)

## **24 September**

1 very young grass snake found dead in South Road. No bigger in diameter than a boot lace. Possibly dropped by a bird?

## **21 October**

Large grass snake (3 foot long) seen by house wall, 41 South Road, in warm sunshine. Next day found curled up under leaves and a log at foot of house wall, possibly ready for hibernation.

AD-N





20: Grass Snake (Anne Dunbar-Nobes, 4 June)



## Moths



21: Hummingbird Hawk Moth (JM)



22: Burnet Moth (PB)



23: Poplar Hawk Moth



24: Common Footman



25: Grey Dagger



26: Heart & Dart



27: Scalloped Oak



28: Ruby Tiger



29: Common Wave

Photographs by Jennifer Hirsh  
except where noted

## Butterflies



30: Comma



31: Speckled Wood



32: Large Skipper



33: Ringlet



34: Small Tortoiseshell



35: Purple Hairstreak (AD-N)



## 5. INVERTEBRATES

### *I. Overview*

2011 brought varied weather with a very cold early part of the year followed by an early warm spring and then a dull summer with very low rainfall.

I took over the recording of invertebrates from March 2011 so the records start from then. As the range of invertebrates is very large and requires great expertise in identification I have concentrated on butterflies, moths, ladybirds, bees, dragonflies and damselflies; reports of invertebrates of other families, though far fewer, have been recorded.

In May we had the help of a bee expert Raymond Uffen with a good turnout of members in the garden at the Old Paddock. He helped us identify many species there though, unfortunately, few bees, probably due to the time of day. Later he gave a slide show on bees in the Institute. David Farrant and I attended a course at the University Botanic Garden on the identification of bumblebees which we found very helpful.

We had two moth nights in 2012. The first in June was set up by Phil Jenner, a professional lepidopterist, in my garden next to the Scout wood and meadow; the night was very damp and in the morning he only identified a disappointing 22 species; it was good for my garden robin though who feasted on the moths on the white sheet too damp to fly away! The second moth night in August was set up by David Farrant in his garden at South Road; on this occasion we did not have the help of Phil Jenner so we concentrated on photographing the moths before releasing them and asking members to try to identify them from the photographs and a field guide to moths. This proved fairly successful and we still have the photographs for the record. Hummingbird Hawk Moths have been widely reported this year and one report of an Elephant Hawk Moth.

Butterfly sightings produce by far the greatest number of reports from members and a few people took part in the Butterfly Conservation's national butterfly count in mid July. Reports started in March with Yellow Brimstones and Commas, followed by Orange Tips, Holly Blues and Whites in April. Orange Tip numbers were down again this year following the national trend; very few Painted Ladies migrated to our county; in fact numbers of butterflies as a whole were low. However, following a newly published book on the butterflies of Cambridgeshire, we recorded 24 of the 34 species that are present in the county (the other 10 species are scarce, uncommon or rare). We were particularly pleased to record the Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak and the Marbled White, not often seen here. It is worth noting that Chalkhill Blues have been seen on the Roman Road – not in our parish but we shall be looking out for them next year. (See species list later in this report).

Bee reports were mainly of Bumble Bees in the spring and early summer when the weather was good, covering all six common species; these are relatively easy to identify. There were various reports of Mining Bees.

Bee flies – there were several sightings of bee flies which interested many members who had not seen them before.

Dragonfly and Damselfly reports were relatively few this year.

Ladybird reports were also few early in the year but by autumn many reports were coming in, mostly of 7 Spot Ladybirds with far fewer Harlequins. There have been lots of reports in autumn and early winter of hibernating groups of ladybirds.

Other reports were of beetles, various flies, grasshoppers, wasps.

## II. Moths

### i. Moth night 1

June – 34 High Street, Little Abington

*As identified by Phil Jenner*

Hooktip moths: Family Drepanidae (p.164)

Buff Arches (*Hasbrosyne pyritoides*) (p.164)

Geometer Moths: Family Geometridae (p.166)

Least Carpet (*Idaea rusticate*) (p.170)

Riband Wave (*Idaea aversata*) (p.172)

Scalloped Oak (*Crocallis elinguaris*) (p.194)

Willow Beauty (*Peribatodes rhomboidaria*) (p.200)

Common White Wave (*Cabera pusaria*) (p.202)

Hawk moths: Family Sphingidae (p.206)

Lime Hawkmoth (*Mimas tiliae*) (p.206)

Privet Hawkmoth (*Sphinx ligustri*) (p.206)

Tussock moths: Family Lymantriidae (p.214)

Common Footman (*Eilema lurideola*) (p.218)

Noctuid moths: Family Noctuidae (p.222)

Heart and Dart (*Agrotis exclamationis*) (p.222)

Heart and Club (*Agrotis clavis*) (p.222)

Large Yellow Underwing (*Noctua pronuba*) (p.224)

The Flame (*Axylia putris*) (p.224)

Triple Spotted Clay (*Xestia ditrapezium*) (p.228)

Setaceous Hebrew Character (*Xestia c-nigrum*) (p.228)

Dark Arches (*Apamea monoglypha*) (p.252)

The Dunbar (*Cosmia trapezima*) (p.252)

Vine's Rustic (*Hoplodrina ambigua*) (p.260)

The Uncertain (*Hoplodrina alsines*) (p.260)

The Spectacle (*Abrostola triplasia*) (p.264)

Beautiful Hooktip (*Laspeyria flexula*) (p.266)

The Snout (*Hypena proboscidalis*) (p.266)

Tortrix moths: Family Tortricidae (p.268)

Several unidentified micro-moths

### ii. Moth night 2

August – 37 South Road

*As identified by Alex (grandson of Derek & Sally Turnidge) from photos that he took*

Geometer Moths: Family Geometridae (p.166)

Plain Wave

Riband Wave

Hawk moths: Family Sphingidae (p.206)

Poplar Hawkmoth

Tussock moths: Family Lymantriidae (p.214)

White Satin (p.214)

Tigers, Ermines and Footmen: Family Arctiidae (p.216)

Ruby Tiger (p.216)

Noctuid moths: Family Noctuidae (p.222)

Broad-Bordered Yellow Underwing (p.224)

Setaceous Hebrew Character (p.228)

Small Clouded Brindle (p.254)

Common Rustic (p.256)

### III. Butterflies

Table showing those seen in Abington in 2011 by month (24 species)

Butterfly name	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Notes
Small skipper				✓✓	✓✓				Widespread & common
Essex skipper				✓✓	✓				Widespread & common
Large skipper				✓	✓				Widespread & common
Large white		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Widespread & common
Small white		✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Widespread & common
Green veined white		✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		Widespread & common
Brimstone	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓		Widespread & common
Orange tip		✓✓	✓✓						Widespread & common
Purple hairstreak				✓	✓				Widespread – rarely seen
White-letter hairstreak			✓						Widespread – rarely seen
Small copper						✓	✓✓		Widespread – not abundant
Holly blue	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓					Widespread & common
Common blue		✓	✓✓				✓		Widespread & fairly common
Red Admiral		✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Widespread & common
Painted lady					✓✓	✓			Common migrant
Small tortoiseshell		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		Widespread & common
Peacock		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓			Widespread & common
Comma	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		Widespread & common
Speckled wood		✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		Widespread & fairly common
Marbled white				✓	✓				Uncommon
Gatekeeper					✓✓	✓			Widespread & common
Meadow brown				✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓		Widespread & common
Ringlet				✓✓	✓✓				Widespread & common
Small heath			✓	✓✓	✓✓				Widespread but localised

Sightings shown as:

- ✓ only one reported sighting in month
- ✓✓ more than one reported sighting in month, usually different date, person or place

List of butterflies recorded as present in Cambridgeshire 1990-2005 (34 in total).

Ref: The Butterflies of Cambridgeshire, 2006, Robin Field, Val Perrin, Louise Bacon, Nick Greatorix-Davies.

### IV. Bee afternoon - Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May

Raymond Uffen visited to lead an exploratory walk and talk about bees in the meadow of the Old Paddock, thanks to Audrey Bugg. It was good to have a large turnout for his visit – and on a rather grey afternoon too. It was also lovely to see the children taking part.

We did not see very many bees but quite a number of other different insects and I am sure that everyone learnt something! I certainly did and I also tried hard to record all the taxonomic names (a lot did not have common English names) of the insects that we saw.

Raymond was very knowledgeable and patiently answered our questions. He later sent a list with further identifications of specimens that he was not sure about at the time.

Later he gave a slide show in the Institute and helped to clarify the differences between some of the bees. It is very helpful to have an experienced expert out in the field with us from time to time; also to give us advice on appropriate equipment.

Jennifer Hirsh – Naturewatch invertebrate recorder  
([jennifer@hirsh.demon.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@hirsh.demon.co.uk) or 01223 893 352)



36: Bee fly (CMcC)



37: White tailed bumble bee (JH)



38: Bumble bee (JH)



39: Carder bee (JH)



40: Mining Bee (CMcC)



41: Shield bug (JH)



42: Common Darter (JH)



43: Broad bodied Darter (JH)



44: 7 spot, Harlequin ladybirds (DT)



45: 7 spot ladybirds, near ford (JH)



46: Harlequin ladybird (JH)



47: Mullein moth caterpillar (DT)



48: Damsel flies (JH)



## 6. MAMMALS

This is the second year of recording mammal sightings.

Grateful thanks must go to the regular contributors to this section. It does enable us to keep records and dates of when our mammals appear each year.

Over the last year we have had the following sightings -

### *I. Winter*

Fox – At least two foxes were seen moving around the Abingtons in January. Several observations were made near the Pampisford Road and Granta Park. Little Abington shared views of this mammal with sightings in at least one garden. The particularly cold weather may have made these sightings more frequent.

### *II. Spring*

Fox – in early April a fox was observed near Sluice Wood.

Hares – as of last year, the hares appeared in the field near the Granta path from the High Street around the first week of April. This year only one pair stayed at the field.

Bats – three reports of the first observations of bats were given on the 9<sup>th</sup> April. We continue to have at least two different bats in the area. These are thought to be Common Pipistrelles and Daubentons.

Hedgehogs – the first were seen over the Easter weekend this year.

Short tailed vole – observed near a compost bin in April.

Muntjac as roadkill was found in March.

Definite evidence of a Badger sett at Grange Farm was reported. No further information was however received.

### *III. Summer*

Bats – There have been exciting reports of bats that have summered in a number of locations; at least two houses in the village as well as the Little Abington Church have them and they are regular summer residents in two locations on the land Settlement. Naturewatch has now obtained two 'Bat Boxes' that assist in their identification and can be borrowed.

Fox – a large fox was noted sighted in the TWA field in the first week of June.

Hares – The hares which give many members of the village great pleasure were present in July and August but then disappeared. (They may not have been visible because of the height of the crops). There were however no reported sightings after the harvest.

Muntjac were observed in several gardens this year and this is not always well received.

Weasel – one was seen crossing a track at the boundary of Grange Farm.

Hedgehogs – the hedgehog is one of the few insect eating mammals in Britain. Two were observed on a pavement during a May evening.

Over the summer there were a range of small mammals recorded. Most were found in residents' gardens, near the house or by a compost heap.

Pygmy shrews were seen in both May and early July.

Woodmice were observed in gardens and gnawed hazelnuts were thought to be further evidence of their presence.

One Field Vole was seen in August.

As last year's report indicated, shrews tend to be found once they are dead.

#### ***IV. Autumn***

Bats – continued to be observed near farm buildings during September.

Hedgehogs – There were a number of sightings around the village in October and early November. These little mammals tend to be observed at dusk or at night when they are foraging. The size of those seen appeared to vary considerably, indicating the new generation was around.

Stoat – What was probably a female was observed in a garden in Little Abington. It was identified by the black extremity of the tail.

Muntjac – two were seen near the Pampisford Road and dashed to the nearby woodland when observed.

Woodmice continue to be seen near houses in late Autumn.

The most recent excitement, in November, was the observation by a member of The Wildlife Trust of Otter spraints near the river. Their spraints are deposited in many shapes and forms but can be identified by a fishy smell. Otters travel quite a distance at night but further inspections, recently, have found further fresh spraint under the Abington Road Bridge. It is hoped that we will be able to follow this up for our next report.

DW



49: Wildlife Trust and County Councillor discuss maintenance of Bourn Bridge PRV (PB, 11 July)



50: Violet (Recreation Ground, March)



51: Celandine (Millennium path, March)



52: Violet (Recreation Ground, March)



53: Cowslip (Cooke's meadow, April)



54: Helleborine (Beech Wood, May)



55: Knapweed Broomrape (Roman Road, June)

*Photographs: Jennifer Hirsh, 2011*





56: Field bindweed (Old Railway, July)



57: Wild parsnip (Old Railway, July)



58: Marjoram (Old Railway, July)



59: Dark Mullein (Old Railway, July)



60: Lady's bedstraw (Old Railway, July)



61: Milkwort (Old Railway, July)

*Photographs: Jennifer Hirsh, 2011*



## 7. PLANTWATCH

### *I. Overview*

This year was if anything weirder even than last, a cool unsettled summer, with barely a hint of high pressure for three months, coming between warm, dry spells in spring and September, the former long and unbroken. The effects could be easily seen in May and even June, especially on small plants such as Rock Rose and Horseshoe Vetch on Fleam Dyke, and even some larger ones like White Campion and Greater Knapweed on the PRV. Yet Bladder Campion there was unaffected and flourishing, as was Mignonette on the Dyke, while Hemlock and Hogweed were having a great time everywhere.

And it's an ill wind (even a damp, cool one in midsummer) that blows no good: later flowering plants, including the best of the PRV, had recovered completely by July.

In spite of the atrocious weather our outing to Welney reinforced the value bird watching trips can have for botanisers, and my visit to the high meadows of Great Chishill has reminded me of the riches of the upland between here and just west of Royston which we have not yet explored.

A disappointment has been the occasional failure of our decision to have more study walks and outings on a Saturday morning, when it seems that in summer people have too many other calls on their time. We shall need to discuss this when planning the 2012 programme.

### *II. Home-ground study walks*

#### **i. Private woodland, South Road, Great Abington, 11<sup>th</sup> July.**

Naturewatch thanks the owners for this visit, the main purpose of which was to review the condition of the Bee Orchids once abundant here. Only one was found, the owner having seen three previously this year. Of Common Broomrape too, also seen here in good numbers not long ago, we could find only one specimen. While other factors may be at work, we felt confident that the main cause was simply the natural growth of the woodland's having shaded these species out.

Good news, on the other hand, was the presence in a glade in the wood of a fine group of about 20 Common Centaury, all in their pure white form, something uncommon, not known before in our villages but recorded in Blamey, Fitter & Fitter 2003. Remarkable too was the number of Rough Hawksbeard, massed over almost all the woodland and adjacent meadow.

#### **ii. Railway cutting east of Chalky Road, Great Abington 22<sup>nd</sup> July.**

The nine members who took part in this study walk, which was led by Jennifer Hirsh and which included the southern end of Chalky Road and the arable field adjacent to the railway, were rewarded with a find of all but 12 of a potential list of 105 species.

The rather less frequent of the mostly calcareous plants recorded were: Black Medick, Catmint, Common Centaury, Dark Mullein, Dewberry, Hoary Ragwort, Marjoram, Meadow Vetchling, Red Bartsia, Rest Harrow, Salad Burnet, Teasel, Wayfaring Tree, Wild Basil, Wild Carrot and Yellowwort, and in the arable Fool's Parsley.

Thanks largely to the horse-riding community, the path at the top of the cutting is still in quite a good state. The diversity of plants too is impressive, but the verge to the north of the path is gradually getting more overgrown. Purging Flax has probably

been lost (its only known site in our villages now), and Yellowwort, Meadow Vetchling and Salad Burnet are struggling. Marjoram however is still flourishing.

### **iii. Grange Farm, Little Abington, upland arable & verges, 2<sup>nd</sup> August**

Tricia Cullimore kindly welcomed us and explained the farm's stewardship programme. It was clear that the erratic climate this year had affected both the diversity and flourishing of flowering plants. One Common Broomrape was however found and several species were doing relatively well, among them (of 33 species recorded) Mignonette, Birdsfoot Trefoil and White Campion. Goatsbeard, its seed dispersed over a month ago on our lowland verges, was still in full seed here, and Rough Chervil still in flower. Scarlet Pimpernel, Knotweed, Field Pansy and Field Speedwell were in the arable, and plenty of Bristly Oxtongue, though of reduced size, on the verge.

A specially good find was a fair amount of Alsike Clover, not recorded before in our villages.

Tricia has kindly offered to take us one day to see the sandy and clayey area of the farm.

## **III. Outings**

### **i. Beech Wood, 24<sup>th</sup> May**

This outing, very well supported by man, woman and dog, was above all to visit the noted station of White Helleborine (*Cephalanthera damasonium*). As expected, the spring drought had had its effect: plants were nearly all poor in height and number of florets, and had gone through quickly, being already more or less withered. However there were plenty of them, their extension over the site was most encouraging, and on a beautiful evening the purity of the beech wood was looking at its best. Remarkable too was the abundance of Spotted Hawkweed throughout the wood, still mostly in full bloom. A good number of these had no markings on the leaves, which left us somewhat puzzled. There was also a good patch of Rough Chervil near the entrance.

More good news came with the discovery of two groups of 2-3 Helleborines in the Plantation (a recent expansion of the range), a few Dogwood in full bloom along the main path, and a group of Common Broomrape parasitising on red clover. There are both Goat Willow and Sallow there, a number of the latter bearing strange black galls.

We noted plenty of berries on the hollies, in spite of the drought having withered the leaves, many of which had actually fallen.

### **ii. Fleam Dyke south, 18<sup>th</sup> June.**

The few who were able to come this time were rewarded with good numbers of plants and diversity, with 32 species recorded. Almost all species apart from Mignonette however showed the effects of the spring drought, stems and leaves being reduced in size and more or less desiccated. Among those listed were:

Composites: Ploughman's Spikenard, Lesser Hawkbit, Greater Knapweed, Musk Thistle (size reduced, blooms good), Carline Thistle (towards Bedford Gap), Dwarf Thistle.

Rose fam. Salad Burnet, Dropwort (few, scattered, good flowers), Silverweed.

Parsley fam. Rough Chervil, Wild Parsnip

Scroph fam. Great Mullein, Dark Mullein.

Others. White Bryony, Teasel, Privet, St John's Wort, Bittersweet, Mignonette (plentiful), Rock Rose (abundant but scattered & reduced), Lady's Bedstraw, Horseshoe Vetch (a few clumps), Common Milkwort, Cowslip (leaf rosettes), Houndstongue (in seed, some dense groups on SW slope), Fireweed.

Of the important Juniper colony, there was a number of young plants as well as the few older ones.

### **iii. Haslingfield Chalk Pit, 24<sup>th</sup> June**

There was disappointment here, as there was no sign of the Man Orchids which are the special feature of this fine site. However, there were by way of compensation a fair number of two other orchids, Twayblade and Common Spotted Orchid (not an *Orchis* but a *Dactylorhiza*), the latter all white with small heads, the former showing the effects of the spring drought, also a number of brilliant blue Chalk Milkwort as well as the Common ones. Other good species were:

Yellowwort (a few small plants), Selfheal, Hedge Bedstraw, Lesser Trefoil, Bladder Campion, Rough Chervil, Greater Knapweed, Red Bartsia (in fair numbers, mostly good specimens), Eyebright, Purging Flax and Field Scabious. Of special interest were the good numbers in one area of Black Briony, not common in our region, one seen in flower.

### **iv. Great Chishill high meadows, 6<sup>th</sup> July**

Though not strictly an outing (I was invited to visit this beautiful site by Phil Jenner), this deserves recording, since there are good Lepidoptera as well as flora here and promise of preservation and so enrichment of the site, so that it could be of future interest to Naturewatch. Pyramidal Orchid and Yellowwort were outstanding among the 24 species of flora I recorded. Others included:

Red & White Campion, Common Knapweed, Traveller's Joy, Smooth Hawksbeard, Dovesfoot Cranesbill, Field Forget-me-not, Hedge & Lady's Bedstraw, Selfheal, Agrimony, Meadow Vetchling, Goatsbeard (in seed), Hop & Lesser Trefoil, Field Scabious and St John's Wort

### **v. Wildfowl Reserve, Welney, 16<sup>th</sup> July**

Conditions were so vile that our pleasingly ample group, made of sterner stuff than the common herd, had this normally crowded place almost to ourselves. Yet again we proved the value of primarily bird-watching outings for botanists too, even though the two heroes who went botanizing were driven back into cover within ten minutes or so, by which time the water was threatening their undies. Even in that time we recorded three really good wetland plants, Marsh Thistle, Marsh Woundwort and Marsh Ragwort, only the first of which we have found either at Wicken or at Fowlmere. Other species viewed briefly through the deluge were:

Fleabane, Purple Loosestrife, Angelica, Teasel, Great Willowherb, Meadowsweet, Hemlock and Yellow Flag (one bloom still surviving).

A fine but curious plant seen at some distance from the hide seems to have been Common Club Rush.

### **vi. Fulbourn Reserve & Fleam Dyke North, 30<sup>th</sup> July**

This was a very successful outing, participation being good and 46 species recorded in the Fulbourn Reserve, mostly in the main marshy field, where there plenty of leaves of Southern Marsh Orchid. Among other plants seen there and elsewhere on the Reserve were:

Composites. Fleabane, Marsh Thistle, Common Knapweed, Dwarf Thistle, Hemp Agrimony, Lesser Hawkbit.

Rose fam. Salad Burnet, Silverweed, Meadowsweet, Dewberry, Agrimony.

Pea fam. Tufted Vetch, Birdsfoot Trefoil

Mint fam. Water Mint, Selfheal, Hedge Woundwort

Umbellifers. Hogweed, Hedge Parsley

Rush fam. Soft Rush, Great Woodrush

Willowherb fam. Great Willowherb, Fireweed (Rose Bay)

Bedstraw fam. Fen Bedstraw, Lady's Bedstraw

Others. White Champion, Red Bartsia, Hedgerow Cranesbill, St John's Wort, Purging Flax, Common Milkwort, Common Gromwell (in seed), Cuckoo Pint, Amphibious Bistort, Vervain, Black Bryony.

Those who went on to Fleam Dyke's north section reported both the hoped-for *Campanulas*, Clustered Bellflower and Harebell, and also Ploughman's Spikenard.

#### ***IV. Some other records of interest***

##### **i. Bourn Bridge Road fields**

On the north-east section of the road through the Bourn Bridge Road fields there was by mid-April a good patch of Wall Speedwell (*Veronica arvensis*), which we find more often in our gardens than 'in the wild'.

##### **ii. Little Abington churchyard**

At the north end of Little Abington churchyard in May there was (not previously recorded) a fine station of escaped Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum angustifolium*), with a few too by the east hedge.

##### **iii. Bourn Bridge Road SE field**

In May too a fine Sainfoin was a surprise arrival on the eastern verge of. Further on here an impressive patch of Hedge Parsley was in bloom in late July. Also in May Goatsbeard has spread with several plants to the east verge of the SW field.

##### **iv. Granta Park lake**

The flora of Granta Park lake was doing well by early July. Two especially fine masses of White Water Lily were in bloom on the west side of the water, and both Yellow and Purple Loosestrife near the west bank. A small group of Wild Basil was a new arrival in the north spur, and on the west shore Birdsfoot Trefoil, Meadow Cranesbill and Small Scabious were all flourishing.

##### **v. A1307 Road Verge**

A large station of Rose Bay (Fireweed) had established itself by early July at the back of the road verge opposite the A1307 Protected Verge.

##### **vi. Little Abington Meadow**

A first for our villages came from the Meadow in Little Abington, with several quite large patches of Dwarf Thistle ('Picnic Thistle'; *Cirsium acaulon*)



**vii. Four Went Ways**

Another new arrival was a large group of Evening Primrose at Four Went Ways, on the cut to the A11 coming from the south. Later on, along the western verge of the A1307 approaching the roundabout from the south the usual diversity of species was in flower, including Selfheal, Burnet Saxifrage (massed, often together with Wild Carrot), the three Trefoils (Lesser, Hop, Birdsfoot), Carline Thistle and Ploughman's Spikenard.

**viii. Bourn Bridge Road west PRV**

The poor summer enabled the mostly later flowering species of the Bourn Bridge Road west Protected Road Verge to recover fully from the Spring drought and in late July and August the brave show of Greater Knapweed, Field Scabious and Lady's Bedstraw was as fine as ever. It was especially good to see that Wild Basil has now quite strongly re-established itself on the SW section of the PRV.

**ix. Stubble Flowers**

Late dressing of the crops eliminated almost all stubble flowers this year, apart from a few patches unaffected, either at the edges, or between rows in mid-field. In the western spur of the NW field in mid September, as well as the usual Cudweed and American Willow Herb, there was a number of good Dense-flowered Fumitory (*Fumaria densiflora*). There were more of these on the east verge of the Temple, where Wild Basil was present as usual. Astonishingly, in the unsown and untreated SW corner of this field there was a small patch of Round-leaved Fluellen, together with a few small plants of Fool's Parsley, Pimpernel, Field Speedwell and Field Pansy.

Also in September in the Linton Road field Black Bindweed, Field Pansy and Field Speedwell had survived the treatment here and there, and the Hedgerow Cranesbill near the entrance was clear of it. Of the stubble plants of special interest, there were several Fool's Parsley between the road and the allotments and in one patch in midfield, a good number of Dwarf Spurge along the front edge of the allotments, and along their south side plenty of Black Nightshade in flower or fruit together with a few faded Henbit Deadnettle.

After the autumn heat wave, one area in the Bourn Bridge Road SW field had escaped the wipe-out: as well a few Field Speedwell and a fair number of Black Bindweed, there were one Night-flowering Catchfly, several 'dusty' Henbits and some Fool's Parsley of good size and in good condition. Later still a few Field Madder and Fool's Parsley appeared near the south edge of the NE field.

**V. *Flora Abingtonia*****i. Plants not previously listed**

28.6.5. T. hybridum (Alsike Clover). Upland arable verge, Grange Farm L/A 2011.

70.20.3. C. acaulon (Dwarf Thistle, 'Picnic Thistle'). Good patches, The Meadow, L/A 2011.

77.1.1. [Ornithogalum angustifolium (Star of Bethlehem)]. Escaped to north end & east verge, churchyard L/A 2011.

**ii. New colour variety of plant already listed**

56.1. 1. Centaureum erythraea (Common Centaury). Flowers all pure white, private woodland, South Road G/A 2011.

**iii. New site for plant already listed**

6.1.3. Fumaria densiflora (Dense-flowered Fumitory). Western spur, Bourn Bridge Road NW field, & east verge of Temple L/A 2011. [NB. This species was a new addition 2010].\_

28.11.1. Onobrychis viciifolia (Sainfoin). One plant, east verge of Bourn Bridge Road SE field. L/A 2011. [NB. Italics should be removed from this item].

35.2. Chamerion angustifolium (Rosebay, Fireweed). Back of verge of A1307 opposite PRV L/A 2011.

35.3. Oenothera biennis (Evening Primrose). Roadside, Four Went Ways L/A 2011.

63.7. Clinopodium vulgare (Wild Basil). Delete words, 'present.... Instead'; substitute: south side PRV S51 Bourn Bridge Road L//A. Add: western spur, Bourn Bridge Road NW field L/A 2011.

70.28. Tragopogon pratensis (Gatsbeard). East verge Bourn Bridge Road SW field L/A 2011.

PD



62: Insects enjoy Knapweed (Bourn Bridge Road, 11 July)



63: Burnet moth (Bourn Bridge Road, 11 July)



64: Meadow Saxifrage (The Paddock, 7 May)



65: Star of Bethlehem (The Paddock, 7 May)

Photographs: Peter Brunning, 2011

## 8. CONTACT INFORMATION

### I. The Abington Naturewatch Website

The Abington Naturewatch Website is now maintained as a *blog* (i.e. web log) at <http://abington-naturewatch.blogspot.com/>. It is also easily reached from the village web-site: <http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/>. Using a blog means that it is simpler for members to submit material for publication.

The site lists the aims of the group and has details of members' meetings. Those interested are encouraged to join – there is no membership fee! Members receive personal invitations to meetings, by email if available.

There is a link to a simple google map of the area, with the names we use to refer to some parts of the area covered. There are also reports and photographs submitted by members and some useful links to other sources of information.

### Naturewatch Home Page:

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Abington Naturewatch website. The browser window title is 'Abington Naturewatch' and the address bar shows 'abington-naturewatch.blogspot.com'. The page has a blue header with 'Share Report Abuse Next Blogs' and 'Create Blog Sign In' links. The main content area is titled 'ABINGTON NATUREWATCH' and includes a subtitle: 'THIS IS A PLACE TO POST SIGHTINGS AND NEWS FOR THE NATUREWATCH GROUP OF GREAT AND LITTLE ABINGTON IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE, UK'. Below this, there are sections for 'THE AIMS OF ABINGTON NATUREWATCH', 'RESOURCES', and a 'BLOG ARCHIVE'. The 'THE AIMS' section lists four aims and mentions Pat Dsant as the coordinator. The 'RESOURCES' section includes links to an 'Events Calendar', 'Resources on the Web', and an 'Archive of older material'. The 'BLOG ARCHIVE' lists posts from 2007 to 2011. A recent post titled 'Fungi at Granta Park' is shown with a photograph of a mushroom.

**ABINGTON NATUREWATCH**  
THIS IS A PLACE TO POST SIGHTINGS AND NEWS FOR THE NATUREWATCH GROUP OF GREAT AND LITTLE ABINGTON IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE, UK

**THE AIMS OF ABINGTON NATUREWATCH**  
At their meeting on 9 April 2005 the members approved this revised version of the aims of Abington Naturewatch:

- To monitor and record the wildlife (fauna & flora) within the borders of the Abingtons;
- To encourage protection of our wildlife, maintain its quality and foster its diversity;
- To promote awareness of the richness, potential and problems of the natural environment of the Abingtons;
- To cooperate in improving access to the local natural environment for the benefit of all Abington villagers.

Pat Dsant, Coordinator

The organisation is informal and communication is by email if possible; members are notified of events from time to time. Contact details are maintained by a small 'project team'. There is currently no membership fee as costs are covered by voluntary contributions at events.

Members are encouraged to report notable sightings of flora and fauna within the Abingtons to the appropriate coordinator and an illustrated record is published annually.

A map of the area covered, with some features noted, is available here: <http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=213774935674882866424.00000111dcmbe9f06ab882-13>

For more information or to join, please contact Patrick Dsant on (01223) 891485 or Peter Brunning via e-mail [nw@brunning.org.uk](mailto:nw@brunning.org.uk).

**RESOURCES**  
[Events Calendar](#)  
[Resources on the Web](#)  
[Archive of older material](#)

**BLOG ARCHIVE**  
► 2007 (18)  
► 2008 (19)  
► 2009 (21)  
► 2010 (18)  
▼ 2011 (35)  
► February (2)  
► March (3)  
► April (6)  
► May (7)  
► June (6)  
► July (5)  
► August (1)  
► September (2)  
► October (2)  
▼ December (1)

**MONDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2011**  
**Fungi at Granta Park**  
George found a variety of fungi around Granta Park on 16th November.

## ***II. The Abington Naturewatch Project Team and Sectors***

### **i. Programme Coordinator**

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### **ix. School Liaison**

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### **x. Website & Record**

Website: <http://abington-naturewatch.blogspot.com/>

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66: Crane fly in Church Lane (Jim Cracknell, 10 November)