



ABINGTON NATUREWATCH

The Record
2014

Records the activities of Abington Naturewatch for 2014. Includes records of sightings of the fauna and flora in Great and Little Abington, Cambridgeshire, as noted by members and covering several sectors: Life at Granta Park and in the River Granta, Birds, Amphibians & Reptiles, Mammals, Insects, Flora.



Front Cover (top): Granta Park from the Recreation Ground across the river and floods – 24 Nov (PB)

Front Cover (bottom): River Granta Shoal Construction in progress – 21 Aug. (RM)



1: Cedar Earth-cup Fungus – Camb. Rd – 24 Feb (DT)



2: Bracket fungus – Beech Wood – 9 May (DF)



3: Aconite – Granta Park – 10 Jan (AM)



4: Snowdrops – Granta Park – 10 Jan (AM)



5: Wild Arum – Sluice Wood – 15 April (JAH)



6: Yellow Archangel – Sluice Wood – 15 April (JAH)

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8: Bee Orchid – 6 June (SR)



9: Bee orchid – 7 June (DF)

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12: Kick Sampling – Cricket Meadow – 12 Aug (PB)



13: Signal Crayfish – Cricket Meadow – 12 Aug (PB)



14: Stonefly nymph – Cricket Meadow – 5 July (PB)



15: Shrimp – River / Cricket Meadow – 12 Aug (PB)

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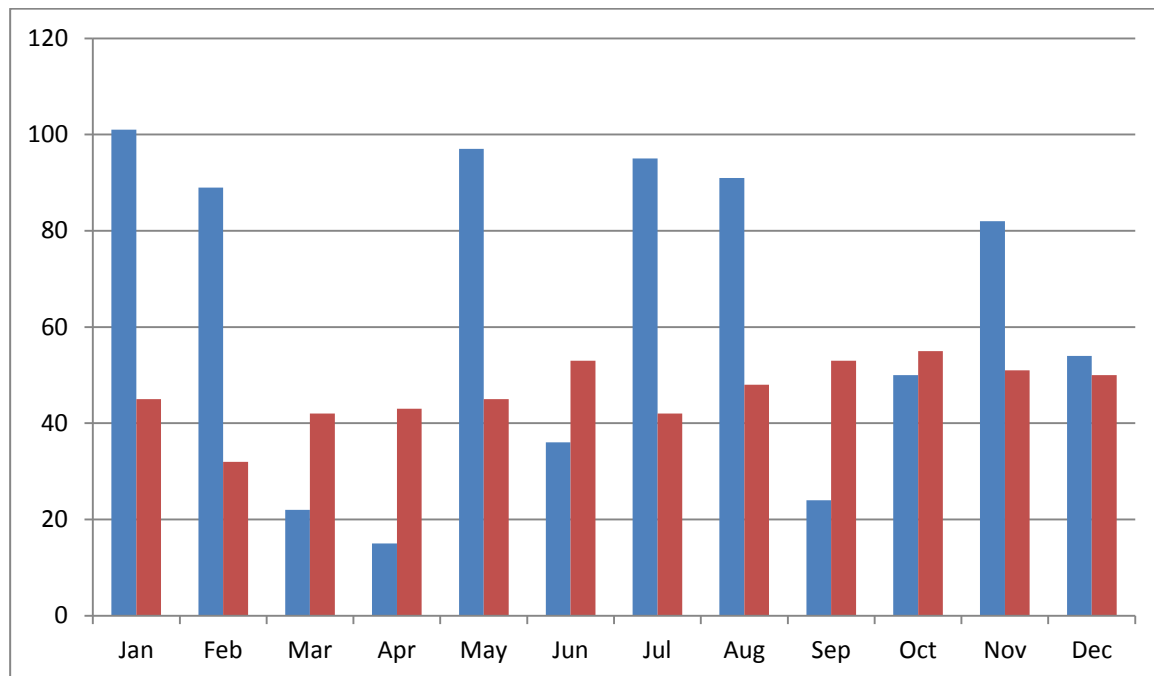
1. FOREWORD

I. Weather

2014 proved to be a very good year for nature with an early warm spring and long autumn with sufficient rainfall over spring and summer to keep the flora actively growing.

January and February were milder than average but very wet with storms in January that caused the severe flooding in the West Country. April was quite dry and warm but this was followed by May which stayed warm but with a lot more rain. June and July produced long sunny spells and low rainfall. August was cooler than average but thunderstorms produced high rainfall figures. The autumn was mild with few cold nights and low rainfall. November and December ended the year with reasonably mild weather but more rain in November.

Rainfall in Abington for 2014 (blue) compared to 30 year average (red) in mm



16: Abington Rainfall 2014

Source of 30 year average – Cambridge Botanic Gardens

The mild spring of 2014, followed by a warm summer and long mild autumn, together with good rainfall over the period has meant that it has been a successful season for bird broods, invertebrates and plants. This is reflected in the following individual reports in the Record.

II. The 2014 Programme

We have again had a busy programme in 2014. This started with the Garden Birdwatch observations in January, our own Abington Birdwatch in May and then further opportunities to record birds during the trips to Wicken Fen and Fen Drayton Lakes over the summer. On the floral side, we had the visits to Wicken Fen in June and Fleam Dyke in July together with an evening on the Old Railway Line which is an important area of old grass and scrubland is currently being cleared of brush by the Wildlife Trust.

2014, with the mild spring and autumn has meant a good year for invertebrates with large numbers of butterflies and dragonflies seen. The highlights were the dragon and damselflies at Fen Drayton Lakes, the Chalkhill Blue butterflies at Fleam Dyke and our moth trapping event in Abington.

Our river sampling programme continued during the year where our samples in April, July and August showed our river remains of good quality despite the large numbers of Signal Crayfish near the bridge. Through the efforts of RiverCare, a new shoal has been added to the river in the Playing Fields for recreational use and to speed up the flow. September saw World Rivers Day celebrated and Naturewatch had samples of our river life on show as part of the Abington Woods campsite opening.

We also had two very interesting talks during the year. In May, Iain Webb, Cambridge City Greenways Project Officer gave us a talk on the History and Wildlife of Fleam Dyke and the Roman Road, and in November, Peter Pilbeam from the Cambridge Mammals Group discussed the various small mammals we are likely to see in our area.

III. Granta Park

In previous years Naturewatch has relied on individuals walking through Granta Park to report on the wildlife within. Following discussions, 2014 has seen a much wider report from volunteers working at the Park and I would like to record my thanks to their main reporters, Tracy Thomas, Sheila Stevens, Andy Merryweather and Mike Gittos for their contributions. We are also very grateful to Granta Park for their financial support of Naturewatch through Tracy Thomas. This has helped towards the cost of printing the Record and the cost of our meetings.

IV. Naturewatch Members

We have maintained a steady numbers of members within Naturewatch during the year and our events have in the main been well supported. However we are still trying to recruit younger people and are also starting discussions with the school to see what opportunities there may be of co-operation in the future.

I would like to record my thanks to all who have supported Naturewatch during the year and especially to those who have regularly reported their observations and sent in photographs. The standard and accuracy of the observations are critical to the quality of the Record.

The events we have put on in 2014 and the production of the Record would not have happened if it were not for the hard work of the members of the Project Team. On behalf of the members, I would like to thank them for all the hard work they put in during the year, gathering the data, writing the reports and researching and organising the events. 2014 has been another good year for Naturewatch and many aspects of nature and we look forward to another interesting year in 2015.

David Farrant



17: River Granta: full flow – Sluice Wood – 21 Feb. (DF)

Notes:

1. In this document, GA stands for Great Abington and LA for Little Abington.
2. All photographs taken in 2014, unless noted.
3. Expeditions outside the Abingtons are recorded separately in Section 8.
4. For contact details for all sectors, please refer to the back page.

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 walk through the cricket and recreation fields along the river and check its condition, picking up litter along the bank and, if possible, from the river. [Volunteers are always welcome at the road bridge at 9:30 a.m.] The national *RiverCare* organization provides equipment, insurance, safety guidelines and other advice. They can also help to arrange clearance of larger debris by the *Environment Agency*, which is responsible for the river and usually responds quickly to these requests.

In August 2014, we realised a major project, which had taken quite a while to plan. We installed a gravel shoal in the river by the Recreation Ground, quite close to the Millennium Footbridge. See below.

RiverCare members also take part in the Cam Valley Forum, a voluntary group, established in 2001, which works to protect and improve the environment of the River Cam and its tributaries – see <http://www.colc.co.uk/cambridge/cam.valley.forum/>.

II. Access Shoal Project

The inspiration for this project came from a talk by South Cambs District Council's Ecology Officer, Rob Mungovan, about his work to improve rivers around South Cambridgeshire. It seemed that something similar would enhance the river environment beside Abington Recreation Ground – and there seemed to be some enthusiasm locally.

After meeting with Rob on site in April 2013, the Recreation Ground Committee identified an area just upstream of the Millennium Bridge, where the bank sloped naturally and the river had a small gravel shoal. It looked like a good place to improve access to the river and improve the natural environment by speeding river flow in times of low water.

Rob helped to draw up plans, which were agreed with The Wildlife Trust, to construct an access shoal. Later in the year, the Recreation Ground Committee submitted an application to the Environment Agency for Flood Control permission. This was approved in January; we waited for the ground to dry out and constructed the shoal on 21st August 2014.

The project was sponsored by Cambridge Water, who supplied an excavator and operator; by South Cambridgeshire District Council, who supplied half the gravel; and by Rivercare who equipped volunteers with waders. The Recreation Ground Committee paid the other costs. Representatives of CW and SCDC, together with the Wildlife Trust, were on hand to supervise operations. Local volunteers assisted by shovelling and raking. The work took most of the day, though some time was spent waiting for gravel lorries!



18: Abington Shoal partially submerged – 26 Aug (PB)

Initially, the gravel looked quite bare but we scattered some wild meadow seed on it and other less desirable vegetation quickly grew back! It soon mellowed and regular high water has helped it to blend into the natural river environment.

Cambridge Water issued a press release and reports appeared in the local media, including the BBC's 'Look East', the *Cambridge News* and the *Haverhill Echo*.

III. River Sampling 2014

As last year we did all the sampling within a 30m stretch of the River Granta beside the Abington Cricket Meadow (as agreed with Rob Mungovan). Grid ref: TL534490.

The Riverfly Partnership 'abundance' figures are as follows:

1 – 9	category A = (based on a quick count)
10–99	category B = (+ estimated number to nearest 10)
100–999	category C = (+ estimated number to nearest 100)
over 1000	category D = (+ estimated number to nearest 1000)

i. Saturday 19th April 2014, 16:00-17:00, sunny but cool

River level: medium, strong flow

Recorder: Anne Dunbar-Nobes

3-minute kick-shuffle sampling technique:

- (a) 1 minute in riffle area with dark green mossy weed and large stones;
- (b) 1 minute in fast-flowing stony area with light green weed;
- (c) 1 minute in shallower gravel area

Riverfly species

Cased caddis: 0

Caseless caddis: 3 -- Category A

Mayfly Ephemeridae: 1 – Category A

Blue-winged olive mayfly: 0

Flat-bodied mayfly: 0

Olive mayfly (Baetidae): c. 70 – Category B

Stoneflies: 0

Freshwater shrimps (Gammarus): 8 -- Category A

(widely varying in size from a few millimetres to 1 cm)

No other species found in the sample apart from lots of miniscule hairworms.

ii. Wednesday 2nd July 2014, 18:30-19:30, fine, dry weather, warm evening

River level: very low

Recorder: Anne Dunbar-Nobes

3 kick-shuffles undertaken within the allotted 3 minutes (1. gravel on margin of foals watercress, 2. gravel close to water crowfoot area, 3. 30 sec kickshuffle close to bank + 30 sec sweep in main river)

Riverfly species

Cased caddisfly: 0

Caseless caddisfly: 0

Mayfly Ephemeridae: 0

Blue-winged olive: Category A, Estimated number 6

Flat bodied up-wings: Category A, Estimated number 2

Olives: Category B, Estimated number 50

Stoneflies: 0

Gammarus (Freshwater shrimp): Category B, Estimated number 60

Hatches seen: none

Other fauna: Signal crayfish (3 large, 3 small); Demoiselle larva (1); 10 tiny minnows/sticklebacks

iii. Tuesday 12th August 2014, 18:30-19:30, overcast, windy, cool evening

River level: low

Recorded by: Anne Dunbar-Nobes and Peter Brunning

Three kick-shuffles undertaken within the allotted 3 minutes (1. stones/rocks on bottom, small amount of weed; 2. large stones/gravel shallow area, 3. in main river flow over stony bottom).

Note: the reach is now shady, and recent heavy rainfall has increased the flow and removed the weed and riffles, there is very little variation within our 30 metre stretch – no silty areas or thick weed beds.

*Riverfly species***Cased caddisfly:** 0**Caseless caddisfly:** 0**Mayfly Ephemeridae:** 0**Blue-winged olive:** Category B, Estimated number 20**Flat bodied up-wings:** 0**Olives:** Category C, Estimated number 120 (all very small)**Stoneflies:** 0**Gammarus** (Freshwater shrimp): Category B, Estimated number 35**Hatches seen:** none**Other fauna:** Signal crayfish (5); tiny leech, red hairworms (2)**Non-catches:** water snails, fish, beetle larvae**IV. Other Events****i. RiverCare network meeting, Rutland Water – Wednesday 23rd July 2014**

Derek Turnidge and Peter Brunning attended the annual meeting of RiverCare groups from East Anglia. The event was sponsored by Anglian Water and held at their Birdwatching Centre at Eggleton, Oakham, LE15 8BT.

It gave us the opportunity to meet members of other RiverCare groups and RiverCare staff, find out what other groups having been doing on their local rivers and hear about some new initiatives on our region's rivers. I often feel at these events that we have a relatively easy job here, with a small river in a pleasant rural environment!

In the afternoon we had the opportunity to watch Ospreys from the hides at the beautiful Rutland Water reserve <http://www.ospreys.org.uk/lyndon-reserve/>.

ii. World Rivers Day – Saturday 27th September 2014

World Rivers Day (<http://worldriversday.com/>) is celebrated each year all round the world on the last Sunday of September. Naturewatch arranged a display to celebrate the occasion on Saturday 27th September, on the site of the former Scout Camp, where 'Abington Woods' was also holding an Open Day. We had plenty of visitors from 10:00am to 3:00 pm, including Scouts and children from Holme Court School, which has moved to Abington Woods.



19: Studying river life – Abington Woods – 27 Sep World Rivers Day (PB)

The main objective of the day was to introduce the fauna of the river to younger members of the community and the event once again seemed to be a success!

We had samples of creatures, taken from the river that morning, in trays and specimen pots to examine with magnifying glasses and a microscope. These included fish, shrimp, and small signal crayfish as well as mayfly larvae.

We had a few larger signal crayfish alive in a bucket, which went home for the pot with one visitor. It is illegal to release or re-release signal crayfish into the wild but eating them is acceptable!

Note: the native white-clawed crayfish is a protected species and must not be disturbed.

To tell the difference between the two types of crayfish, please check:

http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Leisure/Crayfish_Identify.pdf

Peter Brunning



20: Blackcap on nest – Lewis Crescent – 14 May (AM)



21: Dunnock – Lewis Crescent – 19 Jan (AM)



22: Goldfinch – Lewis Crescent – 19 Jan (AM)



23: Great Tit – Lewis Crescent – 27 April (AM)



24: Blue tit – Lewis Crescent – 25 Oct (AM)



25: Coal tit – Lewis Crescent – 25 Oct (AM)



26: Bullfinch – West Field – July (MB)



27: Baby Collared Doves – 1 April (PP)

3. BIRDS

I. Members' Reports

Once more I am extremely grateful for all the reports I have received from many people during the year including reports from Granta Park. Frequent or infrequent, detailed or simple, without them there would be no record. All reports are recorded and I have summarised these by month. Because of the excellent detailed report of birds recorded on Granta Park which appears elsewhere in this Record, I have only included Granta Park sightings here which have been provided to me by village residents as opposed to people working there and reporting to Andy Merryweather.

i. January 2014

A juvenile Cormorant was seen on two occasions by the Granta Park lake. A small flock of Fieldfares appeared near the old A11 and 2 Grey Herons were seen on Bourn Bridge Road fields. The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch produced 11 reports and a total of 28 species including a Blackcap and a Stock Dove.

ii. February 2014

Early in the month 2 Lesser Redpolls were reported in Great Abington. There were c50 Fieldfares in trees on the Old Coach Road and a Buzzard a few days later. In midmonth 30+ Fieldfares were counted in a hedgerow in the south of Great Abington as well as 150+ Woodpigeons near our southern boundary. Two Little Owls were believed to have been heard at the end of the month in South Road.

iii. March 2014

Early in the month, in a garden in Great Abington. There were Yellowhammers under feeders in Little Abington and nest boxes were being looked at by Blue Tits. On 4th a Little Egret was seen twice flying near the river in the village. On 11th a pair of Lapwings were displaying and a Buzzard flew out of a hedge on the old railway line. Reports of Bullfinches on 15th and 16th. Chiffchaffs heard in several places from 20th. Empty Blackbird eggs were found on 22nd and 23rd, and the next day two Skylarks on Bourn Bridge Road fields.

iv. April 2014

Blackcaps reported several times. On 6th a Pied Flycatcher in a garden in Little Abington presumably on its way West, Swallows seen from 9th onwards and House Martins from 17th. On 11th, Blackcap, Whitethroat and several Chiffchaffs on old railway line. On 15th, six Mallard ducklings near Millennium Bridge. Reports of young Blackbirds and House Sparrows being fed and Longtailed Tit carrying food. On 27th unusually a Rook on feeders.

v. May 2104

Frequent reports of Swallows and of House Martins, the latter nesting in the village centre. First report of Swifts over Scout campsite on 11th. On 16th a Cuckoo was heard towards Abington Park Farm. A Little Egret was seen above the football field on 13th and a few days before one was flying towards Abington Park Farm against buffeting winds. A Cuckoo spent several minutes calling in full view on a tree in Lewis Crescent on 21st and one was heard very early on 23rd. The old railway cutting produced a Turtle Dove, 6 Lesser Blackbacked Gulls, 3 Linnets, 2 Bullfinches and 2 Buzzards on 25th. A Spotted Flycatcher paid a short visit to Little Abington. 45 species were recorded during the Naturewatch survey over the last weekend of the month.

vi. June 2014

A pair of Turtle Doves was seen in old railway cutting on 5th. On 10th a Barn Owl was heard in the evening. 17 Swifts were seen circling Little Abington Church on the evening of 13th.

On 20th a Cuckoo was calling in vicinity of corner of Church Lane. During the Midsummer Walk to the Roman Road on 21st many Skylarks were seen. About this time reports began of a partially white Blackbird on the path from Church Lane to the Millennium Bridge. On 19th and 25th, a Kingfisher was seen in Sluice Wood and Recreation ground respectively. Bullfinches appeared in Great Abington and in the morning of 29th Corn Buntings and a Yellowhammer were seen on the Roman Road and on 31st 8 Goldfinches were seen on thistles on Bourn Bridge Road.

vii. July 2014

2 young Green Woodpeckers photographed on a lawn in Little Abington on 10th. On 22nd a Treecreeper was seen in Cambridge Road. The last report of Swifts around Little Abington Church was on 27th. At the end of the month, many young Blue, Coal and Great Tits and Wrens were being seen.

viii. August 2014

Regular reports of both Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers. Willow Warblers – either young or adults in moult, families of Tits, Blackbirds, Robins, Dunnocks and Blackcaps. On 5th a second brood of Swallows in Great Abington and on 15th Kingfisher flying upstream by football pitch. Reports of Tawny Owls. Latter half of month 6-10 Goldfinches seen regularly feeding off flower seeds in the verges of Bourn Bridge Road fields.

ix. September 2014

On 6th, 12 or more House Martins high above Little Abington and the next day a Goldcrest in a conifer. In South Road, 1 Little Owl and 4 Tawny Owls, all calling, on 9th and on 11th young Swallows in the nest and just flying (third brood?). On 30th, Buzzard were over the village around noon and early afternoon – soaring and calling. Female Grey Wagtail in edge of river alongside football pitch.

x. October 2014

On 5th, at least 5 Buzzards soaring above village; also a Chiffchaff on LSA. A single Redwing in Cambridge Road area on 14th. Towards the end of the month, reports of Tawny Owl in Lewis Crescent – and a Goldcrest. On 25th, two sightings of Herons in gardens. Several reports of Buzzards throughout the month.

xi. November 2014

Kingfisher on the Sluice Wood section of the river on 2nd. Mid-month a Great Spotted Woodpecker noted on nut feeder and a partly white Blackbird seen again near Scout Camp and again near month end. 10 Fieldfares on farmland in south of area. On 19th, 20+ Longtailed Tits and a flock of at least 50 to 60 Starlings in South Road area, also a recent sighting of a Little Egret in centre of village. Near month end, 5 or 6 Pied Wagtails in the village centre.

xii. December 2014

On 2nd a Little Egret was seen flying along river in centre of village. On 16th a Goldcrest and on 20th a Treecreeper seen in a Cambridge Road garden. On 29th a Grey Wagtail was feeding on the roof of a Cambridge Road house.

II. Granta Park bird boxes

Early in the year, several members took part in a bird-box building session at Granta Park – see photos in the 2013 Record. 30 boxes, mostly for smaller birds, were split between the three woodland walks. The landscapers have recently cleared out these bird boxes ready for the new season. They found that 17 of the 30 boxes had a nest, including one with nuts and two with eggs. All are in good condition, ready for 2015.

III. RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch 25-26 January 2014 – Abington records

Eleven records were received and a total of 28 species recorded. In descending order, they were:

11 records

Woodpigeon

10 records

Blue Tit

Blackbird

9 records

Robin

Great Tit

Dunnock

8 records

Long-tailed Tit

Collared Dove

Chaffinch

6 records

Jackdaw

Goldfinch

5 records

Magpie

Greenfinch

Coal Tit

4 records

Starling

Jay

House Sparrow

3 records

Wren

Carrion Crow

2 records

Great Spotted Woodpecker

1 record

Stock Dove

Sparrowhawk

Song Thrush

Rook

Pied wagtail

Green Woodpecker

Fieldfare

Blackcap



28: Robin – Lewis Crescent – 19 Jan (AM)



29: Long-tailed Tit – Lewis Cresc – 5 April (AM)



30: Blackbird – Lewis Crescent – 19 Jan (AM)



31: Green Woodpeckers – Camb. Rd – 10 July (RW)

IV. Abington Naturewatch Bird records: 23, 24, 25 and 26 May 2014

Bird Species recorded:

Blackbird	Jackdaw
Blackcap	Jay
Blue Tit	Kestrel
Bullfinch	Linnet
Buzzard	Longtailed Tit
Canada Goose	Magpie
Carrion Crow	Mallard
Chaffinch	Mistle Thrush
Chiffchaff	Moorhen
Coal Tit	Pheasant
Collared Dove	Pied Wagtail
Coot	Robin
Corn Bunting	Rook
Duncock	Skylark
Goldfinch	Song Thrush
Great Crested Grebe	Starling
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Stock Dove
Great Tit	Swallow
Greenfinch	Swift
Green Woodpecker	Turtle Dove
Grey Heron	Woodpigeon
House Martin	Wren
House Sparrow	

45 species recorded in all. 7 reports received.

Absentees this year (compared with 2013) were Little Grebe, Garden Warbler, Wheatear, Whitethroat and Yellowhammer but additions were Bullfinch, Grey Heron and Linnet.

V. Outings

Please note that Reports of Outings can be found in Chapter 8.

Derek Turnidge



32: Long-tailed Tit – 5 April (AM)

4. REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Eight correspondents in the Abingtons provided a steady flow of sightings between March and October of grass snakes, newts, frogs and toads. The earliest sighting of a grass snake was mid-March, but no reports of snakes *in ponds* till May when tadpole prey were at their peak. The last grass snake report of the ‘season’ was mid-September. The year was generally quiet, with no reports of unusual sightings such as slow worms, common lizards, or newly hatched grass snakes.

Our pond on the old Land Settlement, like some others in the Abingtons, had no frogspawn or toadspawn this year, but we still saw lots of young and adult frogs, and toads were seen around the garden later in the year, presumably offspring from nearby ponds. On account of the lack of tadpoles in the pond, we also saw no grass snakes.

<i>Date</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Where</i>	<i>Comments</i>
3 March	Toad	Near Gt Abington Church	‘Rescued’ whilst crossing track to Great Abington Church in evening (Andy Merryweather)
8 March	Frog	Lewis Crescent, GA	Disturbed while gardening (Andy Merryweather)
12 March	Toad	Near Gt Abington Church	Crossing track to Great Abington Church in evening (Andy Merryweather)
14 March	Common newt	41 South Rd, LSA	Single adult in pond
15 March	Common frog	41 South Rd, LSA	2 seen mating in pond (large female, small male)
15 March	Grass snake	Path from High Street to Chalky Road	c. 30 cm long (reported by Pamela Parris)
15 March	Toad	On track near Gt Abington Church	Squashed toad on roadway (reported by George Woodley)
15 March	2 frogs	Lewis Crescent, GA	Under garden plants (Andy Merryweather)
16 March	Frogs and frog spawn	Hannah’s pond	First frog spawn of year (Carolyn Hannah)
1 April	Frog spawn	23 Cambridge Road	Spawn hatching in pond (Turnidges)
1 April	Common newt	23 Cambridge Road	Active in pond
1 April	Common newt	41 South Rd, LSA	2 active in pond
3 April	Frog tadpoles	Hannah’s pond	Tadpoles about to leave their jelly but likely to be preyed on by large population of newts and goldfish (Carolyn Hannah)
Throughout April	Common newts	41 South Rd, LSA and 23 Cambridge Road	At least 15 in pond on LSA; 2 seen in Cambridge Rd pond
10 April	Grass snake	Audrey Bugg’s pond	Swimming in pond
18 May	Grass snake	23 Cambridge Road	First to be seen in Turnidges’ pond this year. About 60 cm long but very slim
18 May	Frog tadpoles	23 Cambridge Road	Lots of tadpoles
Throughout May	Common newts	41 South Rd, LSA and 23 Cambridge	Seen all the time in both ponds

<i>Date</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Where</i>	<i>Comments</i>
		Road	
19 May	Grass snake	19 Meadow Walk, McCrae's pond	One snake, c. 70 cm long but very slender. Possibly feeding on small goldfish.
10 June	2 grass snakes	23 Cambridge Road	Both thin but long (60 cm). One tried to swallow a tadpole but failed.
20 June	Toad	19 Meadow Walk McCrae garden	First toad seen in garden for many years
27 July	Frog Grass snake	23 Cambridge Road	Small frog in greenhouse Grass snake on edge of pond
6 Sept.	Frog Toad	41 South Rd	Small frog and small toad in long grass, escaping from the mower
10 Sept.	Grass snake Common newts	23 Cambridge Road	Plump grass snake near pond edge
14 Sept.	Grass snake	23 Cambridge Road	Very thin, small grass snake on lawn near pond (see below)
Late Sept. and Oct.	Frogs and toads	41 South Rd	Small frogs and toads found in damp vegetation around the garden – one or two at a time.

Anne Dunbar-Nobes



33: Grass Snake – Cambridge Road – 14 Sept. (DT)

5. MAMMALS

There have been 54 mammal reports in 2014, this being a small decrease on the previous year. More hedgehogs were reported, which may mean that people were more aware of them and keener to report them, rather than that there was an increase in numbers.

Foxes were again regularly reported and are apparently thriving in the area.

Fewer muntjac deer have been reported.

More bats were reported this year which may mean that they have managed to increase their numbers after the previous bad year.

No evidence of otters was reported this year.

Species*	Location*	Date*	Abundance	Comments
Hedgehog	Garden, Cambridge Road	09/01/2014	1	Small, hungry-ate mealworms
Fox	Side of old A11	12/01/2014	1	Dead by side of road
Stoat	Abington Park Farm	15/02/2014	1	
Hares	SE of Chalky Road	15/02/2014	2	
Fallow deer	SE of Chalky Road	15/02/2014	12	Females, sitting in dip out of wind
Field mouse	Garden, High St.	06/03/2014	1	
Bat	South Rd	16/03/2014	1	Feeding on insects round light
Fox	Corner of N and S Rd	17/02/2014	1	Poor condition
Hedgehog	Garden, Cambridge Road	23/03/2014	1>	Droppings on lawn
Hedgehog	BB Rd	March	1>	Droppings on lawn
Hedgehog	Garden, Meadow Walk	29/03/2014		Droppings on lawn
Field mouse	Garden	March	1	Appears on bird table
Badger	Rd between Babraham & Worsted Lodge	30/03/2014		Dead, squashed
Bat	Garden, Cambridge Road	31/03/2014	1	Spotted 8pm
Hedgehog	BB Rd	02/04/2014	1>	Droppings on lawn
Vole	Garden, Cambridge Road	04/04/2014	1	In and out of pond
Grey squirrels	Garden, Cambridge Road	13/04/2014	1>	
Hedgehog	Garden, Cambridge Road	13/04/2014	1	Droppings on lawn
Short-tailed vole	Garden, Cambridge Road	13/04/2014	1	
Fallow deer	Field between Hildersham wood & E of Chalky Rd	10/04/2014	14	
Hares	Train lines behind Penn Farm	10/04/2014	2	
Hedgehog	Garden, Cambridge Road	15/04/2014	1	Droppings on lawn
Short-tailed vole	Garden, High St	20/04/2014	1	
Woodmouse	Garden, High St	20/04/2014	2	
Molehills	Garden, High St	20/04/2014		
Hedgehog	Garden, High St.	29/04/2014	1	Young-yearling?
Rabbits & moles	Gt Abington Churchyard	All May		
Dead fox	High St/Granta Park path	12/05/2014	1	
Dog fox	Garden, High St.	1-14 May	1	
Hares	Granta Park	13/05/2014		
Fox	North Rd	18/05/2014	1	Evening-6pm
Hedgehog	Crossing BB Rd by 30mph sign	29/05/2014	1	
Bats	Garden, Cambridge Road	All May		Serotines
Muntjac	Field behind Cambridge Rd	16/06/2014	1	
Hedgehog	North Rd	25/07/2014	1	Evening-6pm
Family of foxes	By old Railway line by North Rd	July		

Bank vole	Garden, Cambridge Road	22/07/2014	1	Brought in by cat
Hedgehog	Garden, Cambridge Road	June & July	1	
Hedgehog	Garden, Cambridge Road	18/07/2014	1	Dead in pond
Weasel	Garden, Lewis Crescent	16/08/2014	1	Running along oak tree branches
Hares	Granta Park	17/08/2014	1	
Common shrew	Roman Rd near Hildersham	18/08/2014	1	Running alongside path
Common shrew	Abington Park Farm	18/08/2014	1	In recently harvested field
Common shrew	Linton Rd	30/08/2014	1	Dead by side of road
Hedgehog	BBR garden	02/09/2014	1	Asleep in greenhouse
Male fox	Millennium bridge	09/09/2014	1	Walking across bridge
Bats	Lt. Abington church	12/09/2014	lots	Pipistrels & natterers
Bats	Land settlement	09/09/2014	<5	species unknown
Muntjac	Garden, Cambridge Road	29/09/2014	1	
Hedgehogs, bats	Garden, Cambridge Road	29/09/2014		
Common shrew	BBR garden	30/09/2014	1	dead in garden
Muntjac	Cooke's meadow	02/10/2014	1	
Hedgehog	Church Lane	15/10/2014	1	dead in middle of road
Fox	Field by Abington Hall	17/12/2014	1	2.15 in afternoon

Gill Smith



34: Squirrel eating apple – High St – 12 Jan (JAH)



35: Wood mouse on feeder – High St – 13 Sept. (JAH)



36: Southern Hawker dragonfly ♀ – High St – 11 Aug (JH)



37: Common Darter dragonfly – High St – 8 Sep (JAH)



38: Common Darter dragonfly – Camb Rd – 27 Jul (DT)



39: Common Blue butterfly – Lewis Cresc – 22 Jun (AM)



40: Bumble Bee – Church Lane – 9 March (PB)



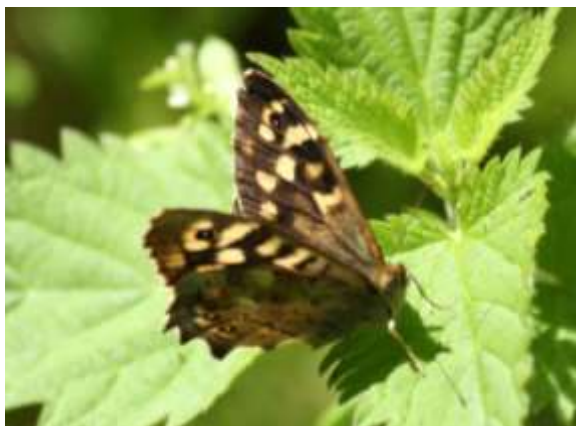
41: Grasshopper – Cricket Meadow – 12 Aug (PB)



42: Small Tortoiseshell – Roman Road – 12 Aug (JAH)



43: Small Tortoiseshell – Church Lane – 2 Sep (PB)



44: Speckled Wood – Granta Park – 25 May (AM)



45: Speckled Wood – Granta Park – 25 May (AM)



46: Elephant Hawk Moth – Lewis Cresc – 21 Jun (AM)



47: Hummingbird Hawk Moth - Lewis Cresc - 17 Jun (AM)



48: Hibernating Peacock butterflies - N Rd - 13 Sep (AD-N)



49: Large Skipper – Lewis Cresc – 22 Jun (AM)



50: Red Admiral – High Street – 31 Aug (JAH)



51: Brimstone – High Street – 31 Aug (JAH)

6. INSECTS

This report covers butterflies, moths, bees, dragonflies and damselflies, ladybirds. These are the groups that members recognize and can usually identify.

Other invertebrates, which are hardly ever reported or identified, are also mentioned at the end.

I would welcome more reporters on insects, particularly butterflies, bees, dragonflies and damselflies and ladybirds. These are generally the easiest to identify. I can help with identification charts if necessary. I would particularly like reports from different parts of the village and different habitats.

I. Weather

The weather is the most important factor that affects changes in our insect populations and observations from one year to the next.

2014 had higher than average rainfall but no real extremes. Early warm and dry spring and long autumn but August was very wet.

	<i>Rainfall in mm</i>	
January	84	Wet, mild and stormy. Rainfall much higher than normal, there have only been 5 wetter Januaries on record. Average temperature higher than normal.
February	61	Mild and lot of rain, gales mid-month, very warm on 24 th
March	17	Warm and very dry, early spring, temperature high on 20 th
April	14	Also very dry and warm
May	72	Fine sunny month, hot mid-month, lot of rain at end
June	47	Lovely warm sunny month with average rainfall
July	51	Prolonged sunny spells, hot mid-month, rain average but 21mm on 10 th
August	92	Very wet month, two big storms on 8 th and 25 th , cooler than average
September	18	Very dry and mild, no very cold nights
October	60	Very mild and warm, only one light frost. Rainfall average but very heavy on 12 th
November	63	Very warm for this month, average temperature 3deg above normal. Wetter than average, leaves still on trees, only 3 moderate air frosts
December	40	Dry than average but many dull overcast days. Temperature higher than average.
Total	619	<i>Rainfall records from Cambridge University Botanic Garden</i>

II. Butterflies

The records of butterflies observed are given in the table. This year there were reports of only 20 of the 34 species resident in the county.

2014	Butterflies ranked by number of sightings (top 10):
1	Brimstone
2	Small tortoiseshell
3	Small white
4	Peacock
5	Orange tip
6	Large White
7	Red Admiral
8	Comma
9	Meadow brown
10	Speckled wood

Butterflies only sighted once in Abington in 2014: Marbled white and Dark green fritillary

The table overleaf shows those butterflies seen in Abington in 2014 by month (20 species)

<i>Butterfly name</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Notes from Butterflies of Cambs</i>
Reported in 2014											20 species in 2014
Small skipper					✓✓	✓✓					<i>Widespread & common</i>
Large white				✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓			<i>Widespread & common</i>
Small white		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓			<i>Widespread & common</i>
Green veined white			✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓			<i>Widespread & common</i>
Brimstone	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		<i>Widespread & common</i>
Orange tip			✓✓	✓✓	✓✓						<i>Widespread & common</i>
Small copper				✓		✓					<i>Widely distributed – but not abundant</i>
Common blue					✓	✓✓					<i>Widespread & fairly common</i>
Holly blue			✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓				<i>Widespread & common</i>
Red Admiral		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	<i>Widespread & common</i>
Small tortoiseshell		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓		<i>Widespread & common</i>
Peacock		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	<i>Widespread & common</i>
Comma	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓			<i>Widespread & common</i>
Speckled wood			✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓			<i>Widespread & fairly common</i>
Gatekeeper						✓✓	✓✓				<i>Widespread & common</i>
Meadow brown					✓✓	✓✓					<i>Widespread & common</i>
Ringlet					✓✓	✓✓					<i>Widespread & common</i>
Small heath					✓	✓✓					<i>Widespread but localised</i>
Marbled white						✓					<i>Uncommon</i>
Dark Green fritillary							✓				<i>Uncommon</i>
Not seen in 2014											
Clouded yellow											<i>Regular migrant</i>
Essex skipper											<i>Widespread & common</i>
Large skipper											<i>Widespread & common</i>
Dingy skipper											<i>Localised and rare</i>
Grizzled skipper											<i>Localised and scarce</i>
Green hairstreak											<i>Uncommon</i>
White-letter hairstreak											<i>Widely distributed – rarely seen</i>
Purple hairstreak											<i>Widespread & common – rarely seen</i>
Black hairstreak											<i>Vulnerable</i>
Brown argus											<i>Widespread but local</i>
Chalkhill blue											<i>Rare</i>
Small blue											<i>Extremely scarce</i>
Painted lady											<i>Common migrant</i>
White admiral											<i>Rare</i>
Wall											<i>Previously common, now rarely seen</i>

The reports started earlier than usual due to mild weather and an early spring; lots of reports by different recorder of Brimstones (normally the first to be seen) in February and these continued to be reported all through the spring and summer until October. Orange tips reported from the beginning of April, through May with the last one at the start of June; not a good year for these. The Whites appeared in March and April and continued in good numbers until September. July was an exceptionally good month for butterflies but August rather poor. Red Admirals and Small Tortoiseshells appeared through to the end of October and both species had a good year. A couple of Peacocks and Red Admirals were seen until mid-November.

The first Brimstones were reported by nine different villagers February 24th which, as the weather records show, was very warm; probably the warm weather brought people out and the first butterflies too!

Highlights of the butterflies

Undoubtedly the highlights were the large numbers of Brimstones and Small Tortoiseshells compared with the last few years. There was one sighting each of a Marbled White and a Dark Green Fritillary.

On the downside there were no reports of Hairstreaks, nor the Clouded Yellows which were reported in 2013.

III. Bees

2014 was a reasonable year for most bees, except for honey bees for which there were very few reports.

Bees reported included bumblebees (buff tailed, white tailed, red tailed, tree), mining bees, common carder bees.

IV. Dragonflies and Damselflies - a better year than 2013

i. From May to July:

Damselflies: Common blue damselfly, Azure Damselfly, Large red damselfly, Small red damselfly, Banded demoiselle.

This year there were many more banded demoiselles reported at their usual haunt on the river by the Millennium footbridge.

ii. From July to September mainly:

Dragonflies: Common hawker, Brown hawker, Southern hawker, Common darter, Ruddy darter, Emperor, Broad bodied chaser

V. Ladybirds

Ladybirds were very few this year. This is reported in the National press as being due to the lack of greenfly for them to feed on.

The few reports submitted were mainly of harlequin ladybirds, mostly from late August through to October.

VI. Other insects

Only one of the curious bee-flies was reported but many more reports of the hummingbird hawk moth in villagers' gardens.

VII. Moths

We organised a moth night on the night of 15/16 August (thanks to Audrey Bugg for allowing us to have this in her garden). We were fortunate to have a moth expert, John Dawson from Fulbourn who is the moth recorder for Cambridgeshire, to come and help with the identification; he was extremely knowledgeable, helpful and patient with our questions. Fourteen members came to see the moths in the trap early in the morning on Saturday 16th.

We very much hope that John will be able to help us again in 2015.

We took lots of photographs – see opposite page for a selection – and John Dawson helped us these identifications. All those shown are Noctuidae unless noted.

Macro moths	Family
Flounced Rustic	Noctuidae
Setaceous Hebrew Character	Noctuidae
Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	Noctuidae
Straw Dot	Noctuidae
Copper Underwing	Noctuidae
Large Yellow Underwing	Noctuidae
Spectacle	Noctuidae
Cabbage Moth	Noctuidae
Square-spotted Clay	Noctuidae
Flame Shoulder	Noctuidae
Straw Underwing	Noctuidae
Square-spotted Clay	Noctuidae
Small Square-spot	Noctuidae
Vine's Rustic	Noctuidae
Shuttle-shaped Dart	Noctuidae
White-point	Noctuidae
Willow Beauty	Geometridae
Micro moths	
Mother of Pearl	Pyalidae
Common Plume	Pterophoridae
Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix	Tortricidae



52: Spectacle



53: Cabbage Moth

VIII. Outings

We had two outings with insects as the main interest:

1. Fen Drayton lakes in July to see dragonflies and damselflies;
2. Fleam Dyke in July to see butterflies

Details of outings are in section 8.

Jennifer Hirsh

Moth Trapping – Audrey Bugg’s Garden, High Street – 16/17 August 2014



54: Willow Beauty (Geometridae)



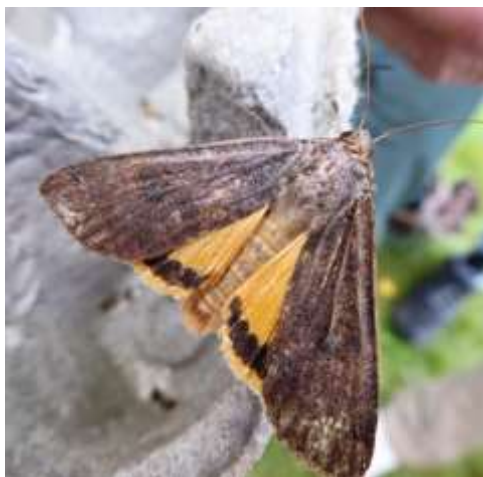
55: Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing



56: Setaceous Hebrew Character



57: Small Square-spot



58: Large Yellow Underwing



59: Copper Underwing



60: Flounced Rustic



61: Straw Dot

7. FLORA

We had only one specific flora walk in 2014, though we also observed them on several of our outings – please see chapter 0.

I. Old railway line, Great Abington – Thursday evening 17th July – Flora

Only one, new, member turned up for this walk but this was useful for one to one tuition on a lot of our chalk loving flora.

The path was very overgrown and walking was not easy. A lot of the usual flowering plants were not visible.

However the highlight was the very large number of Yellow Worts (see photo) in flower in the dry arid field on the north side of the old railway line and between the railway cutting and Pampisford Road. This field has not been used or cultivated for many years and is therefore interesting for its flora.



62: Yellow Wort – 17 July (JAH)

II. Plans for 2015

1. We intend to study again the Protected Road verges along Bourn Bridge Road now that they are recovering from the disturbance caused by the change of use of the fields.
2. We also hope to have a walk along the Roman Road again to see in particular the flowers that have benefited from the clearances and the butterflies that are now beginning to thrive there with more of their food plants.

Jennifer Hirsh



63: Violets – Cooke's Meadow – 8 March (JAH)



64: Celandine – Sluice Wood – 8 March (JAH)



65: Violets – Cooke's Meadow – 8 March (JAH)



66: Cowslips – Roman Road – 13 April (PB)

8. VISITS OUT OF THE ABINGTONS

Jennifer organised six outings (one in the village) to see flora, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies – birds were also seen on some of these outings.

I. Hayley Wood – Thursday morning 27th March – Flora, mammals and birds

Twelve members of the group went on this visit. This is an ancient wood now owned by the County Wildlife Trust and is once again being actively coppiced. We went particularly to see the abundant population of rare oxlips, related to cowslips, which grow there on the damp clay soil.



67: Wood Anemones – Hayley Wood – 27 March (JAH)



68: Oxlips – Hayley Wood – 27 March (DF)

II. The Beech Wood – Friday evening 9th May – Flora and birds

Fourteen members of the group had a glorious evening in this wood at the bottom of the Gog Magog hills near Wandlebury. We went particularly to see the rare white helleborines which only occur in beech woods; this was a very good spring for these small flowering plants which are related to orchids. It was a beautiful sunny May evening and the birds in the wood were singing well.



69: Bugle – Beech Wood – 5 May (JAH)



70: Helleborines – Beech Wood – 9 May (JAH)



71: Beech Wood Outing – 9 May (DF)



72: Helleborine – Beech Wood – 9 May (DF)

III. Wicken Fen – Wednesday evening 18th June – Birds, flora and butterflies

Fifteen members enjoyed this visit on a gloriously sunny midsummer's evening. We saw 23 species of birds including a marsh harrier (and we heard cuckoos), a few butterflies, lots of fenland flowers. No dragonflies though as it was a bit late in the day. The evening ended with a very sociable supper in the Wicken pub.

Derek recorded these birds (23 Species in all) during the visit:

Chaffinch
 Cuckoo (Heard and possibly seen)
 Blackbird
 Blue Tit
 Chiffchaff (Heard only)
 Great Spotted Woodpecker
 Great Tit
 Green Woodpecker (Heard only)
 House Martin
 House Sparrow
 Jay
 Kestrel
 Magpie
 Marsh Harrier
 Moorhen
 Pheasant
 Reed Bunting
 Reed Warbler
 Sedge Warbler
 Starling
 Swallow
 Swift
 Woodpigeon



73: Wicken Fen walk – 18 June (BB)



74: Partial Albino Pheasant – Wicken Fen (BB)

IV. Fen Drayton Lakes – Saturday morning 5th July – Damselflies, dragonflies and birds

Only six members went on this visit to Fen Drayton Lakes travelling on the guided bus. The day started rather cloudy but soon brightened up. We had a volunteer guide, an expert on dragonflies and damselflies and also birds, who spent two hours taking us around some of the very large site. The highlights were the very large numbers (hundreds) of common blue damselflies, like little jewels on the nettles; also blue-tailed damselflies and the much rarer red-eyed damselflies.



75: Fen Drayton Lakes Outing – 5 July (PB)



76: Blue-tailed Damselfly – Fen Drayton Lakes (PB)



77: Common blue damselfly – Fen Drayton (JAH)



78: Red-eyed damselfly – Fen Drayton (PB)



79: Cinnabar Caterpillar – Fen Drayton (JAH)



80: Mullein – Fen Drayton (JAH)

We saw in total 28 species of birds:

Tufted Duck	Chiff Chaff	Lapwing
Pochard	Common Tern	Greenfinch
Dabchick	Reed Warbler	Black Headed Gull
Mallard	Red Kite	Heron
Great Crested Grebe	Wren	Egyptian Goose
Coot	Sedge Warbler	Greylag Goose
Cormorant	Blackcap	Whitethroat
Gadwall	Starling	Little Egret
Moorhen	Green Woodpecker	
Mute Swan	Reed Bunting	

V. Fleam Dyke – Wednesday morning 30th July – Butterflies and flora

Eleven members enjoyed this outing to Fleam Dyke; it turned out to be a beautiful summer morning. The sunshine brought out the butterflies, in particular the Chalkhill blues in large numbers for which this site is well known. We saw other species of butterflies too including one Marbled white which is fairly uncommon here. The flowers were not as good this year as at the same time last year, probably due to the weather conditions which had encouraged them to flower two or three weeks earlier.



81: Chalkhill Blues (mating) – Fleam Dyke (JAH)



82: Chalkhill Blue – Fleam Dyke (DT)

The outing to the Old Railway Line in Abington is described in Flora, Chapter 7.

Jennifer Hirsh

9. WORKING WITH CPERC

We continue to contribute our records to CPERC (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre). We have been focusing on those native species which are in decline and also the undesirable non-native species, that is:

Native species in decline: Otter, Water Vole, Bats, Brown Hare, Adder, Grass Snake, Common Lizard, Slow Worm, Great Crested Newt, Common Toad, Common Frog, Scarce Chaser Dragonfly, Wall Brown butterfly, Kingfisher, Barn owl

Invasive non-native species: Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Floating Pennywort, Parrot's Feather, Giant Hogweed, Creeping Water Primrose, New Zealand Pigmyweed, Muntjac deer, American Mink, Chinese Water Deer



83: Himalayan Balsam – Millennium bridge – Sep (PB)

More details and pictures were published in the Abington Naturewatch Record for 2012.

We reported these sightings in Abington in 2014 (number of sightings in brackets):

I. Native (declining) species

Mammals	-
Amphibians	-
Birds	Kingfisher (8)
Invertebrates	-

II. Non-native invasive species

Plants	-
Mammals	Muntjac deer (3)

Reports to CPERC need the species name, date and place (6 digit grid reference). For more information, please refer to the CPERC website www.cperc.org.uk; you may also submit records online on the website.

Jennifer Hirsh



84: Daffodils – Granta Park – 16 March (GW)



85: Toad's sad end – Granta Park – 16 March (GW)



86: Spindle (?) Ermine Moth Caterpillars – Granta Park path – 12 April (GW)

10. GRANTA PARK – WILDLIFE SUMMARY 2014

I. Introduction

Over the last few years more effort has been concentrated towards the wildlife on Granta Park. Staff from across the Park have joined in and benefited from events held by The Wildlife Trust as well as more informal arrangements.

Formal events were held in June and October. In June, over 20 staff from across the Park joined us for our first Bat Safari on Granta Park, led by Iain Webb from The Wildlife Trust.

The following week we held a Late Spring Birds - Walk & Talk, when staff on the Park were once again treated to Iain's expertise walking through the woodlands listening to and watching the birds.

In October, a break from the rain led to a very pleasant fungi foray. Although we didn't find as much as we have in previous years, due to the dry summer, we did find some lovely samples through Lagden's Grove woods. Peter, from The Wildlife Trust, who led the foray, took the samples home to identify them.

During 2014 staff have also been encouraged to report what they are seeing on their lunchtime walks and this in turn was filtered back to Abington Naturewatch via several volunteers we have in place.

The following sections summarise the sightings in the various categories.

II. Butterflies

i. Species List 2014

2014

Small Skipper
Large Skipper
Brown Argus
Common Blue
Brimstone
Small White
Large White
Green Veined White
Clouded Yellow
Small Tortoiseshell
Red Admiral
Peacock
Comma
Gatekeeper
Small Heath
Speckled Wood
Meadow Brown
Ringlet

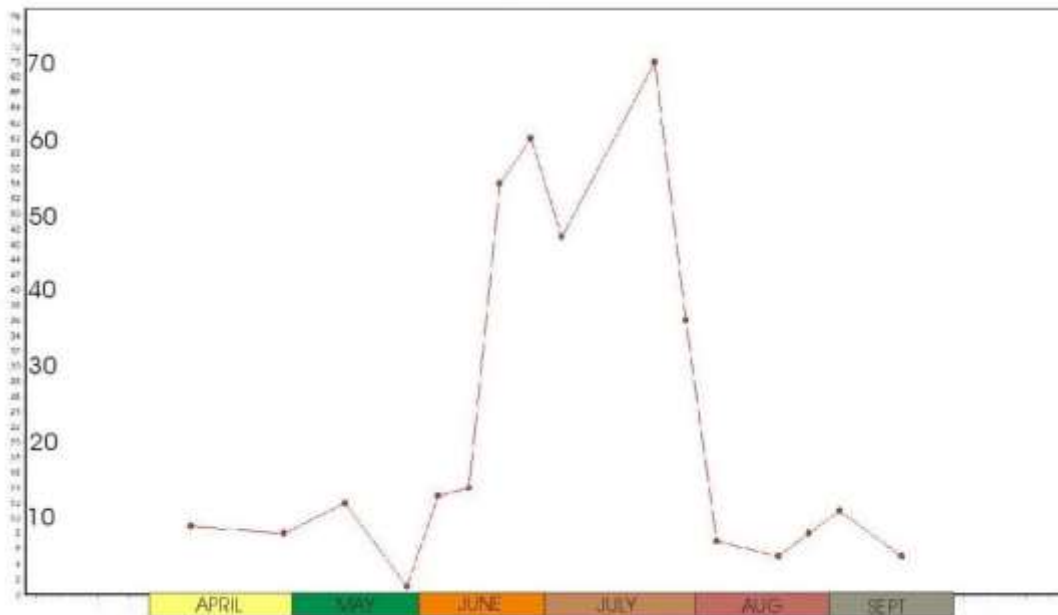
Hummingbird Hawk Moth
Six Spot Burnet
Cinnabar

Previous Years (last sighting)

Essex Skipper (2009)
Small Copper (2012)
Holly Blue (2012)
White-letter Hairstreak (2013)
Painted Lady (2009)
Camberwell Beauty (1995)

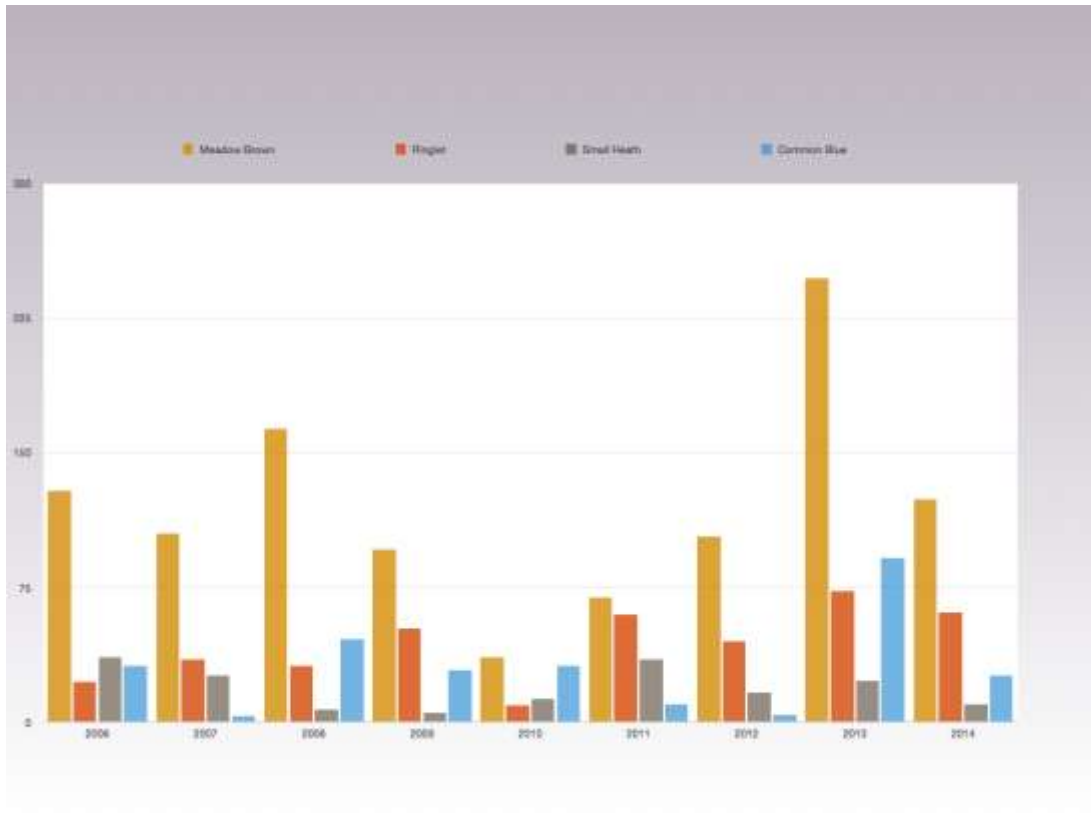
ii. Abundance 2014

Chart shows the weekly 'counts' of all species for the 'Granta Park' butterfly transect during 2014:



iii. Yearly Trend

Overall, butterfly numbers on Granta Park are dominated by the Meadow Brown. This chart shows how the abundance of 4 species has varied over the period when the transect recordings have been made.



Mike Gittos 8 Jan 2015

iv. Wildflowers

Aconite, winter
 Agrimony
 Avens, wood
 Basil, wild
 Bedstraw, ladies
 Bedstraw, hedge
 Bellflower, nettle-leaved
 Betony
 Bindweed, black
 Bindweed, field
 Bindweed, hedge
 Bird's-foot trefoil, common
 Bittersweet
 Brooklime
 Bryony, white
 Bugloss
 Bugloss, viper's
 Burdock, lesser
 Buttercup, creeping
 Campion, pink
 Campion, white
 Carrot, wild
 Celandine, lesser
 Centaury, common
 Cleavers
 Clover red
 Clover, white
 Comfrey, common
 Cowslip
 Crane's-bill, meadow
 Cudweed, common
 Daisy
 Daisy, ox-eye
 Dandelion, common
 Dead nettle, red
 Dead nettle, white
 Dead-nettle, henbit
 Dock, wood
 Dock, curled
 Dropwort
 Evening primrose, common
 Fat-hen
 Figwort, water
 Fleabane, blue
 Fleabane, Canadian
 Flowering-rush
 Fluellen, sharp-leaved

Forget-me-not, wood
 Foxglove
 Fumitory, common
 Ground ivy
 Groundsel
 Groundsel, sticky
 Hairy bittercress
 Hawk's beard, smooth?
 Hawkbit, lesser
 Hemlock
 Herb-Robert
 Horehound, black
 Iris, yellow
 Knapweed, common
 Knapweed, greater
 Knotgrass
 Lady's-mantle
 Larkspur
 Lettuce, prickly
 Loosestrife, purple
 Loosestrife, yellow
 Lords-and-ladies
 Lychnis coronaria
 Madder, field
 Mallow, common
 Mallow, dwarf
 Mallow, musk
 Marjoram, wild
 Marsh marigold
 Mayweed, pineapple
 Mayweed, scentless
 Medick, black
 Medick, spotted
 Mignonette, wild
 Mouse-ear, common
 Mugwort
 Mullein, dark
 Mullein, great
 Mustard, garlic
 Mustard, hedge
 Nettle, common
 Nightshade, black
 Orchid, bee
 Orchid, pyramidal
 Oxtongue, bristly
 Oxtongue, hawkweed
 Pansy, field

Parsley, upright hedge
 Pimpernel, scarlet
 Plantain, hoary
 Plantain, ribwort
 Poppy, common
 Poppy, opium
 Ragged-robin
 Ragwort, common
 Ragwort, hoary
 Sainfoin
 Scabious, field
 Scabious, small
 Sedum acre
 Selfheal
 Snowdrop
 Sow-thistle, prickly
 Sow-thistle, smooth
 Sow-thistle, perennial
 Speedwell, common field
 Speedwell, germander
 Speedwell, slender
 Speedwell, thyme-leaved
 Spurge, petty
 Spurge, sun
 St John's wort, perforated
 Stachys byzantina
 Stork's bill, common
 Teasel, small
 Teasel, wild
 Thistle, creeping
 Thistle, spear
 Thistle, weltd
 Thorn apple
 Tormentil
 Vervain
 Vetch, common
 Vetch, kidney
 Vetch, tufted
 Violet, sweet
 Weld
 Willowherb, broad-leaved
 Willowherb, great
 Willowherb, hoary
 Woundwort, hedge
 Yarrow

Sheila Stevens

III. Birds

i. Granta Park Bird Summary

A total of 74 different bird species were recorded for 2014, highlights of which are summarised below, followed by a table indicating the number of occasions each species was reported, by month.

January 2014: The year started with regular reports of mixed flocks of Finches and Tits in the woods, as well as Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker and Jay. Treecreeper, Goldcrest and Coal Tit were occasionally seen, as well as Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and Buzzard. Redwing, Fieldfare (50-100) and Mistle Thrush were reported, and flocks of Linnet (30-40) and Meadow Pipit were to be found on open ground, with a Red-legged Partridge on one occasion. Reed Bunting were spotted around the lake, and a Cormorant spent a few days alongside the Mallard and Canada Geese on the lake. The small flocks of Black-headed Gull were joined by an occasional Common Gull, and a Grey Wagtail was reported on the cricket green. A Tawny Owl was heard in the evening on 18th.

February 2014: A pair of Great Crested Grebe returned to the lake mid-month, with a courtship head-shaking display observed on 19th. Up to 24 Canada Geese were seen, along with up to 50 Reed Bunting, and a single report of a Coot. Redwing and Fieldfare (up to 100), and mixed flocks of Tit continued to be seen, with Greenfinch and Goldfinch (up to 40) also reported. Skylark were first heard singing on 17th, with many other species such as Robin, Dunnock, Great Tit and Mistle Thrush, also becoming much more vocal. Occasional reports of Treecreeper, Goldcrest, Pheasant and Stock Dove, as well as Grey Heron and a pair of Buzzard around the river.

March 2014: Small numbers of Fieldfare were last reported on 6th and Redwing on 25th, with Goldcrest and Coal Tit only being reported early in the month. A Little Egret was seen flying along the river on 4th, with the first Chiffchaff being heard on 19th. A pair of Reed Bunting was regularly seen in the reeds around the lake, and the Great Crested Grebe continued their courtship displays. Mallard and Canada Geese numbers dropped, and a Greylag Goose was reported on 31st. Three Buzzard were spotted together on several occasions, with Grey Wagtail, Red-legged Partridge, Stock Dove and Sparrowhawk also reported. A Blue Tit was reported investigating the new nest boxes.

April 2014: Blackcap (first seen on 1st) and Chiffchaff were both reported regularly throughout the month. The first Swallow report come on 14th, seen over the cricket green, and several were seen regularly thereafter. A Wheatear was spotted feeding on open ground around the car park, and a Lesser Whitethroat was heard singing on 24th. Green Woodpecker, Grey Heron, Jay and Linnet were seen regularly, with occasional sightings of Treecreeper, Bullfinch, Pheasant and Goldcrest.

May 2014: First of many reports of House Martin (8) and Swift (6) was on 11th, with 1-2 Swallow also seen regularly. Regular reports of Skylark, Blackcap and Chiffchaff heard singing, with a pair of Garden Warbler seen around 22nd. An Oystercatcher was seen briefly on the cricket green on 8th and pair of Mandarin Duck was spotted on the river on 11th. Up to 12 Canada Geese returned to the lake, and a female Mallard with 6 ducklings was spotted on 21st. A pair of Bullfinch was reported.

June 2014: The regular reports of summer visitors continued, with a Whitethroat seen on 23rd and a Yellow Wagtail spotted on the cricket green on



Kingfisher - Hayley Smith

87: Kingfisher – Granta Park – June (HS)

24th. Up to 12 House Martin were seen feeding over the woods, with smaller numbers of Swift and Swallow seen. There were two sightings of a Kingfisher, both at the sluice, on 16th and 30th. On the lake, a Coot was reported, and both Canada Geese and Moorhen were seen with young, but only a single Great Crested Grebe was seen. Seven Barnacle Geese appeared towards the end of the month. A Treecreeper was seen with 3 young, and a Green Woodpecker with one juvenile. Several reports of Mistle Thrush singing from the treetops, and Buzzards were heard meowing overhead. Granta Park 'Lunchtime Walk and Talk', led by Ian Webb, recorded 26 bird species.

July 2014: The Barnacle geese left early on, leaving a flock of around 10 adult Canada geese and 12 goslings. A Cormorant, a Treecreeper and a Goldcrest were reported, with a Yellow Wagtail being seen again on the cricket green. There were several reports of a Spotted Flycatcher family seen in the woodland near the park entrance. A second Great Crested Grebe reappeared on 2nd, and the pair was seen mating on their nest in the reeds. Adult Robin, Green Woodpecker and Swallow were all seen with young birds. A single Red Kite was spotted flying over.



88: Spotted Flycatcher – Granta Park – July

August 2014: A Kingfisher was again spotted by the sluice on 15th, and 3 Common Sandpiper were seen flitting along the edge of the lake on 28th. The Spotted Flycatcher continued to be seen regularly until 19th. Records of Blackcap and Chiffchaff dropped off markedly, as did sightings of Swallow (last reported on 19th) and Swift (last seen on 11th), although up to 10 House Martin were observed regularly over the lake throughout the month. The 12 Barnacle and up to 30 Canada Geese were joined by 7 Greylag from mid-month, and Mallard numbers increased to around 60 on 26th. Occasional Coal Tit, Collared Dove and Linnet, and flocks of 20 Goldfinch were reported.

September 2014: The Canada and Greylag Geese were largely absent this month, but 12 Barnacle geese remained, along with large numbers of Mallard (up to 90). Occasional reports of Goldcrest, Coal Tit, Meadow Pipit and Treecreeper, with Chiffchaff heard calling on 16th and 18th. A single Yellow wagtail was spotted on 3rd, a Little Egret near the sluice on 9th, and a Mute Swan on 29th. House martin numbers dwindled until the last sighting on 24th. Green woodpeckers were reported as becoming very vocal.

October 2014: A single Kingfisher was reported upstream of the sluice on both 15th and 24th. Around 25 Canada Geese were seen on the lake early in the month, and a single Great Crested Grebe was regularly present. Mallard numbers increased dramatically, rising to 150 on 17th, a single Grey heron was seen alongside the lake, and 4 Reed Bunting were occasionally spotted in the reeds. Barnacle geese, initially seen around the lake, latterly moved to the playing fields near Bourn Bridge Road. Small flocks of Meadow Pipit and Linnet were seen around the 'building rubble', and Magpie and Jay were reported regularly in the woods. Mixed flocks of up to 20 Blue Tit, 10 Long-tailed Tit and 2 Great Tit were reported, as well as a single Coal Tit. Both Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers were seen and heard regularly, as were occasional Skylark, Pheasant and Buzzard.

November 2014: The first report of Redwing was on 3rd, with 3 Fieldfare first seen on 13th. Small flocks of 15 Long-tailed Tit were reported, and larger flocks of Goldfinch (30), Linnet (80) and Meadow pipit were seen on the open ground near the car park. Up to 60 Reed Bunting were reported roosting in the reeds around the lake. A female Sparrowhawk was spotted being mobbed by a Crow on 17th, and a Kestrel was regularly seen hunting over open ground near the sluice. Single reports of Treecreeper and Goldcrest in the woods, and a Common Gull on the cricket green.

December 2014: On 1st a Kingfisher was seen perched near the sluice, before flying upstream. Mallard were the only occupants reported on the lake, with a Grey Heron being regularly seen along the river. Around 20 Redwing were regularly seen feeding in the Yew trees near the Hall, but no Fieldfare were reported. Two Goldcrest and a Chiffchaff were spotted in the woods near the sluice on 17th, and a small flock of 12 Linnet was reported. A flock of 65 Black-headed Gull, seen on the cricket pitch on 19th, was observed to also contain 3 Common Gull.

ii. NUMBER OF SIGHTINGS

GRANTA PARK, Great Abington TL5248

<i>Total 74 species</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Total</i>
Barnacle Goose						4	2	13	11	13	3	2	48
Blackbird	21	13	22	19	12	13	4	2	8	7	12	2	135
Blackcap				20	9	17	5	3					54
Black-headed Gull	3		2						1		2	2	10
Blue Tit	29	15	22	19	14	18	2	8	17	15	15	3	177
Bullfinch				1	1								2
Buzzard	5	5	11	11	7	7	2	3	6	4	1	1	63
Canada Goose	8	11	8	2	10	16	6	6	1	9	2		79
Carrion Crow	21	15	19	11	11	19	5	10	9	12	12	2	146
Chaffinch	18	12	14	8	12	14	1	4	4	3	6	2	98
Chiffchaff			3	20	13	17	4	1	2				60
Coal Tit	1		3			2		1	1	1			9
Collared Dove	1							1	1	2			5
Common Gull	3										1	1	5
Common Sandpiper								1					1
Coot		1				1							1
Cormorant	5						1						6
Duncock	3	6	8	4	3	4	1	1	2			1	33
Feral Pigeon			2			2							4
Fieldfare	8	8	2								1		19
Garden Warbler					2								2
Goldcrest	5	2	3	3			1		2		2		18
Goldfinch	25	14	21	16	10	13	5	11	10	12	13	1	151
Great Crested Grebe	1	8	19	12	12	8	3	8	8	12			91
Gt Spotted Woodpecker	10	2	7	7	4	6	3	5	3	3	5	2	57
Great Tit	22	15	25	17	12	11	3	7	12	6	10	3	140
Greenfinch		3	5	5	2	3		1	1		3	1	24
Green Woodpecker	16	6	18	17	10	16	5	11	13	10	9	2	133
Grey Heron	4	2	1	6				1	2	1	4	2	23
Greylag Goose			1					6	1				8
Grey Wagtail	1		1										2
Herring Gull	1	2	2		1	1		1	1	3		1	13
House Martin					8	19	6	12	7				52
House Sparrow	1												1
Jackdaw	27	16	23	20	16	16	3	7	15	17	15	3	178
Jay	9	4	3	5	2	10		3	8	9	4		57
Kestrel	5	4	6	6	5	4			3	4	6	2	45
Kingfisher						2		1		1		1	5
Lesser Whitethroat				1									1
Lesser Back-backed Gull						1							1
Linnet	3			5	2	1		3	1	1	3	1	20
Little Egret			1						1				2
Long-tailed Tit	20	10	14	4	4	6	1	4	4	5	9	3	84

<i>Total 74 species</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Total</i>
Magpie	16	8	15	10	8	15	2	7	14	14	9	3	121
Mallard	10	13	18	12	12	11	5	13	17	15	11	3	140
Mandarin Duck					1								1
Meadow Pipit	4			1					1	2	1		9
Mistle Thrush	5	5	12	5	8	3		1		2	4	1	46
Moorhen	13	9	18	8	7	9	4	6	11	12	5	1	103
Mute Swan									2				2
Oystercatcher					1								1
Pheasant		1		2						3	2		8
Pied Wagtail	22	14	15	14	13	17	6	9	16	16	14	3	159
Red Kite							1						1
Red-legged Partridge	1		2										3
Redwing	4	3	1								7	2	17
Reed Bunting	4	3	4						1	3	2		17
Robin	25	13	21	18	15	12	2	6	16	13	9	3	153
Rook	5	8	18	15	11	8	3	5	6	9	10	2	100
Skylark		4	2	14	6				1	1			28
Song Thrush	3	3	3	6	6	11		1	1			1	35
Sparrowhawk	2		1	3							1		7
Spotted Flycatcher							3	3					6
Starling	9	2	9	9	11	12	1	4	2	4	1		64
Stock Dove		1	2	5	4	2	2	2	1	1			20
Swallow				4	6	5	1	1					17
Swift					8	10	6	2					26
Tawny Owl	1												1
Treecreeper	2	4		2		4	1	1	1		1		16
Wheatear				1									1
Whitethroat						1							1
Woodpigeon	24	16	21	20	14	18	5	15	16	19	16	3	187
Wren	8	8	18	16	14	19	5	8	10	4	9	2	121
Yellow Wagtail						1	1		1				3
Total Reports	36	21	27	21	18	23	9	19	21	20	17	4	236

Contributors: Carolyn Causton, Emily Davidson, Jerry Lanfear, MedImmune, Andy Merryweather, Gareth Rees, Hayley Smith, Jez Smith, Tracy Thomas.

IV. Mammals

No recorded reports, although we have continued to see signs of an otter along the stretch of river Granta that runs alongside Granta Park.

V. Granta Park Events with The Wildlife Trust during 2014

i. June

Over 20 staff from across the Park joined us for our first Bat Safari on Granta Park. Iain Webb from The Wildlife Trust who led the event says 'I thoroughly enjoyed it. Great bats, great audience, great venue and warm otter pool!!'. The bats we saw and heard were, Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Myotis species, several species sound very similar, may have been Natterer's or Daubentons.

The following week we held a Late Spring Birds - Walk & Talk, staff on the Park were once again treated to Iain's expertise walking through the woodlands listening and watching the

birds. Iain helped us identify over 29 different species in just 1 hour, a very impressive total. Highlight of which had to be a Carrion Crow seeing off a Buzzard.

They were: House Martin, Swift, Carrion Crow, Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove, Great Tit, Blackbird, Jackdaw, Robin, Green Woodpecker, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Blackcap, Stock Dove, Blue Tit, Wren, Chiffchaff, Long Tailed Tit, Song Thrush, Buzzard, Goldfinch, Pied Wagtail, Dunnock, Canada Goose, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Coot, Mallard, Swallow, Rook.

ii. October

A break from the rain led to a very pleasant fungi foray. Although we didn't find as much as we have in previous years, due to the dry summer, we did find some lovely samples through Lagden's Grove woods. Peter, from The Wildlife Trust, who led the foray, took the samples home to identify them.



89: Fungi Foray – Granta Park – October



See below for a list of what we found:

Scientific name	Common Name	Substrate
<i>Agrocybe molesta</i>		in herbage
<i>Agrocybe semiorbicularis</i>		in herbage
<i>Arrhenia obscura</i>		in grass
<i>Auricularia mesenterica</i>	Tripe fungus	on Elm logs
<i>Coprinus galericuliformis?</i>		on soil
<i>Ganoderma australis</i>	Artist's fungus	on Stump
<i>Hebeloma crustujunifforme</i>	Poison Pie	in soil base of tree
<i>Lycoperdon pyriforme</i>	Stump Puffball	on stump
<i>Meripilus giganteus</i>	Giant Polypore	on tree stump
<i>Mycena archangeliana</i>	Angel Bonnet	on buried wood
<i>Mycena galericulata</i>	Common Bonnet	on log
<i>Mycena olida</i>	Rancid bonnet	in mosses on dead wood
<i>Mycena pura</i>	Lilac bonnet	in litter
<i>Mycena vitalis</i>	Snapping Bonnet	in litter
<i>Myxophalia maura</i>		in grass
<i>Psathyrella</i> sp?		in grass & on wood
<i>Rhodatus palmata</i>	Wrinkled Peach	on Elm logs
<i>Rhytisma acerinum</i>	Tar Spot	on Sycamore leaves
<i>Scleroderma verrucosum</i>	Earth Ball	on soil
<i>Tubaria conspersa</i>	Felted Twiglet	on dead herbage
<i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>	Candle snuff	on mossy log
<i>Xylaria polymorpha</i>	Dead-man's Fingers	on mossy log

11. CONTACT INFORMATION

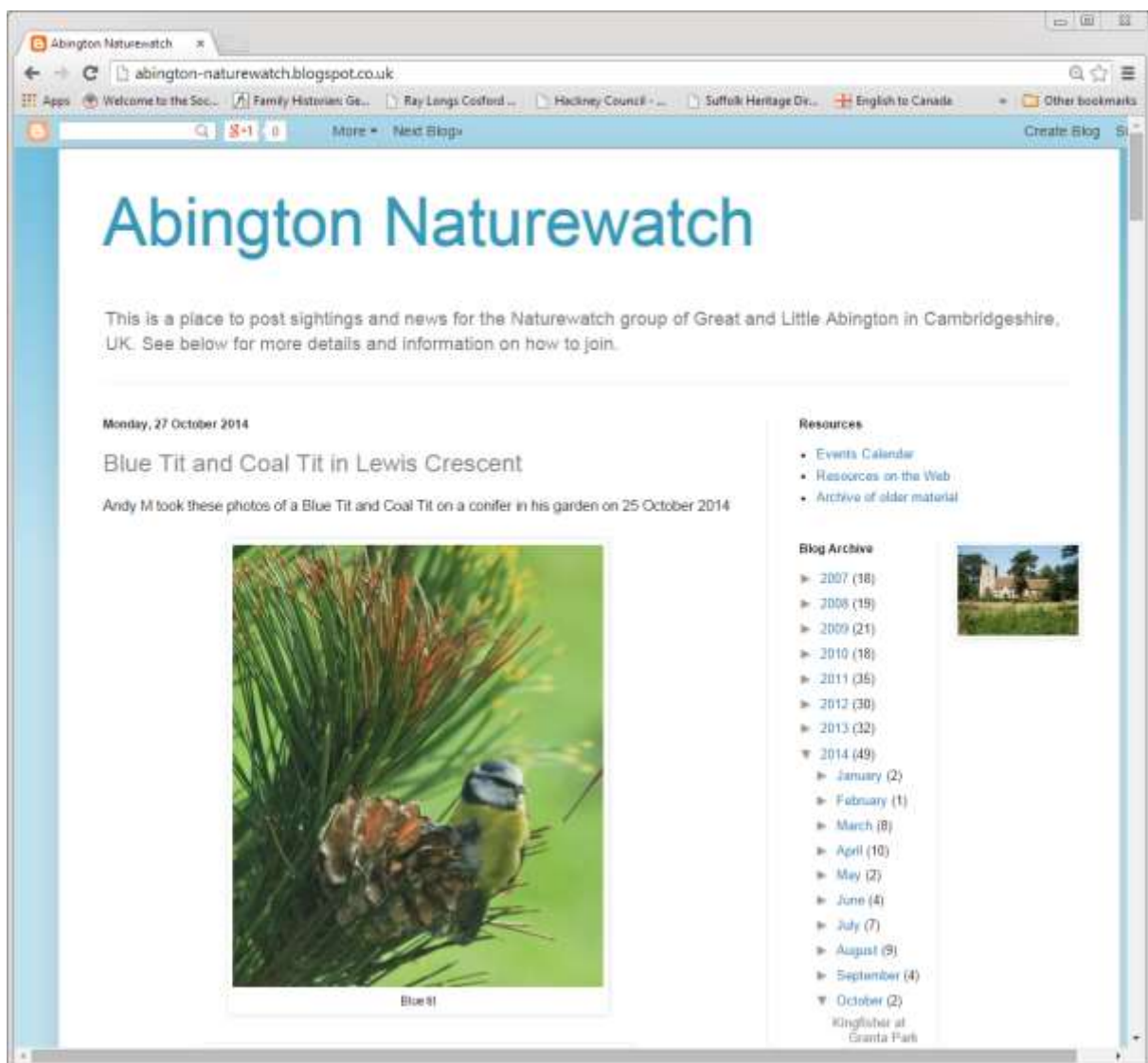
I. *The Abington Naturewatch Website*

The Abington Naturewatch Website is 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 to publish material in diary form.

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:



II. The Abington Naturewatch Project Team and Sectors

i. Programme Coordinator (and Membership Secretary)

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viii. Rivercare

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ix. Granta Park

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III. Other Contacts

RiverCare: <http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/environment/our-commitment/our-projects/rivercare.aspx>

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC): <http://www.cperc.org.uk/>

Wildlife Trust (for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire): <http://www.wildlifebcn.org/>

