



# ABINGTON NATUREWATCH

The Record  
2011-2012

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Records the activities of Abington Naturewatch from Autumn 2011 to end 2012. 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



Cover photos: Mallard on pond (Audrey Bugg); Mallards on pond (Jennifer Hirsh)



1: Bracket Fungus - June (BT)



2: Privet Hawk Moth - 6 August (JN)



3: Magpie Inkcap (*Coprinus picaceus*) in South Road – December (AD-N)



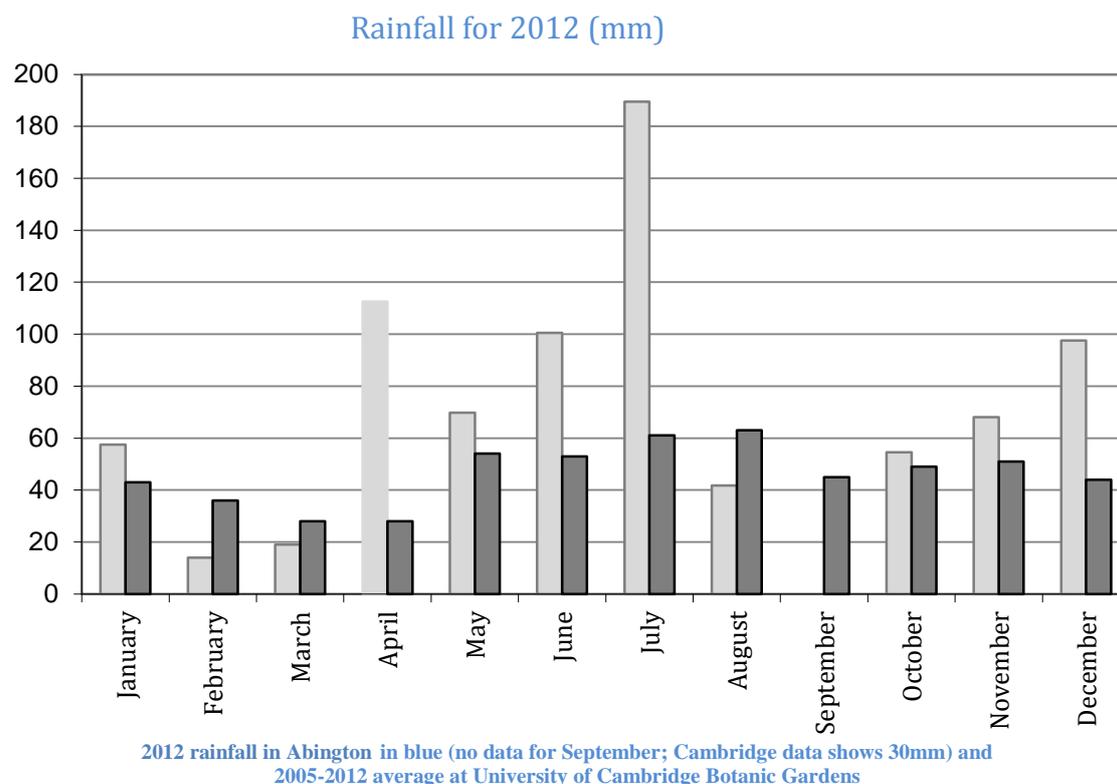
4: Mayfly at the Ford - June (PB)



5: Fried Chicken Mushroom (*Lyophyllum decastes*) in Granta Park – 24 March (PB)

## FOREWORD

2012 will be long remembered as one of the wettest years on record in England. It started off with drought warnings and hosepipe bans in the first quarter but then all talk of drought and bans were forgotten as the heavens opened between April and July. We then had a reasonable period of weather between August and October with some decent sunshine before back came the rain to finish off the year. The very wet weather has had a significant impact on our flora and fauna, with bird broods seriously affected and insect populations much reduced. About the only positive note from the rainfall was the abundant plant life it generated, typified by the glorious poppy display after harvest in the Bourn Bridge Road fields, which lasted until the first frost.



A brief summary of the Abington Naturewatch year is included in Section 1, General News. Expeditions outside the Abingtons are recorded separately in Section 9.

I would like to express my thanks to the members for reporting in their sightings and the Project team for their hard work on the programme for 2012 and their contributions to the Record which each year is put together by Peter Brunning. Special thanks to Diana Wingfield for her recording of the mammals section. We were sorry to lose her support on the Project Team in the autumn. Here's to some sun in 2013 and plenty for us to investigate.

For contact details for all sectors, please refer to the back page.

David Farrant

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## 1. GENERAL NEWS

Despite the weather, Naturewatch enjoyed some very informative trips during the year. This started with a cold but interesting trip by Guided Bus to Fen Drayton and involving a walk round the lakes looking at the overwintering bird population. In April we had a very interesting talk from Roger Lemon on his work in recording the butterfly populations on the Roman Road and illustrating the various changes over time. We also returned to one of our favourite haunts, Paxton Pits, and had an excellent guided tour of the reserve. An invitation to the Grange Farm Open Farm Sunday from the Camps family in June resulted in a tour of the farm, an explanation of the crops grown and a presentation of the history of the farm. That month we also visited Coploe Hill Pit with its Roman snails and the wildflower meadows at Heydon. After all the rain we finally got some dry weather in August and at last saw some butterflies on the Roman Road, especially the Chalkhill Blues. These visits, together with some local ones to the protected verge and an autumn stubble walk, meant the programme was not altogether spoilt by the weather. The year was finally completed by a fascinating talk from Henry Stanier at our autumn meeting about the work of the local Wildlife trust and our native bats.

Membership of Naturewatch has remained fairly stable but we are in need of a new recorder for our mammals section. This is an important area for Naturewatch and not an onerous task. One area that does give cause for concern is the age of our membership and we will be discussing ways of including the younger age group in our work. In 2013 we will have two main challenges. The first is to master the new system of river sampling and the second is to establish whether ash dieback, *Chalara fraxinea*, is present in the Abingtons. A brief survey last autumn showed no obvious signs but any symptoms will be more obvious next summer when the trees are in leaf. Chalara is potentially very serious as ash trees are important on our chalk soils. Symptoms can be seen on <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara#Symptoms>. Hopefully there will be firmer guidance on the disease this coming spring.



### Ash Dieback

6: Ash Dieback – Wilting leaves, most visible in spring and early summer ◀

7: Lesions and cankers on stems / branches / shoots, visible throughout the year ▶



### Events this year included:

February 4	* Fen Drayton Lakes outing	Birds
March 24	Members' meeting	
April 21	* Paxton Pits outing	Birds
April 27	Butterfly talk – Roger Lemon	Invertebrates
June 17	Grange Farm Open Day	
June 22	Moth Night (High Street)	Invertebrates
June 30	* Coploe Hill Pit and Heydon High Meadow	Flora and Butterflies
July 31	Bourn Bridge Road PRV walk	Flora
August 11	* Roman Road outing	Butterflies and Flora
August 17	Moth Night (High Street)	Invertebrates
September 29	Field next to allotments – walk	Flora
October 27	Members' meeting	
November 16	Talk on the local work of the Trust and our local bat population – Henry Stanier	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust

\* Indicates those taking place outside the Abingtons – please see Section 9.

David Farrant

## 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.




**Group Photos**



**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.

Abington RiverCare Group

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

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/>.

Next year, we hope to mark World Rivers Day (Sunday, September 29, 2013) with some form of event that weekend.

### II. General news from the river

Early in 2012, we had news, from Ruth Hawksley at the Wildlife Trust, that volunteer surveyors had found otter spraint on the earth bank underneath under the road bridge in Abington. They were there on 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan as part of a jaunt checking 10 bridges in South Cambs.

### **III. Riverfly Sampling Workshop – 5<sup>th</sup> May**

In the past, our river surveys have been fairly informal and have used equipment supplied by the *Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre*. This year, two of us were trained at a Riverfly Sampling Workshop held in Abington on Saturday 5 May. In all, there were 12 people from local river-based conservation groups at this all-day session. The leader was Stuart Crofts (past captain of the England Flyfishing team which won the World Championships and now an expert in invertebrate river species, based near Sheffield), assisted by people from the Riverfly Partnership, the Environment Agency, the Wildlife Trusts, and Rob Mungovan, our Biodiversity Officer at South Cambs District Council.

As on many occasions this year, the river was too deep and fast-flowing for safe sampling, but nevertheless we were taught rather more rigorous techniques for both sampling and quantifying the samples. We used imported samples and had access to microscopes and other tools in the Abington Institute.

The objective of the Riverfly Partnership is to record the presence or absence of 7 key groups of riverfly larvae and 1 crustacean: cased caddis, caseless caddis, 4 upwinged flies (mayfly, blue-winged olive, olive, flat-bodied), stoneflies + freshwater shrimps. (Stoneflies and the flat-bodied mayfly are upland stream species so not expected in our lowland chalk streams.) These species are pollutant sensitive, so their presence is a good indicator of a healthy river. Other finds (fish, damselfly nymphs, snails, etc) can be recorded but are not required in this monitoring project. For more information, see <http://www.riverflies.org/rp-riverfly-monitoring-initiative>.

With help from Rob Mungovan, we have decided to monitor a stretch of river beside the cricket field. This is not a stretch we have sampled in the past but gives us quite a long stretch of accessible water, with some variation in habitat. For various reasons, we have not performed many sampling sessions this year but hope to do so every one or two months in the coming year. We have a new sampling kit and identification charts, so we're set to go.

### **IV. River Sampling 2012**

#### **i. River Sampling - Ford - 14<sup>th</sup> April**

The water level was rather low, but not as low as at the last sampling of 2011. Populations were small, with not a large number even of very small specimens. Most striking were the very few insect larvae of any kind (probably the smallest ever sample from this site) and a total absence of mayfly nymphs. Water snails of any sort were also not found. A few hoglouse were of fair size and a few freshwater shrimp were caught. Diversity was slightly better but hardly impressive. Fish however showed up well. Two minnows, one gravid, were caught near a weedy patch by the usual method, and by direct net-fishing near the bridge a pleasing four Stone Loach. In the same way and area we had two very small, greeny-brown crayfish, which being unidentifiable we hoped might be natives – we sent photos to Ruth at Water for Wildlife.

**Location 1.** We made four samples by kick-and-net in gravelly, sometimes weedy active water 4-8 metres above the bridge.

Fish. Two minnows, one gravid, 2.5-3.25 cm.

Insects. The only finds were three Midge larvae (two very small; order *Diptera*; probably fam. *Chironomidae*), one caseless Caddisfly larva (Order *Trichoptera*) and one Stonefly nymph (Order *Plecoptera*). This is certainly the smallest ever catch of insect larvae at this site.

Crustaceans. About half-a-dozen Freshwater Shrimps (genus *Gammarus*), two coupling; several Water Hoglouse (*Asellus aquaticus*), ca.1.25 cm.

Molluscs. One only Pea Mussel (genus *Pisidium* or *Corbicula*).

**Worms.** Phylum Annelida: several Leeches (Order *Hirudinea*), 2 very dark and large (stretching 2.5-5 cm), one smaller pale yellow-brown, possibly a Bird Leech; two Sludge Worms (genus *Tubifex*), one tiny. Phylum *Nematomorpha*: one Hair Worm.

**Location 2.** David went direct net fishing in slack, more muddy water near the bridge.

**Fish.** Four Stone Loach (*Noemacheilus barbatula*), in perfect condition, 5-9 cm.

**Crustaceans.** Two greeny-brown very small Crayfish, 3-4 cm full-length (Order *Decapoda*), just *possibly* native but impossible for us to identify (larger signal crayfish have been found here).

Photos from 14 April at the Ford (Photos: PB)



8: Crayfish



9: Stone Loach



10: Pea Mussel



11: Freshwater Shrimp

## ii. Riverfly Partnership Sampling – 12<sup>th</sup> July

**Location:** ‘Riverfly stretch’ (by cricket nets), River Granta  
**River conditions:** fast flowing, all gravel riffles covered by water  
**Time:** 6.30–7.30pm  
**Weather:** overcast with rain

**Sampling** (as per Riverfly technique) = 2 minutes kick-sampling stony bed + 1 minute sweeping net through weed beds (Water Crowfoot and Fool's Watercress) + 1 minute hand-picking animals off stones

### Riverfly key species

Cased caddisfly larva – 0

Caseless caddisfly larva – 0

Mayfly (Ephemeroidea) ? [no definite identification]

Blue-winged olive (Ephemerellidae) – 10–99 (code B) [?]

Flat-bodied up-wings (Heptageniidae) – 0

Olives (Baetidae) – 10–99 (code B) [?]

Stoneflies – 0

Freshwater shrimp (*Gammarus*) – large, often in pairings, number: 10–99 (code B)

### Other species:

Leeches – 6 large and active specimens

Ramshorn snail – 1

Freshwater hoggouse – 1

Limpets – 10+ on underside of stones in river

### Notes:

The mayfly ‘catch’ comprised hundreds of tiny nymphs, some no more than 10mm long. Identification therefore difficult. The Blue-winged olives were identifiable only if magnified so that the dark rings on legs and tails were visible; and the Olives were identified by their darting, fast swimming motion. Too many tiny specimens to make confident estimate of relative numbers. Interesting that there were no large mayfly specimens.

The lack of caddis flies was surprising – normally we get a good number. Might be due to the scouring action of the storm waters which may have dislodged them from the stony bottom?

Some hatched mayflies were visible flying above the river. One fish seen rising (large swirl) upstream of sampling site towards road bridge. No damselfly or demoiselle nymphs. No red hairworms.

Peter Brunning / Anne Dunbar-Nobes

Photos from 12 July by the Cricket Field (Photos: PB)



12: Blue-winged Olive nymph



13: Mayfly nymph

### **3. BIRDWATCH**

#### ***I. 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 necessarily truncated month by month summary.

#### **November 2011**

On 1<sup>st</sup> November a large number of birds were seen washing in the river from the Millennium Bridge, including 4 Redwings. There was one report each of a Siskin, a Red Kite, a Treecreeper, a Goldcrest and a Little Egret. 10 Barnacle Geese were frequently on the Granta Park Lake and a Kestrel was seen feeding on a small mammal.

#### **December 2011**

Early in the month there was another Treecreeper report and 2 Buzzards were seen being mobbed by Corvids. Later 13 Goldfinches were feeding on lavender seeds and a flock of 20+ Fieldfares was seen on Christmas Day. A Tawny Owl was heard on 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **January 2012**

The year started with many sightings of Blue, Great, Longtailed and Coal Tits, Chaffinches, Goldfinches, Blackbirds, Robins, several Wrens, the usual Wood pigeons, Collared Doves, Magpies (seen eating a dead hedgehog), at least 3 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, the occasional Red-legged Partridge and Pheasant and a Blackcap. The RSPB Garden Birdwatch produced 11 reports locally and a total of 28 species including notably Bullfinch, Siskin and Stock Dove. Late in the month a Skylark was singing above Bourn Bridge Road fields.

#### **February 2012**

On 1<sup>st</sup> Fieldfares, Redwings, a Kestrel and a Buzzard near the Roman Road and a Snipe the following day in South Road. In mid-month Little Egret reports continued and a large flock of Fieldfares was seen in South Road area. Redwings also in evidence and a Mistle Thrush. On 18<sup>th</sup>, 3 Tree Sparrows were feeding with House Sparrows and at the end of the month a male Blackcap was seen.

#### **March 2012**

The month started with Bullfinch, Song Thrush, Siskin, Yellowhammer and Lapwing sightings; 8+ Skylarks were heard and seen and a Ringnecked Parakeet on a feeder. The Lake revealed Coot, Great Crested Grebe, 30+ Canada Geese and 8 Mallard. Mid-month produced several reports of large numbers of birds in gardens notably 14 and 21 species in a day. On 29<sup>th</sup>, there was a pair of Mute Swans on the Lake and a pair of Red-legged Partridges was seen the same day. Finally there were 2 reports of Chiffchaffs being heard and a Robin nesting.

#### **April 2012**

Several reports of Chiffchaffs and also a Goldcrest and a Blackcap. On 8<sup>th</sup>, Swallows and House Martins were reported. On 14<sup>th</sup>, a Red Kite was seen above Cambridge Road. A pair of Red-legged Partridges were watched on a lawn for some time and in addition to other species 2 Greylag Geese were in residence on the Lake. Late in the month, a report of 7 Buzzards above Church Close. Early on 30<sup>th</sup>, 2 Swifts and later 5 Swifts seen above Little Abington. Several more reports of Swallows, Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs. One report of a Cuckoo being heard in Great Abington about mid-month.

**May 2012**

On 1<sup>st</sup> a Kingfisher flying along the river near the play area. Many Rook nests in South Grove Wood and on 6<sup>th</sup> a (Lesser) Redpoll in a Great Abington garden. On 11<sup>th</sup>, 5 Canada Goose goslings on the Lake. Mid-month, a Turtle Dove was heard near Little Abington Church and 3 Corn Buntings and a Yellow Wagtail were watched on top of oilseed rape stalks. At end of month, House Martins flying up to last year's nests on Village Shop.

**June 2012**

Report of a Magpie dunking bread in water and flying off with it presumably to feed young. On 11<sup>th</sup> a Barnacle Goose with Canada Geese on Lake. On 12<sup>th</sup>, a Kingfisher seen to fly over the road bridge. A brief visit of Spotted Flycatchers was reported from Little Abington but no sign of nesting. On 26<sup>th</sup>, 2 Stock Doves in a Little Abington garden.

**July 2012**

Buzzards and a Red Kite were seen and a Cormorant visited the Lake. A family of at least 3 Goldcrests was seen in a hedge in a Little Abington garden. There were 3 separate reports of Bullfinches.

**August 2012**

Swifts, Buzzards, House Martins and Bullfinches continued to be seen. In mid-month a family of Wrens was seen and a pair of Greenfinches gathering nesting material. On 28<sup>th</sup>, there were 3 young with 10 Barnacle Geese by the Lake and on 31<sup>st</sup> a flock of 30-40 Goldfinches was watched on the Roman Road.

**September 2012**

On 1<sup>st</sup>, a loose flock of Tits, 2 Goldcrests and a Treecreeper in a Little Abington garden. Later, c. 20 House Martins overhead, 5 Pied Wagtails on the Recreation Ground and Swallows flying very low. A Hobby was seen the following day in Great Abington disturbing Swallows. Several sightings of Buzzards and one of 2 Kestrels mobbing a Buzzard. Tawny Owls heard calling at night.

**October 2012**

On 3<sup>rd</sup>, a Heron seen in 2 gardens in Cambridge Road and it caught many or all the fish in the pond in one. It was attacked by a large bird (possibly a Buzzard). Mid-month a female Sparrowhawk struck a pigeon and returned several times to feed. On 20<sup>th</sup>, 6 Magpies in a tree at end of a back garden in Cambridge Road taking an interest in a Kestrel. Also a Dabchick/Little Grebe on the Lake. On 22<sup>nd</sup>, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker in field in Little Abington.

**November 2012**

3 Buzzards seen above Cricket Ground on 6<sup>th</sup>. On 8<sup>th</sup>, a Green Woodpecker for about 30 minutes in a Little Abington garden. Kestrel frequently in field behind Cambridge Road. On 14<sup>th</sup> a Tawny Owl visited a Little Abington garden for a short time around 1pm and the following day 2 reports of a Little Egret downstream of the Millennium Bridge. On 18<sup>th</sup> a Treecreeper near the Granta Park Restaurant and another on 25<sup>th</sup> in Little Abington. On 23<sup>rd</sup> a Barn Owl over Bourn Bridge Road fields around 6pm. On the same day about 200 Fieldfares on the Roman Road. Several reports of Jays in the month.

**December 2012**

On 6<sup>th</sup>, a Goldcrest in yew tree in Little Abington and on 11<sup>th</sup> a Siskin in Great. A female Grey Wagtail reported on 20<sup>th</sup> and late reports of a pair of Mandarin Ducks on the river and a Meadow Pipit earlier in the year. Finally, a Treecreeper in Little on 28<sup>th</sup>.

## II. Outings

These are reported in Section 9.III.

Derek Turnidge 18.1.2013



14: Tree Sparrows - 22 February (AD-N)



15: Swan & Geese on Granta Park Lake - 24 March (PB)



16: Blackbird in Church Lane - May (PB)



17: Green Woodpecker - 8 July (JH)



18: Heron - October (CH)



19: Little Egret - 15 Nov (JH)

## 4. REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

### *I. Summary: Autumn 2011–Autumn 2012*

Through spring and early summer there were no reports at all of frog spawn, toad spawn and associated tadpoles in the Abingtons. During the winter, common frogs normally hibernate in compost heaps, under stones and logs, or underwater beneath mud and decaying leaves. During February and March they begin to emerge from hibernation and make their way to breeding grounds, with spawning taking place from March through into April. However, for reasons as yet unclear, this did not take place in Abington ponds in 2012.

Smooth newts were regularly reported in a small number of garden ponds from April onwards, and there were occasional sightings of Common Toads in gardens. By far the dominant species this year was the Grass Snake, seen in garden ponds and compost heaps, and occasionally in grass close to the River Granta and the lake on Granta Park, from April through to September.



20: Lizard sunbathing on wooden sleeper - July (AD-N)

One particular highlight was the sighting of a Common Lizard basking on a warm railway sleeper that forms the border to a garden patio. This was all the more exciting given the appallingly wet summer experienced this year.

As in previous years, there were no reports of adders, slow worms or great-crested newts.

### *II. Detailed Reports: 2012*

**10 April 2012** [D. Turnidge] We continue to see Smooth Newts in our pond – two yesterday – but today we had our first Grass Snake sighting (twice) in or near the pond. It was at least 60 cm long, but slim.

**22 April 2012** [D. Turnidge] 3 Grass Snakes in the sun by the pond mid-afternoon today. One was markedly larger than the other two. Also 1 smooth newt in pond.

**30 April 2012** [D. Turnidge] 3 smooth newts (1 female, paler body, and 2 males). The three grass snakes are still in the pond or on the bank (1 large, 2 smaller).

**30 April 2012** [J. Hirsh] Grass snake (60 cm long) seen crossing muddy path in Sluice Wood

**5 May 2012** [J Hirsh] Grass snake seen in garden

**8 May 2012** (D. Turnidge] Our 3 Grass Snakes have taken to climbing. Today they have been resting on the branches of the low-lying conifer at the back of our pond, about 30 cm or more above the water. Is that unusual? 3 newts in pond.

**27 May 2012** [A. Dunbar-Nobes] At least 6 smooth newts seen in pond.

**13 June 2012** [J. Hirsh] While cleaning blanket weed out of pond on Sunday, I was delighted to find a newt – first one I have seen this year!

**15 June 2012** [J. Hirsh] Tiny newt found on leaf in garden ►

**22 July 2012** [A. Dunbar-Nobes] One Common Lizard seen sunning itself on warm timber sleeper beside our patio.

**26 July 2012** [D. Turnidge] I was adding to the compost heap when a Grass Snake slid out from below, almost over my foot and went off into the undergrowth. I estimate it was 75 cm long.



21: Newtlet (JH)

**17 August** [P. Daunt] Slender, 30 cm (1 foot) grass snake in garden.

**20 August** [P. Daunt] Slender, 30 cm (1 foot) grass snake in Granta Park Lake

**22 August** [D. Turnidge] I have seen the first Grass Snake for some time in our pond this afternoon. It was a good 60 cm in length

**26 August** [report via M. Rusted] Residents at 104a High Street, Great Abington have a photograph of a grass snake pursuing a toad across their patio – toad all puffed up and snake with gaping mouth ►

**28 August** [A. Dunbar-Nobes] Small toad found in bucket of rainwater; moved to dense vegetation.



22: Grass snake & Toad – August (TT)

**28 August** [P. Daunt] Another grass snake, a good-sized adult (45 cm +) in the Little Abington Meadow (between the Miles's and the Cambridge Road houses), in the long grass – ungrazed now both horses have gone.

**8 Sept** [D. Turnidge] Grass Snake, perhaps 60 cm long, in long grass in the field behind our house at about midday today.

**9 Sept** [D. Turnidge] Grass Snake in our pond about midday, probably a little more than 60 cm long.

Anne Dunbar-Nobes



23: Grass Snake – 30 April (DT)

## 5. INVERTEBRATES

### *I. Overview*

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.

The weather in 2012 was particularly bad for invertebrates, especially butterflies and moths, due to the very high rainfall throughout the summer. Sightings reported (in total over 600) are recorded in a spreadsheet and make it very obvious when we had the few rare sunny days as more reports come in for those days: villagers are out in their gardens or walking in the village at the same time as the butterflies are out!

In April we had a talk and slide show by Roger Lemon on Cambridgeshire butterflies which was well attended by members and other villagers. Roger is a local expert on butterflies and has been carrying out regular transects along the Roman Road (though not the section in our parish) and Fleam Dyke for the last five years. Doing these walks weekly in the late spring and summer months involves systematically recording all butterfly species seen and their numbers. Over a number of years this builds up a record of the increase and decrease of particular species. The slide show, mainly of Roger's own photographs, gave us a lot of help in identifying different species, differentiating the different blue butterflies and particularly the differences in male and female of the same species.

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.

**February** – A warm sunny day on 23<sup>rd</sup> at 17°C brought out a few early Brimstones and the unusual sight of hover flies feeding on snowdrop flowers.

**March** – This month we saw more Brimstones, the first Orange-tip, Peacocks, Comma and Large Whites. The first bumblebees appeared on 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, Red-tailed, White-tailed and Buff-tailed. Both February and March had lower than average rainfall so there was a scarcity of flowers for the bees and other insects to feed on. Bee flies were seen at the end of the month and again in April.

**April** – This month was very wet and only 8 different butterfly species were reported compared to 12 species in 2011. Unusually no blue butterflies were seen in April. There were more bees including one report of a honey bee and several reports of ladybirds, mainly 7 spots.

**May** – Again this month was much wetter than average and only 7 different butterfly species were reported compared to 14 species in 2011. See later in this report a list of the butterflies not reported at all in 2012 compared to 2011. Holly blues were seen throughout the month. First reports of red and blue damselflies were received.

**June** – A wet month and limited reports of butterflies, few of Orange Tips but Small Copper, Small Heath and Common Blue were seen and a few Red Admirals. Also a few bees and damselflies but not in the usual numbers for this time for year.

**July** – Rainfall this month was about four times the monthly average but in spite of this the sunny days in the first week of the month, the 17<sup>th</sup> and the last week of the month produced many butterfly reports (see table later), a few damselflies and dragonflies and more bees including mining bees in a garden.

**August** – This month at last was back to more normal weather with less than average rainfall and 18 of the 19 reported species of butterfly for this year were seen this month. This included a White-letter Hairstreak seen in a garden for the third year running and this year photographed. Hawker dragonflies and various damselflies also seen.

**September** – Butterfly reports tailing off now but many reports of Red Admirals, the great success of 2012, feeding on buddleia and ivy flowers often with Small Tortoiseshells.

**October** – A few Red Admirals still around but very little else.

**Butterflies (Photos: JH)**



24: Whiteletter Hairstreak (DT)



25: Common Blue



26: Comma



27: Brimstone



28: Gatekeeper



29: Meadow Brown



30: Red Admiral



31: Red Admiral



32: Speckled Wood

**Moths – June (Photos: JH)**



33: Spinach



34: Dark Arches



35: Heart and Dart



36: Peppered Moth



37: Buff Tip



38: Swallow Prominent

## II. Butterflies

Table showing those butterflies seen in Abington in 2012 by month (19 species)

Butterfly name	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Notes from <i>Butterflies of Cambridgeshire</i>
<b>Small Skipper</b>					✓	✓✓	✓✓			Widespread & common
<b>Large White</b>		✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		Widespread & common
<b>Small White</b>			✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Widespread & common
<b>Green-veined White</b>							✓✓			Widespread & common
<b>Brimstone</b>	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓✓	✓✓		Widespread & common
<b>Orange-tip</b>		✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓				Widespread & common
<b>White-letter Hairstreak</b>							✓			Widely distributed – rarely seen
<b>Small Copper</b>				✓	✓		✓✓			Widely distributed – but not abundant
<b>Holly Blue</b>				✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓			Widespread & common
<b>Common Blue</b>					✓		✓✓			Widespread & fairly common
<b>Red Admiral</b>	✓		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Widespread & common
<b>Small Tortoiseshell</b>			✓				✓✓	✓✓		Widespread & common
<b>Peacock</b>		✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓		Widespread & common
<b>Comma</b>		✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	Widespread & common
<b>Speckled Wood</b>						✓	✓✓	✓	✓	Widespread & fairly common
<b>Gatekeeper</b>						✓✓	✓✓			Widespread & common
<b>Meadow Brown</b>						✓✓	✓✓	✓		Widespread & common
<b>Ringlet</b>						✓✓	✓✓			Widespread & common
<b>Small Heath</b>					✓	✓✓	✓✓			Widespread but localised
<b><u>Seen in 2011 but not seen in 2012</u></b>										
<i>Essex Skipper</i>										Widespread & common
<i>Large Skipper</i>										Widespread & common
<i>Green Hairstreak</i>										Uncommon
<i>Painted Lady</i>										Common migrant
<i>Marbled White</i>										Uncommon

Sightings (species to date) are shown in the table 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.

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

## III. Moths

We had two moth nights in 2012 in June and August, both without the help of Phil Jenner, a professional lepidopterist. Both were in my garden next to the Scout wood and meadow; the nights were very damp and in the morning we only had a limited number of species; we again concentrated on photographing the moths before releasing them and asking members to try to identify them from the photographs using a field guide to moths. This proved fairly successful and we still have the photographs for the record.

Below are the moths we photographed and identified (there were others that we photographed but could not reliably identify)

### i. Moth night 1 – June – 34 High Street, Little Abington

Geometer Moths: Family Geometridae

Spinach (*Eulithis mellinata*) (p.32)

Peppered Moth (*Biston betularia*) (p.62)

Prominents and allies: Family Notodontidae

Swallow prominent (*Pheosia tremula*) (p.84)

Buff-tip (*Phalera bucephala*) (p.86)

Noctuid moths: Family Noctuidae

Heart and Dart (*Agrotis exclamationis*) (p.100)

Dark Arches (*Apamea monoglypha*) (p.130)

**ii. Moth night 2 – August – 34 High Street, Little Abington**Geometer Moths: Family Geometridae

Green Carpet (*Colostygia pectinataria*) (p.36)

Clouded border (*Lomaspilis marginata*) (p.52)

Brimstone Moth (*Opisthograptis luteolata*) (p.54)

Willow Beauty (*Peribatodes rhomboidaria*) (p.64)

Common Wave (*Cabera exanthemata*) (p.72)

Tigers, Ermines and Footmen: Family Arctiidae

Common Footman (*Eilema lurideola*) (p.90)

Ruby Tiger (*Phragmatobia fulginosa*) (p.94)

Noctuid moths: Family Noctuidae

Broad-Bordered Yellow Underwing (*Noctua fimbriata*) (p.102)

Dark Brocade (*Blepharita adusta*) (p.120)

Page references in:

*Martin Townsend and Paul Waring, Concise Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland, 2011*

Identifications by members of the group and particularly by Lois and Michael Bull from photographs taken.

**iii. Other moth reports**

No hawkmoths this year in the moth trap, but one privet hawkmoth reported this year.

Only one sighting this year of a hummingbird hawkmoth on lavender in my garden in July.

**IV. Other invertebrates**

**Bees:** Due to the very wet weather, bee reports were few this year; some bumble bees early on and a scarcity of honey bees.

**Wasps:** There were a few sightings of wasps though the year as a whole showed a large reduction in the number of wasps partly due to the bad fruit crops which was caused by late frosts when trees were in flower and the lack of pollinating insects.

**Dragonflies and damselflies:** Fewer than in a normal summer

**Ladybirds:** Mainly reports of 7 spot ladybirds and very few of harlequins. Some harlequins seen in Sluice Wood by the metal sluice gates (see photo)

**V. The Roman Road in Little Abington – a great place for butterfly spotting**

One of the best places for seeing butterflies (and flowers) is the one and a half mile section of the Roman Road in the parish of Little Abington, east from Worsted Lodge on the A11.

Early in 2012 there were plenty of Brimstones, Orange-tips and Large Whites; later there were Common Blues, Ringlets, Meadow Browns, Small Heath, Gatekeepers. A sunny day should guarantee some sightings.

For the last couple of years Chalkhill Blues have been seen on the Roman Road to the west of Worsted Lodge (and seen by us on our outing in August 2012). The Abington section of the Roman Road had a major cut in the autumn of 2012 and much of the scrubby growth was removed; this should enable the chalk grassland flora to thrive again on this section. If the food plant of the Chalkhill Blue, Horseshoe Vetch, establishes here then the butterflies might cross the A11 and come to Abington!

Jennifer Hirsh - Naturewatch invertebrate recorder  
(jennifer@hirsh.demon.co.uk or 01223 893 352)

**Moths – August (Photos: JH)**



39: Brimstone Moth



40: Clouded Border



41: Dark Brocade



42: Common Wave



43: Broad Bordered Yellow Underwing



44: Footman



45: Green Carpet



46: Ruby Tiger



47: Willow Beauty

**Miscellaneous Invertebrates (Photos: JH)**



48: Bee Fly



49: White-tailed Bumble Bee



50: White-tailed Bumble Bee



51: Spindle Ermine Moth Caterpillars



52: Ladybirds



53: Dragonfly (AB)

## 6. MAMMALS

In 2012 a number of different mammals have been reported which shows the variety we have in the villages but probably under reports the numbers. Fallow, Muntjac deer and Brown Hares were reported in the more open arable areas. Of these it is interesting to see hares which are less common now. Only one fox was reported during the year.

In the garden areas, grey squirrels, hedgehogs and moles appear quite frequently. Bats too, mainly Pipistrelles, appear throughout the summer and autumn in Little Abington. A Short-tailed Vole has been seen in the same area and of great importance, a report of a Water Vole near the river at Millennium Bridge. Water Vole populations have been widely affected by wild Mink.

<i>Species</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>When seen</i>	<i>Where</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Deer	Fallow	15-20	March	Near Chalky Rd	Includes 3 males
	Muntjac	<u>2</u>	December	Bourn Bridge Rd fields	Early morning
Fox		1	September	Bourn Bridge Rd	Found dead
Hares		2-3	March	Fields on Chalky Rd	Chasing each other
Bats	unidentified		May & September	Lt Abington gardens	Resident
	Pipistrelle		May & October	Lt Abington gardens	
Grey Squirrel		several	daily	Lt Abington gardens	
Hedgehogs		Several reported	April to September	Lt Abington gardens	1 skin found, 1 immature dead in pond
Vole	Short-tailed	singly	April & October	Lt Abington garden	
	Water	1	August	River Granta, Millennium Bridge	
Mole		several	Throughout summer	Lt Abington gardens	



54: Hedgehog - June (DT)

Numbers of several of our native mammal species such as the Brown Hare, Water Vole and our bat species are considered at risk and possibly in decline. The picture is not clear and we have been asked to report our findings to CPERC – see section 9.III. To help support CPERC and Naturewatch in 2013 we need to obtain more reports from members of the variety and numbers of mammals we see in the Abingtons.

David Farrant

## 7. PLANTWATCH

### *I. Overview*

Flora seem to have coped with the climatic excesses of 2012 rather better than the animal side of life. Even when the gods took Chaucer's words about sweet April showers coming after the drought of March to ludicrous extremes, flora hardly suffered and even the more vulnerable species, such as smaller plants on the dry chalk of the Dykes and White Helleborine in Beech Wood, were looking as good as they should by May, while Birdseye Speedwell had a bumper year. If anything the rains encouraged larger blooms than usual, so that the limitations were on the side of the botanisers rather than the botany – plenty to see but too often impossible conditions for seeing it.

Some cause for regret has been the limited number of members able to take part. The timings of our programme need discussion at the spring 2013 Members Meeting.

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

We had hoped for three study visits to sites within our villages, but one, to Granta Park Lake, was rained off (for my own records there see below). A compensation was that our hopes of a successful stubble walk were not disappointed as they had been the two previous years.

#### **i. Bourn Bridge Road Protected Road Verges, 31 July**

In spite of the lush growth of grass this year Dicots were flourishing and we recorded 39 species, though we noticed the bad effect that mowing in mid-season had had on the non-PRV section of the road.

Field Scabious, the Bedstraws, the Campions and the Knapweeds formed the basis of the main show of blossoms as usual. It was good to see Restharrow, St John's Wort and Hop Trefoil still established and Wild Basil more widely distributed than before. Crow Garlic and Mignonette have not however spread west from the non-PRV section.

Spread of Nettles has not been excessive, but an attack on them may be due in 2013. The increasing interest of the Parish Council in the whole extent of the verges is greatly welcomed.

#### **ii. Linton Road Field Stubble, 29 September**

Good weather, often sunny but not too dry, offered the best abundance and diversity of chalk-loving stubble plants we've seen for some years, with some species, especially Black Bindweed and Scarlet Pimpernel showing exceptionally strong growth of leaves and flowers. We recorded 19 species, including 9 of our target stubble species.

Only one Dense-flowered Catchfly and one Field Madder were seen, and very few Cut-leaved Deadnettle and Dense-flowered Fumitory, the latter plants small but with plenty of flowers. Black Nightshade and Fool's Parsley were scattered but in quite good numbers, the parsley with exceptionally tall stems and large flowers. Dwarf Spurge flourished, with a number of denser patches than seen before. Round-leaved and (in smaller numbers) Sharp-leaved Fluellen were found together in one good area and some scattered too; both species were in flower with the different spurs evident.

Of the poppies only the common Field Poppy was identified, but the presence of several plants with very dark petals like Rough Poppies but with the wrong seed capsule, and of one group with pale pink petals, made it likely that there were other species somewhere in the field.

The abundance of fruit on the fine Spindle near the entrance to the field was a grand sight.

Linton Road Stubble Field – 29 September (Photos: PB)



55: Linton Rd Field looking East from allotments



56: Field Madder



57: Fool's Parsley



58: Field Speedwell and Scarlet Pimpernel



59: Dwarf Spurge



60: Black Bindweed



61: Field Poppy (Dark)



62: Black Nightshade



63: Field Poppy



64: Field Poppy (pink)



65: Round-leaved Fluellen



66: Sharp-leaved Fluellen



67: Dense-flowered Fumitory



68: Field Pansy



69: Cut-leaved Deadnettle



70: Night-flowering Catchfly

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

#### **i. Field on the path to Babraham (May-June)**

An exceptional mass of flowers appeared here this year, including Cudweed, Catsear and Hawksbeard all abundant. Two of our intrepid early morning walkers also discovered a fine Houndstongue, much larger and more handsome than the usual, near the footbridge. We hoped for a new species, and called in the Vice-county Plant Recorder - but alas it was the Common species, over excited by the April deluge.

#### **ii. South Grove, Great Abington**

Several Wood Dog Violets (*V. reichenbachiana*) were in flower here in April, clearly distinguished by the spur being darker than the petals. This is the first firm identification of this species in our villages.

#### **iii. Village centre**

Slender Speedwell, missed last year, is still flowering in April on the turf between the football pitch and the river. In the Vicarage drive there was a mass of Spotted Medic, not recorded before in L/A.

#### **iv. Granta Park Lake**

On the northern 'spur' in May, as well as Yellow Flag and Marsh Marigold (King Cup), Ragged Robin was holding on at the water's edge and Storksbill extending its range. New to our village records was Early Forget-me-not quite plentiful on the short turf.

By August there were signs of more Ragged Robin. Only one Centaury was still in flower and Gipsywort was past its best. Vervain has now spread in good numbers from the L/A side of the river, Purple Loosestrife and Great Willowherb likewise from further west. St John's Wort is another newcomer here, but there was no sign of the usual Water Plantain.

A little further east was Common Fleabane, one fine Water Figwort in seed, and (on the bank) massed Spotted Medick. No Flowering Rush this year.

#### **v. Bourn Bridge Road stubble fields**

As in the Linton Road field, stubble flora had a good year. Of the more common plants, Field Speedwell, Black Bindweed, Field Pansy, Chickweed and Scarlet Pimpernel were all abundant, with some species having exceptionally large blooms, also found on the Scentless Mayweed at SW.

Black Nightshade was generally scattered but massed at the south side of the SW field. Cudweed was plentiful at its usual site in the western 'spur' of NW, with Mignonette and good plants of Ramping Fumitory nearby. A few Scented Mayweed reappeared at SE.

Of our target stubble plants there were a few Cut-leaved Deadnettle in both south fields and a few Field Madder in both west ones. Fools Parsley, often exceptionally tall plants, were quite frequent at SW. A welcome surprise was that a good number of the mass of poppies, especially in the south, were the Long-headed species. Only one Night-flowering Catchfly was seen, but good numbers of both Sharp-leaved and Round-leaved Fluellens at the west end of NW.

I recorded as many as three plants new to Abington records, a good patch of Coltsfoot at NE, a Pale Toadflax in the eastern verge of SE and in the middle of the SW field what appeared certainly to be Stinking Chamomile.

#### IV. *Flora Abingtonia - New Items*

##### i. New species

9.1.4. Wood Dog Violet (*Viola reichenbachiana*). South Grove G/A 2012.

57.5.4. Early Forget-me-not (*Myosotis hispida*), Granta Park Lake (north spur) G/A 2012.

60.2.3. Pale Toadflax (*Linaria repens*). Bourn Bridge Road SE field (east verge) L/A 2012.

70.2. Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*). Bourn Bridge Road NE Field L/A 2012.

70.12A = 70.35 Stinking Chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*). Bourn Bridge Road SW Field L/A 2012.

##### ii. New Sites

5.1.2. Long-headed Poppy (*Papaver dubium*). Bourn Bridge Road SE Field L/A 2012.

28.4.2. Spotted Medick (*Medicago arabica*). Vicarage Drive L/A 2012.

60.70.2. Water Figwort (*Scrophularia aquatica*). Granta Park Lake, north verge G/A 2012.

#### V. *Outings*

Please see section 9.

Pat Daunt



71: Sweet Violets - 24 March (PB)



72: Pussy Willow on Roman Road - 9 April (PB)



73: Wild Basil on Bourn Bridge Road - 31 July (PB)



74: Mignonette on Bourn Bridge Road - 31 July (PB)

## 8. GRANGE FARM VISIT

On the afternoon of Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, as part of the national “Open Farm Sunday” event, the Camps family extended a private invitation to the members of Naturewatch to visit the Grange Farm. Members were taken on a short farm walk, where the crops grown and wildlife features were explained. Below we briefly describe the environmental system and features in place at Grange Farm in 2012, as explained on the day.

Grange Farm is registered into the entry level of the **Environmental Stewardship Scheme**, which is an agri-environment scheme run by “Natural England”, the government’s advisor on the natural environment. Grange Farm has completed one 5 year agreement and is now into year 2 of its second agreement. The scheme is run on a points system and at Grange Farm points are earned for a range of environmental management options, such as providing wild bird cover and buffer strips, creating a beetle bank and hedgerow management.



75: Grange Farm Long Field buffer strip - 7 July

6m **buffer strips** have been sown round some fields with a grass and wild flower mix. The 3 metres next to the crop can be mown so that pernicious weeds such as sterile broom can be controlled. The picture shows some of the clovers and grasses that have become established.

**Wild bird cover** is sown in the small field near the Four Went Ways.

Also as part of the ELS scheme, a **beetle bank** has been created between the Stack Yard and Gravel Pit fields. Being covered by tussocky grass it provides an essential over-wintering habitat, so that predatory ground beetles and other insects can become established.

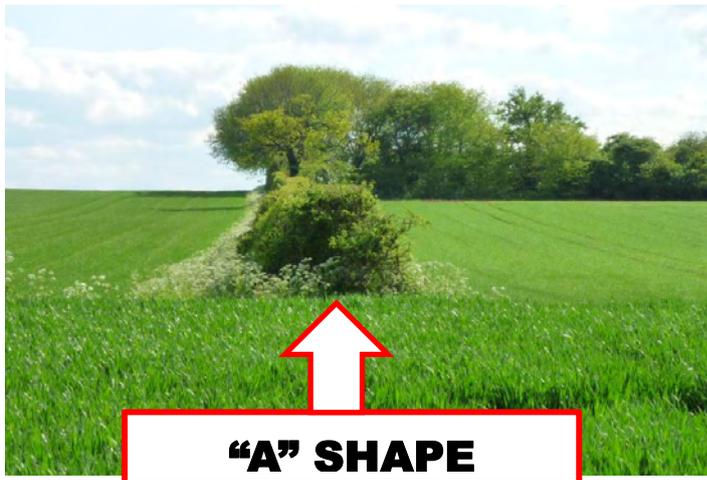
As the bank warms up quicker than the

surrounding soil and drains well, it offers a good environment for insects and small mammals to burrow. It also provides nesting habitats for other wildlife, such as skylarks and harvest mice. Another benefit is that it forms a corridor for wildlife, linking the outer boundary to the farm centre.

**Hedgerow management** is also part of the scheme. The aim when cutting the hedges is to try and get an A shape profile, being thicker at the base and narrower towards the top. This provides a good habitat for wildlife whilst also acting as a windbreak. This is shown in the picture below. Hedges are trimmed on a rotation of 2 or 3 years and the length cut each year is according to the requirements of the ELS agreement.



76: Grange Farm Beetle Bank - May



Year 1: one side and the top are cut  
 Year 2: the other side is cut but not the top  
 Year 3: the top is cut but not the sides

77: Grange Farm - Hedge between Garden Field and Long Field - 12 May

Members were also shown several hives belonging to Mr Rayner, a local beekeeper, who has had hives located at Grange Farm for several years.



78: Grange Farm - Bees flying to the Oilseed Rape - 12 May

The visit concluded with tea in the barn where an exhibit of machinery, farm history and environmental features was displayed. The family give special thanks to Sidney Camps, the farmer of Grange Farm, who although unable to attend on the day, provided the facilities and background knowledge for the rest of the family to carry out the event. And finally, I think all were very relieved, that in this year of record wet, we were blessed with an afternoon of fine weather!



79: Chris Camps serving homemade cakes



80: Tim, Kay, Tricia and Chris Camps

Tricia Cullimore on behalf of Kay, Sidney, Tim and Chris Camps

## 9. VISITS OUTSIDE THE ABINGTONS

### I. *Coploe Chalk Pit & Heydon High Meadows – Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June*

This highly successful outing, visiting the Coploe Hill chalk pit and a high meadow just off the road between Heydon and Great Chishill, was designed and led for us by Phil Jenner.

(i). In the chalk pit, due south of Ickleton, the dominant plant, abundant and in full bloom for us, is Common Valerian, an unfamiliar species hereabouts which is curiously a lover of ‘wet and dry grassland’.

There were plenty of chalk-lovers too, including both Campions and Bedstraws. Of the Legumes we saw good numbers of Birdsfoot Trefoil, Hop Trefoil, Wild Thyme and Kidney Vetch, and of the Composites Rough Hawkbit and Mouse-eared Hawkweed. There were numerous Squinancywort and Purging Flax, and also Milkwort, some of these with exceptionally large blooms; though there were plenty of blue-flowered plants they were growing together with pink ones, so that probably all were the Common rather than the Chalk species. There were good patches too of Agrimony and Eyebright, and a fine Spindle at the entrance was already showing unripe fruit.

Yet pride of place here has to go to the celebrated Roman Snails, already hugely enjoying what was to be a summer of their dreams.

(ii) Phil is discussing with the landlord ways of preserving these beautiful high meadows at the west end of Heydon, approached through a massive old plum orchard (not a plum in sight this year). There are three outstanding species of flower in the right-hand meadow here:

- Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), a prettily scattered group of an uncommon, lovely scarlet-flowered plant with grass-like leaves quite unlike other native legumes.

- Yellowwort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*), a few small but showy groups with plants and flowers of specially good size.

- Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), a good number (more than last year), just coming into bloom.

Other legumes here are Meadow Vetchling and Common Vetch. We found a big patch of Red Bartsia, and St John’s Wort and Rough Hawksbeard here and there. There was Cut-leaved Cranesbill along the access path.

We saw few butterflies about, but Phil reported lots of Marbled Whites here by mid-summer.

Both sites would repay revisiting.



81: Heydon High Meadow (JH)

Pat Daunt

*Coploe Chalk Pit and Heydon High Meadows (Photos: JH)*



82: Roman Snails



83: Wild Thyme



84: Ringlet Butterfly



85: Pyramidal orchid



86: Yellowwort

## **II. Roman Road west of Worsted Lodge – Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August**

To see good chalk grassland flora and butterflies, particularly the Chalkhill Blue.

A good group of Naturewatch members with several dogs met at Mounts Farm on the Roman Road on a rare (for 2012) sunny and clear morning.

We walked westwards for less than half a mile towards Wandlebury with a view to seeing the Chalkhill Blue butterfly. A very small colony of these rare butterflies has been recorded here in the last three years. We saw in total six of them and for most of the group it was the first time; many photographs were taken.



87: Chalkhill Blue Butterfly (JH)

They are here because their food plant, Horseshoe Vetch, grows here and is thriving since much work was done over the last few years to clear the invasive shrubs on this section either side of the track. (They have not yet been seen on the section of the Roman Road which is in Little Abington parish to the east of Worsted Lodge but a lot of clearance was done here in the autumn of 2012 so we can hope that the butterflies and their food plant might cross the A11)

Other butterflies seen were: Large White, Small White, Yellow Brimstone (male and female), Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Gatekeeper, Small Heath, Skipper.

The flowers seen included: Mignonette, Harebells, Rock Roses, Horseshoe Vetch, Dwarf Thistle, Knapweed (Greater and Black), Field Scabious, Small Scabious, Old Man's Beard, Perforate St Johns Wort, Cypress Spurge, Red Bartsia, Black Medick, Spotted Medick, Hop Trefoil, Agrimony, Yarrow.

A most enjoyable and instructive morning.

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



88: Roman Road walk (JH)

### **III. Birdwatch Outings**

During the year there were two outings:

#### **i. Fen Drayton Lakes - 4<sup>th</sup> February**

10 members travelled together by the Guided Busway on a cold morning. We saw 28 species in all including Goldeneye, Little Grebe, Pintail and Shoveler.

#### **ii. Paxton Pits - 21<sup>st</sup> April**

Under the expert guidance of Stuart Elsom, eleven members and guests saw or heard 41 species including in particular Nightingale, Common Tern, Sedge Warbler, Linnet and Cetti's Warbler.

Derek Turnidge

## **10. WORKING WITH CPERC**

We were asked in 2012 if we would contribute to the work that CPERC (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre) are doing by sending them records of sightings in Abington of two groups of species.

### **I. Native (*declining*) species**

These are 15 species that are currently declining, including several amphibians, often due to habitat change:

<b>Mammals</b>	Otter, Water Vole, Brown Hare, Bats
<b>Amphibians</b>	Adder, Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Common Lizard, Great Crested Newt, Common Toad, Common Frog
<b>Birds</b>	Kingfisher, Barn Owl
<b>Invertebrates</b>	Wall Brown Butterfly, Scarce Chaser Dragonfly

### **II. Non-native invasive species**

These are 10 species, mainly plants:

<b>Plants</b>	Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Floating Pennywort, Parrot's Feather, Giant Hogweed, Creeping Water Primrose, New Zealand Pygmyweed
<b>Mammals</b>	Muntjac Deer, American Mink, Chinese Water Deer

### **III. Reported sightings in Abington in 2012**

Native species      Brown Hares, Bats, Grass Snakes, Common Lizard, Common Toad, Kingfisher

Non-native species    Himalayan Balsam

I am sending reports to CPERC so please let me know if you see any of these. I will need the species name, date and place where it was seen. Please describe the place as accurately as you can as I have to give a 6 digit grid reference for it before I send it in.

For more information, please refer to the following pages. You can find out more about CPERC on their website [www.cperc.org.uk](http://www.cperc.org.uk). You may also submit records online on this website.

Jennifer Hirsh

# Tell us if you spot these native species

**Otter**



**Water Vole**



**Bats**



**Brown Hare**



**Adder**



**Grass Snake**



**Common lizard**



**Record your local wildlife sightings and help preserve biodiversity in Britain!**

**Slow worm**



**Great Crested Newt**



**Common Toad**



**Common Frog**



**Scarce Chaser Dragonfly**



**Wall Brown butterfly**



**Kingfisher**



**Barn owl**



# Tell us if you spot these 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**



## 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 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:

abington-naturewatch.blogspot.co.uk

Abington Naturewatch

This is a place to post sightings and news for the Naturewatch group of Great and Little Abington in Cambridgeshire, UK. See below for more details and information on how to join.

SATURDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2012

A day in the life...

Anne and Ross have a group of three Maggie Inkcaps (*Coprinus picaceus*) in damp leaf litter in their garden. They appear every year in October or November (they seem to be quite late this year).

RESOURCES

- Events Calendar
- Resources on the Web
- Archive of older material

BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▶ 2007 (18)
- ▶ 2008 (19)
- ▶ 2009 (21)
- ▶ 2010 (18)
- ▶ 2011 (35)
- ▼ 2012 (30)
  - ▶ February (1)
  - ▶ March (2)
  - ▶ April (3)
  - ▶ May (2)
  - ▶ June (6)
  - ▶ July (4)
  - ▶ August (4)
  - ▶ September (5)
  - ▶ October (1)
  - ▶ November (1)
  - ▼ December (1)
    - A day in the life...

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

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### **viii. Plantwatch**

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### **ix. School Liaison**

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

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

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