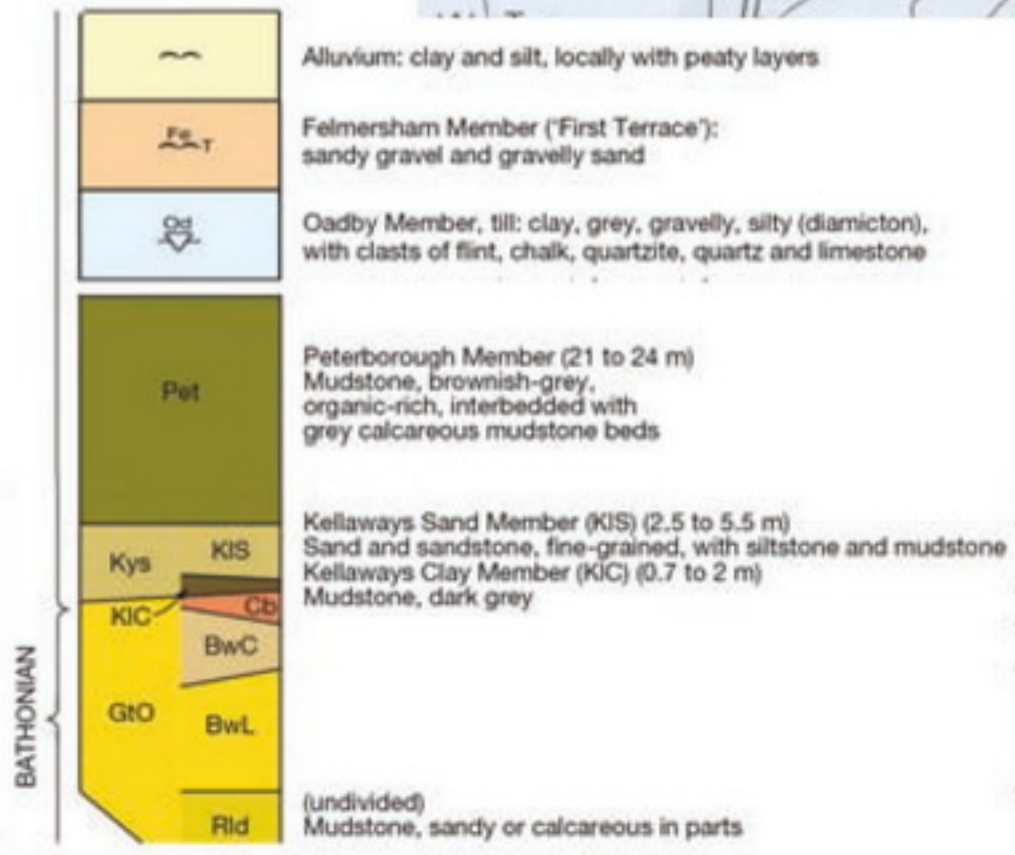
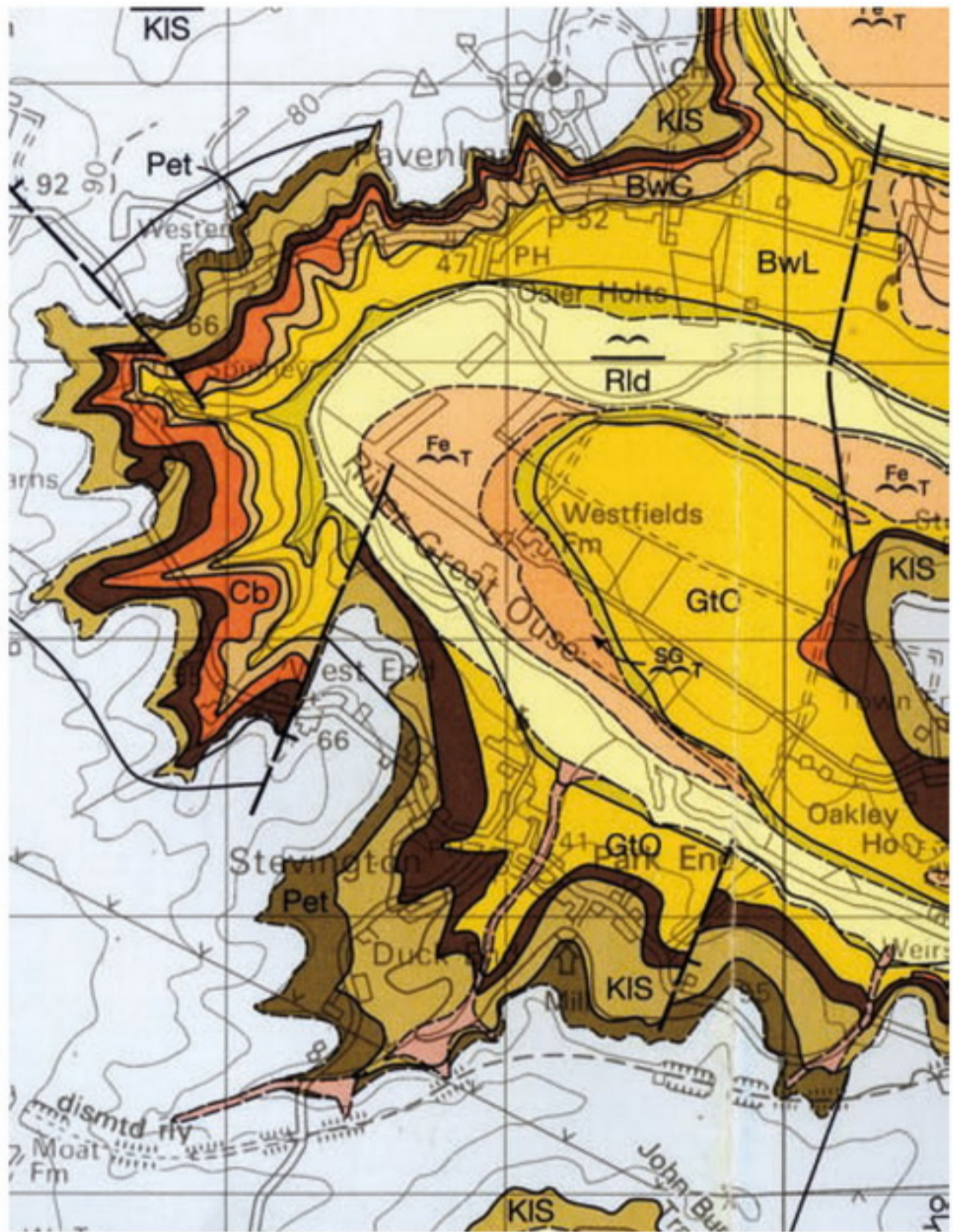


If the writer should at all appear to have induced any of his readers to pay a more ready attention to the wonders of the Creation, too frequently overlooked as common occurrences... his purpose will be fully answered.

GIL. WHITE
Selborne
January 1st. (1788)



OXFORD CLAY FORMATION

- KELLAWAYS FORMATION (Kys) (3.5 to 7 m)
- CORNBRASH FORMATION (Cb) (0 to 3 m)
Limestone, grey, bioclastic, shelly
- FOREST MARBLE FORMATION (0 to 7 m)
(not distinguished at outcrop)
Interbedded limestone and mudstone
- BLISWORTH CLAY FORMATION (BwC) (0 to 7 m)
Mudstone, mottled
- BLISWORTH LIMESTONE FORMATION (BwL) (6 to 14 m)
Limestone, bioclastic, peloidal, with thin lime-mudstone beds
- RUTLAND FORMATION

BATHONIAN

Climate and Weather



Our parish lies in a slight rain shadow area and rain can often be seen falling in Pavenham, on the other side of the valley, when Stevington remains dry. It is not unusual to see a rain line across the Pavenham Road near a house called *The Spinney*.

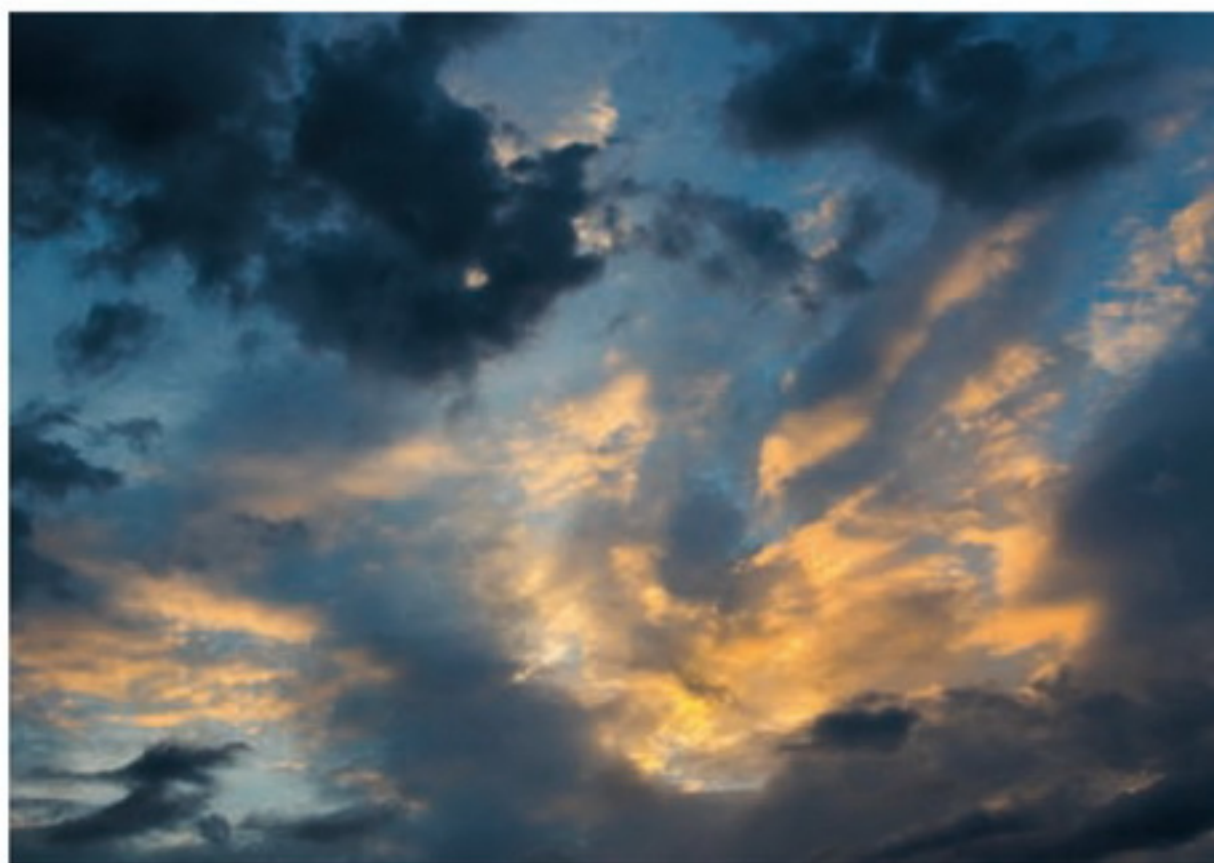
The Village rainfall has been monitored for some decades by John Prentice of *Manor Farm* and the annual records which he has kept since 1972 are reproduced below. In the 1970s Stevington had a low average rainfall of about 610 mm (24 ins) per annum and were the climate

not temperate the parish would be very arid. The graph, which appears below, compares the rainfall in Stevington with the national rainfall. As the graph suggests, the increase in average annual rainfall has mirrored the national increase. The average annual rainfall here is now closer to 700mm (28 ins), an increase of 15 per cent in 45 years. However, rainfall in Stevington remains only 60 per cent of the national average reflecting the comparative dryness of the south-east.

Some of our Garden Watch recorders commented, week by week, on the weather conditions. These are reflected in the observations set out below which, however, rely substantially on Angela Bucknall's records in *The Bedfordshire Naturalist* for the years in question.

2007

The rainfall for the year was 822 mm (32.6 ins), well above the annual average. The weather patterns were rather unusual; a warm spring was followed by a wet summer. It was the second warmest year since 1914 and the mildest winter since records began in 1659. April was the sunniest since 1893; high pressure dominated and there was little rain. It was warm and sunny throughout with only 2 millimetres of rain. In contrast May was the wettest since 1979 (131 mm) and, generally, it was a dull wet summer. July was exceptionally wet (111 mm). The wet May had a significant effect on early



Field Survey

It were to be wish't that we had a survey or inventory of the plants of every county in England and Wales, as there is of Cambridgeshire by Mr. John Ray; that we might know our own store, and whither to repaire for them for medicinall uses. God Almighty hath furnished us with plants to cure us, that grow perhaps within five or ten miles of our abodes, and we know it not.

John Aubrey

The Natural History of Wiltshire (1690-1)



Lake Meadow



Lake Meadow, as it is now called, sits between Tithe Field to the east and Boat Meadow to the west. It is the sum of two parcels of land amounting to 3 acres and 7 poles (1.3 hectares/3.2 acres) and 3 acres 3 roods and

27 poles (1.6 hectares/3.9 acres) respectively as allocated in the Enclosure Award of 1806. The Meadow, formerly part of *Manor Farm*, now runs with the *Old Vicarage*. It is bounded by the River to the north, Town Meadow to





relatively temperate pond. The fern does not seem to deter birds. In May 2007 there was a moorhen's nest in the reeds and at the end of August one moorhen with two very young chicks was swimming on the pond. In 2012 mallard ducks nested on the fallen tree that lies in the pond but a fox robbed the nest when the water level dropped.

With the steady flow of water into the pond from the Holy Well stream it might seem as if the level would remain constant but, like the new pond, it is topped up with water and fish when the River floods. These fish do have a means of escape and stickleback, ruffe and miller's thumb have been seen in the stream. When it is warm enough they go mad if you throw a handful of worms into the water.

All this corner of Lake Meadow is filled with trees apart from a narrow margin around the pond. A crack willow and a small red horse-chestnut fill the space between the north-west boundary and the tall weeping willow. On the other side of the pond are the five, towering white poplars.

There are tall sycamores between the poplars with an understorey of elder. They shade all the wet land between the pond and bank up to the footpath. This edge is overhung with the large sycamores that grow on the higher bank by the Churchyard wall and make this corner even darker. Lesser celandines do well here, lighting up the ground in March. They are followed by a continuous ground cover of dog's mercury and nettles, with lords-and-ladies and ivy on the higher ground and a few hedge woundwort and abundant ground-ivy in the light nearer the pond. Just below the footpath and growing much better there than in the wall of the Holy Well, is a luxuriant group of three hart's-tongue ferns. It is noticeable that even this patch shrinks and expands



with the rainfall. In early spring 2013 every leaf was three times as big as it had been in the dry spring of 2012.

On this wet ground fallen wood rots quickly, but some has time to be colonised by fungi. On the 25 November 2008 Alan Outen paid a brief visit to this corner after surveying the Churchyard for mosses. He observed that a fine tuft of the ubiquitous candle-snuff was growing out of a fallen twig. It is easy to see that these look like ashy, branching wicks, their spore-bearing, blackened





Red Kite (above)

Kestrel (below)

Common Buzzard (below)



Cherry Plum
(*Prunus cerasifera*)



Stevington Playing Field
July-September 2009



Earth Ball (Scleroderma verrucosum)
Stem-like base usually 2-4cm long and ribbed. Fruiting body covered in small brown scales. 4 together under Oak B19-13.



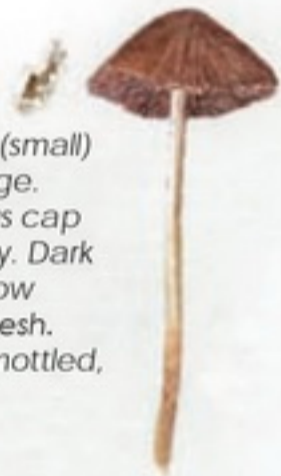
Lyophyllum descartes
B8-9 The Oak Glade.
Very stiff and tough.
White spores have dropped onto the central cap.



Mycena filopes 22.10.05
20m West of power line.
Cap: striate on outer half.
Stem base has white hairs.



Psathyrella candolleana (small)
D7-8 path edge.
Hygrophenous cap pale when dry. Dark brown gills show through thin flesh.
Brittle, shiny, mottled, hollow stem.



Blackening Waxcap (Hygrocybe nigrescens)
Group of 6 West top of Bund in turf near path.
Also C1-3, 2 groups 29.10.06.



Galerina mycenopsis 29.10.2006
Court Cottage in mossy grass in shade under *Philadelphus*.
Also in front, mossy lawn 20.11.09.



Psathyrella obtusata
by hedge W Bund. Pale when dry, dark brown when wet.

	Entries				Sightings Total	Ratio of Totals
	2007	2008	2009	Total		
Blackbird	495	283	214	992	2,117	2.1
Blackcap	12	24	8	44	45	1.0
Brambling	1	0	0	1	1	1.0
Bullfinch	7	29	23	59	75	1.3
Bunting, Reed	11	26	23	60	147	2.5
Buzzard	37	35	22	94	110	1.2
Chaffinch	439	293	205	937	2,386	2.5
Chiffchaff	6	16	11	33	38	1.2
Common Gull	0	2	6	8	10	1.3
Crow, Carrion	202	112	57	371	551	1.5
Cuckoo	16	10	1	27	27	1.0
Dove, Collared	435	251	168	854	1,566	1.8
Dove, Stock	2	0	0	2	2	1.0
Dunnock	349	240	158	747	1,415	1.9
Fieldfare	43	24	21	88	240	2.7
Goldcrest	7	6	2	15	30	2.0
Goldfinch	290	232	167	689	1,796	2.6
Goose, Canada	43	35	13	91	249	2.7
Grebe, Gt Crested	1	1	2	4	9	2.3
Greenfinch	338	273	199	810	1,813	2.2
Gull, Black-headed	11	13	6	30	40	1.3
Heron, Grey	21	11	1	33	33	1.0
Herring Gull	0	3	15	18	18	1.0
House Martin	40	18	24	82	351	4.3
Jackdaw	209	148	106	463	1,430	3.1
Jay	1	0	0	1	1	1.0
Kestrel	47	41	17	105	108	1.0
Kite, Red	2	0	2	4	4	1.0
Lapwing	2	1	14	17	41	2.4
Linnet	10	1	2	13	21	1.6
Magpie	190	134	67	391	481	1.2
Mallard	25	16	9	50	54	1.1
Moorhen	36	75	11	122	123	1.0
Owl, Barn	25	2	3	30	36	1.2
Owl, Little	29	19	2	50	51	1.0
Owl, Long-eared	3	0	1	4	4	1.0
Owl, Tawny	14	0	14	28	29	1.0
Partridge, Grey	21	22	4	47	48	1.0
Partridge, Red-legged	6	0	1	7	7	1.0

	Entries				Sightings Total	Ratio of Totals
	2007	2008	2009	Total		
Pheasant	96	73	30	199	237	1.2
Pigeon, Feral	35	38	8	81	94	1.2
Redwing	10	3	4	17	41	2.4
Robin	468	275	197	940	1,289	1.4
Rook	93	42	11	146	194	1.3
Siskin	0	7	1	8	8	1.0
Skylark	2	15	1	18	27	1.5
Snipe	0	5	0	5	6	1.2
Sparrow, House	379	215	184	778	1,921	2.5
Sparrow, Tree	16	16	47	79	92	1.2
Sparrowhawk	48	34	22	104	106	1.0
Spotted Flycatcher	1	1	1	3	6	2.0
Starling	318	204	134	656	1,720	2.6
Stonechat	0	6	1	7	19	2.7
Swallow	50	44	12	106	174	1.6
Swan, Mute	9	7	0	16	17	1.1
Swift	44	19	18	81	460	5.7
Teal	1	3	0	4	11	2.8
Thrush, Mistle	37	12	40	89	98	1.1
Thrush, Song	154	81	106	341	424	1.2
Tit, Blue	472	295	213	980	2,070	2.1
Tit, Coal	147	110	32	289	390	1.3
Tit, Great	353	260	196	809	1,467	1.8
Tit, Long-tailed	68	61	33	162	570	3.5
Tit, Marsh	4	3	0	7	7	1.0
Treecreeper	3	4	0	7	7	1.0
Wagtail, Grey	1	2	1	4	4	1.0
Wagtail, Pied	84	71	46	201	234	1.2
Warbler, Garden	0	2	0	2	3	1.5
Warbler, Grasshopper	3	2	2	7	7	1.0
Woodcock	0	16	0	16	16	1.0
Woodpecker Gt Sp	156	101	68	325	362	1.1
Woodpecker, Green	85	60	7	152	159	1.0
Woodpecker, Less Sp	2	3	8	13	14	1.1
Woodpigeon	453	274	175	902	1,705	1.9
Wren	219	114	84	417	490	1.2
Yellowhammer	25	37	9	71	78	1.1
	7,262	4,911	3,290	15,463	30,034	1.9

Butterflies, Moths, Dragonflies and Damselflies



Butterflies

The species of butterfly which occur naturally as natives or migrants in the British Isles number 60; of these, 40 are seen in Bedfordshire according to BNHS. Our study identified only 21 of which 20 were seen in gardens. These are listed in the Table at Appendix D along with the first annual sightings of each species in the parish and the Bernard West sightings of 1943 in his *Stevington Study*.

We recorded 163 entries of butterflies in gardens, many with sightings of two or more, most of which were made in association with the plants on which the butterflies had settled, most notably the buddleia. These associations are dealt with more fully in the chart at Appendix B.

Of the 40 BNHS species there are some we would not expect to find in Stevington, while others which we did not record, such as the clouded yellow, we might have expected to see occasionally.

Comma



Peacock





Small Tortoiseshell



Red Admiral



Gatekeeper



Common Blue



Painted Lady

Small White



Clouded Yellow





Barn Owl

Other Invertebrates



Gardens in Stevington with mature trees, hedges and the few areas of rough grassland provide habitats for a wide variety of insect species in our parish.

Many insects were observed by Garden Watch recorders and with some firm identifications, at least as to family if not species. However, although bee names were not always recorded consistently, the following species were identified by the end of the study period: the white-tailed or early bumblebee, *Bombus lucorum*; the buff-tailed bumblebee, *Bombus terrestris*; the red-tailed bumblebee, *Bombus lapidarius*; the common carder bee, *Bombus pascuorum*; and the small, furry bee that hovers in front of flowers, *Anthophora plumipes*. *Psithyrus vestalis*, which infects the buff-tailed bumble bee with parasites, was recognised in one garden and *Apis mellifera*, the honey bee, was recorded many times throughout the study.

Buff-tailed bumble bees were observed in every month of the year in 2007. We saw other bees from February to October each year with most sightings from March to August. Honey bees were recorded from February and white-tailed bumble bees from March and both were seen until late autumn in 2009.

A species of black bee was only recorded in February and May 2008; in May that year a mining bee was seen and in July there was evidence of a leaf-cutter bee. Red-tailed bumble bees were recorded on 11 occasions from January to October in 2009 and a carder bee was reported on three occasions from June to August that year. The carder bee is omnipresent throughout the summer and many may have been recorded simply as "bee".

Hornet





Sparrowhawk
with
Collared
Dove



Great Spotted Woodpecker (above)

Songthrush with a Brown-lipped Banded Snail (below)

One woodland bird, the great spotted woodpecker, comes to the garden for the young conifer cones before they become woody. Of the visiting birds the image of the sparrowhawk is the most powerful. When this photograph was taken it had dived into the garden and brought down a collared dove.

The song thrush is not resident in this garden but one visitor soon finds a snail here.



Appendices

