

Bees and wasps



Several species of bees and wasps visit the churchyard throughout the year.

This picture above shows a Common Carder Bee on a cuckoo flower. These bees are solitary and nest above or below ground.

Below are a variety of bees and wasps.



Bats

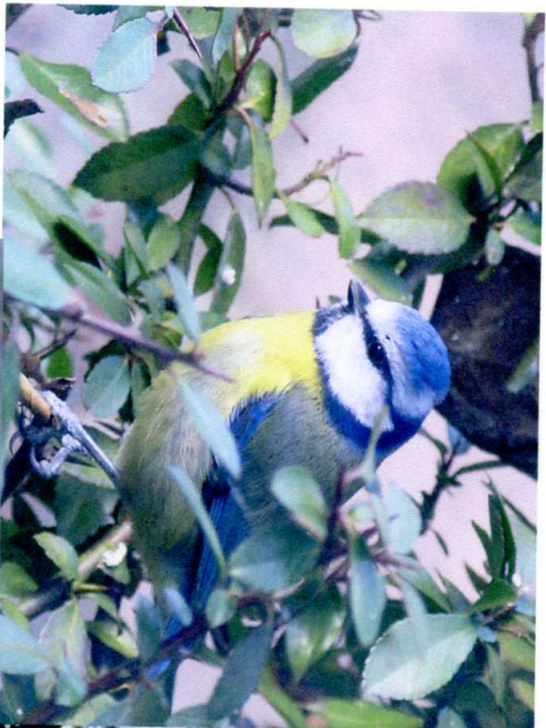


Photo from Friends of Wildlife.

Bats live in various locations around the church. They have been found in the tower and, almost certainly roost in the yew trees, which provide an ideal habitat for them.

On a summers evening you will see the bats flying around. If you listen quietly you will also hear the rustle of their wings as they fly. You may just be able to hear slow clicks as they fly. These are the audible (to us) frequencies of their social calls. Bats have poor eyesight, but quite amazing powers of echo location—so good they can catch small insects on the wing. They are amazing to watch in flight as they dodge and dive catching insects—don't worry about them flying into you—you are a giant and they will have no difficulty in missing you as they fly around.

Birds



Butterflies



At different times of year the churchyard can seem alive with butterflies flitting between the flowers.

Above: this is a common blue – most usually found in open grassy spaces. It feeds on clovers and pea flowers, although here it is on an Ox-eye daisy. Below left: Red Admiral, caterpillars feed on stinging nettles.



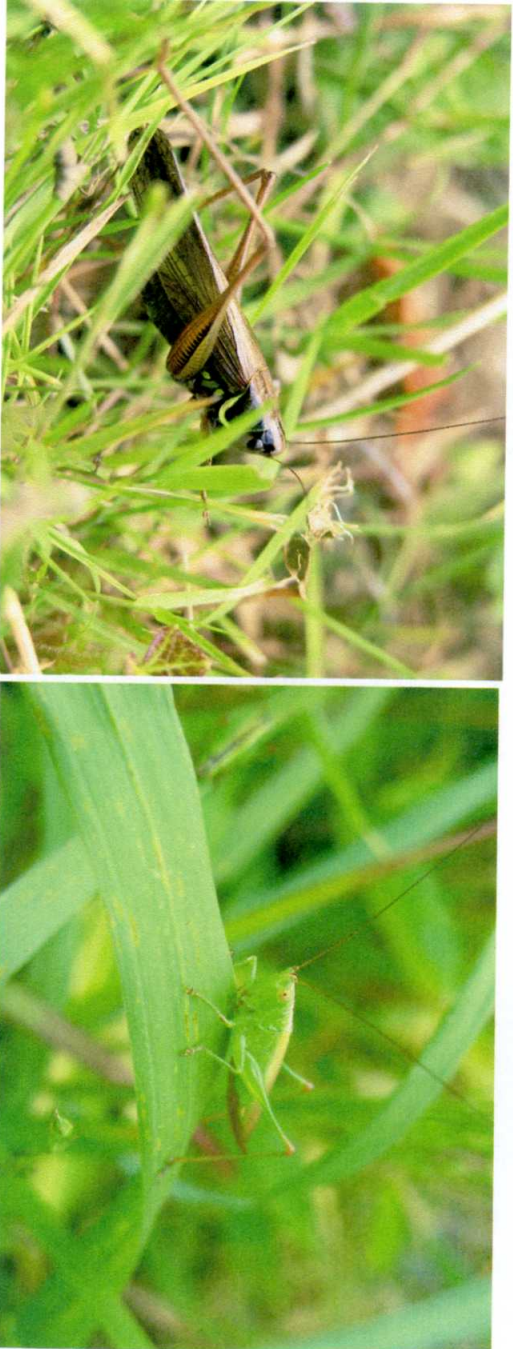
Froghopper/Spit bug



One of the cuckoo spit insects, this one is particularly strikingly coloured. Other spit bugs are brownish green or dark grey, but with the same patterning as this black and red one. They are called froghoppers because they hop, probably to escape predators.

They lay their eggs on various plants where the nymphs hide themselves in a blob of foam. The name cuckoo spit may have arisen because the foam is first seen at the same time as the cuckoo returns.

Grasshoppers & Crickets



Its easy to hear grasshoppers and crickets during the summer, but more of a challenge to find them. In fact both the above photos are of crickets.

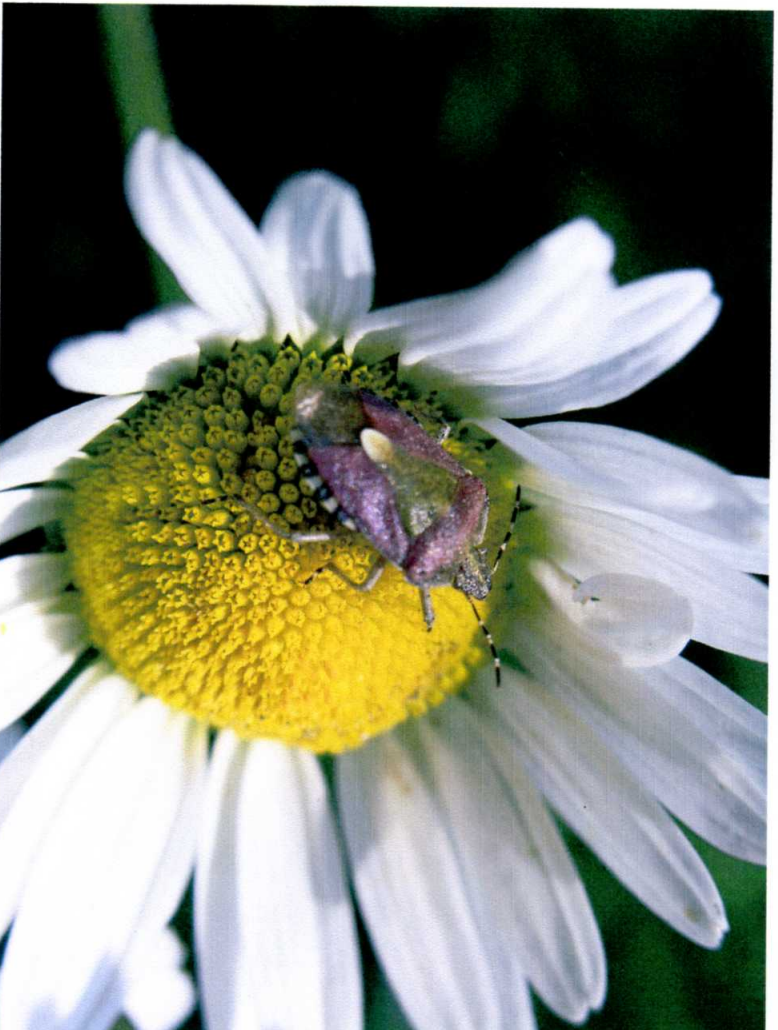
I think the left one is a Roesels Bush Cricket, a relatively recent introduction to the British Isles which is spreading north as our climate warms up

Crickets are easy to distinguish from grasshoppers as they have very long antennae, typically longer than their bodies. Grasshoppers have short, but easy to see antennae.

Hawthorn Shield bug



A common insect which ranges through green to brown. Most often found on or around hawthorn whose berries and leaves are its food.



Ladybirds



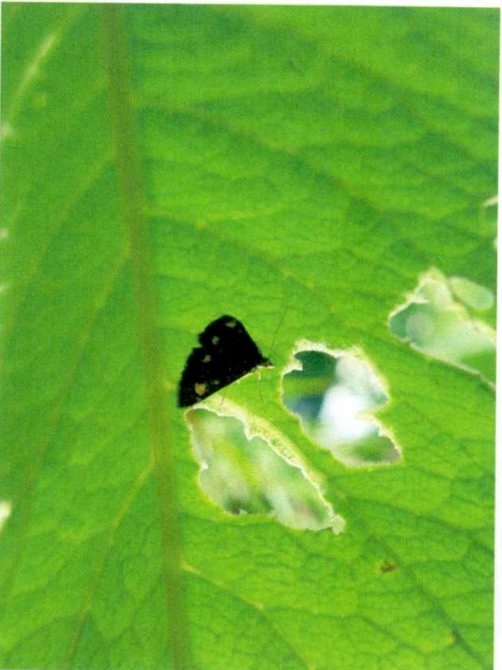
Several different ladybirds can be seen at many times of year. The more usual red and black variety above and below centre, but also black with red spots and yellow with black spots, below right and left. The number of spots can vary from 2 to 22. Adult ladybirds and their larva feed on aphids.



Moths



Many species of moth fly by day, such as the six spot burnet shown above, obligingly posing for its photograph on my hand! This moth feeds on clover, trefoils and vetches and lays its eggs on long grass stems.



Newts



Newts love to hibernate underneath stones and we have plenty of those in the churchyard! They will travel surprisingly large distances over land and spend far more of their lives on land than in water – they only return to water to breed.

We have found several hibernating newts when repairing gravestones. This picture shows a Great Crested Newt, the largest of the British newts. You can just see the bright orange of its underside at the end of its tail. It is a protected species.

Rabbits



To the annoyance of some, rabbits live in various warrens in and around the churchyard. However, they are an important part of the rural ecology of the churchyard, providing food for animal such as foxes and larger birds of prey (I am told that buzzards have been seen in this area).

Hedgehogs



Slow Worms



Photo from BBC wildlife.

Slow worms are actually a legless lizard, not a snake, and can often be seen in the churchyard especially after it has rained or at dusk, these are the times they come out to look for prey (slugs, snails etc). They do not tend to bask like other reptiles and spend the days hiding in long grass or under stones.

They range in colour from silver grey through to brown and can be up to 50cm (20 inches) long. They are very shiny and not particularly quick when they move.