



# Ramsbury and Axford Village Diary

## April 2014



May we have items for the May diary before 17 April.  
They may be left at the Post Office or sent to [diary@ramsbury.org](mailto:diary@ramsbury.org)

### NATURE NOTES

No sooner had I written the notes for March in mid-February than nature began to spring into life with masses of snowdrops and aconites flowering. As we have now enjoyed a few warm spring days the flora and fauna is really coming to life and the flood water is receding at last. What effect will the flooding have had on the water meadow life I wonder?

When walking near the ford (which is now passable) a frog was sitting on the gravel path, it appeared to be warming up in the sunshine, just as snakes do-not that I have seen any for several years. Baby rabbits will soon be around but as yet I have only seen an adult grazing by the roadside.

Insect life can now be seen, not just clouds of winter gnats but yellow brimstones, the females are whitish and small. Tortoiseshells are quite numerous. Several types of bumble bees are now busy visiting the spring flowers. The daffodils are looking grand as they seemed to burst into flower all at once, but the Welsh Borders need to be visited to see our native ones. These wild ones are smaller and paler than the cultivated types. When along by the canal at Great Bedwyn in mid March quite a variety of our wild plants were starting to flower, pink butterburr and common sedge with its black spikes. Both white and red dead nettles were beginning to flower also shepherds purse and bitter cress, the latter two and groundsel will soon need pulling from our gardens.

Since the soil is getting drier lawn mowing is starting together with trimming the edges where slugs are to be found, small garden ones, plus larger types including the brown variety as yet they have not reached their full size. Not only are the garden shrubs developing leaves and flowers but willows and blackthorn are flowering in sheltered places.

By April sowing seeds and buying plug plants will be under way once again, in fact the in the West of the country this is already taking place.

*Rosie Pauline*

### BIRD NOTES

The return of some warmth and sunshine has been welcomed by all of nature it seems. A lovely day on Springs Hill started with a flock of sixty starlings glittering in the sunshine. Four lapwings were doing their tumbling spring aerobatics, accompanied by their wonderful calls. With luck they will nest up there again this year.

The air was full of the sound of the many skylarks that keep singing as they climb, hover and then 'parachute' down to the ground. Two pairs of stonechats preceded us along a fence line, returning from foraging on the ground to sit atop the fence posts until we were quite close. We jumped a one point as our dog flushed three snipe from the undergrowth. They zigzagged away, calling loudly.

Earlier in the week we had six buzzards and four kites circling lazily directly above our house. In the garden a female blackbird has been collecting dry grass and tiny twigs, flying off into an evergreen shrub with an improbable amount of material in her beak. Elsewhere, a friend has enjoyed no less than three male bullfinches enjoying her garden. Unfortunately, they have probably been stripping her fruit trees of most of their buds!

*Paul Swan*

### RAINFALL

Rainfall for the month to 18 March was 2.25 inches, average 2.57 inches.