

# **Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve**

## **Bush Crickets and Grasshoppers**

### **Recorded in Manor Woods Valley**

**2015-25**



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**Manor Woods Valley Group**



## 1. Introduction and Methodology

Manor Woods Valley Group member, Peter Loy-Hancocks, collate reports and records covering the period 2015 to 2025, of bush crickets (which include coneheads) (family Tettigoniidae), and grasshoppers (family Acrididae, subfamily Gomphocerinae, in, and immediately adjacent to, Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve. Sources of reports and records included Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) open access records, iNaturalist and iRecord online recording records, and National Biodiversity Network atlas (NBN) publicly available online records.

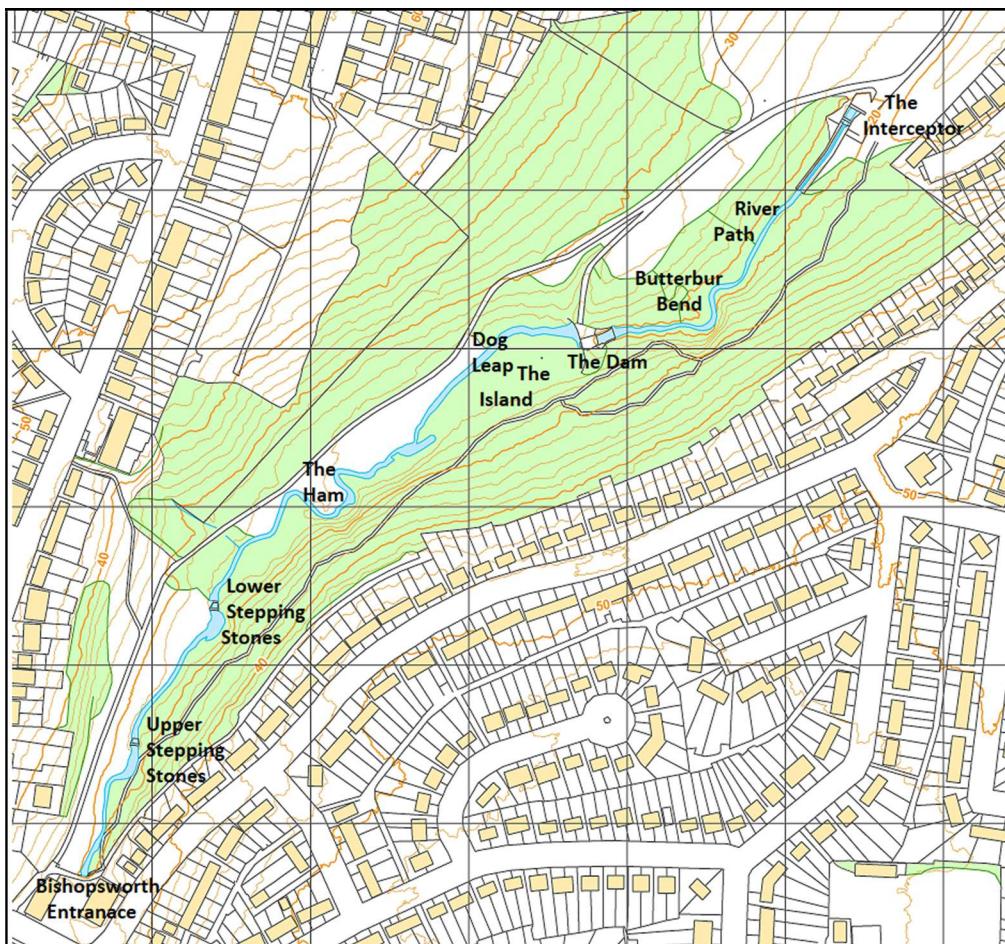


Figure 1: The Malago, place names within Manor Woods Valley

## 2. Results

Possibly seven species of bush-cricket were recorded in, or immediately adjacent to, Manor Woods Valley during the period 2015-25. These are Oak Bush-cricket, Dark Bush-cricket, Bog Bush-cricket, Roesel's Bush-cricket, Great Green Bush-cricket, Speckled Bush-cricket and Long-winged Conehead.

Three species of grasshopper have been recorded in Manor Woods Valley, namely Common Green Grasshopper, Field Grasshopper and Meadow Grasshopper.

### 3. Discussion

Bush-crickets and grasshoppers belongs to the group of insects known as Orthopter. In both bush-crickets and grasshoppers, the hind legs are large in proportion to their bodies, and this enables them to jump long distances. Bush crickets can be distinguished from grasshoppers by their larger body size (up to 5 cm in length) and their very long antennae. Females have a distinctive sword-like ovipositor at the tip of the abdomen which they use for laying eggs inside vegetation. As a very general rule, most UK species emerge in mid–late spring or early summer and die off in late autumn.

Except in the case of the Oak Bush-cricket, all species stridulate by rubbing their wings together.

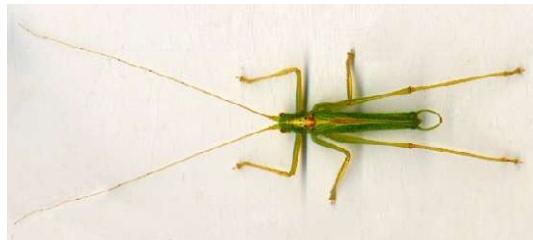
Fifteen species of bush-cricket (including cone-heads) have been recorded in the UK. Eight species have been recorded in the wider Bristol region. Some of the latter have specific habitat requirements and therefore might not be expected to occur in or adjacent to Manor Woods Valley.

Eleven Gomphocerinae grasshoppers have been recorded in the UK. Five species have been recorded in the wider Bristol region, with one record of Lesser Marsh Grasshopper from Pill saltmarsh, and two records of Rufous Grasshopper. As with bush-crickets, some grasshoppers have specific habitat requirements and therefore are unlikely to occur in association with Manor Woods Valley.

Possibly seven species of bush-cricket and three species of grasshopper have been recorded in, or on the edge of, Manor Woods Valley since 2015.

#### Bush-crickets (family Tettigoniidae)

**Oak Bush-cricket:** Unlike other bush-crickets, the Oak Bush-cricket is predominantly carnivorous, feeding on a variety of smaller invertebrates such as caterpillars and other larvae. Males use their hind legs to drum on leaves to attract females. This sound is not picked up by bat detectors.



Oak Bush-crickets occur throughout England and Wales. One was trapped in Manor Woods Valley in a moth trap in 2024.

**Dark Bush-cricket:** The Dark Bush-cricket can be found in woodlands, hedgerows and gardens throughout summer. They occur throughout southern England and along the south Wales coast. Its irregular chirpings are a familiar sound of summer. These chirpings were recorded on bat detectors at six sites on the edges of Manor Woods Valley in 2022.



**Bog Bush-cricket:** Bog Bush-crickets live in lowland peat bogs, where they lay their eggs on Purple Moor Grass and feed on Heather and Cross-leaved Heath. They occur in scattered areas throughout England and Wales. Their nearest known occurrence to Bristol is on the Somerset Levels.



Considering their habitat requirements and known distribution, it is doubtful that the two, bat detector based, records from Ilchester Crescent gardens backing onto Manor Woods Valley are valid.

**Roesel's Bush-cricket:** Until the early 20th century, Roesel's bush-cricket was only found on the south-east coast, but recent years have seen a rapid expansion in its range. It now occurs throughout England, with the exception of the northern most counties, and along the Welsh Marches. It occurs in rough grassland, scrub and damp meadows. It was seen in the Rabbit Field and the top of the Wildflower Meadow in 2021

**Great Green Bush-cricket:** The large Great Green Bush-cricket lives in trees and on grassland dotted with patches of scrub, eating vegetation and other insects. It prefers light, dry soils into which the females can lay their eggs using their very long, down-curved ovipositors. The males display to females by rubbing their forewings together to produce a very loud, long 'song', but their expert camouflage makes them hard to spot.

The Great Green Bush-cricket occurs throughout southern England and Wales. There are a few records of this species from the Bristol area, however in 2022 bat detectors placed in two gardens in Ilchester Crescent, recorded, according to automatic analysis of the data, Great Green Bush-cricket calls.

**Speckled Bush-cricket:** The Speckled Bush-cricket prefers rough vegetation, scrub and hedgerows, and is also found in gardens. It can be seen perching on bushes, window ledges, flowers and leaves, particularly Bramble. Most active at dusk and during the night, males call to attract females by rubbing their wings together, but their 'song' (a high-pitched 'chirp') is barely audible to human ears.



This species occurs throughout Southern England, and along the Welsh coasts. In 2022, calls of Speckled Bush-crickets were recorded by bat detectors in all of the six gardens backing on to Manor Woods Valley that were surveyed.

**Long-winged Cone-head:** The Long-winged Conehead is a bush-cricket of rough grassland, dry heaths and woodland rides, as well as damp and coastal habitats. It is largely herbivorous, feeding on grasses, but will also eat small invertebrates.

The Long-winged Conehead occurs throughout southern England and parts of Southern Wales. It was recorded in Manor Woods Valley in 2015.



## Grasshoppers (family Acrididae, subfamily Gomphocerinae)

**Meadow Grasshopper:** The Meadow Grasshopper can be found in damp, unimproved pastures and meadows throughout summer, across the whole of Great Britain. There are several records from across the Manor Woods Valley site, but especially from the large Wildflower Meadow.



**Field Grasshopper:** The Field Grasshopper can be found in sunny, grassy areas, particularly gardens, throughout summer, throughout the British Isles. There are several records from the southern end of Manor Woods Valley.



**Common Green Grasshopper:** The Common Green Grasshopper can be found in damp meadows and woodland rides throughout summer. It occurs equally as widely as the Field Grasshopper. There is a single record from Manor Woods Valley.



## 4. Conclusions

Possibly over half of the UK's twelve species of bush-cricket and three of the eleven species of Gomphocerinae grasshoppers have been recorded in or immediately adjacent to Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve.

This report does not represent a comprehensive survey of bush-crickets or Gomphocerinae grasshoppers in Manor Woods Valley, however as many of the unrecorded species favour habitats that do not occur on the site, or have limited geographical ranges, formal survey work is relatively unlikely to reveal the presence of more species than have currently been recorded.

All photos in this report © Peter Loy-Hancocks. Photos not taken in Manor Woods Valley.