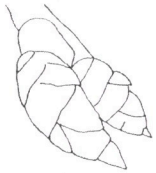
IDEAS FOR SPRING VISITS

Watch the horse chestnut trees along Leopold Street burst into growth
As Spring approaches the hours of daylight increase. This is the time when new leaves begin to grow. You can see this happening in different stages. Also look for the red horse chestnut tree to the south of the church. (3)



Budburst The bud is starting to open



First leaf You can just recognise the leaf's shape



First flower You can just see inside the first flowers

See how many different materials are used for the monuments
There are more than fourteen types of rock. Look out for polished white marble (4), pink Scottish granite (5) and the only slate ledgerstone in the churchyard (6). At (7) you can see fossilised shells in a broken limestone column. There are also four cast iron crosses (8), wooden pented crosses (9) and some fired terracotta 'Grimsley Patent' stones made in Oxford (10).



PRACTICAL TIPS

- Keep to paths if possible.
- Beware hidden stumps, holes and kerbstones
- Don't play or climb on tombstones
- Beware dangerous rubbish such as broken glass and syringe needles. Report any needle find to the City Council: 252 900
- Beware of dog mess
- Do not eat anything, including berries, found in the churchyard
- Do not pick flowers: let others enjoy them

Contact the Vicarage for further information:
cowleysj@btinternet.com ;
01865 242396

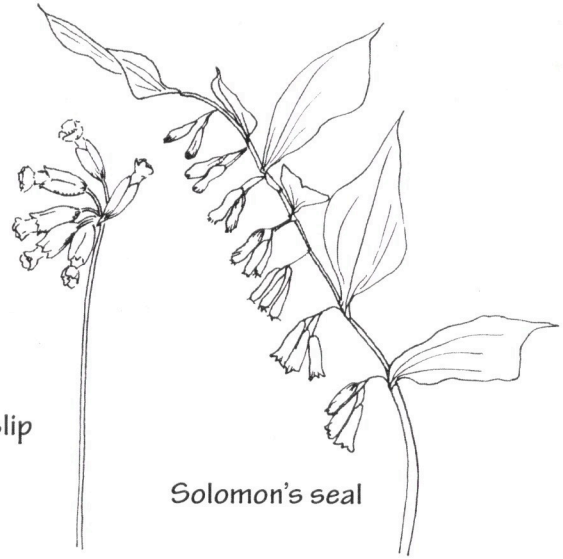
Design and illustrations Julie Norris
Drawing of churchyard Margaret Cullen

Heritage
LOTTERY FUNDED

Ss MARY & JOHN CHURCHYARD
Jubilee Wildlife Space



A Guide for Spring Visits



Cowslip

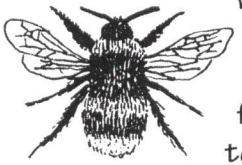
Solomon's seal

ST MARY & JOHN CHURCHYARD
Jubilee Wildlife Space
Spring

A few species of butterfly can be seen early in the year because they over winter as adults.



Small Tortoiseshell lay their eggs on nettles and then die.



White-tailed bumblebee (bombus lucorum) queens are among the first of the species to emerge following hibernation. Only the young fertilised queen survives the winter which is spent in a protected place such as a hole or under moss. She will now start up her own colony.

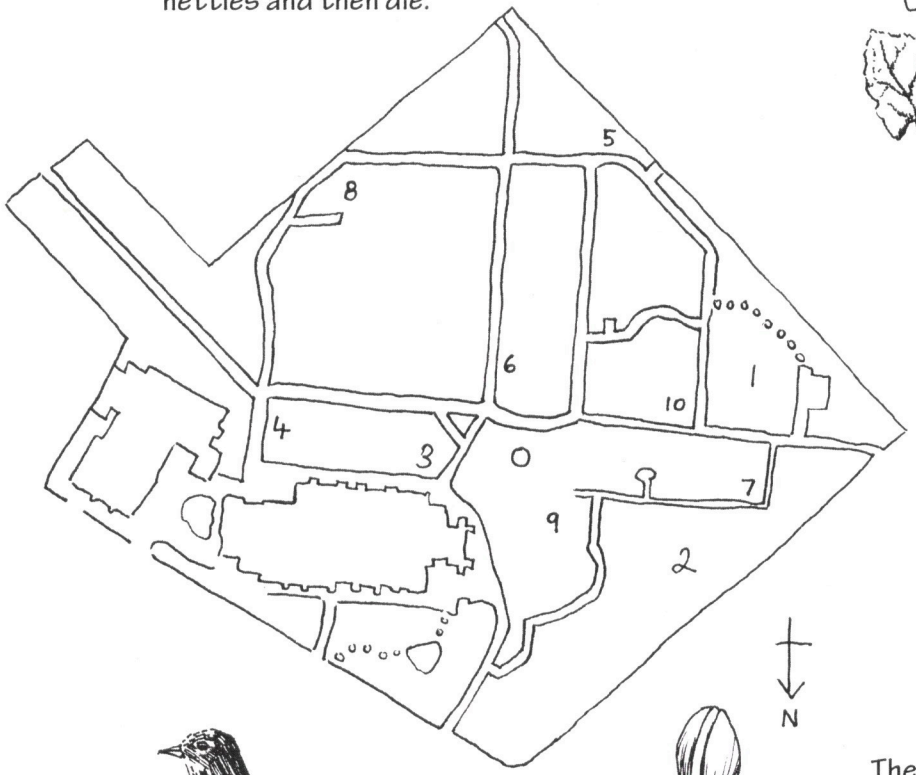
Baby birds can be seen being fed insects foraged from the leaf litter piles in the churchyard. You may see —



Blue tit

Chaffinch





A few of the birds you see will have migrated to this country in late spring mostly from Africa where they have spent the winter.



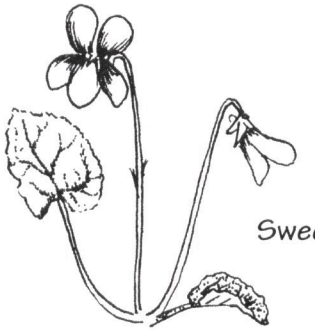
House martin

Spotted flycatcher



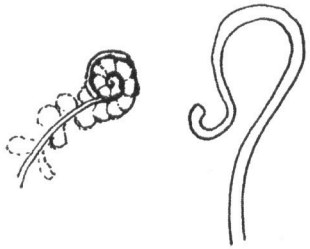
Can you hear the swifts screeching as they swoop above the streets of east Oxford? Except when on the nest, they spend their whole lives, even sleeping, on the wing.

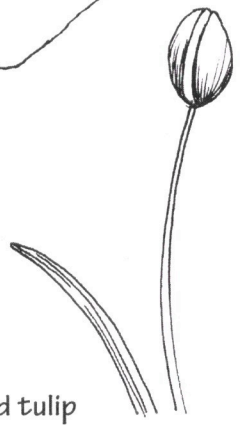
In the Garden of Remembrance and Thanksgiving (1) there are many specially planted wild flowers that are in bloom at this time of year. Look out for cowslips, sweet violets, Solomon's seal and the wild tulip.



Sweet violets

Can you see young ferns starting to grow? The curled top is called a crosier which is the same name as the staff carried by a bishop.





Wild tulip

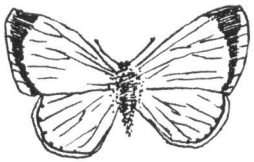
There is an apple tree to the west of the church which will be in blossom at this time of year. (2) It is probably 'King of the Pippins'.



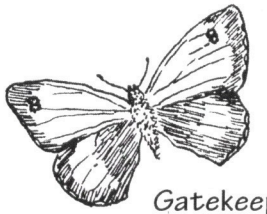
IDEAS FOR SUMMER VISITS

IDENTIFY SOME BUTTERFLIES

On warm sunny days butterflies will be busy in the churchyard looking for nectar which is their energy source.
You may see —



Holly blue



Gatekeeper
(or Hedge brown)



Large white

...also the Orange tip and Speckled wood.

LOOK & LISTEN FOR DEVELOPING SEEDS

You may hear cones dropping onto the churchyard floor from the tall Wellingtonia (3) and Corsican pine trees, (4) each one contains tiny seeds.
Look out for the bright red berries of the lords and ladies in the Garden of Remembrance and Thanksgiving where you will also see the pods of the Gladwyn iris swelling with seed.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- Keep to paths if possible.
- Beware hidden stumps, holes and kerbstones
- Don't play or climb on tombstones
- Beware dangerous rubbish such as broken glass and syringe needles. Report any needle find to the City Council: 252 900
- Beware of dog mess
- Do not eat anything, including berries, found in the churchyard
- Do not pick flowers: let others enjoy them

Contact the Vicarage for further information:
cowleysj@btinternet.com ;
01865 242396

Design and illustrations Julie Norris
Drawing of churchyard Margaret Cullen

Heritage
LOTTERY FUNDED

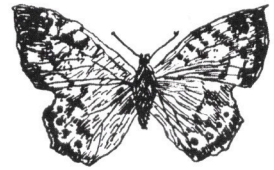
Ss MARY & JOHN CHURCHYARD
Jubilee Wildlife Space



A Guide for Summer Visits



Ox-eye daisy



Speckled wood

ST MARY & ST JOHN CHURCHYARD
Jubilee Wildlife Space
Summer

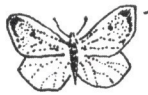
the Summer wood[illegible] of[illegible] churchyard provides a peaceful, shady retreat under the canopy of leaves of the mature trees. The contrasting habitats within the churchyard attract a variety of wildlife.





There are dry stone walls,





orange tip



long grass and flowers

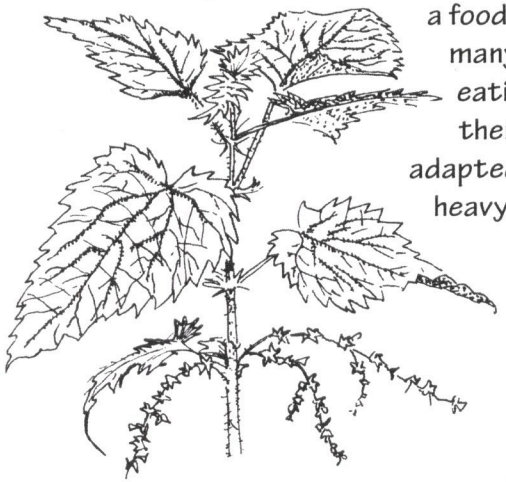




and even in the heat there are cool, damp areas of decaying leaves and rotting log piles. What other habitats can you see?

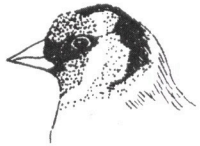


The stinging nettle is one of the most important plants in the churchyard. It supports over 40 species of insects and invertebrates and in late summer the huge quantity of seed produced provides a food source for many of our seed eating birds with their specially adapted short, heavy beaks.



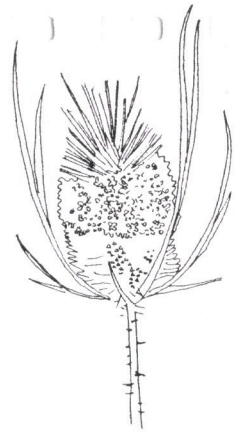


Chaffinch



Goldfinch

Can you see a teasel? (2)
This is a tall biennial plant (it takes 2 years to grow) and in the summer it attracts numerous butterflies, bees and hoverflies who drink nectar from its pale purple flowers. Next year's plants will already be growing around the churchyard where seeds have dispersed. They look like large green rosettes of prickly leaves. In the winter the seed heads provide a food source for birds. Dried teasel heads were used for centuries to comb wool and today are still used for specialist cloths to cover billiard tables, tennis balls and furnishings.



Many other churchyard plants and shrubs have nectar-rich flowers. Look out for —

field scabious



buddleia (or butterfly bush)



and ox-eye daisy

IDEAS FOR AUTUMN VISITS

Sensory

Trees rustling, squirrels scurrying, birds singing. What else can you hear?

Earthy, musty leaf mould smells.

Look all around, up to the tree tops and the church tower and down to the ground below your feet.

Touch the nobbly pine cones and textured tree bark.

Lifecycle

You will find many examples of fruiting seeds at this time of year. Look out for hawthorn, rose, holly, iris and others.

Mini beasts

Each autumn there is a lot of dead plant material lying around the churchyard as most plants either shed their leaves or the plant above ground dies back leaving only the roots alive. Many mini beasts specialise in eating this plentiful food supply so keep a look out for ground beetles, wood lice, slugs, snail, spiders, centipedes and worms

Art

Look at leaf shapes and the Autumnal colouring of the trees. You may see spiders webs covered in dew if you visit in the early morning.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Keep to paths if possible.
- Beware hidden stumps, holes and kerbstones
- Don't play or climb on tombstones
- Beware dangerous rubbish such as broken glass and syringe needles. Report any needle find to the City Council: 252 900
- Beware of dog mess
- Do not eat anything, including berries, found in the churchyard
- Do not pick flowers: let others enjoy them

Contact the Vicarage for further information:
cowleysj@btinternet.com ;
01865 242396

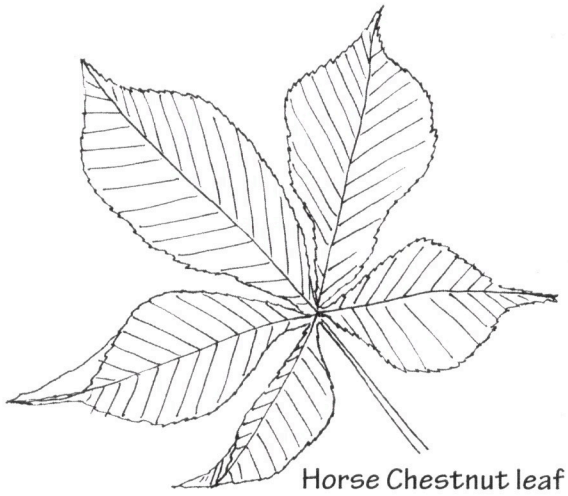
Design and illustrations Julie Norris
Drawing of churchyard Margaret Cullen

Heritage
LOTTERY FUNDED

Ss MARY & JOHN CHURCHYARD
Jubilee Wildlife Space



A Guide for Autumn Visits

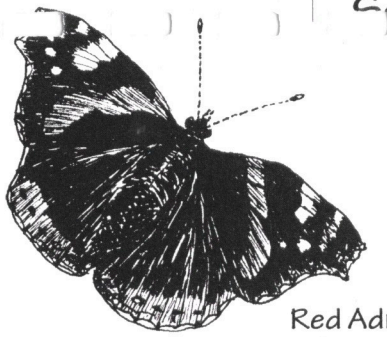


Horse Chestnut leaf

ST MARY & JOHN CHURCHYARD

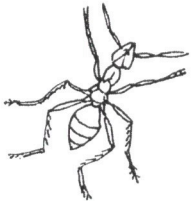
Jubilee Wildlife Space

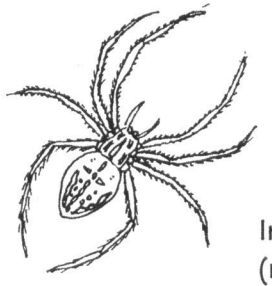
Autumn



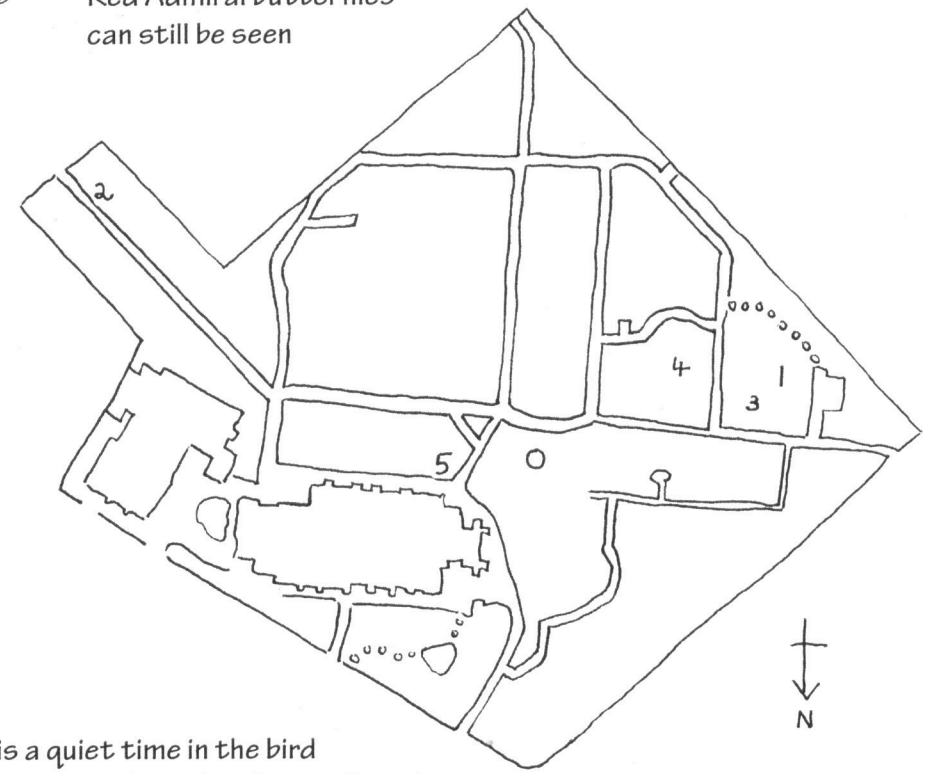
Red Admiral butterflies can still be seen







Invertebrates (mini beasts) are encouraged by the habitat piles and fallen debris in the Autumn.

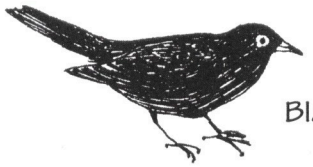




Long tailed tit



Starling



Blackbird

Autumn is a quiet time in the bird world. There is such an abundance of seeds, berries and insects that there is not yet the winter struggle for survival. For many species this is the season of moult when some birds just like to lie low. There may be an increase in the numbers of blackbirds and starlings as migrants from Scandinavia and eastern Europe arrive. Look out for long tailed tits and listen for the robin who is the only regular singer at this time of year.



The Garden of Remembrance and Thanksgiving (1) is a good place to study some of the many wildflowers and ferns specially planted. You will notice the bright orange seeds of Iris Foetidissima (or Gladwyn - an old English name for a spear).

How many different leaf shapes can you identify during your visit?



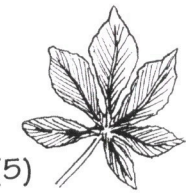
Lime (2)



Sycamore (3)



Hawthorn (4)



Horse Chestnut (5)





This is one of the best seasons for spotting fungi with many varieties thriving in the rotting vegetation. Keep an eye out for bracket and flask fungi on old tree stumps and fallen logs.

IDEAS FOR WINTER VISITS



Look at the trees.

Watch the birds.

Horse chestnut trees along the Leopold Street wall.

There are more than 30 types of trees in Ss Mary and John Churchyard and Winter is the best time to study their shapes and bark patterns. Deciduous, broad-leaved trees such as oak, ash and beech shed their leaves in the autumn. Evergreen trees such as many conifers often have narrow, needle-like leaves with a thick waxy coating and these adaptations help them to conserve water during the winter.



Can you find the two tall Wellingtonias?(3) (Giant Redwoods). Look on the ground for fallen cones and compare them with the Corsican Pines. (4)

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Keep to paths if possible.
- Beware hidden stumps, holes and kerbstones
- Don't play or climb on tombstones
- Beware dangerous rubbish such as broken glass and syringe needles. Report any needle find to the City Council: 252 900
- Beware of dog mess
- Do not eat anything, including berries, found in the churchyard
- Do not pick flowers: let others enjoy them

Contact the Vicarage for further information:
cowleysj@btinternet.com ;
01865 242396

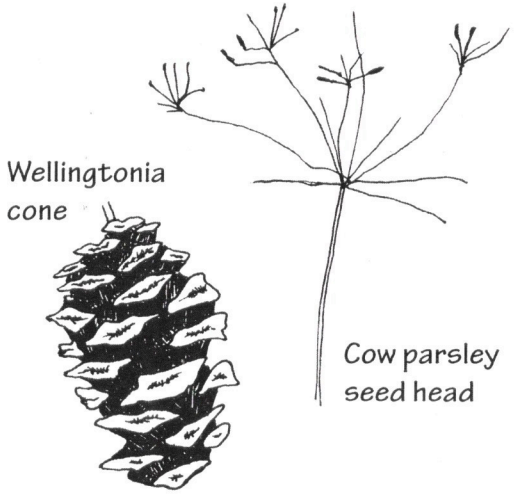
Design and illustrations Julie Norris
Drawing of churchyard Margaret Cullen

Heritage
LOTTERY FUNDED

Ss MARY & JOHN CHURCHYARD
Jubilee Wildlife Space



A Guide for Winter Visits



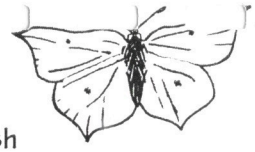
Wellingtonia cone

Cow parsley seed head

ST MARY ST JOHN CHURCHYARD

Jubilee Wildlife Space

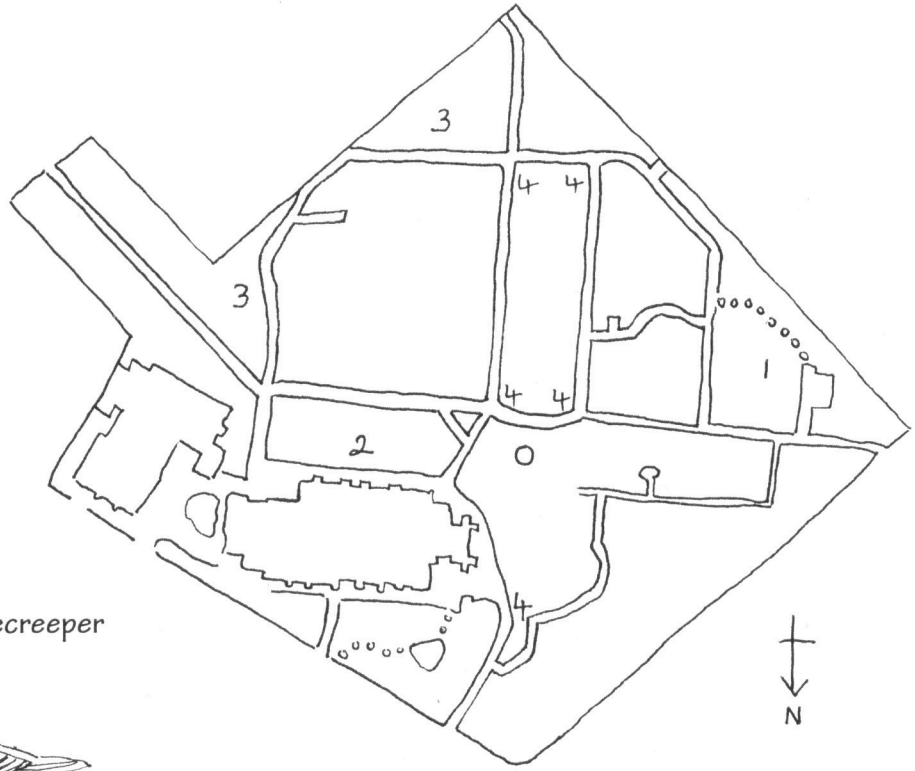
Winter



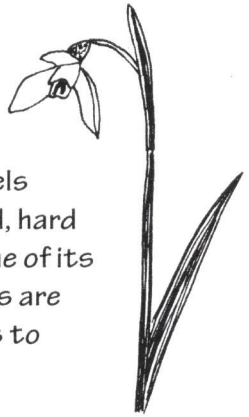
Brimstone butterfly
Yellow (male) & greenish white (female) with an orange dot on each wing. One of the earliest butterflies seen in the churchyard in February.



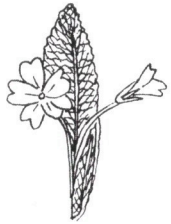
...nte ...pnit ...fte ...
very first flower to bloom in mid-January. Its Greek name eranthis hyemalis explains that it is the 'earliest flower that blooms in Winter'.



Snowdrop is a late Winter flower. Its leaves have a tough sheaf that protects the growing tip from damage as it chisels its way up through the cold, hard ground. 'Snow piercer' is one of its common names. The flowers are pollinated by the first bees to emerge on warm days.



Look out for these flowers in the Garden of Remembrance and Thanksgiving (1) where you may also see —

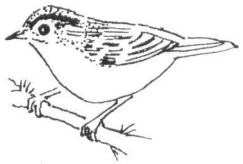

Primrose


Stinking Hellebore


Lungwort

Now that many trees have lost their leaves birds can be seen more easily as they search for food in order to survive the short, cold Winter days. Wood and farmland birds also visit as food in the surrounding countryside becomes scarce and the temperature in town is higher. Smaller birds gather in mixed flocks and dart about the clumps of holly and ivy. You may see the tiny Treecreeper running up (never down) the trunks, digging into the bark searching for insects, and the Goldcrest - Europe's smallest bird. Look out for the 'Winter Thrushes' the Redwing and Fieldfare. As Winter progresses the breeding season approaches with the search for nest sites and the start of singing to establish and defend territories. The Song Thrush may be heard before Christmas and most of our resident songbirds by February. As the month ends nests are being built and some will already have eggs in them.


Treecreeper


Goldcrest


Fieldfare

Lichens are fungus and algae growing together. They are visible at any time of the year but are particularly evident now on the bark of trees and on some stones. There are three main types

Crusty (crustose)



Leafy (foliose)



Bushy (fruticose)



Some prefer to grow on basic stone such as limestone, marble and mortar whilst others prefer acid stone such as granite, slate and many sandstones. Look out for xanthoria parietina - a yellow foliose variety and caloplaca teicholyta a whitish crustose variety on some of the memorial stones at the south of the church. (2)