

Gary Farmer

## Grasshoppers and Crickets of Worcestershire

What colour is a grasshopper? Most of us would say green, or possibly brown. Did you know there are pink ones, yellow ones, stripy ones, spotty ones, mottled ones – and they all occur on the Malvern Hills? There are 28 native species of grasshoppers and crickets in the UK and 15 of them inhabit our local Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. With infectious enthusiasm, Gary gave the Malvern Group an entertaining evening describing all 15, with close-up photographs and detailed descriptions of behaviour. Especially interesting were the maps showing how the distribution of these creatures has changed, sometimes dramatically in the last 20 years. For example the Lesser Marsh Grasshopper is moving into the area whereas the Common Green Grasshopper is now not common and declining in numbers. Roesel's Bush Cricket was first seen here in 2005 and is increasing hugely – a sign of climate change perhaps. Gary had recordings of some of the crickets “singing” and demonstrated how each species has a different sound; as distinct as a bird call in fact. After the interval he gave us a delightful photographic journey through the wildlife year, showing how grasshoppers interact with other species and are an essential part of the food chain.



Field Grasshopper female. Photograph taken at Rifle Range 3rd August 2018