

# WMBC NEWS

No 489 Summer 2018



Photograph - Spotted Flycatcher at i54  
Photographer Jamie Dunn

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# WMBC News

Is published in March, June, September and December each year to link members with each other, what's been happening, current issues and forthcoming events on the birding scene in our area and further afield together with a selection of your articles and a comprehensive summary of the recorded bird sightings in our area

Hello everyone,

This could be the last WMBC News that you receive! To ensure that it is not we need you to do something for us as soon as possible please - turn to pages 4-5 to find out more.

I am delighted to report that although Humphrey Miller has stepped down from chairing our Solihull branch he will continue to produce Bird Notes for our Newsletter. I am also hugely grateful that he has also agreed to continue proof reading the entire Newsletter. Without Humphrey's Eagle eyes the quality of what finally goes to print would be much the poorer.

I would also like to thank Janet and Graham Harrison for their suggestion that the contact details of our County Bird Recorders are included here. A suggestion acted on see page 43. Thank you both.

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# Membership Matters

We are pleased to welcome the following new members of the club who have joined since the last newsletter. Please note the names shown are as on the membership form but that all family members at each address are included in this welcome.

**Mr RBaker** of SMETHWICK, **Mr GBanks** of WOLVERHAMPTON, **Mr PBates** of WALSALL, **Mr JBytheway** of STOURBRIDGE, **Mr SCaswell** of RUGELEY, **Mr PChallinor** of TELFORD, **Mr BClarke** of COVENTRY, **Mr RCoulson** of STAFFORD, **Ms LCropper** of MARKET DRAYTON, **Mr LCutin** of KINGSWINFORD, **Mr MDarby** of WEST BROMWICH, **Ms MEllis** of WATER ORTON, **Mr LEvans-Hill** of CHEADLE, **Mr SEssex** of WALSALL, **Mr RFarmer** of WALSALL, **Mr PFord** of SUTTON COLDFIELD, **Mr MGolden** of WOLVERHAMPTON, **Mr RHales** of MALVERN, **Ms JHancox** of COVENTRY, **Mr JHigginson** of ST MARYS, **Mr RHodges** of WOLVERHAMPTON, **Ms PIsaac** of COLESHILL, **Mr PJohnson** of STOKE ON TRENT, **Ms AJones** of WOLVERHAMPTON, **Mr PJones** of STAFFORD, **Mr MJoyce** of SUTTON COLDFIELD, **Mr SLarkin** of CHASETOWN, **Mr NLehane** of RUGELEY, **Mr TLuker** of STAFFORD, **Ms HLyons** of STAFFORD, **Mr SMcNulty** of STONE, **Mr DNeal** of BIRMINGHAM, **Mrs ANugent** of WALSALL, **Ms JRatajska** of BIRMINGHAM, **Ms JRussell** of BIRMINGHAM & **Mr RSmith** of STAFFORD.

Overleaf you will find details of the WMBC's response to the 2018 General Data Protection Regulations. You are requested to read this then complete, sign and return the consent form to me at the address below so that we can continue to contact you. The form asks you to give the contact details you wish WMBC to use to communicate with you. Please complete this section, even though you may have given the same information in the past, as we can then ensure not only that you are addressed in your preferred manner but also that your contact details are totally up to date.

*Kind Regards*

**Michael Bevan**

*WMBC Membership Secretary*

64 Brookfields Road, Ipstones, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST10 2LY

Email: [membership@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:membership@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)

## Congratulations to Nick Pomiankowski

For being the first UK County Recorder to return his 2017 Rare Breeding Birds Panel submission.  
SIX MONTHS AHEAD OF THE DEADLINE.

## STOP PRESS:

## Sunday 10th June - Staffordshire Road Closures for the IRONMAN 70.3 Staffordshire event

Many roads to the east of Stafford and west of Burton will be closed between 8.00am and 2.30pm which is likely to make access to Blithfield and all areas of Cannock Chase difficult during those times.

The event consists of a 1.2mile swim in Chasewater reservoir and a 56mile bike course through the stunning countryside outside Lichfield, Burton-upon-Trent, and across Cannock Chase area of outstanding natural beauty. The 13.1mile run will start at Riverway, take athletes in and around the Stafford Town Centre before finishing in Market Square

# Data Protection and the EU GDPR Regulations

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into effect for all EU member states on 25th May 2018. These regulations replace the Data Protection Act 1988 and offer enhanced protection to everyone whose personal information is held by organisations, including registered charities such as the West Midland Bird Club. Because of this the Club has been reviewing its data protection policies to ensure that they are in line with the new regulations and that the club is fully compliant. The following article is designed to provide members with information on the data that WMBC holds on them and how it is used, managed and protected. Very importantly it also explains why we need you to opt in before we can continue to use the data you have given us.

## What information do we hold?

Members' personal identifiable information held by WMBC is what was given on the membership application form and consists of name, postal address and, where these have been given, e-mail address and phone number(s). This information is kept up to date by the membership secretary from information provided by members on the annual renewal form or updated by email or letter. We have recently been requesting date of birth but are now only storing year of birth as this is all we need and in future we will only ask for the year of birth. The only other information held on the data base is that from the volunteering section of our application form so that should an opportunity arise we can target and inform members who have shown an interest in being involved in that capacity. We do not hold any bank details of members. When these are given for standing order payments we simply pass the paper form, which the member completed, on to their bank by post.

## Why we need this information and how it is used

Members' addresses are used to send out our quarterly Newsletter and Annual Bird Report and by the Membership Secretary to send out membership cards and can also be used to inform our members of other club matters but, as postage is a costly use of club funds, recently e-mail addresses, which have been provided by approximately 2/3rds of members, have been used to inform users of forthcoming WMBC meetings and can also be useful in contacting members who change address without informing us. These emails can be sent out by members of the Club's Executive Committee or by the Membership Secretary on their behalf. Phone numbers are rarely needed but can be useful if other methods of contact have been exhausted. In addition the membership secretary can use the data held to generate various reports, such as geographical distribution or the age profile of our membership to aid forward planning, however no identifying factors such as names are ever included in such statistical reports.

## How your data is managed

The WMBC stores the data we hold on a commercially supported database application from a specialist company (subscriber.co.uk). It is held and managed by the Membership Secretary (The Club's Data Manager) on a secure Microsoft platform which requires an individual user login and password for access and is kept up to date from the information provided by members. Paper application and renewal forms are retained by the Membership Secretary as these are required by HMRC as evidence for claiming gift aid. This is worth a considerable sum to the club and helps keep subscription rates down.

## Sharing of your Data and how this is protected

Distribution of our Newsletter and Annual report is handled for us by Cheshires Laser Mail of Kidderminster and the data file to enable this, which only includes membership number, name

and address is sent to Cheshires in encrypted format. This file is then held on Cheshires secure server for 30 days after which it is erased completely from their system. Annually lists giving only members names and membership numbers are delivered in encrypted files to our printers to enable our membership cards to be personalised in this way. Members can be confident that these are the only times that members data is shared with outside agencies and that telephone numbers and email addresses are never shared.

Reports can be generated to aid forward planning or for branches to send out meet programmes, reminders or last minute changes. All such reports are sent out securely in an encrypted, password protected, format in accordance with the Club's Data Protection Policy and only to those Executive Members who have signed up to and are fully compliant with this policy.

### **The importance of opting in and your right to opt out**

Although current members have given their information freely on their membership application GDPR requires us to formally ask you to opt in and consent to this information being used. To enable us to continue to contact our existing members we need you to formally opt-in by signing and returning **the consent form which you will find on page 21 of this Newsletter**. The form explains fully your rights to opt in and out of your data being used for specific purposes. You can agree to be contacted by mail, email, telephone and text message, or opt out entirely from contact by any of these methods. All general notice Emails sent out by WMBC include the opportunity to opt out from specific categories such as individual branch meeting reminders or opt out from all general notice type Emails and these requests will be implemented on receipt by the Membership Secretary. The choices you make will be acted on and flagged up on the database so that you only get the contact you give consent to. Should you wish to change any of these choices in the future you can do this by informing the Membership Secretary by email or by post at any time.

**Important: Please note that unless you complete, sign and return the consent form on page 21 of this Newsletter we will no longer be able to use your information to contact you.**

### **What of the Future?**

The Club's Data Protection Policy (DPP) document has been updated in line with GDPR and now requires scrutiny and approval by the Club's Executive Committee and ratification by the Trustees. When the ratification process is complete the DPP document will be available for members to view.

The Subscriber system has the capacity for the data files to be securely accessible from more than one computer. Once the DPP is fully ratified, should increased accessibility be considered desirable, to enable more than one Executive member to work on the system, approval will be sought from the Data Controller who will ensure it is fully in line with the Club's DPP before approval is given.

Currently the Club does not accept payments by direct debit. Should this change consent for any changes in the data held will be fully explained and incorporated into the direct debit application form.

**Sue,**  
**On behalf of WMBC Management Committee**



# Situation Vacant

## Worcestershire County Recorder

The West Midland Bird Club has four county recorders who between them cover the Club's region.

After seven years in the role Steven Payne, Worcestershire County Recorder, will be stepping down in 2019 and the Club is actively seeking his replacement to ensure a smooth transition period.

Steven's successor will be an experienced ornithologist with a knowledge of Worcestershire's habitats and birds although residence within the county is not essential. He/she will have good communication skills and be comfortable with handling large datasets, creating reports and editing them.

An overview of the role of County Recorder

The Recorder is the focus for collection and dissemination of records within the county.

They will also –

- a) Encourage the submission of records both online (including BirdTrack) or by post via record slips etc.
- b) Ensure that all records, submitted by whatever means, are compiled into the County Records Database.
- c) Assist, if necessary, the submission of unusual records to the BBRC (British Birds Rarities Committee).
- d) Submit annual reports within the required timeframes for the RBBP (Rare Breeding Birds Panel) and the British Birds Scarce Migrant report.
- e) Assess county rarities with their own Rarities Committee, for those species requiring descriptions/supporting details etc.
- f) Liaise as necessary with the BTO, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts and other interested bodies.
- g) Deal with queries from members of the public.
- h) Produce, with a team of writers, the Worcestershire sections of the WMBC Annual Report.

The role is entirely voluntary, but WMBC will cover reasonable expenses and provide necessary equipment and assistance if possible.

If you are interested in applying for this important, demanding and satisfying role within the club and wish to find out more, without commitment, please contact

Steven Payne - [worcs-recorder@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:worcs-recorder@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)

Kevin Clements our immediate past chairman who is also the County Recorder for the West Midlands - [west-mids-recorder@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:west-mids-recorder@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)

or Roger Broadbent WMBC Chairperson - [chair@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:chair@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)

all of whom will be happy to discuss it with you and answer any questions you may have.





# Annual Activities Statement 2017/18

## Chairperson's Report

This marks my fifth and final Chairman's Report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved with the Club for their help and support over the last five years, from all of our members to those working on our reserves and in our branches, and those serving on committees and as trustees.

I am pleased to report that honorary membership has been granted to Charlie Brown for his long service to the Club and to Ken Bentley for his years of service at Ladywalk.

Last year's quinquennial Cannock Chase Bird Survey, dedicated to the memory of Frank Gribble, was a great success, with the final report published earlier this year. Thank you to Roger Broadbent and David Dodd for managing the survey, to Cannock Chase AONB Unit, Forestry Commission, Staffordshire County Council and Stafford Borough Council for their support, and to all of those who assisted with the survey.

Our 2015 Annual Report has recently been published, whilst progress on the 2016 edition is well advanced. Thanks to David Emley, the County Recorders and their respective teams, and the circa thousand contributors for submitting hundreds of thousands of records from across the four counties.

Our quarterly WMBC News has continued to grow from strength to strength under Sue Judge's editorship. Thank you to Sue and everyone who has submitted articles on their local patches, recent trips and birding anecdotes.

Access improvement and habitat management work continues at our reserves. New toilets have been installed at Belvide Reservoir and the path extended and upgraded, making the reserve accessible for all, whilst we have funded the first ever hide at Gailey Reservoir – thanks to Sue Judge for leading on these projects, the People's Lottery for funding the toilets and the Canal and River Trust for their support.

At Ladywalk, rust fungus was released onto Himalayan Balsam last year – the first such release in the Midlands. It is hoped to involve local universities in monitoring the success of the rust fungus in limiting the growth of this invasive plant.

We continue to be involved in the "Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme", part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The scheme aims to create a wetland landscape along the River Tame between Birmingham and Tamworth.

The five year agreement with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust that allowed free access for WMBC members to the Moors at Upton Warren came to an end late last year. I would like to thank WWT for the access that our donation towards the construction of the Joyce and Arthur Jacobs hide allowed.

Our relationship with Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory remains strong, with Club representatives continuing to attend board meetings. We also continue to work with local ringing groups, including at Belvide and Blithfield Reservoirs and through the loan of thermal imaging equipment that is providing invaluable information on the habits of birds in the Region.

I would like to thank Jim Winsper, who redesigned the Club's website and retired as website manager at the end of last year, and Christopher Rickus, who has been appointed as his replacement. Thanks also to Humphrey Miller, both for taking the minutes at our Executive Committee meetings for many years and, with his fellow Solihull committee members, for leading that Branch until recently – I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome the new team there.

Finally, thank you once again for allowing me to serve as Chairman of this great Club for the past five years. I wish you all the best for the future.

***Kevin Clements***



# WMBC - AGM 2018 - FEEDBACK

Humphrey Miller took the minutes at the meeting which will be printed in next Spring's Newsletter for approval at the 2019 AGM. This is a brief personal report for the benefit of those members not present.

Club Vice-President Jim Winsper, took the chair and welcomed the members present. He thanked the committee of the Kidderminster branch for arranging and hosting the meeting, and introduced the officers seated at the top table to the members present. Apologies were received and the minutes of the 2016 AGM were approved.

Our retiring Club Chairperson, Kevin Clements presented his final report, printed in full on page 7 of this Newsletter. Andy Thomas, our Club Treasurer, then presented the Audited Annual Accounts for 2017 and his Treasurer's report, printed below and on the opposite page and Griffiths and Pegg were appointed as auditors for the forthcoming year.

Roger Broadbent was elected Chairperson, Sue Judge Deputy Chairperson and in line with Club rule 3.4 her position of Trustee was ratified. The following officers were elected to serve a further year: Andy Thomas, Treasurer; Mark Rickus, Secretary; Michael Bevan, Membership Secretary; Paul Bateman, Harborne Representative; John Holt, Blithfield Representative; Sue Judge, Belvide Representative and Richard King, Ladywalk representative.

Jenny Jupte the Chairperson of our Trustees then thanked retiring Chairperson, Kevin and welcomed Roger Broadbent to the role.

The proposed rule change was agreed unanimously following which David Jackson and Rob Swift were both elected unanimously to the new Elected Member posts on the Management committee.

Under any other business Sue Judge gave a brief outline of the Club's response to GDPR 2018 and the importance of opting in, covered on pages 4 and 5 of this Newsletter and the new Club Membership Classifications covered on pages 10 and 11.

The formal meeting terminated at 20.15hrs and was followed by a fascinating talk by Brett Westwood following which some members present now visit their gardens with hand lenses.

**Sue**



## Hon. Treasurer's Report Annual Accounts

Members will see from the Accounts opposite that the club made a surplus of £27,439 in 2017.

On the income side, we received legacies for the estates of Geoffrey Summers and Norma Hone totalling £51,560. Membership subscriptions remained at the same level as in the past few years.

With regard to outgoings, the Club erected a new hide at the Ladywalk reserve, and toilets were installed at Belvide reserve where we also erected a new fence. The combined cost of these assets was over £36,000. In addition nearly £10,000 was spent at Gailey reservoir on a new hide. The running costs of the club remained at similar levels to the previous year.

**Andy Thomas (Honorary Treasurer)**



## Income and Expenditure Account

Incoming Resources	2017	2016
	£	£
Membership Subscriptions .....	45516	44620
Permit Sales .....	848	348
Fund-Raising (Sales) .....	1270	3236
Field Meetings .....	8273	12895
Tax Recoveries .....	7203	7277
Interest .....	172	356
E.on - Ladywalk .....	7750	7750
RPA - Belvide .....	3191	6381
Legacies .....	51560	0
	<b><u>125783</u></b>	<b><u>82863</u></b>

Statement of Resources Utilised		2017	2016
		£	£
Conservation Expenditure:	Belvide	15140	8972
	Blythfield	3696	12797
	Harborne	1226	535
	Ladywalk	15757	9940
	Gailey	9910	0
	Non reserve costs	1009	5000
		<b><u>46738</u></b>	<b><u>37244</u></b>

Education:	Membership Support	1921	2491
	Publications	16634	15057
	Field Meetings	8718	12601

### Expenditure on Primary Objectives **74011**      **67393**

Cost of Income Generation:			
	Charity Administrative Costs	8627	7827
	Depreciation	15706	12352

### Total Resources Expended **98344**      **87572**

## Statement of funds as at 31st December 2017

	2017	2016
	£	£
Total Incoming Resources .....	125783	82863
Total Resources Utilised .....	98344	87572
Net Incoming Resources .....	27439	(4709)
Funds at the Beginning of the Year .....	214115	218824
Total Funds at the End of the Year .....	241554	214115
Represented by		
Land and Buildings .....	69957	43704
Tractors and Equipment .....	13316	18695
	<b><u>83273</u></b>	<b><u>62399</u></b>
Investments (Short Term Deposits) .....	38000	38000
Cash (Including Restricted Funds) .....	127606	117871
Debtors and (Creditors) .....	(7325)	(4155)
	<b><u>241554</u></b>	<b><u>214115</u></b>



# New membership classifications

## How can we encourage young birders to join WMBC?

This has long been a topic of discussion amongst our members and at Executive Committee Meetings and recent analysis of the age demographic of our Club has confirmed what has long been obvious, that we have a distinct shortage of younger members. In order to begin to address this and to encourage the involvement of younger birders in the activities of our club two new categories of inclusive membership are being introduced as the following extract from the Join page on our website explains.

### **18/23 Birder Membership- Age 18-23 - £10 per annum**

*This category has been introduced to encourage the involvement of birders in this age group in the facilities of the Club and its activities and provides all the advantages of Inclusive membership at a reduced cost. Applicants for 18/23 Birder membership would have to provide their year of birth.*

### **Young Birder Membership - Age 16-17 - £5 per annum**

*Children of members living at the same address are covered by their parent's membership, however those aged 16-17 can, if they wish, now take out Young Birder membership where, for an annual cost of £5, they would be Inclusive members in their own right and receive their own membership card, Newsletter and Annual Report. This category is also open to young people in this age bracket whose parents are not WMBC club members. Applicants for Young Birder Membership are required to provide their year of birth and their application should be supported by a responsible adult (in the case of the child of a member this would be their parent, otherwise a member of WMBC, teacher, youth worker or similar would be required).*

Both of these new categories of membership were announced at our 2018 Annual General Meeting and will be launched to coincide with publication of this Newsletter. The relevant application forms can be found on the join page of our club website.

## Joint Membership

Some years ago when I was asked to join the Club's Executive Committee our previous Membership Secretary, John Hoyle, was very embarrassed to inform me that unfortunately I was not eligible as I was not a member of the Club! I informed him that he would find me listed with my partner John Hipwood but was then very surprised, not to say more than a little cross to learn that he was a member but I was not. Like many of you probably do I thought that what John and I had was joint membership however this is not the case. Although inclusive membership covers the spouse and children of the member it does not make the spouse or children members in their own right. For the majority of our members this does not matter as indeed the spouse is very welcome to enjoy our reserves along with the member and gets the members' reduction at branch meetings, but for some it is important that they are members in their own right and that becomes essential if they want to serve on a Club committee or vote at meetings.

Your Executive committee have now addressed this situation. For the first time we are introducing joint membership which the following excerpt from the new Join page on our website explains.

**Joint Membership - £5 per annum** *Joint membership does not change the existing rights of partners of members in any way and is entirely optional for those who require the additional benefits it gives. It is open to the Spouse/Partner of a fully paid up member (either Standard or Inclusive) and designed to give the additional benefits of full membership, without having to pay a second full membership fee. Joint members have full voting rights at Club meetings and are eligible to serve on Club committees and their presence at meetings counts towards making that meeting quorate. They receive their own membership card and, if requested, an additional Blithfield sticker. They are not however sent their own copy of the Newsletter and Annual Report (for that a full Inclusive membership would have to be taken out).*

Unfortunately all changes to membership cause extra work for our already very overworked Membership Secretary and this would be an added complication to the already arduous task at renewal time if upgrading is left until then, especially if members pay by standing order, so to encourage everyone who would like to do so well in advance of renewal time we will be waiving the £5 fee for those who upgrade before the end of November 2018. This will mean that standing orders can be amended with banks well before the 1st January and also that the membership card can be printed in the joint member's name.

Anyone upgrading after 1st December will need to accompany the application with the £5 fee and, as the data will have already been sent to the printers, will receive a hand written membership card in the first year.

**Important please note:** As the new General Data Protection Regulations require that we don't keep unnecessary data on our system the names of the partners and children of Standard and Inclusive members that we currently hold will be deleted from our files, therefore at renewal 2019 only one name will be printed on each Inclusive or Standard membership card and only one Blithfield sticker per member will be issued.

Joint membership was launched at our 2018 Annual General Meeting. Partners of existing members who wish to upgrade to Joint Membership should complete the application form which can be found on page 22, the reverse of the members' consent form. If the member pays their annual Club subscription by standing order the instruction to their bank need to be changed and the form for this can be found on page 23 The two forms can then be posted to Michael, our Membership Secretary, in the same envelope.

## **Clarification of who is covered by Inclusive Membership**

The Join page of our website now gives clearer information about who is covered by an Inclusive Membership

### **Inclusive Membership (individual) - £30 per annum**

*Gives all the benefits of Standard membership with the addition of access to all four West Midland Bird Club reserves - Belvide, Blithfield, Harborne and Ladywalk. Inclusive membership also gives access to our reserves for the Spouse/Partner of the member and their children up to age 18, living at the same address. It does not however make the partner a full member of WMBC. For this see Joint Membership.*

Further, in line with our aim to encourage young people to get involved in birding our members who are grandparents are also welcome to bring their visiting grandchildren to our reserves and, of course, a Young Birder Membership, at only £5, could make an ideal 16th birthday present.

**Sue, On behalf of the WMBC Management Committee**



# First Hen Harrier Day Midlands

**Sunday 12th August  
11.00am - 2.30pm**

**Stratford-upon-Avon,  
CV37 7LS**

## **Speaker event to raise awareness of the illegal persecution of our Raptors**

Hi Everyone,

Last year there were only three successful Hen Harrier nests in England fledging 10 youngsters. All were satellite tagged, enabling us to know exactly where they travel. At least 5 of these have since disappeared in 'suspicious circumstances'. These tags are extremely reliable, and from the data received when a bird goes missing, we are able to tell if there may have been an extremely rare tag malfunction or if more sinister foul play is suspected. 'Disappeared in suspicious circumstances' would normally mean the bird is likely to have succumbed to foul play, probably trapped, poisoned or shot, as then the tags stop transmitting instantly and the bird and tag are rarely, if ever found. If the bird had died of natural causes the tag would still be able to transmit and the tag and corpse could be recovered.

In the uplands of the U.K, many Driven Grouse Moor Shooting Estates, charge up to £34000 for an eight man, day's shooting, of Grouse for fun. In trying to sustain unnaturally high populations of grouse, for this practice, the estates regularly persecute, fully, legally protected Hen Harriers, and other Birds of Prey, with evidence stacking up evermore, that the birds going 'missing' in these areas.

The first HHD was in 2014, organised by Dr Mark Avery, well known for his campaigning against Driven Grouse Shooting and for his book 'Inglorious – Conflict in the Uplands'. Since then, BAWC (Birders Against Wildlife Crime) have promoted the HHD events with individuals putting themselves forward to organise an event under the BAWC umbrella. This is where I come into the picture, I have stepped up to the line and put myself forward to organise the first Midlands HHD. This will be on Sunday August 12th, the start of the Grouse Shooting season (Inglorious 12th) in Stratford-upon-Avon. This is an event for everyone and is FREE to attend.

I don't consider myself any different from many of the people reading this article, a birder from birth, OK 3yrs old! I am somebody who, like many of you probably are, is fed up with all the illegal killing of our Raptors and other wildlife and feel it is time I put my head above the parapet, to help spread the word about what is going on and what we can all do to bring about change. All Birds of Prey are protected, however, I believe that if we don't make a stand now we could lose one of our most iconic birds in England.



Male Hen Harrier - Gordon Yates

But what about the DEFRA plan to brood manage the HH with a license issued by Natural England to the ICBP? Isn't that meant to save them and boost their numbers? Don't you believe it. It is an ill thought out plan that is now being challenged in the courts on two fronts, by the RSPB and Dr Mark Avery via a crowd funded initiative. Almost a thousand donations were received to fight the NE issuing of the brood management licence. Many of those donations may have come from WMBC members who already know a great deal about the problems our Raptors face. So you may be reading this as someone who is already well versed about the challenge we face to stop the illegal, poisoning, trapping & shooting of our magnificent Birds of Prey. I reach out to all such readers to come and show solidarity on the day, you are the already converted on this subject, and by showing your support at such a rally we can send a strong message to the perpetrators of these crimes, that we are watching, fighting back and in the end **We Will Win**. The tide is turning with the general public, as they find out more and understand what is happening in our National Parks and Uplands, and they are recognising that there is a strong movement standing up and willing to do something about it. So please come to this first Hen Harrier Day in the Midlands, show your strength of feeling and hopefully you will leave having learnt something new and maybe be inspired enough to help take this fight to the next stage.

As you are probably now aware, I am a man on a mission. As it stands at the moment HHDM is just me, I have got the date, a 'Hen Harrier Day Midlands 2018' face book page, a Twitter account @HHDMidlands and the basics organised.

The venue, Stratford-upon-Avon Cricket club, Swans Nest Lane, CV37 7LSA has been chosen for its location which is right next door to the renowned butterfly farm and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and close to plenty of other local attractions. Parking is available (charges apply) and the train station is approximately 15 minutes walk away through the town centre. It is hoped that this will attract families and others to make the visit a whole day out.

It is a speaker event to raise awareness with the general public of the illegal persecution of our Raptors and speakers confirmed so far are actor Nick Miles from Emmerdale and former Green Party Leader Natalie Bennett. We should have around six speakers in total including a representative speaker from WMBC.

I am hopeful that WMBC members will heed the rallying call and boost the attendance figures on the day but I also need a small army of volunteers to help me make this event a success. I had a very good meeting with some of the WMBC management committee recently where we discussed the areas that WMBC members could possibly assist with. The list of roles I need to fill are:

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Leaflet distribution before and on day (4-6 people)     | Car Park attendants (3 people)      |
| Attendee recorder with click counter (1 person)         | Official photographer (1 person)    |
| People to make placards - materials supplied (6 people) | Raffle ticket sellers (4-6 people)  |
| People to sell merchandise-for donations (6-10people)   | H.&S. and First Aiders (2-3 people) |

It would be tremendous if I could fill all these roles with the help of WMBC members so if you feel you can spare a few hours to help spread the word, I would love to have you on board.

Some of these I need to get moving with very soon. Please contact me a.s.a.p Peter Howe email: [henharrierdaymidlands@gmail.com](mailto:henharrierdaymidlands@gmail.com) or contact the Newsletter editor for my phone number.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you in August!

**Peter Howe**

*The plight facing our Raptors is a very complex issue that takes far more space to cover fully than Peter has here. I therefore encourage all members, who haven't done so already, to check out the video of Chris Packham's recent interview with a former Grouse moor worker which illustrates the problem superbly - if that doesn't encourage you volunteer to help Peter on 12th August nothing will.*

*Link to video [youtu.be/neNNbMTUC2M](http://youtu.be/neNNbMTUC2M)*

*In our winter 2017 Newsletter I promised you an article from Belvide Management team member and bird ringer Roger Clay. Roger has sent me two contrasting aspects of his passion for ringing which I am sure you will find as fascinating as I have.*

## **My Love For Nest Box Pied Flycatchers**

My love for Pied Flycatchers all started when I started to train as a bird ringer In 2006. My trainer, and great friend, Bert Coleman had a nest box scheme at Wigmore, near Ludlow, Herefordshire. Bert had been monitoring the nest boxes there from the early 1990's with between 60-70 boxes and in 2010 we added 20 more to make 90, which had on average 12 pairs, producing 60+ Young.

In 2012 Bert retired from bird ringing and straight away asked me to take on the scheme, so I had a talk with the Forestry Commission and they were happy for me to take on the 661+ acre forest. This may sound like a big site but most of the forest is Pine and only about 20% is broad leaf and of that about 10% has mature trees.

In 2012 I wanted to increase the Pied Flycatcher pairs, so that year I made the total number of boxes up to 100, which in that year had 15 pairs and 79 young. In 2013 I added 50 more boxes to take the total to 150 which had a good effect with 23 breeding pairs and 130 young. In 2014 the same number of boxes had 27 breeding pairs but only 118 young, down on 2013. In 2015 the same number of boxes had 34 breeding pairs with 151 young, and in 2016 the same amount of boxes had 38 breeding pairs with 174 Young which was great to see with both the pairs and the young increasing.

In 2017 I still had the same amount of boxes (150), but this was an exceptional year with 57 Pied Flycatcher nests with 41 breeding pairs. This resulted in 271 eggs. On the next visit there were 241 young. So on the first ringing trip 95 young Pied Flycatchers were ringed, which left me with 136 young to ring because of hatching times. Then I watched the weather forecast for the week ahead and with a day of rain for most of Wednesday and the morning of Thursday I knew, from previous years, that this was not a good sign, so it proved to be as on the next visit only 55 young were alive to ring giving me a total of 150 young. As with the Blue Tits and Great Tits hatching two weeks earlier made their survival rate better. I just hope that 2018 is a better year weather wise.

I had worked out that I need to put up five nest boxes to get one breeding pair of Pied flycatchers based on generally that each five boxes attracts one Blue Tit, one Great Tit, one Nuthatch, one Pied Flycatcher and finally possibly a Redstart or empty box but recently with 42 pairs to 150 boxes this is currently 3.57 boxes per Pied Flycatcher nest.

I will see if the number of pairs keeps on growing and if so may add more boxes to give me maybe 200 boxes but as I have to make about 25 new boxes and around 25 new fronts each year to replace the ones damaged by Great Spotted Woodpeckers and Squirrels, 200 may just be too many, especially as it takes me all day to check 150 boxes.

I have just started a study on returning Woodwarblers at Wigmore to see if they are site faithful like some Pied Flycatchers can be, but that has only been going for three years so still early days, with only 32 adults ringed so far.

So as you are reading this I may be walking around Wigmore checking on my nest boxes to see how the Pied Flycatchers are doing this year, so wish me luck!

### **Some Of The Pied Flycatchers Movements And Ages.**

#### **Pied Flycatchers away from Wigmore.**

Box 23 Y990316 Pullus 8/6/2013 Wigmore, 6/6/2014 Nagshead , Gloucestershire , 65km (SSE)  
10/6/2015 Nagshead , Gloucestershire , 65km (SSE) ,7/6/2016 Nagshead , Gloucestershire , 65km (SSE)  
Box 11 Y990415 Pullus 18/6/2013 Wigmore, 6/6/2014 Linley Bigwood , Shropshire , 25km (N)



Box C7 Y990380 Pullus 18/6/2013 Wigmore, 17/5/2016 Woodhampton Wood Nr. Wigmore 3km (SSE)  
Box 30 D583780 Pullus 15/6/2014 Wigmore, 3/6/2015 Presteigne , Powys 11km (WSW)  
Box 5 D583763 Pullus 15/6/2014 Wigmore, 18/5/2017 Presteigne , Powys 11km (WSW)  
Box 16 S381148 Pullus 12/6/2016 Wigmore, 22/5/2017 Llwynmawr , Wrexham 70km (NNW)

### **Pied Flycatchers Controls (birds ringed elsewhere and subsequently caught at Wigmore)**

Box 23 X331284 Pullus 6/6/2009 The Wrekin , Telford 25/5/2013 Wigmore , Herefordshire 46km (SSW)

Box 4 F D000682 Adult F 31/5/2014 Purlogue , Nr Clun , Shropshire 17/5/2015 Wigmore, Herefordshire 13km (SE)

Box J1 Y770653 Pullus 25/5/2014 Woodhampton Wood Nr. Wigmore 29/5/2016 Wigmore , Herefordshire 3km (NNW), 13/5/2017 Wigmore , Herefordshire 3km (NNW)

Box B6 Z521226 Adult F 4/6/2015 Knighton , Powys, 13/5/2017 Wigmore , Herefordshire 12km (E)

Box A7 Z313673 Pullus 11/6/2016 Stanmer Rock, Powys, 28/5/2017 Wigmore, Herefordshire 17km (NE)

Box 26 Z702582 Juv F 22/5/2016 Newcastle -On-Clun , Shropshire , 28/5/2017 Wigmore , Herefordshire 23km (SE)

## **Barn Owls 2017**

I first started putting Barn Owl boxes up in Staffordshire in 2008. After these first two boxes they were followed by four in 2009, two in 2010, one in 2013 and one in 2015 making 10 boxes up on farm land and in barns, with a new one to go up 2018.



In one of my first two boxes I had Little Owls breed, so I changed the box for a Little Owl box and moved the Barn Owl box to a new site on the farm. The Little Owls have bred in that box for the last six years with three young this year.

It only took two years for my first Barn Owls to take up residence in one of the original boxes and only 22 days for the box that was put up in 2015, which

shows that in some areas nesting sites are in short supply.

2017 was a very good year for Barn Owls in South Staffordshire. I had five boxes with Barn Owls in, four of them with breeding birds, which between them had 13 young, which makes it my best year so far. I also check Barn Owl boxes for the Barn Owl Conservation Network Trust in Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire. In their boxes in Staffordshire there were five young and just over the border in Leicestershire there were also five Young.

Only two of my ten boxes have never been used by Barn Owls. Eight have either had breeding pairs or some Barn Owl activity attracting roosting males/females or none breeding pairs. The other two boxes have attracted breeding Tawny Owls and Kestrels.

Success like this can also bring problems with it as there is a shortage of sites for the young to disperse to (one of last year's young Barn Owls has gone up into Cheshire), so as I drive around Staffordshire, or just over the border, I am always looking for sites for new Barn Owl boxes so if you know of a farmer who has some nice big trees or an old barn and would like one of my Barn Owl or Little Owl boxes let the Newsletter editor know at [newsletter@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)

**Roger Clay**



# Changes in taxonomic order and the effect this will have on our Annual Report.

The sequence of species in the Club's Annual Report No. 82, covering the year 2015, follows that of the Eighth Edition of the British List (BOU. 2016) produced by the British Ornithologists' Union. Our report includes changes to the list that have been made up to 2016. There have been recent changes to this list and there are more to come. When it is considered to be appropriate with the chronological order of our report in relation to the timing of new taxonomic findings, the West Midland Bird Club Annual Report, 'The Birds of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and the West Midlands', will introduce any new changes.

Our report is a historic review of the birds in our region in a specific year, the entire content of which is dedicated to that year. We feel that it would be inaccurate to include changes in our 2016 report, No. 82, that had not been implemented by BOU until a later date, albeit that the publication date of the report may reflect the year in which changes were made. In adopting this approach we ensure that the content of each report remains historically accurate.

Our systematic list of bird species follows a taxonomic order that appears in a sequence according to how long they are thought to have evolved. Early lists comprise an order based on observable similarities and differences between birds regarding their assumed genealogy. The approach to the list changed with the introduction of DNA testing, more specifically, by examining and presenting the properties of DNA molecular structures. In layman's terms, the sequence is now based on new scientific evidence rather than perceived observable traits. There are species that still retain their position in the systematic list based on this latter perception, is it now just a matter of time before their order is re-identified?

When our current Report Editor, Dave Emley, took up his position in 1999 and produced Report No. 66, the taxonomic sequence 'systematic list' began with divers. In 2002, report No. 69, new scientific evidence prompted the change to Mute Swan becoming the first species in the list, in other words, as a result of DNA testing and a greater understanding, we now know that Mute Swan evolved before Red-throated Diver. Other changes have occurred in connection with scientific evidence forming a new taxonomic order, Corn Bunting was replaced by Reed Bunting as being the last species in the list, reflected in report No. 81 for the year 2014. Who would have envisaged that falcons would have been separated from other birds of prey, these now appearing much later in the list as an independent group, this has also been introduced into our report No. 81. The latest BOU list, the ninth edition December 2017, sees Mute Swan replaced by Brent Goose as the first in the list. The final sequence of Buntings in the current 2018 list has recently changed again and now reads, Reed Bunting, Lapland Bunting and the list ends with Snow Bunting, yet to be included in our report. Other changes in sequence, too numerous to mention and too frequent in occurrence, have also been made since the commencement of the 21st century.

As a result of these changes I am no longer able to open our report or my field guide to within a few pages of where I expected to find the bird of my choice. This, however, is little price to pay in knowing that the evidence that prompts these changes is far more accurate than in times gone by, a comforting thought based on the fact that accuracy is what we are all about. We must not lose sight of the fact that we pursue a hobby that is based on a science, ornithology, the scientific study of birds. The aim of the BOU is to unify the world list in accordance with the findings of the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) World Bird List. As of 1st January 2018, the British List will conform to this sequence. The West Midland Bird Club are fully supportive of this action in unification.

***Jim Winsper***



# The Biking Birder Gary Prescott

## Our Green Correspondent

Birding in Peru, what could be simpler? Those of you who met me at my talk will know that I have not chosen the simple route. Neither by the literal one, where one gets to Amazonia as fast as possible and sees and hears four hundred bird species in a week, nor by my mode of transport, I choose bicycle and packraft - kayak to you and me. I choose to Go Green!

May has started for me and in the 'thirty days hath April' there have been plenty of birds, as one would expect in a country that has just over 1,800 different species.

The start of The Biking Birder IV Adventure was on the 1st April at Los Pantanos de Villa, a nature reserve with coastal lagoons, reedbeds and scrubby desert habitats but I was no fool as the reserve gave me sixty three species, including fifteen different species of wader! Turnstone and Sanderling we will be familiar with but watching flocks of Stilt, Pectoral and Least Sandpipers with good numbers of what used to be a separate species but now lumped with Whimbrel, the Hudsonian Whimbrel with their all-dark rumps. Hundreds of Black Skimmers and Franklin's Gulls were with Inca Terns and Moorhens on the lagoon, whilst on the sea were Neotropic Cormorants, Peruvian Boobies and Peruvian Pelicans.

Now due to a tooth needing to be extracted and stitches required, I had almost two weeks to wait around Lima, the capital of Peru. Not wasting any days I spent five more days at Los Pantanos and added Blue-footed Booby, Peruvian Thick-knee, Semi-palmated Sandpiper and a Lone Laughing Gull to the Green Birding list. With Red-legged Cormorant, Elegant and Royal Terns going past on a seawatch, the growing list was just what was needed for a birder with ambitions of becoming the Green Birding World Champion.

In Lima itself, at the famous Olive Tree Park, the spectacular Vermilion Flycatcher was the pick of the birds found there. In two forms, the red form is startlingly bright where as its dark form is just that, a small, dark-plumaged flycatcher. Parakeets were flying around but not countable as they are a feral population grown from escapes.

Eventually, with stitches removed, I could set off for The Andes. After negotiating Lima's incredible traffic I reached the desert hills and immediately encountered different birds. Seedeaters, Collared Warbling-Finches and best of all different Hummingbird species, such as Sparkling Violetear, Amazonia and Oasis Hummingbird. The superb



Peruvian Sheartail has a split tail, well the male does anyway, that is twice the length of its miniscule body. The intensely hot weather didn't prepare me for what was to come next as my altitude increased.



Along dirt track mountain roads that clung to precipitous slopes, around which each bend was yet another breathtaking view, birds such as Variable Hawk, American Kestrel and Black-breasted Buzzard Eagle were seen. Then imagine the thrill as looking up to the top of one high mountainous ridge I could count eleven Andean Condors.

As altitude increased past the 10,000 foot mark and road quality deteriorated the valley got more claustrophobic with towering cliffs seemingly about to crash down. Bird species changed and Sierra Finches became more common. Andean Woodpeckers became frequent, not just for being seen but also for being heard. Quiet they are not and their frequently given call is reminiscent of our own Green Woodpecker.



Eventually High Andean lakes could be explored with their ducks and grebes. Silvery and White-tufted Grebes, Yellow-billed teal and Pintail, Masked Duck, which look like the American Ruddy Duck now almost eradicated from Britain and Speckled Ducks, all were

there to be enjoyed on these extremely remote and extremely high lakes. Giant Coot were there too and they live up to their name.

It hasn't all been fun birding. The road has been extremely steep as you would expect when one goes over 15,000 feet in just one hundred miles. I was also attacked by a bull at Huanza and was very lucky to escape with just cuts and bruises! One of the horns hit my upper arm which made pushing the bike a bit difficult for a few days. Ouch!

So with the summit of my route reached at 15,670 feet, it would be downhill all the way from here. The landscape changed to Puna grasslands where shallow pools in valleys had numbers of Chilean Flamingoes and Puna Ibis.

April finished with a bird tally of 180, a total way beyond my dreams. Five months to go, my route will take me along the Andean range to the famous Machu Picchu and down the equally famous, in birding terms, Manu Road. More adventures to come, more landscapes to take my breath away and best of all, more incredible birds to see.

Isn't it wonderful where Brummie birders get to . . . and by what means?

## **Gary, The Biking Birder**

*There will be further updates from Gary whenever he can get a good enough internet connection to send them. In the meantime if you would like to follow Gary's cycling and birding adventures then you may wish to visit his blog:-*

*<https://bikingbirder2016.blogspot.pe/>*

*If you would like to see the photographs of each day then go to his Facebook page:*

*<facebook.com/bikingbirder2015>*

*During his tour Gary is raising money for Birdlife International and would really appreciate your support as he says it keeps his legs peddling and his arms lifting his Opticron binoculars.*

*He is also supporting a wonderful project that enables indigenous children to get an education and therefore fight the destruction in their area. It is called Chaskwasi-Manu. He would really appreciate it if you could donate something to help them.*

*Links to the Justgiving page for donations to either good cause can be found on his blog and a huge thank you from Gary to everyone who donates.*

### **Photographs**

Gary with his trusty Opticrons

Vermilion Flycatcher

Another breathtaking view around each bend

Andean Woodpecker

Gary's toy festooned bike - He gives the toys to children he meets along the way. He started with twenty and now has four.





# **The consent form**

## **The implications of your choices**

Please read before completing the form opposite

Your Name - How you prefer to be addressed? For example my name is Susan Judge but I prefer Sue . On the other hand I could just opt for S Judge. The version of your name that you chose is what will be printed on your membership card.

Contact by Post - if you do not tick this box we won't be able to send you future Newsletters and your Annual Bird Report. This is because we use a third party to distribute them on our behalf (see page 4/5). You can unsubscribe from WMBC News or the WMBC Annual Bird Report at any time by informing the Membership Secretary by email or post that you wish to do so.

Contact by Email - All general notice Emails sent out by WMBC include the opportunity to opt out from specific categories such as individual branch meeting reminders or opt out from all general notice type Emails and these requests will be implemented on receipt by the Membership Secretary.

Contact by telephone or text - Is rarely necessary but can be useful if other forms of contact have been unsuccessful (for example if you have forgotten to let us know you have moved address.

Every time we distribute a Newsletter we always get a handful of returns for members who have failed to inform us that they have changed address. Without an email address we can't rectify this easily.

## **WMBC's Guarantee to you**

West Midland Bird Club will comply fully with the principles set out by GDPR and only keep and process your data in the manner outlined on pages 4/5 of this Newsletter, which is fully compliant.

No data will ever be shared with outside agencies with the exception of the approved distributors for our Newsletter and Annual Bird Report and printers of our membership cards. Data files for these purposes are encrypted and password protected and only contain names, addresses and membership numbers for the Newsletter and names and membership numbers for the membership cards.

No email addresses or telephone numbers will ever be shared with outside agencies.

Should you wish to change your consent or update your contact details in any way in the future this will be acted upon in an expedient manner.

Any member with concerns or further questions on your Club's response to GDPR should contact Michael Bevan, Membership Secretary at [membership@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:membership@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk) or Sue Judge [deputychair@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:deputychair@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)





# West Midland Bird Club Consent Form

The privacy of our members is important to us and we also want to communicate with you in the way that has your consent and which is in line with UK law. As a result of the General Data Protection Regulations, which came into effect on 25th May 2018, we now need your consent regarding how we contact you.

Please fill in the contact details you want us to use to communicate with you:

Name ..... Membership No .....

Address .....  
.....

Email Address .....

Phone Number/s .....

I consent to WMBC (please just tick the boxes where you grant consent)

Contacting me by Post  Email  Telephone  Text

Signed ..... Dated .....

By signing this form you are confirming that you consent to the West Midland Bird Club holding and processing the personal data you have given above to send you WMBC publications and keep you informed about news, events and the activities of the West Midland Bird Club by the methods you have chosen.

On receipt of your completed form your contact details will be updated, the choices you make will be acted on and flagged up on the database and the information no longer required will be deleted so that you only get the contact you have given consent to.

You can withdraw your consent or change your consent choices at any time by contacting the Club's Membership Secretary by post or Email.

Please note: All general notice Emails sent out by WMBC include the opportunity to opt out from specific categories such as individual branch meeting reminders or opt out from all general notice type Emails and these requests will be implemented on receipt by the Membership Secretary. You can also unsubscribe from WMBC News or the WMBC Annual Bird Report at any time by informing the Membership Secretary by email or post that you wish to do so.

**When completed this form should be sent to Michael Bevan, WMBC Membership Secretary, 64 Brookfields Road, Ipstones, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST10 2LY**

**Important: Please note that unless you complete, sign and return the consent form we will no longer be able to use the personal data which we currently hold to contact you.**



# West Midland Bird Club

## Joint Member Application and Consent Form

**This side of the form is for the use of the spouses/partners of existing members who wish to upgrade to Joint Membership.**

We also need our Joint members to consent to how we contact them.  
Please fill in the contact details you want us to use to communicate with you:

Name ..... Membership No .....

Address (should be same as member overleaf) .....

.....

Email Address .....

Phone Number/s .....

I consent to WMBC (please just tick the boxes where you grant consent)

Contacting me by Post  Email  Telephone  Text

Please tick this box if you also require a second Blithfield sticker

Signed ..... Dated .....

By signing this form you are confirming that you consent to the West Midland Bird Club holding and processing the personal data you have given above to send you WMBC publications and keep you informed about news, events and the activities of the West Midland Bird Club by the methods you have chosen. On receipt of your completed form your contact details will be entered onto the Club's secure data base and the choices you have made will be acted on and flagged up so that you only get the contact you have given consent to.

Please note: All general notice Emails sent out by WMBC include the opportunity to opt out from specific categories such as individual branch meeting reminders or to opt out from all general notice type Emails and these requests will be implemented on receipt by the Membership Secretary.

You can withdraw your consent or change your consent choices at any time by contacting the Club's Membership Secretary by post or Email.

**Important: Applications made before 30th November, 2018 will be upgraded without charge this year.** In subsequent years the fee for joint membership should be added to the members renewal fee (£30 + £5 = £35 for Inclusive membership or £20 + £5 = £25 for Standard membership). If this is not received the second membership card will not be sent out and the joint membership will cease.

For anyone paying by standing order this involves changing the instructions to your bank. If you pay by Standing Order please complete the form opposite and this will be sent to your bank for you

After 1st December 2018 please include your cheque for £5 with the application/consent form.

If you have made a Joint Member application and usually pay your membership fee by Standing Order this needs to be updated to £35 for Inclusive membership and £25 for Standard Membership. Please use the form below and when completed sent together with your completed consent form to Michael Bevan, WMBC Membership Secretary, 64 Brookfields Road, Ipstones, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST10 2LY

This standing order form can also be used by anyone who wishes to change from cheque to standing order. If you make this change your 2019 membership card will be sent out automatically without further action from you.

This form will be sent to your bank by the Membership Secretary for action. Please note: No bank details are kept by WMBC and nothing will be taken from your bank account until 1st January 2019.

## **WEST MIDLAND BIRD CLUB**

### **Standing Order Instructions to your Bank**

To: The Manager of ..... Bank

Bank Address .....

.....  
**Please pay to:** Barclays Bank plc. Jewellery Quarter Branch, 35 Frederick Street, Birmingham B1 3HH. Sort Code 20-07-89 for the account of West Midland Bird Club, Account No. 00928054

Quoting reference WMBC..... (Membership Sec.Use)

The sum of £..... annually commencing on 1st January 2019

Account Number ..... Sort Code .....

In the Name of .....

Your Signature .....

Date.....

Your Name (in CAPITALS).....

Your Address .....

.....  
This order cancels any previous order to the same payee

**Please Note: If you choose to pay by standing order you are the only one who can cancel or amend this order with your bank if you wish to terminate or change your membership.**



Call me biased if you will but my favourite photograph this issue! Why? Because on 18th February member Jeff Williams is enjoying the fact that our Belvide Reserve is now fully accessible! Great for users of Wheelchairs and mobility scooters but also for parents (or grandparents) with pushchairs. Jeff is one of three members who are now visiting Belvide on a weekly basis using mobility scooters. Let us not 'rest on our laurels' can we do more? - Your thoughts and suggestions please.

Photograph below taken by Sheila Barnett on 21st November 2017 of Mallard and chicks at Hatherton Reservoir. Sheila would like to know how unusual it is for Mallards to have a brood so late in the year. Any responses please to either photograph to [newsletter@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk) **Sue**



# New Club Conservation Officer

## Dave Jackson

Dave was appointed as the WMBC Conservation officer and co-opted to the management committee in 2017. At our 2018 AGM he was elected and became a full member of the club's management team.

Dave's experience and expertise in this field is impressive and he has already proved himself invaluable where conservation concerns have been raised. He is already currently heavily involved in two schemes and therein lies the first lesson.

The first scheme is a planning application for new housing on a local nature reserve (a green space within an urban environment) the second is a scheme for gravel extraction in an equally sensitive area, to which the Club was not alerted until permission had been granted and extraction had begun.

It's a 'no-brainer' that being informed about schemes at the planning stage stands a far greater chance of a favourable environmental outcome so members are urged to get their Club involved as early as possible in the process. That doesn't mean once planning approval has been granted that it is always too late to do anything about it as it could be that mitigation measures could be put into place to minimise environmental harm even at that stage so still alert your Club even if you think it might be too late.

The second lesson to bear in mind is the importance of your birding records, which provide supporting evidence when objections to schemes are lodged. We often hear anecdotal evidence from birders who tell of birds in the area under threat but unfortunately don't have any written records for support. Birders often keep records of their birding trips away from home but fail to do so for their local environment so members are urged to also keep records of their local sightings and to pass these on to their county recorder. For those who have never done this previously details of how can be found on the 'Record Submission' page of our website and the County Recorders names and contact details can be found on page 43.

Remember, one day your records could help protect your local environment.

Roger Broadbent, our new Club Chairman, was instrumental in recruiting Dave for this post and is also personally passionate about preserving our environment as evidenced by his work on the Club's response to HS2 and the 2017 Cannock Chase Bird Survey amongst other things and also by this line from his acceptance address at our AGM.

*At a time when so many of our British bird populations are in decline and seemingly no wildlife reserve is safe from the pressure of so called developments there has never been a greater need for local independently minded bird clubs such as ours to speak out and make our birdwatching really count.*

Members are urged to raise their conservation concerns as early in the day as possible with either  
Dave - [conservation@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:conservation@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)  
or Roger - [chair@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:chair@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)



# Update on the use and development of the Thermal Imaging Camera

**Colin McShane**

## Introduction

It is now around 18 months since a thermal imager was acquired by WMBC and put in the stewardship of Brewood Ringers (BR), with a view to BR experimenting with and developing uses for the imager initially within the group and subsequently within the wider WMBC area. Here is an outline of the progress made so far on the key activities.

## Activities

A great deal of effort has been devoted to this project and we feel that great strides have been made, with the potential of the imager being recognised locally, nationally and indeed internationally. The main areas of implementation are as follows:-

**1) Lapwing chicks:-** it was our experience of having been shown how successful it was to speed up and increase the numbers of Lapwing chicks ringed which prompted the original request to the Club. This continues to be the case, and the imager has been used on several sites now to locate wader chicks quickly and so reduce any disturbance.

**2) Jack Snipe:-** the acquisition of the imager coincided with the group gaining access to a site which is managed to provide a safe daytime roost for both Common and Jack Snipe. We know that Jacks tend to sit tight using plumage features as cryptic camouflage—making them very difficult to see and hence very difficult to census accurately. Early tests showed the imager was excellent at finding roosting Jack Snipe. Over the last two winters we have ringed over 50 Jack Snipe at the site with help from the Chelmarsh group. We have also counted significant numbers of this species and Common Snipe—all of which has provide the site manager with good evidence to seek continuing support in managing the site for these species.

We have also developed a set of guidance notes on our website to support other ringers to use imagers to catch this under-recorded species. It was very satisfying to get feedback from ringers, including some who have previously caught this species telling us how their catches have improved using our methodology.

In addition, during other uses, we are finding that many farmed fields—especially winter stubbles, are favoured nocturnal feeding areas for these two species. This is a very unexpected but welcome bonus of new information as an outcome of the project.

**3) Nest monitoring:-** during the 2017 breeding season we experimented with viewing nest boxes with the imager—especially on cool mornings. We have found that it is usually very simple to detect if boxes are occupied simply by the white glow (heat) coming from the entrance hole. For many groups this is sufficient for their purposes of monitoring percentage uptake. For other groups who want for example to ring chicks, it offers a very rapid way of focussing on only those boxes where nesting has occurred.

While ringing at a nearby Sand Martin colony, we tried viewing the colony with the imager and found again that it is relatively simple—especially using the camera attachment—to photograph the colony and calculate the proportion of holes occupied by the fact that occupied holes glow white and those unoccupied are black. This provides a very effective mechanism for monitoring this species as a nesting bird.



**4) Roosting and nocturnally active farmland species:-** this is by far the activity on which we have spent most time. Many nocturnal hours in the field have yielded some nationally important numbers of ringed birds and some locally important knowledge.

We have been working with four local farmers who have given us generous access to their land, but most of whom are very keen not to release too much material that would enable identification of their location—they suffer from regular unwanted incursions onto their land by a range of people from poachers, to hare coursers to motor cyclists. They are, however, all keen naturalists and are trying to do their best to manage their land with birds and other wildlife in mind. To a person they have been both fascinated by and supportive of what we are doing with the thermal imager; and they are genuinely surprised and very pleased by the number and range of species we have both encountered and ringed.

Seventeen different species have been ringed over the last two winter periods, however, the numbers of Skylark (470) and Grey Partridge (58) ringed are of national importance as can be seen when the national total of Skylark ringed is around 200 per year, and Grey Partridge around 20 per year. Other interesting finds have been the sheer numbers of Common and Jack Snipe found feeding in farm fields at night.

## **Spreading the word**

**i) Training** - as agreed, we have worked with other ringers and groups- initially in the WMBC area, and more recently across a much wider area. As a result, some groups have now bought imagers, and have been consulting with us as acknowledged experts. Obviously, we will continue to use this method to spread the word.

**ii) Guide** - we have placed a guide to using the imager on the internet. Anecdotally, this is being used; as evidenced by a phone call from a member of a Scottish ringing group which traditionally catch more Jack Snipe than any other group in the UK. They had heard about the imager work we are doing and had bought their own. They had tried several times to use theirs for Jacks but unsuccessfully. I described our technique and pointed them to the guide—next morning I had a call that, at last, they had caught using out guidance.

**iii) Media** - our social media posts had been picked up by BBC researchers which resulted initially in an item on Midlands Today, followed by a section in Winterwatch. Feedback from both was positive, but more importantly seems to be resulting in imagers being bought by UK groups and some abroad.

**iv) Talks** - we have given several talks to local wildlife and other general interest groups explaining what we are doing and spreading the word about our group and WMBC.

Overall then we hope that we are in the process of satisfying the remit set for us by the WMBC, and that we have a clear view of the next steps. We hope members enjoy reading about our work and agree that the investment made by the Club is producing worthwhile benefits for bird conservation.

**Colin McShane**

On behalf of Brewood Ringers April 2018

*It is very difficult to offer members the chance to attend a session using the thermal imager as not only do most sessions take place on private land but success can depend on as few people as possible being present. Members are, however, very welcome to attend any of Brewood Ringers ringing sessions at our Belvide reserve which take place every Wednesday and Saturday morning from the 2nd week in July until the end of September. See Brewood Ringers website for more details - [brewoodringers.com](http://brewoodringers.com)*



# Deputy Chairperson's Annual Report 2017-18

Much of the year has been spent completing the WMBC 2017 Cannock Chase Survey. Field work finished in July and a draft species report was produced for the volunteer surveyors at a function on September 16th at the Springslade Café. Eventually after a considerable amount of re-editing the Report was distributed to members in December. None of it would have been possible but for the wonderful team of volunteers. They did the work and submitted their observations as we went along. This enabled me to compile the Report relatively quickly. There is a whole host of people that I must thank. They are listed in the Report. I would however pay tribute to Sue Judge our editor who took on the editorial work at a busy time ahead of Christmas. The support that I received from Sue Sheppard the County Biodiversity officer was invaluable. Throughout Ruth Hytch and Anne Walker of the Cannock Chase AONB Unit supported the project whilst David Dodd looked after our expenses. The support of Jim Stewart of the Forestry Commission was tremendous too.

During the Survey I made new friends. Their enthusiasm for the Chase was unbounding. Many of them have in recent weeks revisited their sectors and are submitting their 2018 records to Birdtrack for inclusion in the 2018 Annual Bird Report. I represented the Club on the Cannock Chase Habitat and Species Task and Finish Group as well as a Priority species Working Group and the AONB Joint Committee. Chris Evans (Stafford Branch Secretary) has kindly taken my place on the Visitor Management Task and Finish Group whilst David Dodd (Chairman Stafford) has replaced me on the Love Cannock Chase Group.

The 2017 species Report has been well received and a start has been made on the recommendations. Most notably Mike Shurmer kindly offered to map out the exact locations of specific target species so that when environmental management work is proposed our Survey records are known to contractors and organisations who will be responsible for the work. This has already been helpful in preserving a site for Long-eared Owls. The Club is also engaging with the National Trust on an intensive nest box scheme targeting woodland birds.

One of our major recommendations relates to the need for a public education programme. This had a great boost through the public launch of the project on April 3rd 2018 at the Birches Valley Forestry Centre when through collaboration with Kate Macrae we unveiled a poster publicising the birds of Cannock Chase. This will be eventually on display at specific locations and hopefully at several libraries in the Cannock and Stafford areas. A T.V. appearance on BBC Midlands Today on Cuckoos also, hopefully, raised public awareness. It was good to be accompanied by Clive Davies who has made some tremendous recordings of bird song and calls. We had hoped to fit geo-locators to Cuckoos on the Chase but that might have to wait for another year. I had hoped too that we could make a start on an attempt to look for more Willow Tits but that is likely now to take place in 2018-19. Interestingly the Club has been invited to carry out a survey at a private site.

Additionally, I managed to visit meetings of the Solihull and Kidderminster Branches. Both are excellently run by dedicated teams who feel the need to step down after many years of great service. I was delighted that at Solihull Richard Harvey agreed to take on the role of Chairman whilst at Kidderminster their indoor meetings programme is secured until March 2019. We must find someone who can carry on after that.

Our relationships with other birding groups appears to be strong but especially with U3A. I was asked to take on the role as leader of the Stafford U3A group but declined. I was however able to assist the group to continue and join up with our Stafford Branch to produce a programme of field meetings to local birding sites such as Blithfield, Belvide, RSPB Coombes Valley and of course the Chase. Our

second visit there will be an evening occasion. I do hope that this newly formed group will continue to flourish.

During the year David Jackson and Rob Swift were coopted on to the Management Committee with responsibilities for Conservation and Publicity. Dave has largely taken on the HS2 work from me. He has been in correspondence with Lafarge Co Ltd regarding the monitoring of mitigation measures at Whitemoor Haye where gravel extraction has been expanded to areas populated until recently by Grey Partridges, Corn Buntings, Little Owls and good numbers of Skylarks, Yellowhammers and Tree Sparrows. Meanwhile Rob has taken on the Club's Twitter account.

On the debit side we will be losing Kevin Clements from the Management Committee. Kevin has chaired our meetings effectively over the last five years and overseen several changes in that time. Kevin will not be too far away from the scene, however, as he will continue his role as West Midlands County Recorder. Humphrey Miller will also leave the Management Committee after our June meeting. We will miss his wise counselling, proof reading and wonderful minutes of our meetings. I wish both Kevin and Humphrey every best wish for the future.

As you know this is the last report that I will be giving as deputy chairperson. I am grateful for the support that I have had from members whilst in this role and humbled by the confidence that you have in me for taking our Club forward.

Since early February I have been working with the Chair of Trustees on a Development Plan which will cover a broad range of the Club's activities. We are almost ready to present it to the Management Committee for their comments before it will be accepted by the team and recommended to a Trustees meeting in late June or early July

Finally, I would like to thank and congratulate the youngest member of our team Christopher Rickus who took over the Club's website from Jim Winsper. The handover has been achieved with the minimum of fuss and as a senior officer I have been impressed at how quickly he has added new items onto our website and removed items that have been overtaken by events. So, a special thanks to Christopher.

***Roger Broadbent***

**Congratulations to John Alton**, a Ladywalk volunteer, who has won a conservation prize from Natural England. This is for the work he has been doing with a farmer in the Polesworth area to successfully encourage lapwing breeding.

John was honoured along with twelve other winners at the first ever Natural England West Midlands Conservation Awards, held at Wyre Forest Discovery Centre on 28 March. Award winners were congratulated for their work as individuals or groups in enhancing wildlife in our region by the Chairman of Natural England, Andrew Sells.

John is a valuable, knowledgeable and dedicated volunteer at Ladywalk, in addition to his farm conservation work and other tasks such as erecting owl boxes in North Warwickshire. WMBC are privileged to have his support at the Ladywalk reserve.

I am sure there are volunteers or groups doing work on our reserves who should be nominated for future awards!

***Richard King***  
***Ladywalk Reserve***

# East meets West - Midland Bird Club



**From left to right - Philip You, Steve Nuttall, Dave Jackson and Steve Hodges**

During the winter I read an e-mail request circulated to the club's Executive by a visiting birder on a short business trip, seeking good birding locations in our region, so I thought I would offer a day's birding, rather than let a far flung visitor from Taiwan go it alone.

My offer was accepted, and after striking up a chain of e-mail exchanges, on a bright but chilly morning in mid-February I met Philip You at Wolverhampton Railway Station, and we set out on a mini birdathon over the next few hours.

A trip by Taxi with his sister Lily to Middleton Lakes RSPB reserve the previous day had to be curtailed due to the muddy conditions and, to their credit, they saw 27 species, before the muddy tracks got the better of their footwear. Their day list however had included his much hoped for target species Long-tailed Tit. Philip had obviously done his homework.

When we met I learnt that his father's Optics Company 'Optisan' had been exhibiting at the NEC, but that he had had to leave Lily finishing off business at the show event.

I chose Upton Warren as our first destination in the hope that we could see the wintering Whooper Swan and the recently returning Avocets. They did not disappoint and we had great views, also close views of eight Eurasian Curlews two Little Egrets, a perched Peregrine, a host of duck species and various passerines. A very close Green Woodpecker obliged and over 300 Lapwings graced the flashes. We also had a close encounter with a flock of cawing Rooks in a roadside field, which Philip particularly seemed to like - who doesn't?

Philip informed me that his father had started their family's optics business in 1998, and that the firm's manufacturing base was in south China. He showed me his own pair of Optisans and, not only were they light, in my opinion these bins really give other eye-wateringly

expensive brands a real run for their money - puns intended. They would be ideal for beginners, those on a budget, or if you just need a spare pair of a different magnification. In the few daylight hours we had to bird we sadly couldn't locate a Cetti's Warbler, but undeterred, we then drove up to the Club's Belvide Reserve where we met the ever present Steve Nuttall and several other club members, who warmly welcomed Philip as we crammed into the Woodland hide. We saw Marsh Tit and Treecreeper - and more Long-tailed Tits on the feeders. One of the birders in the hide made the kindly meant observation, and likened Philip's visit to that of a "kid in a sweet shop" with choices of several new birds in front of the hide for him to see and photograph. "It would be just the same for us if we visited Taiwan."

On the reservoir we saw lots of Goldeneye, Eurasian Wigeon and several other duck species. In all we saw 55 species in our five hour whistle stop tour of two of the regions premier locations. Philip's list of new species reached 32 in two days.

Even though Philip had confessed to still feeling a little jet lagged we had a super day, and his youthful birding enthusiasm shone throughout. He told me that Optisan sponsor school birding events in China - Top marks for that.

### **Postscript**

Several days after our day out I received a nice surprise in the post. Philip had very kindly sent me a copy of the newly printed English version of "A Field Guide to the Birds of Taiwan." This island situated in the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of China has a rich biological diversity. Over 630 bird species have been recorded, including 27 endemic and 57 endemic subspecies! (ISBN 978-986-05-5019-1)

Members might like to check out the Optisan binoculars which can be purchased on line via Amazon UK - I personally recommend either the Britec R 8x42s at £171.99, the Britec R 10x42s at £179.99 or the Litec RII 10x34s at £126.99. Current prices at time of writing and outstanding value, with free delivery from one of the UK suppliers.

***Dave Jackson***  
***Wolverhampton***

## **An introduction to Richard Harvey**

### **The new Chairperson of our Solihull Branch**

My name is Richard Harvey and I am the new Chairman of the Solihull Branch, West Midland Bird Club. I thought I might provide a potted bio for your interest. I came to birding later, some 6 years ago and for my 60th birthday my wife paid for me to go on a ten day "Round Britain road trip" with Lee Evans. Fabulous!

I am a practising veterinary surgeon, in Coventry. So, as you might surmise, opportunities for twitching are difficult. For example, it took me three weeks to find a three hour slot to see the long staying Hoopoe. Other regional UK lifers included Night Heron, Melodious warbler, Bee Eaters and Sabine's gull. But I missed the Penduline tit by one day! I have had plenty of experience organising meetings and acting as meetings secretary, albeit for veterinary meetings, not birders. I am very much looking forward to meeting you all.

***Richard Harvey***  
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# Club and Branch

## Indoor Meetings and Field Trips

### WMBC FIELD TRIPS

**Please note: All WMBC members and their families are welcome to join all WMBC field trips and attend any Branch indoor meetings or field trips.**

Coaches depart from Cambridge Street, Birmingham City Centre, promptly at the time stated. Food and drink should be brought as required. Appropriate clothing and footwear to guard against the elements is recommended.

**Field Trip Contacts:** To book or for further information please contact Ray Davies on 0121 682 4375 or 07762 061603

wmbcfieldtrips.ray@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk

or Liz Palmer on 01827 54557 or 07947 456448

wmbcfieldtrips.liz@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk

**Please note - Deposits for the April 2019 Devon Weekend are required before 21st October, 2018. Again early booking recommended.**

### Sunday 10th June 2018

#### Bempton Cliffs / Blacktoft Sands

Depart: 07:00hrs Expected return: 19:00hrs

Cost: £23

The spectacular cliffs at Bempton RSPB offer close views of Gannet, Kittiwake, Puffin, Guillemot and Razorbill. Enjoy the NEW Visitor Centre. Blacktoft offers estuary reserve good for waders, rarities, Bearded Tit, and raptors - most likely Marsh Harrier and hopefully Montagu's Harrier. Remember your RSPB card, there is a charge for nonmembers.

### Sunday 9th September 2018

#### Titchwell RSPB Reserve, Norfolk

Depart: 07:00hrs Expected return: 19:30hrs

Cost: £23

Seek seabirds, waders, wildfowl and migrants at peak migration time at the prime RSPB reserve. See how recent changes to the reserve have matured. Remember your RSPB card as there is a charge for nonmembers.

### Sunday 7th October 2018

#### Spurn Head

Depart: 07:00hrs. Expected return: 19:00hrs.

Cost: £23

Seek seabirds, waders, wildfowl and migrants at a peak migration time at this prime RSPB reserve. Experience the new Visitor Centre (coach park, coffee, toilets etc) and start from a more central position!

### Norfolk Weekend - A change this year!

#### Friday 9th November 2018

During the weekend of Friday 9th - Sunday 11th November we will be staying at the Manor Hotel, Mundesley, Norfolk.

Situated in the eastern area of Norfolk it gives us access to places like Sea Palling, hoping for wintering seabirds and maybe migrants, Strumpshaw Fen reserve, for any rare visitors, and the Stubb Mill viewpoint with potential for Cranes, Marsh and Hen Harriers and maybe Owls to be seen.

On Sunday we will explore the North Norfolk coast hoping for winter passerines, wildfowl, waders, birds of prey, and, naturally, any rarities.

Cost for bed, breakfast and evening meal is £65.00 per person per night for those sharing, with a supplement of £10 for singles.

Please book with Ray. No Deposits in advance required this time. We settle our own hotel bills before leaving.

### Sunday 2nd December 2018

#### Rainham Marshes RSPB

Depart: 08:00hrs. Expected return: 19:30hrs.

Cost: £23

Marshland habitat with reedbeds, pools, shallow scrapes, some woodland and grazed meadows by the Thames estuary offers wildfowl, waders, reedbed specialities and rare gulls. Remember to bring your RSPB card as there is a charge for nonmembers.



## **Friday 5th April 2019**

### **Devon Weekend**

We stay at the Langstone Cliff Hotel at Dawlish Warren for our annual Devon adventure. Centred at Dawlish Warren we will search for local specialities and lingering wintering species, as well as the first summer migrants and rarities that may be present.

The cost is £75.00 per person per night for half board (complimentary drink before dinner) for those sharing a room and £90 for singles. Travel by own transport to meet at 6.30pm for dinner at 7.00pm. A deposit of £20 (non refundable) per person is required by the hotel to confirm your booking. Please call Ray or Liz to assess availability and then provide this payment by cheque made out to West Midland Bird Club (WMBC) and sent to Ray Davies at 140 Bradbury Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 8AL before 21st October to confirm your reservation. We settle the remainder of our own bills at the Hotel on departure.

### **KIDDERMINSTER BRANCH**

**Branch Contact** Branch Chair, Brian Rickett  
01562 913898 or 01384 839838  
Email: kidderminster@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk

### **Indoor Meetings**

Meetings are held at St. Oswald's Church Centre, off Broadwaters Drive, Kidderminster DY10 2RY commencing at 19.30hrs. A charge of £2.00 per person for WMBC members and £2.50 for nonmembers is made, which includes refreshments.

### **Advance Notice**

#### **Wednesday 26th September**

Keith Offord - Sri Lanka.  
The birds and fauna of this beautiful Island.

#### **Wednesday 24th October**

Neil Malton - East African Wildlife Landscape.  
Birds, Fauna and Mammals of this African wilderness

#### **Wednesday 14th November**

Mike Leach - A Funny way to make a living part 2.  
It's another opportunity to hear about his life as a wildlife photographer and author.

## **Wednesday 5th December**

Mike Wilkes - Birds in Action and Christmas Buffet.

### **Outdoor Meetings**

#### **Sunday 2nd December 2018 -**

**Slimbridge** - Meet in Main Car Park 10.00am

### **SOLIHULL BRANCH**

At their recent Branch AGM after years of service the Branch committee stood down and a new committee was elected. More details on the next page.

**Branch Contact:** Branch Chair,  
Richard Harvey - 0789556125  
Email: solihull@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk

### **Indoor meetings**

Indoor meetings are held in the Guild House, Knowle B93 0LN, commencing at 19:30hrs  
Admission: WMBC members £2.00, nonmembers £2.50.

**Please note:** Access from the eastern car park via the churchyard is unlit and those who are not confident about their night vision should either bring a torch or take the slightly longer route via the High Street.

### **Advance Notice**

#### **Friday 12th October 2019**

Paul Wilkinson - The Natural History of the Midlands Canals

#### **Friday 9th November 2019**

Malcolm Ausden - Habitat Loss and Gain

#### **Friday 14th December 2018**

Roger Butler - A Week on St. Kilda

#### **Friday 11th January 2019**

Prof. Graham Martin - Through Birds Eyes

#### **Friday 8th February 2019**

Chris Ward - Waders, Waders, Waders

#### **Friday 8th March 2019**

Pete Walkden - Magical Mull

## STAFFORD BRANCH

**Branch Contact:** David Dodd 01543 490096  
Email: [stafford@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:stafford@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)

### Indoor Meetings

These are held at the Perkins Sports & Social Club, Tixall Road, Stafford. ST16 3UB. The Indoor Meetings programme will recommence on Tuesday 6th November 2018. Further dates for your diaries, Tuesday 4th December 2018, Wednesday 2nd January, 2019, Tuesday 5th February 2019 and Tuesday 5th March 2019, full details in the September Newsletter.

**Advance Notice** - 2019 will mark the 90th Anniversary of our Club and our Stafford Branch start the celebrations on 2nd January with

**Kate MacRae - A World of Wildlife in my**

**patch** covering attracting, watching and filming garden visitors. **Please Note:** Due to the bank holiday this meeting is on Wednesday not the usual Tuesday

### Field Meetings

#### Monday 18th June - Cannock Chase

Start at 21.00hrs, The target species being Nightjars and roding Woodcock. Please contact Chris Evans for meeting arrangements and further details: on 07905 563385 or by email at [staffordfieldmeets@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:staffordfieldmeets@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk)

There will be no field meets in July or August and the programme will recommence in September. Details will be printed in the next Newsletter and on the Club Website. If you want to participate in field trips then please support this initiative.

## Other News from our Branches

**STAFFORD BRANCH** At the branch AGM on 6th March 2018 Richard Rafe was elected as Branch Treasurer. David Dodd was re-elected as Chairperson and Chris Evans was re-elected as Secretary. All other committee members remained unchanged.

**SOLIHULL BRANCH** At their branch AGM on 9th March the committee of three, who had between them run this branch for more years than they may care to recall, stepped down for a well earned 'retirement'. Gratitude is expressed to Humphrey Miller (Chairman and branch representative on the Club's Management Committee), Raymond Brown (Branch Treasurer and Secretary) and Anthony Reynolds for all they have done over the years in running this branch.

Richard Harvey (Dr) was elected as Branch Chairperson and will also replace Humphrey on the Club's Management Committee. John Lane was also elected to the branch committee. At the handover meeting in April it was agreed that John would serve as branch treasurer and Richard would also act as its Secretary. Jill Smith was co-opted to the committee. Huge thanks go to Richard, John and Jill for stepping forward to ensure the future of this branch.

Blythe Valley Park – nestbox monitoring scheme

This scheme, which resumed in April, is now down to 18 boxes, as six have become inaccessible due to new building works on the site. The ringers' report for 2017 has been received and placed on the Solihull section of the website.

**KIDDERMINSTER BRANCH** A personal invitation to/reminder of the Branch AGM, which went by email or post to every WMBC member within a 15 mile radius of Kidderminster, achieved no response except for one apology! The existing committee was therefore re-elected to serve a further year. This was disappointing and worrying as the Chairman and Treasurer of this branch will stand down at the AGM in March 2019.

This is a hugely popular branch with regular attendances of around 50 at their indoor meets, many of whom are happy to put out and put back chairs, sell raffle tickets, help with refreshments etc. But they desperately need someone who is prepared to step forward to take on the Chair of this branch and act as a catalyst to create a new team - could this be you? Please contact WMBC Club Chairperson, Roger, at [chair@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk](mailto:chair@westmidlandbirdclub.org.uk) to discuss without commitment.



# BIRD NOTES

## February - April

Compiled from your records by Humphrey Miller

These notes are derived from unchecked records, derived from the variety of sources set out in the previous Newsletter. They cover the end of a prolonged, cold winter and the late, largely cold early spring. My thanks to everybody who has contributed records.

### RARITIES

Probably the most popular bird in this category was the **Glossy Ibis** which visited Upton Warren for an extended period commencing on 10th April. Other sightings of this species came from Middleton Lakes and Lapley. A **Red-rumped Swallow** visited Belvide on 29th and 30th April. Two **Arctic Skuas** were seen at Draycote Water on 9th April. Three **Red-throated Divers** were recorded at Blithfield on 3rd April, and there was a March report from Draycote Water. Reports of **Red-necked Grebe** came from Draycote Water and Branston. A **Kumlien's Gull** was reported from Silverdale C.P. on 6th and 7th February, and another at Chasewater on 12th and 14th March. There were a few intermittent appearances by a **Long-tailed Duck** at Branston. A **Green-winged Teal** was at Middleton Lakes between 23rd-26th March, and the Radford Meadows bird made its final appearance on 2nd February. The same **Common Crane** was seen at Ladywalk, Middleton Lakes and Whitemoor Haye, with the same or another at Marsh Lane. There were three more records of **Bearded Tit** at Napton Reservoir. A **White Stork** was reported at Cookley on 6th April, and the same or another bird at Whitemoor Haye on the same and the next day has been reported as an escape.

### W.M.B.C. RESERVES

#### BELVIDE

A **Northern Goshawk** was recorded on 6th March. There were a few April sightings of **Osprey** and **Red Kite**. A **Ring Ouzel** on 15th April was an unusual record for the reserve. Other

migrant/summer passerine species included all three common hirundines, including a flock of 100 **Sand Martins**, **Reed Warbler** (a count of 10 on 23rd April), **Sedge Warbler**, **Garden Warbler**, **Common** and **Lesser Whitethroats**, **Common Redstart**, **Northern Wheatear** and **Yellow and White Wagtail**. The last **Hawfinch** record was on 14th April. There was a count of 100 **Common Swifts** on 25th April, which was also the date of the first **Hobby** sighting. A **Merlin** was reported on 19th March. The first record of **Common Cuckoo** was on 27th April. A wide range of wader species included **Avocet**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Green Sandpiper**, **Bar-tailed** and **Black-tailed Godwits**, **Eurasian Curlew**, **Whimbrel**, **Ringed** and **Little Ringed Plovers**, **European Golden Plover**, **Woodcock**, **Ruff**, **Sanderling**, **Common Redshank**, **Common Greenshank** and **Turnstone**. Up to three **Black-necked Grebes** were reported. Wildfowl reports included 21 **Pintail** on 4th March and eight **Common Scoters** on 14th April.

A **Sandwich Tern** was recorded on 11th March, and there were small counts of **Arctic Terns** on several dates at the end of the period. Gull



Black-necked Grebes at Belvide - Steve Nuttall

species included an unseasonal **Great Black-backed Gull** on 17th April, a **Kittiwake** on 14th April, **Little** and **Mediterranean**.



## BLITHFIELD

In April there were two double-figures counts of *White Wagtails*, with 18 on 14th. Small numbers of *Yellow Wagtail* and *Northern Wheatear* have been recorded. There was a flock of 400 *Fieldfares* on 21st February. A good count of 27 *Long-tailed Tits* was reported on 2nd February. A *Little Tern* was recorded on 19th April, two *Black Terns* were seen on 21st April, and there was a flock of 30 *Arctic Terns* on 29th. There were a few reports of *Little Gull*. Wader species included *Grey Plover*, *Little Ringed Plover*, *Avocet*, *Whimbrel*, *Eurasian Curlew*, *Common Redshank*, and *Common* and *Green Sandpipers*. There were three *Osprey* sightings in April.

There was a count of 544 *Eurasian Wigeon* on 17th February, and three *Whooper Swans* also flew over on that date. Six *Common Scoters* were recorded on 25th March. The highest count of *Goosander* was 29 birds on 18th February. A *Common Cuckoo* was recorded on 22nd April.

## HARBORNE

The wintry conditions in early March brought in an influx of *Fieldfares* and *Redwings*. A juvenile *Peregrine Falcon* was seen perched on 4th March. A *Grey Wagtail* was seen on the brook in mid-March. A pair of *Mistle Thrushes* was reported regularly, with the male singing in the centre of the reserve. Also singing were *Blackcaps* and *Common Chiffchaffs*, which arrived much later than usual due to the cold

conditions. There were regular sightings of *Eurasian Nuthatch*, *Eurasian Jay*, *Stock Dove*, *Bullfinch*, *Great Spotted Woodpecker*, *Eurasian Sparrowhawk* and *Common Buzzard*.

## LADYWALK

There were several reports of *Lesser Spotted Woodpecker* between 12th February and 26th March, with two birds reported on 13th March. The first *Hobby* was seen on 25th April. 1-2 *Common Cuckoos* were reported from 20th April. A *Tree Pipit* was recorded on 4th April. At least five *Cetti's Warblers* have been singing. Other warbler species include *Grasshopper Warbler*, *Common* and *Siberian Chiffchaffs*, *Willow Warbler*, *Reed* and *Sedge Warblers*, *Common* and *Lesser Whitethroats* and *Blackcap*. Just off the reserve there were reports of a *Firecrest* at Edison Road and a *Hawfinch* in Church Pool Covert. Three *Yellow Wagtails* were recorded on 27th April. 1-2 *Great White Egrets* were recorded on several dates until 17th March. The footprints of a *Eurasian Bittern* were seen in snow on 4th March. Five *Bewick's Swans* were reported on 6th February. 150 *Shovelers* were recorded on 29th March. An *Osprey* was reported on 12th April. A flock of over 300 *European Golden Plover* flew past the reserve on 13th March, and other waders recorded included *Woodcock*, *Jack* and *Common Snipe*, *Little Ringed Plover* and *Black-tailed Godwit*. There were a few sightings of a *Barn Owl*.

## SELECTED RECORDS FROM OTHER MAIN SITES - DRAYCOTE WATER

Two notable gull counts were 58 *Little Gulls* on 15th April and at least 32 *Kittiwakes* on 16th March. *Iceland Gull* was recorded regularly until 28th April, *Caspian Gull* was recorded until 26th April, and the latest report of *Glaucous Gull* was on 16th April. An early *Osprey* was seen on 14th March, and there were four subsequent reports. There were four sightings of *Red Kite*. There was an exceptionally early first record of *Barn Swallow* (9th March), less than three months after the last record for 2017 (Ladywalk, 11th December). Highest count of *Yellow Wagtails* was 11. A *Water Pipit* was reported on 9th and 10th April, and a *Rock Pipit* on 18th and 19th March. The last *Hawfinch* record was

on 23rd March. A flock of 50 **Yellowhammers** was reported on 5th April. Three **Red-breasted Mergansers** were present from 3rd-6th March, followed by sightings of one or two birds on four dates in April. There was a count of 24 **Common Scoters** on 15th April. A **Whooper Swan** was recorded on 9th April. Waders included **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Avocet**, **Sanderling** and **Whimbrel**. A **Black-necked Grebe** was recorded on 14th March, and later from 12th-14th April. There was a count of 100 **Common Swifts** on 25th April. The highest count of **Arctic Terns** was 19.

## BERRYHILL FIELDS

This migration watchpoint is the subject of a proposal (strongly contested) by Stoke-on-Trent city council for a housing development. There were many reports of **Ring Ouzel**, commencing on 4th April. The first migrating **Northern Wheatear** was reported on 13th March, and the species was subsequently a frequent visitor, with a highest count of 22. There were several reports of 1-3 **Whinchats**. **Grasshopper**, **Sedge**, **Willow** and **Garden Warblers**, and **Common** and **Lesser Whitethroat** have all been recorded. Other passerine species include **Willow Tit**, **Stonechat**, **Barn Swallow**, **White Wagtail**, **Yellow Wagtail**, **Hawfinch**, **Lesser Redpoll** and **Yellowhammer**. A maximum of three **Jack Snipe** and 23 **Common Snipe** were recorded in March, and other waders reported were **European Golden Plover**, **Little Ringed Plover**, **Eurasian Curlew**, **Woodcock**, **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Common Sandpiper**. Other species reported include **Little Egret**, **Goosander**, **Eurasian Teal**, **Common Shelduck**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **Mediterranean Gull**, **Barn Owl**, **Red Kite** and **Common Swift**.

## PRINCIPAL RECORDS ELSEWHERE

### NON-PASSERINES

Two **Dark-bellied Brent Geese** were reported from Bartley Reservoir on 4th April. 695 **Pink-footed Geese** went over Tittesworth Water on 5th February. Two **White-fronted Geese** were recorded at Middleton Lakes on 4th February. A **Bewick's Swan** was recorded at Brandon Marsh and also nearby at Bretford. The highest count among many reports of **Whooper Swan** was 30 at Trentham Gardens on 4th February. An

unusual location for **Garganey** was Cannock Chase – two birds were on flood water on 28th April. Five **Greater Scaup** were at Tittesworth on 17th March. Four **Red Grouse** were at Swallow Moss on 1st February. Reports of **Grey Partridge** came from Coombe Fields, Whitemoor Haye, Park Hall Country Park, Burston and i54. A **Great Northern Diver** was reported from Ripple Pits on 10th and 16th February. **Slavonian Grebes** were reported from Arrow Valley Lake (Redditch) and Bartley. Additional records of **Black-necked Grebes** came from Westwood Pool, Bartley (four) and Westport Lake. There were a couple of records of **Eurasian Bittern** from Middleton Lakes. Numerous reports of **Great White Egret** included three birds at Whitemoor Haye. Reports of **Osprey** were also numerous. **Marsh Harriers** were recorded at twelve localities. The birding press contained a report of two **Hen Harriers** at Swallow Moss on 22nd February.

There was a flock of 1092 **European Golden Plovers** at Branston on 6th February. A **Grey Plover** was at Middleton Lakes on 13th March. Reports of **Red Knot** came from Earlswood Lakes (a site first) and Middleton Lakes. **Ruff** were reported from Branston, Ripple, Grimley and Middleton Lakes/Amington. **Wood Sandpipers** visited Doxey Marshes and Grimley at the end of the period. A **Spotted Redshank** was recorded at Grimley on 27th April. **Sandwich Terns** were recorded at Earlswood Lakes and Upton Warren. A **Little Tern** was at J.C.B. Rocester on 17th April. A **Black Tern** was recorded at Middleton Lakes on 20th April. **Long-eared Owls** were reported from Middleton Lakes and Cannock Chase. There were a few April reports of a **Short-eared Owl** on Bredon Hill. **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were recorded at Brandon Marsh, Middleton Lakes, Alvecote Pools and Sheepwash Urban Park. **Merlins** were recorded from nine localities.

### PASSERINES

A party of 60 **Common Ravens** was recorded at Coombes Valley on 9th March. **Woodlarks** have been reported from Mancetter and Lutley Wedge. Reports of **Siberian Chiffchaff** come from Upton-upon-Severn, Hallow, Lower Strensham, Middleton Lakes and Hams Hall. There was

a count of 12 **Wood Warblers** in the Wyre Forest on 22nd April, with other reports from Hawksmoor. Reports of **Grasshopper Warbler** included six at Doxey Marshes. Middleton Lakes had a long-staying **Firecrest** from 7th February to 10th March, and other records came from Tipton (Victoria Park), Hams Hall and Bredon Hill. Bredon Hill was the principal locality for **Ring Ouzel** sightings, with several counts of between 8 and 15 birds: another good count was ten on the North Staffordshire Moorlands. Three **Common Nightingales** were singing at a private site in south Worcestershire on 23rd April. Two good counts of **Pied Flycatcher** were ten in the Wyre Forest and six at Coombes Valley, and an unusual venue for the species was the railway embankment at Olton. A **Black Redstart** was on Lichfield Cathedral from 23rd-25th March, and another was seen at Tanwood on 23rd April.

Two **Dippers** in Trentham Gardens were much reported, and other records came from Gradbach (three birds), Consall and the Wyre Forest. There was a count of eight **Tree Pipits** in the Wyre Forest, with records from seven other localities. The highest count of **Water Pipits** at Doxey Marshes was six, on several dates. There was a count of 30 **Bramblings** at Tenbury Wells on and before 12th March. **Hawfinch** records continued well into April, and a count of 65 at Seth Somers Park, Halesowen, is a regional record: another notable count was 52 at Tutbury. At least two different **Common Redpolls** visited a garden in Amington between 13th March and 7th April. A flock of 20 **Common Crossbills** was recorded at Abraham's Valley on 11th February. 16 **Corn Buntings** were counted at Shenstone (Worcestershire) on 15th April (another location where the local authority is considering a housing development).



Flight shot of 2S Mediterranean Gull at Belvide - Martyn Pitt





# West Midland Bird Club

## Field Trip Reports - Ray Davies

### Devon Weekend - Friday 9th March 2018

Thirteen keen birders arrived at Dawlish Warren for what promised to be another excellent WMBC weekend in South Devon and we were not disappointed! Despite the forecast of heavy rain, the weather neither thwarted our forays to local sites nor dampened our spirit of adventure to find some rarities.

Saturday dawned wet but abated to very light rain as we set off for the fields of RSPB Labrador Bay. Cirl Buntings were immediately obvious, both up in the trees, in the hedgerow and feeding in the field. Their beautiful yellow and brown plumage was effective camouflage shielding them from the gaze of the pair of Peregrine Falcons flying menacingly over nearby trees! A great start to the day and it only got better as from the headland of Broadsands Common Scoter, Shag, Great Northern Diver, Fulmar and Gannet were seen. The trees held good numbers of singing Gold, Green and Chaffinch announcing the start of Spring? So far, so good - the rain was holding off, but the early March snow had left it extremely slippery and boggy under foot. Rain threatened so we headed further down the coast to Beesands by which time the rain had ceased. On a pool in this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the reported Ring-Necked Duck was soon located associating with Pochard! WOW, what a



Ring-necked Duck associating with Pochard - Dave Wood

great sighting. Mute Swan fed among the feeding Coot, Pochard, Little and Great-crested Grebes and a single Red-necked Grebe! We then left to follow our own desires. Some returned to Dawlish Warren and some went to Berry Head. At Berry Head those of the group who went delighted in the stiff-winged Fulmar gliding out from the cliffs, Kittiwakes nesting on ledges and Cormorant hanging wings out to dry. A pair of Raven cavorted over the headland, while other Corvids added to the cacophony.

At Dawlish Warren birding along the shore saw Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls, Rock Pipit and Oystercatchers but no sign of the reported Glaucous Gull. An excellent first day and the rain had kindly held off.

Sunday morning was largely dry as we left the hotel and drove to Cockwood, on the Exe estuary, hoping to see the reported wintering Slavonian Grebe. It eluded us but Red-breasted Mergansers, Oystercatchers and Great-crested Grebe all put in an appearance, with a flock of Brent Geese flying in. We moved on to Exminster Marshes where we searched the canal eventually locating the reported Black-necked Grebe, which we watched at close quarters. To see four out of the five regular UK

Grebes in one weekend was remarkable but when later some saw the Slavonian Grebe it made the group's achievement exceptional! Lunchtime and early afternoon was spent at RSPB Bowling Green Marsh and Goosemoor areas. From the comfort of the Hide sightings included Wigeon, Greenshank, Lapwing, Curlew, Black and Bar-tailed Godwit, Little Egret, Redshank, Teal, Shoveler and Shelduck. On the far side from the hide a Kingfisher conveniently sat on a post for everyone to get excellent 'scope views, and close by a Chiffchaff popped up - a newly arrived migrant? From the viewing platform further along the Clyst estuary we had distant, but good views, of Avocet, Grey Plover, Dunlin and hundreds more Godwit on a far bank. The tide soon moved them on. Walking back we watched a Mistle Thrush busily building a nest, while flocks of Long-tailed Tits buzzed in the hedgerow. The heavy rain started and tracks were made for home! A total of 85 Birds were recorded by the group during a fab weekend in Devon and we hope this report will inspire and encourage more members to join us for a very sociable, birding adventure. Bookmark 5-7 April 2019, when 'Spring into Devon' will give members the opportunity of many more migrants. Huge thanks to Ray Davies for organising and leading the weekend and to all whose patience and persistence resulted in great sightings for us all to share. *Thanks go to Jenny Jupe, Chair of Trustees, WMBC, for providing this erudite summary of the Devon Weekend with minor changes to the detail by Ray.*

## Forest of Dean - Sunday 25th March 2018

At last it was going to happen! After heavy snow on the original planned date of March 4th and bitter conditions of the re-planned date of 18th we were hoping it was third time lucky. So we left at 07.00 on the 25th. With the prospect of a Glossy Ibis near Lydney station we walked the short distance along the Harbour Walk to look over a slightly flooded field. The Ibis had not



Great Grey Shrike - Steve Pattison

been seen before we arrived nor when we were there! We saw Red-legged Partridge as compensation as well as Fieldfare and Redwing in nearby hedgerows. At Parkend no Hawfinch were immediately obvious. So we searched along the Cannop Brook and found Grey Wagtail and a Dipper. Returning towards the coach a single Hawfinch was seen by a few of us before it disappeared into a large conifer nearby.

The sun was warm as we walked up the bank to New Fancy View where we were distracted by an Adder warming up in the lee of the pathside fence! At the viewpoint we had distant views of a Goshawk and one flew very high over our heads. Further distraction happened when another Adder was found at the base of the wall and then two Common Lizards appeared on the parapet! After a break at the Visitor Centre our



Mandarins - Ray Davies

visit to Cannop Ponds soon revealed stunning male Mandarins already paired up with attractive females. Later they would disappear into the forest to breed. Our final venue was Crabtree Hill reached after a half-hour walk. The effort was well rewarded with the rapid sighting of the Great Grey Shrike over wintering for its fifth year?? We watched it as it hunted around the area moving from tree to tree. Persistence paid off for one of us when it was seen to pounce on an unfortunate Wren! We returned to the coach having seen many of the Forest's special birds in fine weather - at last!!



Black-necked Grebe - Ray Davies

## **Woolston Eyes/Burton Mere Wetlands RSPB**

**Sunday 22nd April 2018**

26 members left at 08.00 and after a break at Knutsford services arrived at Woolston to be met by wardens and led on to the reserve. Chiffchaff calls and Blackcap song greeted us and a little later a Willow Warbler was heard. Damp and cool conditions deterred other warblers from activity. We were soon in the main hide and watching some Black-necked Grebes. Some were already paired up and we watched admiring their resplendent breeding plumage when they

were'n't underwater feeding that is! A rainstorm brought hirundines down low over the water and we were able to watch Swallows and Martins swooping for insects and occasionally skimming the surface for a drink. Greenfinches at the birdfeeders were joined by a Willow Tit, a species rare elsewhere, it has an established breeding colony of national importance at the reserve.

We returned to the coach and after thanking the wardens we left for Burton Mere. As we walked to the Centre through a small woodland we heard Nuthatches and watched two Treecreepers follow each other around an oak tree. From the Centre the pools held many Avocets and Black-headed Gulls as well as some Redshank and a couple of Ruff. Further on we went into Marsh Covert hide just as heavy rain started! Mallard and Teal were incidental to our views as six Spotted Redshank, in black white-spotted breeding plumage, took precedence! The rain stopped and we moved on soon finding a Common Whitethroat in a group of bushes and nearby a reeling Grasshopper Warbler, which despite intensive searching remained unseen! Further on our attention was brought to a Wheatear and Grey Partridges in a small pathside field. At Burton Point another Wheatear was disturbed from a fence. From the elevated viewpoint many Little Egrets were seen down on the marshland as well as two Great-white Egrets and Black-tailed Godwits on the pool in front of Inner Marsh Farm hide. Two Swift flew through and were missed by many! We returned to the Centre and back through the wood to the coach. We left for home well pleased with some 65 species recorded with rare grebes and many of the first summer migrants.



Spotted Redshanks - Steve Pattison

**Ray Davies**

# BELVIDE MEGA ALERT - RED RUMPED SWALLOW OFF DAM NOW!!!!



Photograph: Digiscoped by Steve Nuttall.

Spotting a rarity never mind a 'mega' is the stuff that dreams are made of so imagine how Adam McPherson must have felt on 29th April when at 9.25am, on one of his regular visits to Belvide, he entered the Andrew Chappell hide and raised his binoculars to enjoy the Swifts only to spot a **Red-rumped Swallow!** The information was immediately passed on to Steve Nuttall who instantly tweeted the news so that the bird could be enjoyed by as many birders as possible. The bird then continued to perform well to a steady stream of admirers and was still on view

until dusk. On the following day the bird was still present until 10.45am when a Hobby spooked the hirundine flock after which all hirundines started to feed much higher and there was no further sign. This was the first Red-rumped Swallow record for Belvide and became the 5th official record for Staffordshire.

Thanks go to Adam for passing on his find so quickly, to Steve for his tweet updates throughout the day and for 'staying on the bird' so that admirers could find it easily and to Belvide team members who organised access.

## Live Web-cam on Peregrine Falcon Nest

Members may recall that last year the Club purchased two live cameras for a Peregrine Falcon nest in our area. There is now a live link on the front page of our club website to these cameras. Unfortunately one of the cameras is currently offline but it is hoped to have this fixed later in the season (action now would cause disruption to the nest).

**Suggestions** Your Management Committee always welcome suggestions and feedback from the our members regarding any aspect of our Club. Please send your feedback to Roger Broadbent, contact details as given opposite.

**Next Issue** The Autumn issue of your newsletter will go to press by mid-August and should be on your door mats at the beginning of September. Please send your contributions to the editor by 1st August **at the latest please. Anything received after this cut off date will be held over until the Winter issue.**

**And Finally** It is never too early to send in your contribution for the next Newsletter. If something in this issue prompts a response or inspires something entirely different don't wait, email it to me straight away.

No access to a computer? Don't use this as an excuse, write it out and send it to me by post (the earlier the better) and I will type it up.

**Sue**



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