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Glamorgan Bird Club

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2018

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*** BIG BIRDING DAY ***

Our annual get-together. There'll be plenty of birding activities. Come along on Sunday 22nd April Kenfig National Nature Reserve



Snipe at Forest Farm © Anthony Matthews



Hawfinch at Fforest Ganol © Hayden Lack

GBC SURVEY

Have you completed the GBC Members' Survey?
The deadline is fast approaching - April 17th
We really appreciate your feedback

SUBMISSION DEADLINE for the next newsletter is **Friday 22nd June**

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EDITORIAL NOTES

Following on from “the beast from the east” and the “hysteria from Siberia”, spring is slowly unfurling. The cold snap certainly brought some unusual sightings. Who’d have thought a Golden Plover would be found in someone’s back garden in Porthcawl! (The bird was taken into care and is recovering). We need to keep feeding our garden birds, especially in late winter, when natural food sources become depleted.

More great news. Our bid to the Welsh Ornithological Society, to help the Willow Tit, a rapidly declining species in Glamorgan, was successful. The initial phase of the project is to undertake a thorough survey of known and former sites to establish how many birds there are out there. We’ll need lots of volunteers to help with this work. If you’re interested please contact, Strinda Davies.

Membership renewals are due. There’s a form at the back of the newsletter. Subs are the same as last year. Membership is slightly up on past years but we can’t afford to rest on our laurels. We shall find out more when the results of our on-line survey are processed. Many of you have already taken the time (about 10 - 15 minutes) to undertake the survey. We’d like as many as possible to complete it to give comprehensive views of members’ opinions. There are details on page 8. There will be a report on the findings at the AGM. Talking of the AGM. It’s on Tuesday 24th April at Kenfig 7:45 p.m. You’ll find the agenda on page 6, which will be followed by refreshments and a quiz. There’s a major issue for discussion - the conversion of the club to a CIO. (see pages 7 & 8). Please come along and support your club.

Your new programme card is included with this newsletter (or attached, if you are an on-line recipient). We hope that you’ll find it interesting. There are several “new” venues to explore. Please note that there are only 12 places available for the Portland Observatory weekend (26th—28th Oct) this year. If you would like go, please contact Alan Rosney a.s.a.p. It’ll be first come, first served.

We’ve been encouraging as many people as possible to submit their bird sightings, particularly breeding records. It would help if you could attach the following BTO Breeding Codes to any of the records that you submit. It enables the section writers to pull out significant records for inclusion in the bird report.

Possible Breeding:

- H** In suitable **H**abitat
- S** Singing male

Probable breeding:

- P** Pair in suitable nesting habitat
- T** Permanent **T**erritory
- D** Courtship and **D**isplay
- N** Visiting probable **N**est site
- A** Agitated behaviour
- I** Brood patch of **I**ncubating bird
- B** Nest **B**uilding or excavating

Confirmed breeding:

- DD** **D**istraction **D**isplay
- UN** **U**sed **N**est or eggshells found
- FL** Recently **F**ledged young or downy young
- ON** Adults entering/leaving nest, **O**ccupied **N**est
- FF** Adults carrying **F**aecal sac or **F**ood for young
- NE** **N**est containing **E**ggs
- NY** **N**est with **Y**oung seen or heard

We’re hoping that Wayne Morris from BTO can put together some training on the use of BirdTrack in the near future. He intends to provide a taster at the Big Birding Day on April 22nd.

As editor, I’m usually crying out for copy for the newsletter, however this time I’ve been inundated with material. Apologies if your contribution (article/photo etc.) didn’t make it into this issue. Ed



RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS

January 2018

Highlights: A first-winter Caspian Gull was identified in the roost at Cardiff Bay (18th), only the second county record of the species. A Cattle Egret turned up at Wentloog (4th). A Whooper Swan arrived at Flemingston Moor (12th). Two European White-fronted Geese appeared at Kenfig Pool (8th), and subsequently commuted between there and Ogmores Estuary. A Slavonian Grebe was still wintering at Kenfig Pool, while another was briefly at Barry Docks (11th). Iceland Gulls were at Cardiff Bay (two), Cardiff Water Treatment Works and Cosmeston, although it is feasible that only two individuals were involved. A Water Pipit was on the spillway at Llwyn-on Reservoir (13th).

Other Sites: A Dark-bellied Brent Goose was on Newton Point, Porthcawl. A Mandarin Duck was on the River Rhymney at Ty'n-y-coedcae. A Scaup was an unusual visitor to Roath Park Lake, with another noted at Cosmeston. Up to three Great Northern Divers frequented Barry Docks and another called in at Cardiff Bay, where a Gannet also visited. Bitterns were present at both Cardiff Bay Wetlands Reserve and Kenfig Pool. Nine Purple Sandpipers were at Newton Point. Four Green Sandpipers were on the River Ely at Peterston Moor. The returning Common Sandpiper remained at Ogmores Estuary. At least eight Yellow-legged Gulls were roosting at Cardiff Bay, with one seen at Cosmeston as well. Short-eared Owls comprised five at Kenfig and two at Rumney Great Wharf. East Aberthaw held a Water Pipit. Black Redstarts were at Southerndown and Cowbridge Road, Cardiff. A Ring Ouzel at Mynydd Eglwysilan was presumably the same bird as seen in December at nearby Mynydd Meio. Firecrests were at Kenfig (two) and Sophia Gardens, Cardiff. Willow Tits were noted at Nelson and Garwnant. By far the largest gathering of Hawfinches was at Forest Ganol, where up to 50 were observed, with sightings also received from Kenfig, Cosmeston, Canton, Forest Farm and Rudry.

February 2018

Highlights: A 'new' first-winter Caspian Gull was identified in the Cardiff Bay roost (13th). A Hooded Crow was a surprise at Flemingston Moor (2nd). Two European White-fronted Geese were still around; usually at Kenfig Pool, but also visiting Ogmores Estuary. A Water Pipit was again on the spillway at Llwyn-on Reservoir. Iceland Gulls were at Cardiff Bay and Cosmeston. A Glaucous Gull was found at Wentloog and subsequently relocated off Rumney Great Wharf.

Other Sites: Drake Scaup were noted at Roath Park Lake and Lamby Lake. Two Great Northern Divers remained at Barry Docks and another turned up at Cosmeston. Merlins shot through at Slade Farm (Southerndown) and Cosmeston. Common Sandpipers were observed at Ogmores Estuary and on the River Thaw at Aberthaw. Yellow-legged Gulls were at Ogmores Estuary, Cosmeston and Caerphilly Castle Moat. A Water Pipit was noted at Ogmores Estuary. Black Redstarts occurred at Penarth Marina and Fairwater, Cardiff. An unseasonal Ring Ouzel was still present at Mynydd Eglwysilan. A Firecrest continued to remain a draw at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff. Willow Tits were at Aberdare and Garwnant. Hawfinches included 20+ at Forest Ganol and two over the Ely floodplain.

Paul Roberts



BIG BIRDING DAY - SUNDAY APRIL 22nd

Our annual get together at Kenfig will be held on Sunday 22nd April, beginning at 10 a.m.– wrapping up at around 4 p.m. (However if you'd like to watch the bird ringers at work, they'll be down by the pool from about 7:30 a.m. onwards - weather permitting. Wellies recommended.)

We've ordered better weather for this years' event. (Are you listening, Brockway?) Migration should be in full swing, so we'll hope to see plenty of warblers, hirundines and the like.

There will be lots of exciting activities on offer:

- Two guided bird walks***
- Bird song recognition**
- Wildflower walk**
- Moth trap opening**
- Bird ringing demonstration**
- BTO stand**
- Wildlife Trust stand**
- BTO BirdTrack demo**
- Cake stall**
- Plant stall**
- Book stall**
- Craft activities**

[*There will be no Saturday Kenfig walk on April 21st. It has been switched to 22nd, as part of BBD]

Are you able to help out on the day? We'd be grateful for as many helpers on site, as possible. Please come along. All are welcome and it's free!

P.S. Serious cake eaters often bring a box with them to stock up on Mrs Wilson's cakes 😊.



CLUB NEWS

Members' News

New members include Phill & Susan Harris from Litchard, the Kelsey family from Pantmawr, Nick & Carol King from Gwaelod-y-Garth, Hugh Williams from Cowbridge, Mike Pearson from Canton, Bob Swart from Cardiff Bay, Craig de Klerk from Brynna and the Stratton family from Pontcanna. Also, welcome back to Gavin Moore from Rhiwbina.

Committee Update

The committee has met four times since the last newsletter:

- Alan Rosney reported back on the Swift project
- Andrew Bevan presented a draft "Code of Conduct" and alerted the committee to upcoming changes to data protection legislation
- Jean Haslam presented a draft "Safeguarding Policy"
- Jean (& Rod) attended the Curlew Workshop on behalf of the club (see 19)
- Ceri Jones has made further enquiries as to CIO status and will report at the AGM (see pages 7 & 8)
- Ceri and Strinda presented an on-line survey for approval
- Big Birding Day (Sunday April 22nd at Kenfig) was discussed. Jean has updated the banner for display outside the Kenfig Centre
- The 2018-9 programme was discussed. Paul Denning has already lined up some talks for next year and John & Ceri have provided a comprehensive list of outings with some new destinations
- Paul Roberts and Strinda Davies have liaised with Slade and Ty Tanglwyst farms respectively, to arrange the siting of bird boxes (see page 9)
- Anne Wilson has processed the Gift Aid forms for submission and over £500 has been reclaimed
- Strinda has submitted a GBC bid to WOS for a Willow Tit Survey in the Cynon Valley (see page 2)
- Wayne Morris is hoping to organise a BirdTrack training event in the near future and has contacted BTO HQ to ensure that survey (WeBS, BBS, WBBS etc) records are passed on the club
- Dave Carrington and the Kenfig Ringers have visited Ty-n-y-Caeau farm for a ringing session and have had discussions with farmer, John Evans, about the sacrificial crop on the farm. More seed has been ordered
- The GBC notice board is in need of some TLC. Alan, Anne & Jean have volunteered to undertake this task

In accordance with the Club constitution, we're required to give at least 21 days notice of the AGM. Full details are included on the next page.

Alan Rosney



AGM AGENDA

The Glamorgan Bird Club's 2018 Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 24th April 2018 at 7:45 pm at Kenfig National Nature Reserve centre

1. Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 25th April 2017
2. Chairperson's Report on behalf of the Trustees
3. Treasurer's Report and adoption of annual audited accounts
4. To consider and, if thought fit, to pass the following resolution in accordance with Clause 13 of The Glamorgan Bird Club's Constitution:
"That the Committee is authorised to transfer the assets (after settlement of its proper debts and liabilities) of The Glamorgan Bird Club to Glamorgan Bird Club Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) following its registration with the Charities Commission and to dissolve The Glamorgan Bird Club" * See next page.
5. Election of honorary officers
 - a) Chair – Strinda Davies was elected as Chair in 2017 and must stand down.
 - b) Treasurer - Anne Wilson was elected as Treasurer in 2017 and must stand down.
 - c) Secretary - Ceri Jones was elected as Secretary in 2017 and must stand down.Strinda and Anne can be re-elected if willing to stand. Ceri is not seeking re-election as Secretary.
6. Election of Committee members (please see table below)
7. Appointment of Auditor
8. Any motions submitted for debate
9. Any other business

The membership status of Committee members is as follows:

Member	Elected	Years served	Note
Strinda Davies	2017	1	Two years left of 3 year term
Paul Roberts	2016	2	One year left of 3 year term
John Wilson	2016	2	One year left of 3 year term
Andrew Bevan	2016	2	One year left of 3 year term
David Carrington	2015	3	Must stand down. Can be re-elected.
Paul Denning	2015	3	Must stand down. Can be re-elected.
Alan Rosney	2015	3	Must stand down. Can be re-elected.
Jean Haslam	2015	3	Must stand down. Can be re-elected.
Ceri Jones	2015	3	Must stand down. Can be re-elected.
Anne Wilson	2015	3	Must stand down. Can be re-elected.

The constitution states that the committee shall consist of not less than 9 and not more than 12 members and these will include a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. Continued.....



Nominations for honorary officers and members of the Committee can only be made by full members of the Club and, if submitted in writing, should be with the Secretary at least 5 days before the AGM. Nominations can also be taken from the floor at the AGM. All nominations and any motions for debate must be proposed and seconded by full members of the Club, in writing if before the meeting, signed by all parties, and sent to the secretary Ceri Jones by email to secretary@glamorganbirds.org.uk or by post to 26, Smithies Avenue, Sully, Vale of Glamorgan CF64 5SS.

Following the AGM there will be a report on the initial findings of the GBC Member and Non Member survey and then a quiz. Refreshments will be provided. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible at the AGM.

*** Item 4: Conversion of the Glamorgan Bird Club to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

In the of autumn 2017 the Committee reviewed the Club's insurance arrangements ahead of the annual policy renewal due in January 2018. Action was taken to enhance GBC's insurance coverage with our existing insurers. This included giving a more comprehensive description of GBC's activities to our insurers and increasing the public liability cover limit.

However, during the review it was also noted that GBC, like many bird clubs, is in legal terms an unincorporated association. This means that it is not a separate legal entity from its members, which in turn means that its Committee members, and in certain circumstances all its other members, do not have limited personal liability for GBC's liabilities, should GBC be unable to pay them itself.

It was decided that action was needed to ensure that GBC could in future operate as a separate legal entity from its members. Then, in the unlikely event of a substantial uninsured claim, or an insured claim in excess of the cover limit, there would be no claim against GBC members. In researching the available options, the Committee has looked for a solution that allows the club to maintain its charitable status and to carry on its current activities including offering field trips and bird walks, indoor meetings and publishing regular newsletters and the annual East Glamorgan Bird Report. The proposed solution is that in future Glamorgan Bird Club will operate as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This is a relatively new type of legal entity, first made available by the government in 2013, precisely to allow unincorporated associations such as the current GBC to convert into a CIO and then benefit from limited liability for its members. All CIOs are regulated by the Charity Commission.

Moving GBC to CIO status requires the approval of GBC's members and the process is as follows:

- Apply to the Charities Commission to register GBC CIO (this is in hand and the trustees making the application are the existing Committee members of GBC)
- Seek approval from GBC's members to transfer GBC's assets to GBC CIO. This transfer will take place once GBC CIO has been authorised by the Charities Commission
- After the transfer of GBC's assets to GBC CIO, legally dissolve the existing GBC so that it ceases to exist.

Continued.....



Constitution of GBC CIO

To facilitate a high volume of unincorporated associations converting to CIO status, to make the approval process as simple as possible and to keep the costs of setting up the new CIO as low as possible, the Charities Commission has made available a template constitution for new CIOs. This template does offer considerable flexibility in choosing the wording of the new CIO constitution, but not to the extent that it is possible to adopt the existing GBC constitution word for word.

Although it is possible to have a lawyer draft a bespoke constitution for the new CIO, the Committee has decided that the cost of doing this outweighed any advantages. In addition, the Charity Commission has stated that it will invariably take longer to approve bespoke constitutions.

The proposed constitution of the new GBC CIO will be made available for review on the GBC website. The Objects clause of the new CIO is copied word for word from the current GBC constitution, and the Committee will continue to have a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 12 members.

If GBC members have any questions about the proposed conversion to CIO status including the proposed new constitution, please get in touch with any Committee member and we will do our best to provide answers.

Ceri Jones

GBC SURVEY

In February, the Committee launched an on-line survey to help us understand the membership better. It's been a long while since we last carried out a such a survey. In keeping with surveys conducted by fellow bird clubs, we're aiming to get a better sense of the membership and find out if there are any changes to be made to our activity and research programmes.

With your input*, we will better be able to describe the Club when applying for grants, find ways to reduce annual costs (e.g. producing the newsletter) and hopefully gain more volunteers for the range of things we do. Working with other key organisations, such as SEWBReC, our ambition is to also reach non-members, to see if we can entice them to join/rejoin. The closing date is April 17th. The plan is to report the findings to the membership at the AGM.

* The committee will consider all your comments and suggestions and hopefully implement many of them. If you are able to do so, please make use of the expandable boxes that appear at the foot of several of the pages.

Strinda Davies



NATIONAL NEST BOX WEEK - 14th - 21st February

As reported in the last newsletter, our focus this year was to erect a number of boxes, rather than construct, as in past years. (We had quite a stock). One bird in particular that we wish to help is the Kestrel, which is in severe decline. Two boxes have been erected on local farms.

Strinda Davies had made arrangements with farmer, Rhys Lougher, from Ty Tanglwyst Farm in Cornelly, to put some boxes up in a small wood on his land. Rhys was very accommodating and provided us with a cherry picker for the afternoon, which certainly made things easier, especially when putting up the rather heavy Kestrel box. Andrew Bevan and Ceri Jones erected the boxes and Strinda took the photos. They erected several Tit boxes, one Robin/Spotted Flycatcher open-fronted box plus the Kestrel box (made by yours truly). Sadly time ran out and they weren't able to put up the bat boxes that they had hoped to erect. Another time maybe.

The next task is to monitor the boxes to see if they get used. Photos 1 shows Andrew and Ceri. Photo 2 shows the Kestrel box in-situ. Many thanks to Rhys for all his help and expertise, plus of course permission to put boxes on his land.

Photo 3 shows a Kestrel box constructed by Lyn Evans and the students from Bridgend College (Pencoed Campus). Paul Roberts arranged for it to be put up at Slade Farm, as shown in photo 4. Many thanks to Peter Davies and Polly for their co-operation with this project.



Another nest box scheme was set up by Dan Jenkins-Jones, who arranged for some of the club's boxes to be erected in Siginstone. The idea is to enhance the grounds of the local church for wildlife.

If you know of any areas where a nest-box scheme might be feasible, please let us know. We would of course need the land owners permission.

Alan Rosney



SWIFT PROJECT UPDATE

See our blog: glamorganswiftchampions.blogspot.co.uk

Work on the HLF funded Cardiff Bay swift tower is progressing. The tower has been ordered from its Polish suppliers. Carolyn from RSPB has sent off some artwork for incorporation in the interpretation panels and the volunteer sheets are in preparation (see below). Watch this space.

The Glamorgan project continues. A condition of the grant from the Welsh Ornithological Society, was that the club was obliged to submit an "end of project" report. This has been sent and has gone before the WOS Council. We do intend to continue the project in future years.

We have now fitted the boxes in the tower of Trinity Church in Penarth. Let's hope that the swifts appreciate all the work. Many thanks to Howard Driver for his carpentry skills on this project. The church members have requested a talk about the project in the summer. There was a problem with the speaker system that plays swift calls to attract birds to investigate the boxes. We're going to have to return to sort this out.



Howard fitting the boxes in Trinity Church, Penarth © Alan Rosney

Further contact has been made with St John's, Llanblethian and All Saints, Barry, hoping to get schemes started there. The Wildlife Trust's swift tower in Cadoxton is due to be erected in the next few weeks. Also, Ian Hartrey has been in touch with a school in Cardiff and 7 boxes have been installed.

We presented Andy Wilkinson, ecology teacher in Caerphilly, with some swift pin badges for distribution amongst the students. Further meetings are planned to help with this project

*** DO YOU LIVE IN OR AROUND CARDIFF? ***

In conjunction with the RSPB, we're looking for swift survey volunteers. There will be a training event in late spring, (April 30th/1st May). Survey squares will be allocated to assess the number of breeding swifts that we have in Cardiff. If you are interested, follow the link on the GBC homepage or go to:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-fundraising/volunteer/volunteer-opportunities/opportunities/8584/>



WHERE CAN I SEE

Common and Lesser Whitethroat

In my experience by far the best place to see Common Whitethroat is at Kenfig. An early spring walk should see these showy little warblers singing from the tops of the hawthorn bushes, occasionally launching themselves in to a song flight.

Lesser Whitethroat can much trickier to see however. You usually pick them up by their rattling call, often issued from within a bush (call is a bit like Yellowhammer but much harsher). Be patient however and they should show. Try the bushes near the first stile in to the east fields at Kenfig.

Pied Flycatcher

Sadly this is another species that seems to have disappeared as a breeder from our area. You'll probably have to travel to see one. On club trips recently we have seen them in Youth Hostel Wood (over the road from Craig Cerrig Gleisiad), Cwm Claisfer and Dinas RSPB reserve. You might be lucky and see one passing through en route to their breeding grounds however.

Wheatear

Wheatears return early from their wintering grounds and can often be encountered on open coasts at this time (some remain to breed). Try the fields and walls around Sker farm or Rumney Great Wharf. Once they are on their breeding grounds, you'll need to head for the hills. A drive along the Llwyn-on Reservoir to Penderyn road should have several birds sitting on top of the rocky outcrops.

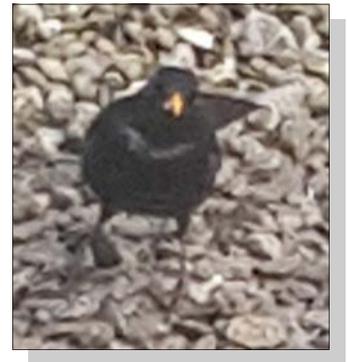
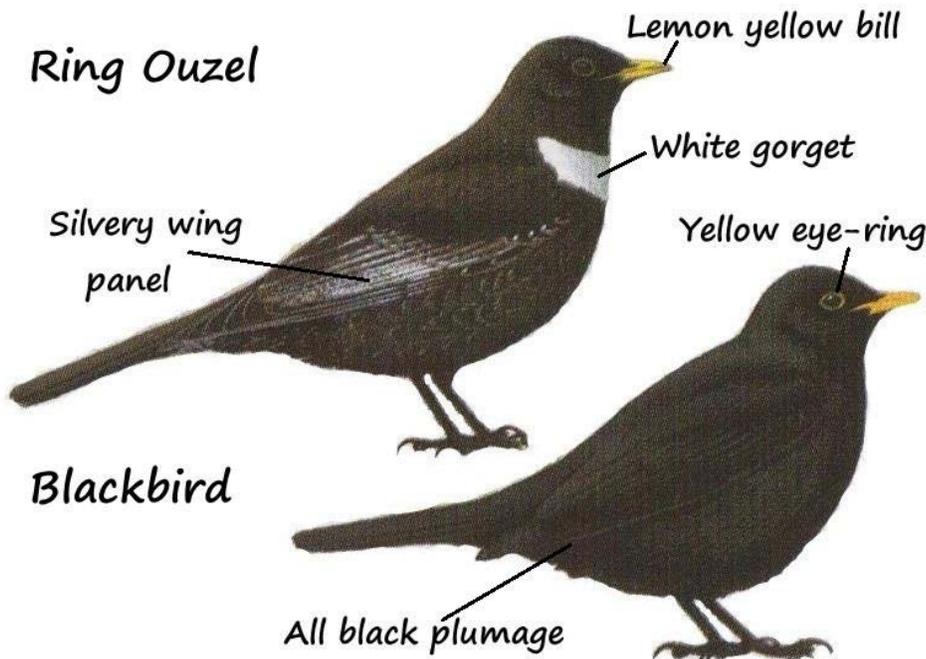
Whimbrel

The "seven whistler," as it is known, is best encountered on passage, in spring and autumn. Like their cousins, the Curlew, they like rocky shorelines. Our best sightings on club trips recently were OOC at Kidwelly Quay and Goldcliff lagoons. However they can be encountered anywhere along our coast. Try Sker rocks, Aberthaw or Sully. My best ever views were on the golf course at Kenfig, where seven birds were on one of the fairways.

Grey Partridge

Another very difficult bird to see in Glamorgan. They do occasionally occur. Recent sightings have all been from the south of our recording area. Paul Roberts saw one at Ogmere and John Duffy and Tim Adcock encountered a covey of 10 near Nash Point. They used to be regularly reported from the tips at Aberthaw (no access). Gileston also has recent records.

CONFUSION SPECIES - RING OUZEL & BLACKBIRD



Pictures adapted from the Macmillan Field Guide

On the face of it, it would appear to be relatively straight forward to separate these species. Certainly, given good views, the males (illustrated) have several points of difference, notably the white gorget and silvery wings of the Ouzel, compared with the all black plumage of the Blackbird. However females and juveniles may show very little white on the breast. Also some Blackbirds have a white collar. I've got such a bird over-wintering in my garden, as is shown in my awful, through the window, photo above.

Ring Ouzels are the "blackbirds of the mountains," although you might encounter one in lower areas whilst on passage in early spring or late autumn. If you see one in flight, the Ouzel appears longer, reminiscent of a Fieldfare or Mistle Thrush, The wings too are longer. The loud chacking call may alert you to the presence of this now scarce species. The song however has plaintive piping notes.

If you see an Ouzel in autumn, the male Ouzel's white breast can be obscured by pale brown feather tips. Also at this time, juvenile Ouzels are more chocolate in colour with a pale throat, white on the neck side and barred underparts.

It appears that Ring Ouzels have ceased breeding in our recording area. Your best chance of seeing one is to head for the Brecon Beacons. Go early in the spring when males are busy establishing territory. Craig Cerrig Gleisiad has been a regular spot in recent years. Some observers reported them from there last year, although I failed to see one in three visits. Remarkably one has been observed this season, over-wintering on Mynydd Eglwysilan.

Alan Rosney

IT'S ONLY A BLACK-HEADED GULL

On 3rd February 2016, Jackie and I found a ringed Black-headed Gull at Caerphilly Castle Moat. It turned out that it was ringed in Oslo, Norway. We thought it was interesting enough to put the record on to the Glamorgan Bird Club web site. On 2nd January 2018, we saw another ringed Black-headed Gull on the Moat and submitted it (green ring white lettering J49P) to Euring. We had a reply from Morten Herlberg from Oslo, it turned out to be the very bird we had seen in 2016. Morten sent us the history of controls. This bird which, was ringed in June 2015, has never been sighted more than 10k from when it was first ringed with two remarkable exceptions, that is when it visited Caerphilly Castle Moat, to be found on the dates mentioned above, 1272 k from Oslo.



Picture © Mike Pointon

We are used to seeing vagrant and storm driven birds but, in this instance surely it is not the case. The gull knows its home range and having been to Caerphilly Castle Moat once, perhaps as an accidental, it must have headed there for a second time of its own volition. The odds that it arrived a second time by accident are remote. So next time you see, just a BHG, it might have an interesting story to tell.

The bird is male age 2 CY. Ring number J48P.

Mike Pointon

P.S. Mike included a comprehensive list of the sightings of this particular bird. Sadly We didn't have room to include it all.

PHOTO GALLERY



There wasn't enough room to include many photos in this issue but here's a couple to whet your appetite: Bittern at Kenfig Pool © Jeff Slocombe and Redwing in a snowy Porthcawl garden © Mike Jones



TRIP REPORTS (all reports by Alan Rosney, unless stated otherwise)

Trip lists are on the GBC website. Hover over "Sightings", select "Trip lists" from the drop down menu.

Whiteford Point and Llanrhidian – Sunday 7 January 2018

Twenty-two participants met at Cwm Ivy car park at 08.30. The weather was sunny but breezy and cold. High tide was just after 10am so we made our way down the hill and on through the pine woods. Highlights here were a Merlin disturbing small birds in Cwm Ivy marsh and a flock of 60+ Chaffinch coming to drink in pools along the track. Sadly no Brambling amongst them. Once out of the pine woods we started walking north, scanning the saltmarsh and pools to the east. Most birds were distant here but we picked up Brent Geese, Red-breasted Merganser and several wader species. A Marsh Harrier showed briefly.

We headed for the hide at Berges Island and en route one of the group flushed a Woodcock. Another, who'd taken the track along the edge of the marsh, flushed a Jack Snipe. At the hide the tide was still quite high and most birds still quite distant, but we set up scopes and started scanning. As the tide dropped the birds became more mobile and some moved closer. A Common Scoter was found, along with a group of 4 Red-breasted Merganser. Trevor Fletcher then got the group on to a Black-necked Grebe which drifted north on the falling tide. We also had a second view of the Marsh Harrier, more or less where we'd seen it previously. We relocated to the dunes and settled to scan the northerly beach, with the lighthouse away to our left. The Eider flock was spotted just offshore at the Point and with the sun behind us we had really good views of waders, gulls and Brent Geese on the beach.

Lunch stop was at the Point, in a sheltered spot on the west side of the dunes. Scanning from here we picked up small groups of Common Scoter. Shortly after starting south along the beach, we saw a Slavonian Grebe. Kevin Hughes picked out a Great Northern Diver close offshore which showed well.

After returning to Cwm Ivy car park we moved on to Llanrhidian Marsh. Here we had decent views of several Great White Egret. We were hoping to see Hen Harrier but none showed. We did add Peregrine, Kestrel, Red Kite, Tawny Owl and another Merlin to the trip list, which ended up at 80 species for the day. Many thanks to all 22 participants for an enjoyable day's birding in wonderful scenery.

Ceri Jones

Rumney Great Wharf - Wednesday 24th January 2018

There was an awful forecast – strong winds and heavy rain. Most folk who had booked to come decided, unsurprisingly, to drop out. I went to the meeting point by the lake at Parc Tredelerch [Lamby Lake] as at least some might possibly attend. GBC member Delme Rees arrived and I had the pleasure of meeting two potential new members – Mike Pearson and George Auchterlonie, who had arrived on spec. All were keen to at least go for a walk, so we set off up Cors Crychudd Reen. We saw a couple of Little Grebes and a pair of Mute Swans plus a few Moorhens. A couple of Redwing flew out of adjacent trees. On reaching the far end and the sea wall we left the lee of the landfill and felt the full force of the W wind which together with the rain, made viewing the mouth of the Rhydney impossible.



Instead we headed east along the Wales Coastal Path, following the sea wall of Rumney Great Wharf. The tide was pretty high so no waders were immediately seen. Eventually we saw a flock of about 200 Dunlin flying up and down. Farther along we had a small flock of Dunlin settling on some breakwater posts partially submerged in the water and with them were about 8 Grey Plover showing off their black 'armpits' as they attempted to land. Also visible were about 20-30 Curlew roosting in saltmarsh vegetation at the water's edge. A few thrushes were spotted flushing out of a field which turned out to be Fieldfare and Mistle Thrush. We eventually reached the 'blockhouse' at Sluice Farm, just over the border in Gwent. Here there were a good number of ducks and we soon ID'd Teal, Wigeon, a good number of Pintail, and plenty of Shelduck. We had a good look in all the foreshore pools and wet areas for Water Pipit which are often recorded here but with no luck. The walk back along the sea wall against the headwind on slippery mud was hard work but at least the rain had stopped. The tide had started falling and we had a few flocks of Dunlin coming off their roost to feed and a small flock of Redshank. Finally back at Cors Crychudd Reen and in the lee of the landfill 'hill' we could relax a bit. A nice sight along here were 4 Bullfinches including a nice bright male in the bushes next to the path. Back at the car park, Mike & George decided to have a walk by the lake and we bade farewell. I had a quick look at the reed bed and heard a Cetti's Warbler calling a couple of times. There were a few Tufted Duck on the lake and 3 Great Crested Grebes. All in all we were pretty lucky to have seen 40 species on a pretty dire morning.

John Wilson

Ogmore & Kenfig - Wednesday 7th February 2018

On a cold but gloriously sunny morning, twenty-three club members gathered in the Portobello car park on the Ogmore. Here a Red Kite drifted over before our attention turned to the river. Almost the first bird we saw was a male Kingfisher that perched alongside a Cormorant on a branch right opposite the car park. A couple of red-head Goosanders showed well before flying off and around 10 Goldeneye were present downstream. Other birds seen here were Buzzard, Shelduck, Teal, Little Grebe, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Mallard, Gadwall, Redshank, Curlew, Oystercatcher and Little Egret. The gull flock was mainly made up of Herring and Black-headed Gulls but there were also a few Common Gulls, plus singles of Great-black backed and Mediterranean.

There was no sign of the Yellow-legged Gull that had been present. Paul Roberts, a regular Ogmore birder, appeared and told us of a Water Pipit that he'd been watching further upstream. We weren't able to follow this up however. The only passerines encountered here were Pied Wagtail, Goldfinch, Meadow Pipit, Dunnock, Goldcrest, Blackbird, Magpie, Robin, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit and Stonechat.

From the main Ogmore car park we searched the rocks for Purple Sandpiper, with no luck, although a smart adult Mediterranean Gull with an almost full black hood, put on a good show. Some of the group picked out a Harbour Porpoise out to sea. After lunch we decamped to Kenfig to try for the Slavonian Grebe and White-fronts that had been favouring the site. We quickly got on to the "Slav" and added Pochard, Tufted Duck, Wigeon, Great Crested Grebe, Greylag and Coot to our day list plus Collared Dove, House Sparrow and Reed Bunting that were around the reserve centre.



After some departures due to time or other constraints, the remainder went along east pool shore to try and find the White-fronts, but with no luck. However we added Redwing, Song Thrush and Meadow Pipit to the day list and also a couple of Grey Herons on the other side of the pool. A short session in the hide gave us good views of the Slavonian Grebe again and some Long-tailed Tits but no Bittern.

Finally we decided that if we gained some high ground we might be able to scan the southern dunes to see if we could at least get some views of the Short-eared Owls that had been seen on site several times, as time was limited. We found a high spot not far from the reserve centre and after about 15 minutes, had nice, if distant views of two owls quartering an area out towards the Haul Road. One of these eventually circled up very high in the company of a Kestrel, action which reserve warden Dave Carrington had seen and videoed the previous day. We then had a message that left-over Mrs. Wilson's cakes which hadn't been consumed by the volunteers, were available if we went back to the centre before closing time. Needless to say after such a nice ending to the birding, we scurried back to tea and cakes to celebrate.

Alan Rosney & John Wilson

Dryslwyn & Tregaron - Sunday 25th February 2018

On a sunny but cold day, eleven GBC members met at Dryslwyn Castle car park at 9am. Scanning from the castle car park birds seen included Curlew, Lapwing, Teal, Wigeon, Goosander, Grey Heron, Red Kite, Little Egret, Canada Geese, Greylag Goose and an out of place Bar-headed Goose. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was drumming nearby and Redwing and a Treecreeper were in the car park. Scanning from the river bridge we added more Canada and Greylag Geese in an upstream field. A Raven and two Rooks flew over and a pair of Little Grebe were on the river. At the houses south of the river some of the group got on to a single Tree Sparrow which quickly flew and sadly did not return. We were then really fortunate when one of house owners very kindly allowed us to walk the track-bed of the old railway line downstream. Try as we might we couldn't find another Tree Sparrow, but along the way we added Fieldfare and Bullfinch and had an excellent view of a perched Red Kite.

We then got a much better view of the river and in with the Canada Geese were 10 Pink-footed Geese reported in the area recently, a year tick for pretty much everyone and a lifer for some.

Back to the cars and a few miles up the road to Cilsan Bridge. There were just a few Mute Swans in the roadside fields, but some of the group noticed more swans in a field further east of the road. There were at least five Whooper Swans here, quite possibly more but visibility was limited by the hedgerow.

On to Cors Caron where we had lunch at the main car park and watched the birds coming to the feeders. Rod and Jean Haslam joined us here, and they had just had excellent views of a Great White Egret nearby. We immediately made the short walk to Maes Llyn where the Great White Egret had done the decent thing and waited for us. We retraced our steps and walked the boardwalk to the glass-fronted hide. Little Egret, Teal and Snipe were present here and we also had good views of two Green Sandpipers which flew in shortly after we arrived.



Back to the car park and then a walk north along our second old railway line of the day. Surprisingly quiet along here, and disappointing not to find any Willow Tit, though good views of several Red Kite. Shortly after we'd turned back towards the car park, Sean Kelleher made the find of the day when he and Colin Stevenson saw a ring-tailed Hen Harrier very briefly in flight and then go to ground two fields away from us. Some of the group had gone ahead. We called them back and an anxious few minutes followed while we waited to see if it would reappear. Then suddenly it was up again and we had decent views as it made its way over the fields past farm buildings and along a line of trees before disappearing from view - a nice way to end the field trip. 58 species seen or heard in all, and thanks to all who came along and made it an enjoyable day's birding.

Ceri Jones

Forest of Dean - Wednesday 7th March 2018

Roads in the Forest of Dean were clear after the recent snow and bitterly cold weather, but the Forestry Commission had still not re-opened the car park at our planned meeting point at New Fancy View. As a result our group of 23 relocated to the small car park across the road from Cannop Ponds. Here the water was partially frozen, but sightings on the open water in the morning sunshine included at least 15 Mandarin Ducks. Other sightings at the pond included Grey Heron, Cormorant, Little Grebe, Tufted Duck, Gadwall and Stock Dove.

There was a lot of activity at the feeding station including several Nuthatch, Coal Tit and Chaffinch. After a few minutes the hoped for Marsh Tit appeared and gave really good views in nearby trees. Another year tick for a number of participants, with Marsh Tit now a scarce bird in East Glamorgan. We moved on through the forest towards New Fancy View. Passing through Russell's Inclosure, it was relatively quiet, though we added a few species including Goldcrest, Mistle Thrush and Grey Wagtail. A few Siskin flew overhead calling.

Shortly after the Three Brothers sign the track led us through a gate and into an area of clear fell. Almost immediately Tate Lloyd picked out a Great Grey Shrike to the south of the track, and we enjoyed excellent views of this scarce winter visitor. Again, this was a year tick for almost all in the group and a lifer for some. Reaching New Fancy View we spent some time scanning the ridges for Goshawk. For a while here the weather was cloudy and cooler. Buzzard and Raven were seen, but sadly no Goshawk and no Crossbill either. On the walk back some of the group again had good views of the Great Grey Shrike, more or less where we'd seen it earlier. Back at Cannop Ponds some Teal had appeared and on the drive to Park-end, some in the group noticed two Greylag Geese on the pond near the stone-works. This was our last stop on this field trip and back in sunnier conditions all of the group had good views of several Hawfinch in and below the trees near the cricket ground.

Thanks to all who came along and once again made this an enjoyable day's birding. In total we saw or heard 42 species.

Ceri Jones



Saturday Kenfig Walks - January to March 2018

The January to March Kenfig monthly walks went ahead in all weather, ranging from glorious sunshine to bitterly cold wind. For the stalwart regulars and several keen new faces, the highlights have been: Bittern, distant views of Golden Plover in large numbers, Goldeneye, Goosander, Slavonian Grebe, long close view of a perched Sparrowhawk, the first of the Sand Martins and a Kittiwake taking shelter on the Pool.

N.B. The April walk (due on 21st April) has been switched to Sunday 22nd April to coincide with the Big Birding Day. Start time some time after 10 a.m.

Strinda Davies

INDOOR MEETINGS

Rio Grande birding - Dave Rich

Dave is a bit of a US specialist. On this tour he targeted a few "special" birds that he hadn't seen before. We began with a map of the locale, showing the sites that he and Margaret visited back in 2016. We were treated to some excellent shots, not only the birds, but also the flowers, mammals and reptiles that they encountered. Some of the birds were particularly colourful with brightly coloured orioles and cardinals on view. Others were predominantly ground hugging species including thrashers and doves plus we had views of birds of prey, particularly the Aplomado Falcon, a species that Dave had been hoping to see for many years. The trip looked great and whetted the appetite. Many thanks to Dave for showing us his highlights, particularly as he was still getting over a recent operation.

Alan Rosney

The mystery of the disappearing flycatchers -Jez Smith

An informative talk from Jez, one of Dr. Rob Thomas' students, as part of his PhD. Focussing on Pied Flycatchers. Jez said that although Spotted Flycatcher is also of concern, it's better to research one species well and to apply any learning, than dilute research over two species.

A detailed explanation was given of the essential link between leaf bud, caterpillars and young being fed in the nest. Climate change is disrupting this delicate balance with a subsequent sharp reduction in Pied Flycatchers. breeding in lowland areas of Wales. Although the outlook is quite bleak for this delightful migrant's continued breeding here, Jez remains hopeful that the research will reveal methods of habitat management to help conserve it. (A lesson for the Club's Willow Tit project).

Strinda Davies



CONFERENCE DIARY

SEWBReC RECORDERS' FORUM - 20th JANUARY 2018

A brief report on the Gwent-Glamorgan recorders' forum in the Park Hotel in Cardiff :

The speakers ranged across a wide variety of topics from oil beetles, Cosmeston Country Park, the ecology of coniferous forests, data handling, leafhoppers on reclaimed colliery spoil and the Mary Gilham archive project, right through to surveying wetland birds.

It was great to hear the enthusiasm and expertise of all the speakers. There was also a chance for enthusiasts to bring up pet topics in a soap-box session, with 5 minute presentations. Thanks to SEWBReC for organising the day. It was great opportunity to meet fellow wildlife enthusiasts and to catch up with current news.

Alan Rosney

THE STATUS AND FUTURE OF CURLEW IN WALES WORKSHOP

Builth Wells, 24th January 2018. This was part of a series of four British conferences and was organised by Mary Colwell, NRW, WOS, RSPB Cymru, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Ecology Matters and Mike Smart.

'If we don't do something about this now, in 30 years time, there will be no breeding Curlews in Wales'
Patrick Lindley, NRW

It was a very full day with 12 speakers, 112 delegates ,including ' bird-watchers and 'Curlew enthusiasts', farmers, land managers, scientists, countrymen, official bodies and non-government bodies '

The presentations began with emotive speeches from Mary Colwell, followed by Iolo Williams, stressing that work needs to be led by working partnerships. There was information from the Irish project, which is much further on in research and practical work; from an RSPB project on-going in North Wales; from Southern England and Shropshire, environmental researchers and farmers.

The decline appears to be driven by reduced breeding success. For a stable population, each pair needs to fledge 0.5 young per year. At the moment, fledging is estimated to be 0.34 per year. Reasons include-predation, changes in land use, farming methods and forestry.

Solutions suggested included -predator control, farm partnerships, habitat management, head starting-as used in the Spoonbill Sandpiper project, where eggs are removed, hatched, then fledglings returned later.



Lunchtime was a friendly occasion and a good opportunity to meet other enthusiasts; chatting with a Shropshire farming couple, we learned about their problem of looking after nesting Curlews in their hay meadows by delaying cutting as long as possible, while having to make a living and Curlew chicks straying from the nests and fenced off areas.

Questions we discussed as group activities in the workshop session were:

What do we need to initiate a Curlew programme for recovery?

What are the key themes emerging and what are the solutions/programme of work?

Practical follow-up measures gleaned from the ten groups are summarised here by Mary Colwell:

- To establish an All-Wales Curlew Action Group (This should be in place by May 2018)
- To implement monitoring of existing populations
- To engage farmers and landowners
- To create public awareness about Curlew decline
- To seek the establishment of Curlew-specific agri-environmental schemes

Lots more information about the conference and the scheme is on the website <http://www.curlewcall.org>

Jean and Rod Haslam

BTO NEWS

Peregrine Survey paper



The results of the 2014 Peregrine Survey have just been published and reveal that the UK Peregrine population is estimated at 1769 pairs; 22% larger than the population estimate from the previous survey in 2002. Most of this increase is accounted for by increases in lowland England, whilst populations in some upland areas have declined.

The likely reasons for the continued success of Peregrines in the lowlands include increasing the uptake of breeding sites on human structures, abundant availability of prey in many lowland situations and in many areas, a relative lack of conflict with humans. Factors likely to be limiting upland Peregrine populations vary between different regions and include on-going illegal killing and deliberate disturbance as well problems with the food supply.

There is a summary on the BTO website:

<https://www.bto.org/science/latest-research/breeding-peregrines-thanks-growth-lowland-populations>

M. W. Wilson, D. E. Balmer, K. Jones, V. A. King, D. Raw, C. J. Rollie, E. Rooney, M. Ruddock, G. D. Smith, A. Stevenson, P. K. Stirling-Aird, C. V. Wernham, J. M. Weston & D. G. Noble (2018) et al.



Project Owl

As indicated in past newsletters, BTO will run two Tawny Owl surveys this autumn. The first is the structured Tawny Owl Survey which will repeat (and enhance) the surveys carried out in 1989 and 2005 to investigate the occupancy rates of squares. This will require the allocation of pre-selected squares (same as previous surveys) by Regional Organisers.

The second survey will be open to all and will be based mainly in gardens or places that volunteers can record on a weekly basis. This will be run by the Garden BirdWatch team and will repeat the 2005 survey, which looked at the calling behaviour of Tawny Owls throughout the autumn, winter and spring.

BTO will also be working with ringers and nest recorders working on owls, to provide support and advice on their long-term studies, and to encourage new well-designed projects. More details will be provided in the coming months, but some information online:

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/project-owl>

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

BBS is a long-running volunteer survey monitoring the status of breeding birds across the UK. We have good coverage of this key survey in our region. Many of our surveyors have been visiting their squares for many years and are seeing very real changes in populations at a local level, and of course, it is this continued, year-on-year coverage across the UK, that is enabling BTO to build a clear picture of how different species are responding to the environmental pressures that face.

A number of vacant squares are available after the retirement of a few long-term volunteers this year. We would welcome new recruits to this important survey.

The survey involves two spring visits to a local 1-km square, to count all the birds you see or hear while walking along two 1-km transects within the square. Each visit should take less than two hours, and we recommend that you make a reconnaissance visit to set up or check the transect routes and access, and complete a habitat recording form.

Details about BBS and our vacant squares may be found online: <https://eastglambto.wordpress.com/surveys/bbs/>

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BTO Regional Representative in East Glamorgan

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Daniel Jenkins-Jones

WeBS Local Organiser for East Glamorgan

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FUTURE EVENTS

Field trips Contact John Wilson at least 7 days before the due date:

- Wednesday 18th April - Craig Cerrig Gleisiad
- Sunday 22nd April - Big Birding Day at Kenfig NNR
- Sunday 13th May - Cefn Cadlan/Cwm Cadlan
- Wednesday 23rd May - St David's Vale
- Wednesday 6th June - Llanwonno
- Sunday 17th June - Bargoed/Cefn Gelligaer
- Sunday 1st July - Rhossili & the Worm

Indoor meetings Held at the Kenfig Reserve Centre at 7.45 p.m:

- Tuesday 24th April - AGM & quiz

Monthly walk - Kenfig NNR

Held on the third Saturday of the month. Meet at the Reserve Centre at 9 a.m. For more details please contact David Carrington or Strinda Davies.

CONTACT DETAILS

See the GBC website for further details - email addresses etc

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Membership Sec/Newsletter	Indoor Meetings Organiser	Publicity Officer	Mapmate Hub
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The membership year runs from 1st April. If you join between 25th December and 31st March, your first year's membership will be extended to include the following full year. E-mail addresses may be used for the purpose of sending newsletters, club notices etc., unless requested otherwise. We will not share your details with any third parties without your permission

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If you haven't already done so, please consider donating Gift Aid to the club. Gift Aid makes every £1 you give worth 25p more to the GBC at no extra cost to you.

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Return to Membership Secretary: Alan Rosney, 10, Parc-y-Nant, Nantgarw, RCT CF15 7TJ