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**SUBMISSION DEADLINE** for the next newsletter is **Friday 30th June**

Follow Glamorgan Bird Club on Facebook and Twitter

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**COMMON COMING SOON**

**BIG BIRDING DAY 7**

**SUNDAY 30th APRIL - KENFIG**

Starts at 10 a.m.

![Glaucous Gull in Cardiff Bay © Cliff Woodhead](image)

![Lesser Redpoll in Efail Isaf © Graham Tierney](image)

![Common Crane taken on a GBC trip to Slimbridge © John Wilson](image)
EDITORIAL NOTES

Who’d have thought it - a Red-flanked Bluetail in Caerphilly! Well done to the finder, Alan Cripps. This little beauty normally winters in south-east Asia, so what’s it doing in our neck of the woods? My guess is that it was blown in from Finland, where there is a small breeding population. There was a run of strong easterlies in the autumn that brought lots of rarities at that time. Many of you will have taken the opportunity to go and see it - I tried, but failed. :-(( Alan has kindly written us an article about the day he found the bird (see page 4).

Spring migration is beginning. The first migrants are arriving on our shores. It is always an exciting time in the bird watching year. Please get your notebooks out (or more likely nowadays, your smartphones) and record the earliest dates of arrivals. This is particularly important data, as it gives us some indication of the effects of climate change on our bird populations. Indeed the importance of phenology is becoming increasingly apparent. Do you record the first bud burst, the first flowers, bees, butterflies etc? There are several websites dedicated to this branch of science. The one I use is called “Nature’s Calendar”. Have you got data going back many years.? If so, please get in touch, as historical data is also important.

There are numerous surveys to which our members contribute. I’m sure many of you will have taken part in the RSPB’s Big Garden Bird Watch at the end of January. (Thanks must go to Lee Taswell, who helped with the BGBW event in Caerphilly). BGBW is the largest survey of its type in the world and provides much valuable data. It is of course only a snapshot of one weekend of the year. I’m sure however that it has the potential to provide more, as is the case with the BTO’s Garden BirdWatch. Another survey was the RSPB’s Beached Bird Survey, which took place at the end of February. Volunteers walked a section of coast, noting any dead birds that had been washed ashore. As far as I’m aware, no oiled birds were found (which is a good sign). Also several club members joined in with National Nest Box Week in mid February. A nest box making session was held at Kenfig on Saturday 18th February (see page 8).

Thanks to the photographers that sent in pictures for the newsletter. Sadly I can’t include them all. I’m not going to apologise for including Waxwing and Long-tailed Duck images again, they’re just fabulous birds.

We’re holding our seventh Big Birding Day at Kenfig on Sunday April 30th. There’s plenty going on; including guided bird walks around the reserve, a bird ringing demonstration, moth trapping, quizzes, children’s activities plus book and plant stalls. Mrs. Wilson’s exceedingly good cakes will be on sale and teas and coffees will be available. We hope you can come along. We always split any proceeds 50/50 between GBC and Kenfig Reserve.

There is a notice of the upcoming AGM on page 7. Please make the effort to attend and support your club.

I’m easily amused. As I’ve indicated before, I use a spell checker to run through the newsletter prior to publication. It always has difficulty with Welsh names. This time it came up with Merthyr Tidy. Might have been better if it was Merthyr Half Tidy.

Ed
RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS

January 2017

Highlights: A Red-flanked Bluetail was a remarkable discovery at Wern Ddu, Caerphilly (23rd); the first county record. The bird was favouring a large tract of forestry and, whilst seen a few times in the following days, it proved frustratingly elusive for many. Two Siberian Chiffchaffs and a Glaucous Gull were regularly sighted at Cardiff Bay. A flock of 14 Barnacle Geese rested on Sker Point (3rd). A Bearded Tit was heard at Kenfig Pool (17th). The only sizeable Waxwing flocks were at Newport Road, Cardiff (maximum 66) and Barry (maximum 26), outside of these favoured location 'ones and twos' were seen at Porthcawl, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil.

Other Sites: Brent Geese were noted at Ogmore Estuary (two) and Gileston (12). Scaup were present at Cardiff Bay (eight), Kenfig (four) and Cosmeston (one). A Long-tailed Duck continued its winter sojourn at Cardiff Bay and also briefly called in at Cosmeston. A good count of 12 Goosanders was made at The Wilderness Lake, Porthcawl, with two Great Northern Divers offshore at the seafront. Bitterns were observed at Cardiff Bay, Cosmeston and Kenfig. Little Egrets were reported from Ogmore Estuary, Waterton and Forest Farm. Waders included Common Sandpiper at Ogmore Estuary, Bar-tailed Godwit in fields at Porthcawl and 68 Snipe on the Ely floodplain. As usual Cardiff Bay was the Yellow-legged Gull stronghold, with up to six individuals logged, while a singleton was at Ogmore Estuary, where a Water Pipit was still wintering. Black Redstarts occurred at Cardiff Bay, Cardiff University, Riverside (Cardiff), Church Village, Gileston and Southerndown. A Marsh Tit was at Cardiff Bay. A sacrificial crop at Dunraven held around 60 Yellowhammers and 20 Reed Buntings.

February 2017

Highlights: The elusive Red-flanked Bluetail at Wern Ddu, Caerphilly, was last sighted on the 16th. Observations from Cardiff Bay included a Long-tailed Duck, nine Scaup, two Glaucous Gulls, an Iceland Gull (in the roost on the 10th, noted earlier in the day at Cosmeston), a hybrid Black-headed x Mediterranean Gull, three Waxwings, a Black Redstart and two Siberian Chiffchaffs. A Glaucous Gull was at Porthcawl (3rd) and an Iceland Gull was in Bridgend town centre (18th). A Water Pipit was an unusual occurrence at Nash Point (5th), with others remaining at Aberthaw and Ogmore Estuary. A Great Grey Shrike was reported at Fforest Fawr (28th). A Siberian Chiffchaff was at Aberdare. A Yellow-browed Warbler at Brynna Woods (24th) was presumably the same bird seen there two months previously. Ogmore Estuary held several Little Egrets, a Common Sandpiper and three Yellow-legged Gulls. Bitterns were at Kenfig and Barry Docks. A Little Egret was seen at Tirfounder, Aberdare. A male Hen Harrier graced Mynydd Eglwysilan. Two Jack Snipe were at Rhymney Estuary. Black Redstarts were at Nash Point (2) and Southerndown.

Paul Roberts
FINDING THE RED-FLANKED BLUETAIL

On 26th January, Alan Cripps was out birding on Caerphilly Mountain. He came across a very rare bird - a Red-flanked Bluetail. There follows a description by Alan of this fantastic find. Many bird-watchers went up to the site to catch a glimpse of this little beauty.

Very much an afternoon recreational birder nowadays my local trips usually last a couple of hours finishing about 4:30. Then home to a nice cup of tea, a slice of Mr Kipling Manor House cake, Pointless and Eggheads. For the past few years, I’ve set myself a bit of a Winter challenge of finding 100 species within Cardiff’s boundaries between 1st Nov and 28th Feb. On this day, however, I decided to go outside Cardiff’s boundaries to Wern Ddu in Caerphilly, to hopefully see Crossbills, Redpolls etc.

I parked in the car park and crossed the road to do an anti-clockwise circuit starting at Cefn Carnau Lane. There was a cold wind blowing and I remember thinking that this walk wasn’t going to last very long. I soon got onto some Redpolls but no sight nor sound of any Crossbills. I reached the bridle path that crosses the lane and turned left down it. Usually I walk quickly to the other side as this area is mainly non-native conifer trees and there is never much to see but today I noticed a couple of Robins on the path in front of me and decided to have a quick look at them before continuing. I immediately noticed, however, that one of the Robins was behaving differently from the other one. It was hyper-active moving about more like a Goldcrest than a Robin. It had it’s back to me but I could see it’s tail was much darker than the Robin alongside it. More slaty-grey with a bluish tinge than the brown of the Robin. They soon disappeared into the woods but I decided to hang around and hope they would come back for a better look. After 15 minutes or so they did. Again I could see the tail of the smaller one but I couldn’t get any closer. All I could see was it’s back as it moved away from me, often into the undergrowth and never staying still enough for me to get any sort of decent view. Eventually, however, it did turn sideways on and I could see a red patch on it’s flank and no red on it’s breast. Robin sized and Robin shaped but not a Robin. Red flanks and a dark tail could only mean Red-flanked Bluetail, couldn’t it? A bird I’ve only seen twice before and so there was still a big doubt in my mind. The only way to be 100% certain was to get a photograph. As people have since found that is easier to say than to achieve. (Alan’s picture is overleaf).

There followed an extremely frustrating hour or so with the bird often going missing for long periods and not giving me any opportunity to get close to it to get a positive Id or a photograph. It was getting on past 4 o’clock now and the light was fading. I was about to give up and post it on the various bird sites in the hope someone would see it the next day to confirm it when the bird appeared in front of me on a low branch less than 2 metres away. I just pointed the camera and pressed the shutter button and hoped for the best. Within a second or 2 the bird was gone but amazingly the camera had focused on the bird and not the surrounding twigs and I had my photo to confirm the sighting.

It was then home to a well deserved cup of tea and an extra large slice of cake and put the news out. A first for Glamorgan I believe but no addition to my Cardiff Winterwatch. Never mind, you can’t win them all.

Alan Cripps
GIFT AID & EASY FUNDRAISING

As you may have noticed, we’ve managed to keep the subs at the same rate as last year. Increased postal charges may mean a review is necessary in the future. The more members we have that sign up for Gift Aid the better. Also by using Easyfundingraising (Easy fundraising.org.uk) you can donate a small % of what you spend to the club. Easysearch (Easysearch.org.uk) gives 0.5p per search, not much, but it all adds up and raises money for us, without costing you anything. You need to specify that you are raising funds for GBC when you first sign up.

Anne Wilson

GBC MERCHANDISE

Don’t forget we’ve GBC polos, sweatshirts etc. in bottle green with a gold GBC logo on the left breast. Contact Alan Rosney for details

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CLUB NEWS

Members’ News

We’ve got several new members; Mike Hayes from Llanharan, the McMullen family from Cardiff, the Kelleher family from Aberdare, Dean Mceachen from Maesteg, Rhos Williams from Treorchy, Geoffrey Charlton from Cimla and Robert & Anne Francis from St. Athan. Also best wishes go to Dr. Chris Hodgson, who has moved from Cardiff to Sidmouth. Keep in touch, Chris.

It’s that time of year again folks. Membership renewals are now due. There is a renewal form at the back of the newsletter. The majority of those members who renew by Standing Order haven’t yet signed up for Gift Aid. If you could do so, it would be appreciated.

Dave Rich has been in touch. He’s having a clear out and has past Bird Reports (going back to the 70s), that he thought others might like. If you are interested, call Dave on 07731700277.

Committee Update

There have been four committee meetings since the last newsletter.

- The GBC pull up display and membership leaflet have been passed on to a designer to sharpen things up a bit. Thanks to Jean and Tri Haslam for arranging this.
- The Big Birding Day on 30th April was discussed, See the poster on the next page. Please spread the word. There’s a Welsh version too. If you want one, contact Alan Rosney. Thanks to Dan Jenkins-Jones and Sion Bevan for their translation expertise.
- Legal deposit copies of the GBC Newsletter have been lodged with the National Library of Wales. Thanks to Dan Jenkins-Jones for providing copies from his spell as newsletter editor.
- The nest box making session was planned. Thanks to Howard Driver who obtained the wood and pre-cut some nest box kits (see page 8).
- Alan Rosney and Strinda Davies led a U3A group from Cowbridge on a bird walk at Kenfig. A generous donation was made to the club.
- The club has been consulted on the design of a wildlife garden in Bedwas Secondary School. Mike and Jackie Pointon were able to advise on the provision of wildlife habitats.
- John Wilson has put together the 2017 - 8 trip programme. I’m sure you’ll agree that there’s plenty on offer. There are 22 field outings planned, plus the monthly walks at Kenfig.
- Paul Denning has put together the indoor programme - a very varied and interesting selection.
- Ceri Jones has been keeping abreast of developments with the proposed Swansea and Cardiff lagoons, the Cosmeston wakeboarding application and the Nant Lesg open cast site.
- Andrew Bevan and Ceri Jones are looking at our data protection policy.
- Anne Wilson has reclaimed Gift Aid and she has paid the renewal of our website domain names etc. Anne has also been investigating where we might get a higher interest savings account.
- David Carrington has purchased seed for Ty’n y Caeau Farm (see page 8).
- Following our successful bid for funds for our Swift project, the committee have been looking at proposals for future projects. Get your thinking caps on. Contact Ceri Jones if you’ve got any ideas or projects in mind.
AGM NOTICE

The Glamorgan Bird Club’s 2017 Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 25th April 2017 at 7.45 pm at Kenfig National Nature Reserve centre

Agenda

1. Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 26th April 2016
2. Chairperson’s Report on behalf of the Trustees
3. Treasurer’s Report and adoption of annual audited accounts
4. Election of Committee members (please see table below)
5. Election of honorary officers
   a) Chair – Strinda Davies was elected in 2016 and must stand down. Can be re-elected if willing to stand and if re-elected as a Committee member
   b) Treasurer - Anne Wilson was elected in 2016 and must stand down. Anne can be re-elected if willing to stand.
   c) Secretary - Ceri Jones was elected in 2016 and must stand down. Ceri can be re-elected if willing to stand.
6. Appointment of Auditor
7. Any motions submitted for debate
8. Any other business

The membership status of Committee members is as follows:

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<td>David Carrington</td>
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<td>Paul Denning</td>
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<td>Alan Rosney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jean Haslam</td>
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<td>Ceri Jones</td>
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<td>Anne Wilson</td>
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<td>Paul Roberts</td>
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<td>Andrew Bevan</td>
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<td>1 yr</td>
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In accordance with the Club’s constitution the Club’s Committee shall consist of not less than 9 and not more than 12 members and these will include a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. 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 itself.

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 post to 26, Smithies Avenue, Sully, Vale of Glamorgan CF64 5SS or by email to secretary@glamorganbirds.org.uk

Following the AGM there will be a quiz and refreshments will be provided. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible at the AGM.
NATIONAL NEST BOX WEEK

The bird club participates in the BTO National Nest Box Week each year. Howard Driver got us off to a great start by pre-cutting some planks of 6” timber (he also made three Sparrow boxes in his workshop at home.) A team of eight of us got stuck in to construction. In all 12 tit boxes, suitable for Blue Tits or Coal Tits were built. In addition a couple of larger Starling boxes were completed, which I believe are destined for Kenfig Reserve.

As space was limited two of the group went in to the second workshop and built some insect hotels for sale at the upcoming Big Birding Day. Many thanks to John Wilson, David Carrington, Hilary Perry, Anne Wilson, Gareth Jenkins, Rod Haslam and Andrew Bevan for their hard work on the day.

The picture on the far right shows two Tawny Owl boxes that were built by Lyn Evans and the students of Bridgend College, Pencoed Campus, for a nest box scheme in Coed Craig Ruperra. What a brilliant job. There are two main types of Tawny Owl boxes, upright ones, like those shown, or a tube like structure that hangs at an angle below a branch (similar to the one we put in the grounds of Ty Hafan a few years ago). It would be interesting to know which are more successful. We did see an owl sitting at the entrance to an upright box in Cwm Claisfer on a GBC trip last year.

TY’N Y CAEAU FARM

The Kenfig Ringing Group had another session at Ty’n y Caeau on 8th February. They were to delighted to record Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting in this session. An unusual record was of a Wood Pigeon, a species that is rarely caught in the nets. In the fields there were over 100 Skylarks, none of which were ringed at this time.

Supplementary feeding has continued. The provision of grain is particularly important in late winter, as this is the period when many birds struggle to find sufficient food supplies.
SWIFT PROJECT UPDATE

See our blog: glamorganswiftchampions.blogspot.co.uk

A lot has been happening:

- A group of our Swift enthusiasts visited St Illtud’s Church in Llantwit Major, where we have permission to put some Swift boxes and a call system inside the church tower. Last year we found Swifts nesting in nearby buildings, so hopes are high that we can expand this colony. Many thanks to Gareth Roberts for arranging this and to Howard Driver who measured up and has constructed the internal boxes, which were installed in early March (see below).
- Alan Rosney gave a short presentation to the SEWBReC Gwent-Glamorgan Recorders’ Forum on the plight of our Swifts. The main message he gave was “get those records in”.
- Ian Hartrey has approached several developers in Penarth with a view to erecting Swift boxes on their properties. He also contacted the Vale of Glamorgan Council and has persuaded them to supply some boxes. Great work, Ian.
- A meeting was held in the Cardiff Harbour Authority building to discuss the possibility of siting a Swift tower in Cardiff Bay.
- Contact has been made with the Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council, hoping to expand Mike & Jackie Pointon’s project there.
- We have spoken to the Heritage Lottery Fund to discuss further funding opportunities. (Having said that - the receptionist at HLF misheard my phone message and thought I was calling from the “Glamorgan Berk Club”. Erm…. Could be true).

Do you fancy becoming one of our Swift Champions? It won’t be long before the Swifts return. We currently have 12 Champions that search their local areas for nesting Swifts. If you can contribute in any way, please get in touch.

Left: The church tower in St. Illtud’s © Alan Rosney

Above: The boxes in situ. Howard has made latches so that they can be inspected and there is room for a camera if Swifts do occupy the chambers. Photos © Howard Driver
WHERE CAN I SEE ..........?

Wood Warbler
The Wood Warbler has become quite difficult to see in East Glamorgan in recent years. They are of course summer migrants and begin arriving in mid to late April. You might be lucky and see one on passage but your best bet is to head north. Try Pontneddfechan (SN 9007) at the head of the Neath Valley. Take the riverside path (with the wrought iron SGWD GWLADYS gates) which has stunning scenery and will give you a good chance of seeing these lovely warblers. Listen out for their spinning coin song and the pew, pew, pew calls. They can often be seen performing their parachute display ritual. Other places to try are the valleys to the east of Maesteg, Garwnant Forestry Centre above Merthyr (SO 0013) and Glyncornel Woods in the Rhondda (SS 9994). We caught up with them on recent GBC trips out of our area in WTSWW Cwm Claisfer and RSPB Dinas.

Water Rail
Water Rails are never easy to see, being more often heard than seen. They occur in many of our reed beds. Listen out for their squealing calls and you might be lucky to catch sight of one. The obvious sites to try are Kenfig (SS 7981), Cosmeston (ST 1769), Hendre Lake (ST 2480), Forest Farm (ST 1480) and CBWR (ST 1873). However it might be better to try quieter areas such as East Aberthaw lagoon (ST 0366) or Parc Slip (SS 8783), where disturbance is less likely. Patience (or luck) is the key.

Lesser Redpoll
Lesser Redpoll often associate with Siskins. The best places to see them are in or around mixed conifer plantations. They can often be seen clinging to Birch or Alder twigs. Listen out for their buzzy calls. Once again Garwnant might be worthwhile visiting or you could try the upper area of Dare Valley Country Park (SN 9802).

Redstart
Another migrant, Redstarts begin arriving in mid April. They tend to favour open sites with mature oaks, where they can perform their fly catching flights, often dropping down to the ground to catch insects. They may nest in dry stone walls. In north Cardiff, try the line of mature oaks to the north of Coed-y-Bedw (ST 1082). Generally you may need to head north once more, to areas like Pontneddfechan, Garwnant, Dare Valley and Pontsticill (SO 0512) etc.

Grasshopper Warbler
The reeling song of the Grasshopper Warbler often alerts you to their presence. However it isn’t always easy to pin–point the exact location of the bird. The combination of cryptic plumage and skulking habits make this a tricky species to see. In late April/early May, they can sometimes be seen singing from exposed perches, especially in the early morning or at dusk. They like thick tangles of vegetation, often near water. Try the thickets en route to the Arthur Morgan hide at Kenfig or the similar habitat at the north side of the pool. We have encountered this species on club trips to the Newport Wetlands, especially on the power station side of the reserve. They’ve also been recorded at Oxwich.
We’re looking at two fairly common species this time. They get a bad press but are very successful species. Given the right conditions, they can breed all year round. My brother-in-law often had Feral Pigeons breeding in the barn on his farm in mid-winter.

The Feral Pigeon is a common sight in our towns and cities. They can be extremely variable in plumage. Their ancestor, the Rock Dove, is restricted to the north and west of Scotland and the south-west of Ireland. The bird illustrated has many of the characteristics of Rock Dove, with white rump, dark head and prominent wing bars. In flight, it often shows silvery-white under-wings, as opposed to the grey of the Stock Dove.

Stock doves are smaller and stockier than ferals. They fly with rather stiff wing beats, having triangular shaped wings. When flying, see if you can pick out the black border on the back edge of the wing. If your bird has any white in its plumage, the chances are, it is not a Stock Dove.

Stock Doves have brightly coloured, relatively small bills. Another feature to look for is the emerald-green neck patch. (Beware as juvenile Stock Doves have dark bills and no neck patch). If you get close enough views, look at the eye. Stock Doves have dark eyes, whilst Feral Pigeons have red or orange eyes.

Another confusion species might be Wood Pigeon. Size alone should rule this out but the white line in the wing is characteristic of Wood Pigeon, as is the white neck patch. (Once again beware, juvenile Wood Pigeons don’t have this). In winter, Stock Doves often associate with Wood Pigeons, so check those flocks.

Stock Doves are probably under-recorded in our area. The best chance of seeing one is in the arable belt of the Vale. The Ely floodplain often has small flocks in winter. Another place to try is Goldcliff lagoons. There are often two or three birds in the grassy areas and on the banks. There's no need to guide you towards Feral or Wood Pigeon, as they are easy to find. A Turtle Dove however, would be another matter altogether…….

Alan Rosney

Pictures adapted from the Collins Bird Guide
PHOTO GALLERY

John Wilson took a couple of shots of a Marsh Tit in Cogan Wood. They show some useful Id features. The glossy cap and small bib show well. The head on shot shows the white spot on the lower mandible, another diagnostic feature, which is often difficult to see in the field.

The Lacks have been out and about with their cameras. This Waxwing was captured by Hayden Lack in Barry

Redwing at Forest Farm © Cliff Woodhead
Another from Hayden Lack. A Mistle Thrush in his garden in Barry

A record shot of the Dartford Warbler at Dunraven © Paul Denning

The long staying Long-tailed Duck, now sporting its long tail, was taken by Della Lack in Cardiff Bay.

A couple more from Graham Tierney. Siskin and Robin in his Efail Isaf garden

The St Athan Cattle Egret © John Wilson
TRIP REPORTS

Ogmore - Wednesday 4th January 2017

A good turn out for our trip to Ogmore. We met in the grass car park at Portobello. The first birds seen on the river were a group of seven Goldeneye. Two of the males were performing their neck stretching courtship routines. There were a good number of duck species present. Apart from the ubiquitous Mallard, there were Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Pintail, Shelduck and Goosander. Also present were Little Grebe, Cormorant, Kingfisher, Redshank plus numerous gulls and geese. On the river bank were Pied Wagtail, Grey Wagtail and Meadow Pipit. Our next stop was at the sea front to catch the rising tide. We were looking for Purple Sandpipers on the rocks and weren’t to be disappointed. Three or four were eventually spotted tucked in between the slippery rocks. The local Turnstones were much easier to see in this area.

We had heard that there was a Dartford Warbler in Dunraven so we thought we’d try to see it. Luckily sharp-eyed Jean Haslam spotted it picking its way through the gorse and most got good views. We then thought we’d have a look in Pant Norton. It was really quiet and we only added Stonechat to our list. Most then departed but some went and had a look at the sacrificial crop at Ty’ n y Caeau Farm. There were plenty of Wood Pigeons in the crop but also there were Redwing and Yellowhammer in the hedgerow.

Slimbridge - Sunday 29th January 2017

Heavy rain at home as I left didn’t augur too well, but it was dry when I arrived at Slimbridge to meet up with the 7 other hardy souls, including the Scarboroughs from Barry on their first outing with us, so it was nice to see some new faces. We had light rain on and off for most of the day but with the plethora of hides available it wasn’t a problem. The tide was in so we visited the most likely hides for waders first – South Lake, then Zeiss. South Lake had mostly Lapwing, some Redshank and Snipe. Zeiss was more productive and produced large numbers of Snipe feeding in the grass [at least 50 I would say], plus a single Black-tailed Godwit, and Ceri picked out a Ruff. There were also large numbers of Dunlin feeding in the short grass, and Curlew. The highlight here was without doubt, a Bittern, which Gareth Jenkins first spotted, sitting in some Juncus, in clear view. After a while it then walked right out into the open into the grassy field, allowing excellent views, and then flew off to the far side of the flood there. Also here we watched a Water Rail wandering amongst the Juncus, plus of course large numbers of common wildfowl. Cetti’s Warbler also gave good open views, plus a couple of Stonechats. Next was the Kingfisher hide at the South Finger, where we found a field full of European White-fronted Geese. A Bittern had been showing here as well, plus an Otter but it as very crowded so we didn’t see that. The feeders gave us some common birds to add to the list, and in the adjacent fields were many Golden Plover in with the Lapwing, Dunlin and Curlew, plus another Ruff. Redwing and Fieldfare fed in the wet grass. We checked out the other hides along the path and then headed back to the centre and made our way to the Rushy Pen hide. Here, sharp-eyed Colin Stevenson got us on to the over-wintering Little Stint, feeding on the mud with a single Dunlin, which was useful for size comparison. Whilst here we saw a distant high-flying Marsh Harrier. We then moved on down to the Holden Tower. Here we had excellent views of the same or another Bittern walking out in the open, plus a very distant Peregrine, about 100 Barnacle Geese and 6 Common Cranes in the Tack Piece field.
We got better views of these by visiting the other hides on the way back towards the centre and eventually had 10 feeding together in the field. There was some interesting aggressive interaction when two birds flew in and landed near a couple of the birds already there. Light started to fade pretty quickly with the heavy cloud cover and increasingly heavy rain so we called it a day. Total species seen during the day was 67, which is a pretty good tally. All in all, a most enjoyable day.

John Wilson

More shots from John Wilson, taken on the GBC field outing to Slimbridge. Bittern and Lapwing

Garwnant - Wednesday 8th February 2017

17 participants met in the Forestry Centre Car Park in Garwnant and luckily the weather was good. Initially birds were very thin on the ground. There was a Green Woodpecker in the car park and we did see a pair of Ravens and a Buzzard over the clear fell on the top path. Next a Red Kite came in to view, giving great but brief views. Passerines were hard to find with only Bullfinch, Siskin and common woodland species evident. After lunch we headed down to the river, where there were four Dippers - probably two pairs right on the boundary between their territories. A Kingfisher and a Grey Wagtail were also seen here. Sean Kelleher then got us all on to a rather distant flock of Fieldfare and Redwing. Llwyn-onn Reservoir held Cormorant and Mallard. We only saw 31 species on the day but the fine weather in a lovely location made up for the paucity of birds.

Bridgwater Bay & Steart Marshes - Sunday 19th February 2017

Sadly the owl fest of last year couldn’t be repeated but there was plenty to compensate. We began at the main car park in Steart. From here we walked over to the Quantock View hide where there were large numbers of Lapwings, Golden Plovers, Dunlin and Teal to be seen. Other birds seen here were Shoveler, Shelduck, Snipe, Redshank, Cetti’s Warbler, Reed Bunting, Sparrowhawk, Peregrine and Buzzard. In the fields alongside the hide we were delighted to see four Roe Deer and at least four Brown Hares. In the hedgerow was a group of nine Yellowhammers and a couple of Stonechats posed nicely.
From here we went on to Bridgwater Bay to catch the high tide. Thousands of waders were pushed up on to the foreshore, the bulk of which were Dunlin but there were good numbers of Knot and Grey Plover as well. In the midst of them all was a lone Bar-tailed Godwit. The local Skylarks had obviously decided that spring had sprung, as their song filled the air.

Next we decided to walk down to Steart Pont. From the hide we saw a couple of groups of Avocet fly past and a female Marsh Harrier drifted over. On the banks of the river were large groups of Wigeon and Shelduck. All in all it was an excellent days birding, with fine weather to boot. If you haven’t visited this reserve yet, make the effort. It is a gem and can only improve as it matures.

**Forest of Dean - Sunday 5th March 2017**

Despite an atrocious weather forecast, 12 of us met up at New Fancy View watch point. As luck would have it, the rain had passed through quicker than expected, leaving the morning relatively clear. From the viewing mound, Tim Adcock quickly got on to a Goshawk circling overhead. This was joined by a second bird and we witnessed an impressive courtship display. Next a couple of Peregrines put in an appearance, giving good views as they swooped over the forest canopy. From here it was a short drive to Crabtreehill plantation, where a Great Grey Shrike has been over-wintering. We were in luck, the bird showed well and even did two very lengthy spells of hovering, scanning the ground for prey. I’ve never seen this behaviour before, have you?

As we were on a roll we went of to Cannop Ponds to search for Mandarin Ducks. We saw about 20 here with Mute Swan, Little Grebe, Gadwall, Tufted Duck and Mallard as well. Sadly the Marsh Tit that frequents the feeding station here wasn’t seen. We did get close views of several Treecreepers however.

At Parkend, we parked near the famous stone alongside the cricket pitch, hoping to see a Hawfinch. We weren’t disappointed as a female came down briefly to grab some of the seed kindly provided by visiting photographers. A Sparrowhawk was being mobbed overhead and a couple of Mistle Thrushes were fielding at mid-off on the square.

As the weather was still fine, we decided to try RSPB Nags Head in the vain hope of seeing Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. The woods were very quiet indeed. We id catch sight of a Great Spotted Woodpecker but didn’t really add to our day list of 41 species. We’d seen some special birds and I believe all went home in good spirits. It all comes to show, you shouldn’t always trust the weather forecast.
INDOOR MEETINGS

Travels in the South Atlantic - Paul Seligman - Tuesday 10th January 2017

Paul took us on a journey to Argentina, the Falklands, South Georgia, South Orkney and Elephant Island - places that he and his partner, Janet, had visited in early 2016. There were some stunning shots of both wildlife and scenery. I believe we saw 7 species of Penguins, plus Albatrosses, Petrels, Skuas, Sheathbills etc. In addition there were lots of shots of seals, whales and some very large icebergs. At the end we treated to some video clips of the highlights. Many thanks for a great presentation, Paul. There was a really good turn out, with 34 club members present. Hilary Perry won Paul’s special prize of a framed copy of one of his images.

South Africa - Jo’burg to Kruger - Richard Smith - Tuesday 7th February 2017

Richard gave a cracking presentation of a trip to South Africa in 2015. He began in the High Veldt, a cold region, with unique flora and fauna. Next we moved on to Kruger National Park, which by contrast was stifling. We saw Ostrich, Secretary Bird, Eagles, Korhaans, Francolins and Vultures aplenty. (He saw 275 species of bird on his trip). Richard’s main reason for visiting this area was to see mammals however. There were brilliant photos of Lions, Rhino, Zebra, Wildebeeste, Warthog, Hyena, Cheetah, Wild Dog and several species of antelope. On one occasion Richard’s party came upon a Lion kill and the jeep was surrounded by Lions, Hyenas and Jackals, all wanting a share of the spoils. What an experience. Many thanks, Richard (who wasn’t very well, yet soldiered on regardless).

Long term monitoring projects - Dr. Rob Thomas - Tuesday 7th March 2017

Rob gave us a fascinating talk on some of the projects that Cardiff University has been undertaking. His focus was the effects of climate change on bird behaviour and coping strategies. He began by looking at Storm Petrels, moved on to our reed bed specialists, Reed, Sedge and Cetti’s Warblers. Wheatears and Pied Flycatchers were also included.

The range of research is truly impressive with ringing recoveries, phenology, DNA analysis, artificial feeding all coming together to give more understanding of changes in bird populations. Brilliant work, Rob. Thanks a lot.
**BTO NEWS**

**Nest Record Scheme Taster Day, 2017**

8:00am - 3:00pm, Sunday, 14 May 2017

Rudry Parish Hall, Rudry, Caerphilly, CF83 3DF

After a successful event in 2016, we are running an introduction to nest recording again in 2017. The aim is to increase the number of birders in Glamorgan contributing to this valuable survey over the coming years.

The day provides an introduction to monitoring nests, how to follow the all-important NRS Code of Conduct to ensure that you’re monitoring does not influence the outcome of nests, as well as a few hours in the field for some supported practice searching for a variety of different species’ nests.

There will be a charge of £10 per person to cover costs.

For more information about the day, or to book your place, contact Dan.

**Your Holiday Records Needed**

Fieldwork for the European Breeding Bird Atlas 2 concludes this summer. EBBA2 will map the distribution and abundance of Europe’s 500+ breeding species across more than 50 countries. Huge progress has been made already but your records are still needed to fill gaps in coverage.

Some of the countries where gaps exist, including Portugal, Greece and Turkey, are regular destinations for UK birders. Others, such as Albania, Armenia and European Russia, are further off the beaten track. BirdTrack users can help by submitting records – with breeding evidence codes – from wherever they travel in Europe, using the global data entry tool or the new app.

Information on how and where birders can help is given on the EBBA2 website.

**House Martin Survey**

Across our region in 2016, five volunteers monitored 19 nests and BTO is looking to repeat the survey this year.

Anybody can take part provided they have a site with at least one nest that can be viewed for approximately 15 minutes regularly throughout the breeding season (i.e. approximately once a week although missing the occasional week due to a holiday is fine).

In 2017, we would particularly welcome repeat surveys from sites and nests which were surveyed in 2016. Data from nests which were not surveyed in 2016 however, would be valuable too.
Glamorgan Bird Club Newsletter April 2017

**Links**

1. Nest Records Scheme, [http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs](http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/nrs)
6. Volunteer Surveys, [https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys](https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys)
7. BTO Glamorgan Open Day, [https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bto-glamorgan-open-day-registration-31534914779](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bto-glamorgan-open-day-registration-31534914779)

Wayne Morris, BTO Regional Representative
eastglambto@gmail.com

Daniel Jenkins-Jones, BTO Assistant Regional Representative & Wetland Bird Survey Local Organiser
eastglamwebs@gmail.com

* Apologies - Wayne & Dan included details of the BTO Members’ Day at Parc Slip on March 26th but we were too late going to press. Ed

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**BLACK-HEADED GULL**

In the last issue we had a letter from Mike and Jackie Pointon about Black headed Gulls on Roath Park Lake. They have been back and made another interesting observation.

“On Monday 6th March, Jackie and I found a ringed Black-headed Gull at Roath Park. It had a white ring with black letters Z-A. I submitted it to Euring, who coordinate all European colour ringing projects. Two days later I got a reply from Frank Majoor, a Dutch birder. The gull had been ringed in January 2014 as a 2CY bird at Noorderplantsoen, in the city of Groningen, in the Netherlands. It was last seen there on 18th February 2014 and two days later was in Kiel-canal, Schleswig-Holstein, in northern Germany. It then kept its head down for three years until we saw it at Roath Park.”

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*** MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ***

Don’t forget that membership renewals are now due. A renewal form is included at the back of this newsletter.
FUTURE EVENTS

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

- Wednesday 5th April - Craig y Cilau NNR
- Wednesday 17th May - Bryngarw CP
- Sunday 28th May - Cwm Claisfer WTSWW
- Wednesday 7th June - Llanwonno (evening meeting)
- Sunday 11th June - Somerset Levels
- Wednesday 21st June - Llw Reservoirs
- Wednesday 12th July - Goldcliff and Uskmouth

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

- Tuesday 25th April - AGM & Quiz

Monthly walk - Kenfig NNR

This takes place on the third Saturday of each month. Meet at the Reserve Centre at 9 a.m. For details please contact David Carrington.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE  for the next newsletter is  Friday 30th June

CONTACT DETAILS

See the GBC website for further details - email addresses etc

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GLAMORGAN BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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Address: ..........................................................................................................................................................

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Postcode: ........................................ Telephone: .............................................................................................

E-mail: ..............................................................................................................................................................

Additional family members: ..........................................................................................................................

Do you wish to receive your newsletters by e-mail ☐ or by post ☐ ?

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.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Categories: Single £12 ☐ Family £15 ☐ Concession £7 ☐
Payment method: Cash ☐ Cheque/PO ☐ Standing Order ☐ Bank transfer ☐

To pay by Standing Order or Bank Transfer, please contact the Membership Secretary.

GIFT AID

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.

I want the Glamorgan Bird Club (Reg Charity 1129684) to treat all gifts of money or subscriptions that I have made since April 22nd 2008 and all donations and subscriptions made from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations until I notify you otherwise. I confirm that I am a UK tax payer.

Signature ............................................................... Date .................................................................

Print name ..........................................................................................................................................................

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