

OGSTON BIRD CLUB

APRIL 2023



NEWSLETTER



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THE CLUB NEWSLETTER

Our Club Newsletter has not changed its current format in all the years we have been producing them. Three issues per year inevitably means we are sharing old news and we feel the need to try something different. So, starting in 2024, we will produce Bulletins with current news and information regarding upcoming events. The aim is to provide something fresher and more relevant. We won't need to be so rigid on frequency and dates, and we will avoid clogging your inbox by just sending something well worth seeing. It's early days yet but we have some ideas and no doubt it will evolve, certainly over the first year. The frequency of the Bulletins will totally depend on what we have to tell you and when we need to say it, but bear with us and hopefully the end result will fit the bill. As the number of bulletins per year may increase from the three newsletters we currently send out, it will not be practical to post paper copies out and asking members to pay so much extra for postage and printing is unreasonable. Copies will be made available in the Members hides and will also be available to view on the Club Website. There will be no need for any member to pay a postage fee at renewal time in December. Such a change is long overdue, and it could be quite interesting.

Steve Slack, Chairman April 2023

NEWS ROUND-UP – EXCITING TIMES at OGSTON



The Heronry: Herons are early breeders, and the heronry is a hive of activity. Mary Wilde caught this bird displaying on 4th February. The adults were back at the nests before the end of February. The snowfall of 9th March may have caused a setback as several nests were under snow, but as we go to print the number of occupied nests is at or about 18, with some quite well-grown young.

New Birds in 2022. We are taking stock of the birds of 2022 for our forthcoming annual report. Several county rarities have been accepted by the Derbyshire Ornithological Society Rarities Committee, but notably two will be additions to Our All Time List. These are a **White-tailed Eagle** which made a fleeting visit on 29th April 2022 (Tim Sexey and Steve Mann) and a **Lapland Bunting** on 18th September 2022 (Tim again) In fact Tim also obtained late acceptance of his Lapland Bunting from way back on 11 October 2010.

Recent Trends. The winter was rather quiet in terms of wintering wildfowl in that, for example, the numbers of Wigeon and Pochard were quite low. Walkers on the west bank have, however, regularly seen Goldeneye, Goosander and good numbers of Gadwall and Teal. Several Curlew have passed through, and 260 Lapwings has been a typical count.

A single **Hawfinch** was to be seen again of late, giving good views for patient observers. Steve Walker spotted the one in this photograph at the beginning of February - one of three seen in Brackenfield churchyard at that time.

The gull roost has also become smaller, perhaps influenced by closure of local rubbish tips, although there have been Caspian Gulls on several dates.



Work has continued apace on the Ogston site, with the cutting of the meadows facilitated by Severn Trent Water. The cuttings were removed by our work parties to avoid undue enrichment of the site and maintain the varied flora. This avoids proliferation of invasive species and reversion of those areas to scrub.

A new tern raft, destined to replace the one at the southern end of the reservoir arrived a week ago. Having been delivered and prepared a week before, the constant pumping in of water caused the reservoir levels to rise so much the raft had floated away by the day we were ready to float it! With great support from our friends at the Sailing Club and our ever reliable volunteers, the raft was rescued and is now secured in position, waiting for new occupants!



2022 saw the creation of the **new scrape and island.**

We have tried to manage the fluid flow dynamics so that the surface water off the land and the rainfall are directed to the pools to optimize water levels in a dry summer. The new island (like the existing island) is of such a height that the surface should always remain proud of the reservoir level. We'll see!



The nest box scheme has been monitored and recorded. The 2022 season was not especially fruitful for the owls, although their intended boxes were occupied by Stock Doves and Jackdaws. Our crusade to help the Willow Tits continues with management of potential nest sites both natural and by way of nest boxes. As seen on the left, we have added boxes suitable for Mandarin in the hope that they will leave the owl sites free for their intended occupants. Thanks Rob Simmons. On the right, our



photo shows an inspection of one of the Tawny Owl boxes which proved to have been occupied last year by Stock Doves.

There are always plenty of potential occupants for large nest boxes near to the water, including Goosander and, in our dreams, Goldeneye which certainly do nest as far south as the Spey Valley, although not thus far in Derbyshire.

A note of thanks One of our members, Michael Blisset, passed away recently and his family were in touch to give us a donation which he wished the Club to receive. With our sincere thanks, this money will be deployed to enhance the interiors of both the members hides.

None of the foregoing could be achieved without the support of the members – so thanks again to All.

Works on the Dam Wall members visiting Ogston have noticed works which are being undertaken at the dam wall and have asked what is being done. Severn Trent Water have been happy to advise us .

The problems encountered at Whaley Bridge in 2019 raised questions for water companies, government agencies and the emergency services about how fast reservoirs can be drawn down in an emergency. The risk varies from site to site depending on the age and design of each reservoir, its topography and how it is fed.

All reservoirs will in future have to be able to drop their levels by agreed amounts within agreed timescales.

Ogston, as a smaller site, can be drained down with the use of supplementary pumps. The work which the Ogston Bird Club members will have seen develop over the last few months is the creation of a concrete platform and access track to bring in and house pumps if required. Once this work is completed there won't be pumps permanently housed on the platform, and there shouldn't be more foreseeable activity on or around the dam.

All to the good!

Bill Padley March 2023

SPRING HAS SPRUNG – RECENT SIGHTINGS and what we can look forward to seeing soon!

We have already seen a Wheatear arrival on Saturday 18 March, looking very handsome and posing well in front of the main hide, (did you know the Wheatear was named white-arse in Old



English on account of its white rump) and heard several skylarks over the car park. We have recently had sightings of a male and female Stonechat, as well as the Chiffchaff at long last - bit later than usual this year but at least three believed to be around Ogston as I write this. It is so encouraging to see these migratory birds returning to us for the summer, the main reasons being that the UK has longer days than Sub-Saharan Africa where many of these birds come from, so they can spend longer hunting for the food needed for their chicks. We also have less predators, so it is safer for them whilst raising their young. It certainly makes us feel better to see and hear them together with the longer days and better weather. We also have 18 Heron nests in the Ogston heronry at the last count! 5 Sand Martins made an appearance at Ogston on 17 March and no

doubt more will arrive soon. A Dunlin was recorded Saturday 18 March on the shoreline – tricky at first to tell if it was a Dunlin or a Common Sandpiper but our experts said definitely Dunlin, too early for the Common Sandpiper yet.

Other birds we hope will make a welcome return during the coming weeks are the much-anticipated Osprey (one was in fact seen on 28 March and another one, a different bird on the following day), also the Swallow (a sure sign of Summer), Blackcap, Willow Warbler, and the Yellow Wagtail. In April we will hopefully see the return of the Swifts (much depleted in numbers due to lack of nesting areas) and House Martin and hope the recent creation and sightings of new nest boxes will encourage the Mandarin Duck and Willow Tit to breed here at Ogston. We haven't seen the spotted flycatcher for a few years at Brackenfield Church yard, but we may get lucky this year.

Also from April to May we will be looking forward to sightings of the Whitethroat, Reed and Sedge Warblers, and hopefully the odd Whinchat. Last year we were lucky to have an Avocet sighting, a wonderful bird and the logo of the RSPB of course, which we hope we will see again this year on more than one occasion (one was in fact at Ogston on 28 March, the day after there had been a Black-tailed Godwit spotted on the West bank). As always, do also keep an eye out for the blue flash of the Kingfisher which we all love to see.

We have had several notable sightings in March, not least was that of a Gyr Falcon spotted flying over the car park, one of 38 which escaped from a falconer in Derbyshire, think he has them all back now! An Egyptian goose was recorded then verified a few days later. We have several pairs of Oystercatchers of which at least one pair have been seen to be mating and will hopefully breed successfully and raise their chicks somewhere in the area around the reservoir.



It was as always lovely to see the Willow Tit, Coal Tit, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Siskin and Lesser Redpoll in the feeder area last month, not to mention the shy Water Rail, two of which in fact appeared there quite regularly – one at least is now over in the reedbed and can be seen on occasion from the Sue Worsey hide. (*Sam Taylor (16), an active multi-skilled younger member of the Club, took this very nicely lit photograph*)



I really want to say a huge thanks to all those members who either email their sightings to me, add their sightings to the hide diary or include their sightings on the Ogston Facebook. It is so very helpful and invaluable for attempting to give a good record of birds habiting the Ogston area! I have been a member of Ogston Bird Club for 3 years and began the role of recorder last September which I am finding both very rewarding if a little challenging at times.

Val Jones March 2023

THE MEMBERS HIDES

Since the last newsletter the main members hide guttering has been replaced. The original downpipe was down the front of the hide which allowed the run-off water to just flow in front of the hide and drain away



naturally. The replaced new downpipe has been placed on the side corner of the hide and has been extended to allow any run-off water to now flow directly into the Kingfisher pond. This means that both the Sue Worsey and main hides now make good use of any rainwater which will hopefully help to maintain the water level in the



Kingfisher Pond and prevent it from completely drying out in periods of dry weather as it did as a result of the drought last year. Kingfishers to return soon hopefully.

2022 saw the creation of the new scrape and island. We have tried to manage the fluid flow dynamics so that the surface water off the land and the rainfall are directed to the pools to optimize water levels in a dry summer. The new island (like the existing island) is of such a height that the surface should always remain proud of the reservoir level. We'll see!

A new paint has been trialled on the main hide to see if adequate coverage can be achieved. The previous paint used is no longer available in the right colour, so alternatives are being trialled. Further work will be continued over the Easter holidays to confirm what the best options are. A working party will be organised during 2023 (outside of the breeding season) to ensure that all of the main hides, fences and walkways are covered. I look forward to offers from any willing member volunteers to help out here – paint bushes will be provided!



The interiors of both the main and Sue W hides have been tidied up and new notice boards installed. In addition, a variety of new bird ID posters are now on display, most of these courtesy of the local Chesterfield Group of the RSPB.

Longer term work to be carried out during 2023 is the replacement of the Sue Worsley walkway and adjacent fencing. This is currently being costed with a view to getting the work completed in 2023. General refurbishment of the Alders wood hide is also under consideration. Updates on progress will be given in the next newsletter.

Chris Taylor March 2023

JIM MART NATURE RESERVE

There has been a lot has been in the media recently about events happening in the night sky, Venus and Jupiter aligning and Green Comets. Did you see them, well the chances of seeing them clearly depends on the light pollution where you live. If you've ever been to the Jim Mart Nature Reserve you will know that it sits in a valley and as such has very little light pollution. In short it is a perfect place to view the night sky. Looking skywards on a clear night reveals a sky full of stars that are not able to be seen near towns and cities and gives you a better chance of seeing the Aurora when it's visible this far south.

Tourism advertises areas of 'Dark Skies' and they make a big thing about it, you don't have to go far to experience it, just go to Jim Mart.

While you are sitting on the bench in the reserve, keep an eye out for the Fox and cubs that are curious why you're in their domain, for Bats that are flying overhead and the Tawny Owls hooting in the distance.

Don't forget that there are 8 species of Bat that live on site in the Bat cave (Hibernaculum), so a very good chance of sightings.

Finding Jim Mart has long been a problem, to make things easier, if you use the 'what3words' app and use the following location reference: 'taps.logged.shortens' this will take you to the entrance to the reserve. Of course, you can find directions to the reserve on the website as well. Don't forget a torch, it's very dark.

Rob Simmons March 2023

OGSTON BIRD CLUB TRIPS 2023

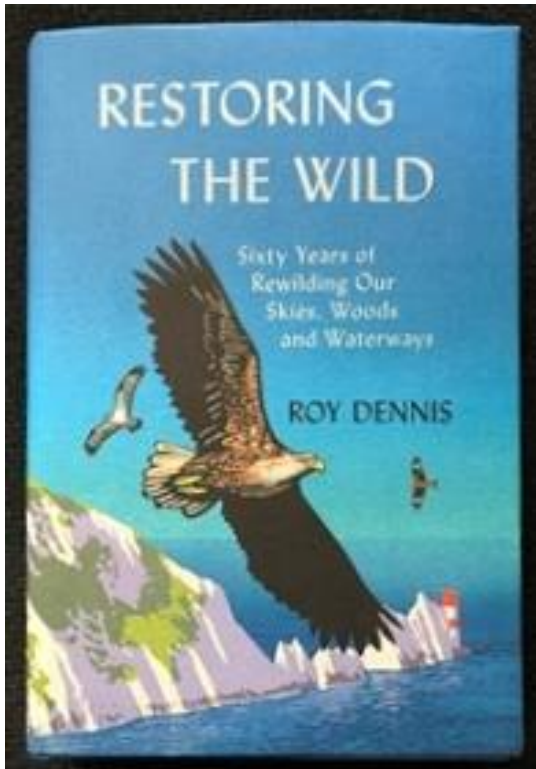
Trip	Day/Date	Meeting Point	Time	Dist from Chesterfield	Leader	Notes and target species
Budby Common	Wednesday 8/3/23	See map on website On A616 at SK622695	08:30	20 miles	Martin Kaye	Wood Lark + heath land birds
Cutthroat Bridge South Yorkshire	Wednesday 12/4/23	Car park in massive layby on south side A57 heading towards Sheffield at SK217875 one mile east of Ladybower Inn (map on website)	08:30	16 miles	Martin Kaye	Half/Full day (see website details under TRIPS/TRIPS DIARY) looking for Ring Ouzels. Other species might include Red Grouse, Raven, Kestrel and Peregrine.
Lawrence Field, Upper Padley Gorge, Bar Brook Plantation	Wednesday 10/05/23	Park at the side of the Grindleford to Foxhouse road (SK258800)	08:30	15 miles	Martin Kaye	Half/Full day (see website details under TRIPS/TRIPS DIARY) may need packed lunch. Dist 1-2 miles. Lawrencefield - Stonechat, Cuckoo, Tree Pipit, maybe Whinchat. Padley - Redstart, Pied + Spotted Flycatchers, maybe Wood Warbler + other woodland birds. Bar Brook - as above but more likely to get Spotted Fly and Whinchat.
Whisby Nature Park and RSPB Langford Lowfields	Wednesday 17/05/23	Whisby reserve is brown signed left from the roundabout on the A46 just west of Lincoln	09:30	45 miles	Steve Slack & Andy Marshall	Take lunch if you want to stay out into the afternoon. Short gentle walking around the reserves. Whisby - Nightingales, Mediterranean Gull, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, both types of Whitethroat. Langford Lowfields - Hobby and reed bed birds.
Nightjar trip	Wednesday evening 24/5/23	Flash Lane (Darley Moor) at large layby SK293694 (see map on website)	9pm	6 miles	Steve Slack & Andy Marshall	Nightjars and Woodcock
Annesley Pit Top	Wednesday 14/06/23	Newstead SK523530 (see map on website)	09:30	20 miles	Martin Kaye	Half day. Exploring a local nature reserve. Black-necked Grebe should be the stars but a good variety of birds, dragonflies and stunning wild flowers.
Blacktoft RSPB	Wednesday 19/07/23	RSPB reserve DN14 8HR	09:30	60 miles 1 hour 15	Martin Kaye	Full day. Packed lunch. Water birds, Marsh Harriers and possibly Bearded Tits
Frampton RSPB	Sunday 13/08/23	RSPB reserve PE20 1AY TF356392	09:30	75 miles 2 hour	Martin Kaye	Full day. Packed lunch. Returning migrant waders e.g. Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper, wildfowl including early geese and shelduck. Various Raptors. 50+ species!
Potteric Carr	Wednesday 23/08/23	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve	09:30	30 miles	Martin Kaye	Potential for birds of prey, plenty of wild fowl and dragonflies
Dearne Valley Tour	Wednesday 18/10/23	Edderthorpe Flash Wombwell Ings RSPB Old Moor	09:30	44 miles	Martin Kaye	Starting at Edderthorpe Flash (see map on website), a lovely reserve viewed from an area used regularly for flytipping but don't be put off (if you have a scope, bring it). Wombwell involves a bit of a walk but proper birding. Old Moor around lunch time with all its hides.
To be decided						

Please note: all trips will be by members cars. Full details are on the Club website under trips. Alternatively phone Martin Kaye 07833 720542
You can read the report on the Budby Common trip which took place on the 8th March on the Club's website here:
<http://www.ogstonbirdclub.co.uk/budby-common-trip-report-8-3-23/>

BOOK REVIEW- Restoring the Wild by Roy Dennis

Many people especially birders will know of Roy Dennis' work to bring back Ospreys to the UK. However, I suspect that most of these folk including myself will have little or no knowledge of the breadth of his other work.

The opening chapter of the book covers some of his involvement with the early efforts to reintroduce White-tailed Eagles to Scotland which didn't come as much of a surprise but then the second chapter



deals with his considerable efforts to encourage Goldeneye to start breeding again in Scotland. Then follows his involvement in the translocation of small numbers of Scottish Peregrines to support a breeding programme in Germany post the banning of organophosphate pesticides and then this is succeeded by the tremendous efforts he went to with regard to the reintroduction of Red Kites.

One of the surprises that emerge as you read through the book, is the resistance he meets to various reintroduction schemes. Okay, no surprise from some farmers/landowners but a bit of a shock when it's some conservation organisations and big ones at that, which were dragging their feet.

Roy does deal with Ospreys in much more detail later on in the book including in Poole Harbour on the south coast of the UK, but what will almost certainly be new to most readers is his involvement with reintroductions as far a field as Spain, Italy and Portugal. Another major surprise for most readers will be his involvement with the reintroduction of Red Squirrels to the west coast of Scotland. I for one was totally unaware that not all that long

ago, these little mammals were absent from great swathes of the Highlands.

There's also an interesting chapter on his attempted reintroduction enterprises, usually with fellow European conservationists which have either failed or had to be put on hold because of local resistance. Roy also devotes part of the book to the consideration of large mammals that once roamed our wild islands including wolves, lynx and brown bears. Controversial stuff! Finally, he deals in detail with the reintroduction projects both successful and failed of the iconic White-tailed Eagle including the translocation of Scottish birds to the Isle of Wight.

At around £11 for a new copy and less second hand, there's a lot of book for the money (450 pages). I got the impression that a lot of it was taken from diaries, which may not be the case, but that would explain what I found to be a repetitive form of description appearing throughout the book. However, while that might irritate, the reader cannot be anything other than staggered at the level of energy, enthusiasm and dedication that he has maintained throughout his life and be in complete awe of what he has achieved. A must read for those who are keen to understand rewilding through reintroductions of once indigenous species.

Martin Kaye March 2023

Pub. William Collins ISBN 978-0-00-836881-4

WEBLINKS TO ARTICLES OF TOPICAL INTEREST

Bird flu report spotlights impact of the disease on UK wild birds

A report into the continuing Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI or 'bird flu') outbreak has been published by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

[Read it here](#)

Plasticosis: A new disease caused by plastic that is affecting seabirds

A new disease has been described in seabirds, but it might just be the tip of the iceberg.

[Read it here](#)

Tarmac transfers ownership of Langford Lowfields to the RSPB

The RSPB has taken on ownership of wetland nature reserve created following historical land transfer. Ownership of a rare wetland habitat has been transferred to the RSPB in Nottinghamshire, giving some of the UK's rarest species a unique home thanks to a historical land deal 25 years in the making.

[Read it here](#)

'Missing' Hen Harrier had satellite tag cut off, say police

Press release from RSPB. Yet another mysterious disappearance involving a rare Hen Harrier has been identified by the RSPB and South Yorkshire Police.

[Read it here](#)

Man arrested in connection with Suffolk Goshawk killings

A man's been arrested in connection with the shooting of five Goshawks in Wordwell near to Bury St Edmunds.

[Read it here](#)

Record numbers of Stone Curlew on RSPB reserves

Stone Curlew are making a triumphant comeback across southern England and East Anglia, with record numbers of the bird now found on RSPB nature reserves during spring and summer.

[Read it here](#)

Want to help protect rare birds in nesting season? Keep your dog on its lead

There are few sights more joyful than a dog bounding through the countryside. But for ground-nesting birds and other wildlife, the experience is quite different.

[Read it here](#)