



Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club

Registered Charity No. 1098296

NEWSLETTER 2013

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

It undoubtedly feels a little odd to be writing as President after ten years as Treasurer, but I am honoured and hope to serve the club well. There are big shoes to fill, following on from Alf King, who not only served officially as President for three years but also unofficially for most of last year, after Terry Piggott had to resign through illness. Alf has been a fine President, we owe him a large vote of thanks and I am delighted that he has remained on the committee and as our IT man. I must remember to wear the chain of office, having been reprimanded by Alf for forgetting it!

The administration of the club depends upon the Committee and the considerable hard work it does behind the scenes, much of it unseen, but I hope not unappreciated by members. John Walker has stepped into the breach as Treasurer, as well as continuing his longstanding role as Indoor Meetings Secretary. We also welcome onto the Committee Russ Smithson, whose field experience will be extremely valuable and who is undoubtedly one of our most active members with his involvement in developments in the lower Calder Valley, a subject on which Russ be giving a talk to us in October. Russ has also volunteered to take on the job of Survey Coordinator.

The real life of the club however depends upon members' participation. Committee members can be hard pressed to fulfill their duties as well as those of ordinary life and we remain in need of more new blood willing to help and spread the load – if you think you might be able to help please come forward and have a word. This is particularly the case in regards to our IT, web site etc. It is somewhat of a standing joke between Alf and me that he is our 'one-eyed man in the land of the blind'. Whilst a considerable amount has been achieved, we are desperately in need of some real IT expertise to push forward with our other ideas, so if you know of anyone...!

It has been in the main another strong year for the club. We have enjoyed an excellent lecture programme, completed the re-vamp of the web site and forum and produced a quality annual report in good time. We ran some particularly interesting local patch outings this Spring, most reasonably attended, and we plan to run more next year – I highly recommend them to anyone who has not yet tried them.

On the other hand, no 'in-house' surveys were run, a weakness we aim to address in 2014 with Russ Smithson now taking up the Survey Coordinator job, but which will also depend upon the support of members to take part. Another concern is that membership has fallen in the last year, for no single obvious reason. Clearly if the club is to thrive it depends upon a strong membership and I hope that you will all continue your participation and financial support and also play a part in attracting new members – do you know of anyone who might like to come and see what we have to offer ?

John Walker did us proud again with the superb lecture programme he put together, always a difficult task to bring fresh topics and speakers. Visiting speakers took us around the UK and the world, but of particular note were the excellent presentations by club members, demonstrating the talent and expertise we have in-house. After the AGM, Stuart Brocklehurst fascinated us with his look behind the scenes at his wildlife artwork in 'Cutting out the image'. Terry Piggott demonstrated his unique observational photography and insightful commentary in

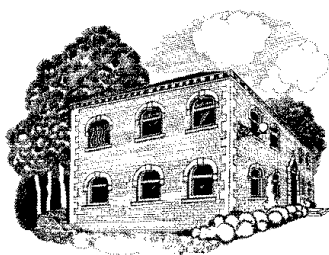
his talk on Mexico and also in his much updated presentation about Anglesey, standing in at short notice when the scheduled speaker had to cancel. Our club photographers contributed to '2012 – A Huddersfield Birding Year in Pictures' presented by Mike Denton, who packed the talk with many fascinating facts about the species we see locally. If you were not there you missed a treat, but we shall be running a similar review of 2013 next May.

One member raised a concern about some overlap in speakers with the local RSPB Group, which many of you also attend. We enjoy a good relationship with the RSPB Group, whose leader David Hemingway will be well known to many of you as a longstanding member of our club, and we have agreed to exchange information about bookings to minimise any problem without cramping our respective arrangements.

John Walker has put together a fascinating and varied new programme of lectures for us in 2013/14 and full details are in the enclosed card. The first is on Tuesday 3rd September, when we welcome John Linton Smith presenting "In Search of Dotterel". I look forward to seeing you all there.

Meanwhile, enjoy your birding.

Mike Wainman



in focus

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PATCH OUTINGS

Honley Patch Outing, Sunday, 28th April, 2013

I wrongly expected a bright sunny Sunday morning, but as you've guessed, it was in-fact cold, cloudy and threatening to rain. Our delayed start was made from Station Road. This is the home to a thirtyish-strong rookery, one of three rookeries within one-hundred metres as the crow flies. Crossing the river Holme we scanned for Grey Wagtail and Dipper both of which breed in this industrial area.

Joining the footpath towards Magdale (the Old Turnpike Road) we traversed downstream near the river Holme to Magdale Dam going through pastures as well as oak and beech woodland. All this land plus the adjacent cemetery and Magdale Dam is owned and managed by Honley Village Trust, who safeguard it for future generations. Wren, Dunnock, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and Nuthatch were all heard but were keeping well sheltered.

While standing on the bank of Magdale Dam we were all, that is Mike Wainman, Alf King, Stephen Cooke and David Butterfield, treated to the sight of a female Sparrowhawk circling overhead, a Grey Heron flying in and a pair of Bullfinches on the opposite bank.

Kingfisher is seen most days here during winter, but not today. Crossing over the road at Alpine corner we walked steeply uphill to Upper Park Nature Reserve, hearing Great Spotted and Green Woodpecker on the way. We observed breeding Jackdaw and potentially breeding warblers. This area is a good location for transient birds at both spring and autumn because of its microcosm of pastures, mixed old woodland, unimproved ground and newly planted woodland, one of the last areas in Huddersfield to be favoured by migrating Corncrakes, (don't get too excited that was 60 years ago).

From here we crossed over Northgate into Westwood and Hey Wood, which was very quiet on this dull cold morning.

This interesting walk is never going to produce a long list of birds but can present a selection of woodland birds with the odd surprise. It also has a wealth of natural and industrial history for those who like to combine such things with birding.

This day we also enjoyed panoramic views and excellent company. Thanks to all who came, next year bring a friend.

Reg. Senior



Dipper on the River Calder at 'Elland Gravel Pits' – posted January 30th 2013

Patch Outing to Blackmoorfoot Reservoir, 9th May 2013

Two members, Mike Wainman and the leader, met at the inflow of Blackmoorfoot Reservoir at six-thirty pm on 9th May. The abysmal weather, which had persisted for several days, put the dampers on any attempts to watch birds other than from the hide along the west bank.

With the exception of one of the breeding pair of Great Crested Grebes the only other birds noted were twenty-plus House Martins, fourteen Swallows and half a dozen Swifts. The time in the hide did, however, provide an opportunity to discuss Club politics (not what we had gone for but, due to the situation, the best thing available).

On leaving the hide it was noted that three Lesser Black-backed Gulls were in the field to the west of the reservoir – at least the leader was happy!

The evening was to get even better because we headed for the Wills' O' Nats to down a not-so-well deserved pint.

Mike Denton



Pair of Great Crested Grebes in courtship at Sands Lane, posted March 10th 2013

Patch Outing to Kerry's N.R. and Mitchell Laithe's Sewage farm, 7th April 2013

A good turn out by club members, and fine weather helped to make a good morning's birding.

After meeting at nine am by the entrance to Kerry Foods, we entered through the willow coppice that runs alongside the River Calder and then into the reserve. Members that had not been on the reserve before were shown the feeding stations and the hides. A bird of interest on the reserve was Chiffchaff (calling). Whether this was a migrant or one of the wintering birds is anybody's guess. Other newly arrived migrants were Sand Martin and Swallow. Sadly the White Wagtail that turned up on the 6th was not seen. Great Spotted Woodpecker and three species of titmouse were on the feeders.



Chiffchaff at Kerry's/Healey's reserve, taken on 2nd February 2013

Sparrowhawk and Common Buzzard put in an appearance, Reed Bunting and Yellow Bunting were in full song.

A walk along the path that runs on the northern edge of the sewage farm gives excellent views of the river valley and the few lagoons that are left. This area produced Canada Goose,

Shoveler, Teal, Mallard, Grey Partridge, Cormorant, Common and Black Headed Gulls. Birds noted feeding on the sprinklers were Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Starling, and Pied Wagtail.

A total of forty species were recorded throughout the morning. A big thank you to all who turned up.

Russell Smithson

Patch Outing to Horbury Strands and Horbury Wyke, 14th April 2013

Another good turn out by club members, meeting at the Bingley Arms, Horbury Bridge at nine am. We were all well rewarded by a cracking Kingfisher which spent a few minutes feeding and calling just in front of us while we stood waiting for any latecomers. We then walked along the canal towpath eastwards to the Strands and Horbury Wyke. From the Wyke we followed the river west which brings you back to the Bingley Arms.

The woodland by the canal had newly arrived Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers singing twenty-six Swallows and six Sand Martins were hawking flies, a female Sparrowhawk flew over and a male Blackcap was singing by the iron bridge. Gadwall, Goosander, Mallard, Coot, Moorhen and Teal were all on the river.

Great Spotted Woodpecker, Song Thrush and other common birds were in good numbers near Addington Lane. Reg managed to photograph a Robin sat on a nest which was shown to him by one of the locals. All good stuff?



Song Thrush in a Holmfirth garden, taken on March 23rd 2013

A big thank you to all who turned out.

Russ Smithson

PERSONAL PATCH OUTINGS

In the 2012 newsletter I raised the possibility of 'personal patch outings' to complement the group outings we have in the spring. The idea was simple – to draw up a list of members who would be willing to take someone round their local patch for a personal tour at a mutually convenient time. This list would be made available at meetings and perhaps on the club web site.

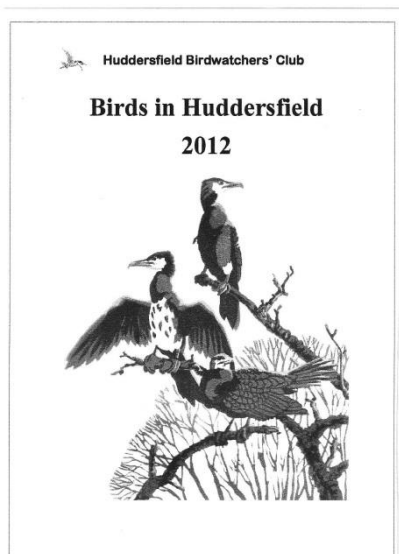
The response was disappointing, but I still hope that many members will be willing to make their knowledge more widely available and am therefore making another appeal. If you would be willing to take part please return the form below indicating which site or sites you would

offer and the telephone number and/or email address on which anyone interested should contact you. I will then draw up a list for circulation. It would be good for the club to get this underway and could help attract new members, so I hope as many as possible will support the initiative.

Mike Wainman

Personal patch outing volunteer			
Name	Patch area (e.g. Digley)	Contact details	
		Tel. no	Email address
Please return to Mike Wainman, 2 Bankfield Park Avenue, Taylor Hill, Huddersfield, HD4 7QY			
Or email details to m.wainman@ntlworld.com			

ANNUAL REPORT – BIRDS IN HUDDERSFIELD 2012



Production of the 2012 report is well advanced and on schedule for printing in the early autumn. Thank you to members for sending in their records so promptly and enabling David Butterfield to complete the mammoth task of entering and analysing the data ready for our team of writers. Chris Abell and Mike Pinder stood down from the team this year, having taken part every year since we formed the syndicate, and I wish to thank them both for their invaluable contributions. Heather and Steve Chippendale and Roger Mitchell came forward to fill the gaps and we welcome them to the team. Russ Boland and Stuart Brocklehurst have produced yet more fine graphics, including the roosting Cormorants for the colour cover (see opposite), the artwork for which Stuart has again donated for raffle when the report is out.

Remember that the report is free to members in 2013/14, so make sure you qualify and send in your subs now!

Mike Wainman

TWITTERY TWEETS FOR TWITCHERS

All birdwatchers take note of every tweet and twitter that they hear, of course, but all of us will also have heard of the seemingly ubiquitous Twitter and it's associated "tweets", yet have any of us tried to make use of it in our hobby? Many birdwatchers have, it is reported, and it would be interesting to know how many club members (if any) would be interested in trying to exploit such technology to enhance their hobby.

I am a very recent adopter of Twitter and a very infrequent tweeter as well, but in playing around with it I have become aware of its potential. It is quite simple, for example, to broadcast sightings of interest to all and sundry using a message of 140 characters or fewer with an appropriate hash-tag. These can be read by others either immediately through a mobile phone or later via a web browser on a smartphone or PC. All that you need is a Twitter account (free) and a mobile phone. Alternative uses could include tweeting club news-items, updates regarding speakers, updates on sightings and so forth.

See: www.twitter.com

If anyone is already a Twitter user and interested in exploring the potential then please use the #huddsbwc hash-tag. Anyone who isn't and might be interested please contact me by email or post on the forum.

NOTE: Twitter is a very open medium and it is impossible to prevent anyone from reading your tweets especially if they are "re-tweeted". This means that the greatest care should be taken, as always, in passing on any information about rare or sensitive species.

Alf King

A BRIEF NOTE RELEVANT TO THE ACCUMULATION OF RECORDS

It has been customary for me to take records from the HBC website's *Forum*, and others, for inclusion in the annual report "*Birds in Huddersfield*" – especially in the case of those contributors that I have thought unlikely to provide such data in any other form.

Some contributors do subsequently provide written records but, at times, information contained therein has been at variance to that posted on the *Forum*. This has led to inaccuracies on the HBC database and, inevitably, some duplication of data causing errors when transcribed to species datasets which go to (our) report-writers and thus make their difficult job that much harder.

I propose, therefore, in most cases to cease the practice of taking records off the *Forum*. Consequent to this, I would urge all contributors to the *Forum* to please provide me with written records of their observations / postings as a matter of course. By far the easiest way to do this is by email at:

butterfieldd60@gmail.com

So, what constitutes a good record? Information relevant to the reporting of HBC / YNU *Description species* and 'sensitive' species can be found on the website but what about the 'commoner' stuff.

A record is far more valuable if, at a minimum, information is included covering date, location, species, number and if possible, age and sex. Even estimates of number are better than nothing. Any other information relevant to the sighting that the observer feels might be of interest could be included at the observer's discretion. Details of time, weather conditions and habitat might be included if the observer feels this could add to the record. For geese in flight and species that are obviously migrating details of time and direction of flight is especially important. Similar information is useful for raptors but details of breeding raptors should be sent to the recorder **but not posted on the *Forum*. People other than birders will have access to it.**

David Butterfield
Recorder

BLACKMOORFOOT HIDE

Several months ago the lock on the hide at Blackmoorfoot went missing and it was thought that a member (the only people allowed on the west bank with the exception of YW personnel) had inadvertently left with it in their pocket. Enquiries at a Club meeting proved fruitless and it was decided that the best way forward would be to replace the lock with a spare as soon as possible. This procedure was carried out the following day but, within the next few days the lock had been removed again. There was no damage to the hide but a newspaper and a number of candles had appeared and the hide had the distinct smell of cigarette smoke. It seems that somebody was removing the lock, perhaps with a hand-held grinding wheel, and was using the hide as a smoking den. As hide locks cost in the region of £60 (because they are specially ordered to fit the existing keys), it was decided that the best way forward would be to contact the Police and leave the hide open.

Several months later the hide was still being used illegally but, although it had been left open, no damage had occurred. On the night of the Patch Outing (9th May) Mike Wainman and Mike Denton considered that the time may be right to replace the lock. Chris Horne, a regular at Blackmoorfoot, suggested that because few people use the hide it may be best to try a cheaper lock and see what the consequences are. This could, in the long run, save the Club a lot of money.

If you visit the hide within the next month of receiving this notification, the hide may be locked with a foreign padlock. If the hide remains padlocked during this period and nobody makes an illegal entry, the lock will be replaced with the usual lock.

So, if you can't gain entry to the hide, please accept our apologies, but realise that in the long run this will save the Club money. Please bear with us during this period of uncertainty and in the months to come, the hide may once again become a secure haven.

Mike Denton

I.T. UPDATE

On the surface little change will have been seen in the club's IT capability and output. Some small changes have been made, however, notably to the software used by the forum and the final elimination of the old web site. This latter change should have eliminated for good the tendency for search engines to direct searches toward the old web site which was discontinued four years ago.

Changes to the forum have made it more straightforward to administer, if any IT administration can be referred to as straightforward that is, and also permits posting of images more easily. The site in general, and the forum in particular, can be a little slow at times and this is due to a hosting issue which is largely out of our hands, unless we decide to spend more money fixing it.

Most importantly our IT efforts should be making active participation in club matters more accessible to more people. The number of postings on the forum seems to indicate that this is the case even if this is still a relatively small proportion of members. Don't be shy with your postings - let us know what is happening in your local birding activity.

The perennial question with IT is what more could/should we be doing? Your input as members into this is always welcome. I am painfully aware that the web site hasn't been revamped to any significant degree for some time and suggestions as to what might be done, if anything, will be welcomed and maybe even acted upon.

Finally, as always I must make the point that I am no IT expert and am always looking for input, help and assistance from those who have greater expertise than I. Please make yourselves known.

Alf King
alf.king@ntlworld.com

THE BIRDS OF THE HUDDERSFIELD AREA – HARDBACK

In the last newsletter we asked if anyone was interested in a second hardback reprint of Paul and Betty Bray's excellent book, originally published in paperback and later in a first hardback edition. Only one request was received and therefore it was not viable to proceed.

Mike Wainman



Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club

Chris Abell, Secretary, 57 Butterley Lane, New Mill, Holmfirth HD9 7EZ
Tel 01484 681499; email: cdabell@gmail.com

NOTICE OF A.G.M.

The 47th Annual General Meeting is to be held in The Old Court Room, Huddersfield Town Hall at 7.30pm on Tuesday 12th November 2013. A full agenda will be issued at the meeting.

The following posts are due for election to serve for 2 years;

President

Treasurer

Indoor Meetings Organiser

2 Committee Members

Nominations for these posts should be sent to the Secretary, in writing or by email, 14 days before the meeting (i.e. to be received no later than 6th November).

2013/2014 SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE!

Subscriptions for the new season are now due and are slightly altered from last year.

Please send your subs now directly to John Walker using the slip below. This method of collection has worked well over recent years - it avoids queues and delays at the indoor meetings.

The Club receives substantial amounts in **Gift Aid**. Most members have already signed a Gift Aid form and it will still be valid. However, if you are a taxpayer and have not provided a signed form, please help by asking John for one (Tel. 01484 310875 or email j.walker@forrestburlinson.co.uk). It costs you nothing and the Club can reclaim a tax rebate from the government.

Address and email update: please also fill in your postal address, telephone number and email address so that we can check that club records are fully up to date.

Thank you your support.



Huddersfield Birdwatchers' Club
SUBSCRIPTION RETURN SLIP 2013/2014
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Post to: The Treasurer, John Walker, 68, Brecon Avenue, Lindley, HD3 3QF

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