



DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY

APRIL 2025



CHIT CHAT FROM THE CHAIR

The Society's AGM was held on Monday 31st March and despite low attendance there were sufficient attendees to enable the meeting to go ahead with yours truly taking on the role of chair. I would like to thank outgoing officers Ken (chair) and Roy (vice chair) for their support and contribution over the last year. I would also like to thank Simon, Caroline and Rebecca for their work in their respective roles over the last twelve months and for agreeing to continue in the same roles. Thanks to Peter and Ken for remaining as committee member/taking on the role as committee member respectively.

Lastly I would like to introduce Mike Tranter as treasurer. He kindly took the role on during the interim period between the sad loss of David Wood and the AGM, Amanda Sultan Black as vice chair and Colin Greenwood as committee member.

Dot

(more from Dot on page 7)

FORTHCOMING TRIPS - All trips will be bookable on the web site

Cleeve Hill

Leader: **Arthur Ball**

Sunday 13th April

Meet at 10:30 am at Radio Masts Car Park, Cleeve Hill Cheltenham GL54 4EU, for a morning walk. The map reference is 995250. At the junction of Hales Road and Hewlett Road, take the right turn into Harp Hill and follow the road all the way to the aerials, where there is parking for about a dozen cars. We will be looking for Ring Ouzels in particular. We're lucky to have Arthur Ball to lead this trip for us - he's been birding this Common for about 30 years and always manages to find a Ring Ouzel or two.

Coombe Hill Meadow

Leader: **Mike Smart**

Sunday 27th April

Meet at 9:00 am at The Wharf, Coombe Hill GL19 4BA. Take The Wharf, a narrow lane alongside "Swan at Coombe Hill" pub (turn left at traffic lights if going north along the A38). Grid reference is SO885272. DBPWS members who don't know the site can look it up on the GWT website, which gives What3Words as **recovery.imprints.rooting**. If anyone wants to contact me (Mike Smart) in advance my mobile phone number is 07816 140513.



TRIP REPORTS

River Frome Walk to Stroud Brewery

Sunday 9th March

Report from: **Dot Jones** with illustrations from: **Tony Johnson**

With wall-to-wall sunshine and cloudless skies sixteen of us congregated at Wallbridge along with our leader Simon who informed us of what we should hope to see. It was nice to see so many members turn out and one or two old faces as well. Perhaps it was the lure of ham, eggs and chips at the Stroud Brewery! Only kidding. 😊



With emerging Brimstone butterflies on the wing we set off along the Stroud Navigation Water canal towards Lodgemoor Lane Bridge where we turned left and headed between the buildings for Frome Mill Pond. This turned out to be quiet today, but is always worth checking out, having yielded things like Water Rail in the past. We moved on and went behind the Self Storage Company to

the Frome itself where a Dipper was seen beside a small bridge.



Returning towards Stroud along the canal a Water Rail flushed from close by to the opposite side of the canal and eventually afforded views for most of us.

As we approached the Painswick stream tributary a Kingfisher announced its presence by whistling as it passed us and flew up the stream. Quite a bit of time was spent admiring this little jewel to the point where a change of plan was implemented and it was decided to drive to the brewery.

Most surprising 'spot' of the day was a pair of Muntjak Deer on the opposite bank of the canal almost in the centre of town!



I unfortunately had to leave the group early so did not participate in the second half of the walk but from what I could gather the rest of the event was just as pleasant.

Thank you Simon for leading.



River Frome Walk continued

Further to Dot's report, I will add.... After sorting out cars, drivers and arranging lifts, we managed to get to the brewery in time for a delicious lunch. Most of the group then walked back into Stroud. We started out along the canal and Simon then took us on a mini magical mystery tour beside the River Frome. We were hoping to spot the Mandarin ducks that had been resident for a while, but sadly they had chosen today for their away day. The walk however, was most enjoyable and a great finish to our day.

CMS

Bird List - recorded by Simon Ashley

Grey Wagtail, Chaffinch, Pied Wagtail, Blackbird, Chiffchaff, Black-headed Gull, Mute Swan, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Robin, Dipper, Wren, Long-tailed Tit, Great Tit, BlueTit, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Kingfisher, Buzzard, Red Kite (being mugged by crows), Sparrowhawk, Moorhen, Water Rail, Woodpigeon, Mallard, Goldfinch, Goldcrest (heard)



My photos from the day:

Grey Wagtail

Nesting Swan

Crow (about to take off!)

Brewery Robin

Muntjak on the run



The weather forecast for the day wasn't too good - but hey, it was officially Spring, so the group of 10 who met at Lower Moor Nature Reserve were optimistic. The first sighting of the day of 2 pairs of Bullfinches was a promising start.

On the walk, we were accompanied all the way by the song of Chiffchaffs, and I don't think there were more than a few seconds when they weren't singing throughout the first part of the walk. The harsher calls of most Corvid species were a background to the more musical songs of Robins, Wrens, Dunnock, and the occasional Blackbird and Song Thrush.

As we walked, I enjoyed seeing the fresh green growth of hawthorn, bramble and other buds just ready to burst out in the hedgerows; numerous golden clumps of primroses brightened up the dim woodland, and the white blossom of cherry plum and blackthorn also added to the colours, as well as a small clump of yellow coltsfoot flowers, now rarely seen.



The several lakes that we scrutinised as we walked were rather devoid of birdlife, just Mute Swans, Tufted Duck, Mallard, and - great excitement - one Great Crested Grebe! There were a few calls of hidden Little Grebe, Coot and Moorhen. The woodland habitat seemed ideal for a variety of species, and Chaffinches, Long-tailed, Blue and Great Tits were seen and heard, but an elusive Great Spotted Woodpecker proved to be the main excitement, until the songs of Blackcap and then Willow Warbler were heard. It was decided to move on to South Cerney and here we were able to have good views of a number of Red Kites in the air, and a Green Woodpecker, Greenfinch and Cetti's Warblers calling.

As we walked towards Shorncote reedbeds we found that the lakes here were more productive, and Shoveler, Teal, Gadwall, Greylag and Canada Geese were added to our sightings list, with a bonus of a Grey Heron, a Little Egret and two Great Egrets flying overhead. There were also plenty of Black-headed Gulls being very vocal.

From one of the hides, we were excited to see plenty of Sand Martins high overhead, sometimes dropping closer to the surface of the lake, with an occasional early Swallow among them, while a very smart Reed Bunting was flitting in a nearby tree. When most of us were inside the hide, Susanne on the outside heard a Bittern booming, and in contrast we then heard the musical song of a Skylark high above.

The rain that had been forecast began just 5 minutes before our return to the cars, but despite that, it was a rewarding day that showed Spring had certainly sprung! A group total of 53 birds were seen or heard - many thanks to all who contributed in identification, and to Ken for leading the walk.

Bird list: Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Bittern, Little Egret, Great Egret, Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Red Kite, Buzzard, Kestrel, Pheasant, Moorhen, Coot, Black-headed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Swallow, Sand Martin, Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Cetti's Warbler, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Blackcap, Goldcrest, Long-tailed Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Jay, Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Raven, Starling, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Reed Bunting.



FROM OUR MAILBOX

Dear Dursley Birdwatching & Preservation Society,

My name is Judy Zhu, and I'm a student research coordinator at University of Toronto/Rotman Research Institute whose lab works on neuroplasticity and lifespan learning. We're currently doing outreach across Canada, the US, and the UK for a short online study examining how **birding and citizen science activities contribute to cognitive and brain health**. We've worked with various groups to develop this line of research (e.g., naturalists, gardening, musical interests), most of which focuses on nature and learning in the domains of natural science.

The study is open to **anyone 18+**, takes ~15 minutes, and requires **no prior birding experience**. Participants can choose to enter a raffle for a gift card, or one of several pairs of binoculars from our sponsors. At the population level, we're exploring how trends in species prevalence correlate with geographic trends in how people perceive and categorize birds. At the smaller scale, we have a line of neuroimaging research looking at beneficial changes to brain structure and function that result from decades spent learning about birds. More details about the study as well as links to past publications and articles can be found at the **study website: www.birdingstudies.com**.

I'm also including this link to an Audubon Magazine article that provides a brief overview of this research area, including some of our past work:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2023/yes-birding-does-change-your-brain>

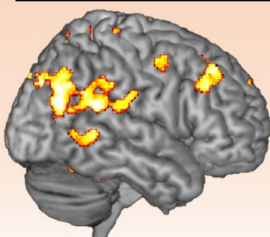
If participating in this research might be of interest to some of your group's members, I was hoping you could share a brief note about the study, or the attached flyer image. As with past projects, when this study is published, we'll distribute the findings to the various organizations so people can see what they're helping us discover about the brain's capacity to change through learning. I'm happy to answer any questions or put you in touch with the head of the project-- Dr. Erik Wing (yes, actually his name:) for more details. Many thanks for your consideration.

Best regards,
Judy

3rd Year Undergraduate Student, University of Toronto, Rotman Research Institute



Which of four birds at right matches this bird?
And the which is the "odd one out"?



Our group researches how birders' brains differentiate species like this Meadow Pipit from other possibilities (1. Yellowish Pipit, 2. Meadow Pipit, 3. Wood Lark, 4. Berthelot's Pipit). Check out:

www.birdingstudies.com

for our newest **online study** (~15 min, laptop/desktop required)– it's open to all, from beginners to experienced birders. Be a part of our next research report!

 Participants can enter raffle for binoculars or gift cards giveaway 





Dursley Birdwatching and Preservation Society

MINUTES of AGM 2025 ~ 31/03/2025 @ 7:30PM

Dursley Community Centre, Rednock Drive, GL11 4BX

1. Attendees

a. **Present:** Rebecca & Oliver Paisey, Mike Tranter, Roy Jellings, Colin Greenfield, Caroline Sandrey, Ken & Mary Cservenka, Roland & Sheila LaPorta, Dot Jones, Mike Robinson, John Arrowsmith, Simon Ashley, Cilla Pryce

b. **Apologies:** Peter Steele, Barbara Wood, Amanda Sultan-Black, Barbara Devine, Anne Nuttall, Christine Davis, Roberta Goodall, Karin Honeyball

It was agreed a Quorum of membership had been met.

2. Minutes 2024 meeting

Minutes had been distributed in the Bulletin - no objections having been received the minutes were accepted.

Matters arising from these Minutes none.

3. Chairman's Report - Ken Cservenka

My year in the chair has gone relatively quickly but I haven't been able to attend as many field trips as I would have liked to for various reasons.

The society year started with a very successful practical event making nest boxes for Swifts at the Rodborough Community Centre.

It was decided last year that the Society was holding too much money in the accounts and that we needed to use some of it to fulfil our obligations to the Charity Commission. We have set up a grant scheme for bird conservation groups to apply for and to that end we have given a grant to the Chew Valley Ringing Group for '**Garden ringing site refurbishment**' and another to the Waterbird Colour-marking Group (WBCM) towards their project '**Assessing the use of unprotected wetlands by overwintering Whooper Swans.**' While it would be foolhardy to deplete the funds too much it is good to see it being used for practical conservation projects.

Finally I would like to thank the committee and officers of the society for their hard work and support over the year. Ken

4. Treasurer's Report

Distributed with March Bulletin and available on the website with Recent Bulletins. Mike who had taken over as interim treasurer gave a brief run through and his report was accepted.

5. Membership Secretary Report

We currently have 90 members.

Most members now receive the Bulletin by e-mail and to keep costs down the Avon County Scout Office kindly prints a few copies of the Bulletin free of charge, if we supply the paper.



6. Appointment of Officers

The following nominations were proposed and seconded.

Position	Candidate	Proposed	Seconded
Chair	Dot Jones	Simon Ashley	Mike Tranter
Vice-Chair	Amanda Sultan-Black	Dot Jones	Ken Cservenka
Secretary	Simon Ashley	Mike Tranter	Dot Jones
Treasurer	Mike Tranter	Simon Ashley	Caroline Sandrey
Membership Secretary	Caroline Sandrey	Dot Jones	Simon Ashley
Indoor Meetings	Rebecca Paisey	Dot Jones	Ken Cservenka
Committee	Colin Greenfield	Ken Cservenka	Dot Jones
Committee	Peter Steele	Ken Cservenka	Dot Jones
Committee	Ken Cservenka	Dot Jones	Simon Ashley

These nominations were carried and these are the new officers and committee for the Society.

7. Programme of Events

The programme for 2025/26 will follow the template of previous years – 1 local and one more adventurous trip per month. We are also planning another residential trip - perhaps to Kent in October.

Field trip and meetings will be published in the Bulletin and also on the website.

Members are encouraged to offer suggestions for trips or speakers, or to offer to lead walks.

8. AOB

Key Holder for indoor meetings has passed to Alan Keith.

Mike Robinson said he had particularly enjoyed the meetings and trips out this year, and thanked the committee and helpers for all their work during the year.

Meeting Closed 19:49

Light refreshments of tea/coffee and cheese and biscuits were available for attendees.

CHIT CHAT FROM THE CHAIR (continued)

As I write this we have moved into April and the dry spring-like weather of late has heralded the arrival of not only Blackcaps and Willow Warblers but the hirundines as well. Look and listen for them when you are out and about.



Bird of the month - (Atlantic) Canary *Serinus canaria* -

Breeds in Madeira and some parts of the Canary Islands. Not one we see in this country in its original form but they are said to be "fun loving" and who knows - one day.

Dot



THANK YOU

Thank you to Dot Jones, Anne Nuttall, Tony Johnson and Simon Ashley for their contributions this month.

Preparations are now in hand for our new season trips until afternoon meetings begin in Autumn. Do let us know if there is anywhere in particular you would like to visit, or you have any good ideas for speakers.

Please think about sharing any items of news you have, or birds you have seen - Send any articles or photographs for the next bulletin by **15th of the month** to me by email

DURSLEY PET SHOP

Remember, if you show your membership card in the Dursley Pet Shop you will be entitled to a 10% discount on a wide range of gardening items sold in the shop such as seeds and bulbs etc. as well as the usual discount received on bird related items.

NB: If any trip is in doubt or cancelled because of bad weather or unexpected circumstances, we will try and contact everyone by email or through the WhatsApp group. It is important therefore that we have your contact details. We will also put a notice on the website.

To be added to the WhatsApp Group, please contact Caroline Sandrey (Membership Secretary) caroline.sandrey@gmail.com or Simon Ashley (DBWPS Secretary) simonashley65@gmail.com

Dursley Birdwatching and Preservation Society - Officers & Committee 2025-2026

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Secretary	Simon Ashley	2 Victoria Villas, Spillmans Patch, Stroud GL5 3LU simonashley65@gmail.com	07825 668389
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IT & Communications			
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Bulletin Editor			
Bulletin Distribution			
General Committee	Peter Steele, Ken Cservenka, Colin Greenfield		



Secretary: simonashley65@gmail.com



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