

# DURSLEY BIRDWATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY



MARCH 2026



## CHIT CHAT FROM THE CHAIR

The days are drawing out and although we are still experiencing a lot of rain the signs of Spring are around. The early songsters are proclaiming their territories in the hope of attracting the females. Snowdrops and Lesser Celandines are in flower along the roadside banks.

As our thoughts turn to the year ahead we must also decide who would be best to guide our society on into the coming months. As I said in the previous bulletin our committee will be standing down and all positions become available.

Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Indoor Programme Secretary, Outdoor Programme Secretary, Bulletin Editor/Distributor and three further Committee Members

Would you like to have a try at any of these positions and make a difference, bring fresh ideas to the table? Nomination forms are attached to this bulletin; completed forms can be sent to Simon

It is important that as many of you do attend the meeting as possible, it is your Society, it is your chance to have a say in how the society is run. Refreshments will be served at the end of the meeting including cheese and biscuits.

Dot

**Flower of the Month** - Lesser Celandine - *Ficaria verna* - is a member of the Buttercup family it has bright yellow star shaped flowers and heart shaped leaves and can be found at this time of year in woodland and along roadside verges.



\*\*\*\*\*

## INDOOR MEETING DATES 2025/2026

Indoor meetings take place at Dursley Community Centre, Rednock Drive, GL11 4BX

**23<sup>rd</sup> February ~ 1.45pm**

**Speaker: Andrew Bluett**

Andrew is a well known speaker to our club on a variety of birds, wildlife and other topics. Andrew's talk is titled 'Birds of a Different Feather - The Bavarian Archaeopteryx Fossils' come and find out more....

**23<sup>rd</sup> March 7.30pm ~ AGM** - Annual AGM with updates on grant projects. After the meeting there will be cheese and biscuits to enjoy while you chat with other members.

\*\*\*\*\*



## FORTHCOMING FIELD TRIPS

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February Oldbury on Severn**

**Leader: Dot Jones**

Don't forget this trip - information was in your February bulletin

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March River Frome, Stroud**

**Leader: Simon Ashley**

**River Frome: Dippers, Kingfishers, and Otters!**

An early spring walk along the River Frome in Stroud. As winter recedes, the local birdlife becomes more active, offering a perfect opportunity to witness some of our most charismatic river and woodland species. Our journey will follow a well-made path that showcases a woodland stream, a historic canal, and an old mill pond, ensuring a diversity of sightings.

### Target Species & Habitats

- **The Frome:** The highlight for me will be the fast-flowing woodland stream, the perfect habitat for the **Dipper**. We have an excellent chance of seeing this unique bird, which is here year-round. This is one of the key sites on the Dipper Project we heard about recently.
- **Canal:** The adjacent canal offers a different, calmer environment. We'll be keeping a sharp eye out for a flash of electric blue as the resident **Kingfisher** patrols its territory. This is also a prime spot for the ever-charming **Grey Wagtail**, and we may even be lucky enough to find a secretive **Water Rail** that has overwintered.
- **Mill Pond:** The old mill pond is a magnet for waterfowl. We'll be looking for the stunningly ornate **Mandarin Duck**, along with Little Grebe and Little Egrets.
- **Woodland:** As we walk we'll be listening for the call of **Goldcrests** and **Treecreepers**, and we'll scan the alders for flocks of **Siskin** and **Redwing**.

### A Bonus Encounter!

This stretch of the Frome is home to a resident **Otter family!** While they are elusive, they are occasionally seen, so we will be keeping our eyes peeled for any signs of their presence.

- **Meeting Time:** 9:30 AM
- **Meeting Point:** By Travis Perkins at Wallbridge, Stroud.
- **Terrain:** The walk is mostly flat on good paths, with one short section along the river that may be muddy, so please wear appropriate footwear.

**Lunch (Optional)** After our walk, we have the fantastic option to head to the nearby Stroud Brewery for a well-earned lunch and refreshments. Please book via WhatsApp and let Simon know if you will be staying for lunch. (This was a very enjoyable lunch last year!)

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March Portland Bill**

**Leader: Simon Ashley**

For car share from Stroud meet at Cheapside car park at 7:00 am. Early start, but it should be worth it. We'll head straight down to the southerly promontory - We will be sea watching looking out for early migrants. There's also a good chance of seeing lingering winter visitors, such as Purple Sandpipers, Black Redstart, Rock Pipits and hopefully we'll see the resident Little Owls. If there's time, we'll also visit the estuary scrapes at Ferry Bridge and finish off with a visit to Lodmoor or Radipole Lake. We plan to return by about 6:00 pm.

\*\*\*\*\*



## FORTHCOMING FIELD TRIPS (continued)

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April Cleeve Hill

Leader: Arthur Ball

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April Coombe Hill Meadows

Leader: tbc

## TRIP REPORTS

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January Slimbridge

Report from: Barbara Devine

On a dull and misty Sunday, 17 Dursley Birders met our leader Dot Jones at Slimbridge carpark, other members turned up later. Firstly we went to the Peng Observatory to observe what was on the lake. We stayed a while in the warmth and saw Bewick's swan some with cygnets (which is a good sign), Pochard, Tufted duck, Teal, Widgeon, Avocet, Heron, Pintail, Herring Gull, Coot and Shelduck.

We then split into two groups, with Dot leading one and Kevin the other. We wandered to the Willow hide to watch the birds on the feeders. Tits, Dunnocks, Chaffinches and Moorhens were busy enjoying the food. We then entered the Martin Smith hide where the next species we added to our day list were Curlew and Greylag Geese. Onward then to the Estuary Tower listening out for smaller birds but only Robin were seen. On the first floor of the tower scopes were setup and a number of cranes were visible in the distance. Greylag, Barnacle (with the single Ross's Goose) and Canada Geese were seen grazing on the Dumbles. Huge numbers of Lapwing were seen. A Little Stint was observed in very clear view and was watched for some time to properly identify it. Also, a couple of Redshank were noticed. A highlight was the sudden flight of Lapwing as a Marsh Harrier and a Peregrine Falcon put all the birds up, giving us good views of these raptors as they hunted.

We left the Estuary Tower to continue on to South Hide, stopping briefly enroute at the Decoy Hide. Here we disturbed a Great White Egret that flew up and resettled to devour it's dinner, an eel. A pair of Gadwalls were swimming on the pond. Fieldfare and Redwing were seen flying from tree to tree.

At the South Hide we observed Avocets, Shovelers, Cormorants, Black Headed Gulls, Common Gulls, Tufted Ducks and a few Black-tail Godwits. As it began to rain heavily some of the group decided to head home. On leaving South Hide we encountered Simon approaching in a WWT mobility scooter (his first birding foray since his operation), so well done to Simon and his bird spots have been added to the days Bird list.

### Bird List from Dot Jones

Greylag Goose, Barnacle Goose, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Bewick's Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Gadwall, Widgeon, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Coot, Crane, Avocet, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Curlew. Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Dunlin, Little Stint, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Little Grebe, Cormorant, Great White, Egret, Heron, Marsh Harrier, Buzzard, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Peregrine, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Skylark, Song Thrush, Redwing, Fieldfare, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Chaffinch, Linnet, Siskin

\*\*\*\*\*



Starling Murmuration at Ham Wall

Eleven members set off for Ham Wall RSPB reserve, Somerset, under lowering clouds on a day threatening more rain in an already wet week. Our leader Amanda had the brilliant idea of booking us in for a hearty lunch at the Ring o Bells, Moorlinch, (a stones throw from Ham Wall) to fortify us on our walk as it would be well into dusk when the starlings begin to gather.

Arriving at the reserve, the dark clouds lifted to reveal welcome glimpses of blue sky. A group of chattering Linnets, bouncing up and down from one treetop to another as if on invisible strings, were the first to greet us as we set off eastwards along the track.



© Roberta Goodhall

Approaching the first large reed bed, a Great Crested Grebe came into view, gliding majestically in and out of clumps of reeds. Also notable were several Shovelers, Gadwall and a single Pochard. Quite suddenly a male Marsh Harrier appeared over the reedbed, quartering quite low over the water clearly visible only a few yards away from us. Among all the wildfowl which consequently took to the air, we had a glimpse of a Snipe.

Onwards to the lake on the left we saw several more large groups of Shovelers, also many Lapwing, Cormorants lined up on a fence drying their wings, and

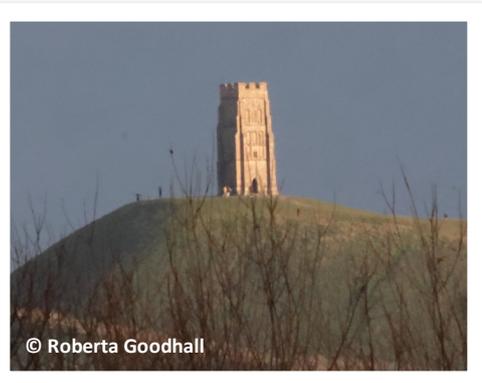
a Great White Egret gracefully picking its way around the edge of the reeds. Moving on to the large lake, the whinnying call of a Little Grebe could be distinctly heard, although it was a while before we had a glimpse of it at the far edge of the lake. After about an hour we retraced our steps so we had time enough to visit the Shapwick side. We had heard that a Green-winged Teal had been sighted on the lake by Noah's Hide, so we had just enough time to visit before returning to the west side of Ham Wall where the Starlings were forecast to gather. On our way a second Marsh Harrier, a female, was observed, also some Stonechats calling from the tops of the reeds. Whilst winding our way through the trees along the footpath to the hide, we had a good view of a Great White Egret sitting on a low branch framed by tree branches. However when we arrived at the hide we were greeted by hundreds of Teal and other ducks among which was reportedly the Green-winged version. We



© George Ogden

soon realised that with our time being limited we had to abandon our search for the Teal so we could return in time for the 'main event' the Starling murmuration.

Retracing our steps we joined the throngs of visitors wending their way along the path to the Avalon marshes area where the starlings were predicted as being most likely to gather. As the light started to fade we could see what looked like far away patches of grey clouds moving swiftly just below the far line of hills. These 'clouds' began to merge and move closer and higher, with smaller shapes merging into larger ones, swooping and diving in everchanging patterns described by the RSPB as a 'choreographed dance'.



© Roberta Goodhall

Glastonbury Tor glowing in the evening sun



© Barbara Wood



The synchronisation is just breathtaking. As they move nearer the individual birds can be spotted flying low overhead with a great 'whooshing' sound caused by the sheer numbers of thousands of birds flying as one entity. The starlings ended their display by swirling down to roost among the reeds in the marshes. They can also be observed in the morning, thousands swirling up from the reedbeds as they fly off to feed elsewhere.

It has been reported that on the day of our visit the murmuration totalled 750,000 Starlings! Many of these birds are migrants from North-eastern Europe who are gathering before returning for the breeding season. Others are our British residents dispersing prior to nesting.

#### Bird list from Amanda Sultan-Black

Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Gadwall, Wigeon, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Coot, Lapwing, Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Little Grebe, Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Great White Egret, Heron, Marsh Harrier, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kestrel, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Blu Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Cetti's Warbler, Goldcrest, Wren, Starling, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Stonechat, Dunnock, Chaffinch, Linnet, Goldfinch, Reed Bunting.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Nothing can prepare you for the amazing sound of the wing beats of thousands of starlings as they swoop overhead, or the chittering/chattering from them when they are setting down to roost in the reeds.*



© George Ogden



© George Ogden



## GLOUCESTERSHIRE BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

You can refer to the Gloster Birder web site for up to date bird sightings in the county. Please enter your sightings at <https://theglosterbirder.co.uk>

Do let us know of anything rare or unusual you see.

## SOCIETY NEWS

Thank you to our contributors this month; Dot Jones, Barbara Devine, Barbara Wood, Simon Ashley, Roberta Goodall and George Ogden.

Please think about sharing any items of news you have, or birds you have seen - even if only in the garden. Send any articles or photographs for the next bulletin by 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to the editor by email at [caroline.sandrey@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.sandrey@gmail.com) or by post to the address below.

### 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 because of bad weather or unexpected circumstances or has to be cancelled-** we will try and contact everyone by telephone or through the 'WhatsApp' group. We will also put a notice on our website and inform members by e-mail. It is important therefore that we have your contact details.

If you would like to be added to the 'WhatsApp' Group, please contact Caroline Sandrey (Membership Secretary) [caroline.sandrey@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.sandrey@gmail.com) or Simon Ashley (DBWPS Secretary) [simonashley65@gmail.com](mailto:simonashley65@gmail.com)

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

<b>Chair</b>	Dot Jones	<a href="mailto:dorothy.jones3@me.com">dorothy.jones3@me.com</a>	<b>07478 662363</b>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Amanda Sultan-Black	<a href="mailto:amanda.sultanblack@gmail.com">amanda.sultanblack@gmail.com</a>	<b>07419 843042</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mike Tranter	<a href="mailto:mike.tranter22@gmail.com">mike.tranter22@gmail.com</a>	<b>07421 102412</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	Simon Ashley	2 Victoria Villas, Spillmans Patch, Stroud GL5 3LU <a href="mailto:simonashley65@gmail.com">simonashley65@gmail.com</a>	<b>07825 668389</b>
<b>Outdoor programme</b>			
<b>IT &amp; Communications</b>			
<b>Indoor Programme</b>			
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Caroline Sandrey	15 Spey Close, Thornbury, Bristol BS35 2NR <a href="mailto:caroline.sandrey@gmail.com">caroline.sandrey@gmail.com</a>	<b>07972 125959</b>
<b>Bulletin Editor</b>			
<b>Bulletin Distribution</b>			
<b>General Committee</b>	Ken Cservenka, Colin Greenfield		



Secretary: [simonashley65@gmail.com](mailto:simonashley65@gmail.com)



[www.dbwps.org.uk](http://www.dbwps.org.uk)



@DursleyBirds



DursleyBirds



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING March 23rd 2026

## Election of Officers and Committee

DBWPS members wishing to serve (or seek election if more than one person is nominated for a particular role), must be duly proposed and seconded by members of the society and their signed application submitted on the form below, by post, by hand or as a signed and scanned e-mail attachment, to the Secretary, who must receive all nominations at least twenty eight days before the AGM (that is by 23rd February). If a member wishes to nominate more than three people, please copy the form or apply to the Secretary for a second form. Elections, will be held at the AGM.

POSITION	NAME OF CANDIDATE	NAME OF PROPOSER	NAME OF SECONDER
	Signature of Candidate	Signature of Proposer	Signature of Seconder

POSITION	NAME OF CANDIDATE	NAME OF PROPOSER	NAME OF SECONDER
	Signature of Candidate	Signature of Proposer	Signature of Seconder

POSITION	NAME OF CANDIDATE	NAME OF PROPOSER	NAME OF SECONDER
	Signature of Candidate	Signature of Proposer	Signature of Seconder

## SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS

Any member who desires to move a resolution to alter the Constitution must ensure that the written text of the resolution is in the hands of the Secretary at least 21 days before the AGM. The Secretary is then required to give 14 days' notice of the proposed resolution to the members. It should be noted that no alteration to clauses 2, 10 or 11 can be made.

Any member who desires to move any other resolution at the AGM must ensure that the written text of the resolution is in the hands of the Secretary at least seven days before the AGM. Such resolutions may not be amended at the AGM except by unanimous approval.

**DBWPS SECRETARY:** Simon Ashley, 2 Victoria Villas, Spilman Patch, Stroud GL5 3LU. ✉ [simonashley65@gmail.com](mailto:simonashley65@gmail.com)

