



From the Chairman

We have a new Treasurer on the Committee. Barry Slaymaker has taken over from Ann Crouch. Ann is a founder member of the Club and will remain on the Committee for a further year. We are very grateful to her for all her work in gaining a grant for the Club and in keeping us on a firm financial footing. We are grateful too that Barry has stepped into the post.



We have all endured, not too strong a word I think, a really long, long, cold and wintry spring. Mid April suddenly sprung Spring on us with daffs and snowdrops, redwings and swallows at the same time as if we had entered some kind of Dr Who dimension. By now, I sincerely hope that Summer will follow Spring in a more orderly fashion. I am eagerly awaiting Cuckoo and Flycatchers, Warblers and Hirundines in abundance as well as, perhaps, a Honey Buzzard or two. We had Cuckoo near Silver Hill on May 5th last year. Keep sending in your records to Pete at nbrecorder@gmail.com. I do think it's time that another month was invented between May and June. Birdwatchers need to be in at least three places at once to see everything that needs to be seen. We are doing our best with providing plenty of outings on our Events Calendar and no doubt you will be organising many other trips out and about. It's rumoured that there might be some celebratory cake available at the Brimham Rocks evening walk on 17th June. Nidderdale Birdwatchers will be five years old and is in good health. There's also Bioblitz Day on 6th July and High Batts Open Day on 7th July. More about both in the newsletter. So get out your bucket and spade and let's make this Summer one long birding holiday.

Ros Wade

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Chirps

Pete Seaman 6th April

At least 4 Avocets are back at Nosterfield and looking very smart in breeding plumage. Yesterday they were showing at the viewing screen at Lingham (near the quarry car park). Also around the area are Golden Plover in breeding plumage and a Mediterranean Gull with the Black Headed Gulls. Water levels are dropping back to normal and many species are looking for their territories. 12 Pied Wagtails and what appeared to be 2 White Wagtails. Also there were at least 5 Avocet and both Ringed and Little Ringed Plover plus Greylag Geese with about 20 goslings

Tony Knowles 4th March

The HDNS site reports Long Tailed Ducks and a Slavonian grebe there as well, and a possible pair of Ring ouzels at Scar. There's a general impression that the breeding season is off to an early start.

Angus Gosman 10th March

I feel so lucky that I have a daily visit from my resident Sparrow Hawk but strangely my Blue Tit population doesn't diminish !! Best of all worlds !!

Tony Knowles 27th March

The snowy spring is bringing brambling and siskin on a daily basis to the garden feeders, but still the migrants are coming; three Greenshank at Gouthwaite today with that delightful triple piping call.

Alex Penn 13th April

Just had my first Swallow of the year hawking over fields next to the A59 just before the Nelson pub. Chiffchaff singing in riverside trees in Dacre Banks too.

Tony Knowles 28th April

One Cuckoo calling above Pateley on the 26th. According to Biddy Noakes the usual first Cuckoo is on either the 25th or 26th so the bad weather doesn't appear to have delayed the arrival date. Any other reports so far?





SUMMER EVENTS PROGRAMME

The description of each outdoor event gives the name and contact details of the Event Organiser. **Please let the Organiser know if you intend to go on a trip.**

This does not mean that you cannot attend at the last minute but trips may be cancelled if there appears to be insufficient interest, so we need to know in advance who wants to go. Some events demand a reasonable level of fitness depending on distances and terrain to be covered so if in doubt contact the

organiser. Under 16s should be accompanied by an adult on all outdoor events. Non members are welcome at events.

We would also advise that you check the website or ring the Organiser just before the event to ensure that it is still happening and the arrangements haven't changed.

The rendezvous point for car sharing is the car park in Pateley Bridge

Friday 10th May RSPB Bempton Cliffs



Easily the best place in England to see, hear and smell seabirds! More than 200,000 birds (from April to August) make the cliffs seem alive – with adults bringing food to their nests, or young chicks making their first faltering flights. With huge numbers to watch, beginners can easily learn the difference between Gannets, Guillemots, Razorbills, Kittiwakes and Fulmars. The easily recognisable Puffins (here between April and July) are always a delight. Specially-created cliff top viewpoints are wheelchair accessible with care.

A full day's trip. Meet at Pateley Bridge CP at 8.30am or at the reserve reception at 10.30am.

The Organiser is Ros Wade



Monday 20th May Ramsgill/Bouthwaite

An evening walk up on the moors to enjoy the spring birds. Meet opposite the Yorke Arms at 6.15pm (car sharers from Pateley meet at the bottom car park at 6pm).

The Organiser is Angus Gosman

Saturday 25th May Scar House Reservoir

A half day walk to look for Ring Ouzel and other Summer visitors, some walking in this exposed area so please dress accordingly. We may explore the valley bottom fields along Scar Road on the return. Meet Pateley Bridge 8.30 am, Scar House Car Park 9.00 am.

The Organiser is Pete Seaman

Friday 4th June Farnham

A half day guided visit to Harrogate and District Naturalists' Reserve.

Situated one mile north of Knaresborough, Farnham Gravel Pit, comprising both the North and South Lakes. The shallow South Lake has five low-lying islands, on one of which is an artificial Sand Martin wall and another holds a platform for nesting Common Terns. The islands and emergent willows along the western side provide nesting sites for several species of waterbirds. The shoreline varies from relatively open shallow sandy banks to areas of prolific willow trees and the surrounding embankments have maturing trees, planted during the restoration period. Hedges and hawthorn scrub provide breeding habitat for a wide variety of passerines. There are good paths, no steps or hills and no facilities.



Cars should be parked at the end of the main entrance track, 350yds (320m) from the gate, in the lakeside car park from where a grass path leads for 100yds (92m) to the hide.

Meet at Pateley at 8.30am or at the reserve where June Atkinson will have the gate open by 9am. She suggests that instead of coming down to the lights at K'bro we turn off the Ripley road and take the road through Scotton and Farnham. After passing the church in Farnham take the first right and the reserve is on the right a hundred and so yards further on. **The Organiser is Rob Lees**

Monday 17th June Brimham Rocks



Meet in the car park 6.30 -7pm for a picnic to celebrate our fifth anniversary. Bring food to share. We will start walking in woodland to the left of the rocks, at 7.30, looking for nest boxes put up by Trust volunteers. Good paths, not too hilly.

The Organiser is Ann Crouch

Saturday/Sunday 29th/30th June Farne Islands

Inner Farne and Staple Island are major sanctuaries in the UK for about 22 species of breeding seabirds, including Guillemots, Razorbills, Eider Ducks, 4 species of Terns and a staggering 70,000 Puffins. This is an overnight trip which has been very well subscribed to.

There are still two places available, so contact Brian quickly if you think you would like to go.

The Organiser is Brian Robertshaw



Friday 12th July Grass Woods

A half day visit to the Woodland Trust Reserve of Grass Wood. It is a pleasant walk through woodland alongside the river Wharf and upwards towards the moors managed by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust . Paths are likely to be muddy, especially after rain. There are no facilities. Meet at 8.30am at Pateley Bridge.. If you wish to go straight there ask Becky for instructions

The Organiser is Becky Huff

Monday 15th July Dallowgill



An evening walk/talk on moorland habitat led by Marian Wilby AONB Farm Conservation Advisor.

Meet at Pateley bottom car park to car share at 6.45pm or at Harper Hill Grid ref SE 196703 at 7pm.

The Organiser is Chris Seaman

Friday 9th August Gouthwaite Reservoir

Half day mystery bird walk in the region of Gowthwaite led by Colin Slator. Be prepared for muddy footpaths, it's unlikely to have steps or steep hills. No facilities. Meet 8.30am in Pateley car park. The details are still to be finalised, but if you would like to know more, nearer the time, please can you contact **Ann Crouch**.



Monday 19th August The Royal Oak Bird Stroll



An amble through woodland towards the forestry and back along the riverside. A range of habitats which yielded a surprising number of species last year. Finish back at the pub. Meet at 7.30pm in the Royal Oak car park.

The Organiser is Ros Wade

A NEW PIN-UP FOR YOUR KITCHEN NOTICE BOARD
to remind you of what's on offer this summer



Month	Date	Venue and Type of Event
May	Friday 10 th	RSPB Bempton Cliffs <i>Full day trip</i>
	Monday 20 th	Ramsgill/Bouthwaite <i>Evening walk</i>
	Saturday 25 th	Scar House Reservoir <i>Half day trip</i>
June	Friday 14 th	Farnham <i>Half day guided visit to Harrogate and District Naturalists' reserve</i>
	Monday 17 th	Brimham Rocks <i>Evening Walk round the NT Woods</i>
	Sat/Sun 29 th /30 th	Farne Islands <i>Weekend Trip</i>
July	Friday 12 th	Grass Woods <i>A half day visit to a Yorkshire Wildlife Reserve near Grassington</i>
	Monday 15 th	Dallowgill <i>An evening walk led by Marion Wilby – AONB Farm Conservation Advisor</i>
August	Friday 9 th	Gouthwaite Reservoir <i>A bird walk</i>
	Monday 19 th	Royal Oak Bird Stroll <i>Evening Walk</i>
September	Saturday 14 th	Long Preston Wetlands <i>A full day visit</i>
	Monday 16 th	Upper Nidderdale Black Grouse Recovery Project <i>An illustrated talk at The Royal Oak</i>
	Monday 23 rd	Nidderdale Show <i>Visit the Club stand at the Show</i>
	Sunday 29 th	Moth Morning with Jill Warwick

CLUB EVENTS

Reports from members on past outings

Friday 8th February Swinsty Reservoir

Eight members met in the fisherman's car park at Swinsty Moor on a fairly calm morning after the strong winds we had suffered recently and set off walking through the plantation. Apart from the odd Coal Tit and a calling Green Woodpecker there was little bird life here, this may have been in part due to some forestry operations in the area. Workers were thinning out some of the lighter Birch trees and the lighter brushings were bundled up like witches brooms. According to the workmen these were used in building fences for horse racing, no tips on the winning horses though. We then spent some time scanning the mature trees around Swinsty Hall and got quick views of Nuthatch, Treecreeper, mixed Tits and a male Sparrowhawk sped through. It was a slow crossing of the dam as we scanned the skies for raptors and were rewarded with three Red Kites, three Common Buzzard and a Kestrel as well as a skein of Greylag Geese flying over. While scanning the water as we walked back up the main track we had distant views of small numbers of gulls, mainly Black Headed with the odd Common and Herring Gulls and over by Stackpoint there were more Greylags, Canadas and a few Mallard no doubt hoping to be fed from the car park at that side. As we neared the end of the walk the cold wind was starting to blow and people were glad to get into the cars and home for lunch. The grand species total was 27 so not too bad for a February mornings outing. **Pete Seaman**

Monday 18th February Illustrated Talk on HACKFALL

Paul Mosley, the Hackfall Officer, gave an illustrated talk about the restoration project of this semi natural ancient woodland. He explained how the land will be managed and how old ruins are being restored and improved. This promises to be an interesting place to visit as the restoration continues to take place over the next few years.



Saturday 23rd February Old Moor



Though it was rather cold and overcast on Saturday 23rd. February, nine hardy souls took part in the trip to the RSPB site at Old Moor near Doncaster. They included the Roberts family, Sue Harrison, Becky Huff, Lesley Knight, Audrey Summersgill and Ros Wade. Our main objective was to find the



Bittern, Smew and Green Sandpiper. However we had rather mixed results; The Roberts had a Bittern fly across (it had come to find Holly); some of us had a fleeting glimpse (30secs.) of a Smew (a little bit disappointing as it was an immature male) but Ros had the best find, the Green Sand piper in the far distance. Soon the whole hide was wanting to know it's position.

In total we had 43 species, the usual winter ducks, and a good mix of small birds including Brambling and Bulfinches, unfortunately no raptors. **Jane**

Friday 8th March Lofthouse—Scar Road

Yet another cancellation due to extremely cold and misty weather.

Monday 18th March What's In A Pellet?



Barn and Tawny Owl pellets and we all had a go at taking them apart and examining the contents.

The concentration and silence was amazing, showing how absorbed we all were, looking at tiny bones and other bits through magnifying glasses. Thanks to Adrian for a most interesting evening.



Adrian Roberts organised a fascinating event at The Royal Oak. Jeremy and Chris brought their pet owls, a Little, a Tawny and a Barn Owl which gave us all a chance to see these beautiful birds up close. Following that, Adrian produced a number of



Saturday 23rd March Foxglove Covert—Catterick Garrison

Sadly, another casualty of the appalling weather!

Friday 12th April A Nidderdale Safari!!

As the proposed outing to look for Black Grouse was cancelled due partly to adverse weather conditions on the higher hills a field trip up our local dale was planned. Nine members including a very welcome new member met up and started birding at Gouthwaite reservoir hoping the mist would lift enough to see across the water. One of the first birds spotted before we left the car park was a Common Tern which was being mobbed by the local Black Headed Gulls, a very nice starter to the day. The water on the reservoir was unusually calm and as the mist lifted there were good numbers of birds to see. The two long staying Long Tailed Ducks were showing well in front of the viewing platform although they did seem to spend more time under the water than on it making it hard to point them out at times. Other winter visiting waterfowl included Wigeon and some very smart looking Goldeneye while the resident Tufted and Mallard were all in their Breeding plumage. Scanning through the gulls we had Common, Lesser Black Backed, Herring and a single Greater Black Backed as well as Black Headed which were making life uncomfortable for the Common Terns in the area by harassing them. As the water level was fairly high most of the waders were on the far bank and 'scopes were needed to check them out. Among the noisy Oystercatchers and displaying Lapwing we found a single Common Redshank and a very nice Bar Tailed Godwit. Unusually for this site we had no raptors but the still misty hill tops may have prevented any sightings. The feeders in the car park had the normal selection of tits and finches and a number of Blackbirds feeding below the trees.

We next moved up to the Rock Cutting along the Scar Road where a Green Woodpecker kept us interested as he "yaffled" all around his territory and we had the first raptor of the day in the shape of a Kestrel. A flock of small birds on the hillside were identified as Meadow Pipits when someone managed to get a scope on them.

A short drive up to the reservoir brought us into a more wintry landscape with lots of snow still laid on the hill side. Some intensive viewing from the car park gave us our main target bird, a Ring Ouzel. At first the male bird was seen against the skyline and then it, or another bird, was seen against a snow drift part way down the hill. It posed here for some time so we all got good views of it before it flew off with what was presumed to be a female. Later it was proved that there were at least two males calling in the area. A short walk along the dam gave us more Meadow Pipits, Siskin and a very agile Goldcrest in the plantation. Final views from the car park were a quick glimpse of a male Wheatear for two members, a Merlin over the ridge and a Kestrel over the remains of the old village and then a Common Buzzard seen on the road back down to Lofthouse.

The outing was finished off with a late lunch at the How Stean café which gave us another chance for some socialising. With a group total of 55 species including some of our hoped for spring birds it was a worthwhile trip.

Chris Seaman

Monday 15th April Annual General Meeting

A well attended event. Ann Crouch resigned as Treasurer, although will stay on the Committee for another year. We thank her for all her hard work and are pleased that she will continue to take an active part in the management of the Club. After the official business, Lynda Fussell gave an illustrated talk on the updated website and how we can contribute.

Saturday 20th April Leighton Moss

This felt a bit like a release from prison; after all the snow, wind and rain a beautiful day with birds singing, sun shining and virtually no wind. Is this Spring?

Eight of us left the Dale for Leighton and on the way stopped off to admire the hirundines at a bridge over the River Wenning, then found when we got to Leighton that Hilary and Lesley had arrived the day before. The northerly winds over the last few weeks had prevented many of the migrants from reaching Britain and the improvement in the weather led to a sudden influx, particularly of warblers, so that we saw or heard Cettis, Blackcaps, Willow Warblers, Chiffchaffs and Sedge Warblers. Marsh Harriers, both male and female, were putting on a good show and one of the highlights of the day was provided by an Osprey which put on a twenty minute flight for us. (These birds know a



thing of two about the importance of Nidderdale Bird Watchers). This bird was thought to be heading to either Cumbria or Scotland to breed. A greylag with 6 ducklings performed a swim past. No signs of Bearded Reedling which we had hoped for and although Bitterns were heard booming they were staying well hidden. Black tailed godwit were the only waders in generous numbers.

At four o'clock we moved on to Warcliff Crag to admire the Peregrines and Ravens. The Ravens have chicks in the nest and are causing a fair amount of mayhem to the Peregrines. We hope that the Peregrines have a successful breeding year despite this.

I have checked with Ann who keeps proper records of sightings and she reports that we saw 75 species in all. Maybe spring has arrived after all.

Tony Knowles

Leading a Bird Watching Event

We always need volunteers to organise our outings. The venue can be either a place suggested by Sheila Nash, Chris Seaman, Linda Pridmore and Ann Crouch who arrange the programme, or we are always happy for people to suggest a favourite and/or new place that they think other birders might like. There is not usually a huge amount involved. It is useful if you have visited the venue before. If the access is tricky or there is a longish walk involved, it is helpful to mention this as some members may have limited mobility. Availability of toilets is a useful thing to mention. Details of venues can often be found on line. You might want to give people some idea of the cost which could be involved and also (most important!) the birds which may be around. Other than this, it is just a question of waiting for people to contact you and perhaps organising some car sharing.

Do help to share the load by offering to lead an outing.

Kettlesing School – part 2.....

In a continuation of the joint project by members of Nidderdale Birdwatchers and Nidderdale Conservation Volunteers, on Tuesday 22nd January the younger pupils of Kettlesing Felliscliffe Community Primary School were involved in identifying some of the common birds visiting gardens in winter and making simple bird feeders.

Class 2 had a short presentation prepared by Linda Pridmore and Ros Evans, followed by looking at a selection of commercial feeders which the school are going to use in the grounds; then by some small group practical work to make apple, pine cone, half orange skin and cardboard drink feeders. There was some discussion about where to site their feeders, they then really enjoyed going out in the quite deep snow to find suitable places to hang their feeders. During this time a shrew decided to run across the snow and was deftly caught by Tony Knowles so that all the children could have a good look at it. The children have agreed to identify, count and record the birds visiting the feeders.

After morning break the Class 1 children had a short presentation emphasising the importance of feeding birds in winter, they then did some small group practical work making simple feeders - honey stick, toast bird and apple. They really enjoyed getting to grips with the honey, peanut butter and seeds. I think everyone involved enjoyed the morning; it is always nice to try and encourage the next generation to think about birds and wildlife. Special thank to Ros Evans for the work she put in coordinating the morning.

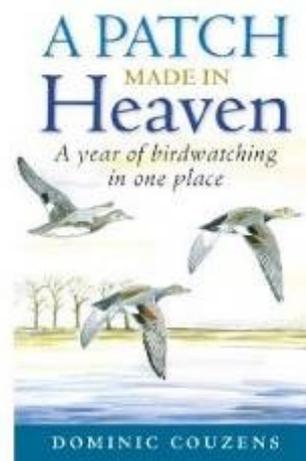
Linda Pridmore

BOOK REVIEW

A Patch made in Heaven by Dominic Couzens

is the diary of a wildlife-watching year in a single square kilometre of southern England. Written in wryly humorous style, it details the bird, the animals and the human visitors that turn up and use this tiny parcel of land. It chronicles the delights, disappointments and frustrations that go with dedicated "patch-watching", and also uncovers all sorts of unusual and unexpected details about what we might think are familiar British creatures. Hardback Amazon £8.96 post free

A good "Summer" !!! read is a thriller by Frederick Forsyth " The Deceiver " £5.99 paperback amazon post free or £5.22 kindle



BIOBLITZ DAY at BRIMHAM ROCKS

Would you like to help out at this event at Brimham Rocks on 6th July? Organised by the AONB it is planned to try to record as many species of flora and fauna as possible within a set time period. We are taking a stall to publicise the Club, leading a morning birdwatching walk and an afternoon walk recording the birds we see. If anyone can spare an hour or more to help out on the stall or on the walks please let any Committee member know or phone Ann Crouch on: 01765 600 358 or email niddbirds@gmail.com. We need cover for the period 9am to 4pm approx.

Ann Crouch was talking to Carol Taylor, Dorothy Parkin's daughter, recently and she said that she, David and Family were having a seat in the Cathedral dedicated to Dorothy and Gordon. She would like members to know so that when they visit the cathedral they can read the plaque placed in their memory.



The Yorkshire Naturalist Bird Report for 2011 is now available.

Reports can be obtained direct from the YNU website (payment via PayPal) or from RSPB Old Moor, Fairburn Ings, Bempston Cliffs, YWT Pottery Carr, North Cave Wetlands, Spurn

or by post from:

Jill Warwick, Sharow Grange, Sharow, Ripon N Yorks HG4 5BN (01765) 602832 email: jil@swland.co.uk
Jill may be able to bring some reports to future NB meetings

The report is around 250 pages and first time in full colour throughout and redesigned. The price is £12 plus £2 P & P.



Raptors In the Dale

Committee members are meeting Julian Smith MP for Skipton and Ripon on Friday 10th May at his Pateley Bridge Surgery to discuss the plight of raptors in Nidderdale, especially hen harriers.

High Batts Open Day is on Sunday 7th July. There will be a mix of displays including small mammal trapping, bird ringing and the results of moth trapping. We will have a stall. Access will be signed from the A6108 between the Lightwater Valley entrance and North Stainley village when approaching from Ripon



Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Newsletter. Please keep things coming. Thanks particularly for the pictures which make the issues so attractive and readable. Our newest member, John Dowson, sent the pictures of the Brambling and the Redpoll and thanks to Malcolm Jones who let me print the Farnham Picture.

Pete's Corner

News of our local area from our bird recorder

For both Chris and myself birding in part of the last few weeks has often consisted of how many Red Kites we can see on our drives to hospital appointments at St James's Hospital in Leeds or the Nuffield in the centre of Leeds where I was reduced to watching Feral Pigeons out of the window of my room and hoping a Peregrine Falcon would decide they were suitable for its lunch and entertain me to relieve my discomfort I had, no such luck!!

At the back end of February, we had a walk round the reserve at Nosterfield in the late afternoon light. This seems to be a favourite time of day for us to walk round the silt pools path, often the birds seem to behave differently, either having their last feed of the day or heading for the evening roost, this along with the fading light seems to give the reserve a magical feel about it and is often a good way of finishing an afternoons birding.

On the last day of February we met up with a birder that I knew well from one of the many birding forums for a visit to Staveley reserve one of my favourite birding areas outside the dale, probably because as a youngster we had "nature walks" near here from primary school. The purpose of our visit was to take my mind off the forth coming operation and with displaying Red Kites and Common Buzzard and Long Eared Owl hiding in the scrub and a very talkative companion I think it was a success.

Our local raptors made the media again with a feature on the loss of Hen Harriers as a breeding bird from the uplands of Northern England. This of course was instigated by the shooting of "Bowland Betty" and the discovery of her body in the northern part of our recording area. For those not in the know Betty was a female Hen Harrier born and radio tagged in the Forest of Bowland and was tracked around the northern Pennines and Scotland before her body was discovered shot in Colsterdale. The feature gave quite a balanced view of most of those with an interest including a short interview with the head keeper from the nearby Bolton Abbey estate whose views were in contrast to those of the representative from the Moorland Association who seemed to think there was no crime involved.. It is very important that there is some action taken very soon before this magnificent raptor ceases to exist as a breeding bird in England.

One members' sighting of two very early Ring Ouzels up near Scar House caused a bit of a stir among some who thought it was much too early for Ouzels to be in the area. Considering the weather in the days before the sighting and the fact that birds were sighted the same weekend over the Pennines in Bowland These birds were the earliest recorded in the area by about two weeks but birds do have a habit of throwing the record books out. There is also a possibility that one member sighted displaying Goshawk on our patch, this is another bird that is badly

persecuted in shooting areas and one that can be difficult to separate from the more usual Sparrowhawk so the jury is still out on that one.

Although out of the clubs area we have had some interesting window sightings here in Ripon and on one day we had a single Waxwing along with smart looking male Siskin and Goldfinch all in the same tree. There is a lot going for this window birding looking out into the wintery landscape while you sit there in the warmth with binoculars and a hot drink.

Some spring migrants are now arriving in the region with Chiffchaffs heard locally and the Avocets have arrived back at Nosterfield and hopefully will have another successful breeding season.



The Committee for 2012/2013 are

Ros Wade – Chairman

Sue Hickson – Secretary

Barry Slaymaker – Treasurer

Ann Crouch _Lynda Fussell Angus Gosman Sheila Nash Adrian Roberts

Nidderdale Birdwatchers is a voluntary organisation which exists to promote interest in and understanding and knowledge of birds, their environment and conservation, and in particular to promote the study and welfare of the birds within Nidderdale. Membership is open to all interested individuals; for details contact the Membership Secretary, Angus Gosman on 01423 755276 or visit our website www.niddbirds.org.uk