



giving  
nature  
a home

Newsletter  
of the  
Central Ayrshire  
Local Group



**39th year**  
Autumn 2015



Our group at Hesketh Out Marsh Reserve, in May 2015

For all local birding details - log on to: [www.ayrshire-birding.org.uk](http://www.ayrshire-birding.org.uk)

## Leader's Lines

Hello fellow birders,

It hardly seems a year has gone by since I took over the reins of the group leadership. It has not been the easiest of years for me, personally, but I hope I have managed to deal with all things RSPB in a timely and efficient manner. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your sympathy, cards and e-mails and for joining Hugh and I to say goodbye to Dad after he passed away in February, just 10 days short of his 95th birthday

We enjoyed a varied selection of speakers on a variety of topics at the indoor meetings, and, hopefully, next session's speakers will be just as interesting. We start on **Monday 21st September** with **Liz Leyden** giving a talk on **Baja California**. We can be assured of an excellent talk accompanied by fantastic photography. I do hope you will be able to come along. If you need a lift to the hall, please give me a ring and I will do my best to arrange this for you.

Jim led a number of interesting and fruitful outings. Unfortunately two trips had to be cancelled - September's outing to the Cumbrae had to be abandoned due to lack of interest and January's to Glasgow, had to be cancelled due to all the ponds being frozen. The other outings were well attended and provided excellent sightings. I was very grateful to Peter, Jim and Eleanora for sharing my car to the later outings as I don't think I could have gone alone. I am looking forward to next year's outings which again offer a variety of venues, both in Ayrshire and in Galloway. Again shared transport can be arranged to the further away places to save on cost and fewer cars helps the environment too!

---

Tony arranged a couple of excellent weekends away - To **Islay** in November to view the Goose Extravaganza. Dad was with us on this trip and had a great time, which he spoke of often over the winter when he was confined to barracks with his broken hip. The June trip to **Lancashire** was another splendid event, visiting two new venues in addition to our old favourite, Leighton Moss. I found it strange to be on my own and be free to go on long walks without having to watch over Dad on his scooter. Next year there will be a day trip to Musselburgh and a week to Orkney. Tony will have details at the start of the season.

The **P.S. Waverley** only managed to make three of her five trips to **Ailsa Craig** in 2014. Dad, Jim & I were on the first sailing which gave excellent views of the seabird colonies - all seemed to be doing well except the kittiwakes which were very short of nests on the island. Most of the committee managed to get on at least one sailing, all of which were well supported. It was most unfortunate that the other sailings did not take place. This year has not gone at all well with the first four of the sailings cancelled already. We can only hope some of the other three, planned to take place, actually go.

If there is anything I, and the rest of the committee, can do to enhance your enjoyment of the Central Ayrshire RSPB local Group, **PLEASE** let me, or any of the committee know and we will do our best to help. Hoping to see as many of you as possible at our events in 2015-16 and wishing you lots of Happy Birding

Kind regards, **Anne**

**In memory of Charlie. A few images taken on our birding trips.....**



Cyprus with Nancy



Hiddensee with Anne



Nancy & Charlie, Cyprus



On Waverley



In Yorkshire



Islay 2014

Photos: Gerda & Tony Scott

## Do sparrows speak Spanish?

Ian Thomson



*The sparrow hopped up to me, brave little chap,  
Cocked his head to one side, gave his small wings a flap.  
He let out a chirp, then a whistle, then **said**  
“Good morning, kind sir!” winked and nodded his head.  
“You **spoke**”, I gasped, stunned. “But how can that be?”  
“We speak English and Spanish - (sporadically) -  
‘spect sparrows spoke Spartan in days of old Greece  
And would swear in Swahili, disturbing the peace.”  
“But how many languages do you all speak?”  
“I really don’t know, some have Latin and Greek.”  
“Even ancient Egyptian!.....Don’t be in denial!”  
“Be careful, that river has huge crocodiles!”  
“It’s been very interesting talking to you.”  
Said the sparrow succinctly, “Now it’s time I flew.”  
I watched the wee winger, vanish from view,  
Leaving me to persuade you that all this is true!*

---

## Lancashire birding

**An RSPB Central Ayrshire and SOC Ayrshire group long-weekend from Saturday 20 to Monday 22 June 2015**

Report by Tony Scott



Our group numbered twenty - both RSPB and SOC members. 19 of us joined the coach in Ayr and one joining at Gretna Services (Days Inn). Our driver this time was Derek Murdoch - helpful and jolly - with a wealth of tall stories!

We loaded our large 50-seater coach and were off by 07.35. We headed east to Cumnock, Muirkirk and Douglas, before turning south on the M74 motorway. The weather was mixed with sunshine and showers and temperatures around 16 centigrade. Our first stop was at Annandale Water services where Costa provided the necessary shots of caffeine in the form of Americano, Macchiato or Cappucino coffees. Some of the group decided to have a walk around the lake, possibly on the look-out for sand martins which have often been seen here. They did see four goosander and a number of oystercatchers, and just outside the café - swallows were feeding young.

After one hour, we left for the short drive to Gretna Services where Molly was waiting for us at the planned time of 10.35, arriving spot on the minute! From here it was down the M6 to junction 35 and the A6 and a couple of unclassified roads (tight for our large vehicle) all the way to RSPB's Leighton Moss reserve. We arrived here at 12 noon and were welcomed by one of the staff members who came aboard to tell us what was about and where, and to wish us a good day's birding.

Since our last visit, the area around the visitor centre has undergone a major upgrade with wildlife friendly planting and a new bird feeding area complete with a covered viewing platform. Impressive! We saw lots of activity here, with nuthatches, marsh tits, bullfinches, greenfinches, chaffinches, robins, great spotted woodpeckers, treecreepers and more. A high-level viewing tower was also nearing completion. This will eventually give visitors expansive views across the reedbeds. We had some superb views of marsh harriers, mainly from Lillian's hide where one of the two pairs were seen. There was another single male (possibly juvenile) harrier around, and it was apparent that the two pairs of marsh harriers were feeding young. Lillian's hide also gave us views of great egret, and avocets, plus a variety of ducks and waders. As we walked around the reserve, the calls of reed and sedge warbler were clearly heard.

---



Marsh harrier



Nuthatch



Avocet

In addition, the explosive sound of Cetti's warbler was heard in a few locations. Lunch was available, and to be recommended, at the reserve café. Some of us ate here and others preferred a picnic from home - especially good eaten in one of the hides surrounded by birds! At 16.00 hrs, our time at the reedbed reserves came to an end, and we took our coach as close as we could to the Morecambe Bay hides. Here we anticipated views of waders and other ducks and seabirds. We were not disappointed, with over 200 black-tailed godwits, common tern, little egret, avocets and a variety of gulls. Other highlights of the day had to be the marsh harriers, lapwings with young, marsh tit and long-tailed tits. The weather changed to sunny skies as we walked through the meadows to the Morecambe Bay hides, giving us a pleasant and warm end to our first birding day in Lancashire.

We drove back down the M6 and within the hour we arrived at our home for two nights, the four-star Best Western Premier Leyland Hotel. By 18.45 we had been welcomed by the hotel's Claire Stringfellow, who had organised an efficient and speedy check-in with our keys already in named envelopes. Dinner was at 19.45, so we had time enough for a quick change and a drink at the bar beforehand. The menu appeared to please everyone, with an excellent smoked Southport mackerel fillet with pea shoots, Parmesan shavings and a mustard dressing as one of the three starters. Seabass with Southport samphire, scallion, white wine sauce and new potatoes was a popular main course, as was the tender roast pork with cauliflower in a Garstang blue cheese sauce with roast potatoes and vegetables. Lemon posset and fresh fruit salad were two of the three dishes on the dessert menu. After coffee and tea, the evening was brought to a close with Jim calling out the sightings for the day as we wrote up our bird lists. All in all - a good start to the long weekend.



Black-tailed godwits from the Eric Morecambe hide

Sunday 21 June 2015

Cloudy at first, quite windy, but sunny later. It was also Fathers' Day today and (we are told), many of the fathers on board our coach had received e-mail messages, texts or telephone calls (or did receive them as the day wore on). Nice to know.

Following a great breakfast buffet - which included Bury black pudding (England's finest), we were on the bus for 08.45. Later in the day we were heading to Southport which our driver Derek knows well. He also knows a traditional family-owned butchers shop which also deals in game. When he was there on a tour last week, he picked up a real bargain (he thinks). In his own words: "Venison was on offer and seemed too good to resist. I bought eight legs of venison for five pounds. Do you think that was *too dear?*". There's more where that came from.....

On to our first stop of the day at Pennington Flash Country Park. Unknown to us beforehand, a FunRun was about to get underway at 10 o'clock! We arrived at 09.15 and had been advised to use the public car park. It was so busy we almost didn't get a space for our large vehicle, but Derek managed to squeeze in. A cold wind blew off the water of the lake as we alighted, and the tannoy was booming out encouragement to all the participating fun-runners! How to get away from the hurley-burley of this packed event? Well, the noise did abate as we got farther into the nature reserve, and the sighting started to take off. The first hide offered us great crested grebes, cormorants, greylags, mute swans, a few duck species, common redshanks and a mystery bird which we could only see from an awkward angle. 'Scopes were sharply focussed and digital images taken and enlarged to try to ascertain the identity. We were convinced (more or less) that this was a spotted redshank and in the end it made it into the bird list, but with a question mark rather than a tick. A 'not proven' verdict if ever there was one! On to the next of seven hides, and this one produced something special.

Here were little ringed plovers with chicks - a lovely and quite rare sighting. Their presence had been flagged up by the development manager at Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, Graham Workman, who is a keen birder and RSPB volunteer who has worked on projects in the northern isles amongst other places. He had also told me that black terns, green sandpiper, hobby and Cetti's warbler had been around recently. We did manage the Cetti's warblers and the green sandpiper from these four. Pennington Flash is a terrific reserve and would be even better without the 'fun-runners'. We still got some excellent sightings - including kingfisher, song thrush, bullfinch, common whitethroat, nuthatch and stock dove, as well as grey heron, moorhen, little grebe, great-crested grebe, lapwing, sand martins, house martins and swallows. All in all - a good morning's birding.

---

Pennington and all the other Wigan flashes (or lakes) are a legacy of the town's industrial past and were formed as a result of mining subsidence. Some of the flashes were partially filled with colliery waste and ash from the nearby Westwood power station. Ince Moss colliery closed in 1962 and Westwood power station was demolished as recently as 1989. Natural colonisation and large-scale reclamation works have helped heal the industrial scars, turning the area into the amenity it is today. The reserve is part of a larger network of important wetland habitats, running for approximately 9km along the Leigh branch of the Leeds Liverpool canal. These include Hey Brook, Abram Flashes SSSI, Pennington Flash and Hope Carr nature reserve. Wigan flashes habitats include large areas of open water, reedbed, fen, rough grassland, wet woodland and scrub. Over 200 species of birds, 15 species of dragonfly and six species of orchid have been recorded. The elusive bittern is regularly recorded in winter months and work to improve and manage the reedbeds is aimed at attracting this nationally rare bird to stay and breed.



Pennington Flash reserve



with a grey heron



and kingfisher



Marshside



reserve



black-tailed godwit

By 12.20 it was time to leave and find a place to eat. Because our coach was too large to enter the other park entrance where the café is located, we decided to drive on to Southport where we had time for a bite of lunch from 13.15 to 14.15 hrs. We were due to meet Nick Godden, warden at RSPB Marshside reserve on Southport's northern end of the Marine Drive. We arrived a little late, as we had driven past the reserve entrance (signage could be better!), but by 14.40, Nick was on board our coach to welcome us and let us know something of the reserve's history, its future and - most importantly for us - what was around today and how to access all areas.

---

There are two hides at Marshside and we paid a visit to both of them. By this time the sun was shining and the temperature up to 18 centigrade. There are trails and footpaths totalling 6km, but we walked a mere 1.5km between the hides. Highlights included black-billed godwit, little egret, avocet, shelduck, mute swans - one pair with three cygnets, and a variety of other ducks including gadwall, mallard, shoveler, teal and tufted duck and interestingly...a llama! Buzzard, sparrowhawk and four kestrels were also seen today. In addition - dunlin, lapwing, common redshank and curlew - oh - and just one Mediterranean gull. Marshside is part of the South Ribble Marshes and its 4,697 ha National Nature Reserve. The area is the most important wildfowl site in the UK, supporting over a quarter of a million waders and wildfowl each winter, and is an internationally important site for 20 species of birds, including pintail and nine species of wader, particularly knot, sanderling and bar-tailed godwit. Breeding birds include several thousand pairs of black-headed gulls, a few hundred pairs of herring and lesser black-backed gulls and common terns on the marshes, as well as a few Arctic terns, large numbers of waders, particularly common redshank, as well as lapwing and avocet at Marshside Marsh, shelduck, shoveler and corn bunting. Black-tailed godwits often overwinter here.

At 16.40 we left for the short drive to Hesketh Out Marsh - an RSPB outpost within the greater NNR. The large tidal scrape is viewed from a high bund and there are information boards with some shelter as well. I imagine the shelter is necessary from time to time. Even today there was a fierce wind and it was difficult to keep both telescopes and binoculars focussed and steady. There appeared to be a good number of gulls spread across this vast area, as well as shelduck and little egret too. Access was along the narrow Dib Road from Hesketh Bank, but there was plenty of space to turn the coach in the reserve car park. Because of the wind conditions we were here just 45 minutes, before returning to Leyland and our hotel for dinner and overnight. This had been another good day visiting some new (for us) Lancashire reserves.





Monday 22 June 2015

Breakfast at 07.30, check-out and load the coach for the return journey. We were away by 09.00 hrs and had only a short distance to drive, a mere eleven miles, to reach Brockholes Nature reserve and centre, just off junction 8 of the M6. We were here by 09.20, well before the visitor centre opened its doors at 10.00. However, there was a covered viewing area, actually part of the café. This provided shelter for us initially, as rain set in for a while. Despite the gloom, we watched the antics of a herring gull repeatedly mobbing a grey heron and this appeared to go on...and on...and on! A few great crested grebes popped up and a family of Canada geese sailed by in a long line. It looked like a creche with two adults in charge - but maybe it was just a large family. There were a number of greylags around as well and an assortment of gulls and the ubiquitous mallards.

Brockholes is an award-winning reserve, developed and run by Lancashire Wildlife Trust. It has been established on the site of an old quarry and the LWT have created an environment that provides habitat for lots of different wildlife. Hides, paths and viewing points have been built to allow visitors to get closer to wildlife without disturbing it. There are paths alongside the idyllic River Ribble and through ancient woodland and lakes. The visitor centre is a unique experiment - a floating island which carries the welcome centre and education rooms, shops and cafe/restaurant. During the spring, birds such as little ringed plover, lapwing and great crested grebe are starting to breed (the reserve is only three years old). Otters have been sighted too, and there are families of hares - especially visible in early spring. In summer, the wildflower meadows are a delight and the water areas a magnet for both dragonflies and damselflies.

We were here until 15.40 hrs - time enough for walks covering the riverside, woodlands and lakes. We visited three hides on our meanderings, one very close to nesting great crested grebes. We also had good views of shelduck, common sandpiper and a variety of ducks and gulls. From the pathways we saw and heard blackcaps, garden warblers, chiffchaffs and common whitethroats. Swifts were swooping overhead and a few kestrels were hovering as the weather improved in the early afternoon. Brockholes has great potential and we enjoyed our visit to this easily accessible reserve.



Great crested grebe on nest

At 15.40 it was time to leave and Derek had brought the coach around to the centre. We were soon driving north on the M6 with a brief stop scheduled at Tebay services. By 17.30 we were in Carlisle and tables were booked for dinner at the Gosling Bridge Inn. Despite being busy, service was most efficient and everyone managed to order their choice of food and drink from an extensive menu, and be away again by 19.15 hrs.

At 19.35 we were pulling into Gretna Services where we said goodbye to Molly, who collected her car from the Days Inn car park and headed west for a few days birding in Dumfries and Galloway with her friends from the Edinburgh group. We carried on north along the M74, allowing ourselves one brief comfort stop at Abington services. We then joined the A70 for our last leg of the journey west to Ayr, arriving at Dodds coach depot for 22.00 hrs. We had an excellent three days and travelled safely, thanks to Derek's driving skills. Another trip completed successfully, so here's to the next one!

Those travelling on the Lancashire Birding weekend were:

Jim Thomson (bird leader); Gerda and Tony Scott (trip organisers); Bob Yates; Fiona Ferguson; Ian and Monica Clark; Jean and Geoff Sheppard; David and Helen Rackham; Brian and Maureen Dodson; Jim and Margaret Sutherland; Iain and Morag Howat; Anne Dick; Peter Halbert; Molly Woolgar - and Derek Murdoch of course.

The wide expanse of wetland, woods and flowers at Brockholes



## Reintroduction of the northern bald ibis in Europe

From the Neuen Zürcher Zeitung of 17.03.2015 and the Südkurier (Bodenseekreis)



**On 07 February, the female northern bald ibis “Shorty” was rescued in the Swiss town of Jonen (Aargau) and taken to the animal rescue centre in Goldau. She was below weight and had damaged wings. In the meantime, “Shorty” has recovered. On March 16, she was collected by an assistant from the bald ibis team and returned to her colony in Goldbach, Germany.**

Sometime at the end of the 17th century, the last bald ibis disappeared from the town of Überlingen on Lake Constance (Bodensee). What happened to this individual is not known, but more than likely it ended up as a meal for a hungry resident of the area! The bald ibis was well known as a favourite culinary item in the 17th century, and sadly was not afraid of human beings and nested in close proximity to towns and villages - which made the species vulnerable to capture.

Along with the bald ibis, many more bird and animal species were affected in this way, and ended up in a pot. However, this story may have a happy ending, if all goes well. Forty or more bald ibises should be nesting happily once again on the steep cliffs near Goldbach, and successfully raising their young very soon.

The Überlinger project really took off in June this year (2015), when 16 bald ibis chicks arrived at the airport of Stahringen. At this time, the chicks are being tended by two volunteer human ‘stepmothers.’ The young birds will follow them and learn from them closely. They will even learn to fly by following an ultra-light aircraft. If all goes according to plan, the young birds will follow the airplane over the Alps in mid August, all the way south to their overwintering site in southern Tuscany. Another 16 birds will receive the same treatment in 2016 and 2017. The whole project is being master-minded by an Austrian ornithologist called Fritz, who will be expecting the birds to return to their home near Stahringen each year.

It is however, most unlikely that the birds would return to the cliff face in Überlingen of their own accord, so Fritz and his team will recapture them and bring them back again.

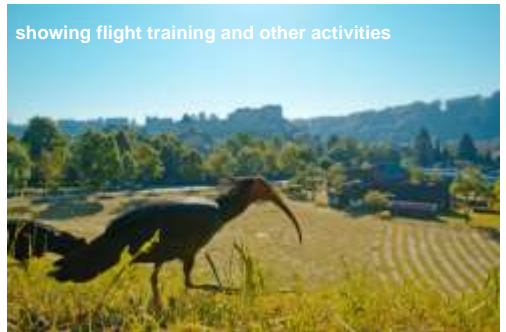
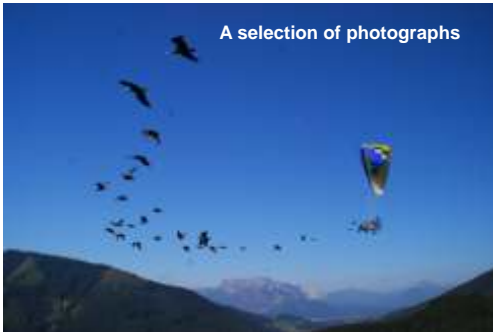
---

The team intend to construct a large, enclosed, free-flight installation on the cliff face, to ensure that the birds will stay and raise their own young. Finally, when it's time to head south, it is hoped they will lead their families back to the winter quarters in Tuscany.

One of the biggest threats to the project could be Italian hunters, who do target raptors and would probably aim at the ibis as well. It is therefore critically important that this project is carried out in the open public view and receives plenty of publicity.

The bald ibis team have looked at various locations for these trials, and finally the choice was made. Burghausen, Salzburg and the old 'Reichstadt' of Überlingen. The old town on the Bodensee was finally added for valid historic reasons. In the ancient chronicles (Wiltersulger Chronik from Überlingen) it was found that during the extremely hard winter of 1481, the colony of bald ibis were so weakened by the freezing cold weather that they could easily be captured by hand. More importantly, this historic nesting site normally provided a rich assortment of nourishment for the birds. The Max-Planck-Institute for Ornithology also spoke for Überlingen as a choice for this project. The project has now been given the official title 'Reason to Hope', and the cost - over four million euros - has been mainly provided by the European Union to cover all three breeding areas within the EU "Life+Projektes" programme. In Überlingen, 500,000 euros will come from the EU and it is hoped that another 100,000 will be raised locally.

This information was kindly sent in by our 'local correspondent' in Überlingen, **Inge Kern**



## Notes from my summer wildlife diary

Eleanora Forrester,  
Knockshinnoch Bungalow



**18 May. Wild Weather.** Yesterday, I thought we'd have to return to a life of Noah's Ark: the rain was so painfully heavy, I was right drookit while doing my WeBs count. For once, not a doggie or jogger was on my route from South Beach to Pow Burn. When I arrived, I first had the head down taking note of the tide etc., then looked up with the bins to see what I was to record. To my amazement, a bird was being buffeted about just a metre from the tide edge.....a Manxie! I was a bit concerned as there was a dead gillnet and a dead gannet lying on the shore. The Manxie just sat having some wing flaps and then a few flutters like a practice run but then resumed the bouncing about on the waves. I felt anxious that it wasn't going to survive. To my relief, the Manxie had flown by the time I returned.

**24 May. Homes.** A fortnight ago, house martins built their home at the lovely new house at Broomhill Fishery. So I waited expectantly for mine to show up. A week later, martins came and inspected my place but my old site was rejected. What a disappointment. Each year, I leave their old nests up so the martins don't have to expound so much energy, but last winter some nests were really battered in the gales and just have the foundation remaining. This week my birds showed up again and have now decided to get on with the repairs. One pair of martins has overdone their renovations and can hardly squeeze themselves out of the entrance = so that is amusing to watch. Others have just achieved sufficient rebuilding to give themselves a cradle to nest in. Now, I don't need an alarm clock because the martins outside my bedroom window sure chatter away first thing in the morning, but I'm so glad to have them back.

**04 June. Clever clogs.** Driving through Troon town, I was puzzled to notice a rook on the pavement by the crossroads. The traffic lights changed to red and so I was able to stop to observe the rook, actually expecting it to fly away. When the pedestrian sign came up, this rook just ambled across the pedestrian crossing and then walked up to a picnic bench and sat politely beside a guy having his snack. Lights changed again before I saw the result, but I hope the rook was successful in persuading the guy to give it a tasty bite.

**02 July. Single swallow.** This morning, I was wakened at first light by a single swallow twittering at my back yard. Looking out to see why, the swallow was down on the ground picking up a leaflet. Presumably, it wanted to freshen up its nest ready for another brood. Usually, the first thing in the morning and at the end of the day, a mass of swallows together swirl and zoom around, weaving in and out around the trees at the front garden, doing a marvellous miniature version of the Red Arrows.

**02 July. Spotted fly.** The spotted flycatchers this season have not stayed loyal to my front garden. They are utilising an extremely extensive area all around the farm, mainly fluttering around the largest trees but also the farm's hedge style of ash trees opposite my kitchen window. They seem to also like perching on the fences and cables plus some of the parked farm machinery so their hunting ground is much more varied this year.

---



## Birds, history and landscapes of the Orkney Islands

Leader: Jim Thomson  
Organisers: Tony & Gerda Scott

Friday 27 May to  
Sunday 05 June 2016

**Join us for seven nights on the Orkney Islands, plus one night in Inverness on the outward journey, and one night in Carrbridge on our homeward journey.** Orkney comprises 75 islands, 17 of them inhabited. It's attractions for the visiting birder are the vast numbers of breeding seabirds, the moorland specialities and passage migrants. The time we are travelling is one of the very best for both migrants and breeding birds.

We hope to book a comfortable three to four star hotel on Orkney Mainland - and similar hotels on the outward and home legs. Positioning ourselves on central Mainland will enable us to visit the major birding sites - as well as the many historic, archaeological and scenic treasures of these islands. We will be travelling by comfortable small coach from Ayr and crossing on Northlink Ferries from Scrabster to Stromness. Hotel stays will be based on dinner, bed and breakfast and all ferry costs will be included.

**We would appreciate early booking if possible, as hotels can be booked up quite early for this time of year. We expect the cost to be in the region of £970.00 to £1075.00 for the ten days/nine nights dbb/coach/ferries.**



The cost of the trip will be around £970.00 to about £1075.00 depending on the number of participants.

It will include all coach and ferry costs and accommodation in en-suite rooms in a three or four star hotel.



If you would like to join this tour, please request an itinerary from Tony & Gerda Scott, 4 Hilltop Place, Ayr KA7 3PB or f please telephone us on 01292 281 085 or e-mail Tony Scott on: [da.scott@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:da.scott@tiscali.co.uk)

## Committee

Anne Dick, **Group Leader**  
Tel: 01292 541 981

Kenneth Smith, **Deputy Group Leader**. Tel: 01292 442 901

Ian Clark, **Treasurer**  
Tel: 01292 441 940

Anne Thomson, **Secretary**  
Tel: 01292 260 816

Jim Thomson, **Outdoor Leader**  
Tel: 01292 571 899

Gerda Scott, **Publicity**  
Tel: 01292 281 085

Tony Scott, **Newsletter and tours organiser**  
Tel: 01292 281 085

Ronnie Coombes  
Tel: 01292 265 891

Peter Halbert  
Tel: 07824 888 271

*Please note: talks subject to alteration*

Monday 21 September  
**BAJA CALIFORNIA, WHALES, DOLPHINS & BIRDS**  
A talk by **LIZ LEYDEN** with more superb photography  
Membership registration precedes the talk.

Monday 19 October  
**WILDLIFE CALENDAR OF DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY** An illustrated talk by **KIRSTY GRIFFITHS**

Monday 16 November **FIONA ROSS** with an illustrated talk on the **BIODIVERSITY OF SOUTH AYRSHIRE**

Monday 21 December RSPB's **ZUL BHATIA** will talk on the **WILDLIFE OF TANZANIA**

## Indoor Meetings 2016

Monday 18 January **WORKING WITH RAPTORS**  
An illustrated talk by **GORDON RIDDLE**

Monday 15 February **TONY SCOTT** will talk about **THE CRANE MIGRATION IN EAST GERMANY 2015**

Monday 21 March **MEMBERS NIGHT** A chance for members to show images from their own wildlife photographs.

Monday 18 April  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** followed by **AYRSHIRE ROUND-UP** - the year's highlights told and illustrated by **JIM THOMSON**



## MUSSELBURGH LAGOONS, WATERSTON HOUSE AND ABERLADY BAY

Saturday 21 November 2015

by **COACH**

Leader: **Jim Thomson** Tickets **£25.00**

A joint SOC Ayrshire and RSPB Central Ayrshire Local Group day trip. **Leaving Dodds coach depot, East Road, AYR at 07.45.** We will be driving via Glasgow with the first comfort stop at Heart of Scotland Services on the M8 (09.15 - 09.45). On around Edinburgh ring road to Newcraighall and **MUSSELBURGH LAGOONS (C.10.30 to 11.45).** On to SOC headquarters at Waterston House, where we will have time for lunch (please bring a packed one) from around 12.10 to 13.45 - with time to take in whatever art exhibition is running at that time - and maybe use the library and peruse the sale items in the shop. Then to nearby **ABERLADY BAY** from 13.50 to 16.00 or until dusk. We return via Loanhead and the A702 to **BIGGAR** where we will organise dinner from about 17.30 to 19.30. Finally to the M74 (Abington) and the A70 via Douglas and Muirkirk to **AYR** for c. 21.30 hrs. **Tickets will be available from September onwards or register by e-mailing Tony Scott on : da.scott@tiscali.co.uk or telephone 01292 281 085.**

# Central Ayrshire Local Group Meetings, Outings & Holidays Season 2015-2016

## Field Trips 2015

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654.

### The Gannet

is the official newsletter of  
Central Ayrshire Local  
Group of RSPB Scotland.  
Registered charity  
no. SC037654

All indoor meetings take  
place on Monday evenings  
at 19.30 hrs - in Hall B of  
the Newton-Wallacetown  
Church, 60 Main Street,  
AYR. Parking available on  
Main Street or Garden St.

The meetings are open to  
everyone interested in birds and  
wildlife. Please come along and  
join us. If you enjoy our meetings  
and field trips - local membership  
costs only £6 single or £10 double.  
There are eight indoor meetings  
and nine field trips.

We will be repeating our annual  
bird walks in Rozelle & Belleisle  
Parks during the Spring of 2016.  
Please look out for details to be  
advised at a later date.

All field trips are held jointly  
with the Ayrshire branch of the  
SOC (Scottish Ornithologists'  
Club). The meetings are open  
to everyone interested in birds  
and wildlife. Please come  
along and join us on any of  
these outings.

We generally car share and if  
anyone requires a lift or is willing to  
share their car, please telephone  
any of the committee mentioned  
inside, also if you require further  
information about any activity.

Saturday 19 September  
**RSPB KEN-DEE MARSHES AND THREAVE GARDENS**  
Meet at New Galloway High Street (toilets) at 10.30 hrs. On to  
Ken-Dee reserve for around 11.00 and at 13.30 on to Threave  
until c.16.00 hrs. Full day trip - please bring a picnic lunch.

Saturday 24 October  
**RSPB MERSEHEAD RESERVE**  
Meet at 11.00 hrs at the reserve car park. Whole day trip until 15.30.  
Shop & café on site, so we can lunch here or bring our own.

Saturday 21 November **by COACH**  
**MUSSELBURGH LAGOONS, SOC WATERSTONE HOUSE  
& ABERLADY BAY**  
Meet 07.30 at Dodd's bus depot. Whole day trip returning around  
21.30. Dinner will be arranged. Coach tickets: £25.00.

Saturday 12 December  
**FULLARTON WOODS & BARASSIE**  
Meet at 10.00 hrs at Fullarton Woods car park (toilets). On to  
Barassie / Troon Harbour. Please bring picnic lunch. Finish c.15.30.

## 2016

Saturday 23 January  
**MAIDENS & NTS CULZEAN**  
Meet 10.30 hrs at Maidens Harbour car park (toilets). On to Culzean  
later. Please bring a picnic lunch. Finish around 15.30 hrs.

Saturday 20 February  
**GREENAN SHORE AND DOONFOOT.**  
Meet at 10.00hrs Greenan Castle car park. Trip lasts until 12.00 hrs.

Saturday 19 March  
**GLEN AFTON & SWT KNOCKSHINNOCH LAGOONS**  
Meet 10.30 at Glen Afton. On to the lagoons at New  
Cumnock. Whole day trip. Please bring picnic lunch. Finish c.15.30.

Saturday 16 April  
**RSPB WOOD OF CREE & NEW RESERVE**  
Meet 11.00 hrs at reserve car park. Whole day trip. On to the new  
extension woodlands later. Please bring picnic lunch. Finish c.16.00.

Saturday 21 May  
**LOCH DOON & NESS GLEN** Meet at the Roundhouse car park.  
Lunch can be purchased at the Roundhouse or bring your own.  
Whole day trip to finish about 16.00 hrs.

Friday 27 May - Sunday 05 June. **A ten-day coach holiday**  
**BIRDS, LANDSCAPES & HISTORY OF THE ORKNEY ISLANDS**  
Coach travel from Ayr. Staying at three or four-star hotels on a DBB  
basis. One night Inverness; seven nights on Orkney; one night  
Carrbridge. Ferry from Scrabster to Stromness. Full details available  
in September. Cost between £970.00 £1075.00 depending on hotels  
chosen and numbers participating. The cost includes all coach travel,  
car ferries and accommodation in en-suite rooms with dinner, bed and  
breakfast each day.