



a million  
voices for  
nature

Newsletter  
of the  
Central Ayrshire  
Local Group

35th year  
Summer 2011

Photos below: Tony & Gerda Scott



PS Waverley off Ailsa Craig on 18 July 2011



A black-headed gull trying to impress. Taken at the Public Hide, Leighton Moss on our April weekend



An avocet 'walking on water' - taken from the Eric Morecambe Hide at Leighton Moss, April 2011.



Some of our group on the June 2011 field trip to RSPB's Mull of Galloway Reserve.

Ailsa Craig gannetry  
from PS Waverley  
cruising from Ayr and  
Girvan - 03 July 2011



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

# The Gannet

## Leader's Lines

Hello everyone!

It is quite amazing to think we are about to start on our winter/spring session. I do hope you all had some nice summer holidays and managed to enjoy some lovely weather too. I had a great week in York, and also arranged a visit to RSPB's Bempton Cliffs Reserve on a scorching hot day.

Jim Thomson and I were invited back to Ochiltree Primary School with our RSPB shop. We had a good morning with the children and teachers and we raised £142.00 for our funds and we thank them for their support. The PS Waverley trips have gone well and again I would like to thank all those who have taken part in making our contribution a success.

As we look forward to the new season of interesting talks and outings, could I just remind everyone of our change of venue for our evening meetings. We will now meet in Newton Wallacetown Church Hall (Hall B), 60 Main Street, Ayr. Please note that there is no parking in the church drive, but plenty of on-street parking nearby (and also in River Street which is only a short walk away). Our meetings have been re-timed to start at 7.30 pm, so doors will be open well before that. I'm certain we'll settle in nicely to our new venue.

As you receive this newsletter, our 'Art on the Wing' wildlife art exhibition will just have commenced. For those of you who don't know, the exhibition will run from Sunday 28 August until Sunday 25 September at the Maclaurin Galleries in Rozelle Park. Opening times are 10.00am to 5pm daily except Sunday, when the gallery is open from 12 noon to 5pm. The gallery is closed Tuesdays, but we will be holding a series of events at the gallery on these days and evenings. Full details in this newsletter.

There has been a vast amount of work involved in organising the exhibition and your committee are hoping, with your help, to better the 2005 total of £4,500.00 which we raised for the work of RSPB Scotland. Details of all our evening meetings and field trips are listed in the newsletter - including details of our proposed long weekend to the Farne Islands in June next year.

We look forward to meeting with you all.

Best wishes,  
**Ronnie Coombes, Group Leader.**



Puffin by Angus Hogg

## Seven artists donate works for our grand raffle during the wildlife art exhibition 'Art on the Wing' at the Maclaurin Gallery

RSPB Central Ayrshire Local Group's wildlife art exhibition 'Art on the Wing,' which runs from Sunday 28 August until Sunday 25 September at the Maclaurin Gallery in Ayr's Rozelle Park, has benefited from the generosity of seven artists who are also taking part in the exhibition. These are **Christopher Allan** of Prestwick, former curator of the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, who has recently exhibited at the Glasgow Print Studio together with an exhibition of work by Elizabeth Blackadder. One of our own members - **Eleanora Forrester** who has donated a water colour by her late husband Bruce, a most touching gesture. She has also donated two mounted wildlife prints. **Liz Leyden** - another local RSPB and SOC member, and a superb wildlife photographer, has donated one framed print and one mounted photographic print of African wildlife. The well-known couple **Beryl and Keith Dawdry** of the Peinn Mor Pottery in Pinmore ([www.peinmor.co.uk](http://www.peinmor.co.uk)), have donated a fine ceramic piece. **Jude Ridout**, a young ceramist from Cardiff who is exhibiting in Scotland for the first time, has also kindly donated one of her ceramic works. Finally, **Kathleen Lindsley** from the Isle of Skye has also donated one of her artworks. ([spanglefish.com/ravenpressgallery](http://spanglefish.com/ravenpressgallery)) We are most grateful to all of these artists. We are sure that many people will wish to own any one of these works of art and have the chance to do so by taking part in the raffle which will run throughout the exhibition. **The draw will take place at our 17th of October meeting at Newton Wallacetown Church Hall.**

We would also like to thank our main sponsors, **Hope Homes** for their support which has greatly helped in the staging of the exhibition. Not only have they donated a cash sum, but have also advertised our exhibition on their website and have printed and displayed our handbills and posters in their sales centres. They are currently building a sustainable community at Knockroon, part of the Dumfries House Estate, and this development will complete with shops, offices and workshops and beautifully landscaped areas. It also combines the very best of modern energy-saving techniques with solid traditional building values. Please visit their website which is: [www.hopehomes.co.uk](http://www.hopehomes.co.uk)

We must also thank **Sainsbury's** of Prestwick, for kindly donating wine for the preview for invited guests on Saturday 27th of August. We do hope that as many of you, your friends and family, will visit the exhibition when it opens on the 28th of August and enjoy this unique exhibition with works by 36 artists.

We would also like to thank RSPB's **Anne McCall**, Regional Director for Glasgow and South West Scotland, who will be officially opening the exhibition at our preview, as well as all those who will be giving talks and doing guided walks and more. These are: **Mary Thomson** ([www.marythomsonbooks.com](http://www.marythomsonbooks.com)), **Angus Hogg, Duncan Watt, Jude Ridout, Neil O'Donnell** and **Eve McGregor** of RSPB Scotland. **Thanks also to all those on the steering committee for their hard work in setting up this intricate and time consuming but oh, so satisfying and important exhibition.** These are **Ronnie Coombes, Ian Clark, Anne Dick, Kenneth Smith, Gerda and Tony Scott.** Thanks also to **Susan Porteous** who offered help with stewarding the exhibition through the **Friends of the Maclaurin.** Finally, our thanks to **Ann Bontke and all the gallery staff** at the Maclaurin Gallery and Rozelle House, as well as **Sheena Andrew** for her help and advice..

**The exhibition is open** daily (except Tuesday) from 10.00 until 17.00 hrs. Open Sunday from 12.00 until 17.00 hrs. Admission free. Raffle tickets will be available at £1 each or £5 for a book. **There will be a sales stall operated by our RSPB local group members and we thank them** for giving their time to do this.

The café at Rozelle will be open as usual and is the ideal place for a drink, snack or lunch. The craft shop in Rozelle House will also be open at the same time as the exhibition. **TS**



Photos from top to bottom:

Eleanora Forrester, Christopher Allan; Jude Ridout; Kathleen Lindsley; Liz Leyden.

## Malaria and other avian remedies

**A report by Stephen Moss which appeared in The Guardian on 16.08.11.**

Reports that Britain's birds are suffering from avian malaria have caused understandable alarm. It's bad enough that we could lose some of our best-loved wild creatures, such as the majestic tawny owl, but what about the prospect that we might succumb to the disease ourselves?

The good news is that the parasite that infects birds, *Plasmodium relictum*, is not one of those that cause malaria in humans, and so we are safe - for the moment, at least. The bad news is that climate change is allowing all malarial mosquitos, including those that infect us, to extend their habitats north. Like humans, birds are able to develop resistance to malaria, and indeed most infected birds do survive. However, the resulting loss of red blood cells may weaken them, making them more susceptible to other forms of disease.

And malaria is not the only problem facing Britain's birdlife. Salmonella, avian tuberculosis and the respiratory disease trichomonosis have also wreaked havoc amongst our birds, especially those that congregate in our gardens for the free food we provide, passing their germs around.

Songbirds such as greenfinches have been hit particularly badly, with many householders finding dead or dying birds beneath their feeders. As with avian malaria, a warmer climate is enabling these diseases to spread, as their agents (such as ticks) are no longer being killed off by prolonged winter cold. So, should we continue feeding our garden birds? The RSPB advises that we should, though it suggests we thoroughly clean bird tables and feeders, and bin uneaten food before it goes rotten. Keeping birdbaths clean, and refilling them regularly, is also essential, as bird droppings can accumulate there.

Perhaps the biggest issue with these diseases is that they are hitting birds when they already have so many problems to contend with. Habitat loss, both at home and abroad, is affecting migrants such as the cuckoo and nightingale, while our farmland species continue to suffer as a result of agricultural policies. At such a tricky time, avian malaria may turn out to be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back. **SM**



## We need your details to keep you informed

The RSPB Central Ayrshire Local Group would like to keep your details to send you further information about group activities and the work of the RSPB. If you want to amend or update your details or you do not want us to use them in the ways stated, please contact me at the address below.

Ronnie Coombes, Group Leader, 23 Glenmuir Square, AYR KA8 9PT. Tel: 01292 265 891  
E-mail: [ronnie.coombes@tesco.net](mailto:ronnie.coombes@tesco.net)

If you wish to receive this information electronically, please confirm your e-mail address here:

Thank you. It is necessary to comply with the Data Protection Act, and this means we now need to re-collect all personal information which includes your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address if applicable. We would appreciate your help in this matter.

## Report on income from stamps for the whole of RSPB

From 01 April 2012 until the end of March 2011, the income raised from stamps reached a grand total of £15,000.00. In the same period the year-end figure for recycling ink cartridges and mobile 'phones was £65,300.00.

## World record smashed!

RSPB beat the world record for the number of mobile 'phones donated for recycling in one week by having 6,130 mobiles donated. The old record was 3,883. The new world record raised £5,214.00 to help fund our conservation work. For more information visit the website: [www.recyclingappeal.com/rspb](http://www.recyclingappeal.com/rspb)

## Feed the Birds Day

Although we are still enjoying summer, and autumn seems a fair way off, we wanted to remind you that Feed the Birds Day will take place on Saturday 29 October this year. Your local group (Central Ayrshire) are hoping to stage an event with the co-operation of one of our local garden centres, possibly Nurseries Direct near Coalhall. We will keep you informed about this event and hope that some of you may wish to become involved by being at our information stand at the garden centre on this day (and possibly Sunday the 30th as well). There will be no selling of RSPB goods involved, just a time to chat to visitors and tell them about the work we do. We also hope to make some new members during the course of the event. We will have leaflets available to hand out and our full selection of badges will be on display for donations. These are usually very popular.

Last year, 120 events took place throughout the UK and more than 10,700 people were engaged with. In addition - over 170 memberships were made during this time.

# Our April weekend away in Lancashire with our SOC friends

## Report by Tony Scott

A small group comprising members of our RSPB Central Ayrshire Local Group and SOC Ayrshire, enjoyed two days of excellent birding, good company and good food - along with unseasonably warm weather with temperatures reaching 19 degrees centigrade.

We all met at Dodds coach depot in Ayr on Saturday 16 April for a departure time of 07.55 hrs. Our driver was John Cairns, who has been part of our group (or so it seems, as he brings along his binoculars too) for many years now, having driven us on day trips and extended tours as well. Today we headed off along the A76 via New Cumnock to Dumfries, then the A75 to Gretna Green, stopping at Gretna Services for breakfast. Leaving again at 10.45, we joined the M6 south to Carnforth and over the hill to RSPB's excellent Leighton Moss Reserve for 12.17 hrs - just in time for lunch at the reserve café. We then enjoyed the delights of the reserve, starting at Lilian's Hide where we had superb views of a pair of marsh harriers mating on a distant post. As well as the large colony of (predictably noisy) black-headed gulls, we managed to get a good view of a Mediterranean gull close to the hide. From the Griesdale Hide, two garganey were playing hard-to-get, hiding most of the time, but with the occasional tantalising view of a head, until some of our group did, finally, achieve good views. All around us the reed warblers were singing their unmistakable 'kirri-kirri-keet-keet' song - a reminder that springtime was indeed with us. Views of deer wading through shallow waters came as a pleasant surprise. From the Tim Jackson Hide, we once more had good views of marsh harrier, and this time a close-up of a very pale bird. Finally, a walk to the Public Hide where not only did we see three marsh harriers, but also one common buzzard and great-crested grebe. Just time to pop into the well-stocked shop for a couple of items before taking our coach down to the Morecambe Bay hides.

We were here from 16.00 until 17.35 hrs, and were happy to hear both chiffchaff and willow warblers in the surrounding bushes. At least 11 avocets were visible from the two hides, possibly more. The really stunning views came from the 1000-plus black-tailed godwits - mainly in summer plumage already - and a delight to see as they rose in large flocks and moved in formations above the water, only to settle once again in a different area. In addition, we noted over 200 common redshank, raven, kestrel, gadwall, sand martins, skylarks and two greater black-backed gulls. On an area of water and reedbeds close to the roadway (near the railway level-crossing) were four little egrets and one little grebe in the fine late afternoon sunshine.

We then joined the M6 once again to speed on to our hotel for the night, the Best Western Leyland Hotel, a well-appointed four-star establishment not far from the motorway. Rebecca, the friendly and helpful receptionist, soon had us checked in and - apart from one wrong room type (which was also soon rectified) we were all happy with our accommodation and met once again for a pre-dinner drink in the main lounge and bar area. It was good to see that at least one real ale was available - a very nice local beer - Thwaites Wainwright - named after the well-known rambler, artist and writer who lived in the Lake District. Saturday night was fairly busy of course, and a wedding was taking place in one of the numerous suites. Dinner was booked for us in the main restaurant - the 'Four Seasons,' where we all enjoyed a three-course meal. There was a choice of steamed supreme of chicken filled with creamed leek and spinach, and laced with a wild mushroom sauce; or alternatively, slowly roasted sirloin of beef with traditional Yorkshire pudding and horseradish gravy. A vegetarian option was also on the menu of course. To start, the cream of vegetable soup with thyme and sage was really good, and the temptation to try a dessert called 'Lancashire Belles' was too great, although it must be said, some found this a little disappointing. The Parkin-flavoured ice cream that accompanied it was quite pleasant though. A very fine day was rounded off with a nightcap and a chat in the bar.



Male bullfinch, Leighton Moss



Great crested grebe from the Public Hide



Black-tailed godwits in flight



Our coach at Leighton Moss



The 'Four Seasons' restaurant, Leyland Hotel

The next morning we were up early for a very fine buffet breakfast, probably one of the best I've had in England, with a wide choice of hot and cold dishes and nice little touches such as pots of local damson jam, not to mention a good North of England black pudding - nothing comes close to it! We loaded our coach and left at 09.00 for the relatively short journey to the Wildlife and Wetland Trust's reserve at Martin Mere. On this gloriously sunny Sunday, we could relax in the knowledge that we had well over five hours to explore this vast area with its many wild bird hides and also the collection of exotic and not-so-exotic waterfowl from Europe and the rest of the world.

The highlights of the day just had to include the huge number of shelduck everywhere, literally hundreds! Tree sparrows are always something special and they are very much at home here at Martin Mere. The woodland areas also contained great spotted woodpecker and treecreeper. Reed buntings were plentiful and we noted a total (for us) of 51 avocets throughout the reserve. Other sightings included red-legged partridge, sparrowhawk, beautiful 'sky-dancing' from a pair of marsh harriers - we could and did observe this for ages. We also saw three whooper swans, six black-tailed godwits, 36 curlew, pochard, barn swallows, sand martins and more.

Lunch was enjoyed at the new and spacious Mere Side Café-restaurant with a large outdoor seating area, ideal on a day like today - and at a place where many of the collection species could be viewed. The afternoon was taken up mainly with a saunter around the fascinating world of birds in the collection, which is quite extensive, both in the number of species and in the area of land needed for it. There are also enclosures for otters (albeit an Indian species) and another area for beavers, which we didn't expect to see of course, as they are mainly nocturnal in their habits.

All too soon, it was time to return to the coach for our journey north once again. We drove through the centre of Preston to reach the M6 and then it was on to Tebay Services for a short stop (and a few purchases made at the very good farm shop there). On along the M6 and the A7 to Longtown where we had booked dinner at the Graham Arms Hotel. The sun was still shining as we arrived here at 17.45 hrs. Loud music issued forth from the hotel, and I began to wonder if the right choice had been made! Despite all the racket coming from the public bar, the dining room was peaceful enough when the door was closed behind us. It must also be said that the food was exceptionally good (although I don't think the wine glasses had seen a good polish for a fair while!). Nevertheless, the staff were friendly and the roast beef and Yorkshire's were even better than the previous evening. The steak, ale and onion pie was also delicious and of huge proportion. We were in luck with real ale once again and the Geltsdale 'Tarmonath' was a great choice and one I had never tried before.

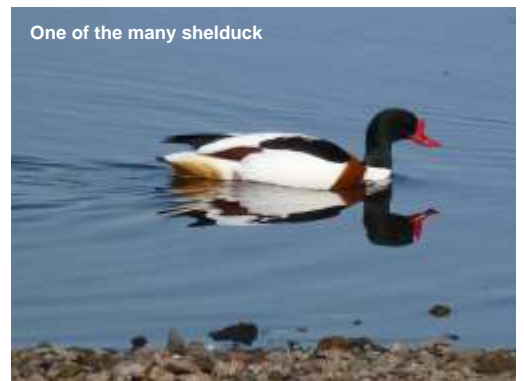
We then returned via Dumfries once again (as the Douglas Road - the A700, was closed for repairs over the weekend. We were back at Dodds coach depot in Ayr for at exactly 22.01 hrs (just two hours and one minute's drive from Longtown. Not bad. Everyone agreed that we had a super weekend and I would like to thank all those participating for their good company. We look forward to the next time, when we will spend three days away on the Northumberland coast - visiting the Farne Islands and Coquet Island. The dates? Saturday 23 to Monday 25 June 2012. Full details elsewhere in this newsletter.



Loading our coach the hotel



Liz at Martin Mere



One of the many shelduck



An avocet from the Kigfisher Hide at Martin Mere



More godwits in flight



A Spanish white-headed duck in the collection

## Waverley Cruises this season

We are pleased to report that more of the cruises from Ayr Harbour around Ailsa Craig have actually taken place this year, with just three failing to materialise because of adverse sea conditions. The early season cruises are always the most productive as far as the number and variety of seabirds are concerned and we are pleased to say that the puffin population appears to be growing, with up to 250 seen on any one occasion. Needless to say, the gannets are doing well and appear to be increasing even more, with grassy areas high on the Craig being colonised. Paddle-steamer 'Waverley' herself has fortunately had a better season so far, with passenger loadings appearing to be higher. However, this iconic vessel is not out of danger, as the amount needed to operate her increases annually - specially in these times of high fuel prices. There is an appeal to raise £350,000 to pay for her overhaul this coming winter, and there is the possibility that she may not sail next year if this target is not achieved. To donate - please see the website: [www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk](http://www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk)

Our own RSPB information stand and shop onboard has done reasonably well, with an average £75.00 or so being taken on all cruises. Of course, our main reason to be there is to chat to passengers about the work of RSPB and to inform everyone about the birds of Ailsa Craig and the Clyde. We continue to do this by giving a commentary as we circumnavigate the Craig, as well as handing out literature which helps to identify bird species we are likely to encounter on our cruise. **TS**



Anne and Charlie at the on-board shop

## Art on the Wing gets off to a flying start

The preview was held on Saturday 27 August at the Maclaurin Gallery and was opened by Anne McCall, Regional Director of RSPB Glasgow and South-West Scotland. We are very pleased to announce that over 150 people attended the opening and the quality of the artworks and exhibition layout was very well received. We would like to thank Ann Bontke and all her staff at Rozelle House for the superb work carried out with hanging the exhibition. It is also good to record the number of sales we have had in the first few days, and we do hope this continues throughout the period of the exhibition, which runs until Sunday 25 September. Please come along to see this superb collection and don't forget the events which have also been organised around the exhibition.

**At 14.00 hrs on Tuesday 6th September, Duncan Watt will offer an informative guided tour of the exhibition** and will interpret the works of art on display. Cost for this event £3.00 (the gallery is closed for general viewing on this day).

**At 19.30 hrs on Tuesday 6th September, Angus Hogg**, our well-known bird expert and Ayrshire bird recorder for over 30 years, **will give an illustrated talk on the 'Birds of Ayrshire'** in the Gallery. Tickets are £3.00 for this event.

**On Tuesday 13th September, Duncan Watt will hold a full day's art workshop in Rozelle House.** This event is open to everyone, beginners and experienced participants alike. The cost for this event will be determined later and numbers will be limited.

**On Saturday 17 September, the local group will hold a bird walk through Rozelle Park at 09.00 hrs.** This is open to all and is free of charge.

**At 14.00 hrs on Tuesday 20th September, Jude Ridout, a young ceramist from Cardiff will give a talk** and explain how she is inspired by birds and uses them as a catalyst for developing her work. Tickets for this event are £3.00.



Anne McCall and Ronnie open the exhibition



Some of the artists



Malabar trogon by Sathyan Meppayur

## Other Worlds

Mary Thomson

Orion filled my trembling lenses as I shivered on the moor.  
The nebula in his sword was a glittering smudge of stars  
continuously being created, like us, and from the same matter,  
their pricks of light our world's only visible measure of time.

Under my window great tits fluttered in a swaying eucalyptus,  
chaffinches were busy in the elder, jackdaws quarrelled,  
sleek blackbirds turned over leaf litter  
like frantic peasants without a plan.

Startling themselves, they rose and fell  
like notes on a stave, and  
when I entered their world beyond the glass,

after their instant flight only a robin came  
to see if I might be useful to him.  
He was like the star we see  
that stands for invisible worlds beyond.

Mary Thomson gave a reading of poetry and stories at the Maclaurin Gallery on Tuesday 30 August. The above poem was one of many which were so well received. You can see Mary's work at the Art on the Wing exhibition which runs until Sunday 25 September.

You can also visit her website:  
[www.marythomsonbooks.com](http://www.marythomsonbooks.com)



See these works of art at the Maclaurin Gallery until 25 September



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



# Central Ayrshire Local Group

## Meetings, Outings & Holidays

### Season 2011-2012

A spoonbill at RSPB's Titchwell Marsh Reserve in June 2011 on an Ayrshire Birders trip to Norfolk and Humber side. Photo by Tony Scott.

## The Gannet

is the official newsletter of Central Ayrshire Local Group of RSPB Scotland.

## Field Trips 2011

Saturday 24 September

### FAIRLIE & PORTENCROSS

Meet at Fairlie Point car park (toilets) at 10.30. We will bird the lagoon area before driving on to Portencross for lunch (picnic) and then walk out to Hawking Craig. Finish around 15.00 hrs.

Saturday 29 October

### RSPB's newest reserve at CROOK OF BALDOON

Meet at 11.00 hrs in The Square, Wigtown. We then drive down to the Crook, following the A714 to one mile beyond the mini-roundabout at Bladnoch. Then left at the sign for Penkilin saw mill. Straight on past East Mains of Baldoon Farm. All day trip, please bring a picnic lunch.

Saturday 26 November **by COACH**

### JOHN MUIR COUNTRY PARK & ABERLADY BAY

Meet at DODDS coach depot, Ayr at 07.45 hrs. Stop at Harthill Services en-route to Aberlady (SOC's Waterstone House) and the woodlands and bay. Picnic lunch at John Muir CP before birding around Belhaven Bay. We will arrange dinner for 17.30hrs. Back in Ayr 21.30 hrs. Coach tickets at c. £20.00, available from September.

Saturday 10 December

### LOCH RYAN, STRANRAER & WIG BAY

Meet at Ballantrae car park (toilets) at 10.30 hrs. On to various viewing areas around Loch Ryan to Wig Bay. Whole day trip, please bring a picnic lunch. A garden centre with café / toilets is a short drive from Wig Bay.

## 2012

Saturday 21 January

### MAIDENS AND CULZEAN COUNTRY PARK

Meet at 10.30 hrs at Maidens Harbour car park. Toilets on site. On to Culzean around 12.15. Café and toilets here. Field trip finishes around 15.00 hrs.

Saturday 25 February

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

Saturday 24 March

### IRVINE HARBOUR & BEACH PARK

Meet at the Harbourmaster's office at 10.15. Bird out to the harbour point and then the Beach Park. Picnic lunch or something warmer at 'Puffers' or the 'Ship Inn' (the oldest pub in Irvine). Finish around 15.00 hrs.

Saturday 28 April

### MUIRSHIEL Regional Park & RSPB LOCHWINNOCH

Meet at Muirshiel for 10.30, a walk around the policies and out on to the moorland for hen harriers. Picnic lunch here (toilets, drinks and snacks available). Then call in at Lochwinnoch later in the day. Finish around 16.00 hrs.

Saturday 26 May

### THE ISLE OF CUMBRAE by ferry from Largs

Meet at the seafront car park in Largs at 10.30. Ferry to Cumbrae Slip, walk around the north and west of the island, stopping on the way for a picnic lunch. On to Millport for the bus back to the slip. In Largs c. 16.30 hrs.

Saturday 23 to Monday 25 June **by COACH**

**LONG WEEKEND - The Borders, FARNE ISLANDS & COQUET ISLAND for roseate terns.** Meet at Dodds coach depot at 07.45. Full details inside newsletter. Cost including coach plus two nights B&B - c. £175.00

## Indoor Meetings 2011

Monday 19 September

### FARMLAND BIRDS & AYRSHIRE YELLOWHAMMERS

A talk by **DAWN THOMSON**  
Membership registration precedes the talk.

Monday 17 October

**BHUTAN - THE UNEXPLORED EAST. MONASTERIES AND BIRDS.** A talk by **MIKE BETTS.**

Monday 21 November

**GORDON JAMIESON** with his exciting talk on **BIRDS AND WILDLIFE OF SOUTH AFRICA.**

Monday 19 December

**THE CRANE MIGRATION ON THE ISLAND OF RÜGEN.**  
A talk by **TONY SCOTT** at our pre-Christmas meeting.

## 2012

Monday 16 January

**IAN CORNFORTH** (Ayrshire Bat Society and SWT) talks about **BATS - the fly-by-nights in Ayrshire and beyond.**

Monday 20 February

**TOM BYERS** on **LESSER WHITETHROATS** - his studies in Ayrshire and the west of Scotland.

Monday 19 March

**DAVID STEEL** shows us the wonderful wildlife world and **BIRD LIFE OF THE FARNE ISLANDS.**

Monday 16 April

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** followed by **LOCAL BIRDING.** An update of the year's happenings by our own **JIM THOMSON**



with Angus Hogg and Tony + Gerda Scott  
**Contact address + info:**  
4 Hilltop Place  
AYR KA7 3PB  
**Tel: 01292 281 085**  
**E-mail: da.scott@tiscali.co.uk**

Wednesday 09 to Monday 21 May 2012

## SPRINGTIME IN ANDALUCIA & EXTREMADURA

Join us for a magnificent birding and wildlife tour through south and western Spain, with the addition of visits to some romantic and beautiful towns and cities on the way. We will visit the wild and untamed **Monfragüe National Park in Extremadura**, famous for its concentration of black vultures, Spanish Imperial eagles and black storks; and a visit to the **beautiful medieval town of Trujillo** with its nesting white storks; the vast **Laguna de Fuente de Piedra** near the town of Antequera, where more than 8,000 pairs of greater flamingo breed. In complete contrast, we drive south to the famous **Coto Doñana National Park** on the Andalusian coast, a World Heritage Site and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. We will visit the **centre of the sherry industry at Jerez** and the nearby **Laguna de Medina** - a true oasis for birds. Finally we head back into the mountains to spend two nights in the **ancient town of Ronda**, well known for its red-billed choughs and high concentrations of raptors in the magnificent setting of the Tajo Gorge. **We will travel** in an air-conditioned coach and half-board accommodation will be in four-star hotels in Antequera (two nights), Torreon el Rubio (four nights), Matalascañas in Andalusia (four nights) and Ronda (two nights). Flights from Glasgow are also included in **the cost of c. £1700.00.**

### NEW VENUE!

All indoor meetings take place on Monday evenings at 19.30 hrs - Newton Wallacetown Church Hall, Hall B, 60 Main Street, AYR. On-street parking available or at River Street.

**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.

**If you would like more information - please telephone:**

Ronnie Coombes  
Tel: 01292 265 891

Tony Scott  
Tel: 01292 281 085

Ian Clark  
Tel: 01292 441 940

**We will be repeating our annual bird walks in Rozelle Park for one day only in Spring 2011. At 06.00 and again at 08.30 hrs at a date to be announced.**

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 and join us on these outings.

Our committee:

Ronnie Coombes, **Group Leader.** 01292 265 891

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

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

Jim Thomson, **Outdoor Leader.** Tel: 01292 570 351

Rosemary Duke, **Syllabus Secretary.** 38 Main St., Coynton

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

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

Tony Scott, **newsletter, coach tours + trips.** 01292 281 085

Kenneth Smith, **special projects.** Tel: 01292 442 901