

## Trip Reports continued

### Lakenheath RSPB – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (GT)

A warm, dry day was forecast for our final trip of the season to Lakenheath in Suffolk and so it proved with the temperature soaring to 30 degrees C. Even before we left the visitors centre there were fine views of a kingfisher on a strategically placed perch at the centre pond. A slow walk was the order of the day and as we wandered along to our first rest stop at New Fen viewpoint we saw & heard cuckoo and numerous warblers including family parties of reed warbler. From this “bus shelter” viewpoint we were treated to excellent views of at least two bittern flying in and by as well as a kingfisher again.

From Joist Fen at the far end of the reserve we lunched and we had good close views of Bearded Tit as well as several hobbies feeding on dragonflies. Returning to the centre along the embankment alongside the River Little Ouse we had a further very good view of a bittern flying slowly in front of us for quite a distance before dropping into the riverside reeds. An excellent day for quality target birds and exceptional views of bittern – total 59 species on the day.

### Rutland Water (SLB Swift Challenge) – 13th May (GT)

The annual bird race for the Swift Challenge Trophy was again held at Rutland Water. This year 15 names were in the envelope for the draw and 5 teams were duly sorted. Spookily the 3 members of last year’s winning team were again drawn together – what were the odds of that and more importantly could another team stop their winning run? The teams set off in various directions and a Great White Egret was soon found. As expected hirundines and warblers were plentiful. Several Osprey were about, to be expected as a chick had hatched within the past 24 hours. Lagoon 4 also produced a good selection of waders to identify. Notable finds were Black Tern found by one team, Yellow Wagtail by another and a Hobby by a third. A singing Nightingale was heard by most teams but proved more difficult to see, although two teams did manage a sighting.

When the “tick lists” were returned and verified the result was a close run thing. Last year’s winning team of Linda, Barbara and Brian were in 2nd place but this year’s winners were Sue Walton, Dave Judson & Graham Turner. The “Swift Challenge” trophy, a beautiful carved wooden Swift, was duly presented to the team by its maker Roger. Total different species on the day was a marvellous 86, and all participants agreed it had been a most enjoyable day.



*The next edition of the Newsletter will be issued in Jan 2018. If you have a story for inclusion please send copy and photos to Marion at [graham.turner@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.turner@btinternet.com)*

## SLB NEWSLETTER

Issue no. 47

Aug 2017

**SOUTH LEICESTER  
BIRDWATCHERS**



As usual it's been a busy time since the last issue, with the Swift Trophy Competition and the weekend away to enjoy as well as the usual field trips. I can't believe we fit so much in! See photo (right) including most of the group enjoying the Red Kite feeding, in the sun, while on the weekend trip to South West Wales (full report inside). I hope to see you all again at the September indoor to renew your membership and to book places on the forthcoming field trips. Also a reminder that October will be the AGM & Annual Photographic competition, so start sending your entries to Graham (email below). Same format as before, prizes for both categories “Birds” and “British Wildlife, Fauna & Flora”. Maximum of two entries per person per category. Enjoy the rest of the summer and Happy Birding.



### Indoor Meetings & Events

Our forthcoming programme of indoor meetings, with guest speakers is:

<b>13th September</b>	Prof Graham Martin	Birds' Eye Views
<b>11th October</b>	AGM & Annual Photographic Competition	
<b>8th November</b>	Danny Green	Long Journey North
<b>13th December</b>	David Cromack	Return to Sri Lanka
<b>10th January</b>	Jeff Blincow	Ethiopia

Meetings start at 7.30pm (doors open from 7pm) finishing at approx. 9.30pm. Please attend early if you wish to book trips, speak to the Committee or order seed.

For further information on the South Leicester Birdwatchers, please contact Graham Turner on 01455 282854  
e-mail [graham.turner@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.turner@btinternet.com)

## Trip Reports

### South West Wales Weekend 19th - 21st May (GT)

#### Day 1

A group of 25 members set off from Blaby at 7am for our annual weekend away, this year to South West Wales. It rained most of the way to the Welsh border but when we entered Wales the weather improved and the sun was soon out. Our first stop was to Lyn Clywedog reservoir in the Cambrian mountains. We headed out following the steep circular footpath down to the water's edge. En route we had the usual Warblers & Hirundines and although there was nothing much on the reservoir, other than a raft of Great Black Backed Gulls, on the walk back a Cuckoo was found and we had excellent views of a singing male Redstart atop a bush. We then headed to the Red Kite centre at Nant y Arian for the 3pm feeding. On the feeders at the centre there was a good flock of Siskin as well as a very handsome Redpoll. As we walked the short distance to the viewing area, the sky was soon filling with around 150 Red Kite anticipating their free afternoon feed. This was a true spectacle in glorious sunshine appreciated by the whole group and especially those with cameras. The coach then took us on to our hotel at Gwbert near Cardigan. A total of 56 species on the day.

#### Day 2

After an early breakfast we set off to catch the boat to RSPB Ramsey Island for our days birding. The boat trip was only 10 minutes and after a short talk by one of the resident volunteer wardens we were soon off exploring the island.

Fairly soon we spotted one of our target species, Chough, feeding on the ground nearby and also a Little Owl sunning itself on a dry stone wall. As we wandered further along the trail we found Peregrine Falcon harassing the seabird colonies and Raven, Buzzard and Red Kite adding to the mix. Wheatears were in abundance and we also had good views of Stonechat and an especially handsome male Linnet in superb plumage. We had lunch in the sunshine on the cliff top overlooking nesting colonies of Razorbill and Guillemot with further good views of the Peregrine. A steep climb took us near to the summit of the Island's highest point granting splendid views over the island and sea. On the walk back to the centre we encountered the small resident herd of Red Deer. Another excellent day bathed in sunshine. A total number of 43 species seen.

#### Day 3

After the exertions of yesterday our final day was a more leisurely pace with hardly a step or a hill to be conquered. Our first stop was the Teifi Marshes reserve only a few miles inland from the hotel. Here there was an impressive Visitor Centre with a feeding station which offered views of various Tits and a Nuthatch, and then we set off on the circular walk around the reserve. Warblers were in abundance and some of the group had fine views of a singing Garden Warbler. In the reed beds we saw both Sedge and Reed Warblers with Cetti's Warbler being heard and from the final hide we found the resident herd of Water Buffalo enjoying the sunshine.

## Trip Reports continued

Lunch was taken on the coach as we started our return journey home which included a short stop at Cors Caron bog just north of Tregaron. A walk along the boardwalk to the hide produced views of Smooth Lizard basking in the sun and a Mink whilst the only bird of note was a solitary Redshank. On the walk back we did find Marsh Tit, heard a Cuckoo and along the disused railway line saw a fine pair of Bullfinch to add to the days total of 52.

A super weekend break at an excellent hotel and where quality birds and amazing sights were enjoyed - a total number of species for the weekend was 83.

## Field Trips 2017

Sep 16th

Sculthorpe Moor NR, Norfolk NR21 9GN

A Hawk and Owl Trust site that has been developed since the club's last visit in 2009. Boardwalks will make for easy perambulating and there are 5 hides in all. A new aerial walkway climbs to a platform 4 metres above the site, giving spectacular elevated views over the fen and reed bed. They have Tawny and Barn Owls here and we should still see summer visitors enjoying their last few days in this country. Time permitting, we will stop off at Eldernell Lane, Whittlesey on the way home for more owls!

Facilities: Toilets. Coffee machine only. Cost £6.50

Oct 14th

Amwell NR & RSPB Rye Meads, Herts, SG12 9SS/SG12 8JS

Two reserves close to each other in Herts. Amwell was formerly gravel pits but is now a SSSI, with 3 hides overlooking the reserve for us to view waterfowl and tardy migrants. Rye Meads has reed beds so we should see a wide range of birds on the day.

Facilities: None at Amwell. Toilets and Coffee machine at Rye Meads. Cost £2.50

Nov 18th

RSPB Langford Lowfields, Notts NG23 7QL

**NB. A week later than the usual Saturday**

As this quarry becomes worked out more of it is being handed over to the RSPB for further development. However, this reserve is already a pleasant site to visit with lagoons and reed bed areas which have attracted Bitterns, Bearded Tits and Water Rail. A pontoon walkway forms part of the circular path. We may also visit a Notts Wildlife Trust site at Besthorpe for wintering ducks and geese and/or Spalford Warren which is a heathland reserve close by.

Facilities: None, but Cafes in the vicinity. Cost £2.50.

**All booking forms and payments to be returned to Sue Walton please.  
Sue Walton, 6 Peers Way, Huncote, Leicester LE9 3BT.**