

## The Ornithological Section

*President*—The Rev. F. L. BLATHWAYT, M.B.O.U., Dyrham Rectory, Chippenham, Wilts.

*Vice-President*—Mr. BERNARD W. TUCKER, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.,  
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*Secretary and Treasurer*—Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, F.S.A., Taunton Castle.

*Committee*—The President, the Secretary and Treasurer, the Rev. C. J. PRING,  
Messrs. E. GERALD HOLT, EDMUND PAGE, H. TETLEY and B. W. TUCKER.

THE Annual Meeting of the Section was held in the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, on 31 March 1938, when the Rev. F. L. Blathwayt presided.

The Treasurer presented the financial statement for 1937, which showed a credit balance on 31 December of 9s. 4d. On the other hand there was the liability of the cost of the Report for that year to be taken into consideration. There was also on deposit at the bank the sum of £26 7s. 0d.

The President, the Vice-President and the Secretary and Treasurer were re-elected; also the four members of the Editorial Committee, and the seven members of the Committee of the Section. Sir William Meade-King, Mr. E. G. Holt, Mr. H. Tetley and Mr. E. Page were re-elected to form the Wild Birds Protection Committee.

The purchase from the Wigesworth Fund of *The Practical Handbook on Ornithology*, in 5 vols., was confirmed by the meeting.

Mr. Tucker made a short report on the visit of ornithologists to the Isle of May Bird Observatory.

It was announced that owing to the lamented death of Dr. R. L. Meade-King, Captain H. L. Cochrane, R.N., M.B.O.U., had kindly accepted the invitation to act as bird instructor to the Somerset Police recruits when visiting the Museum.

In the afternoon Mr. W. B. Alexander, M.B.O.U., gave a lantern lecture on the subject of Bird Observatories.

The autumn meeting was held in the Wyndham Hall at

26. H. C. Darby, *Historical Geography of England before 1800* (1936), 184.
27. Maitland, *op. cit.*, 425.
28. The occurrence of large areas of limestone would mean that the number of ploughs on the remaining area must have been high.
29. F. W. Morgan, 'The Domesday Geography of Berkshire', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, li (1935), 353-363; F. W. Morgan, 'The Domesday Geography of Wiltshire', *Wiltshire Arch. & Nat. Hist. Mag.*, xlviii, 68-81.
30. D.B., iii, 156.
31. Maitland, *op. cit.*, 444.
32. *Somerset Record Society*, iii (1889), ed. F. H. Dickinson.
33. *Somerset, Victoria County History*, i (1906), 423.
34. F. W. Morgan, 'Domesday Woodland in South West England', *Antiquity*, x (1936), 306-324.
35. C. V. Dawe, *Regional Types of British Agriculture* (ed. J. P. Maxton, 1936), 205.
36. Billingsley, *op. cit.*, 166.
37. D. P. Dobson, *Archaeology of Somerset* (1931), 140-1. On the question of the relation between villas and claylands see E. Barger 'The Open Fields', *Eng. Hist. Review*, liii (1938).
38. H. C. Darby, *op. cit.*, 198.
39. D.B., iii, 157b; 279b.
40. Map by F. W. Morgan in H. C. Darby, *op. cit.*, 199.
41. D.B., iii, 447b; 280; 147.
42. D.B., iii, 104b; 160b.
43. D.B., iii, 270; 442.
44. D.B., iii, 170b-171; 103b; 160; 172.
45. D.B., iii, 361b.
46. D.B., iii, 430; 430; 430; 431b.
47. D.B., iii, 114b; 103; 107; 443; 352b; 357b; 383; 105.
48. D.B., iii, 105; 172; 189.
49. D.B., iii, 89b; 82; 113; 160; 270b.
50. D.B., iii, 89; 265b; 277b; 270b; 282b; 432b; 172.
51. Maitland, *op. cit.*, 215.
52. A. Ballard, *The Domesday Boroughs* (1904).
53. D.B., iii, 173b; 174; 174b; 188; 113; 105b; 90b.
54. Ballard, *The Domesday Inquest* (1906), 181.
55. D.B., iii, 173b; 174; 174b; 88b.

Taunton Castle on 27 October when the President was in the chair.

Owing to the increasing cost of printing and the importance of the information published by the Section, the Committee was asked to give consideration as to the desirability of increasing the subscription of members of the Parent Society from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d., and of non-members from 5s. to 6s.

In the afternoon the Rev. C. J. Pring, M.B.O.U., gave a lantern lecture on 'A Bird Trip to Shetland'. In this part of the programme the Section was joined by the Taunton Field Club who kindly provided Tea at Maynard's Restaurant for those able to accept the invitation.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY

#### SOMERSET BIRD NOTES, 1938

Of chief interest among the bird notes for the County during 1938 is the extraordinary number of rare species visiting the new reservoir between Cheddar and Axbridge. The following notes are taken from the Ornithological Section's report for 1938, to which reference should be made for full particulars.

##### RAVEN, *Corvus c. corax* L.

Again nested in the Avon Gorge on the Gloucestershire side; at least 3 young reared (*H.H.D.*). A nest with 2 eggs at Sand Point on Mar. 3 (*H.W.Neal, per H.T.*). Hatched in quarry site on Brean Down (*H.C.*). One tree nest found; a cliff nest in W. Somerset had 3 eggs on Mar. 6 (*F.H.*). Four young reared in a cliff site (*A.V.C.*). Six young hatched in quarry site on Brendons on Mar. 17 (*C.J.P.*)

##### HOODED CROW, *Corvus c. cornix* L.

One seen at Burnham-on-Sea from Jan.—end of March (*D.Macdonald, per H.T.*)

##### HAWFINCH, *Coccothraustes c. coccothraustes* L.

Three occupied nests within 50 yds. of each other in Leigh Woods on May 11 (*B.K.*)

##### SNOW BUNTING, *Plectrophenax nivalis* (L.)

One, probably an adult female, seen at Cheddar reservoir on Nov. 17; it was closely observed, and full details noted (*A.C.L. & W.R.T.*)



BRITISH WILLOW TIT, *Parus atricapillus Kleinschmidti* Hellm.

Definitely observed in the Shapwick district in April by several observers. One seen and heard, Shapwick Moor, Apr. 14, and a pair on Apr. 18 (*K.D.S.*). A pair watched at very close quarters in same district on Apr. 24 (*H.H.D.*). Another pair, probably this species, seen in same district on Apr. 8 (*A.M.*)

RING-OUZEL, *Turdus t. torquatus* L.

A nest with 3 eggs found on Exmoor, May 9; it hatched a week later (*F.H.*)

BLACK REDSTART, *Phœnicurus ochrurus gibraltariensis* (Gm.)

Several recorded during the year as follows: Sand Point, Dec. 27 (*Mr. & Mrs. S.H.G. Barnett, per H.T.*); Burnham Brewery, up to Mar. 6, and again from Nov. 10 to Dec. 16; Brean Down (two), Dec. 11 and 31 (*E.G.H.*); Winscombe, Mar. 22 (*D.B.G.*); Glastonbury, mid-Dec to end of year (*C.I.E.*); Cheddar Reservoir, Dec. 11 (*H.H.D.*); Martock, Nov. 26 (*G.H.E.Y.*); and Dunster (two) on Dec. 31 (*A.V.C.*)

SHORT-EARED OWL, *Asio f. flammeus* (Pontopp.)

One seen at Berrow, Mar. 7; and two on Sedgemoor, Oct. 29 (*E.G.H.*)

HOBBY, *Falco s. subbuteo* L.

One (? two) seen at Blagdon, May 18 (*C.J.F. Coombs, per H.T.*). Fine views of two over Ubley end of Blagdon reservoir on Sept. 10. One at Chesterblade on Oct. 4 (*H.H.D.*)

MERLIN, *Falco columbarius æsalon* Tunst.

Again nested in old Raven's nest on Exmoor (*W.C.*); four young seen in nest (*F.H.*)

OSPREY, *Pandion h. haliaetus* (L.)

A large raptorial bird seen by Mr. H. W. Neal over Blagdon reservoir on Sept. 8 was confidently identified by him as an Osprey (*H.H.D.*)

BITTERN, *Botaurus s. stellaris* (L.)

One flushed near Ashcott on Dec. 31 (*E.G.H.*)

GADWALL, *Anas strepera* L.

An immature duck shot on Sedgemoor on Feb. 1 (*M.J.I.*)

GARGANEY, *Anas querquedula* L.

A pair identified on Cheddar reservoir on May 6 (*F.L.B.* & *H.T.*). A pair on Sedgmoor in May, but no sign of nesting (*F.H.*)

PINTAIL, *Anas a. acuta* L.

A drake on Reservoir ii at Barrow Gurney on Nov. 18, 25, and 27 (*H.T.*, *H.H.D.*, & *B.K.*). Two drakes and two ducks on Cheddar reservoir on Dec. 15 (*H.T.*); on Dec. 20 the number had increased to four drakes and two ducks (*H.T.* & *B.K.*). A drake shot at Porlock at end of Dec. (*F.H.*)

SHOVELER, *Spatula clypeata* (L.)

The large number of 70 recorded on Cheddar reservoir on Dec. 11 (*H.H.D.*)

SCAUP, *Nyroca m. marila* (L.)

A male at Barrow Gurney reservoirs from Feb. 4—May 8 seen by several recorders; another on Sept. 17 (*H.T.*), and again on Dec. 8 and 28 (*W.R.T.*). Twenty to twenty-five off Dunster beach on Feb. 6 (*A.V.C.*)

GOLDENEYE, *Bucephala c. clangula* (L.)

Several at Barrow Gurney in early part of year; 4 seen on Feb. 27 (*H.H.D.*). At Blagdon, 10 were seen on Apr. 3 (*H.T.* & *H.H.D.*). At Cheddar reservoir 4 or 5 reported by Mr. S. Lewis on Feb. 24; 5 recorded on Dec. 20 (*H.T.* & *B.K.*)

COMMON SCOTER, *Oidemia n. nigra* (L.)

An adult male at Portishead dock in Sept. (*C.Tuckett*, per *H.T.*). The remains of an adult male were found at Barrow Gurney on Nov. 3; another found dead at edge of Cheddar reservoir on Oct. 14 (*H.T.* & *B.K.*). Twelve off-shore between Dunster and Blue Anchor on Aug. 1 (*A.V.C.*)

SMEW, *Mergus albellus* L.

Two 'redheads' at Barrow Gurney on Dec. 29 (*G.E. Clothier*, per *H.H.D.*); two on Cheddar reservoir on Dec. 11 (*H.H.D.*), and one on Dec. 20 (*H.T.* & *B.K.*)

GANNET, *Sula bassana* (L.)

An adult male picked up alive at Burnham on Oct. 6 (*H.T.*)

FULMAR, *Fulmarus g. glacialis* (L.)

A dead female picked out of water at Cheddar reservoir on Nov. 25 by Mr. S. Lewis after strong gales (*H.T.*)

RED-NECKED GREBE, *Podiceps g. griseigena* (Bodd.)

A single bird at Barrow Gurney reservoirs on Feb. 21, 1937, was identified by members of the Oxford Ornithological Society. This is a first record for Barrow Gurney (H.T. & F.L.B.)

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER, *Colymbus immer* Brünn.

One at Barrow Gurney reservoirs from Nov. 25 to Dec. 8 (H.T., H.H.D., etc.)

BLACK-THROATED DIVER, *Colymbus a. arcticus* L.

One found alive with damaged leg in a lane near Williton on Dec. 20 ; it was released again next day (F.H.)

RED-THROATED DIVER, *Colymbus stellatus* Pontopp.

One in Floating Harbour, Bristol, from Jan. 31 to Feb. 9 ; it was badly oiled and died on Feb. 10 in Clifton Zoo (H.T.)

SANDERLING, *Crocethia alba* (Pall.)

One at Cheddar reservoir on May 4 (H.T. & H.H.D.), and on May 6 (G.H.J.F.). Two on Dunster beach on Feb. 27, and three on Dec. 4 (A.V.C.)

CURLEW-SANDPIPER, *Calidris testacea* (Pall.)

Two near Warren Point, between Minehead and Dunster, on Oct. 16 (A.V.C.)

GREENSHANK, *Tringa nebularia* (Gunn.)

Recorded by various observers in Sept. at Blagdon reservoir ; as many as three on Sept. 13 (A.A.A.). One on R. Axe on May 4, and two on May 7 (K.D.S.). One at Cheddar reservoir on Sept. 3 (J.H.S.)

BLACK-WINGED STILT, *Himantopus h. himantopus* (L.)

One at Cheddar reservoir on Sept. 4 seen by Mr. S. Lewis at close quarters. This is the third record for Somerset.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT, *Limosa l. lapponica* (L.)

One at Cheddar reservoir on May 4 (H.T. & H.H.D.). Five at Minehead on Dec. 27 (A.V.C.)

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT, *Limosa l. limosa* (L.)

Recorded several times at Blagdon and Cheddar reservoirs. Six at Blagdon on Sept. 10 (H.H.D.). Eight at Cheddar on Aug. 17 (B.K.), and ten on Aug. 18 (H.H.D.).

BLACK TERN, *Chlidonias n. niger* (L.)

Eight at Blagdon on May 5 (K.D.S.) ; four on Oct. 6 (H.W.Neal, per H.T.) ; five on Oct. 8 and six on Oct. 9



(*H.T.*, *B. K.*, & *H.H.D.*). Two at Woodspring Bay on May 6 (*K.D.S.*)

A wonderful assembly at Cheddar reservoir in early May. Three on May 4 (*H.T.* & *H.H.D.*); twenty-one counted on May 6 (*H.T.*, *K.D.S.*, & *F.L.B.*); two on May 7, and none on May 8 (*H.T.*)

COMMON TERN, *Sterna h. hirundo* L.

Twenty at Blagdon on June 2 (*H.W.Neal*, per *H.T.*). Several records from Cheddar reservoir; six were seen on June 28 (*B.K.*)

LITTLE GULL, *Larus minutus* Pall.

One at Blagdon reservoir on Oct. 8 (*H.T.*)

A remarkable occurrence at Cheddar reservoir in early May: five adults present on May 4; twelve—8 adults and 4 immature—on May 6; four or six on May 7; none on May 8. These birds were seen by *F.L.B.*, *K.D.S.*, *W.R.T.*, *A.C.L.*, *J.H.S.*, *G.H.J.F.*, *H.H.D.*, and *H.T.*

BLACK-HEADED GULL, *Larus r. ridibundus* L.

A 'ringed' bird, found dead at Cheddar reservoir on Sept. 20 by Mr. S. Lewis, was ringed at Chlumec, Bohemia; the date of ringing is not given.

KITTIWAKE GULL, *Rissa t. tridactyla* (L.)

Four over Cheddar reservoir on Feb. 15 reported by Mr. S. Lewis; one was picked up dead and partly eaten the next day.

WESTERN LITTLE BUSTARD, *Otis t. tetrax* L.

The female Little Bustard taken at Drayton on 19 Oct. 1894 has been identified as the above species. It is now in the Bristol Museum (*H.T.*)

QUAIL *Coturnix c. coturnix* (L.)

One out of covey of 8 killed on telegraph wires near Rooksbridge on May 6 (*E.G.H.*). Several seen on three different occasions near Langport in Aug. and Sept.; one was shot (*M.J.I.*). Mr. Wyndham's keeper twice saw Quail at Williton during the summer (*F.H.*)

Contributors to the above notes may be identified by their initials from the following: A. A. Adams; Rev. F. L. Blathwayt; H. Cox; W. Copp; H. H. Davis; G. H. J. Fursdon; D. B. Grubb; E. G. Holt; F. Hibberd; Dr. M. J. Ingram; B. King; A. C. Leach; Miss A. Miller; Rev. C. J. Pring; J. H. Savory; K. D. Smith; H. Tetley; W. R. Taylor; G. H. E. Young.

C. J. PRING