

the Bardsey Beacon



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Bardsey Website:

www.bbfo.org.uk

The Bardsey Blog:

<http://bardseybellman.blogspot.com/>

The Beacon On-line:

www.bbfo.org.uk/beacon.htm

Appeal for Photographs

It is intended that the **Birds of Bardsey** book will contain photographs that represent the birds seen throughout the lifetime of the Observatory.

As early photographs will not be digital, please consider sending the original prints/slides so that they can be digitised, or arranging for them to be digitised yourself.

The more images we have to select from, the more complete the book will be.

Photographs on any media are also welcome for the Annual Report.

Please send images to Steve on the island (but please do not email them).

Editor's Intro.

How many of you saw the BBC feature about flying penguins? It was televised, of course, on April 1st! To add authenticity, they had even hired the reassuring tones of none other than David Attenborough.

Those of you who are a little older may recall a similar April Fool that appeared on Esther Rantzen's *That's Life* (yes, that dates this recollection!) when they reported that a new species of primate had been discovered - the Lirpa Loof!

In this issue we welcome our new President - the Rt. Revd. David Hawkins, Bishop of Barking - the full picture is on page 6.

If you have any stories or anecdotes of past trips to Bardsey (concise, if possible!) that you'd like to share with other Friends, especially if you have a photo of any personalities involved, these would be welcome. If you have any comments or feedback on this issue of the Beacon, please get in touch (my contact details appear on the back page of this issue).

Mike Armitage

New Sale Goods Items

Please see the final page for Denise Healey's advertisement for a new addition to Enlli's sale goods range - Lead Crystal Whisky Glasses with a beautiful Manx Shearwater logo, a bird that is so symbolic of Bardsey.

The Bardsey Beacon is the newsletter of the Friends of Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory (Registered Charity No. 249790)

A member of the Bird Observatories Council



Warden's Report

Firstly an apology – this report may appear to be rather sketchy and jumpy. I must admit I am rushing a wee bit to get it complete before we go back to the island on Friday (we hope!!!!!!).

In my last report I summarised the autumn on the island and told you that I left in early December. We went and stayed with Emma's parents for a while and spent a short time in Yorkshire with my parents.

Christmas was spent in Southport with Emma's parents. We were joined on Christmas Day by Emma's grandmother, aunt, uncle and brother with respective partners. Connor had a wonderful time unwrapping his presents. I would like to thank those who send cards and gifts for us for Christmas.

When we left the island we got all our wedding photos and had them made into a professionally bound and printed book. We gave one each to our parents and had one for ourselves. Anyone interested in seeing it on the island can call round for a coffee during your stay.

Over the winter I did four talks to various groups around the country. In total about 200 people turned out for them. Most were new faces, though there were some Bardsey regulars amongst the crowds. Hopefully this will encourage more people to come to the island in the near future.

Over the winter I have been very busy, so much so that I have hardly been out birding. I joined Patrick for a day out to Norfolk in early January to go and see the White-crowned Sparrow at Cley. We had a good days birding seeing Black Brant and a flock of Snow and Lapland Buntings. We also bumped into a few old friends there including Ian Fisher (former BBFO Assistant Warden).

So what have I been doing with my time. Well the Annual Report was completed by early January and sent to the editor. This was what took up most of my days up to this point. I also had interviews to do for the new Assistant Warden post in December.

From January I have been completing the annual returns and ringing data for the BTO, writing the annual report for the Countryside Council for Wales. Preparing for various meetings etc.

I have also spent a great deal of time in preparing and sourcing 'stuff' for the improvement of the Observatory. We have bought/acquired loads of new stuff for the Obs to make the stay of our visitors even more comfortable. On top of this we have to spend quite some time each winter collecting supplies for us to manage to live on the island for the whole year. Imagine how much you bring over for a week or two, then multiply that by about 40! Well that is what we need to live on and there are three of us, so it takes a lot of organising. We have to buy all our meat and other things well in advance of when they are to be eaten. Just try and imagine what you will be having for tea on 24th May or 18th August. That is the sort of thing we have to consider. Going round supermarkets – checking prices and shelf life, etc, etc. However....

In late February, (shortly after the BBFO council meeting) Emma and I travelled down to Macclesfield to see one of our vice presidents – Mr Tony Bianchi. Tony has, over the years been extremely generous to the island and the Observatory fitting us out with furniture from his warehouse. Again Tony's generosity showed no bounds and Emma and I (having been treated to lunch by Tony) chose some new furniture for the Warden's accommodation, and for the Observatory itself. Tony has provided us with more new rugs for the rooms and a new computer desk

for me to work at, as well as a new sofa and chair. The Observatory is very lucky to have such a generous friend.

After we had been to see Tony we were hoping to get back to the island the following weekend (1st March). It is now 11th March and I am sitting writing this piece so as to be able to email it to Beacon editor, Mike, before we go back this weekend (15th!!!). Richard and Richard were supposed to be coming out on the 8th, though we will all now be going back together. The reason for this delay was, as you may have guessed, the weather. It seems to me to have been windy forever. I was talking to Christine last week and she said it was one of the windiest winters for a while.

Birdwise the island has been fairly quiet, but Ben has had one or two good birds in my absence. The year started with a Red Kite over the farm on 1st! Ben also had an Eider in Solfach for about a week and Red-throated Diver off the west coast.

RECYCLE YOUR INK CARTRIDGES

If you own, or know someone else that owns an inkjet printer (NOT EPSON or DELL) and you throw away your cartridges, then you could help the Observatory by letting us have your cartridges to recycle. The Obs can get between £1 and £2.20 PER CARTRIDGE!! This newsletter will go out to about 340 members. If everyone of you uses one colour and one black cartridge per year that could make a staggering £680 per year if you were to let us have your empty cartridges. If you want to bring them to the island, or any of the BBFO meetings please do so. We are also looking for old mobile phones to recycle. Again we can get between £1 and £5 for an old phone. If you can get hold of any of these items and wish to bring them to me on the island I would happily deal with them from there.

FOOD STORE

Just a reminder that we would like people to

check the website before arriving on the island to see what the availability of items are in the shop. We will endeavour to keep the shop fully stocked during the summer months, however at the start and end of the season there will be some items that are not in stock.

Steve Stansfield

Secretary's Bit

A meeting of the Observatory Council was held on Saturday 23rd February at the Marine Hotel, Criccieth, followed by the Annual General Meeting.

The meeting started on time at 10.30 am with our Chairman, Patrick Davies, welcoming all members and observers and thanking them for their attendance.

The Chairman then presented his report in which he gave a detailed update of all the projects currently under consideration and relating to the general business of the Observatory.

He was pleased to announce that the Rt. Rev. David Hawkins, Bishop of Barking had agreed to accept the position as President of the Observatory, subject to proper proposal etc. at the AGM and election by the Membership.

Members of Council all agreed that this proposal would receive their full support and looked forward to welcoming David as our President. This proposal was duly presented at the AGM and received full approval. We now welcome David and trust that he enjoys his office, partaking as much as possible in the work of the Obs.

The diesel generators at 'Cristin' have continued to cause concern over the winter and Council have agreed that we should

the Bardsey Beacon

purchase a replacement for the current unreliable units that will give us some guarantee of good service for some time. We hope that this course of action will ease the concerns over reliable electricity supply at the Obs for some time.

A work party would be arranged to install this unit as soon as possible, hopefully to be in place and working ready for the new visitor season

Steve Stansfield is to continue as our Warden for the coming year with the support of his lady wife Emma and son, Connor.

Richard Brown was appointed as Assistant Warden for this year with Richard Else as a Research Assistant conducting monitoring work on Manx Shearwaters.

Dianne Charles, our Treasurer, presented her interim report of the financial standing of the Observatory which is holding its own despite some heavy financial outlay.

Alicia Normand, our Bookings Secretary gave her report which showed good visitor numbers through 2007 and fair numbers already booked for 2008.

The Sales Team of Denise Healey, our Warden Steve, and his partner (now wife) Emma have made the shop a great success, well supported by Simon Hugheston Roberts and Dafydd Phillips who maintain supplies to the food store. Thanks were recorded to all concerned.

Our Warden Steve Stansfield, gave his report which can be read in our Annual Report when published. We are grateful to Steve, supported in no small way by Emma, for all the time and effort given towards the success of the Observatory.

The 52nd Annual General Meeting was well attended and it was pleasing to welcome

many good friends who have maintained their support over many years for which we thank them most sincerely.

Apologies were received from two of our Vice Presidents, 'Tony' Bianchi who continues to give great support to the Observatory and Peter Hope Jones, who although not well enough to attend our meetings, always retains a keen interest in all matters relating to the Observatory, its work and 'Enlli in general.

As mentioned earlier, the Rt. Rev. David Hawkins the Bishop of Barking was proposed and seconded to take the office as President and was duly elected. Liz James was proposed and elected to Council as a 'Friend of Bardsey Observatory'. Gwen Newton and Dafydd Phillips have completed their current term of office as representatives of the 'Friends of Bardsey Observatory' but will continue as co-opted members subject to confirmation at the next meeting of Council. All Executive Officers were willing to continue in their office as were other serving 'Friends of Bardsey Observatory' and were re-elected en-bloc.

Alicia Normand completed the day with a fine talk about bee-keeping which held everyone's interest and which drew many questions from the 'floor'. Ann Owen Vaughan ran a very successful 'raffle' which raised £22.50 for the Observatory.

The next meeting of Council will take place on Saturday 12th July 2008 at the Marine Hotel, Criccieth, beginning sharp at 10.30 a.m and a General Meeting at which the only 'Item of Agenda' will be the presentation of the (audited) independently inspected Accounts for acceptance.

Further information regarding the Accounts will be made available to members before this meeting.

A second meeting of Council will take place on Saturday 6th December 2008 at the Haling Dene Centre, Penkridge.

A third meeting on 21st February 2009 will be followed by the 53rd AGM held at the Marine Hotel Criccieth again.

Mike West

Electronic Beacon

We are trying to cut down the costs of sending out the Beacon and are now appealing to all those who have internet access to consider the following idea. We are putting the current Beacon on the website so that it may be accessed easily by any member on the internet.

One big advantage to members will be the fact that photographs and the like in the Beacon will be in glorious colour instead of black and white. The advantage for the Observatory will be a saving on the cost of postage and photocopying.

Therefore electronic versions of the Beacon (in PDF format) will be put onto the following page: **www.bbfo.org.uk/beacon.htm**

Anyone who is happy to access the Beacon in this way **MUST PLEASE LET ME KNOW SO THAT I CAN STOP SENDING THEM A COPY BY POST.**

Just send an email to me at **bookings@bbfo.org.uk** or to Bevan Craddock at **webmaster@bbfo.org.uk** and we can then let you know if we ever change the page on the website.

Naturally we will still have to send out the Annual Report by post and we do realise that

there may be a lot of our members who do not have access to the internet and who will still want their newsletter by post.

Alicia Normand

The Last Sale at Car Boot Hill

There are many ways of raising a few pounds for the Obs – jumping out of a plane, running a marathon, swimming the channel or simply having a car boot sale! Judith Read and I have been having annual car boot sales for Bardsey for what seems like dozens of years and must have raised a considerable amount to date. Last year we were completely banjaxed by the weather – every time we planned a date it poured with rain. By January this year neither of us could move in our respective garages for the amount of hopefully saleable junk. Friends know we do this for the Obs and often unload bits and pieces on us! We spent an afternoon pricing things (a 50p box, a 20p box and a few things worth a bit more) and discarding clothing and what was real junk. We still managed to require two cars to fit it all in and we duly arrived at Newton Abbot Racecourse early on Sunday morning. The day was fairly bright but was blowing a hoolie and non too warm either but we just prayed the rain would keep off. We were surprised how quickly we began to sell and we had shifted quite a bit of stuff by the time an enormous black cloud came scudding our way. Within minutes people were abandoning their stalls and packing up. We decided to do the same and just made it in time before the heavens opened. During the morning we had decided that this would most definitely be the LAST boot sale we would do and anything left would be downloaded to a local charity shop. We duly drove to the Animals in Distress centre and asked if they would like any of the

things we had in the car. They were delighted and took it all!

We drove back home and after a warming cuppa poured all the cash onto the table. After deducting the cost of entry (£14) we were left with £143.12 for the Observatory so it had been a very worthwhile morning. We hope that this will inspire some other Friends of the Obs to take on where we have left off and in the meantime we will be devising another wheeze to raise money.

Alicia Normand and Judith Read

New President



We are very pleased to announce that we have at last found our New President. The Rt. Revd. David Hawkins, Bishop of Barking, has very kindly accepted our invitation to be our new

President. David will be known to some of our regular visitors to the island, especially those who visit in the Autumn when he has been making regular birding visits in recent years. David has been visiting the island since 1997. We had been searching for some time for an appropriate person to head our 54 year old organisation and at last feel we have found the perfect person to continue the good work that our last President, Dr. Eifion Jones, carried out for many years until his untimely death 3 years ago. David's mother and father, Monica and John Hawkins, very much loved the island

and were regular visitors and great friends of Sister Helen Mary who was the resident nun on the island at the time. His father, John, represented the West Midland Bird Club on the Council of the Observatory and David served on the council for a term from 1986. And, of course, not only is David a proficient birdwatcher, regularly contributing at evening roll call when on the island when we record the birds of the day, but he has a close affinity with the spiritual life of the island. Last year he was asked if he would officiate at the wedding of Emma and Steve on the island which he happily agreed to. In the October of 2007 some of us were privileged to be present at the unforgettable ceremony which was conducted in the Island Chapel and in the Abbey ruins.

I am sure you would like to hear a little more about our new President so our research can reveal the following: The Rt. Revd David Hawkins was consecrated bishop on 17 October 2002 and began his public ministry as Anglican Bishop of Barking in the Diocese of Chelmsford in January 2003. He has special responsibility for mission and parish development. The Barking area comprises the five East London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest, together with the Epping Forest and Harlow districts of west Essex. The population is 1.3 million and it includes a wide mix of ethnicity and culture. The area comprises 166 churches, 60 of which are set in 'urban priority area' parishes. The Barking area also includes the main site for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games in London. David is an ornithologist and artist.

So as well as a special responsibility for mission and parish development to a population of 1.3 million in East London, David now has taken on a new mission, heading our Bird & Field Observatory on an island with a resident population of only 9

or 10 individuals but which has a summer population of thousands of breeding birds and, of course, is also reputed to be home to thousands of saints.

On behalf of all the Island population (humans and wildlife) and our members, we thank you David for agreeing to become our President.

Bevan Craddock

Introducing the Young Person's Newsletter

Just a few words about an addition to the Bardsey Beacon that I hope will be welcomed by our members. It comes in the form of a supplement initially titled Young Person's Newsletter. I am very grateful to Jo Jones for agreeing to put this together, following a discussion we had on Bardsey last summer. The intention is that this supplement offers something that relates better to our younger members. If you do not have youngsters within your household, please consider sharing the supplement with your extended family, friends, neighbours etc.

This will help to promote the Observatory to a wider audience. There may not be a supplement with every copy of the Bardsey Beacon, it will depend on the availability of material. I would encourage you to send things that you would like to be considered for inclusion to Jo Jones by email:

JoJones14@btinternet.com

We are looking for a snappy title for this supplement, so please send ideas to Jo. We are also running a competition for our young members to create a "Green/Environmental" slogan to accompany a

new logo being designed for our children's clothing range. Aim for a slogan that is catchy, like the RSPB's slogan "for birds, for people, for ever" and try to make it relate to Bardsey in some way.

Entries should be sent to our Warden by the end of July (2008). The prize will be a free tee-shirt with YOUR slogan on it.

Patrick Davies

New BBFO Officer sought

We are looking to co-opt someone onto BBFO Council to act as a Membership Development Officer. It is expected that the primary functions of the role will be the recruitment of new members of BBFO, as Friends of Bardsey, the retention of existing members and the maintenance of a master list of members and affiliated organisations.

Anyone who is interested or wants more information should contact the BBFO Chairman, Patrick Davies by email (**chair@bbfo.org.uk**).

Wales's first Red-flanked Bluetail seen on Bardsey

Ben Stammers was the lucky observer who found Wales's first Red-flanked Bluetail on Enlli in October 2007. He has written a full account of the event, and his feelings about rarities and twitching, in Natur Cymru. Photographs by Dan Brown are also included. Copies are available for £4 from Natur Cymru, Maes y Ffynnon, Bangor LL57 2DW, or you could email **info@naturcymru.org.uk** for subscription details.

SALE GOODS New for 2008

Hand Cut Lead Crystal Whisky Glasses

Specially designed and engraved with our
Shearwater logo

Available on the Island or by Special Order
£15.00 each with English or Welsh
inscription



Send cheque payable to
BARDSEY BIRD & FIELD OBSERVATORY.
Please include £2.50 per item to cover postage and
packing

To- Denise Healey
41 Nursery Drive, Penkridge,
Stafford ST19 5SJ

Please remember to state English or Welsh inscription
Allow 21 days for delivery

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