

Are you ready to go on *YET* another intellectual journey of discovery?

If you have eyes then kindly avert them for fear of them falling out in excitement ... 'cos it's time for...

# The Pigwell Bay Brid ROpnit

(or the annual diary of a man having his seventeenth nervous breakdown in the full glare of the general public)

For *SOME* Of the Year 2010 ... well odd bits AnywAy.

2010 things, bits and general tat include:

Craig's comeback! **Forrests** **four!** Months... well okay **six** as it turned out?

Bird lays egg in open mouth of Pegwell's most **idiotic** waffle mouthed birder.

Man arrested for **Fred Flintstone's** impersonation/bike ride. (October)

Ben's hasty **escape** at the end of August saves him **brain ache** amuch.

More things appertaining to **wigs** and **arthritic joints** than you can shake a stick at.

17 men die with **boredom** at the announcement of the Royal wedding.

**Johnny W** swaps wig for Queen Elizabeth's favourite set of **Wooden** teeth.

Building site **blues** early winter. Extra added **sarcasm** in profusion.

Man with **two long legs** laughs lots at man with two extremely **short legs**.

**Klaus** update.

**BeAdle** comes out of the **closet**.

**Photographists** ... what's all that about **eh?**

Nine fingers' **MacClumsy** steps on own hair - slips, Knocks **Pete MacClumsy** off his bike into river and catches **neck** in lift door - **exclusive!**

All this ... and more ... inside this **comic** of wonderment!!

- For the barely **visible** new world recession price of **8.7 pence!**

**Introduction:** The first draft of this docu-soap from the bowels of bad taste and awful birding (up to the end of April at least) was lost during one disastrous week in May when both my computers passed away in the space of three days. Even all of Gadgets skills at computer mending, trickery and tomfoolery could not retrieve either the lost document which included months of stuff pre-written for the 2010 bird report or many of the precious photos and videos that were contained within the two hard-drives that were in the machines. Now, many months on as I sit down to write this tale of trial and frustration, I'm still a bit gutted - though to be honest - the loss of three or four months writings and ideas for the 2010 report are small potatoes to some of the other bits and pieces that went astray, never to be retrieved. This meant that I had to rush about securing records as late as the autumn months and then set out this whole report from scratch, when not only not in the mood but under pressure, which just reminds how much easier it is to write this nonsense over the course of a whole year when the mood takes rather than as it feels now in this 'I can't be bothered' attitude. I usually write much of the silly nonsense that turns up in these rags of well meaning character assassination during the early winter and in small increments as the mood takes me during the summer so the timing of the computer breakdown wasn't exactly ideal as not only did I lose the stuff on the hard-drives but I was without a computer for months after that too. I wrongly thought that if I had two machines that the chances of them both going up the spout simultaneously would be virtually impossible - how wrong can a man be? Much of my life gets transferred into my computer - all my birding, moths, photos etc. so I must admit to getting a bit disillusioned about the whole affair. A wise man once said something about 'not storing your treasures up on earth where moth and rust consumes' had I applied this nugget of wisdom I wouldn't have got so downhearted about losing these things. I - like so many of us in this age of technology have gotten to rely on my computer far too much and I've come to realise that I spend far too much time taking photos, writing and organising stuff instead of getting on with things that really matter in my life.

My birding year has been an erratic one even by my madcap standards. I watched the area in manic fashion between Jan 1<sup>st</sup> and early May and then again between the beginning of September and the end of October - as for the rest of the year, well I spent that mostly in hiding - I'm not sure from whom or what exactly? The things from which I feel impelled to hide of course both do not nor have never ever existed. I did put in a token effort during the latter half of December - though even this feeble effort that I put into any birding coverage was in fact a massive trial. It sort of happened rather than through any sort of executed plan on my part. To explain - at the end of last year (2009) I was completely birded out - not so much because of birding as I will always have a passion for birding - but the things that I had to put up with to go birding were really getting on top of me once again. Pegwell is a very hard place to be at times as we all know - but especially so for me. It's becoming too much of a busy place - full of people totally oblivious of their surroundings and others lacking respect for both the area and the people who try and enjoy the natural world for what it is - these are the things that really wore me down as usual. As I'd already written most of the 2009 report and had put lots of hours into birding for virtually the whole of that year, my intention had been to get December the 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 out of the way, finish the bird report and then stop birding - well not stop entirely perhaps but at least have a bit of a break? As it turned out a phone call from 'young' Craig arranging a visit on January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year got me going again and I ended up birding all the way through to early May until things got on top of me yet again. I hadn't seen Craig for a while at the time as he was in the process of either moving back into Thanet or not birding very much otherwise I'd have probably declined his invitation altogether? As touched on earlier I persevered for a few months but after getting attacked by a dog for the second consecutive spring (the attitude of yet another irresponsible and unapologetic dog owner with no thought for the damage this sorts of things can do to the sort of person that I've turned into) as well as the general pressure of birding in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain led me to 'give up' yet again midway through the spring. The birding was truly awful

during the spring anyway and I reasoned that I'd done quiet well to endure over four months of Pegwell and kept away from the area from the first week of May until the first week of September, before yet another change in direction of my ever changing brain saw me have another try at watching the area during the autumn. I've come to realise over the years that nothing that I think that I will or won't do is set in stone so to speak. Had anyone told me that I'd have birded throughout the entire early winter and spring period I'd have laughed in their face last December? The same in this August too - though I always feel happier about going back to Pegwell after the kids have gone back to school after their summer holidays. The days are shorter so I don't have to get up so early to block up my moth traps and the moth numbers start to drop off a bit too, so the autumn 'comeback' was far less of a shock than the early winter/spring 'comeback'. I bumped into Steve Tomlinson at Margate cemetery only the day before I went back for another try in early September and when he asked me what I was going to be doing for the autumn I told him that I couldn't see me going back to Pegwell and I meant it - yet less than 24 hours later I was back? It was sort of by accident but even so I hate to think what he thought the next time he clicked on Gadgets website to see day upon day of entries by me - especially so as he isn't aware of my state of mind these days? Even I admit that this behaviour is most odd even for me? I felt at the end of 2009 that I'd endured a sort of marathon with the finishing line being getting through December 31<sup>st</sup>. There isn't a finishing line with me of course as it all depends on whatever mood I happen to be in at any one time and it would appear than one tentative trip back to Pegwell, however nerve wracking can turn into a flurry of activity that no-one, not even me could have foreseen. There were mitigating factors of course - as I touched upon earlier that my old mate Craig had resettled in Ramsgate and was now 'back on the scene' full time after a period of either living out of the county or on the opposite side of Ramsgate. He was now living in a new flat just outside of the recording area and has made a concerted effort to get back into watching Pegwell once more, which proved a big help to me. Although we do get a fair few birders passing through Pegwell very few are diehards like me and Sammels, though Craig's almost as moody as I am these days. Since people like Barry Child, Dave Gilbert and Martyn Wilson and all the others who chipped in over the years stopped watching here it's become very hard to keep motivated - like most things it's no fun doing things on your own. I know Franny and some of the other lads show up every now and then, plus Tony, Pete and others chip in which all helps, but it was far better years ago when there was a nucleus of regular all out birders who very much used to keep each other going. If I start sounding like an old fogey here then it's probably because I feel as if I'm turning into one.

Another thing that's been getting to me about my birding is the total lack of effort people put into getting along with each other. This year was no different in this regard. Many birders think that they are the centre of the universe and make little or no effort at all to letting people do things the way that they want to do them. We're all different of course (especially Solly) and we all have our own little foibles and eccentricities but surely this only helps with making things more interesting doesn't it? Some people are not as efficient at birding as some others or chose to go about their bird watching in an entirely different way, but so what eh? The whole male ego/competition/listing thing always gets my goat and is far and away the thing from which I feel I'm blessed (as a practising recluse) about as I have very little dealings with these sorts of persons. To top it off the whole Thanet twitching thing kicked off again this year when some Plover turned up at Dungeness and a few of the local lads went to see the dammed thing for whatever reason and all the twenty plus year old Thanet suppression stuff was re-churned out for its annual outing. It just drives me more and more into wanting to get away from the whole listing and twitching brigade and makes it all the less likely that I will be making my news available to the masses which is a shame for the 98% of the people who keep lists who behave when they turn up en-masse but they must see that from my point of view that I just don't want to be anywhere near this sort of thing as it drives me barmy. I see the lads from Sandwich Bay every now and again and we always seem to get along okay as I do with all the local birders but there always seems to be problems as soon as the serious 'action men' show their faces. My birding is very much about going out and building up records of an area - I'm a paranoid, reclusive, ultra nervous patch watcher who

just can't cope with crowds of people and all the politics and opinions they bring into my airspace. I don't want to upset anyone of course, but anyone who falls out with someone or spends their day slagging someone off behind their back over a flipping bird isn't really the sort of person I want to be around in the first place. Long gone are the days where I'd find a decent bird, pack up and cycle up to the phone box then feel impelled to leave because I couldn't cope with the thought of being around this sort of behaviour. On the odd occasion in those days that I'd hang around I often picked up that if the bird wasn't seen immediately that it wasn't going to be believed which only added to my haste to leave the area after the penny had dropped about the cynicism that exists amongst the listing fraternity. No one can say that I haven't tried as I used to put everything out as quickly as was humanly possible, so my conscience is reasonably clear. Nowadays I phone or tell the locals or whoever is one site but that's as far as I'm prepared to budge in recent years I'm afraid. Pegwell is a hard enough place to get any peace and quiet as it is, without all these other things going on and unfortunately my 2010 head just can't cope with it. Luckily we very rarely get anything very rare down here anyway so the problem only occurs every now and then thankfully. I make mention of this as there are some people who are not aware of the situation at Pegwell - Dylan dealt with it for me on his blog during the year when totally understandable questions were asked about the lack of news getting out via the RBA or birdline. Believe me I do have my reasons like seeing people stomping the salt marsh looking for the Fan-tail twenty feet from the scrape, some berk wandering around Westcliff Terraces balcony six foot from peoples bedroom windows looking for a bird he 'needed' even though he'd zillions in the past for his 'year list' - one visiting birder even kicked one of the old girls dogs when she tried to get past the path they had blocked off with their telescopes ... I could write a book about such ill mannered obsessive behaviour. I'm well on the way with this 'introduction' by the looks of it? If this comes across a bit serious or negative then its really not meant to be - I don't like upsetting people but as I've touched on, if you're the sort who gets upset about birds then perhaps much of the problem isn't actually mine? Anyway that's my ten penneth worth - I'll jump off the old soapbox I think ... Dylan wants use of it and he's better at this sort of thing that I ever will be. Long live the hippy! If you got through that lot without falling asleep then you've done well. Unfortunately there's plenty more of the same to come.

## **Non bird news for 2010**

2010 will be remembered (yet again) as another year that Solly DIDN'T catch me a long awaited Clifden Nonpareil. Contrary to popular belief he's a useless moth man ... lets face it I've been waiting for well over a decade for old hairy bonce to catch me a Clifden and I'm still waiting! Life just isn't fair. The only moth 'tick' he got me at all this year was a Sussex Emerald ... pull your finger out Solly or else your name will be mud around here in future.

A few changes occurred around the reserve this year, firstly Ben Lewis escaped in late August followed soon after by young Andy, who acquired a full time job on a park estate in Oxford - home of Morse, a famous university and a car free town centre. Ben lasted less than a year as a warden, leaving to take up a new job on a reserve in Norfolk, which was a real shame as not only was Ben a thoroughly good lad to have around the place but was a decent birder and moth enthusiast to boot. They will both be missed - and not for any sort of birding prowess or excellence but purely because they were both completely unaffected by the politics of birding which made them a joy to be around. After Tony Jolly left only the autumn prior (I still haven't got over Tony not being around) it seemed it was all change in the KTNC staff. However - a change was afoot that was so dastardly that it seemed beyond belief when Peter (Pete - Pete, quick on his feet) Forrest acquired a four month contract running between September and the end of the year only a few weeks after Ben had left. Pete came back from his job in the Brazilian rain forest in 2009 and short of work accepted the position which was unexpected as our Dylan becoming chief teacher of the art of international diplomacy for the United Nations.

**Sad news:** The surrounding area has looked like a war zone these past couple of years as the powers that be in their wisdom continue to destroy anything resembling what they consider wasteland into concrete and tarmac. The area around Wetherlees has been obliterated by the new road and even the reserve itself has been affected by all the disgusting run off water getting piped down through the old hover port onto the mud flat and pool where many hundreds of birds feed. Now the threat of development hangs over the farm fields on the cliff top - the seemingly semi harmless horse boxes leaving a shorter step to the planning permission needed by money grabbing development in an area where the local wildlife just about hangs on by its toenails. I was told that the pub near the sunken garden plans to build a car park right along the side of the ancient hedgerow that is getting in their way along the Pegwell road. The council are also taking over the running of the Country Park in January 2011 which is a bit worrying given their policy of seeing every so-called 'weed' as an object of hate and deserving of annihilation as they do around the rest of the coast. The further they stay away from the place the better given what they've been up to around the coast of Thanet in recent years.

Other bits of non-bird news included a phone call from Solly. That's the news ... He actually phoned me! The normal two word text that I've been on the receiving end of for many years became a proper phone call on Christmas day and wonderful it was too ... though a little out of character? He only did it to save him cycling a further 500 yards into the bay as it turned out, so now its official ... he's both overly succinct and lazy. He needs to save the battery power of course. Both he and Pete acquired the names of the MacClumsy brothers during the winter - Francis 'nine-finger' MacClumsy and Pete - Pete MacClumsy. Pete would have got away without picking up such a name (after falling off his bike and breaking his arm in late winter) but Solly both ripped off a fingernail by shutting his finger in a door at work early on in the year then in the late winter did a similar thing with a door handle, yet again at work and broke one of his fingers! Other silly stuff included Simon Mounts cycle ride around half of the south east in October dressed as Fred Flintstone! As it was one of those all day Sunday sponsored idiot brigade things and Pegwell was en-route I spent a few hours wandering around on the farm that afternoon hoping to see Ramsgate's favourite bank manager making a berk of himself but failed to lay eye, bins or camera lens on him unfortunately. You could call it the first ever Fred Flintstone twitch if you want? Mind you to compensate I did get cracking views of 2 Ravens and a Bat species getting mobbed in full daylight by a gang of Swallows, which I thought odd. I'd have swapped them both for seeing Simon dressed as Fred on his 1970's bike of course.

My old school mate Dave Beadle turned up for his annual visit to Britain from Canada in the late winter. He was hoping to escape the bad weather that he'd left behind in Ontario but on arriving in late December it was actually even worse here! I met him during his first walk around the area - bumping into him in Stone Lees where a flock of 100 Waxwing were munching on the ripe berries of the Guelder Rose along the cycle path. Although he seemed in fine fettle I picked up that something just wasn't right? He confessed later - he just needed to get it off his chest - his poor conscience had been battered for the past two years as he had to hide what a debauched person he'd become. As we walked around he opened up ... "Phil ... I have something to confess" he said - a look of shame appeared across his already furrowed brow. He went on ... "it's a really bad thing that I've done and I need someone to talk to - I hope you won't be too offended?" Crickey I thought ... what's he done? Murdered the wife? Robbed a bank? Become a Man Utd fan? My mind was going crazy but deep pity welled up inside of me and I managed to control my personal feeling, knowing that a fellow human being was in dire need of my help! Then he hit me with it ... "Phil ... I'm not a birder anymore ... I've become a ... a ... a - I can hardly bring myself to say it ... a bird photographer!" It took me many hours of sympathetic reasoning to calm him down and tell him that being a bird photographer isn't all the bad - it's a weakness that's become endemic amongst the local birding community and beyond - an illness yet to clearly understood by science or clinical psychology and as yet although there is no known 'cure' I tried to make him understand that help may well be available in the distant future? Okay there is a bit of a

stigma attached to the fact that it's all about 'the photo' and you actually miss seeing some birds etc. but others such as our Dylan, Steve Ashton, Steve Ray (Steve Grey?) et al, all seem to get by ... we're not exactly sure how, but the main thing is that they do live with themselves.

Whilst on the subject of photography - Gadget received an e-mail off the editor of the esteemed Birdwatch magazine in December. They were after 'quality' images (taken by me supposedly) of the 1000+ Waxwings that I saw up the Ebbsfleet road in late winter for use in their magazine. Imagine how the old long lens brigade would have felt had they picked up a copy of Birdwatch to see one of my photos adorning the front cover of 250 indistinguishable, grainy - out of focus grey specks taken on a two hundred quid 'point and squirt' camera sitting atop a bit of manky willow tree with a backdrop of a slushy, muddy field being ploughed up by heavy machinery as a backdrop! Oh if only eh? Phil M - top bird photographer in all the s/east - not!

To end this section I picked this up off the Liverpool FC fanzine:

**Never argue with an Idiot, they will drag you down to their level and then beat you with experience...**

So 'if' you fancy taking me on in a row then take heed of the above. I just thought I'd warn you all out there?

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## **2010 Sport news ...in scintillating colour: This year in stunning black!**

Lots of things were being looked forward to in 2010 - a World Cup in South Africa, another wonderful F1 season ... of course they are always wonderful, Rossi versus the new up and coming kids in the Moto GP then the winter winning Ashes series in Australia to end the year. I won't make mention about league football after the debacle that went on with my beloved Liverpool FC all year - a disappointing 2009/10 season when we failed to even get into the Champions league was followed by Rafa going to Inter Milan (which as I write still doesn't seem right ... a bit like being dumped by your girlfriend and seeing her out a week later with some other bloke) then the threat of administration for a club with a long and illustrious history who almost won the league 18 months prior. At least we got rid of those parasites Hicks and Gillette but this was the only plus point. The introduction of Roy (pronounced Woy) Hodgson - our second manager called Roy (which I believe to be something that no other club will ever achieve?) followed the course of our initial manager known as Roy - a nice enough bloke, as was Roy Evans but perhaps not the right man for a job such as Liverpool Football Club? Anyway - as I say I won't mention it. Hang on - didn't I sort of just mention it? I mentioned it once but I think I got away with it? Rafa got sacked by Inter in December - I'd have him back in a jiffy!

The Commonwealth games in India during the autumn were very good weren't they? My personal strategy for watching the event went very well - so very well in fact that the 2010 Commonwealth games proved to be my favourite of all time. Yeah - because I didn't watch a single second of it.

The world cup in June was the worst in memory, which had absolutely nothing to do with England's abysmal failure of course because I'm not a fan of England's international team and never will be. Generally the games were awful weren't they? Even though I eventually got used to ignoring those irritating vuvuzela's - the combination of that ultra light football that FIFA decided in their wisdom to use and the thin air (altitude) meant that any long range shot ballooned over the crossbar... well unless your name was Diego Forlan anyway. What was going on ... Dunga left a fit again Ronaldinho at home, sticking to his dreaded European style football and the normally classy Dutch took up brutality - kicking anyone within range

and getting away with it for the whole competition. What ever happened to the 1970's Dutch exercise of total football - I'd have given my back teeth to be a fly on Johan Cruiff's wall during some of the Holland games. The one saving grace was that the best team (Spain) won but wow was it a disappointment overall. I'm still to re-watch my eighty odd hours of videotaped games which is quite odd so late in the year.

The Moto GP was disappointing too, as Valentino Rossi broke his leg in the summer and missed many of the races then carried shoulder injuries sustained earlier on in the year all throughout the rest of the season. Then Dani Pedrosa got injured and Casey Stonar had an up and down season leaving Jorge Lorenzo to run away with it. 2011 will see Rossi going on to ride for Ducatti ... I can't wait, even though someone riding one of the Japanese machines will ultimately win the 2011 crown of course.

The Formula 1 season made up for it as was for the third time in the last four years a real cliff-hanger - going right down to the last race. A bit like the Kimi Raikkonen win in 2007, a bloke came from nowhere to pinch the crown in the last race, when Sebastian Vettel came from 15 points adrift to nick it at Abu Dhabi. The other thing about 2010 was that Michael Schumacher made the rather strange decision to make a comeback at the age of 41 and probably more significantly, after an absence of three whole seasons, which was in retrospect an awfully bad decision if he thought he had a cat in hells chance of winning anything? He failed dismally which I thought was a bit of a shame given his history but if he's as happy about the season as he says he was (which I doubt?) then good luck to him. It certainly added a bit of spice to the early races anyway.

It's nice to see Francis getting a bit more into the F1 these days isn't it? Yeah - we were talking about F1 this autumn and Francis reckons that it's only 'very boring' now. Well ... at least his enthusiasm for the sport is heading in the right direction? Other things he finds boring are (a) small talk. (b) Eating human food. (c) Shopping - I'm with him on this one. (d) Birding and moth trapping in Thanet. (e) Dylan.

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### **Klaus von Schumacher - an update in remembrance ...**

Back in the summer I was contacted out of the blue by my old mate Klaus - he sounded very happy, which was odd as the last time we'd been in contact he was most disillusioned with the way his life had turned out. His marriage to his beloved wife Ingrid had gone down the pan when she ran off with the son of esteemed musical madman and ex U Boat captain and Wagnerian maestro Herr Hans von Kreuzschlitzschraubenzieher (RIP) then after a night of karaoke at the local bar he'd fell out with his best mate and tactical adviser Shin Hi over his bullying attitude and poor English. After years of trying to come up with a master plan to get the fifth Reich up and running and invade 'Ze lazy pigswine Ingländers' as he so eloquently put it, only to met with failure upon failure, the final straw was well and truly broken when he fell for a conman trick. Klaus foolishly handed over all his deutschemarks, accumulated over years of personal savings and arduous fundraising, to a shady looking man with a thin Irish accent and a pony tail who he arranged to meet at a motorway service station after being told he had a 'top of the range' atomic submarine for sale. So excited was Klaus by the thought of getting his hands on a machine with which he envisioned he could hold the entire British Isles to ransom, that his normal German logical thinking went awol and he made the fatal mistake of not checking both the machine (seated on the back of a low loader on the side of the M1 just past Northampton) and the hastily produced documentation, both of which proved not to be as originally agreed upon - the documentation being a computer print out and the bright shiny sixty foot long so-called Atomic submarine proved nothing more than a poorly painted plywood carnival float placed over the top of a 1978 Ford Transit! Klaus was as about as low as any human could get and those of us that knew Klaus (basically me, Kevin

Thornton and Sally from Eastbourne – who is my stalker) were actually thinking that this may well signal the end of the insane 21<sup>st</sup> century super Nazi. The 2010 'upbeat' Klaus went on to tell the exact tale in much detail – I will let him tell the tale in his own words to start off – it was:

**Klaus letter Part 1:** Unt 2004 I am going unt a long and tiring deutschemark raising campaign around whole of Vestern Europe in aid fur fifth Reich – I am doing unt going unt ze coming unt getting cash unt shedloads. When I am getting back indoors unt 2007 I am finding beloved wife – mein Ingrid has run away with unt nutter U Boat captain son Herr Hans von Kreuzschlitzschraubenzieher! I am of drown eine sorrows for unt many months unt next thing I am standing unt bar unt Dusseldrof washing away memory of mein Ingrid durink 2010 Voerld Cup and seeing lazy Inglander pigswines getting their ten bobs worth from mighty Farterland with 4 to 1 and I am laughing actually on outside with alcohol but unt inside I unt vast sadness. Anyhow beink I am getting tipsy unt schnapps unt saying to ponytail man unt bar that I am having very good joke ... unt most finniest joke unt all of farteland. I am saying joke to him, it is:

There is unt Inlander swinehunt, unt Scottishmanperson unt Irishistman ... ha ha ha ... is good joke yah?? Inglander unt Scottishmanperson unt Irishistman – all in same room beink!! Ha ha ha ... yah vol ... unt joke unt so funny it is the split of the side!!

Man is not laughing but is saying he has large atomic submarine for sale ... unt price is good unt I am beink happy with this. So we arrange unt rendezvous unt autobahn car parken unt M1. Zis man unt very bad man is. He drive off with Deutschemark unt Klaus is left beink with 1970 Ford Transit unt carnival floaten Atomic cardboard submarine!!! Agghhhh!!! I am on my knees beink. I am home now and look at wall for seven days unt seven nights saying unt head 'why is world is so bad?' I am sayink unto life size poster of Mein Fuehrer hanging unt kitchen wall "What would you do mein fuehrer?" But no thing is happening! My mind is full of silence unt contemplation.

To cut a long story *slightly* shorter and to save the reader the torture of understanding Klaus' broken English – after the expensive so-called Submarine being nothing more than a plywood carnival float debacle, Klaus had reached rock bottom. He stayed in his room for over two weeks neither eating of drinking, just listening over and over again to the sad bits of side 47 of the boxed LP set of Das Ring Cycle, when he had 'a moment' – a ray of hope from a mind crushed by year upon year of defeat and tragedy when he'd lost his wife of many years, a few good friends and all of his money. He rose from his position of gloom and defeat, saluted the air and smiled for the first time in weeks. Defiant – he would try another strategy.

Klaus had always wondered if there was a way of getting his message out to a wider audience. His constant shouting people into submission routine had fallen on deaf ears when presented face to face – he needed to get on TV – but how? He couldn't just go on TV dressed in full military regalia hollering the masses into being persuaded as to the merits of a fifth Reich as he would be shunned as some sort of radical Nazi maniac. (Which of course he was) No - he would have to come at this one from a different angle?

One day whilst watching an audition programme from the German version of the X Factor (Das X fumenfactor) he saw his opportunity. After booking in for a slot on the next X factor gathering in Munich he decided to put his well honed Karaoke skills to the test, knowing that even if he made a complete fool of himself that at worst it would get him some airtime and fifteen minutes of fame which could with luck, lead to the wider audience he needed to get his dastardly pot off the ground. This might seem a rather overly simplistic and unrealistic idea but poor old Klaus was getting so desperate that he was prepared to give anything a go. As it happened things didn't go as Klaus planned.

His big moment arrived. He stood quivering at stage side – fairly poorly prepared for what he was about to throw himself into. The live audience was both very large and very loud and

imposing. Klaus took a large gulp of Schnapps before stepping out into the limelight and broke into a stuttering song which went thus:

How much unt das doggy unt za vindow?  
Eine vun with unt viggelly vaggley?  
How much unt das doggy unt za vindow?  
I do hope unt doggy bite za Inglander!!

Mein Fuhrer had dog - it name unt Blondi ...  
His tail does za wig unt ze vag,  
When Berlin get taken by the Ruski -  
Blondi eat cyanide meal - guddentag.

How much unt das doggy unt za vindow?  
Eine vun with unt viggelly vaggley?  
How much unt das doggy unt za vindow?  
I do hope unt doggy bite za Inglander!!

Blondi good dog - he unt good Nazi hound  
Until he drop dead unt za floor.  
He train to bitten lazy Inglander Svinehunt,  
Unt Inglander poopenfritter unt sore.

How much unt das doggy unt za vindow?  
Eine vun with unt viggelly vaggley?  
How much unt das doggy unt za vindow?  
I do hope unt doggy bite za Inglander!!

A percentage of the audience started to boo Klaus immediately, almost forcing him to stop his insane song but far more of them thought the whole idea of a man dressed as Hitler singing a distorted version of a kid's kindergarten rhyme hilarious!

However serious Klaus was taking the whole thing, which isn't quite clear on the part of the poor storyteller writing this awful rubbish down here - shouts of sarcastic bravo eventually echoed through the auditorium long after Klaus had left the stage to rapturous applause.

The X fumfenfactor judging panel was made up of - Das Hoff - the man off Baywatch, Das Kaiser - ex footballer Franz Beckenbauer (they wanted Gerd Muller but he was dead - or that's the excuse his agent gave at the time) and some unknown third tier German celebrity man with a mullet haircut and a 1950's wardrobe door brown spray on face. They to a man insulted Klaus - laughing at him and generally pouring ridicule upon the poor downtrodden 21<sup>st</sup> century Nazi. Klaus was crushed by their scathing criticism even though he won much of the audience over, they thinking he was some sort of comedy act!

However - the full effect of Klaus' performance was yet to come to light.

After Klaus left the stage Das X fumfenfactors switchboard began to get jammed with people phoning up to say how enlightened and stress free Klaus's performance had made them feel. People from all over Germany rang up with tales such as one man, who had wandered into his living room with a lugar in his mouth, fully intending to blow his brains out after a lifetime of woe and suffering when he suddenly found himself dancing around the room feeling 'happy' for the first time in many years within seconds of hearing Klaus's version of 'Doggy unt ze vindow' as the room into which he had inadvertently wandered had a TV tuned to the right channel. Anther man had heard a brief passage of Klaus's rendition via an open open-topped hearse whilst stuck in a traffic jam on his way to the funeral of his wife and four kids who had been killed only the week prior in a tragic autobahn accident. He too,

even though crushed beyond what is imaginable found himself humming the tune out loud even as his wife's remains were dropped into her grave then the entire funeral gathering started singing Klaus's words out loud and everything seemed okay again! These events were mirrored throughout the whole of Germany on a massive scale and after many scientific tests under controlled conditions it turned out that the song was indeed a cure for all known forms of depression and anxieties. Klaus ended up signing many high profile contracts – music contracts, medical contracts, clothing contracts... appearances on TV the whole lot and within just a few months Klaus had many millions of Deutschemarks pouring in from all angles – enough to get the Reich rolling. The audience for his message that he craved was within his grasp at last. Unfortunately after our conversation things took a very bad turn for the worse.

No-ones quite certain of exactly what happened – various tales abound, all having differing scenarios. Whatever actually did happen then we are sure that all that was found of poor old Klaus' was a bloodied jackboot with 'Klaus fifth Reich 09' written in biro on the inside, his twisted glasses frame with one lens missing and his wedding ring which had etched into the inner bit 'To mein loving hisband Klaus Freidrich von Schumacher unt farter from Ingrid Edelweiss Schumacher ... foriver yours' (it was rather a large wedding ring) and police later pronounced Klaus dead within the month, even though his remains never ever did show up. Amongst the thousands of theories there were some who say he was set upon by a gang of left wing vegetarian extremists who beat poor Klaus to death with their sandals then hid the corpse in a poorly maintained Volkswagen camper van that accidentally caught fire destroying the evidence whilst others say they saw him bundled into a rusty 1980's Toyota Land cruiser by a gang of Japanese midgets who bored him to death after two hours of being trapped with them while they sang endless poorly sung Karaoke before they got him to their hideout where they intended to hold him to ransom? My personal theory is that it's entirely possible that Kevin Thornton had Klaus bumped off after two years of constant criticism as to his slow updating of the SBBO website when he was head warden? He will hold a grudge will Kevin and lets face it he has been in hiding for a while, perhaps to plan the murder of my mate Klaus? I've already rung the Sussex branch of MI5 and told them to keep Kevin under constant surveillance just in case he slips up and lets the cat out of the bag somehow?

### **The birding year in brief ... (not to be confused with the year in briefs)**

Although the overall coverage was poor and the spring and summer months were hard going the year will be remembered for some extremely good days out all the same. During the early winter 2 Black-necked Grebes, a few Whooper Swans, a few White-fronted, Bean and Pink-footed Geese, a Black Brant and a Hooded Crow were seen as icy temperatures hit our shores. A Sooty Shearwater, seen in January was an unexpected record too. Record numbers of Red Kites showed up during the spring as did another Goshawk, a spectacular bird that seems to be getting seen slightly more regularly in the south east in recent years it would appear? Other 'bits' seen during the spring included 3 Cranes, a Golden Oriole, a Serin plus a brief cameo from a/the Fan-tailed Warbler in April that showed so well for an extended period in 2009. The autumn had a couple of real red letter spells in September and October with a few good rarities thrown in amongst some really nice movements of visible migration. The star birds were a long awaited Red-throated Pipit (for me anyway) in September plus the arrival of a Little Bunting and another Penduline Tit on one day in October. Other good stuff included a group of 5 Glossy Ibis, a White-rumped Sandpiper which showed for three days in September and although it wasn't reported at the time, a probable Wilson's Phalarope in October. After seeing flight shots on the internet I'm certain that this was the mystery grey bird with the wrap around white rump and trailing legs we saw flying around over the mud from the Country Park, the penny didn't start to drop until over a week later as it was just a bird that we hadn't even considered at the time even though there had been one about in the Stour valley. I still haven't found out what Craig thinks? Other good birds during autumn included a Short-toed Lark, a Great Grey Shrike, quite a few Rough-legged Buzzards, 2 each of Yellow-browed and Pallas' Warbler, the Fan-tailed Warbler (again?), another Serin plus

record numbers of Lapland Buntings and 2 Hawfinches. Good numbers of Brambling and Ring Ouzels made all the hanging about a bit more tolerable and then to end the year off with a bang, spectacular numbers of Waxwings started to show during the autumn building up to many hundreds by late winter then during the second cold spell just before Christmas, saw many Geese arriving off the continent which included a mind boggling 300 Barnacle Geese that Pete Forrest and Dave Beadle bumped into on December 21<sup>st</sup>. I really enjoyed the day when we witnessed nearly 7000 Goldfinches too – a real spectacle even though to some they would be considered as just another common bird.

On the downside the migrant wader numbers were poor and some of the wildfowl were extremely low at times. Birds like Red-breasted Mergansers and Eiders, once a fairly regular sight during the migration periods and winter are becoming very scarce in the area and Turtle Doves, once such a common summer visitor were almost a rarity in 2010. Another whole year went by without hearing and Nightingales – we didn't even get any on migration let alone breeding birds, which is a shame.

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## The Pegwell Bay Bird Report for some of 2010

### Systematic list:

#### **Red-throated Diver/Diver Species** (*regular winter visitor*)

They were poorly recorded during both winter periods. They were seen quite regularly in small numbers on and off passing by off the east pier and through the bay seen from the Country Park in January, though during the late winter no sea watching took place whatsoever save a quick scan every now and then from the Country Park. When they were seen in the early winter period numbers were quite low, the peaks being: 33 south and 4 north on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 21 south on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 74 south and 9 north on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 25 south on January 29<sup>th</sup> and 37 south and 5 north on February 1<sup>st</sup>. No more than two were seen offshore on any one day during late winter.

#### **Little Grebe** (*regular winter and occasional/probable breeding species?*)

They were scarce during the early winter period, especially so as the garage pools, their chosen area - was frozen over throughout January. The first sighting there wasn't until February 25<sup>th</sup> and only one bird was seen on and off there until March 18<sup>th</sup>. Birds could be heard calling unseen from the overgrown farm reservoir throughout spring right up until September at least so it's quite possible that breeding took place?

There were no more reports until 2 turned up on the garage pools on October 18<sup>th</sup> and they were ever present (1 - 2 birds) in the same area (when the pools were ice free anyway) or upriver until the end of the year.

#### **Black-necked Grebe** (*scarce winter visitor*)

One was seen from the harbour diving out near the breakwater on January 4<sup>th</sup> (MH + SH) then another was seen offshore out in the bay from the Country Park on January 12<sup>th</sup>. (PM, JM + TS)

#### **Great Crested Grebe** (*regular Sept - May*)

Small numbers were ever present offshore between January and May at least. The only significant numbers were 30 offshore on January 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and 120+ birds on March 1<sup>st</sup>. They were seen offshore in small numbers throughout late summer until the end of the year. It was surprising given the hard weather during November and December that the peak late winter number was a mere 12 birds seen on December 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Fulmar** (*regular December – August*)

No proper counts were taken though numbers appear relatively stable compared with recent years. They were ever present in small numbers between January and August then again in smaller numbers in November and December.

**Sooty Shearwater** (*scarce passage migrant*)

One was seen flying north from the east pier during a sea watch looking for Divers and Auks on January 20<sup>th</sup>. This is a most unusual date for a Sooty in Britain and is certainly the first ever area winter record.

**Gannet** (*common passage migrant*)

Very little note was taken this year. 9 were seen fishing in the bay on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and occasional others were seen on and off, passing by offshore as is usual.

**Cormorant** (*non breeding resident*)

Peak month counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
10	8	6	15	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	62	45	20	20+

**Shag** (*annual winter visitor/passage migrant*)

Up to five birds were present in or around the harbour throughout January until March. Away from the harbour where sightings are quiet an event a 1<sup>st</sup> winter bird was seen hanging around the estuary on February 25<sup>th</sup>. None were reported during late winter.

**Grey Heron** (*common non breeding resident/passage migrant*)

Peak month counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
5	2	2	2	2	n/c	n/c	n/c	13	8	?	3

**White Stork**

Pete saw one in the car park (!! ) on September 18<sup>th</sup>. (PF)

**Glossy Ibis** (*rare vagrant*)

A flock of five flew west over Stone Lees on September 9<sup>th</sup>. (CS and PM) This was the third area record of this ever increasing visitor to Britain after single birds seen on October 27<sup>th</sup> 2001 and October 8<sup>th</sup> 2009.

**Little Egret** (*common non breeding resident/passage migrant*)

Monthly peak day counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2	0	1	4	3	-	25	23	30+	26	3	3

### **Spoonbill** (*scarce but annual visitor*)

A record year for Spoonbills, as numbers continue to increase not only locally but throughout Britain – a few pairs even bred on the Norfolk coast this year. One was present from April 19<sup>th</sup> until 21<sup>st</sup> at least then single juvenile birds were present on May 1<sup>st</sup> and another from September 8<sup>th</sup> until October 6<sup>th</sup>. An adult joined the long staying juvenile on September 26<sup>th</sup> and left on the same date (October 6<sup>th</sup>) plus there were 3 present (the juvenile and 2 adults) on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Also earlier on in the autumn the flock of nine birds that were first seen on the north Kent coast from September 13<sup>th</sup> touring Sandwich, Saint Margaret's and Grove were seen flying over Pegwell on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Yet another was present for one tide on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Mute Swan** (*irregular visitor*)

The only records that I received were of 2 present on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1 flying west on September 11<sup>th</sup> and 1 juvenile east on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Another (probably the same juvenile as October 15<sup>th</sup>) was present on and off until the December 24<sup>th</sup> when it was seen dead on the mud flat, no doubt a victim of the bitter weather? 3 flew north on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Bewick's Swan** (*scarce winter visitor*)

6 were present on the mud before flying off out to sea on December 19<sup>th</sup>. (CW and PF)

### **Whooper Swan** (*scarce winter visitor*)

A group of 4 flew south upriver after arriving from inland on January 18<sup>th</sup>. (PM and JM) Another 2 arrived in-off and flew off s/west on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. (PM)

### **Barnacle Goose** (*rare winter visitor*)

A rather 'smashing' flock of 300 birds arrived in hard weather on December 21<sup>st</sup>. (PF and DB) Potential other groups of 90 and 37 seen 'arriving' in off the sea on December 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> may well have been different birds to Pete's 300? They were absolutely smashing you know. After this Simon 'Flintstone' saw a flock of 100 birds flying over the harbour on December 29<sup>th</sup>. (SM)

### **Brent Goose** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

A few birds over wintered during early winter - probably less than ten birds which were joined on and off by a few others. The spring passage was uneventful – the peaks being: 130 present on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 34 north on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 121 south and 34 present on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 40 present on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 67 present on February 24<sup>th</sup> and 36 present on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The last birds of spring were 3 seen on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Autumn migrants started to show from September 26<sup>th</sup>. The highest counts were: 181 on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 84 flying north on October 16<sup>th</sup> and 115 flew north on October 24<sup>th</sup>. I have very few records for November but 101 turned up on December 20<sup>th</sup> with 10 – 60+ seen regularly until the end of the year.

Monthly peak counts of birds present were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
130	67	36	13	-	-	-	-	181	115	16	101

### **Pale Bellied Brent** (*B.hrota*)

1 was present from January 1<sup>st</sup> until the 8<sup>th</sup> at least (CS etc) plus it or another was seen on January 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. (BL etc) There were 20 present during the hard weather on December 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> (TS/MS) and the group built to a peak of 26 birds on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. There were still 21 birds present on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 22 on December 26<sup>th</sup> and 12+ on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Black Brant** (*B.nigricans*)

Craig found an adult bird feeding amongst a group of Brent Geese in the fields on Little Cliffsend Farm on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. (CS, SR + PM)

**White-fronted Goose** (*annual passage migrant/winter visitor*)

36 flew n/west on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 south on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 120+ east out to sea on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 4 were present on January 15<sup>th</sup> and 3 flew south on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

208 arrived on December 20<sup>th</sup> (flocks of 25, 53 and 130) – (PF, NL, JC) then 60+ flew n/west on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 81 flew north or n/west on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Bean Goose** (*scarce but increasing winter visitor*)

3 flew south on February 1<sup>st</sup>. (PM)

**Pink-footed Goose** (*scarce passage migrant/winter visitor*)

A flock of 13 flew west on January 25<sup>th</sup> then Ben saw a group of 42 fly west on January 30<sup>th</sup>. A group of 6 flew in off then north on October 8<sup>th</sup> and 5 flew west inland on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Greylag Goose** (*occasional visitor*)

A group of four flew south on April 27<sup>th</sup> and two were seen from April 7<sup>th</sup> until 9<sup>th</sup> at least, then two adults with six young goslings were seen upriver opposite Stone Lees on May 1<sup>st</sup>. One was hanging around amongst a flock of Canada Geese between September 17<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>; a flock of 30+ flew n/west over the reserve during hard weather on December 21<sup>st</sup> and other single birds on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Canada goose** (*irregular/scarce visitor*)

1 on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 19 on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 18 on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 8 on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 31 on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and 29 on October 5<sup>th</sup>. 25 birds near the end of the year (on December 23<sup>rd</sup>) and 24 on December 28<sup>th</sup> ended 2010 off on a Canada hot streak – the best year for the species in living memory. Whoopee do eh?

**Shelduck** (*breeding resident/passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Breeding numbers included 16 juveniles present on July 27<sup>th</sup>. The first decent influx was noticed on October 24<sup>th</sup> when 183 birds were seen arriving in off the sea during the day. Fairly average numbers prevailed throughout the late winter.

Peak monthly Shelduck counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
105	67	37	60	72	-	-	-	28	183	65	84

**Mallard** (*resident/passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Peak month counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
145	135	4	14	-	-	-	-	76	181	n/c	350

**Pintail** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

The peak counts were: 27 on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 12 on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 15 on January 21<sup>st</sup> and 12 on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Also of note were 9 on March 3<sup>rd</sup> then during the cold snap at the end of the year 22 on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 20 on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Craig also saw 25 one day in mid December. They are known as 'The Prince of Ducks' by David Mairs – but he's weird.

Peak month counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
27	2	9	0	-	-	-	-	4	1	?	25

**Gadwall** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Peak month counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
9	6	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	10	35

**Shoveler** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Peak month counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
11	2	3	4	-	-	-	4	3	1	9	2

**Wigeon** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

During the early winter cold spell some spectacular numbers of birds were present in the bay which peaked at around 2500 at high water on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Numbers had started to build half way through the first week of January and there were 1000 or more birds counted on 14 dates before the end of the month when numbers dropped to more usual levels. There also highs of 1420 on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2060 on January 15<sup>th</sup> and 1620 on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

In the late winter numbers were very low until December when counts eventually reached four figures after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month and were ever present in four figures until the end of the year. The peak counts were: (all in December) 1450 on 10<sup>th</sup>, 1880 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1450 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1740 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 1630 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

Peak month Wigeon counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2500	630	132	2	0	0	0	0	110	96	100	1880

**Teal** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Good numbers were present during early winter when counts of over 700 birds were taken on a few dates. My peak (I think that Franny the wonderhair had more?) was the 710 birds seen on January 5<sup>th</sup>. I also counted about 700 on January 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.

During the late winter the only decent numbers were recorded during the second cold weather spell during December when 2 - 300+ birds were seen fairly regularly peaking at 450+ birds present on December 27<sup>th</sup>.

Peak month counts:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
710	460	130	12	0	0	11		53	19	n/c	450

**Garganey** (*irregular passage migrant*)Franny saw the only one on August 7<sup>th</sup>.**Pochard** (*irregular winter visitor*)

There were masses of them this year - 1 on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1 on December 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> then 5 flew north on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. These three records actually constitute masses around here these days.

**Tufted Duck** (*irregular winter visitor*)

They were still scarce but numbers were better than of late. The only records were 3 on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1 on May 19<sup>th</sup> then 1 on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2 on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 8 n/west on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 5 north on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1 on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and 6 on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Eider** (*declining winter visitor/passage migrant*)

Early winter numbers were as low as was humanly possible barring any being seen at all. The one that broke the 'duck' was of one seen swimming about off the harbour sea wall on January 21<sup>st</sup>. None over summered as is the norm in recent years and only the occasional 'one' was seen during the late winter until 9 were seen on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Scoter** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

January: 2 on 1<sup>st</sup>. February: 8 north on 1<sup>st</sup>. April: 10 north on 14<sup>th</sup>, 1 present on 21<sup>st</sup> and 15 north on 22<sup>nd</sup>. Aug: 1 on 25<sup>th</sup>. Sep: 1 on 3<sup>rd</sup>. Dec: 2 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 24<sup>th</sup> and 60+ south on 31<sup>st</sup>

**Velvet Scoter** (*scarce/declining passage migrant/winter visitor*)

One flew south after landing briefly out in the main bay on February 1<sup>st</sup> then 3 flew north on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldeneye** (*irregular passage migrant/winter visitor*)

The only records I saw/received were of 3 seen flying south on January 28<sup>th</sup> and a drake was present offshore on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Goosander** (*scarce passage migrant/winter visitor*)

1 was present offshore on January 11<sup>th</sup> and 3 flew north over the cliff top on October 24<sup>th</sup>. (FS) Andy Lipczynski saw another out in the bay on December 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-breasted Merganser** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Numbers of Merg's continue to go into freefall. The only records that I received were of singles on January 12<sup>th</sup>, April 11<sup>th</sup>, April 19<sup>th</sup>, October 14<sup>th</sup> and November 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Osprey** (*scarce passage migrant*)

1 flew n/west on April 1<sup>st</sup>. (PM and FS) I saw it first - Solly will probably never forgive me of course - seeing something before him I mean. It doesn't happen too often believe me.

**Red Kite** (*increasing passage migrant/wanderer*)

I'm not sure what is going on with these Kites nowadays? They always used to be a bird that we regarded as occasional migrants from the near continent or wanderers from the various re-introduction schemes that have been going on around the UK but presumably there is the distinct possibility that birds must be semi resident in Kent nowadays? During the early part of the year there were so many records here that migration just didn't fit into the normal pattern of sightings. The ball started rolling when a bird flew south on March 1<sup>st</sup> then another flew north on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Things went crazy during April when 7 birds passed through the area on the 9<sup>th</sup> - at one point there were six birds in view on one scan - a group of 4 flew west inland of the country park and 2 more flew west high over Ramsgate! Other sightings during April were 1 west on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 south on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1 north on the 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 north on the 23<sup>rd</sup> then 1 n/west on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Hen Harrier** (*winter visitor/passage migrant*)

Numbers during both winter periods were quite low and followed the period of irregularity that's been going on down here for the past few years. They were reported on only 15 dates from the beginning of the year until the end of February all as single birds until 3 birds were seen on February 26<sup>th</sup> which included two nice male birds. Other male birds were seen on January 7<sup>th</sup> and February 24<sup>th</sup> - the other sightings were all of ringtails. The only record during March was of a single present and a migrant bird flying west on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

*Hen Harrier cont:* They were recorded as single birds on quite a few days from November until the end of the year – at least one of which was another male.

**Marsh Harrier:** (*passage migrant/increasing summer and winter visitor. Breeds nearby?*)

One to two birds were regularly present during the early winter period as is the norm these days plus a few migrants were recorded from middle March throughout April. The maximum numbers of migrant birds seen were: 1 west and 2 north on April 30<sup>th</sup> also 1 – 2 birds were seen passing through on at least ten other dates whilst raptor watching from the Country Park. Other singles were seen on May 9<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Displaying activity was once more evident inland of the Country Park during April with up to 4 birds involved in the aerial display. Unlike the last few years when activity has mainly been seen at the back end of Richborough Power Station this year there were also a pair displaying further south on the other side of the power station.

Up to 2 were seen during December.

**Common Buzzard:** (*wanderer, passage migrant and semi resident!*)

Johnny 'the wigmaster' Websper saw the first Pegwell Buzzard of 2010 when he was forced to fight one off after it mistook his Sunday best wig for a dead rabbit carcass on January 1<sup>st</sup>. A tussle ensued but old Johnny, using personal feats of strength not seen since the battle of balaclava managed to rescue his 'syrup' woven from the hair of 14 baby woolly mammoths – the old Buzzard didn't have a hope – though perhaps I shouldn't refer to Johnny as an old Buzzard?

Anyway - the spring 'passage' was ruined by local birds ... I shouldn't really moan of course but I'm going to anyway. I used to prefer it when the local Buzzards were all migrants - nowadays they are going the same way as Sparrowhawks (semi resident) and I've been ignoring much Sparrowhawk migration now for years mainly due to massive levels of impatience on my part. Records were written down as recorded and there is no doubt some duplication anyway as Buzzards have a habit of circling around Thanet or even more annoyingly these days even hanging around!

In March: 1 south on 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 s/west on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3 south on 15<sup>th</sup>, 6 n/west and 4 south on 16<sup>th</sup> then 1 north and 1 west on 17<sup>th</sup>. April: 1 n/west on 4<sup>th</sup>, 2 north on 6<sup>th</sup>, 3 s/west on 7<sup>th</sup>, 17 west and s/west on 8<sup>th</sup>, 17 west and 2 n/west on 9<sup>th</sup>, 11+ north on 16<sup>th</sup>, 7 'loitering (damn it!) on 17<sup>th</sup>, 5 north and 1 west on 21<sup>st</sup>, 1 north on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 1 n/west on 30<sup>th</sup>. A late bird showed on May 9<sup>th</sup> – well that's 'if' it was a migrant at all? There were also at least two birds hanging about and even displaying on occasion inland (west) of the Country Park during April. I threw stones at them for weeks but they wouldn't go away. I used to enjoy the mid March to mid April Buzzard watches ... they, like my youth, hair, money and enthusiasm to play guitar and the like, have wasted away in the midst of time. I still have my looks mind you?

Little bits of presumed autumnal migration were noted – though it appeared there were birds hanging around inland throughout if you took the time to stand around looking for them? In September 8 migrant birds flew n/west to s/west on the 9<sup>th</sup>, then 1 s/west on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and 15+ west and n/west on the 30<sup>th</sup>. During October 1 flew west on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 6 north on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Up to 3 birds were seen loitering inland during these months too. The last record was one our Franny saw on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Rough-legged Buzzard** (*a bird*)

Sounds like one of my old girlfriends? Anyway ... a good autumn ensued for this species - at long last might I add - with the first birds showing up in the area for the first time since October 2002. One seen flying west along the cliff top on October 15<sup>th</sup> (FS) was followed by another which flew south between Manston and the bay on October 19<sup>th</sup>. (PM) On October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> juvenile birds were seen flying north (PF, PM and CS) then south on the following day. (PM and CS) Another was seen flying in off the sea from the harbour on November 29<sup>th</sup>. (JC)

### **Honey Buzzard** (*scarce but increasing passage migrant*)

1 flew south over the farm on September 7<sup>th</sup> (CS and PM) then another flew s/west behind the Country Park on September 9<sup>th</sup>. (PM and CS) A ridiculously late bird was seen hanging about around the back of Saint Augustine's golf course or that general area on October 22<sup>nd</sup>! (PM and CS)

### **Sparrowhawk** (*another bird species*)

The usual apathetic attitude towards these wonderful birds prevailed throughout. During the spring around 3 pairs could be seen displaying but where/if successful breeding took place then none of us would be entirely sure? They do spend a lot of time around the sunken garden so this is probably one spot and breeding was reported as taking place on the Country Park for the first time as far as I'm aware? Counting the migrants is difficult when you have an attention span of fourteen seconds and are paranoid about looking at a Sparrowhawk for too long just in case you miss a larger and more interesting species of raptor. Little 'bits' of migration were noted between March and May then again in September and October but even then in rather haphazard fashion. 4+ were noted whilst raptor watching on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> then during April counts of 8 north on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 10 north on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 4 north on the 23<sup>rd</sup> were taken. During the autumn: 6+ migrants passed over on September 9<sup>th</sup> then 10 flew north on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Otherwise birds were seen most days in small numbers throughout... yawn. Bah ... humbug.

### **Goshawk** (*usually not a Goshawk*)

One was seen soaring inland from the Country Park whilst raptor watching before flying of south on March 16<sup>th</sup>. (PM) I know what you're thinking but it was one.

### **Kestrel** (*an old type of engine oil ... GTX*)

Craig recorded up to 6 birds daily in both June and September. One with a limp was seen but not reported to me by the man who may or may not have seen it. They do breed.

### **Hobby** (*summer visitor from the Antarctic*)

1 - 2 birds were seen on a few dates from April 30<sup>th</sup> with 3 on May 9<sup>th</sup> and 2 on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. During the autumn there were good numbers seen attacking dragonflies over the country park with 3+ on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 3+ on September 29<sup>th</sup> and 4+ on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The last record was of one on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Peregrine Falcon** (*resident*)

The usual pair were virtually ever present and once again it would appear that breeding took place in the usual top secret area. Others would have been present every now and again and juvenile birds were seen regularly during the autumn months.

### *Lanner Falcon: (escape artist)*

One was seen sitting on a mound of salt marsh on March 24<sup>th</sup>. It was a wild one - it was obvious due to the grimace on its beak and the mean look in its eye. Grrr! Nasty!

### **Merlin** (*winter visitor/passage migrant*)

During early winter they were reported on about a dozen dates until February 26<sup>th</sup>, mainly as singles though there were 2 on January 19<sup>th</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup> - one of which was an adult male bird. 2 migrants were seen on April 23<sup>rd</sup> - one flying north and another present around the marsh.

Autumn/winter: yep - much the same!

### **Grey Partridge** (*resident*)

3 pairs were present in April – including one pair on the country park, which is quiet unusual these days. I did find out this year that a pair escaped my eyes/ears/neck last year somehow – they were seen on and off in the old horse paddock over by the cycle path. They used to be regular before the Country Park got popular with the general public. The autumn numbers were dire and I suspect that the cold winter of 2009/10 hit the local population quite hard? The peak count was a mere 9 birds around the farm during October – it's often been as many as two or even three times amount in recent autumns.

### **Red-legged Partridge** (*wanderer/French vagrant*)

A pair were seen around the fenced off paddocks on the Country Park during April, perhaps later as I didn't go watch the area between the second week of May and early September. There is a new subspecies it's rumoured? Yeah it's known as the Red-legged Allan Partridge? It looks very similar to the 'Frenchies' but can be heard calling its diagnostic mating cry 'Aha' but only if you're upwind from them standing on one leg, wearing a spacesuit made out of corduroy and a blue bowler hat in midwinter when the RLAP starts getting all fruity.

### **Pheasant** (*Tommy Coopers hat/small industrious insect bird*)

It's a pheasant ... so what. They've not long to go around here locally as the dog's have started to notice them and chase them around so the only place where they get any peace is in the old fenced off horse paddock where they play poker to relieve them of the boredom of getting trapped in the old fenced off horse paddock. I'm considering joining them there next year?

### **Coot** (*figment of Nick Levers imagination?*)

Nick 'apparently' found 4 in the inner harbour on Dec 24<sup>th</sup>. Such was the importance of such a find that I went on to send him this e-mail within the exact minute the immense news hit the press. (*Via Planetthanet*)

Hi Nick,

Four Coots!! Four ... Coots! Four! Coots!! Stone tha' Crows ... what is going on. I can include this rather dubious record in the internationally important scientific document 'THER PiGgSwill BerD RiporT - but I will need in advance a full written description, photographic evidence and a DNA profile of course.

Yours sincerely.... Professor Egbert Milton the third.

In retrospect - after studying Nick's rather fantastical romantic yarn within an inch of its life via Gadgets website (*its still up and running folks*) I concentrated on his wording 'whilst out for a run' which are the words he used on his report on Gadgets website. Considering the fact that all our Olympians runners or otherwise are now allegedly so full of potions and powders that if they sneeze its akin to a snowstorm in an Alaskan midwinter, I wondered as to whether or not some sort of illegal mind altering substance may have been behind Nick's sighting? He is some sort of weird fitness freak after all? So avid readers of drivel – I decided under some duress to include Nicks sighting giving you, the readers to make your own minds up about such things? He is a 'Pool fan after all - hence the charitable inclusion.

### **Moorhen** (*yet another type of bird*)

Regularly seen/heard around the farm reservoir but you can't see how many as it's very overgrown now. I did see one on the nearby workshop roof one day ... oh how I laughed ... titter ... titter ... ho ho ho etc. (that's the sound I made when I saw him.) some were even seen on the garage pools ... wow. Not as funny as the one on the workshop roof mind you but it pushes it quite close. I'm smirking to myself as I write ... the memory indelibly etched etc etc. Dropping the sarcasm for one moment, one was seen in the harbour during January.

### **Water Rail** (*winter visitor - may breed occasionally?*)

Didn't he bring tobacco and potatoes from the new world a few centuries back? I heard one on October 14<sup>th</sup>. I was so happy. Others were 'around' but not very many it would appear? Winter numbers have declined somewhat for whatever reason? Franny did bag a year record of 3 on November 27<sup>th</sup> until gazumped by a combined total by Dave Beadle and me of 6 on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Crane** (*the strongest of all European birds*)

One, which was seen flying around the marsh on the evening of April 17<sup>th</sup> (Allan), presumably roosted in the area as it was seen the following morning flying over Stone Lees by someone else who told young Ben about it. You won't get anything near this amount of detail in other bird report will you? By the way - young Ben isn't a smaller, newer version of the large clock tower in Westminster if that's what you're thinking? Well at least I don't think so ... hmm? Well on second thoughts perhaps he is? Anyway - on May 2<sup>nd</sup> two were seen flying distantly south from the Country Park after being heard calling unseen from somewhere across the river on the particularly gloomy, misty morning of May 2<sup>nd</sup>. (PM)

### **Oystercatcher** (*passage migrant/winter visitor/some over summer*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
570	420	540	126	100	107	100	350	670	980	?	310

### **Avocet** (*regular visitor/passage migrant*)

February: 1 on 28<sup>th</sup>. March: 1 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 7 on 22<sup>nd</sup>. April: 3 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 14<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 24<sup>th</sup>. May: 3 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 21<sup>st</sup> and 2 on 24<sup>th</sup>. June: 1 on 9<sup>th</sup>. July: 1 on 27<sup>th</sup>. August: 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>. September: 3 on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 8<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 14<sup>th</sup>. November: 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 6 on 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Little-Ringed Plover** (*passage migrant*)

2 on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1 flew n/west on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1 flew n/west on April 19<sup>th</sup> and 1 flew west on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Ringed Plover** (*passage migrant/winter visitor/breeds*)

The spring migration was virtually overlooked altogether due to lack of coverage in May or even early June, which can be a good time for flocks of Ringo's on the move. The peak arrival that I recorded was an insignificant 26 birds on April 24<sup>th</sup> though in May both Franny and Craig 'outdid' me with counts of 29 on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 32 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. I was gutted!

Autumn migration was noted but only in dribs and drabs, confirming 2010 as a very poor time to see any decent numbers of newly arrived migrant waders of any species. The peak counts were: 35 on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 40 on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 35 on September 14<sup>th</sup>, c50 on September 28<sup>th</sup> and 41 on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
8	5	12	26	32	17	1	40	50	26	5	16

**Kentish Plover** (*scarce but annual passage migrant*)

Franny saw one on ... I don't know? He never did tell me the date, even though I nagged him on a few occasions. It was in August or early September I think?

**Grey Plover** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
260	120	86	17	23	3	-	15	37	109	100+	435

**Golden Plover** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2500	1080	800	0	0	0	1	11	164	640	1800	1600

**Lapwing** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
4750	3500	400	3	0	0	0	0	240	460	700	2500

**Knot** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
370	310	420	18	17	5	2	10	39	120	200+	410

**Sanderling** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

66 migrants which were seen on May 9<sup>th</sup> were the only half decent arrival of the entire spring.

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
67	66	386*	34	66	0	2	8	9	61	84	60

\*The 386 on March 1<sup>st</sup> were the consequence of strong onshore winds and a high tide which must have swept most of the Thanet population of birds into Pegwell. Phil Charlton also counted nearly 1000 Turnstones on the same date when most of the birds were crammed into the beach area just north of the old hover port.

**Turnstone** (*passage migrant/winter visitor - a few over summer*)

\*927 on March 1<sup>st</sup> - see Sanderling.... also 30 new arrivals on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Monthly peak roost counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY		AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
100	60	927*	50	30		10	35	110	?	?

**Dunlin** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1400	970	840	175	89	15	n/c	87	470	400	700+	1100

### **Curlew Sandpiper** (*regular passage migrant - scarce in spring*)

2010 was yet another poor year. During spring: 1 was seen on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

Autumn: July: there were 'some' – no dates. August: singles on 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. September: 13 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 6 on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 26<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 30<sup>th</sup>. October: 1 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Purple Sandpiper** (*winter visitor*)

No records this year?

### **Little Stint** (*passage migrant*)

1 on May 9<sup>th</sup>. No Big Stints or medium sized Stints were seen in 2010 or at any other time in recorded history it would seem but I still get the feeling that they are out there somewhere? The only actual records I received or noted myself were in August: 1 on 7<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 29<sup>th</sup> then during September: 1 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 26<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 27<sup>th</sup> then 1 on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Wood Sandpiper** (*scarce but usually annual passage migrant*)

There was only one sighting this year - on 7<sup>th</sup> August. (FS) A little know fact about Wood Sand's is that they just cannot tolerate being in the company of and member of the Parrot family, in fact it's gone into print here for the first time. During the year whilst pondering life and the universe I had a moment of realisation that I'd never once seen Wood Sand's in the company of Parrots ... so there you have it. After asking around no-one that I spoke to had ever seen them together either ... what more evidence does a man need?

### **Green Sandpiper** (*irregular passage migrant*)

All records were: January: 1 on 11<sup>th</sup>. April: 1 on 19<sup>th</sup> then 1 on 26<sup>th</sup>. July: 1 on 28<sup>th</sup>. August: 4 on 7<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 9<sup>th</sup>. September: 1 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 9<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Common Sandpiper** (*regular passage migrant*)

Records were almost non existent during spring. The only ones that I saw were singles on April 27<sup>th</sup> and May 2<sup>nd</sup> and no-one else reported any though there would have been more of course. Reports were a bit short during the autumn too with only a few reported between July 27<sup>th</sup> and September 29<sup>th</sup>. The only number worthy of mention was 12 on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Redshank** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
70	100	170	150	n/c	n/c	80	280	120	110	?	80

### **Spotted Redshank** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

All records were: April 1 on 15<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 21<sup>st</sup>. May 1 on 9<sup>th</sup>. August: 1 on 26<sup>th</sup>. September: 1 on 12<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 17<sup>th</sup>. No winter records this year at all which has not been the pattern for many years. They have been showing signs of decline during recent winters.

### **Greenshank** (*common passage migrant*)

Small numbers showed during spring from April 15<sup>th</sup>. The only half decent amounts recorded during the period were of 26 birds that arrived on April 29<sup>th</sup> then 10 on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

A light passage occurred from July onwards. The peak counts were extremely low being only 5 birds on August 25<sup>th</sup> then during September 5 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 8 on 8<sup>th</sup> and 7 on 9<sup>th</sup>. The last record was of a bird on October 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-tailed Godwit** (*increasing passage migrant and occasional winter visitor*)

May: 19 on 9<sup>th</sup>. July: 2 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. August: 19 on 7<sup>th</sup> and 14 on 22<sup>nd</sup>. September: 1 on 7<sup>th</sup>. October: 9 on 4<sup>th</sup>. November: 5 on 27<sup>th</sup>. December: 1 seen on many dates and 2 on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Francis counted 143 newly arrived migrants on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
193	153	120	36	143	3	3	13	31	17	100+	286

**Curlew** (*passage migrant/winter visitor/some over summer*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
250	290	240	270	-	28	366	368	370	400	?	c100

**Whimbrel** (*common passage migrant*)

The first migrants were seen on April 7<sup>th</sup> with birds continuing to be seen until early May as is normal. The peak counts were: 34 on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 42 on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 39 on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 37 on May 9<sup>th</sup>. We enjoyed a really good day on April 21<sup>st</sup> ... ooh we were just so happy, when 191 were counted as birds moved north on and off all day. This is the highest number I've personally witnessed in the area ... I'm well chuffed. Well okay not now ... but it was good at the time. My mum let me stay up that night because I'd been such a good little boy and shown real endeavour in staying for many hours in one spot counting all those birdies turning up. The peak autumn counts were: July: 10 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 11 on 27<sup>th</sup>. August: 17 on 6<sup>th</sup>, 23 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 22 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 15 on 24<sup>th</sup> and 18 on 26<sup>th</sup>. September: 12 on 7<sup>th</sup> and 10 on 16<sup>th</sup>. One hung around the salt marsh upriver until October 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Woodcock** (*annual winter visitor/passage migrant*)

During the cold snap in January there were 5 birds present on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 7 on 6<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 7<sup>th</sup> then singles on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. Odd ones were seen during autumn and during the first and second winter cold spells in November and December the peak of 3 birds were seen in Stone Lees during late November. There were also singles on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Snipe** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
100	30	2	0	0	0	0	0	8	15	22	16

**Jack Snipe** (*mainly a regular winter visitor to the area*)

Singles were noted on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> then on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Franny had 3 birds on November 27<sup>th</sup>.

**White Rumped Sandpiper** (*Poorly seen Dunlin*)

One was seen amongst the Dunlin on September 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. (PM and CS) This is the fourth area record after single birds were seen in August 1978, July 1996 and July 1998.

**Grey Phalarope** (*Sort of bird*)

One flew in off, landed then fed out on the mud for 15 - 20 or so minutes on September 26<sup>th</sup>. (PM and FS)

**Ruff** (*annual passage migrant – occasional winter visitor*)

All records were: July: 1 on 28<sup>th</sup>. August: 4 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 21<sup>st</sup> and 1 on 24<sup>th</sup>. September: singles on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. October: 4 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Arctic Skua** (*passage migrant*)

Singles were seen on August 7<sup>th</sup>, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> then September 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Black-headed Gull** (*brown or white headed*)

Peak counts were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
-	-	-	-	-	-	1150	1000+	2000+	4000+	n/c	500

**Common Gull**

Peak counts were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
-	1000	-	-	-	-	45	n/c	440	350+	n/c	1330

**Mediterranean Gull** (*Larid beauty*)

January: 1 on 7<sup>th</sup>. March: 2 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 22<sup>nd</sup>. April: 2 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 3 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 8 on 26<sup>th</sup>. July: 2 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 11 on 28<sup>th</sup>. August: 4 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 25 on 6<sup>th</sup>, 16 on 21<sup>st</sup>, 2 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 4 on 29<sup>th</sup>. September: singles on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. October: 1 on 4<sup>th</sup>. November: 1 on 14<sup>th</sup>. December: 1 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Herring Gull** (*white and grey one*)

Peak counts were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
600	1000	-	-	-	-	-	-	1800	1000+	n/c	3000+

**Yellow-legged Gull** (*migrant/winter visitor*)

In a rather unremarkable early winter they were recorded on only 12 dates until March 24<sup>th</sup> mainly as singles birds. The exception to these poor numbers was an influx that occurred on January 22<sup>nd</sup> when there were at least 8 birds present. An unseasonable one (a second year bird) was present on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Birds arriving during the late winter were not monitored very well this year. Francis did get 10 on Dec 19<sup>th</sup> (he must have been bored? He doesn't usually do Gulls all that much) and there were at least 5 present on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 6+ on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Others in ones and twos were seen every now and then, especially so around Christmas time.

**Caspian Gull** (*annual winter visitor*)

In the early winter: a 1<sup>st</sup> winter on January 14<sup>th</sup>, an adult on January 16<sup>th</sup>, a 1<sup>st</sup> winter on February 24<sup>th</sup>, two 1<sup>st</sup> winters and an adult on February 25<sup>th</sup>, two 1<sup>st</sup> winters on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, a 1<sup>st</sup> winter and a sub adult on March 11<sup>th</sup>, an adult on March 16<sup>th</sup> (all records: BL, PM, SR and CS) In the late winter an adult was present on December 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> (TS, FS etc) it or another was seen on December 22<sup>nd</sup> (PM, SR and SA) then 2 on December 26<sup>th</sup>, an adult and a 1<sup>st</sup> winter. (PM) It's safe to say nowadays that this species is a regular winter visitor to the area with no doubt many being overlooked.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*bird species*)

Peak counts were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
15	40	80	-	-	-	-	30	160	80	n/c	130

## Great Black-backed Gull (*common brute*)

Peak counts were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
120	120	40	n/c	n/c	3	n/c	17	180	1050*	n/c	580

\* The 1050 was part of an influx that occurred for one or two days locally. Otherwise the October peak count was yet another lowly 380 birds on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Numbers continue to be very poor for this species; we'd expect up to four figures during winters past.

## Little Gull (*passage migrant*)

1 flew north on March 16<sup>th</sup> and a group of 5 flew south on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

## Kittiwake (*regular winter visitor/passage migrant*)

Sea watching from the harbour in January turned up 3 south on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 27 south on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 10 south on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Occasional others were seen during the early winter period either around the harbour or on the mud flat.

## Glaucous Gull (*scarce winter visitor*)

Ben came across a 1<sup>st</sup> winter bird on March 19<sup>th</sup>. (BL)

## Sandwich Tern (*passage migrant – has over wintered annually since 1991 at least*)

The regular over wintering individual was present on and off throughout the early winter period and was joined by a second bird on January 13<sup>th</sup>, which was the first multiple winter record for the area if memory serves correct, though on occasion it has been suspected.

The spring passage was once again quite poor (a reoccurring theme in this years report I'm afraid) with birds very late at turning up too – the first definite migrants not appearing until April 7<sup>th</sup> when at long last 48 birds showed their faces. The peak counts were an incredible meagre 70 birds on April 9<sup>th</sup> then 75 on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

The autumn passage was also quite poor with very few high counts taken at all. The peaks were: July: 227 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 244 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 476 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 255 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 250 on 28<sup>th</sup>. August: 100 on 21<sup>st</sup> and 280 on 29<sup>th</sup>. Numbers started to drop off even more during September (peaks of 80 on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 115 on the 9<sup>th</sup>) and the last sign of any definite migrants was on October 7<sup>th</sup> though the over wintering individual continued to be seen well into December (until 16<sup>th</sup> at least) so it's still alive and kicking.

## Little Tern (*decreasing passage migrant*)

A very poor showing during spring with only a few seen/reported on a mere five dates. In April there were 2 on 14<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 21<sup>st</sup> and 7 on 25<sup>th</sup> then 2 on May 1<sup>st</sup> plus 1 more on May 21<sup>st</sup> ... hang on that's four dates isn't it? The return passage wasn't much better – all reports being: August: 1 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> then 3 on 29<sup>th</sup>. September: 1 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1 on 9<sup>th</sup>. The last one was seen on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Common Tern (*common passage migrant*)

They started to show up from April 7<sup>th</sup> and numbers were so low during spring that it's not even worth writing them out here. The peak that I have is only 12 birds present on April 25<sup>th</sup>. The return passage peaks were: 348 on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 330 on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 130 on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 145 on August 29<sup>th</sup> and 130 on September 17<sup>th</sup>. The last record was of 2 birds on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## Arctic Tern (*passage migrant*)

There were no spring records whatsoever and very few during summer/autumn. The only records I received were of singles on August 5<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> then 4+ juveniles were present on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Roseate Tern** (*passage migrant – mainly during July*)

A rather poor showing with one on July 7<sup>th</sup> then 2 on August 6<sup>th</sup> the only records. (All records FS)

**Black Tern** (*passage migrant with an autumnal bias*)

As with all species of *Sterna* – a very poor year ensued with the only records being of 1 on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 3 on August 7<sup>th</sup> then singles on August 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Auk Species** (*autumn/winter visitor*)

Sea watching off the east pier in early winter turned up very few at all. I did see 19 fly south on January 16<sup>th</sup> then 27 south on January 20<sup>th</sup> but that was just about as good as it got. Even though coverage was quite poor there were not too many Auks about in our part of the North Sea during early winter. No Sparrowauks, or Gosauks were seen at all this year even though we tried so much that our pants burst.

**Guillemot** (*autumn/winter visitor*)

See Auks. 90+% of those are generally Guillemots or penguins perhaps?

**Razorbill** (*autumn/winter visitor*)

I'm putting forth a motion here to change the name of Razorbill to Razorbob? What do you reckon eh? It would be much better saying I saw 21 Razorbob's, now wouldn't it as were all bored with Razorbill after years of saying it now aren't we? They have a bill like a razor and they do 'bob' on the sea when they land and it's choppy? I also want to change the word 'choppy' in this instance for the words 'chip choppy' because then you could say if a Razorbill landed on a choppy sea "look there's a Razorbob sitting there on the chip choppy sea" etc and so forth. This would surely enliven any dull and boring sea watch? Odds ones were seen in January whilst looking for Dovers and Guillebobs across the chip choppy sea.

**Cuckoo** (*summer visitor*)

During the spring birds were seen in small numbers (1 – 3 birds) from April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The only summer/autumn sighting was one on July 28<sup>th</sup>. My Christmas day Cuckoo vigil once again turned up exactly none. It's weird isn't it? They are very hard to find during winter – I wonder where they go? Foreness perhaps ... there's no one there looking out for them?

**Turtle Dove** (*low level breeding bird, summer visitor and declining passage migrant*)

Both passage periods were pathetic in the extreme. After the first arrival on April 21<sup>st</sup> we saw 1 – 3 birds on about half a dozen dates and it's quite possible a pair may have bred either on the Country Park or just outside the area. About two were seen during the entire autumn – the last record that I have was of one seen on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Collared Dove** (*common resident*)

Up to 65 birds were counted on the farm fields during September plus there were probably about a dozen to twenty or more birds present between the Country Park and the local gardens etc throughout. I'm losing the will to live writing this awful turgid rubbish. Rather than read this why don't you go out and get a good book to read? It'll expand your mind far more than this 'I saw 65 Doves' etc rubbish ... who cares about it anyway?

**Stock Dove** (*resident/passage migrant*)

I just couldn't be bothered.

### **Wood Pigeon** (*resident/boring passage migrant*)

Whilst good numbers were 'around' or seen flying over in waves from time to time I doubt very much if I will receive too many complaints if I decline writing out and records here? About a 1000 or so were seen flying south to roost during late December.

### **Barn Owl** (*scarce semi local resident/wanderer*)

Two birds were seen hunting over the marsh in early January.

### **Short-eared Owl** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Single birds were seen on five dates between January 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. During October: singles were seen on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, a newly arrived migrant flying west on 19<sup>th</sup> then single birds were present on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Roly saw another one on November 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Little Owl**

Mick (and his wife) saw one on the cliff top just before Christmas.

### **Swift** (*common summer visitor/migrant*)

I've not too many records - the first ones showed up on April 20<sup>th</sup> and the highest counts that I have are a measly 80 north on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 100 north on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 140 present/hanging around on June 2<sup>nd</sup> when 60 more flew north. In July 200 flew west on 27<sup>th</sup> and by the time I started watching the area again in September they were seen on a further six dates until the last one on September 28<sup>th</sup>. They are another species in serious and obvious decline.

### **Green Woodpecker** (*common resident*)

Ever present in small numbers ... well what else am I supposed to write here?

### **Great-spotted Woodpecker** (*resident - autumn migrant/wanderer*)

1 - 2 were recorded on and off throughout the year as well as many more post breeding/wanderers and presumed migrants during the autumn. 5 migrants flew s/west to n/west on September 11<sup>th</sup> and up to 10 birds were seen on in September and October.

### **Wryneck** (*scarce passage migrant*)

One showed up amongst the hover port scrub on September 10<sup>th</sup>. (PM and CS) I'm almost certain I saw another on the country park the day previous too?

### **Ring-necked Parakeet** (*far too common resident*)

Numbers appeared fairly stable though no effort was made to ensure that this statement is indeed factual. I once again blame F. Solly.

### **Woodlark** (*scarce passage migrant*)

I heard a Woodlark call after all the small birds were flushed from the salt marsh on January 7<sup>th</sup> but didn't see it or them - then Francis saw two together in the same general area on January 10<sup>th</sup>. A period of possible sightings of one or two birds over the salt marsh in flight or hopping about on Shellness point went on until February 2<sup>nd</sup> when I actually saw one of the birds or another fly across the river. I was well chuffed ... not! These are the first ever winter records of this species at Pegwell and were due no doubt to a rather large influx of mainly Skylarks that arrived during arctic weather conditions off the continent during January.

During autumn: 2 birds were present on the farm on October 9<sup>th</sup>, one of which flew off east and another dropped in after flying in from the south on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Skylark** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Quite a bit of cold weather arrivals/comings and goings were noted during the bitter spell in early January. Numbers of birds present around the river/salt marsh peaked at around 300 birds on January 7<sup>th</sup> plus another 120 birds flew north on the same date. There were also 100+ present around the salt marsh areas on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and 80 on January 5<sup>th</sup>. Rather worrying was the fact that there was so little spring migration that I took absolutely no note of any at all during the March/April period. Singing birds were at a premium with a pair hanging around the farm fields which presumably bred and another singing male was noted displaying its wares whilst raptor watching from the Country Park somewhere over near Saint Augustine's golf course. There were another 1 - 2 seen or heard on the Sandwich side of the river if memory serves correct?

Autumn migration was in evidence from early October after which a steady trickle occurred until late October/November. During October up to 15 birds were present around the farm and visible migration counts in that month included 82 west on 7<sup>th</sup>, 83 s/west on 8<sup>th</sup>, 139 west on 9<sup>th</sup>, 42 n/west on 14<sup>th</sup>, 44 n/west on 15<sup>th</sup>, 41 north on 18<sup>th</sup>, 56 north on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 65 north on 25<sup>th</sup>.

Very good numbers were present during the second cold spell of the late winter - there were 300+ on December 19<sup>th</sup> and a spectacular 600+ on December 21<sup>st</sup> when there were around 300 each in the salt marsh around the country park and the same again on the farm fields as well as quite a few seen flying north during the day in question.

### **Short-toed Lark** (*rare passage migrant*)

Craig found one in the fields of Little Cliffsend Farm on October 11<sup>th</sup>. This was the second area record after one seen on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2004. (CS, PM etc)

### **Kingfisher** (*regular winter visitor*)

Up to two birds were seen around the harbour during both winter periods plus the occasional other one was seen from the country park/river end as is the norm. Once again they were seen pretty regularly during the autumn/winter from the hover pad and Scott saw one around the farm reservoir on October 17<sup>th</sup> which is the first record from there as far as I know?

### **Sand Martin** (*passage migrant/occasional breeder*)

During the spring: they were recorded on a mere ten dates between March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. The peak counts were low as is the norm here being of only 7 flying north on April 21<sup>st</sup> and 8 north on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

I have very few records for the autumn. Coverage during July and August when the largest gathering usually appear, wasn't very good - hence the lack of records. The only counts of over 15 birds that I have from later on in the autumn were: 16 south on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 20 over on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 40 over on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 20 n/west on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 150 n/west on September 8<sup>th</sup> and 20 on September 11<sup>th</sup>. The last record of the year was of 1 on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **House Martin** (*summer visitor*)

After the first ones were seen on April 6<sup>th</sup> they were followed by yet another very normal poor spring passage. 50 birds seen flying north on April 30<sup>th</sup> was far and away the highest number recorded. Coverage was poor in May though by all accounts they were scarce everywhere so no harm was done with the lack of recording?

Autumn: the peak counts were: 1000+ present and south on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 500 s/west on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 850 n/west on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1700 s/west on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 400 present on October 6<sup>th</sup> and 500 north on October 18<sup>th</sup>. The last one was seen on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Swallow** (*summer visitor*)

During spring they were recorded from March 30<sup>th</sup> when 50+ birds flew north which is quite a few for a first arrival down here in sunny Thanet. This raised hopes for the rest of spring but what occurred was akin to proverbial hirundine belly flop as a light passage ensued, so light and hardly noticeable that hardly anyone 'noticed it' and gave up birding in the spring as it was treble cack! The peak counts were hardly worth bothering with but here goes - 70 flew north on April 19<sup>th</sup> and 150 north on April 30<sup>th</sup>. I told you it was cack didn't I? This would be a good thing for Solly to have written on his tombstone perhaps ... I told you it was cack? His enthusiasm for birding is at times more rock bottom than a rock at the bottom of the deepest crevice in the Atlantic Ocean these days - anyway ... enough of old hairy bonce and on with the autumn ... whoopee.

Autumn: There were no very large movements but some half decent gatherings and visible migration were noted during September and October. The peak counts were: 1600 north and 500+ present on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1000 s/west on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1000 present on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 3850 n/west and 2000 present on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1200 s/west on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 4500 present on October 6<sup>th</sup>. The last one was seen on 'I don't know' as I went into hiding during November?

### **Rock Pipit** (*resident/passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Early winter estimates added up to around 30 or more birds frequenting the salt marsh surrounding the Country Park.

Though they breed around the harbour the first returning birds started to be noticed from September 8<sup>th</sup>. No extensive counts were taken later on in the year though Francis did record 15 on November 27<sup>th</sup>. I would suspect there to have been a quite a few more present.

### **Water Pipit** (*scarce passage migrant/winter visitor*)

Following the recent trend of the past two winters 1 - 2+ were seen - in the main around the hide/scrape areas up until March 1<sup>st</sup> and then again during the late winter from November onwards. The occasional other one (twice?) were seen near the pools adjacent to Stone Lees during early winter too. Another was seen on the small beach near the west cliff on October 25<sup>th</sup> then in Stone Lees there were 3 on November 23<sup>rd</sup> (CS) and 1 on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Tree Pipit** (*passage migrant*)

The normal low amounts of records were taken during the spring with single flyover birds recorded on four dates between April 18<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

Autumn passage: September 1 south on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3 north on 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 west on 9<sup>th</sup>, 5 north on 28<sup>th</sup> and 3 north on 29<sup>th</sup>. October: 2 west on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 south on 8<sup>th</sup> and 1 over on 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Meadow Pipit** (*resident breeder - common passage migrant*)

A few were ever present during the early winter period plus a small arrival was noted on January 4<sup>th</sup> when 60 birds were present in the area. Spring passage was very light with hardly any even into double figures movements noted. The exceptions were 15 west on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 60 n/west on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 20 north on April 9<sup>th</sup> and 12 north on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

Numbers started to build during the second week of September and there were good numbers present around the farm fields during October (300 on 15<sup>th</sup> and 200 on 16<sup>th</sup>) and the peak counts from the entire area were 350 present on September 28<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>. The highest numbers were seen during watches of visible migration - the best days being: 175 s/west on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 348 s/west on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 730 s/west on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 415 north on October 14<sup>th</sup>. 100+ were using the salt marsh on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Red-throated Pipit** (*poorly heard Mipit*)

One flew west along the cliff top on September 28<sup>th</sup>. (PM) Later on what may have been the same bird was flushed from the edge of the Farm paddocks – the call certainly sounded similar anyway. This is the third Pegwell record after birds on October 29<sup>th</sup> 1999 and one other older record on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1990.

### **Pied Wagtail** (*resident/passage migrant*)

During January up to four birds frequented the car park area and a couple of pairs were present virtually throughout. No pre roost activity was seen at all during the early winter period and spring passage was virtually non-existent. A bit of passage was noted from late September until late October the best days being: 48 north on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 64 north on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 48 north on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 33 north and west on October 18<sup>th</sup> and 34 north and west on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **White Wagtail** (*passage migrant some may winter?*)

During spring 1 – 2 were recorded on 11 dates between March 15<sup>th</sup> and April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Grey Wagtail** (*regular passage migrant/wanderer*)

One flying north on January 18<sup>th</sup> was the only early winter record. They were amazingly scarce during the spring with only one record when 1 flew east on April 21<sup>st</sup>. As I write I actually find this hard to believe? Only one Grey wag?

After 1 flew south on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, watching the visible migration during September and October turned up migrating birds on 22 dates during the period starting on September 7<sup>th</sup>. The peak counts were 3 north on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 6 west on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 5 north on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 3 south on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 3 south on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 5 north and 3 south on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 3 over on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 4 west on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2 north and 1 west on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 3 north on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 west on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 4 west on October 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Yellow Wagtail** (*common passage migrant/used to breed nearby*)

Spring migrants were noted from April 6<sup>th</sup> until May 21<sup>st</sup> and the spring peaks (not the obscure TV programme by David Lynch) were: 8 north on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 5 north and 2 south on April 21<sup>st</sup> and 11 north on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Birds were seen on many dates from mid August until October 5<sup>th</sup> but 9 on August 25<sup>th</sup> was the only count even worth considering for inclusion in this rag for the sad and lonely I'm afraid. Thank you for your patience and understanding – it's very much appreciated.

### **Wren** (*common resident*)

Little Jenny Wren went largely ignored in 2010. Shame on us eh? The local population was hit a bit during the very cold early winter period but that's your lot on the Wren front I'm afraid.

### **Dunnoek** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, waffle ... slurp (I'm drinking a cup of tea as I write) ... blah, blah, blah, blah, – waffle ... doo-dah ... slurpity slurp. Crunch (a biscuit is engulfed) etc. Ow ... I just hit my head on the desk ... must have fallen asleep due to the boredom?

### **Robin** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Extra added nothing. The usual one or two ticking away in every bush occurred on a couple of occasions during the autumn but no-one, including me could be bothered to even hazard a guess as to how many migrants were present.

### **Waxwing** (*sporadic scarce winter visitor*)

The autumn/winter of 2010 proved a spectacular period for these lovely confiding little semi suburban birds. They started very early – as did the cold weather, the first sighting was of 3 seen flying west along the cliff top on October 20<sup>th</sup> (PM) then another was heard in the same area on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Nick Lever saw the next ones – a group of five flying west along the cliff top on November 2<sup>nd</sup> then Franny reported 15 in Stone Lees on November 27<sup>th</sup>. By mid November quite a few small flocks were being seen in Thanet which, by the end of the month had built up to a flock of 80 between Ramsgate and Broadstairs, but this was just the start of things. By the second week of December birds started to turn up around Pegwell en-masse, firstly along the Canterbury Road East on the 12<sup>th</sup> when 300+ were seen (CW, FS etc) plus 70+ birds in Pegwell. (MM) The following day (13<sup>th</sup>) Craig and I saw 14 by the Shell Garage then many hundreds in Pegwell – I saw two flocks arriving from the north, one of c150 and the other an estimated 500. (PM) This second flock landed in Stone Lees briefly before flying off, though there were still 70+ birds present, building to 150+ later on in the day. 1 – 200+ birds were seen on and off from Stone Lees during the proceeding days, peaking at 500 birds on the 17<sup>th</sup>. (FS) Many of these birds were very mobile making exact counts (or guesses?) as to how many birds were involved virtually impossible. Just outside the recording area there was an absolute minimum of 1000 birds seen between Stone Lees and Ebbsfleet Road on the 15<sup>th</sup> (PM) and Dylan estimated there to be around 600 in that general area still, on the 20<sup>th</sup> - which included a few colour ringed birds which had travelled down through Scotland. There were also 1 – 200 birds there on a regular basis for a few days around this general period. After this we started seeing birds on the Country Park – mainly feeding on the apples left over from the autumn. There were at least 30 – 100+ present on the Country Park between the 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> plus a few flyover flocks which included around 200 seen flying north across the Country Park on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Up to 300 were reported just outside the north end of the recording area after Christmas, feeding around the houses. No doubt many of these would have been the same birds seen initially on the 12<sup>th</sup> as they were extremely mobile. There were still 60+ birds present on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Redstart** (*annual passage migrant*)

Spring: 1 on April 22<sup>nd</sup> then 2 on April 26<sup>th</sup>. A bit better during autumn as usual with in September: 3 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 6<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 9<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 28<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 29<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 30<sup>th</sup> then during October: 1 on 5<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Black Redstart** (*annual passage migrant/occasional winter visitor*)

1 on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2 on March 30<sup>th</sup> then single birds on March 31<sup>st</sup>, September 27<sup>th</sup> and December 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Wheatear** (*passage migrant*)

Spring: recorded in very small numbers from April 7<sup>th</sup> except for 13 on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 9 on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 7 on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 21 on April 26<sup>th</sup> and 7 on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

Autumn: a light but regular passage was noted from August 24<sup>th</sup> until October 18<sup>th</sup>. No large numbers appeared, the peaks being: 12 on September 5<sup>th</sup> and 21 on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Stonechat** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

None were seen after March 1<sup>st</sup> and the first autumn arrival was on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Monthly peak counts were as follows:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY		AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
5	3	1	0	0		0	2	1	2	0

### **Whinchat** (*passage migrant – regular during autumn*)

No spring records were reported this year. During autumn I have records of 1 – 7 birds on many dates from late August until the rather late date of October 17<sup>th</sup> no doubt due to the mild autumn. The peak counts were: 10 on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 13 on September 7<sup>th</sup> and 13 on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Song Thrush** (*resident/passage migrant*)

30+ continental looking/sounding birds were present on January 4<sup>th</sup>. The only other note that I took of them was during the autumn migration. Birds started to arrive as usual from late September with peaks of 470 west and 100+ present on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 320 west and 150+ present on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 55 west and quite a few present on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 80 west on 12<sup>th</sup> and 50 west on 20<sup>th</sup>. There were also 80 present on October 11<sup>th</sup> and 50 present on October 15<sup>th</sup> and December 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Redwing** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

A few cold weather arrivals included in January - 20 on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 40 on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Low numbers of birds were seen on and off until late March. The spring migration was not even worth mentioning and the last record was of 7 birds on April 6<sup>th</sup>.

Autumn arrivals started to show from September 26<sup>th</sup>. The peak movements/arrivals were as follows: 980 west and 50+ present on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1215 west and 50+ present on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 west on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 4650 west on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

During the late winter up to 200 or more were present in Stone Lees and 100 on or over the Country Park on occasion. A bit of cold weather movement in December produced 100+ flying n/west over the Country Park on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **Mistle Thrush** (*resident*)

I think the local breeding population is down to two pairs, perhaps three? Singing males were heard in spring/summer along the cycle track near the Saint Augustine's golf course and there was another pair that successfully bred somewhere up near the Viking ship – perhaps in the garden across the road?

Other bits of news included that there were 9 on September 13<sup>th</sup> and vismig in October turned up: 11 east on 9<sup>th</sup>, 11 south and west on 10<sup>th</sup>, 16 west on 12<sup>th</sup>, 9 west on 15<sup>th</sup>, 8 west on 16<sup>th</sup> plus a few ones and twos amongst the other Thrush movements.

### **Fieldfare** (*passage migrant/winter visitor*)

During the January freeze up a few birds were virtually ever present around the Country Park and were bulked up by arrivals of 60 on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 15 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 110 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 40 (north) on 14<sup>th</sup> and 500+ flew n/west on February 24<sup>th</sup>. In spring 19 migrants flew south on March 5<sup>th</sup> – well okay spring for Fieldfares if you must.

The first arrival of autumn was of one flying west on September 28<sup>th</sup> and they were seen most regularly and in the largest numbers during October with peaks of 245 west on 15<sup>th</sup> and a decent 3260 west on 20<sup>th</sup>.

Winter numbers were low as is usual, so 80 present on December 12<sup>th</sup> (MM) and 60 birds seen flying n/west on December 21<sup>st</sup> were noteworthy for here. Up to 20 were feeding around the apple trees on the Country Park during the cold spell in December.

### **Ring Ouzel** (*annual passage migrant*)

Spring: During April singles on 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> then there were 1 or 2 present on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The autumn was quite good as north and east winds peppered our bit of coast for prolonged periods ... whoopee eh? 1 on September 27<sup>th</sup> was followed by 5 on September 28<sup>th</sup> then during October 2 on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 2 west on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 2 north on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 5+ on 12<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 13<sup>th</sup>, 9 on 14<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 16<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 1 on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Blackbird** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Lots of small arrivals during October, which is just about as much as you're going to get! A bit of diurnal visible migration was noted during October but nothing more than about 40 in any one day.

**Cetti's Warbler** (*wanderer, migrant and casual breeder*)

A pair set up territory presumably breeding in the s/west of the recording area. Singles birds were seen or heard throughout the area between Stone Lees and the country park throughout most of the year. A rare sighting occurred when we saw one on the hover pad on September 9<sup>th</sup> which is only the second ever record from that end as far as my poor semi functioning brain can bring to mind? There were 2 birds still hanging around the reed bed near the bird hide on December 20<sup>th</sup>. (MS)

**Garden Warbler** (*low level breeding bird and common passage migrant*)

An early bird was seen around the car park on April 9<sup>th</sup> and another male set up territory and could be heard singing around the Country Park from May 19<sup>th</sup>. Other singles were seen in June, August and September but that was about it for 2010.

**Blackcap** (*fairly common breeding bird and common passage migrant*)

Spring: from March 17<sup>th</sup>. Was this a migrant? Don't know ... don't care. By the first week of April they started to arrive in numbers. How many? Er ... a few? What was the peak count? 21 on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Is this an unusually high amount? No. How many breeding pairs occurred then? Don't know. Did any over winter? Don't know ... I suspect not, they don't usually? Why don't you know? I don't know. Do you talk to yourself when you're out on your own? Yes. Do you think this is normal behaviour? No ... probably not? Do you send yourself Christmas cards and pretend that they are from other people? I don't celebrate Christmas but if I did I would consider it. Would you consider therapy? I don't know ... what does she look like?

**Lesser Whitethroat** (*low level breeding bird and common passage migrant*)

If only you realised how boring it is at the end of a long gruelling year to correlate all the records together of some boring little warbler, knowing that whatever you write no-one is going to take a blinding bit of notice of what you write down about them or even care how many there were? Lesser Whitethroats are doing okay around the reserve though I think that as a breeding species numbers probably dipped a bit these past couple of years? They usually arrive during the second half of April (and this year was no exception to the rule - 5 on April 20<sup>th</sup> was the first day) and peak numbers can reach double figures during spring and 20 - 30 during autumn - mainly in August and September. Once again 2010 fitted the general rule as there were peaks of 23 on August 25<sup>th</sup> and 20 on September 8<sup>th</sup>. The last ones were seen as is usual on October 4<sup>th</sup> - which fits into the normal parameters of the thingamy wotsit already mentioned. I always get bored writing this part of the report. Is it showing?

**Whitethroat** (*common breeding bird and passage migrant*)

The first arrival was on April 7<sup>th</sup> with a steady build up until the area was festooned with them by April 23<sup>rd</sup> when over 35 singing males were counted. Over 20 pairs bred between Stone Lees, the Country Park, Hover Port and Cliff Top.

During autumn the peak count was 120 birds on August 25<sup>th</sup> with 30 - 50 birds regularly present around the country park up until mid September. The last record was of a rather late bird still present on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Sedge Warbler** (*low level breeding bird and common passage migrant*)

They were poorly recorded so not too much info to pass on from the year. The first one was noticed on April 6<sup>th</sup> and up to 4 were recorded on quite a few dates between then and June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The late summer/early autumn build up wasn't recorded at all. Coverage was better during September but the peak counts were a measly 6 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup>. There would have been many more present during August. The last record was of 2 birds on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Fan Tailed Warbler** (*very rare visitor*)

One spent about an hour skulking around the Country Park and salt marsh on April 9<sup>th</sup> before flying off high towards Wetherlees. (PM and FS) During the autumn singles were heard calling from scrub on the Country Park on September 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. It's just got to be the same one as last year ... surely? (CS and PM)

**Reed Warbler** (*low level breeding bird and common passage migrant*)

The first arrival was on April 21<sup>st</sup> and the spring peak count was of 8 singing males present between the hover port and the country park on April 30<sup>th</sup>. 5 males were singing around the hover port reed beds alone on May 21<sup>st</sup> and there were 6 birds heard on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Once again the late summer build up was largely ignored though there was a low level scattering of birds present around the area throughout September until October 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Grasshopper Warbler** (*passage migrant*)

One was reeling in Stone Lees on April 23<sup>rd</sup> then in September Scott found one on the cliff top on the 5<sup>th</sup> and there were 1 or perhaps even 2 in Stone Lees on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Willow Warbler** (*low level breeding bird and common passage migrant*)

Numbers of breeding birds fell to only one this year. The tale of woe on the Willow Warbler front continued as arrivals during both migration periods were amazingly poor once again, even though much of the early autumn arrivals were no doubt overlooked in August due to poor coverage of the bushes at that time of year?

The first ones (5 birds) showed up in rather tardy fashion on April 4<sup>th</sup>. The cold spring no doubt kept them at bay as they can arrive a week or even earlier some years. A steady trickle continued throughout the month into May but at no time did any one of us record more than 7 birds, which is fairly poor.

Autumn records although regular throughout September (until the 28<sup>th</sup> when the last one was seen) were in amazingly low numbers, in fact the peak count that I have is ... wait for it ... 4 on September 2<sup>nd</sup>! Even though there would have been a few more undiscovered birds these numbers are just getting ridiculous.

**Chiffchaff** (*low level breeding bird and common passage migrant*)

Oh no ... I just can't be bothered writing about Chiffchaff numbers. See Gadgets website and scroll through the counts we almost fell asleep writing during March and April then September and October if you're all that interested? If you've still got a pulse then you are doing well. There were some really good numbers during September - perhaps 150 birds one day, which isn't too bad for here and at least one was still present near the Shell garage in mid December and another was hanging around the car park on the Country Park until December 20<sup>th</sup> at least and 2 were seen/heard on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Yellow-Browed Warbler** (*scarce autumn migrant*)

One showed along the cliff top between the sunken garden and the burned out garden on October 9<sup>th</sup> (PM) and another was present near the chine on October 12<sup>th</sup>. (CS and PM)

### **Pallas' Warbler** (*rare autumn migrant*)

Two were found feeding on the under cliff of the old hover port on October 12<sup>th</sup>. (PM, CS etc.) One of the birds, perhaps both was/were still present on the following day.

### **Goldcrest** (*passage migrant*)

After the rather appalling autumn of 2009 for this species it was hardly too much of a surprise that the early winter peak count was a rather massive one bird!

Autumn: migrants started to show from mid September though not in numbers until early October with 9 birds on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 21 on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Peak counts during the month were 20+ on 11<sup>th</sup>, 50+ on 12<sup>th</sup>, 25 on 13<sup>th</sup> and 20 on 18<sup>th</sup> – there were birds seen in smaller numbers all month. There were 2 seen on November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Firecrest** (*passage migrant*)

Two birds were seen during winter this year with singles on the Country Park on January 30<sup>th</sup> and another in a garden along chalk lane on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The spring migrants were: 3 on March 17<sup>th</sup> then singles on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

During autumn 3 early birds on September 8<sup>th</sup> raised hopes for a good period for this species. In reality nothing of the sorts happened of course. The entire sets of records were: September: 3 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 26<sup>th</sup> and 1 on 28<sup>th</sup>. October: 3 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 9<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 13<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 16<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 3 on 22<sup>nd</sup>. One was in the bushes outside Stone Lees on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Bearded Tit** (*passage migrant/wanderer*)

2 flew west along the cliff top veering off s/west towards the bay on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2+ were found in the reed bed near Stone Lees on October 18<sup>th</sup> (NL), another single flew west from the cliff top on October, 12+ were present in the reed bed south of the hover port on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 3 were present on October 25<sup>th</sup>. (PF)

### **Penduline Tit** (*scarce passage migrant*)

A juvenile was present in the small reed bed just south of the bird hide along the sea wall on October 9<sup>th</sup>. This would be the third or fourth ever area record after birds on October 14<sup>th</sup> 1991 and October 26<sup>th</sup> 2005 plus perhaps one other record too?

### **Great Tit** (*resident*)

Nothing. No-one would take any notice anyway ... I could write anything here and no-one would ever know. I'll write a word here ... any old word – CUSTARD, that'll do. I bet I don't ever get anyone saying why did you write 'custard' in the report? It's certainly the first time the word would have ever appeared in a bird report I presume?

### **Blue Tit** (*resident*)

More extra added nothing. Little bits of visible migration were in evidence in September and October – up to 30 showed some days bush hopping west along the cliff top.

### **Long-tailed Tit** (*common resident*)

Around 40+ birds were present in two separate groups on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Although breeding birds were still present here and there I would hazard a guess that they were in fewer numbers than the past few years?

### **Spotted Flycatcher** (*declining but annual passage migrant*)

There was only one spring record this year when a bird was spotted on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Anyway ... a few showed up in autumn which were as follows: during September: 1 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 10<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 12<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 26<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 7 on 29<sup>th</sup> then 2 on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Pied Flycatcher** (*annual passage migrant*)

In September: 1 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> then 2 on 7<sup>th</sup> followed by further singles on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Late one's appeared on October 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Magpie** (*common resident*)

20+ were present during the autumn months. Otherwise they were ever present etc.

**Great Grey Shrike** (*scarce migrant – usually found by Scott*)

Scott did his normal trick and found another bird which frequented the hawthorns at the top of the tunnel entrance – occasionally the horse paddocks and cliff top too between October 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Scott now has the official Pegwell nickname (unwanted) of The Shrike-finder General.

**Jay** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Birds continue to be seen far more regularly than they used to be, though I can never be bothered to actually take many counts except for over flying migrants when I'm in the mood. In the autumn I tried to keep some rough counts but once again fell into the same old trap of concentrating on visible migration. There was a group of 5 on the Country Park on September 27<sup>th</sup> and a few more besides around the recording area on the same date. Autumn migrants were reported on a few dates – 4 flew north on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2 north on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2 north on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 7 north and 10+ present on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 11 west on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2 west on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 4 west on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 7 west on October 19<sup>th</sup> and 7 north on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Jackdaw** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Couldn't be bothered – a few were seen on and off and the little bits of migration that were noted were deemed so insignificant that they were not worthy bothering with.

**Rook** (*resident/passage migrant*)

No proper counts were taken but numbers appeared to be relatively stable in the surrounding areas. No migration was noted at all.

**Carrión Crow** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Virtually ignored – 100+ were present around the farm and mud flats most of the year.

**Hooded Crow** (*rare winter visitor*)

One flew north through the bay then low west inland over the Country Park on February 25<sup>th</sup>. (PM)

**Raven** (*rare visitor*)

Single birds flew s/west past the hover pad on April 20<sup>th</sup>, south over Stone Lees on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, n/west behind the Country Park on September 27<sup>th</sup>, east on October 7<sup>th</sup> and then two arrived off the mud flat and circled around calling over Ramsgate on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Starling** (*resident/passage migrant/winter visitor*)

1000 were seen around the Country Park on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2000+ were present around the marsh on October 10<sup>th</sup> and 1000+ migrants arrived in off on October 24<sup>th</sup> before I lost interest and stopped taking any note of them. It was hardly a classic period for Starlings though I didn't watch through November.

### **Golden Oriole** (*scarce passage migrant/over shooter*)

Craig saw an adult male bird flying south through Stone Lees on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **House Sparrow** (*resident*)

I took a few counts during the autumn - the highest of which was a flock of 40+ birds seen feeding on the farm fields on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Other groups of a dozen or so birds each were also present around the cliff top and the houses along the main road during the same period so there were at least 60 birds present in the whole area dropping to around 20 - 30 birds by winter in their main hideouts in the gardens along Cliffsend and the farm/cliff top. The decline in slow here but would appear to be in evidence? They have completely disappeared from the car park area these past few years.

### **Tree Sparrow** (*annual passage migrant that no longer breeds or over winters*)

There were no early winter reports or spring records at all in 2010. A group of 12 were seen flying around the country park on September 9<sup>th</sup> which is a miraculous record for the area so early on in the year these days. A few others showed up, mainly during visible migration watches in October - they were: 3 flew south on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 12 north on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 10 north on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 21 north and 3 were present on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 11 north and 1 west on the 19<sup>th</sup> then 10 west and 1 north on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Chaffinch** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Up to 80 birds were present during January dropping to 40+ in February. Spring passage was noted from mid March to the first week of April the peaks being 40 north on March 16<sup>th</sup> and 70 east on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

A bit of early visible migration was on view from late September with fairly good September movements (for here anyway) of 120 birds west on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 910 s/west on the 29<sup>th</sup>. By October there were many birds present but most of the action went on overhead - the peaks being: 237 s/west on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 535 s/west on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 94 west on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 247 west on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 92 west on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 92 west on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Brambling** (*passage migrant*)

The only record that I have for the early part of the year was of 2 flying north on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Autumn passage got going early and carried on at quite a pace with birds seen in half reasonable numbers more often than not between September 27<sup>th</sup> and the last week of October. Though no very large movements were noted, this was by far the best time for Brambling since I've been watching the area, which is pushing twenty years now. The entire passage in September and October amounted to 774 west, 5 north and 8 south plus a few present, which is quite a decent amount for the area. The peak counts were all recorded flying inland from the cliff top during October and were: 43 west on 9<sup>th</sup>, 38 west on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 38 west on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 73 west on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 77 west on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 54 west on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 54 west on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 219 west on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 32 west on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 41 west on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

A few were seen during the cold weather in December when up to 3 were seen on the Country Park peaking as 4 birds between there and the Hover Pad on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Twite** (*declining winter visitor*)

Early winter numbers peaked at 12 birds present on January 6<sup>th</sup> - there were also 10 on January 4<sup>th</sup> and 9 on February 1<sup>st</sup>. They were only ever present during January though the colour ringed group of four were present on and off until March 12<sup>th</sup> at least.

No birds overwintered during the late winter - a sign of the times I'm afraid. We did get a few migrants between us and I'm pretty sure that Craig and I ignored a few high flying passage birds in late October? The only 100% records that I have are of 4 north on October 17<sup>th</sup> and 4 present on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Linnet** (*resident/passage migrant*)

80 were present on January 6<sup>th</sup> and 200 present on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Spring peak visible migration counts during April were - 90 west on 7<sup>th</sup>, 50 north on 8<sup>th</sup>, 60 north on 9<sup>th</sup>, 70 north on 12<sup>th</sup>, 55 north on 15<sup>th</sup>, 120 north on 16<sup>th</sup>, 50 north on 19<sup>th</sup> then 140 north and 30 south on 21<sup>st</sup>.

100+ were present around the Country Park throughout September building to 150+ during October. Autumn migrant counts included: in September - 75 north on 28<sup>th</sup> and 72 west on 29<sup>th</sup>. October - 450 present on 4<sup>th</sup>, 250 present on 7<sup>th</sup>, 120 north on 9<sup>th</sup> and 110 west on 18<sup>th</sup>. Up to 400 - 500+ or so birds were scattered around the whole recording area during the second cold spell in late December.

### **Redpoll** (*passage migrant*)

There were no records during the spring migration this year, which isn't all that unusual for the area. The autumn wasn't much better either with low numbers being recorded passing through from September 28<sup>th</sup> until October though the largest numbers did pass through Kent well after the period that I was watching. I'd packed it in by late October and many of the other watch points around the Kent coast recorded decent numbers well after this date. The best we could manage during October were: 24 west on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 22 west on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 17 west and 8 north on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 16 north and 4 west on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. After this Craig saw a single flock of 55 birds flying north on November 23<sup>rd</sup> and up to ten were seen around Stone Lees and the Country Park during the late autumn.

### **Siskin** (*passage migrant*)

Spring: passage was very (extremely very) light as might be expected by anyone who has been watching here for more than a couple of years. It was noted on 8 dates between March 12<sup>th</sup> and April 14<sup>th</sup> with the peaks being 12 north on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 12 north on March 18<sup>th</sup> and 5 north on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

During the autumn very few decent counts were taken, though the best visible migration spot to watch the northward passage was left unguarded for most of the days when the cliff top was the area where became our focus of attention. Even then it wasn't exactly a classic autumn for Siskin, though a steady trickle was noted from September 27<sup>th</sup> to ...well I don't know as I gave up in late October and there were still birds moving well into November this year for whatever reason, which is most odd.

The highest day counts I have were - during September: 191 north and 18 west on 27<sup>th</sup>, 34 west and 28 north on 28<sup>th</sup> and 88 north and 47 west on 29<sup>th</sup>. October: 48 s/west on 4<sup>th</sup>, 16 north and 9 s/west on 5<sup>th</sup>, 4 north and 32 s/west on 7<sup>th</sup>, 34 west and 17 north on 9<sup>th</sup>, 37 east and north on 10<sup>th</sup>, 32 west and 6 north on 11<sup>th</sup>, 26 north and 7 west on 14<sup>th</sup>, 28 north and 10 west on 18<sup>th</sup>, 38 west on 19<sup>th</sup>, 23 west on 21<sup>st</sup> and 33 north and 6 west on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

A few were reported during late winter in Stone Lees by people looking for the Waxwings.

### **Goldfinch** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Peak counts of birds present around the Country Park were 20 on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 8 on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Spring passage from mid March was very light with peak counts of only 35 heading north and 30 north on April 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> respectively.

15 - 20 were present around the Country Park throughout September. Autumn passage was evident from the last week of September when 88 flew west on 27<sup>th</sup> and 110 west on the 30<sup>th</sup>. As usual the best movements were witnessed during October, especially so on the 14<sup>th</sup> when birds were pouring through in their thousands when Craig and I counted 6690 birds flying north in just over two spectacular hours. Days when any half decent numbers were seen passing through during October included: 315 north on 9<sup>th</sup>, 196 north and east on 11<sup>th</sup>, 160 north on 13<sup>th</sup>, 1860 north on 15<sup>th</sup>, 240 north on 16<sup>th</sup>, 102 west and 82 north on 18<sup>th</sup> and 140 north and west on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Greenfinch** (*resident/passage migrant*)

Little 'bits' of vismig were noticed during the spring, such as 30 birds flying north on March 16<sup>th</sup>. However - all the other occurrences were either too small to take note of or ignored entirely. I failed to take any note of any birds that were present all year long too.

During the autumn whilst watching the visible migration, mainly from the cliff top I did make up for my rather lax attitude regarding the rather paltry spring movements. Birds were noted moving from late September throughout October with peaks as follows: During September - 20 west on 28<sup>th</sup> and 35 west on the 29<sup>th</sup> then October - 40 west on 9<sup>th</sup>, 74 west on 15<sup>th</sup>, 50 north on 16<sup>th</sup>, 182 west on 18<sup>th</sup>, 48 west on 19<sup>th</sup>, 87 west on 20<sup>th</sup> and 33 west on 22<sup>nd</sup>. I deserve a medal for counting these I think?

### **Serin** (*scarce passage migrant*)

1 flew north on April 21<sup>st</sup> (CS) and another was hanging around the paddock/farm area on the cliff top on October 19<sup>th</sup>. (PM)

### **Hawfinch** (*scarce passage migrant*)

1 flew north after dropping in briefly on the cliff top bushes on October 9<sup>th</sup> (PM) then another west on October 20<sup>th</sup>. (PM) Migrant records do seem to be increasing perhaps? They always used to be like hens teeth around here - its getting to the point where they are almost annual in Thanet now. Since the year 2000 there have been 9 records of this species here - 2 in 2000 and the other 7 birds since 2007.

### **Bullfinch** (*declining resident*)

There were up to four birds present during early winter - the usual pair on and off in Stone Lees plus at least two more were seen on the Country Park in February, which is rather unusual as this species has undergone a massive decline in the past ten years or more. There were up to three birds seen in Stone Lees during the autumn too. Probable migrants were seen flying west along the cliff top on October 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Crossbill** (*passage migrant*)

Back to normal after the fantastic numbers of autumn 2009 - 3 flew west on April 7<sup>th</sup> then 2 flew north past the hover port on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2 flew north on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 10 west on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Reed Bunting** (*resident and common passage/winter visitor*)

Early winter numbers peaked at 70+ birds estimated to be present in the general Country Park/Salt Marsh area on January 7<sup>th</sup>. It's probably safe to assume that there would have been 100+ birds present had all the Reed Bunting areas been checked during that period. There were also 50 birds still present on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Spring migrants were seen in such low numbers that I didn't bother to take any note. Passage locally is so light that it's a hardly ever worth taking notice of during the first migration. At least two singing males were holding territory during the breeding season.

Autumn migration started to become hard to ignore (even though we tried our best) from the last week of September and little trickles of northward migration was evident pretty much from then all the way through October.

During October: the highest counts taken were - 50 present and 20 north on 4<sup>th</sup>, 63 north on 13<sup>th</sup>, 34 west on 18<sup>th</sup>. Over 100 birds were present on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Little Bunting** (*rare migrant*)

One was briefly present in the stunted bushes along the cliff top before flying off south across the bay on October 9<sup>th</sup>. (PM) This was a new bird for the area.

### **Lapland Bunting** (*scarce passage migrant*)

One was present in the salt marsh on January 7<sup>th</sup>. (PM) The autumn period was a red-letter one for these lovely enigmatic little birds. The north end of Britain was flooded with birds as early as late August and many of these gradually worked their way south, eventually reaching our area by September. We saw more Lapland's this autumn than we've seen in the last twenty years of watching the area. I took all records up until late October, which were:

September: 1 s/east on 9<sup>th</sup> and 1 west on 28<sup>th</sup>. October: 3 on 5<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 3 west and 1 present on 9<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 10<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 9 on 14<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 15<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 14 west on 20<sup>th</sup>, 6 present on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 1 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

I stopped keeping tally after October but I do have a few records from after this. In November, Scott came across 2 on the farm fields near chalk lane on the 12<sup>th</sup> then Francis found 2 in Stone Lees on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 4 in the salt marsh near the garage on December 19<sup>th</sup>. Another flyover was seen on December 20<sup>th</sup> (MS) and there were 2 or 3 seen from the country park on December 21<sup>st</sup> plus a few other sightings and birds heard on a few other dates during late winter.

### **Snow Bunting** (*autumn/winter visitor*)

All the early winter records were taken during January when birds were seen on 7 dates between 4<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> in the main frequenting the normal spot across the river on Shellness. There were 25 on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 32 on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 42+ on the 8<sup>th</sup> which included a flock of 26 birds that flew over the Country Park where they split with 13 heading off north and the other 13 high west inland. Another group of 8 birds flew strongly n/west over the country park on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

Coverage was poor in the later part of the autumn so I would presume that quite a few birds went unrecorded? After an early one appeared on the farm fields on October 20<sup>th</sup> the only other record that I have is of one in the same general area on November 17<sup>th</sup> which Steve Harper found.

### **Yellowhammer** (*passage migrant*)

The only records were: 1 south on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1 west on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 north on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1 east on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1 west on October 13<sup>th</sup> then 2 flew south and 1 was present on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Another was seen on the Country Park on December 21<sup>st</sup> then there were 2 on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Corn Bunting** (*mainly a winter visitor in recent years*)

Up to 14 birds were seen around the country park most days between January 1<sup>st</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup> which was the last sighting of the whole early winter period. The only other record that I have in the first half of the year is one seen on the farm on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Hardly any were seen during autumn and the late winter period - I saw the odd single during December but that was about it by the looks of it?

Phew ... I'm glad that lots out of the way for another year.

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### **Key to initials:**

JC = John Carnell. PF = Peter Forrest. M/SH = Marianne and Steve Harper. NL = Nick Lever.  
BL = Ben Lewis. PM = Phil Milton. MM = Mark Milham JM = Jason Mitchell.  
SM = Simon 'Flintstone' Mount. SR = Steve Ray. CS = Craig Sammels. FS = Francis Solly.  
MS = Martin Sutherland. TS = Tony Swandale. CW = Claire Ward.

## Contributors:

I would like to thank the following who have provided information for this so-called bird report mainly without the use of violence or bribery: Some records I nicked off Gadgets website - I hope the inclusion of these doesn't offend? Special thanks go to Tony Swandale for providing me with the entire list of Ben Lewis' CBC counts of Stone Lees and the Country Park plus the disturbance records that the KNCTC have been undertaking to try and provide some evidence as to what some of our birds have to put up with by mistakenly trying to find food and shelter around our little bit of coast. At the risk of this document getting a tad 'mushy' - thanks also go to Phil Hunt, Andrew Grant, Tim Hodge, Jason Mitchell, Pete Akers, Tim Smith, Ben Lewis, Martin Sutherland and Peter 'quick on his feet' Forrest, for aiding Tony and co in getting the evidence down in writing.

Other to whom thanks are owed for passing on their personal records by e-mail or word of mouth on site included:

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\*Kent Bird News: via Ian Harding who kindly sends me various bits of Pegwell info that might otherwise have slipped through the net.

\*\*Via the Dumptidge garden gnome - my little mate Gadget.

\*\*\* An apology is in order as in last year's report I wrongly wrote Phil Smith's name down as Ian Smith. Sorry mate, quite how I forgot your Christian name when it's the same as my own just shows what a confused state my brain can get in from time to time.

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## The great 2010 OAP Bittern hunt.

Are you sitting comfortably children? Then we'll begin ... The three old codgers Johnny 'The Wig' Websper, 'Oooh arr' Laslett and Jolly old John Hollyer arranged to go out looking for Bitterns in the Stour valley after a big cold spell hits the south east of England. John Websper acting as chauffeur, arranged to go and pick up Pete Laslett from his old peoples refuge deep in sunny Birchington. Johnny and Pete have been great mates since 1837 and have travelled over half the world in search of birds - though neither of them has seen a Bittern in a good while. John pulls up outside of Pete's 'block' toots the Model T Ford horn a couple of times before seeing his old buddy happily shuffling down the path, his replacement knees squeaking and creaking with each footstep, merrily shouting many oooh arrs' along the way to all and sundry whilst adjusting his hearing aid to it highest setting. In no time they are both in Johnny's car and heading off towards John H's little toy house in Worth. After an arduous fifty seven minute drive at between two and eight miles an hour across Thanet and around Sandwich they eventually pull up outside John's house. The sun was shining brightly in the sky though the air was decidedly chilly. Johnny W toots his horn as before but after a full twenty minutes of constant 'honking' elapse with no sign of John H, he has to go and half

knock the door down to get any sort of response. Any lesser mortal would get annoyed by such a thing but Johnny W's made of more tolerant stuff and is blessed with the patience of a Saint, which is just as well as most people would have driven off and left the old duffer! Eventually Jolly old John H arrives at the door and opens it ... "I won't be a third of a jiffy old bean ... nice to see you" - a beaming smile across his withered aged, paint splattered face before disappearing indoors to get his bird watching equipment. Johnny W gets back in the car and switches on the radio, fully aware that it'll take John H another fifteen minutes to walk the twelve yards between his front door and the car - and after the sports news and the first two movements of Handel's Hallelujah chorus are nearly over - John H makes it to the car and climbs in the back alongside Pete. They say their hellos and the conversation begins:

**Pete L:** "Oohh arr it be a good day fer seein' those Bittuns eh Jarn?"

**John H:** "Quite - as you say old bean, it is indeed a very good day to go out looking for the Great Bittern - I hope we can bag one or two? Might you be a dear and help me remove the stopper from this 1949 bottle of Port? It's became quite attached and I can be quite wretched if I don't get a couple of glasses of the Iberian peninsula's finest inside me on such a day - even as excited as I am about the Great Bittern chase. Are you in fine fettle old Chum?"

**Pete L:** "Oooh arr ... I is beyin in tarp condition Jarn - and fanks fer askin' old buddy. I aint felt so well since I accidentally mistook the wife's little blue slimming pills 'fer a tube er' Smarties and spent the rest of the day dancin' rund tha garden in me pants 'n socks.

Johnny W gets back in the car after arranging the boot full of telescopes, binoculars, tripods and Zimmer frames - throws his well used road map (written on velum) on the empty passenger seat next to him before fastidiously taking the next fourteen minutes getting his ancient limbs into the proper driving position required for someone of such mammoth age - when Pete pipes up from the back seat:

"Ere Jahunny while you be getting Jahn ere from 'is house ... me finks they they just be sayin' summit on tha wireless that's there's bin another Tsunami ... in Newcastle? Dunnit be quiet unusual fer a Tsunami in northern Britain Jahunny?"

**Johnny W:** "That's not a tsunami - it's a Football news programme I was tuned into and they were referring to the Toon Army you silly deaf old twit!"

(John W was far and away the most lucid of the three codgers and was feeling particularly fresh and daisy-like after undergoing a complex and multi-annual WD40 transfusion, which helped him to get his pre-Cambrian joints back on the move. (See \* below) After making sure that both of his passengers were settled down and comfortable, Johnny re-arranged his wig for the eighth time after a casual glance in the rear view mirror and they were off. Within seconds he could hear old Hollyer snoring away from the seat behind him, which made Johnny W feel a bit better due to John Hollyers constant shouting due to the fact that his brain was trapped in second world war Britain and he kept elapsing into a frame of mind thinking that the date was Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 1942 for some reason? Not only did John H dive for cover every time he heard an airplane when in this mood but to make matters worse every time they saw a Collared Dove, John H would go mental and start shouting at the top of his voice 'First for Britain ... first for Britain!!' Once whilst on a codger's trip to the coast John H spotted a Little Egret in a nearby pool and got so excited that he had to be revived by a crack ambulance team who resorted to applying him with a nice bottle of vintage wine to get him back up and running again! No matter how many times Johnny W told him about the recent surge of Egret records into southern Britain and beyond over the last two decades, poor old John H seemed incapable of taking this information into his 198 year old grey matter. He seemed happy enough with life, which made old Johnny W happy as all this codger camaraderie brought out a strange maternal instinct in Johnny W. Johnny W, he was far younger than the other two after all - by almost a whole year. John spent the rest of his journey calming down Pete during every overexcited sighting of combine harvesters and recent avian colonists to our shores whilst John H snored away in the seat behind him in-between periods of waking up and shouting out 'Food tokens at the ready' at the top of his voice whilst still clutching the now almost empty bottle of 1849 port to his bosom. They took a rather strange route into the Stour valley, the normal 14 mile scenic route from Thanet via the Thanet Way and

Wingham being swapped for a 21 mile route whereby every public convenience in the area could be visited – all in all they had to stop seventeen times ... the least amount of toilet stops they'd made in the last 22 years of taking the self same route. At some time that afternoon they arrive in the car park at Stodmarsh. It was almost dark even though they had left just after first light. Johnny W anticipating the fading light really put his foot to the floor as they came through Wingham around midday and ended up not being able to turn right at Grove Road as the old Model T's brakes tended to fail at anything over 9 miles an hour and there was such a backlog of traffic piled up behind them on the single lane back road that any U turn was impossible both because of the lack of room and the train of angry motorists that they were desperate to avoid due to the five mile and hour average speed. As it turned out they ended up having to drive right on through Preston and onto the main road near Canterbury where they lost the chasing posse by driving round a roundabout 16 times to shake any of the convoy of angry motorists intent on violent retribution off!)

Anyway - back at Stodmarsh car park; Johnny W jumped out of the car and after hurriedly visiting the bushes it was by then properly dark! Still he decided to get all the optics and scopes out of the car boot which woke up John H with a start.

**John H:** "What is it old bean ... a blackout?" he said between slurps of what was left of his Port.

**Pete L:** "Now calm down me ol' mucker - we're 'ere in Stadmarsh. We're a beet late cus old Jahnnny had 'ter drive into Canterbury to get ridder a buncher yobo's 'oo was bein' a beet angry like. They start chasin' us darn froo the lanes shartin obscenities art er their winders and old Jahnnny's brakes were over-eetid n' we couldn't starp. I fort we'd addit at one point mate as 'is wig came undone while we is goin' rund a runderbart at almost fertteen moile ner hour and ee' near skiddid inter a larry wot were fuller tarlet roles ee' were deliverin' like to Tesco's. I darn near needed a tarlet roll meslef loik at one point I tell eee ... I fart we was gunna carash. Ohhh arrr".

**John H:** "Thanks Pete my old chum ... I thought the gerry Heinkel 111 bombers were overhead as I'm sure I heard the sound of their engines rumbling away in the distance?"

**Pete L:** "Nah ... that be me matey boy ... I ad a beet of a hut curry for breakfast. Surry abart that me ol' mate, I didn't wanna freeten yer or nuffin."

With that Johnny W sticks his head into the car:

**Johnny W:** "What do you reckon boys ... an all night knee's up at the Red Lion or shall we just sit it out in the car all night and have a look for those Bitterns in the morning?"

**All in unison:** 'Red Lion!'

(So dear readers of drivel – these three OAP travellers (with combined ages of 742.7 years between them on earth remember) decided to hit the pub. Now this proved quite a logistical challenge as there was no way that they were going to risk taking the car and getting a pull off the local Bobbies. Johnny W replaced the optical equipment back in the boot of the old Model T leaving only the three Zimmer frames out and lined up ready for use. The three then donned their winter pub garb using the car lights for illumination. Laslett wore his best hat, warm coat and walking boots, Johnny W taking a similar approach but as for John H, well lets just say that the rather eccentric attire he put on (as if he was trying to win some sort of abstract bet) made him appear something like a mix between Sherlock Holmes and Great Uncle Bulgaria – chief womble of Wimbledon! They all went to their personal Zimmer, belted up and were off! What happened next is hard to describe as in the dark they struggled to find the Red Lion even though it was only a few hundred meters away on the other side of the lane they'd accessed the car park from. At some point John H found himself irretrievably wedged in the hedge running along the full length of the track and called in the darkness for assistance, but Oooh arr Laslett already well in the lead in the race to the bar failed to hear him. After Johnny W had got John H back up and running and pointed in the right direction they found they'd lost Laslett altogether! They shouted but heard no replies, and deduced that they'd find Pete propping up the bar when eventually they got to the Red Lion. On arriving there was no sign of him

and the barman said that he'd definitely not come through the door as he'd been on duty all evening and couldn't really have failed to miss a 247 year old man shouting 'Ooooh arr' at the top on his voice as he sped through the door on a Zimmer frame. They decided to wait and see if he turned up. Pete did have a mobile phone on him but they knew that even though he'd had it in his possession for well over ten years that he'd still not worked out exactly how it worked. To illustrate when Pete did use his mobile he would remove it from his pocket (whether switched on or off) and without dialling shout at full volume to the person who he wanted to speak to. If he accidentally had the phone switched on and someone did 'try' and call him, there was no way in a million years that he'd hear the phone anyway so the whole point to taking a mobile with him in the first place was a waste of time. John H didn't have a mobile – in fact he thought they were the work of as he'd say 'witchcraft' – 'how else could someone talk to someone else on the other side of the country without witchcraft' he used to say often. Johnny W used to fool John H when using his mobile phone in John H's company, making out that it was a walkie talkie receiver or a ship to shore radio. This did have one rather large drawback as this meant he had to have conversations in some weird sort of pre-war code so as not to worry John H which was more problematical than you'd think especially when ordering pizzas or trying to get a Chinese takeaway?)

### **Meanwhile back at the exciting conclusion of today's story ....**

They'd waited a while but still no sign of Pete – then decided they may as well have a drink while they were waiting. One round led to two and two to three and before they'd realised they completely forgot all about Pete, eventually wading their way through 2 bottles of Port, 3 bottles of crème de menthe and fourteen cans of red bull. With that the pub door flew open and a rather exasperated woman shouted from the middle of the bar:

**Woman:** "Does anyone in here know a bloke called Pete?"

Johnny W, (after explaining to a half sozzled John H that she may have been referring to Pete L who they'd misplaced earlier on that same night) piped up:

**Johnny W:** "Would that be a 'Pete' – very, very old, quite lardy, supported by a Zimmer frame who repeatedly shouts Oooh arr by any chance?"

Johnny W's question was answered in the affirmative. It was indeed Pete L. He'd been stuck in the poor woman's house next door thinking it to be the Red Lion and she'd not only rather foolishly let him in but, when he'd asked for a large rum, out of politeness given him a large rum. Eventually the penny had dropped and she'd realised Pete's confused mistake, though by which time he'd downed half a bottle of rum and eaten half a packet of chocolate digestives and a cheese sandwich or three that he'd asked for. She told Johnny W that he'd been waffling on all night about how quiet it was (he thought he was in a public house after all) and asked her questions like "Is you beyin in the trade long m'luv?" also "Is you acceptin' Barclcard?" which may have upset some ladies but luckily by then she'd realised that Pete thought her front room was in fact a bar. Johnny W and John H went next door and retrieved Pete L and decided after apologising to the poor lady who'd been stuck with him half the night to knock the drinking on the head and go back to the car for a few hours kip. This they did and awoke the following morning with heavy heads just around sunrise. After half an hour of combined groaning, creaking and snapping of joints, all three were fully awake and ready to get out of the car.

It took them what seemed like an age to get all the gear out of the car and then after twenty exhausting minutes of full throttle 'Zimmering' in which time they hadn't even got out of sight of the car, they gave up. The writing was on the wall when John H, slightly bilious with a bladder the size of basket ball, finally extracted himself from the car and uttered the eternal words 'I'm just going outside; I may be away some time' before falling flat on his face in muddy puddle at car side.

So our intrepid heroes returned home safe and sound - back to their loving wives, heated sitting rooms and triple layered incontinent pants. They all lived on to fight another day and have many other adventures and journeys into the world and beyond. Hail the three codgers!

I'll write this bit in small writing so the old crinklies won't be able to read this bit - well not without the aid of a microscope and they are hard to use in conjunction with a computer screen I would presume? They've had enough stick from me in this years rag - I think I may well get away with this if I both write it in tiny text and you lot out there keep your combined traps shut and don't tell Johnny Websper about this bit?

John's normal treatment for advanced rheumatism failed to bring any relief as every joint in his body was still completely seized up even after many months of poking and jostling, potions and pills given him by a crack team of osteopaths and orthopaedic surgeons. After much head scratching from the entire team of arthritic geniuses a new group of people were shipped in who checked old Johnny out from head to foot. The new so-called hospital technicians were acting rather strangely and John suspected that something was afoot? John started asking questions and soon came to realise that even the most basic of medical issues seemed to be treated as if they didn't understand what Johnny was trying to say to them? Unbeknown to old Johnny the entire hospital arthritis and rheumatism team were so perplexed as to the extent of Johns conditions that they had trawled the entire world for answers, as never before had they seen such an extreme case of arthritis? The hospital team had received an e-mail from a prominent palaeontologist who did 'human bone things' as a sideline and he said that in his opinion from the information passed along, all the evidence at hand seemed to indicate not any form of arthritis but in fact was possibly fossilisation! This theory was in fact proved as scientific fact during hours of intensive exploratory surgery and proved old Johnny as a modern marvel - a new finding to modern science - he was so old that his entire body was actually turning into a fossil! Eventually the hospital came clean with Johnny and told him the news that the hospitals medical staff had acquired the knowledge of a renowned palaeontologist come 'human bone thing' man who recommended passing him on to a team of crack automotive engineering technicians who were expert at getting and engine part however badly seized back up and running. John agreed to this rather radical treatment and after signing many exclusion forms they decided to go ahead. His knees were in fact totally fossilised and his neck, wrists and elbows were well on the way to becoming as bad. He was told not to worry as the undercover team were beheld in their trade as some sort of miracle workers many being graduates of Oxford University, the esteemed William's Formula 1 race crew and Ted's Garage in Eastbourne in their former lives. As promised, they had, after weeks of extensive research and tests arrived at a cure. Five times a year Johnny was to have a 48 hour period where his entire circulatory system was to be intravenously fed with a compound containing 22% Castrol GTX engine oil and 78% WD40. After the first trial dose of engine oil this pioneering and radical new treatment had old Johnny up and running about like a fluffy bunny rabbit on a summer's morning. He was now free to get on with the rest of his life.

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**And for a grand finale - the fantastic tale of the ...**

### **MacClumsy's brothers trip to ... Dungeness!**

The MacClumsy Brothers had planned a trip to go down to see the breeding Purple Herons at Dungeness in the summer. The entire area had been taken over by rare herons with Grey Heron, Great White Egret, Little Egret, Cattle Egret and the breeding 'Purp's' on the cards, so as the MacClumsy brothers just couldn't resist a good twitch they hastily made plans to go the minute the news broke. The sun shone in great big blue sky and all was well until Hairy 'nine fingers' MacClumsy went round to 'Quick on his feet' MacClumsy's pad at Sandwich Bay where he was living for a short while. But ... oh no ... on arrival 'Quick on his feet' full of excitement and glee, year list in hand - ran out of the Obs car park too quickly, slipped and cracked his head on the bonnet of 'nine fingers' new shiny red car, breaking his nose and cracking his skull in four places. 'Nine fingers' seeing the calamity in some sort of Hollywood slow motion from his position in the drivers seat of the car - got out as quickly as was possible, worried as he was, that Pete's head might had damaged his paintwork. But ... more Oh no ... unfortunately his haste was just so great with his mind being taken as to the condition of his paintwork that Hairy Nine Fingers MacClumsy got his hush puppy snagged in the door seal of the car and ripped off two toes whilst simultaneously breaking his left kneecap in half ... so they didn't go.

This is the end. (My only friend - **the end**.)  
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**The The Pigwell Bay Berd Riport** was created by the  
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Complaints legal or otherwise regarding this literary masterpiece of our age should be addressed to one F. Solly. His office can be contacted via 222222, Two hundred and twenty two Street, Twentygate, Twent.  
You should be able to guess his rather obvious phone number?