



Milford Environment Group
(Formed 1989)



(Formed January 2012)

Website: www.milfordconservation.org



Wildlife Recording Group
(Formed 2001)

Keith Metcalf - Conservation Officer 'Fledglings' 25 Swallow Drive, Milford-on-Sea, Hampshire, S041 0XD
Tel: (01590) 645825 Mobile: (07771) 918449 or E-mail: keithmetcalf@btinternet.com

MCV E-NEWSLETTER - May 2020

Hope you are all taking things easy and coping with whatever home or garden task awaits you. We hope that 'you and yours' are all safe and well and dealing with everything that is happening.

To lighten any burden you may be feeling, one of our members has asked if I would like to share the picture quiz on page (2) with our readers. I shall send out the answers later once I've fathomed out the answer to number 6?

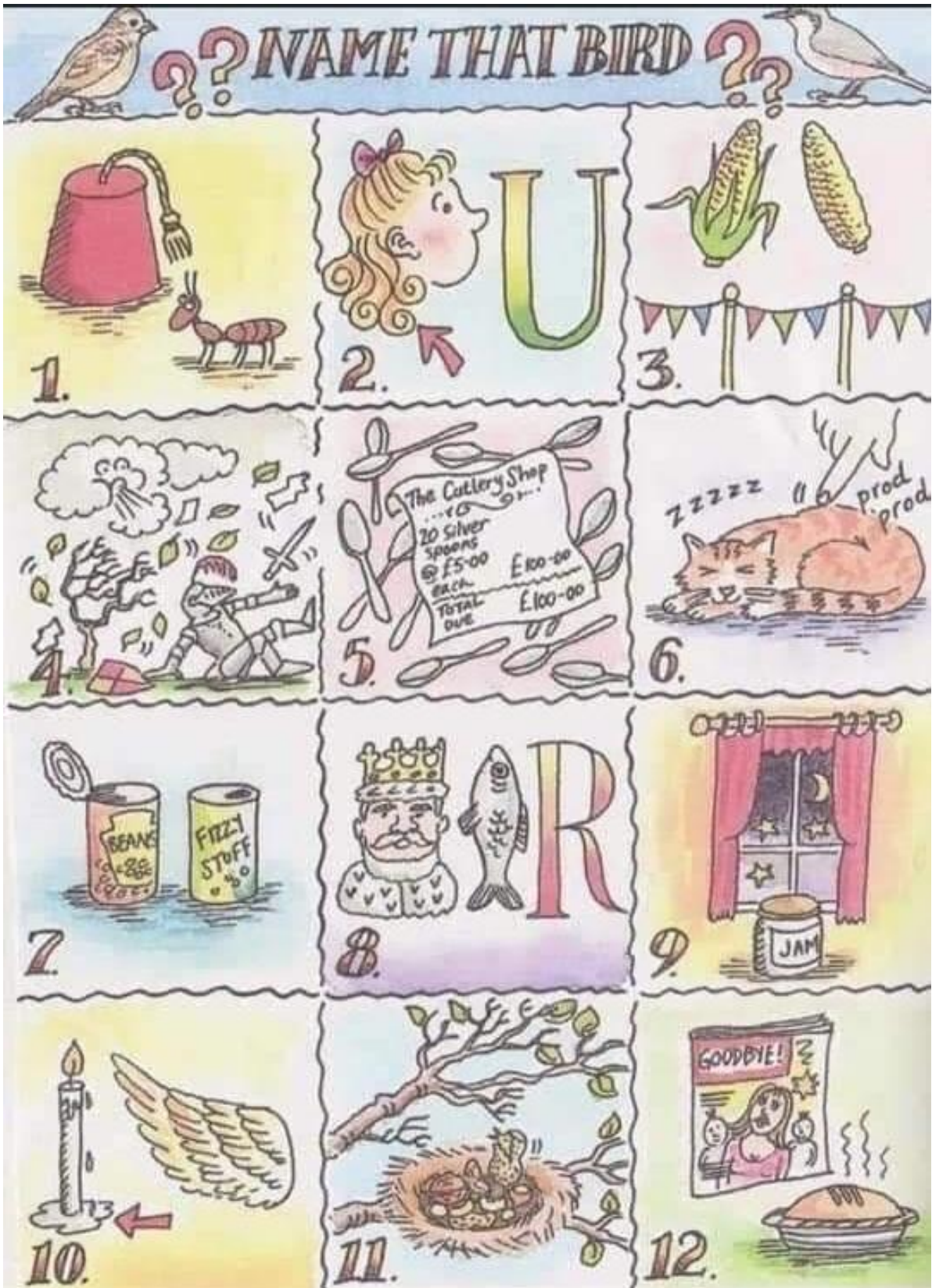
MESSAGE FROM MCV's NEW CHAIRMAN

Hello everybody, my name is David Horne and I have the honour of being your new MCV chairman.

From a young boy I have always had a passion for nature and in particular ornithology. At university I specialised in studying Aquatic Ecology. I then worked for the Environment Agency in Hampshire for 27 years before recently retiring. Much of my working days were spent associated with the protection of local rivers such as the Danes Stream. Over the years I recall there have been a number of serious pollution incidents involving sewage, oil and discolouration, some of which resulted in significant fish kills.

May is definitely my favourite month, full of beautiful blossom, bird song and buzzing insects. Do try and make the very best of spring in these difficult times. Many species can be seen heard and recorded from within our gardens, and don't forget to look up to the sky where birds of prey such as buzzards can often be seen and if you are really lucky a passing osprey, red kite or white-tailed eagle.

I very much look forward to meeting up with many of you in the months to come when we return to more normal times.



- 1)
- 3)
- 5)
- 7)
- 9)
- 11)

- 2)
- 4)
- 6)
- 8)
- 10)
- 12)

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE PROJECT – UPDATE

In September and October last year, we raised awareness of the White-tailed Eagle reintroduction programme on the Isle of Wight. We held two very successful fund-raising Film and Talk events at the community centre. We are pleased to say that we were able to raise sufficient funds (£1,200) to be able to sponsor one of the eagle's satellite tags and electronic data gathering equipment.

To honour the memory of our founding group, the Milford Environment Group (MEG) which was formed in the late 1980's early 1990's we decided to informally name one of the female birds **Meg**. The Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation has acknowledged that we shall name the one-year old juvenile G3-24 Meg, but they say that they only exceptionally name a specific bird to give publicity to the project. We know that in the first few years of a project such as this, there is only a 40% to 50% chance that juvenile birds will survive. I believe this rate is also typical of this species in the wild.



G3-24 (female) and G2-74 (male) have spent much time together over the past twelve-months at the Needles end of the Island. It is hoped that they will form a special bond and stay together till they are about 4 years old when they reach breeding maturity.

The male bird G2-74 recently went on a long-distance excursion to the West Country via, Poole, Weymouth, Sidmouth and over Honiton crossing the county border into Somerset. He flew low over Avalon Marshes in the Somerset Levels, which is considered a potential future breeding site as more eagles arrive and disperse. He headed northwards to Cheddar crossing into Wiltshire and roosted in woodland north-west of Salisbury. Next day he crossed back into Hampshire, stopping for a couple of hours besides the River Avon at Fordingbridge before zigzagging his way across the New Forest, passing Brockenhurst and Lymington and over the Solent back to the Isle of Wight. In his four day excursion, he travelled 265 miles and it is significant that he returned to the island indicating that he now regards the island as his home. (See flight path details on page 4).

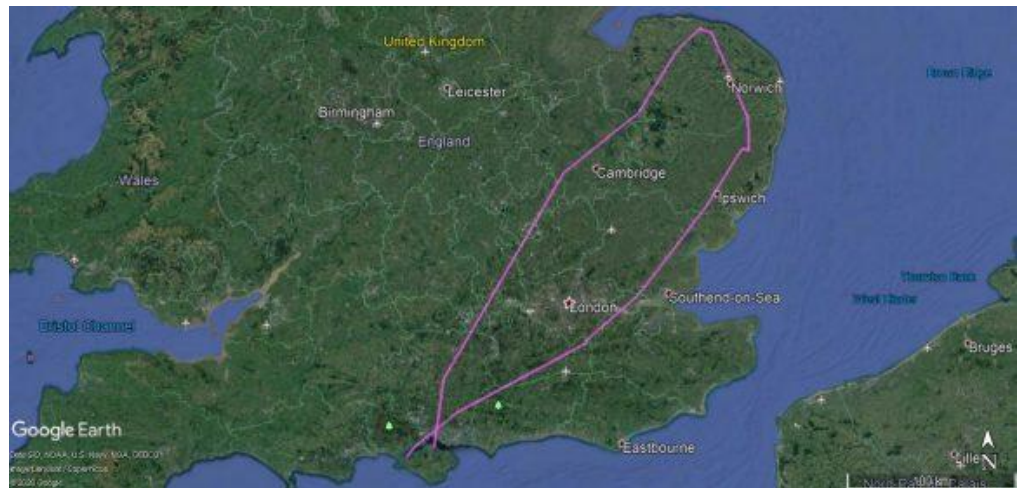


G2-74

West Country flight path taken in mid-April by G2-74 before returning to join back up with Meg. The two have since been seen together hunting mullet in two of the islands estuaries.

Meg - G3-24

Earlier in April, Meg had gone on her own six-day trip to Norfolk. See map and details of her journey right and below.



Meg has been one of the most sedentary birds released last summer, which was one of the reasons she was selected by us, together with the fact that she had spent quite a lot of her time at this end of the island, 'though, that all changed when in early April she decided to do some exploring of her own.

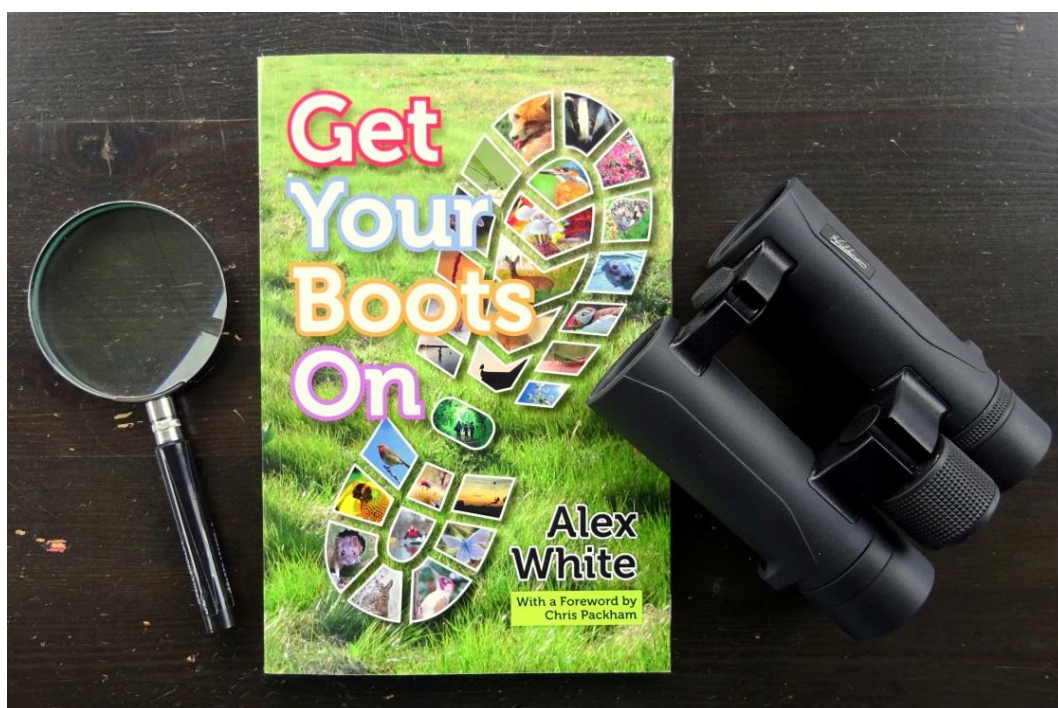
Departing the island on the 4th April, she first headed north over the Solent and up to Winchester. Two hours later, she was flying over Cambridgeshire and roosted just north of the RSPB nature reserve at Lakenheath Fen in south-west Norfolk. Next day she reached the north Norfolk coast near Cley. Having spent a little time in Norfolk, she set off south and was photographed as she flew over Bungay on the Norfolk/Suffolk border. She roosted that night in a small wood near the village of Peasenhall in Suffolk. On

the 7th April, she continued heading south and was again photographed as she passed over an Ipswich garden before arriving at Abberton Reservoir. She stayed in that area until she passed close to Basildon and later crossed the River Thames at Grays and then east over Dartford and Orpington before roosting west of Biggin Hill. Next day she was close to Hambledon before perching on the shore of the Solent at the mouth of the Beaulieu River. Later that evening, she passed back over the Solent to the Isle of Wight. Meg had flown 410 miles during the course of her six day journey.

Thanks to the Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation and Steve Egerton-Read for providing the flight data maps and text for this MCV update report.

Book Review

'Get Your Boots On' - by 15-year old - Alex White



If you want to encourage your teenage youngsters to develop their interest in 'all things' wild' well, most almost anything wild, look no further than Alex White's beautifully illustrated book, using many photographs taken by this exceptionally interesting and talented young man. Alex lives in Oxfordshire.



About the author

Alex White is a wildlife photographer and blogger. Since the age of ten, he has won a number of photography competitions. He has appeared on wildlife panels and

spoken to audiences about his love of wildlife, from small local gatherings to BBC TV's *Springwatch Unsprung*.

Alex is passionate about British wildlife — in particular mammals — and keen to show other people how easy it is to find amazing wildlife on their doorstep. He continues to write his Appleton Wildlife Diary blog as a way to engage people with what goes on around his local patch in Oxfordshire.

Unless otherwise stated all wildlife photographs in this book which don't have Alex in them are his own work.

His book is specifically written for youngsters. If your teenage son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter already has a keen interest in nature, conservation, wildlife photography and enjoys being out in the fresh air, then during these 'stop-at-home' days, I seriously recommend that you order a copy of this colourful book online and give it to them now.

This is what Alex had to say about how his encounters with nature are what he will remember most. *"When I'm old and sitting in a care home, I'm not going to remember that YouTube video or the battle I won on my game console. What will bring a smile to my face is the memory of the first time I saw a badger cub or the feeling of exhilaration that seeing a whale, free, in the wild gave me"*. **ISBN Paperback = 978-1-909455-22-1. About £14**

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS - NESTING

In summer 2019 a pair of Great Black-backed Gulls nested not far from the village centre and raised two youngsters. The adults could often be seen flying in circles above and around the village centre. It is likely that they remained unseen by most residents and visitors and may have been rearing young in the same location for several years.

Photo to the right:

Two young Great Black-backed Gulls that were successfully raised in Milford village in 2019!

Note the heavily mottled back and 'piano-keyed' wing coverts seen when the birds are at rest.



Adult wingspans can reach a massive 5 foot 5 inches and is the world's largest gull. Adults have a **dark charcoal to black back with dull pink legs**. Its nearest local relative seen here along our coasts and estuaries is the smaller **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, which has a **paler charcoal-grey back, bright yellow legs and a piercing vicious looking yellow eye!**



Left:

Photo shows female adult nesting on a Milford roof-top in late April 2020.

The male adult bird is standing just out of shot guarding his mate and nest. Look out in late June or July when the birds will be free-flying around the village centre.

The Great Black-backed Gull is a consummate kleptoparasite, stealing food from other gulls and even birds as large as Cormorants. **Note: - In summer, remember not to leave your Fish & Chips packets unattended!**

FAREWELL TO TONY LOCKE RETIRING MCV CHAIRMAN

As the AGM was deferred, it is fitting we say a little about Tony's outstanding contribution to our conservation work in the parish.

Several years ago, when Anne Jenks stepped down from being Chairperson, we were able to cajole Tony into stepping into Anne's shoes, although he did say that they probably wouldn't fit him!

Nonetheless, he agreed to take on the role of Chairman. Not an easy feat to take over from someone who has had 30 years of experience working closely with the Parish Council and the Milford Environment Group. Tony stepped into the role seamlessly and soon began to work his conservation magic.

His most challenging moments by far, would not come from working with the Parish Council, but working with his elected Conservation Officer! Tony, you certainly rose to the challenge.

We have had many meetings with the Parish Council trying to persuade them to undertake conservation work that they were not always happy to support. However, Tony, being a master of the '*softly softly approach*', was gradually able to win over the Council and I cannot believe the cooperation MCV receives nowadays from them.



Well done Tony. Over the years, we came up with a myriad of ideas that we suggested we should pursue. You took them all in your stride and have always given your full support for the things we wished to achieve. Through your leadership, we were able to overcome numerous challenges that have presented themselves along the way. It has been an honour for us all working with you on so many successful projects, and though you are no longer at our helm, you shall continue working your conservation magic around the Pleasure Grounds and on Studland Common. **Take a bow.**

“On behalf of the Management Committee, MCV members and the wider community, thank you Tony for all that you have done to help us achieve our aspirations as our Chairman”.