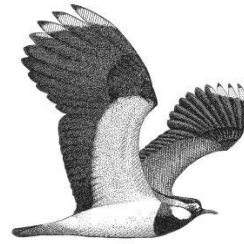


December Newsletter 2015

Charity Number. 1102961



**Fylde
Bird Club
LANCASHIRE**

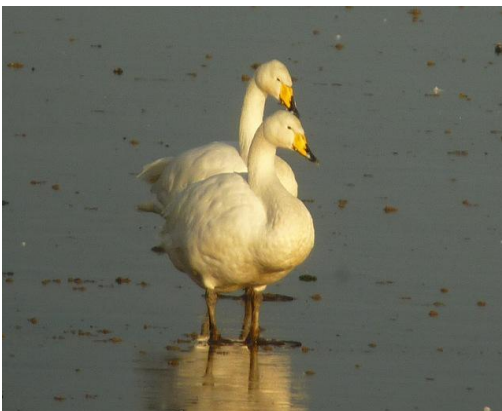
Editor

Peter Rhind
Email: rhind1003@btinternet.com
Telephone: (01253) 812495

Assistant to the Editor

John Jenkins
Email: jrjenkins@gmx.co.uk
Telephone: (01253) 790889

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



It doesn't seem long since I looked forward to what 2015 would bring. Is it me or does time fly even faster as you get older? Let's see what 2016 brings and I hope it brings whatever makes you happy.

In this issue Ellen Pemberton reports on sightings on Marton Mere and Stuart Piner on sightings in the rest of the Fylde.

Maurice Jones has written about finding a Wryneck, fast followed by TWO Barred Warblers and Ian Hartley about his discovery of a Lesser Yellowlegs.



I have attempted to help the newer birder to identify the four main raptors we see in winter. I hope you find it useful. Ron Bedford has a look at birds and aeroplanes and the links between them!!

I couldn't resist including a photo I took of a Water Shrew munching a mealworm oblivious of the watching audience.

The Ahhh factor rules.

Paul Ellis has included an update on the Club's activities. There is also an item on guided birding in

the highlands with A9 and reporting on Twite on the Fylde.

Don't forget the **2016 Photographic Competition**. Collect your most enjoyable images together and **enter**. Rules will come out with the Christmas mailing.

And finally thanks to all who have sent in articles for the Newsletter and thanks in advance to all those planning to do the same in 2016. **The newsletter needs you.**

Peter Rhind

Marton Mere Report July – September 2015

Waders have been a major feature of this quarter, starting with 2 Black-tailed Godwits on 4th July. The rest of the month was very quiet, although 3 Stock Doves were seen on the 12th. On 3rd August there were 21 Tufted Ducks on the reserve, including a female with a duckling. A Greenshank was on the island pool and a Curlew flew over on the 7th, whilst on the 12th, 3 Black-tailed Godwits flew south-east and 2 Little Egrets flew over – one north and one south-east. Dabbling ducks started to return on the 14th, with 4 Gadwall and 5 Shoveler. Green Sandpipers put in an appearance at the Mere this month, with 3 on the 15th and single birds on the 20th and 24th. Garden Warblers can be difficult to connect with in the Fylde, but one was seen on the 17th, 22nd and 24th August, also on 1st September. A Wheatear passed through on the 19th, while a Peregrine was seen on the 20th. Starling numbers reached 4 figures during this quarter, with 2000 on 20th August, 2500 on 3rd September and 5000 on 18th September. On 22nd August a Water Rail and 2 Garganey were seen. Garganey sightings continued into early September, with 3 on the 2nd and one staying up to the 5th. On 26th August, 2 Sand Martins flew south and on the 28th, 2 Little Ringed Plovers flew south-west. The Bank Holiday weekend was a busy one, with a Wood Sandpiper on the 29th and on the 30th, a Spotted Redshank, Water Rail, 2 juvenile Black Terns, 9 Stock Doves and an unseasonal sighting of a Bittern! The terns spent the next 5 days commuting between the Mere and a fishing lake at Mythop. On the 31st an Osprey flew south.

Stock Dove numbers peaked at 11 on 1st September, with a Black-tailed Godwit flying north the same day. A Grey Wagtail was seen around the outflow at the east end of the Mere during the first half of September (2 were present on the 7th.) Black-tailed Godwits were seen on 6th and 7th September; 8 Siskins flew west on the former date and a Kingfisher was present on the latter. A Jay and a Green Sandpiper graced the reserve on the 10th and 16th respectively. The first sign that winter is approaching came on the 18th, when 41 Pink-footed Geese flew over. Peregrines were also present, with a single bird on the 18th and 2 on the 19th. On the 22nd, at least 5 Tree Sparrows were present. There was a Skylark circling over the reserve on the 26th; the Bittern also had a flight that day. The summer migrants had not completely gone, as a Sedge Warbler was seen on the 27th. Migration was, however, in evidence when 210 Meadow Pipits flew south on the 30th.

Ellen Pemberton

Sightings

August 2015

August produced a 1st-summer Ring-billed Gull at Preston Dock (2nd-31st), Lesser Yellowlegs on the Conder Estuary (20th-26th), juvenile Caspian Gull at Cocker's Dyke (23rd-31st) and Spoonbill at Glasson (7th-30th). Elsewhere notable records included Great White Egret on Warton Marsh, Quails at Eagland Hill and Lytham Moss, Hobbies at Freckleton, Warton Bank, Fleetwood and Mowbreck Hall, Curlew Sandpipers on Wyre Estuary (4) and Fluke Hall (3), nine Little Terns at Lytham St Anne's, Little Stint at Fairhaven, Ospreys at Fleetwood, Marton Mere and Cocker's Dyke, Garganey at Marton Mere (2) and Fleetwood, Velvet Scoter and Pomarine Skua at Starr Gate, Wood Sandpipers at Conder Estuary, Marton Mere and Fleetwood, Pied Flycatcher at Fleetwood, Little Stints at Glasson and Wyre Estuary, Yellow-legged Gull on Glasson Marsh and two Black Terns at Marton Mere.

September

Highlight of the autumn was the discovery of two Barred Warblers and a Wryneck in the same bush at Fairhaven Dunes on 10th! The Wryneck remained until 15th. Lingering scarcities comprised the Caspian Gull at Cocker's Dyke and Ring-billed Gull at Preston Dock

The best of the rest included Garganeys at Newton Marsh, Fleetwood (2), and Marton Mere (3), Black Terns at Marton Mere (2) and Fleetwood, Little Stints on Wyre Estuary, Bank End and Glasson (2), Yellow-legged Gulls at Glasson Marsh and Preston Dock, Curlew Sandpiper at Lytham Jetty, Great White Egret and two Spoonbills at Warton Marsh, Shag at Lytham St Anne's, Black-necked Grebe at Fairhaven Lake, Bittern at Marton Mere, Avocet at Skippool Creek, Snow Bunting Fairhaven and Yellow-browed Warbler, Spoonbill, Black-throated Diver, Osprey, Hobby, Redstart and Turtle Dove at Fleetwood.

October

At least ten Yellow-browed Warblers were discovered during the month (in Fleetwood, Fluke Hall, Galgate, Glasson and St Annes). Otherwise there were no standout rarities, but the Ring-billed Gull at Haslam Park (relocating from Preston Dock), an Osprey and Dark-bellied Brent Goose at Cockersand, two Great White Egrets and a Snow Bunting at Lytham, two Curlew Sandpipers at Glasson, Avocet, two Pale-bellied Brent Geese, Snow Bunting, Ring Ouzel, Firecrest, Black Redstart, Long-tailed Duck, Long-eared Owl, two Black-throated Divers, two Velvet Scoters and Purple Sandpiper at Fleetwood, Tundra Bean Goose at Pilling Lane Ends, Pale-bellied Brent Goose at Cocker's Dyke, two Pale-bellied Brent Geese at Knott End, Long-tailed Duck at Blackpool North Shore and Firecrest at Fluke Hall were all notable.

Stuart Piner

Wryneck and Barred Warblers at Fairhaven

At about 0845 on 10th September in calm sunny weather, with a south-easterly breeze, together with Frank Walsh and Jack Dixon, we began to check the undisturbed fenced area of Fairhaven Pumping Station (United Utilities). I noted a bird perched in the gorse bushes, showing just head and shoulders. Seeing a thin dark line through the eye, grey head and beige chin and upper breast lightly barred, I immediately called it as a Wryneck. It flew and was lost to view and not seen again, until about 0930, in full view in a rose bush. It was later seen on and off all day by perhaps 70 or more birders, showing well at times and was no doubt photographed.

Whilst searching for the above, at about 0940 we noticed a grey bird in a Willow. By then, we had telescopes and it was clearly a juvenile Barred Warbler (my 3rd found in Fylde). Frank Walsh commented on a 2nd bird in the same Willow and believed it to be the same species. Later Frank Bird and Len Blacow saw a Barred Warbler with an aluminium ring. Throughout the rest of the day, an unringed bird showed well to all comers with a little patience. The birds were bigger and greyer than Garden Warbler, with a long ample tail, pale tips to coverts forming obscure wing bars, a little light barring on the undertail coverts, heavy bill and dark eyes.

The Barred Warblers could not be found on the 11th, but the Wryneck was still there and was seen at varying intervals throughout its stay until 15th September.

Maurice Jones

Lesser Yellowlegs at Conder Green, August 2015

On the morning of 23rd August 2015, I visited Conder Green as part of my usual Sunday morning birding routine, where I was joined by M. Hartley and W.W. Hartley. I was checking through a Redshank flock, initially with the idea of finding one of the regular Spotted Redshanks, when MH pointed out a wader on the river, partially obscured by a mud bank and other birds, in a flock of about 20 Redshank. It had a strong white stripe above and forward of the eye. I checked it but still had Spotted Redshank in my mind. The bill was too short and lacked red, but the face pattern was strong and I was confused initially as to what I was looking at, then the birds all took off and scattered out of sight around the creek. I walked up the road to look around the corner of the creek and 'scoped along to try and re-find the bird. I immediately saw it foraging on a mud bank, and this time it was in full view. My immediate thought was Lesser Yellowlegs and I called over MH and WWH to look at it. The bird showed well, in good light at about 80-100m range for about 3-4 minutes. During this time I confirmed the identity as a Lesser Yellowlegs based on a variety of features. At this point a large female Sparrowhawk flushed all the waders and other birds on the marsh and there was general mayhem as everything flew around, mixed, and landed in different areas. We lost the yellowlegs and spent the next 30 minutes trying to find it before I eventually relocating it where it was first identified in the creek. It then showed well as it foraged on the mud banks, at least for the next hour and a half,

after which time we left it. By then, other birders had arrived by chance and it had been photographed.

The bird superficially resembled a Common Redshank, but was smaller, paler underneath,



greyer on the upperparts, with a more slender body, relatively longer looking legs, and with a fine dark beak of medium length. The legs were greeny-yellow rather than the bright orange of a Redshank, and it looked longer-legged than a Redshank. The bill was fine, straight and looked relatively shorter than a Redshank's bill. The bill length was about equal to head length, so too short for the much rarer Greater Yellowlegs. Additionally, the bill was blackish with a paler area near the base, but 90% dark, again, unlike

Greater Yellowlegs. The face pattern was striking, with a strong white supercilium running from just behind the eye, forwards to the bill base, below which were dark lores. Some larger blackish flecks on the upper forward flanks and lower neck sides were indicative of breeding plumage, as were a few blackish feathers mixed in with the pale grey back, so it was aged as an adult.

The bird stayed in the same place for the next few days, showed to lots of local and visiting birders and was last reported on the evening of 26th August.

Ian Hartley

Photo Stuart Piner

Confusion Species – Small Raptors

Four small raptors are to be seen around the coast in winter. There are three falcons: Peregrine, Merlin and Kestrel and one hawk, the Sparrowhawk. It is a rare winter when I don't see them all on my walks between Knott End and Fluke Hall. The first indication of their presence is usually the scattering of the waders on the beach and a fast hurtling body of a raptor if you are quick enough.



Sparrowhawk

Nowadays this is increasingly becoming a garden bird. The recent Garden Birdwatch report puts it in 10% of all gardens and any garden raptor is almost certainly a Sparrowhawk. The hunting technique is simple, it flaps and glides in a slightly undulating path low to the ground followed by a surprise ambush on any bird not fast enough to escape. If the surprise approach fails then the prey usually lives to feed another day. It is a beautiful

killing machine unless of course you are another bird. In our garden they take prey from Blue Tits to Collared Doves.

Males are slightly larger than a Blackbird with a blue grey back and rufous bars across pale underparts. The female is one third bigger with a brown back and a barred front. They quite often have small white patches on their backs or neck. The wings are round tipped unlike the pointed wings of the falcons. They have long bright yellow legs finished with needle sharp talons and fierce yellow orange eyes.



Photos Peter Rhind

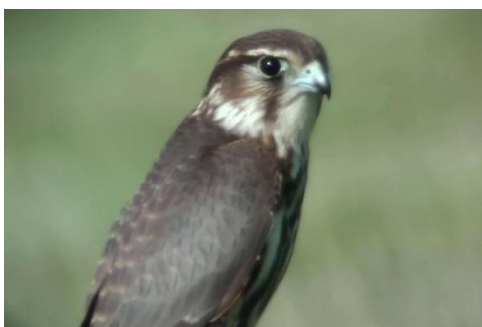
Merlin Aka, Peerie Falcon or Lady's Falcon.

The Merlin is our smallest raptor specialising in Meadow Pipit/Skylark sized birds. It is a bird of open spaces, the moors in summer coming down to the coast in winter.



It is built for speed with sharply angled wings and a strong square tail. It hunts with quick shallow wing beats and grabs the unfortunate prey in a shallow stoop. Unlike the Sparrowhawk, if it misses, what ensues is a pursuit as it matches every twist and turn of its prey until the kill or escape. I watched a Merlin on Mull pursue a Meadow Pipit slowly closing on it till it

vanished from sight. The end result I did not witness.



Adult males are Blackbird sized with blue grey upperparts. The under side is a rusty yellow with fine streaking and the throat is white. The moustache is narrow and can be indistinct.

The females and juveniles have brown/grey streaky backs and heavily streaked underparts with hooped tails, four or five light bars on a dark back ground. The male's tail is blue grey with hardly any barring but a dark subliminal band and a narrow white tip. They are compact, fierce and beautiful.

Photos John Jenkins and Chris Batty

Kestrel Aka, Windhover



Also sometimes called the motorway hawk due to its love of the hard shoulders of the aforesaid motorways. It is our most visible small raptor.

Its usual hunting technique is to hover or hang in the air facing into the wind, its wings holding it stationary

and its head quite still. When it sees prey it drops like a stone. On calm days it will seek out a vantage point and watch from there. Food consists mainly of rodents but it is not too proud to reject insects, etc.



The male is terracotta backed with a delicate blue/grey head and a dark eye with a fine yellow ring. It has a blue/grey tail with a terminal black band. The back is covered in fine black spots and the wing tips are dark. The under parts are pale and covered in bold dark spots.



The females have warm brown upper parts and tails. The backs are heavily barred and the tails is laddered with lateral lines and black tips at the end. The under parts are heavily marked with dark streaks.

Both show a dark moustache. Juveniles are very similar to females.

Photos Peter Rhind

Peregrine Aka, Duck Hawk



The king of all falcons, the fastest of all earth's creatures. It is without doubt an impressive bird. Probably best known for its hunting technique, it towers up in the sky and, when it sees prey, it dives or stoops at speeds in excess of 100 mph until it hits the target or misses. An explosion of birds is sometimes the first sign of a hunting peregrine. I was at Cocker's Dyke one day when a flock of Dunlin erupted into the air and I heard a thud. As the air

cleared I watched a Peregrine drop to the beach, pick up a Dunlin and head off down the beach.

Adult Peregrines are slate blue/grey on the upperparts and pale underparts with light barring. The throat is white, which accentuates the black cowl and the dark well defined moustache. The female is larger than the male. Their beauty is completed by yellow legs, a narrow yellow eye ring and a yellow base to the bill. In flight they are



powerful and bulky birds with strong wings tapering to a point. Their flight is characterised by shallow very flexible wing beats. When ambling or circling, the flight silhouette is unmistakable; deep chested, powerful, shorter tailed than many raptors, it looks like a crossbow waiting to be drawn.

With these smaller Raptors I find they are identified as much by situation, behaviour and general appearance as by the finer details.

Peter Rhind

Photos: Peter Rhind and Howard Phillips

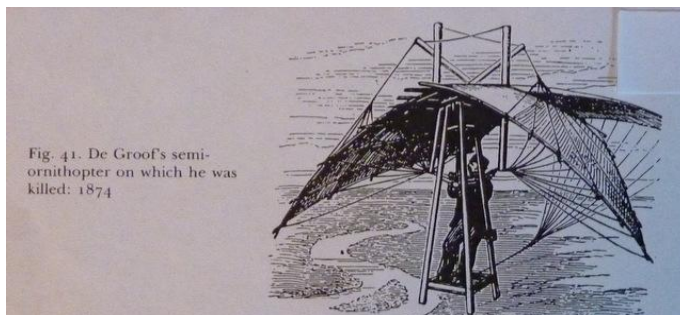
Avians and Aviation.

Nobody knows how it all began but it is certain that once mankind had mastered the art of standing up, walking and running someone would look (take a gander perhaps) at copying those birds.

This article came about after Howard Phillips excellent talk at the September club meeting – he spoke about Waxwings. This triggered a recall of the tale of Icarus' failed flight over the Aegean Sea in the time of ancient Greece. Icarus' dad, Daedalus, designed and built a set of bird wings – feathers and all. Icarus was to be the test pilot. It was a hot day even for Greece when Icarus, ignoring the instructions of Daedalus flew even higher. The wax holding the wings together melted and lo, Icarus became ex-Icarus.

You could say Icarus went down in history; making his wax wings into a link with Waxwings.

In spite of that flop mankind remained fascinated by bird flight and the beauty of birds. Inevitably we carried on copying them - and naming our contraptions after them in an attempt to boost confidence.



Certainly confidence was vital when jumping off towers with wings, but not necessarily feathers attached. A lot was learned about repairing broken limbs - but not about mending broken necks.

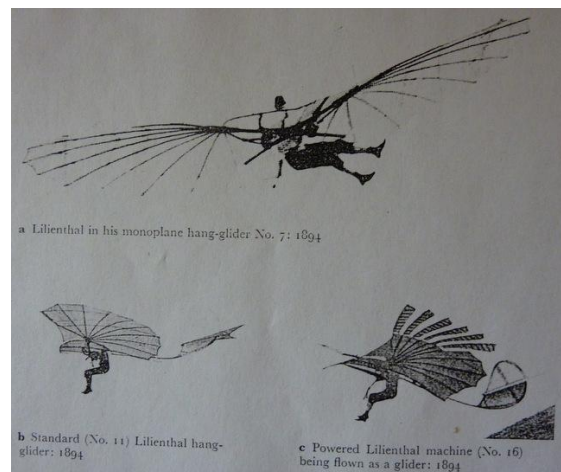
Much later on flapping wings with complex mechanisms were tried – like

DE GROOTS Ornithopter – de Groot died in his, unsurprisingly, in 1874.

The problem, in general, was there was not enough manpower and too much gravity.

(copyright, Sir Isaac Newton, 17th century.)

We tried to use gravity as a power source – it is called gliding. **Otto Lilienthal** in the late 19th century had some success with bird shaped wings and running down slopes. But he clearly had some problems. Eventually one of his gliders got him and he broke his neck.





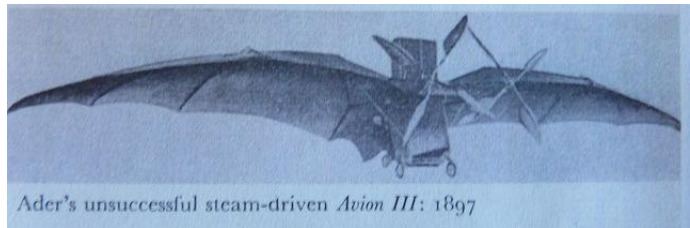
Santos-Dumont's 14-bis
(12 November 1906).

Even kites were tried but tethering them to the ground did not really count as flying. A real and deserved success with power was achieved by **Santos-Dumont** eventually in spite of his bizarre looking device.

Incidentally I wonder if our kites were called after these kites? Not only that,

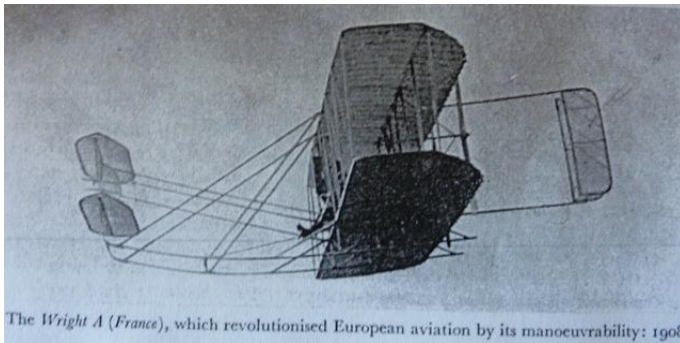
were these box kites the basis for the old R.A.F. slang term (kite) for all aeroplanes? By the way, another slang term for aeroplanes is (was) "crate".- probably because early aeroplanes flew with the elegance and grace of a falling crate.

Valiant efforts were made to power the machines but as only steam power was available it made things very cumbersome. Even **Aders** bird-like effort couldn't generate enough steam to get it off the ground properly.



Ader's unsuccessful steam-driven Avion III: 1897

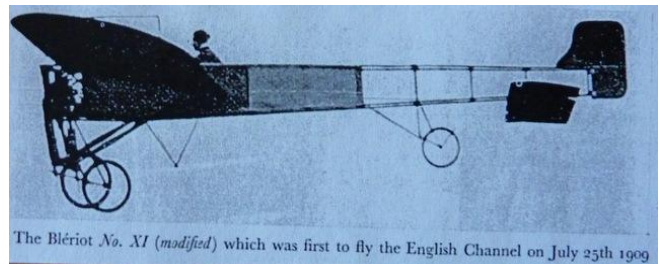
At last in December 1903 the Wright brothers made it. Sadly, it in no way resembled a bird. For a start it was a bi-plane.



The Wright A (France), which revolutionised European aviation by its manoeuvrability: 1908

So far as I'm aware no such bird species exists. And it had its tail forward of its wings - again unusual for a bird. Its success lay in its light weight petrol engine. Nearly avian had it been PETREL. Anyway the first ever controlled flight took place in Kitty Hawk - a nice choice.

The next big step (leap?) was to cross the English Channel. Many tried until Bleriot, in a much more bird-like monoplane with a tail made it in 1909.

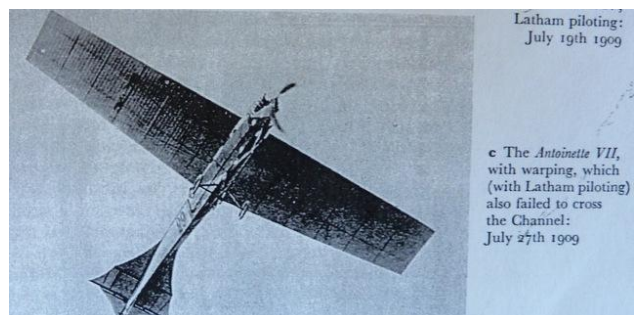


The Bleriot No. XI (modified) which was first to fly the English Channel on July 25th 1909

It is said that the structural integrity of the Bleriot, which depended on networks of wires holding, in particular, the fuselage together, was ensured,"by placing a bird inside the fuselage, leaving it in amongst the wires overnight. If the bird had not escaped by next morning the network was sound."

Before Bleriot's success Antoinette had tried and failed to get across the Channel-pity, since it was a more elegant beast - AND it had a bird like tail.

The problems with early monoplanes - although, broadly, copying the birds (but certainly not their beauty) was the strength of their wings. They came off rather too

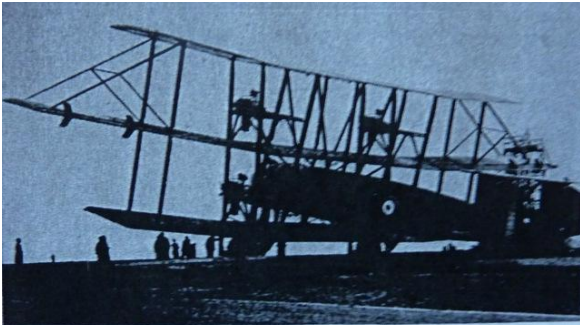


Latham piloting:
July 19th 1909

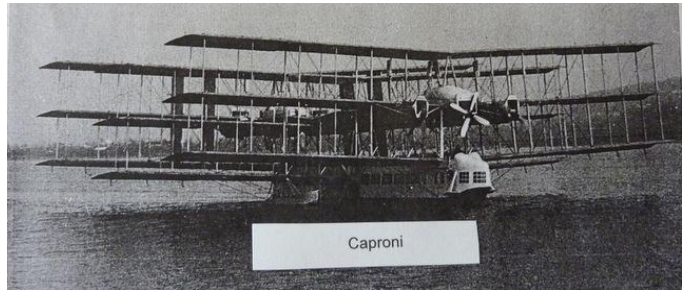
c The Antoinette VII,
with warping, which
(with Latham piloting)
also failed to cross
the Channel:
July 27th 1909

readily but if they were strengthened they were too heavy thus requiring bigger (and therefore heavier) engines and propellers. Was the answer more wings and/or more engines?

A sample of that approach was the **Tabor** in 1919. It was at the time the largest aircraft built. However it crashed on take-off in its attempted first flight.



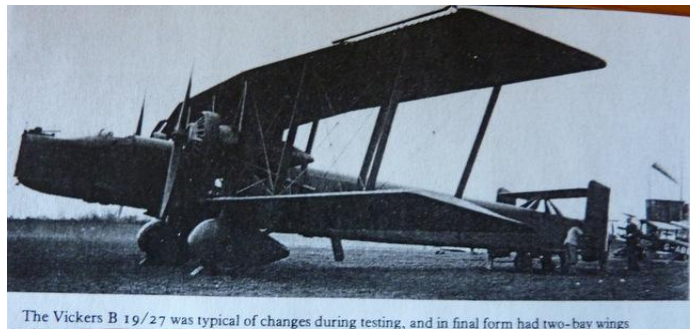
The Tarrant Tabor, the largest aircraft then built, which crashed on its first take-off in 1919.



Caproni

Others tried this approach and the **Caproni CA 60** (1920) was a flying boat even worse than the Tabor, It had 9 wings and 8 engines. On its first (and also only) flight it climbed to 60 feet, nosed over and plunged vertically into the lake.

This was certainly not the way to go – probably because we had moved away from emulating the birds. Good ideas were being derived from bird “design.” We got to raise the undercarriage first – reducing drag just like the majority of birds do. Then there was the idea of adding flaps to the trailing edge of the wings to increase the lift for low speed flight – that is changing the wing profile just as birds do. (Think of swans landing)



The Vickers B 19/27 was typical of changes during testing, and in final form had two-bay wings



Lesser Kestrel

Leading edge slats (as we know them) for the wing were designed to reduce the risk of stalling. They are shown on the Vickers B19/27 wing.

These slats came straight from birds – the alula or “bastard” wing as on this **Lesser Kestrel**. Incidentally the Kestrel is the symbol of the Royal Aeronautical Society established in 1866. 150th birthday next year.



The Fairey Flycatcher was one of the earliest fighter aircraft designed for the Fleet Air Arm and continued in service for many years, serving in aircraft carriers.



Seagull

As for naming aeroplanes after birds it turns out that just about all bi-planes with bird names seem to be inappropriate. Such as the **Fairy Flycatcher** and even worse was the **Supermarine Seagull** – but at least someone had further thoughts and it was eventually renamed Walrus – a bit more appropriate.

It might have been hoped that monoplanes had a better chance of having a suitable bird name, alas not necessarily.



The **Polish Thrush** somewhat missed the mark.

The **Blackburn Skua** didn't do its job – but at least it was a dive bomber; like a **Bonxie** on its breeding ground.

For me the most inappropriate was the **Fairy Gannet**. Its elegance of line and resemblance

to a real Gannet is a bit lacking.

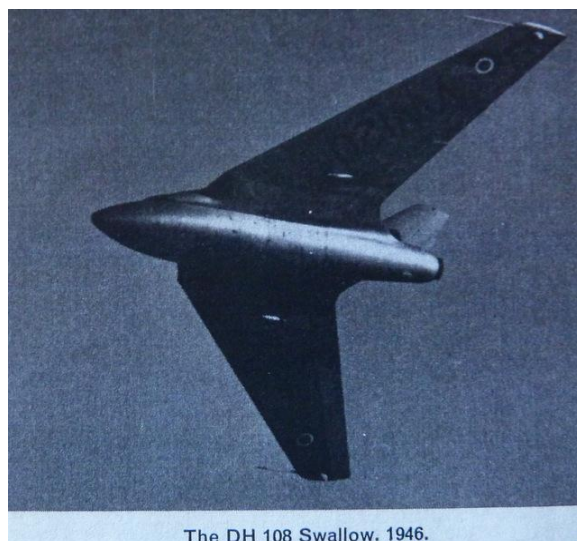
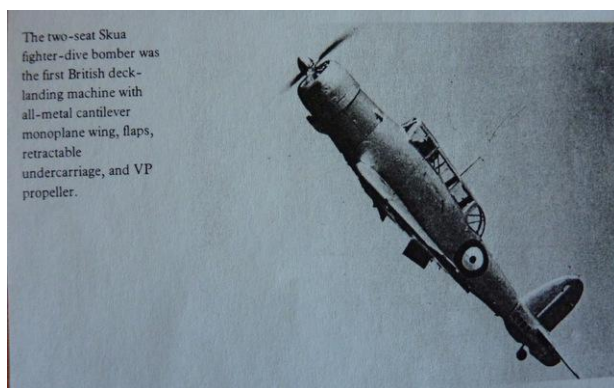
Things broadly got better as aircraft designs improved, certainly as far as the function of the bird named aeroplanes is concerned but rarely are they a match for beauty or elegance.

For me only the de **Havilland Swallow** came close to matching function with beauty. The



same company produced the **Albatross** before the war and did pretty well for beauty but it was unsuccessful as an airliner.

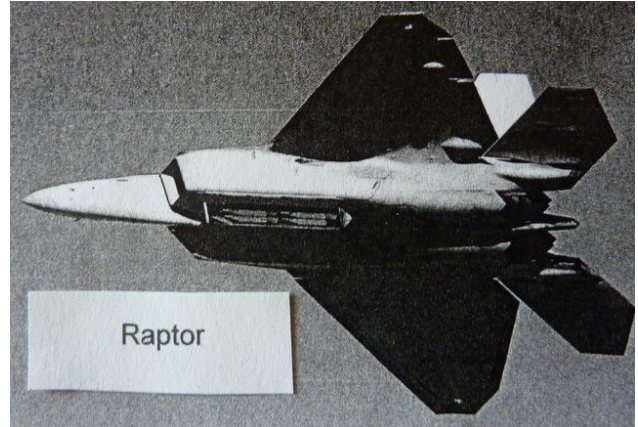
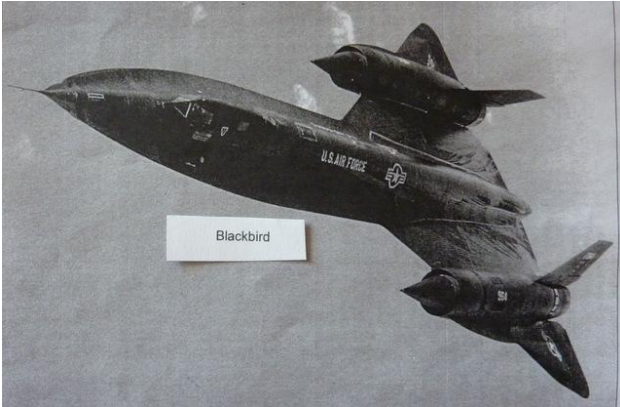
A success in function but distinctly lacking in beauty was the **Feisler Stork**. Those legs are definitely storky.



Now for the truly modern aircraft these are the two which meet the functionality requirements – and perhaps have some elegance – plus a bit of brutality.

The **Lockheed SR71 Blackbird**. The fastest, highest altitude, reconnaissance aircraft. It only takes pictures and doesn't drop bombs or fire missiles.

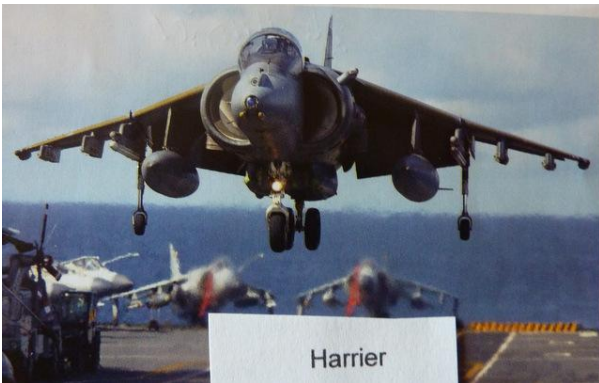
Boeing F22 Raptor does what its name implies – it kills other aircraft. More brutal than elegant.



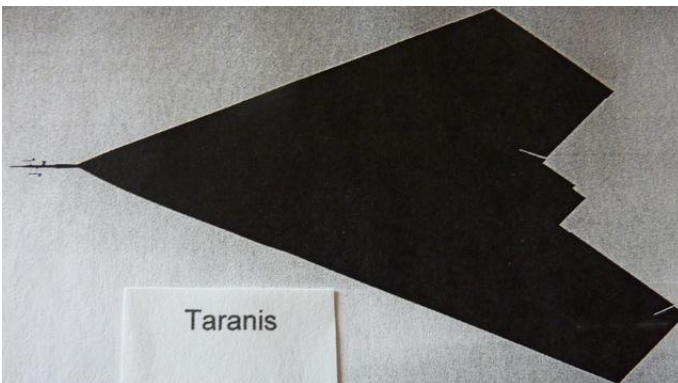
The next two are purely functional but they do what birds can do in important respects, they can take off and land vertically and can fly fast horizontally. Nearly there.

The BAE Harrier is well known to most people. The original name given was **Kestrel** – much more appropriate in my view.

And now the **V22 Osprey**. It does the same tricks as the Harrier but it carries cargo as



well. But it doesn't catch fish.

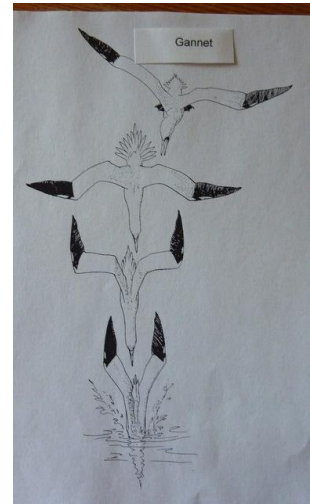


So what is happening now? The BAE Systems **Taranis** is a U.C.A.V. It really looks like a bird at last. But it can't take off and land vertically and the wings don't morph (change shape) It is not man conquering the air by flying like a bird because U.C.A.V. means

Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle.

I await the aeroplane which can match a **Gannet** diving, flying underwater, taking off from water (or land) and being beautiful in the air.

The good news is, thinking of poor old Icarus, that a man did succeed where he failed. In 1988 the Greek professional cyclist (and relatively amateur pilot) Kannellos Kannelopolous pedal-powered his flying machine, Gossamer Condor, due North from Crete to Santorini 120kms away in 4 hours. The wings stayed on but the pilot was knackered.



Ron Bedford

The Revised Colour Ringing of Twite

So far this Autumn only one Twite has been seen at our Heysham feeding area. In previous years the first arrivals have been around mid-October so hopefully some should arrive any day now. There have been no sightings from our Twite colour ringing over the last two seasons, using numeric engraved rings, in which the engraved numbers could be determined. Feedback has been that it has been frustrating trying to read these numeric engravings. I have therefore applied to BTO to revise my colour scheme. The original scheme was chosen to make the ringing process manageable for a lone ringer with a largish catch. I can now generally expect to have a second ringer or helper to speed up the process so that fitting the proposed combinations will be acceptable. The Right Leg combination of Pale Blue (Site identification colour) above BTO Metal is to be retained. The Left Leg combination will now consist of two single colour rings, providing individual identification, from a stock of twelve colours. (The Right Leg combination may be reversed i.e. Metal above Pale Blue, should we exhaust the left leg colour combinations). I have not received approval for this change from the BTO so far but am assuming that no news is good news. I should be pleased if people could keep an eye open for any Twite in the area wearing colour rings and kindly report the details to me.

Thanks Very Much
Alan Draper

alanjdraper@fsmail.net

A9 Birds

I provide full and half day trips for birders, photographers and those that are a mix of both! Additionally, I also provide evening trips in the Spring/Summer (ideal for making the most of the long Scottish evenings) where target species include owls (Tawny, Barn, Short-eared and Long-eared), Hen Harriers and Black Grouse...the latter for those who don't want to face an early start during the lekking season. A 90 minute lesson on birds-in-flight photography is also available for those wishing to use their camera to the fullest.

I'm based in southwest Moray, and my trips can typically cover eastwards along the Moray coast, down south into Strathspey and the Cairngorms and then north into the glens of Inverness-shire

Refreshments are provided based on dietary requirements, and our full day trips include lunch with lots of homemade Highland food!

I tailor my trips to each customer, dependent on their needs, interests and skill levels, and can offer advice on locations to visit outside of using my services. Between May and August, I also offer one-to-one (maybe one-to-two/three if folk are travelling together) tuition in Osprey fishing photography, using a private hide.

A9 Birds is also pleased to offer discounts to FBC members; 15% off of full and half day birdwatching trips for solo birders (the basic charge is £10 per person per hour), or - if travelling with a friend/partner (I can take up to three people in my 4x4) - then the discount of half price rates (i.e. £5 per person per hour) apply to any 2nd and 3rd person. Specific charges apply to any private access hide photography, such as the fishing Ospreys, as these will be finalised by January 2016 though as a guide, the 2015 price was £190 per person for a three hour session.

More details can be found on our website www.a9birds.com and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/a9birds for our latest news and views.

Michael Crutch.

The Friends of Marton Mere

A new group of local community members have joined together to form the Friends of Marton Mere Nature Reserve. They are a friendly group who all share the same passion for the reserve.

The group will be helping to protect and promote the reserve through events, projects and fundraising. They are busy preparing an events programme for 2016 and putting down their ideas for the year ahead.

They are looking for new members to help expand the group. Everyone is welcome to join, you don't have to be an expert in wildlife, just have a love for the reserve. If you would like to get involved or find out more then contact annie.heslop@blackpool.gov.uk or 07917 837345

The Friends of Marton Mere Nature Reserve have held their initial meetings, written their constitution and are now ready to make a difference to support the nature reserve.

We are looking for more members to help make a difference. You don't need to be an expert in wildlife or in the reserve.

Events

We are putting together our Events programme for 2016. Please let us know if you have any ideas or would like to help out. We are looking for people who may wish to share their skills. Could you run an art workshop, natural jewellery making or willow weaving workshop? Perhaps you would like to run a sponsored walk or fun day?

Contact us with your ideas!

Christmas Escape

Wednesday 23rd December at 10.30-12.00 meeting at the Visitor Centre

Take a break from the Christmas hustle and bustle with a visit to Marton Mere Local Nature Reserve. We'll take a walk around the reserve to spot our winter wildlife residents. Followed by a mince pie and warm drink.

Annie Heslop

Fylde Bird Club Business Update

Highlights

- **Data Sales**

Since autumn 2015 we have earned over £3000, which is extraordinary!

- **Preston Dock Terns**

140 pairs of Common Terns and at least 2 pairs of Arctic Terns attempted to breed in 2015. Almost all birds used trays, tyres and gravel mounds provided by the Club.

- **Birds of Marton Mere Book - Issue 2**

Work has progressed to the point that it is being prepared for printing.

Special thanks to Malcolm Evans, Carol Coupe and Maurice Jones, amongst many who have worked hard on this project.

- **Display Panels for Rossall Point**

Four beautifully designed panels have been produced by Geoff Gradwell. We will now pursue getting them printed and mounted.

- **Club Membership**

We had a record 172 members in 2015.

- **Peregrine Nest Box**

The nest box, installed last winter on St Thomas's Church by the Club, was used in 2015 but unfortunately the nesting attempt failed. We hope for better luck next year!

Paul Ellis (Secretary)

