

Item 55.2

Soper, T. *A Passion for Birds* (1988). David and Charles Inc.
p.137. Guillemot in Shropshire.
Permission per Gareth Thomas.

Coreley, Clee Hll, 28 Feb. 1986 taken to Gareth Thomas, vet in Ludlow.

A Passion for Birds
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I. Soper, Tony
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Photos by Gareth Thomas FRPS. Text PTO

A BIRD IN THE HAND

Land locked

As a veterinary surgeon in a country practice, I frequently have brought to me wild birds that require attention.

Unusual ones in the past year have included a Sparrowhawk, a Grey Heron and a Tawny Owl.

These birds are all native to the area, but recently I was surprised, to say the least, when a client arrived with a Guillemot which had been found in a hedgerow near her garden on the southerly slopes of Clee Hill, near Ludlow.

Clee Hill is approximately 30 miles west of Birmingham with the River Teme about 8 miles to the south. The bird had a small flesh wound to its left wing, but even without this, it is almost inconceivable that it had flown inland, even with the help of the River Teme.

It was an attractive bird, in winter plumage and probably a youngster. We kept it for a week during which it fed voraciously on all the fish we could feed it, and took great pleasure from a daily swim in our bath.

Seven days later I took it to the Worms Head on the Gower Peninsula and released it near the Guillemot colony there. It really appreciated its reunion with the sea and spent two hours preening itself in the salty pools, apparently trying to get sea-water into every feather.

Gareth B. Thomas

(This is the first known record of a Guillemot in Shropshire this century, although there were a few in the nineteenth century. They are generally very rare inland.)

