

which proved to be the second laying of one of the pairs taken on 16<sup>th</sup>. J.W.B. later took it for me with 6 eggs.

Returned to Aldcup this afternoon.

2<sup>nd</sup> July 1932. Birling Gap, Beachy Head.

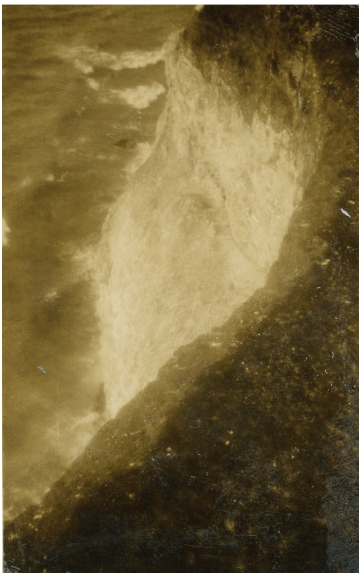
Motored down in Philp's car with Dr Sloan-Chenes starting from Carshallon at 7 A.M., & reaching the Gap at 9.30, where we met Edgar Chance & his wife and O.R. Owen & his fiancée. It was a blazing hot day & we watched Coru-Buntings on the Down & tried a number of localities in the vicinity for them. Many of the birds were nesting in growing crops. We found nests with 5, 4 and 4 eggs, which Philp & Chenes kept, as they had not taken them before. We saw a young peregrine sitting on a heap of stones only about 150 yards from the road at Belle Toubi, where there is always an eagle.

10<sup>th</sup> July. Ash Ranges. Spent the afternoon, the hottest of the year, with J. Beddall Smith all over this magnificent ground, looking for Hobby, but we did not see one or find a nest, although J.B.S. heard one scream once. The explanation subsequently transpired, as Dr. Peteresth. Thompson & three of his friends had looted the County & took 20 clutches of Hobby this season. He subsequently showed the eggs at the B.O.A. September dinner.

31<sup>st</sup> July. Chichester. Dr Sloan-Chenes and I went down on the invitation of Mr. Colwyn Britton to look for third clutches of Cirl Bunting, which are common in the lanes all round about Fishbourne. It turned out a wet

31<sup>st</sup> July 1932. Cont'd. Pirl Buntings.

Afternoon, which handicapped us in the thick vegetation and hedges. Several birds were singing and we found nests containing clutches of 3, 3, 3 young, and two nests with deserted eggs, probably the result of Sparrow Hawks. The birds in this district seem to prefer the thin, trimmed hedges, building like Hedge-sparrows about 2 to 3 ft up, or near the top. They are partial to corn fields, the proximity of elm-trees, & seem to like cross-roads, cottage gardens & their frequented spots. Carlyn Britton showed us a good selection of local clutches in his collection, but, in this district, 3 eggs is certainly the commonest clutch.



**Seaford Head, Sussex.**

**April 23rd 1933.**

J. Walpole-Bond, Dr. Sloan-Chesser  
and D.H. Meares inspecting a  
Peregrine eyrie, 30 feet down.

Walpole-Bond descended,  
hand-over-hand on a single rope  
tied to a crowbar. (See page 144).

Photos by Sloan-Chesser.

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26<sup>th</sup> March. Cliffe marshes, near Rochester.

D<sup>r</sup>. Sloan-Chemer & I motored over to the Pooling marshes (vide 2 Apr. 1932.) to visit the rookery in low willow trees. We climbed to a large number of nests but found no clutches of 5 eggs. We took 7 clutches of 4, incubation begun in all cases.

After lunch by an old barn (see photo.) we went over to the terrory about 1½ miles away on the slope of a wood overlooking the marshes. There were a large number of nests here in very low oak trees, & I went up to one average height & down to ground again in 2 minutes! We climbed to 6 nests and took 2 sets of 5 and one of 4 eggs, incubated about a fortnight. One nest contained only 1 egg.

14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> April. Easter. I found three Stonechats nests on Dartford Heath with 6-5-5 eggs, all sitting. One of the 5's was very hard set, & the other two clutches were nearly fresh.

J. W. B. took 2 sets of 4 Dartford Warblers on 13<sup>th</sup>, (see 23<sup>rd</sup> inst.) on Newhaven Head, and one on 16<sup>th</sup>.

23<sup>rd</sup> April. D<sup>r</sup>. Chemer & I started at 6-30 AM. from his home to motor to Hove, where we picked up Walpole-Road & proceeded to Peacohaven.

On the cliffs between there and Newhaven Head we took cl. 3 Peregrine falcon with a fishing-rod & net tied on to a walking stick.

The falcon was actually sitting on coloured hen's eggs, which J. W. B. had substituted a few days before, as the egg was very easily visible from above, & could have been stoned by boys.

We then visited a nest of Dartford Warbler still in situ, from which J. W. B. took clutch 4 on 16<sup>th</sup> for Edward Colman Clarke. We also saw

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23 April. Two nests containing two eggs and three eggs, first sets having been taken about 10 days previously. All the nests were in thick gorse, on both sides of the Newhaven road, & were found by the only method possible in gorse forests of watching the birds building. We did not see or hear the birds to-day. Found Stoucheat with 5 sitting.

We also saw the site of a very easy peregrine's eyrie on the cliffs at Peacoham, from which J.W.B. had taken clutch 3 with Callyon-Britton on 7<sup>th</sup> April. We found the falcon brooding on the New site, also close to the top and easy to scoop, about half a mile from the other site. No egg had been laid yet.

After lunch we proceeded to Seaford Head, where we located the site of an eyrie about 30 ft. down the cliff, not very far from where J.W.B. and Mayo had taken the first set of 3 on 7<sup>th</sup> April. J.W.B. went down a rope hand over hand to look at the new site, the rope being merely tied to a crowbar! He is an absolutely bold & fearless cragsman.

We then went on to Crow Link on the Seven Sisters to see an eyrie with 2 eggs nearly due to hatch, but we found the ledge had fallen with a mass of cliff to the beach below.

Although we spent some time along these cliffs we did not see the falcons anywhere.

Chenier took a rather nice clutch 5 Jackdaw from a rabbit-hole at the top of the cliffs.

We left for Hove about 4 pm, and I reached home at 8 pm.



During week-end 29<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> May (Monday) I went down to Clent to see Gerald, so did no birdsnesting, and the following week-end I was laid up with a chill & had to stay in bed.

20<sup>th</sup> May 1933. I spent this Saturday with Edgar Chame near Henley-on-Thames & we found several Black-caps, Garden Warblers and three nests of Wood-wren, two 6s and one with 2 eggs, which laid to. Very early year; we saw a nest of young blackcaps nearly ready to fly. Gerald came down this week-end, so I did not spend much time nesting. We spent a short time on Church-tunst-Corridor looking for 3 pairs of Wood-wrens, but did not find them. Saw Creeper with 3 hard set-eggs!

10<sup>th</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> July. I took my holiday late this year in hope of getting Hobby, but although I saw two pairs of birds behind the Ash ranges near Pirbright, I failed to find the eggs. I stayed with Jack Beddell Smith at Ripley from 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> & we searched the Ash Ranges, around Goddington & the Portsmouth road, & also the Ripley and Witley districts but failed to find Hobbies, although there were young behind the Hut-Cum last August. Met Dr. Nethercote-Thompson near Pirbright on 16<sup>th</sup>, but he had not taken eggs in that district this year. Beddell-Smith and I climbed a number of trees near where we saw the two pairs of birds but found nothing.

I returned home on 20<sup>th</sup> June and on 21<sup>st</sup> we went to East Wittering, near Chichester for 10 days at the sea.

24<sup>th</sup> June. Near Siddlesham, between Chichester and Selsey I found a small colony of Pish Buntings, and saw a nest with 3 young and one egg, and a new nest with lining just pulled out. I also saw

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24 June 1933. Siddlesham, Sussex. (cont'd)

a pair of Cirls feeding young. Goldfinches were very abundant, and many young were flying.

27<sup>th</sup> June. I spent the day with Raymond Collyer-Britton a few miles North and West of Chichester & around Fishbourne and we saw about 8 pairs of Cirl Buntings, but only took one cl. 4 and one cl. 3. (actually taken on 21<sup>st</sup> by R.C.B.) Some nests were building, but had young, one was forsaken, & this we could not find. Took a nice cl 4 yellow Bunting & Britton gave me an unspotted set of 2 yellow Bunting, like Wheatear's eggs, which was a third laying this year, both he and J. Walpole-Bond getting sets of 3 earlier. Last year this bird laid 2 sets of 4 almost unspotted.

28<sup>th</sup> June at East Wittering I took a set of 5 Corn-Bunting but hard set to blow.

In this district there were a fair number of Corn-Buntings, but they were mostly nesting in growing crops, so I did not trouble to find them.

Goldfinches and Sedge-Warblers were very common.

Aut. 3<sup>rd</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> June. Sidcup. Blue-headed Wagtail (*M. f. flava*) found by D.S. Munelwhite and myself with 8 eggs. Account of this is appended



Cliffe Marshes, Kent.  
March 26th 1933.

D.H. Meares  
photo by  
Sloan-Chesser.

(See page 143).



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16 March 1934. I went down to Colonel Sparrow's house at Colva Eugaine, and on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> March we motored over to the Thetford district of Norfolk-Suffolk to look for Crossbills. The birds were very scarce this spring & we saw little recent evidence of them in the fir-cones and only saw a few birds.

A very strong N.W. wind blew both days with snow & sleet flurries, which made hearing difficult.

On 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> we found one nest each day, each with 2 eggs only, & the birds were sitting on the nests in both cases.

The nests were low down in the pines along the Thetford-Duston road, & I reached one of them from the roof of the car!

The other was about 20 ft. up, & both were at the end of lateral branches.

Both nests were subsequently taken by some-one else, so that we got no sets.

5<sup>th</sup> May. Ripley, Surrey. I spent a short half-day with J. Beddell-Smith after Nuthatch, but only found one nest with a short clutch, incubated about 4 days.

6<sup>th</sup> May, Frant, n? Tunbridge Wells.

Mr. Reginald Ware met me about 11 A.M. & we spent a most interesting and enjoyable day after tits & Nuthatches.

I took one set of 7 Nuthatch, about 3 days incubated from a hole about 10 ft. up in a small oak tree, easy to scoop.

Also examined 2 nests, with 4 eggs and 2 eggs in easy places in oak and apple, but

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Neither of these nests completed good clutches.

We also saw a bird building in a difficult hole 20 ft. up an oak, but this nest had been tampered with, & eggs had probably been taken.

All the eggs we saw were rather poor.

I saw a Willow-Tit's nest in a dead branch over a stream, placed there for this purpose, but a blue-tit had a nest in the same stump, & the Willow-Tit deserted.

As we could see no eggs at this late date, although we heard the birds close to, it is probable that the blue-tit had appropriated the original hole.

In an old orchard we found a Marsh-tit with 4 eggs & bird sitting on in a very open hole, large enough for a starling.

Close to this was a Lesser-Spotted-Woodpecker's boring, ready for eggs. In the same small decrepit orchard there was a Nuthatch with 2 eggs & Blue-tit.

We visited a number of nesting boxes all with blue & great-tits in them, one of which had been clayed up by a Nuthatch, but was occupied by Blue-tit.

Out of about 130 boxes there were only 8 Blue-tits, 5 Marsh-tits, & almost all the rest Great and Blue-tits.

11<sup>th</sup> June. I went down to Salisbury to spend a fortnight studying Hobby in this district where, perhaps, they are commoner or at least more easily observed than in any other district, as they seem to favour the smaller plantations and belts of Scotch fir & isolated spinneys which are found



high up in commanding situations from which magnificent views over very wide areas of the Plain are obtained.

I spent the first four days at Lobscombe Corner, 8 miles from Salisbury on the Andover road, and adjacent to the large area of the Porton Experimental Station.

On 12<sup>th</sup> June I found both Hobbs at an old Crow's nest on the N.W. side of Tower Hill, built in the top of a Scotch fir.

I sat for  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour under another fir about 20 yards away & had a splendid pair of both birds, which were noisy & demonstrative at my presence.

The falcon went on to the nest several times but did not remain, & the Cuckoo meantime kept up a continuous chattering & mewling noise. On climbing the tree I found that they had not yet laid.

This tree was subsequently climbed again & marked by someone else, probably on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>, when I was at Amesbury, for on my return on 21<sup>st</sup> this nest had been deserted.

On 14<sup>th</sup> June I located another pair of Hobbs in a long, narrow wood lying in the valley  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile below Pheasant inn. Both birds were flying about rather excitedly, but, although I examined several good nests, and one in particular a magpie's at the extreme top of a very tall Spruce, with branches all the way up, which had a good deal of down in it &

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showed signs of having been used by the falcons, I found no eggs.

\* On 15<sup>th</sup> June I located a third pair of Hobbs, about half way between the two already described. This pair were in the middle of the upper part of a fir plantation in the juniper belt  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from Pheasant-inn. I saw both birds several times in the same place, where there were two good crow's nests, but neither contained eggs, nor did I find the birds sitting when I revisited their nests on 21<sup>st</sup> June. In view of the lali-deli - I have little doubt that both their birds had been robbed, probably about 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> June, & that they were taking up their quarters for second nests.

In this connection Edgar Chance informs me that he found two nests on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June, each containing one egg.

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June I moved to the George Hotel, Amesbury, 6 miles north of Salisbury, and on 17<sup>th</sup> Jack Beddell Smith joined me early in his car.

We examined a great deal of country around Stonehenge, the Bustard inn (now closed) and the artillery ranges to the north of these places.

We put a falcon off a nest in a larch plantation called Shrewton Tolley, but again found no egg. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away Jack had climbed to a good nest which had been already climbed by some one else, & found 2 small Hobby feathers in

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The nest. In view of my other experiences in locating pairs this year, we now think that this, again, was probably a second location, after the first set of eggs had been taken.

Both J. Walpole-Bond and Edgar Chance inform me that Hobbys are very prone to shift their quarters, tho' not as a rule to any great distance, if they are even disturbed much at the nest.

This might, possibly, account for their four pairs apparently having no eggs yet.

I spent 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June in the Tidworth & Bulford Camps districts, but could not locate Hobbys here. The district is good, but the trees are much higher & were difficult to work satisfactorily.

I thought I saw Hobby once or twice in a small isolated plantation near the Polo ground & golf course at South Tidworth, but failed to flush a bird from any of the numerous Crow's nests about there.

20<sup>th</sup> June I went about 3 miles to the west of Shrewton along the Warminster road & examined some good Copses & plantations in this district.

In a small circular plantation of Scotch fir about 1 mile to south of the fish farm I put a Hobby off a Crow's nest in a tall fir tree. On concealing myself about 30 yards away, the falcon returned in 10 minutes, & hovered first over the

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nest, without a motion of the wings, and then first on one side then the other of the nest, giving me an excellent view of her. Then she slipped quietly into the nest, unaware of my presence.

On being disturbed she dashed off the nest again & soared up close over the trees & disappeared. This performance

was repeated 3 times in half-an-hour,

& I then climbed the tree and took a very nice set of 3 eggs, of a yellowish

red tinge, incubated at least a week,

probably 10 days. I lost my spectacles

coming down the tree, & failed to find

them again, so that I had to give up

work for the day & return to Skrewton

for Amesbury.

On the following day I returned over to the Porlock Ranges to revisit the 3 pairs already located there, but, as already recorded, I found no eggs in any of the nests.

20<sup>th</sup> August 1934. P. A. D. Hollow visited the Hobby's nest which I located on 15 June, which Jack Beddall Smith & I found at this nest again last Sunday, in order to ring the young ones.

On climbing up he found only one young hobby, 3 weeks old and two addled infertile eggs, which he brought back to me.

If 18 days are allowed for 2<sup>nd</sup> laying, and 31 days' incubation this would put the first set of eggs at about 10 June, a couple of days before I went down to Porlock Ranges.

The first nest was, no doubt, taken by someone



the about Sunday 10 June. The two eggs in the nest were no doubt considerably "weathered" but were very light coloured, and not unlike normal eggs of the Red-legged Partridge in colour. I have kept these as an interesting record of this second hatching.

When J. B. Smith & I were on their ranges last week, 13 August, Mr. Smith, the keeper, told us that a Hobby had hatched off its first sitting close to Tobenbe Corner, & the young were then flying about near the nest.

Evidently in this part of Wiltshire the Hobby is about a week earlier than in many localities, and about 9<sup>th</sup> or 10 June would appear to be a good date for first sets.

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On 3<sup>rd</sup> April we finally moved house from Lideup to Langroid Maisonette, London Road, Summingdale and the 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> April was my first week-end in our new home, which faces the 9 hole golf course  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from Summingdale railway station. Beyond the three golf courses Chobham Common stretches for miles to the east & south. The Wentworth golf-course and estate extends for 3 miles on the other side of the railway. The whole district is good ground for several rare birds in Surrey & Berkshire, & is mainly coniferous with much heather & gorse.

On 30<sup>th</sup> March I went a walk over the Common & located several pairs of Dartford Warblers & Woodlark, also Curlew & snipe all within 2 miles of our maisonette, and on 4<sup>th</sup> April I saw a Woodlark from the train on Wentworth golf links.

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6<sup>th</sup> April. Found Woodlark sitting on a nice set of 4 eggs close to the furthest golf tee on New Course. They hatched about 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> April. I watched cock soaring for ½ hour some 200 yards from nest, & after joining mate he sang 300 yards away. Saw first swallow to-day.

On 7<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> April I tried without success to locate nests of two other pairs of Woodlarks, whilst on 19<sup>th</sup> a nest with 4 eggs was inadvertently destroyed near a tee on the golf course, near the pond.

22<sup>nd</sup> April. I found Dartford Warbler with 3 eggs and another almost ready for eggs, also Curlew with 3 eggs on Chatham Common.

On 27<sup>th</sup> April the one Dartford Warbler was incubating 4 eggs, but the other had still not laid. The nest was more fully lined than usual & was quite ready for eggs. To-day the Curlew was sitting on 4 eggs, which were a rather unusual type & I took them.

12<sup>th</sup> May. Dr. Sloan-Chener came over for the day & we spent the time on Chatham Common.

We found 8 Dartford Warblers' nests, one of which had 4 fresh eggs, rest sitting, five were quite ready for eggs, & two looked ready but had been disturbed. The nest found 27 April ready, had forsaken, but another nest had been built within a few yards, and was about ready for eggs. Also found Greep 5 hard set; Wasp 7 hard set & another hatched.

Coal-tit near first Woodlark's nest had 9 eggs well incubated. Saw several pairs of Curlew, and a Hobby over Hartworth.

18<sup>th</sup> May. Last Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> Chener took two Dartford Warblers, still with only 4 eggs.

To-day I revisited the others. One had one

egg, bird was on the nest. Another had a set of 4 eggs, almost erythrina. There was no trace of green, but ground was creamy white, with brown markings. This was the most remarkable clutch which I have seen or taken, and I took it for my collection. Two nests had just laid, & one appeared deserted. I located two more pairs of birds. The weather was very cold, & rain came on in the afternoon.

25<sup>th</sup> May. I saw a woodlark singing & soaring by the greatest clump of fir trees out on Chobham Common. Also found woodlark, 4 young about a week old, close to the railway bridge at Sunningdale, which I tried to find earlier in the year. This is very late for a first nest, or early for a second, unless first attempt was destroyed. No eggs in Dartford's nests.

8<sup>th</sup> June. Whitsun holidays. I took my 3 weeks' leave from this date, to have another holiday after Hobby. From 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> I saw birds in 3 different places round Chobham Common, & think there is probably a nest on the border near Gracious Pond Farm. Saw one bird soaring over the Wentworth golf-course, & P.A.D. Holman & I saw a pair soaring on the high ground north of Chobham village. So far I have located no nest.

On 12<sup>th</sup> I worked all round the Chobham ridges, but saw no birds on this likely ground. They may be nesting in private ground round the edges.

On 13<sup>th</sup> I found a Hobby's nest with 2 eggs behind the Ash ranges, in an old crow's nest in an isolated clump on the edge of the burnt patch, just south of the two well-known "spurs", & close to a side road. Both birds left the clump together & had not returned in 3/4 hour. I did not touch or disturb the eggs.

14<sup>th</sup> June. I revisited the Aste ranges nest, & both birds left the clump of trees as I approached. There were still only two eggs in the nest, and I took them and substituted two small white pullets' eggs. When I climbed the tree both birds, which had been rather demonstrative, left the vicinity. I waited about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away for  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour when I saw the female approach & finally go to the tree and settle on the eggs. Then I left.

15<sup>th</sup> June. I returned to the nest, & the tiercel left as I approached the clump & hovered around, but did not call until I began to climb when the female left her nest & called loudly. I found the 3<sup>rd</sup> egg in the nest to-day & removed it and the pullets' eggs. While I was there field firing was going on on the one side, close to the nest, and firing from Aste ranges on the other side. Saw Woodlarks along the road to the lily-pond on South side.

16<sup>th</sup> June. Saw a hobby again on the S.E. corner of Chobham Common close to an ornamental pond in private grounds, but again failed to find nest.

17<sup>th</sup> I again worked the Wensworth ground, but failed to see anything of Hobbits there again.

18<sup>th</sup> Today, in pouring rain, I broke new ground between Bagshot and Cracknell, & found Hobby with clutch 3, in an old Crow's nest in an oak tree in a large but thin oak wood just north of the golf course on the way to Ascot. The hen twice left the nest without a sound before I had reached the tree, & flew right away without demonstration. I did not see the cock at the nest, but saw both birds about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away before I found nest. Either frost or caterpillars had stripped the oaks of leaves, & the wood looked very bare & open. This place is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile due north of "Red hedge" in Swinley Park, on right hand side (i.e.) of main drive.