

1908.

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March 1st Kingston. (Cont^d)

Raven. On Sunday 1st we started out to take the second, or "blue" raven, - so called from the light blue, sparsely marked eggs she lays - on a cliff 7 or 8 miles away near Rorlstone. After a three hour's walk we saw the cliff, & the cock raven flying about near it. As we approached he called the hen off the nest, & we descended to the beach, whence a view of the nest could be obtained. Just the outside sticks were visible, & the nest was hidden up a crevice some 30 ft. from the top & about 150 ft. from the beach. Two other old nests were close to it on the rock, one of which was found to be inaccessible last year. After several cuts from the top we assured ourselves that the guide rope was hanging over the only possible point that could be "made" in descending, - a little pinnacle projecting from near the nest. We then went round to the top, & I went down on the ropes, & secured a fine clutch of eggs. The crevice was a large one, & I was able comfortably to pack the eggs, which, as usual, were light blue with few markings. The birds did not appear & made no demonstration.

During our walks along this coast, I saw a large number of old raven's nests, from which H.G. had taken many clutches in past years; we also saw two pairs of falcons, & quite a number of buzzards, three being in the air together. I saw several old buzzard's nests, all in very awkward situations. The coast here is very rocky & indented, much overhung & composed of slate which is bad for climbing on, as big pieces fall away at a touch. The weather on the 29th was stormy, with a N. gale, & occasional snow & sleet showers & very cold; on March 1st it was warm, with a N. breeze, & bright sun. Both nests were incubated about 2 days.

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March 7th - 8th ; Llanrhaiadr } { W. Pennant
Llangynog } { C.M.

Raven

Left Paddington 12.15 a.m. on 7th, and arrived Llangynog 9.45 - thence over the moor, which was snow clad, to Pistyll Rhaiadr. On the afternoon of 7th, we searched the valley leading up to Cader Berwyn, also the rocks above Pistyll Rhaiadr, but saw no sign of the Ravens or of any new nest. The snow made progress on the hill sides very stiff going.

On Saturday night heavy rain fell, the thaw swelling the streams enormously, and rendering the ground exceedingly slippery. On Sunday morning, 8th, it cleared, and against a strong wind set out and explored the Llangynog site, which also proved blank. There we sent back the long ropes, and set out to Pistyll Pennant with the crow-bar & 50 ft. of rope.

Arrived at Pistyll Pennant about 3 p.m., and starting up the rock, shortly found the nest, with flaxes, near the top of the crag-covered mountain side, and observed the Raven leave the nest, & watched her return, due to a hail storm.

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March 7th - 8th; Llangynog, cont^d

We had a ghastly climb to the summit, up a very narrow wet & slippery sheep track, flanked with deep gorges, the wind driving with full gale strength. Observing the nest from an adjacent prominence, we could not see the contents, but in view of the furious wind, and very slippery ground - together with there only being two of us, i.e. one at the top of the rope - we decided that the task was impossible, and had reluctantly to abandon the nest.

Returned to Llangynog, where we slept, and travelled back on Monday, 9th.

April 4th; Warley.

C.A.M.

Rook

Took cl. 5, 5 fresh

April 15th; Harold Wood

Carrion Crow

}	Jack Smith
	C.A.M.

Two eggs in nest of the fine bird; taken 21st 5 eggs, by Jack Smith.

Peregrine - taken by Pennant at Pistyll

Rhaiadr with 3 eggs on April 16th; new hen bird; v. fine eggs.

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April 11th-12th; Epping & Warley C.M.

Carion Crow

Carion Crow - Theydon bird sitting
on 3 eggs, very light variety;
Billericay bird sitting on 6,
taken by Jack Smith on 14th.

Goldcrest - nest, building, in
spruce n^o Blackmore; forsok later.

Nuthatch - Birds carrying leaves
into old Woodpecker's hole
in Barracks Wood, Warley -
hole not yet mudded; subsequently
turned out by Starlings.

April 17th - 20th; Clive. C.M.

Magpie

Barn Owl

Stock Dove

Song Thrush

Easter - everything very backward;
heavy snow & hail on Easter
Sunday.

Magpie - nest, 2 eggs, 17th, Shugs Pit
nest, 6 eggs, fresh, 20th, Aston Park
do. , 5 eggs, do. do., Brook Farm
do. , 6 eggs, do. do., Wooley's Farm
do. , 4 eggs, forsaken, Wem rifle range
do. , ready, 17th, Trench Farm
do. , inaccessible, bird sitting, 20th, ^{Aston} Park
also nests not climbed & bird
not sitting Broughton forse, above
Braidway, & Palm's Hill (building).

Barn Owl - 6 eggs on 20th in old
oak - at Palms Hill, fresh.

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April 17th - 20th ; Clive, cont^dMistle Thrush - 4 eggs, garden, Clive.Stock Dove - 2 eggs, the Quarry, CliveSong Thrush - nest, 6 eggs, do. do.Little Grebe - nest, no eggs, on
pond n^e Battlefield, Ap. 16th.April 11th & 12th ; Seaford, Sussex.Peregrine Falcon,Stonechat,Mistle Thrush.

}	H.G.
	S.H.C.
	J. Rodman
	W. de Bond.

On Saturday afternoon H.G., Rodman & I left Victoria at 12:5 for Eastbourne. We walked out to the old Belle Tout Lighthouse, where our men awaited us with the ropes, & J.W.B. was on the beach at 3 pm. to direct us. The nest at Belle Tout proved to be quite inaccessible & though I descended over 100 ft. I could not approach the eyrie, which was in a hole near the bottom & which had frequently been attempted before without success. H.G. then tried the other eyrie which Bond had spotted for us, but on account of loose chalk boulders, which kept dropping down the attempt to reach the eyrie had to be abandoned. We then walked to Seaford, seeing the 'sister's' pair, but failing to find the nesting site, and on Seaford Head we saw the hole from which H.G. took a fine ch. on April 7th. Before we arrived, Bond had taken the Newhaven Head Pair of Falcons with 3 eggs, which he gave to me. On Sunday I found Stonechat with 5 sitting, & three nests building, & we also took two ch. Mistle Thrush, one fresh, & the other just hatching. Saw Cliffchaff, Willow-wren, Wheatear & Redstart.

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April 16th to 22. Portmagee, Co. Kerry, Ireland.

Chough.

Hooded Crow,

Rock Dove.

{ S. Hoorman.

{ J. H. H.

We left Paddington 8.45 p.m. on 15th April, via Fishguard, changing at Mallow Junction, where I saw a swallow, & at Farnafore, and arrived at Cahireiveen station about 1 p.m. on 16th. Had a long drive, about 8 miles to Portmagee, which we reached at 2.30 p.m. After lunch at Shanahan's Inn we took a stroll along the high cliffs to S.W. of the village, with our chief man, Mr. Maurice Shanahan.

Chough. We saw a colony of Choughs on an immense precipice and found 5 nests all quite inaccessible & in deep overhanging fissures & crevices. Several odd pairs were also seen nesting in crevices on other immense sea-cliffs, a pair or sometimes two inhabiting most of the suitable inlets or 'caves' as they are called along the coast here. They seem to prefer bare and overhanging precipices, & seldom nest where there is any vegetation. The flight is more like a rook's than any other corvine bird, but is more buoyant. They sail gracefully over their nesting haunts, & descend with fine undulating flight, often dropping into the caves from a considerable height with closed wings. The note is not unlike a jackdaw's, but is long drawn-out, & more ringing & metallic. The red bill & legs are not very noticeable, except at close quarters.

Raven. A common bird here, one pair inhabiting each large headland round the coast.

Found a nest to the N. of this chough 'cave', about 300 ft. down a perpendicular & overhanging cliff some 500 ft. high, containing fully-fledged young, visible from the top.

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April 16th, Portmagee; (Cont'd.)

We saw no Hooded Crows on this first afternoon; they are not common in this district, being poisoned & destroyed by the Knight of Kerry's gamekeeper on Valentia Island.

Rock-Pipits, Stonechats & Wheatears are abundant, & we found a Stonechat's nest with young. The pipits are not yet sitting, & we found no nests.

Peregrine Falcon. Common on this coast, a pair inhabiting each of the highest and most prominent headlands. We could not locate the eyries as the cliffs here are so enormous and we could not disturb the sitting falcon.

Patrick Donoghue came into the inn in the evening, & said he had located several Chough's nests and a Hooded Crow on Valentia Island.

April 17th, Valentia Island.

with Maurice Shanahan & P. Donoghue.

} S.B.
} M.

Chough,

Hooded Crow.

About 9 a.m. we took ferry across to the island & with full tackle set out for Hooded Crows. Donoghue's son showed us a nest built on the top of a grassy bank on the summit of a low cliff, hardly any nest being made but only a hollow in the grass lined. This nest contained 3 eggs only which were being incubated, & S.B. removed them. Boorman then made a descent to a hole which contained a Chough's nest last year, about 15 ft. from top, but there was no nest here.

Chough. I then descended to a Chough's nest about 75 ft. down a cliff of about 130 ft., where Jack Smith took a cl's last year, & found the nest contained 3 fresh eggs.

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April 17th, Palentia Island. Cont.

This nest was wedged into a crevice beneath a projecting rock, & was difficult to reach. This we left to revisit later. Choughs apparently often brood upon incomplete clutches of eggs. We saw three more Chough's nests on S. side of the island, but did not attempt them, as we are full early yet, & wish to spend the first few days after Hooded Crow & falcon.

On the highest point on N.W. side of Palentia we saw a pair of Falcons, but could not locate the eyrie on so vast a precipice; and further W. a pair of Ravens had young close below the castle. Further to the E. we saw two quite inaccessible Chough's nests, very much overhung, but the birds are not yet sitting.

S.B. found Stonechat with 3 young & 1 egg.

Returned to Portuagee for lunch at 3 o'clock, & shortly after took a boat out to 'Castle Islands' about a mile to the W.

Hooded Crow. Found a nest on the low rocks between the islands & took a nice clutch 5, slightly incubated. Saw another pair of birds in a 'cave' on the Mainland opposite, but could find no nest.

The Hoodies prefer the low cliffs where grassy ledges & other vegetation are found; we found no nests on the higher & more precipitous cliffs.

Rock-pipits & wheatears very common.

April 18th. Puffin Island.

Hooded Crow.

Took a boat & four men who the Shanahan brothers, & sailed with the wind to Puffin Island, which lies just off the mainland, about 3 miles to the S.W. of Portuagee. Almost as soon as we landed, I found a Hoodie's nest

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April 18th Puffin Island. (Cont'd)

on the side of a 'cave', & the bird sat remarkably close, refusing to leave the nest, which was about 20 ft. down, until we threw over the guide rope. Boorman descended & secured a fine cl. 5, highly incubated. These were the only eggs we took on the Island.

After this we walked round the island & saw several pairs of Choughs, but found no nests.

We learned later that a boy had taken a cl. 5 from this island, which eggs Boorman secured.

Saw a falcon, & I believe I found the eggs; but either the eggs have been taken or she has not yet laid. Saw numerous Puffins, Oyster Catchers & Kittiwakes.

Hooded Crow. A pair were nesting on the S. side of the island, but Patrick Lynch & I failed to find the nest. We subsequently learned that a boy had taken the 5 eggs & destroyed the nest, which clutch I succeeded in regaining from him. They were only slightly incubated.

At 3 o'clock we left the island, & put over to the Mainland.

Rock Dove. We visited a cave at the corner of Lynch's beat, where there were 3 nests, one was inaccessible, one contained large young & one had 2 fresh eggs which I took.

Saw several pairs of Choughs, which are not yet sitting, & found one nest which we visited later.

April 19th Sunday. Ballinskelligs.

Hooded Crow.

This is the worst locality we visited.

From 8 miles out to the S. towards Waterville, and

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April 19th. Ballinskelligs. (Cont'd).

at 12:30 (after our men had been to Mass) took boat to Horse Island, where Boorman took a Hooded Crow with 4 eggs, considerably incubated. We boated along the mainland cliffs to the west, but saw no Hoodies, & only one pair of Choughs. After lunch we went to some cliffs in the bay, 2 miles or so to the east, where we learned some boys had taken a Hoodie with 6 & destroyed the eggs. I found another Hooded Crow's Nest, which upon examination contained 5 young birds just hatched.

After this we drove home.

April 20th. Valentia Island.

with Shanahan & Donoghue.

Chough.

The first nest we found was in a low cliff some 40 ft. high, close to where we took the cl. 3 Hooded Crow on 17th, but was much overhung. Boorman tried it, but could not reach it till after an hour's delay we procured a 20 ft. ladder, from the top of which he scooped out a cl. 4, slightly incubated. Then I descended to the nest which contained 3 eggs on 17th, & took a nice cl. 5, & was lowered to the beach, which is uncovered at half tide.

In a cave further to the W. I descended to a nest which Smythe found last year, but no eggs had yet been laid, & the nest though new was not lined.

Still further W. below the castle I descended to another nest which proved to be much overhung & quite inaccessible, being built deep down in a

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April 20th, Valentia Island (Contd.)

Narrow slit in the rocks. Thence we proceeded across the Island to the North side, & tried again unsuccessfully to locate the falcons.

Travelling E. to O'Connor's beat of last year, we saw a few more pairs of Chough & found 3 nests all quite inaccessible. Saw no Hooded Crows. Valentia cliffs are extremely difficult, all the rocks run off the wrong way and are mostly overhanging. We were out for 12 hours, & had a long & tiring day.

April 21st, S. Finian's Bay, & Bolus Head.

With M. Shanahan & Michael P. Daly.

Chough.

We drove out to the Glen first thing in the morning, where Boorman secured a cl. 4 Chough from a cottage, taken (18408) previously by a boy, the nest of which we called upon later. Away to the South, beyond the school house, we met our guide to this district, Michael P. Daly, who said he knew all the nests along that part of the coast. The first nest was high up in the roof of a very dark cave, a difficult climb from the bottom, which proved to be empty; this was the nest from which the cl. 4 came. The second nest, also at the very top end of a long narrow cave, rather difficult to climb into from the shore, on to which we were lowered about 130 ft. on the ropes, contained 1 fresh egg, and Daly is sending me the clutch when complete. Another nest was about 40 ft. from the shore, where there is a landing for lobster boats, & was an extremely awkward climb, & inaccessible with ropes from the top. This nest had been taken by a farm hand, with 6 poorly marked eggs, which I fortunately secured from him.

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April 21st St. Finian's Bay & Bolus Head. (Cont'd.)
with Michael P. Daly & Maurice Shanahan.

The next nest visited was about 30 ft. from the top, in a crevice amongst large stones, and from this Boorman secured a fine cl. 5 with the aid of a scoop on a walking stick.

I then made a long & awkward descent to a nest wedged into a narrow split between 2 rocks. The nest was a long way in, & after great difficulty I scooped out one egg, which proved to be the only one, so I returned it & left the nest.

The last nest I visited was only half built, & was not lined, which is strange so late on in April; the birds may have been disturbed.

I made another long descent, almost to the sea, to try to find a seventh nest, which we knew was in the gully, but I could see no signs of it, and darkness prevented our further delay.

Saw several Hooded Crows, but found no nests, & had not time to search for them.

Reached home at 9 p.m.

April 22nd The Glen; N. Side, St. Finian's Bay.
with Patrick Lynch & Maurice Shanahan.

Chough.

Walked over the mountain to Lynch's beat, the donkey carrying the ropes. St. Finian's bay is far the best Chough locality we have visited.

At Lynch's house we received a fine cl. 5 Hooded Crow, taken on Puffin Island (see 18.4.08), which I retained. Lynch had spotted 7 nests for us, which we at once proceeded to visit, commencing from the North, almost opposite Puffin Island, by the cairn from which I took the Rock Dove's eggs -

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April 22nd. The Glen x St. Finian's Bay, N. Side.

Chough. In the first nest, built in a crevice about 30ft. down, we could see one egg from the top, & when I descended I found there were no more. This nest is being taken for us.

The second nest was built high up in the roof of a cave, amongst ferns, in an extremely awkward & hazardous place to approach. With much trouble & fright, & great assistance from Lynch I managed to reach the nest & was rewarded by finding a magnificent clutch of 6, which we brought safely to the surface. The next nest was about 50ft.

sheer down a cliff, in a hole in the turf, & after S.B. had made an unsuccessful attempt to reach it from the side, I descended & found two extremely beautiful eggs, spotted, not blotched, & not unlike Oriole's eggs, which Lynch is taking for me later.

The fourth nest was in a crevice some 30 or 40 ft. from the bottom of a cliff by the new landing stage (S. side) & we pulled S.B. up to this from bottom, where he secured an excellent cl. 5, quite fresh.

The fifth & sixth nests were in bad places & were quite inaccessible, so we did not waste any time on them.

The last nest was in a most curious situation. A large hole in the field above connected with a cave to the sea. The nest was built on a ledge in this hole, & could be brought out on the end of a long gaff or pitch fork. Some boys had taken 3 eggs from the nest early that morning & had replaced the nest in situ. Chourman took it out again, & another egg had been laid in the nest. This he took, & procured the other 3 from the boy & also brought the nest home. If eggs are taken from a nest the Chough completes the clutch in same nest.

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April 25th - 26th; Warley { C.L. Collinette
 Redshank } C.H.M.
 Plover
 Jackdaw.

Redshank - nests 1 egg & 3 eggs; due to the very wet spring, some nests appear to have been swamped.

Goldcrest - nest, outside nearly complete, found building n^r. Blackmore in a spruce (see Apr 11/12; first attempt deserted)

May 2nd; Warley J.H.M.

Redshank

Magpie

Redshank - nest, 4 eggs.

Magpie - nest, 6 eggs, Herongate.

Marsh Tit - just commencing to bore in wood by Herongate (found later)

May 3rd; Warley C.H.M.

Jackdaw

Starling.

Starling - nest, 6 eggs, Thorndon Park

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker - shaft, well advanced, found in rotten branch of an elm by big pond at Childerditch; the bird visited the hole only once between 11 a.m. & 1, and stayed inside some 3 minutes; rained incessantly. (see May 19th)

Marsh Tit - building by Childerditch pond, in a natural crevice - turned out later by Blue Tit.

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3rd May; Epping Forest.

D.H.M.

Ruthatch,	} Building.
1. Hawfinch,	
Marsh. tit.	

All found building only; this is a late year, & all these birds should normally be sitting.

1. Taken with cl. 5 on ~~29th~~ May.

May 9th, Epping Forest.

Hawfinch,
Cuckoo.

{ D.H.M.
Jack Smith.
C.H.M.

Hawfinch. Jack Smith & I worked the Heydon Bois corner of the forest where we found 5 or 6 nests containing 1-2-3 eggs & the others were building. On the Wake-Waltham-Abbey road we found many more nests, took cl. 5, as above, & found a two, the rest building.

Cuckoo. J.S. took cl. 3 Hedge-sparrow & a cuckoo.

Ruthatch. Found ready for eggs along the Epping road.

Chiffchaff. Found ready for eggs in holly-bush. (see 13th)

also :-

Hawfinch - On Buckhurst Hill beat found seven new nests, the bird in no case being on the nest - only therefore climbed to one nest, which contained 1 egg. (see May 14th)

Chiffchaff - found two nests building, one just commencing to line, both in holly by a grassy glade ^{Fair Meadow} _{High Beech}.

Chaffinch - several nests building, and one with 4 eggs, incubated.

Coal Tit - found building in crevice of a beech tree, High Beech (see May 20-31)

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10th May, Wolmer Forest, Liphook.Dartford Warbler,
Coal-tit.

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D.H.C.

Jack Smith.

Dartford Warbler. We revisited two nests found building on 3rd May by J.S., & one contained cl. 4, & the other 1 egg. I found another nest half-built, & we saw 3 more birds whose nests we could not discover. The nests were all in similar situations, about a foot from the ground in heath growing through and amongst gorse. The sitting bird sat very closely, & when at last disturbed slipped off into the surrounding gorse, where it was at once joined by its mate, the two uttering their low alarm note continually. We never saw the birds at all round the nest containing 1 egg, though we worked all the gorse systematically; nor did we hear the alarm note. About 1/2 mile away a cock bird was rather demonstrative but we could not disturb the hen. Several hundred yards away from here we saw a hen, not at all excited, & this pair may have belonged to the nest with one egg. ? About a mile away we disturbed a cock, which was not excited, & we failed to find any nest. The other pair we saw, whose nest I found, were not within a hundred yards of the nest when we first saw them, & were several hundred yards from where they were located the previous week.

The habits of this bird are most difficult to understand, & the nests are very well concealed & extremely hard to find. Unless the sitting hen is disturbed the cock remains concealed & makes little, if any noise. When an incomplete clutch of eggs is in the nest, the birds apparently do not remain in the immediate vicinity.

Coal-tit. Nest containing four or five eggs found in a hole in a wall.