

# North-East Scotland Branch Newsletter

September 2015

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Welcome to the newsletter of your local SOC branch.

With some exciting events coming up, we thought it was time to issue another local newsletter to all our members. While we don't anticipate this being a regular occurrence, please do contact me if you have anything you would like to include in a future edition, or with any other comments. Other ways to keep up to date with branch news are through our page on the SOC website (<http://www.the-soc.org.uk/whats-on/local-branches-2/grampian/>) and by email. If you'd like to receive email updates about branch news and events, it would be great to have your email address. While we do have many members' addresses, there are about fifty for whom we don't. If you think that we might not have your correct (or preferred) address, please send an email to me at [grampian.secretary@the-soc.org.uk](mailto:grampian.secretary@the-soc.org.uk).

I hope to see you at a branch event soon.

*John Wills, Branch Secretary*

## Upcoming talks

With the start of the North-East Scotland branch's winter talks' programme just a few weeks away, here are a few more details to tempt you along, whether you're a regular attendee, a first-timer or somewhere in between. Meetings are held at The Sportsman's Club, 11 Queen's Rd, Aberdeen, AB15 4YL at 7.30 pm. To cover the hire of the room a small donation is requested – £2 for members and £3 for non-members.

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October** – Eric Meek – Orkney – seabirds, raptors and migrants.

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November** – Will Miles – Fair Isle migration trends.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December** – Des Thompson – A hero of nature conservation – Derek Ratcliffe

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January** – Grampian Ringing Group – Updates on local projects, including rock pipits, nest recording and inland oystercatchers.

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February** – Daryl Short – A year in the life of a Forvie birder.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March** – Kenny Kortland – Pine marten and red squirrel conservation and research.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April** – Branch AGM, followed by Ian Francis & Jenny Weston – RSPB international work from a local perspective: Egyptian Vultures and Turtle Doves.

Please note the changes to the talks for October and December to those shown on the 2015/2016 Winter Meetings Programme that you would have received from SOC HQ. These late changes have occurred because of the unfortunate non-availability of the previously arranged speakers.

## Field Excursions

Possible trips we could explore are joint excursions with other local groups, with a themed content and local expertise on hand, or another goose-watch on Loch of Skene or Strathbeg, ringing demonstrations, etc. There are other locally-organised trips too, like pelagics organised from Buckie and Banff this year and last to see the assembly of White-billed Divers off Portsoy, all of which have been well-supported. If more of these trips can be arranged for next year, we will be happy to lend our wholehearted support to the organisers.

However, none of these ideas will come to fruition unless we hear of some interest – so, if you are at all interested, speak up! Contact myself or any one of the branch committee.

*John Wills*

## Book Review: Birding Guide to North–East Scotland (Mark Sullivan & Ian Francis)

### A Newcomer's Perspective

In some ways, this review is perhaps somewhat redundant! I can hardly believe that anyone with an interest in birds and birding in this part of the world hasn't already obtained a copy of this excellent and very reasonably priced little work.

Having spent the last 30 years and more in Orkney, my past visits to North–East Scotland had been more or less confined to the harbour, the railway station, the airport and the interior of No. 10 Albyn Terrace, the RSPB's base in Aberdeen. It was only when my wife Aileen, moved to work for the RSPB in their front office in 2012 and we set up a temporary home in Alford that I had the chance to explore more widely. I had retired as the Society's Orkney Area Manager earlier that year so I was more or less a free agent except for the fact that we hadn't (and still haven't) sold our Orkney home. This situation necessitates regular trips back north although the lure of 100 breeding female Hen Harriers and an almost continuous run of interesting migrants does soften the drag of the 400 mile round trip each time.

Finding one's way around a new area is an exciting but often frustrating process. When the Raptor Study Group said 'Could you monitor these old Peregrine sites on The Cabrach, it might have helped if I had known where The Cabrach was! When an e-mail from the Grampian Ringing Group arrives saying 'Meet at 0800 at Slains Pool for a cannon-net catch of ducks', one feels slightly embarrassed to have to ask for more detailed directions! Anyway, I did get there eventually and the end result was a catch of 200 ducks, one of which, a Wigeon, has already been recovered in Russia en route to its breeding grounds.

However, all this has now changed with the arrival of Mark Sullivan and Ian Francis's 'Birding Guide'. Published in the spring of 2015, the first nine pages of the Guide give a brief introduction to the habitats and wildlife species (other than birds) that help to make North–east Scotland so special. There are some really good tips in this section that I feel could be very usefully expanded upon, perhaps in a separate publication at some stage in the future.

The Guide then turns to birds and six pages are devoted to the species and species groups that help to elevate our region to being one of the top ornithological areas not only in Scotland but in Britain as a whole. In a further three pages, some of the best migration hotspots and sea-watching sites are detailed together with a bibliography and contact details of the various relevant organisations.

However, it is the following 95 pages that this guide is really all about. This section is divided into six geographical zones – 'In and around Aberdeen'; 'North of Aberdeen'; 'The North Coast of Aberdeenshire'; 'The Coast South of Aberdeen'; 'Inland to the Cairngorms'; and the 'Donside and Upper Deveron Area'. For each of these areas, sites have been selected, varying in number from 14 for Donside and the Upper Deveron to 36 for 'Inland to The Cairngorms'. Of necessity, of course, these 'sites' vary enormously in size from, for example, the Torry Battery bushes to the Ben Macdui – Beinn a Bhuird – Ben Avon plateau! The sites in each area are themselves divided further into groups and a map shows the localities of all the sites within a group. The maps are admirably clear and it would be difficult to go far wrong, especially if they are used in conjunction with the relevant Ordnance Survey map. Each site in the Guide's maps is clearly numbered and cross-referenced to the accompanying text which also gives a six-figure grid reference for each.

The text for each site, as well as giving details of the bird and other wildlife interest as one would expect, also gives clear information about logistics such as parking, something that, in my explorations around the lesser known by-ways of Aberdeenshire, I have found can be quite a difficult issue!

I found that where the 'Guide' really scores is in directing folk towards lesser known sites that only birders 'in the know' would hold dear. The Auchlossan Floods and the Coull Floods are two such that I would have tracked down far more quickly had the guide been available a couple of years ago while I had never heard of the Cullerlie Pools before I studied the Guide in greater depth for this review. The latter prompted me to test the guide so, Black Lab into the boot, binoculars onto the passenger seat and off I went. The information took me straight to the pools and a load of Mallard, Teal and Greylag Geese that I didn't know existed. It also took me down roads that I had never previously ventured along and led to my finding a glorious concentration of arable 'weeds' (including masses of Heart's ease Pansies and Corn Marigolds) around the edges of barley fields that have been less intensively managed than elsewhere in the region.

The Guide concludes with a very useful checklist of all the bird species ever recorded in North–east Scotland compiled by Paul Baxter, the status column in this list being particularly helpful for anyone new to the area.

So if you haven't yet got a copy of the Guide, I hope that this will have persuaded you to go straight out and get one or, if you already have one, do get out and use it – you never know what you will find!

*Eric Meek*

## Raptor persecution in NE Scotland – caught on camera

The RSPB Scotland Investigations team continues to uncover raptor persecution cases in NE Scotland. As a result of one operation, an Aberdeenshire gamekeeper on the Kildrummy Estate was given a four month prison sentence, after being convicted of a number of charges related to the illegal use of cage traps and the killing of a protected bird of prey. The offences came to light during the review of footage captured by video cameras deployed on the Estate in 2012. The cameras were being used by the RSPB Scotland Investigations team as part of a long-term project monitoring the use of cage traps in Scotland, as part of evidence-gathering in response to a Scottish Natural Heritage consultation on the general licences that permit the use of such traps. RSPB Scotland has, for many years, voiced concerns to the Scottish Government and SNH about the potential impacts of cage trapping, both legal and illegal, on wild bird populations.

In a trial at Aberdeen Sheriff Court in December 2014, it was heard that the gamekeeper was filmed placing an illegal Jay decoy in a Larsen-type trap; killing a goshawk that was subsequently caught in the same trap; illegally taking a Buzzard in the same trap by failing to release it immediately; and illegally taking a Goshawk in a second trap by failing to release it immediately. He claimed that he had used the Jay decoy in a bid to catch Jays that were eating food placed out for pheasants, that he had euthanised the goshawk because it had an injury to its beak, and that he had taken the second goshawk and the buzzard and released them some distance away from his pheasant pens. He had been a gamekeeper on the estate for 12 years, and was a member of the Scottish Gamekeepers Association at the time of the offences.

But this is by no means the only instance of raptor persecution taking place in NE Scotland. In March 2015, RSPB Scotland and the police released another video, as part of an appeal for information as to the identity of three masked individuals filmed apparently attempting to destroy a goshawk nest, on five separate occasions, near Strathdon (within the Cairngorms National Park). This yielded no responses likely to lead to a resolution of the case.

Ian Thomson, SOC Vice-president (and Head of Investigations at RSPB Scotland) commented “It is clear that despite decades of legal protection, the illegal killing of birds of prey is an ongoing issue in NE Scotland. While some incidents are detected, it is clear by the continued absence of successfully breeding hen harriers, peregrines and golden eagles in many areas that we are only uncovering a small proportion of offences.”

Birders visiting our countryside should not hesitate to report any suspicious activity, traps of dubious legality or dead birds in unusual circumstances to Police Scotland on 101, asking for the details to be passed to a wildlife crime officer. It's worth also contacting the RSPB Scotland Investigations team on 0131 317 4100. The more eyes that are looking, the better the chance we have to detect, investigate and prosecute the criminals who continue to target some of our rarest birds.

*Ian Francis*

## Saving St Fittick's Wildlife

The thriving habitat of the St Fitticks Park area of Torry, Aberdeen is under threat in the plans of the new Harbour development in Nigg Bay. There are many who feel this area should be preserved, as habitat loss is a huge issue for our wildlife. A Torry St Fitticks Wildlife Group has been set up, aimed at volunteers documenting – in writing and through photographs – the many species of birds, plants and insects that frequent the area. The man-made wetlands and plantation of trees and wildflowers have seen it bursting with skylarks, chaffinches, warblers and herons. Butterflies, moths and bees of many descriptions have also been identified.

The Group are keen to have more ornithologists involved to help identify species, along with joining the campaign to save this area from the development. If you can help please contact Suzanne [susyan.reid@gmail.com](mailto:susyan.reid@gmail.com). Or visit the facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/701474939958654/>

St Fitticks Park is the most accessible open space available to the residents of Torry. It provides equipped play areas, playing fields, skate parks, nature trails and the scheduled monument / B listed remains of St Fitticks Church.

Details of the proposed new harbour development in Nigg Bay can be examined in the Project Background documents on the website [www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk/future/nigg-bay-development/project-background/](http://www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk/future/nigg-bay-development/project-background/). However, there is little detail as to how the development will impact the immediate onshore area other than to suggest that the adjoining roads may require upgrading (almost certainly!) and realignment as the attached map can testify.



However, other documents describing possible further development after the new harbour has been built suggest that a direct route from the East Tullos Business Park into the harbour may also be needed, which could be provided by the construction of an access route across St Fitticks Park (see the next map). (<http://www.scottishconstructionnow.com/5977/320m-aberdeen-harbour-development-framework-to-go-on-display/> & (<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=65982&SID=2991>)





## The George Waterston Library at Waterston House, SOC Headquarters



The library is now in its tenth year at Waterston House. George Waterston, co-founder of the SOC, was instrumental in forming the collection by begging books from various sources. Many books in the Club's collection were formally part of his and his wife's library, alongside donations made by others in the early 1930's.

With an outlook over Aberlady bay, the library offers a calm and tranquil environment to sit and read. It is open to all—researchers, birdwatchers of all levels, artists and historians, seven days a week during HQ's normal opening hours. There is also an area specifically tailored to young visitors with comfy seating, activity sheets and children's books on offer.

As the largest ornithology library in Scotland and one of the top collections of its kind in Britain, the facility contains over 5,000 books, around 130 different journals and houses a unique and distinctive archive. The library aims, as far as possible, to be a complete repository of all material on Scottish ornithology. As such, it has a collection not just of books but of some fascinating diaries, photographs and letters from eminent Scottish ornithologists.

This wonderful resource also contains a range of non-Scottish ornithology titles including standard works on avifauna of all parts of the world, handbooks on identification, and works on bird behaviour and methodology.

The library has complete runs of the key British journals, all the main international periodicals and all the bird reports from Scotland, neighbouring English counties, Wales and Ireland.

The library receives many of the latest natural history books, sent by publishers in exchange for a review in the Club's journal. See opposite for the latest titles available to borrow.

A large number of books are also donated to the library from people who wish to tidy up their book shelves and attics, or collections have been received as part of a legacy. To find out more about donating books to the Club please email [jane.cleaver@the-soc.org.uk](mailto:jane.cleaver@the-soc.org.uk) . Any duplicates are offered for sale in our second-hand bookshop at Waterston House, to support the continuing charitable work of the Club.

SOC members can borrow books!

Club members can borrow up to two books at a time for a maximum of two months, subject to availability and borrowing terms and conditions (see <http://www.the-soc.org.uk/borrowing-books/>). Smaller books can be posted (p&p charges apply) or passed on to members via conferences/meetings/events, so distance from Waterston House should not be a hurdle to borrowing. There is also the facility for Headquarters to scan and email, or photocopy and post pages to you (p&p charges apply), subject to copyright conditions.

For more information and to view an up-to-date library catalogue, please visit the Club's website <http://www.the-soc.org.uk/our-headquarters/the-library/>



KAREN BIDGOOD, LIBRARIAN AT WATERSTON HOUSE

Karen is a keen birdwatcher and walker with a particular interest in Iceland where she has spent many holidays with her family. Previously she worked in microbiology and taught Science to younger children. To contact Karen, email: [library@the-soc.org.uk](mailto:library@the-soc.org.uk)

## LATEST TITLES AVAILABLE TO BORROW FROM THE LIBRARY

- \*Tales of Remarkable Birds by Dominic Couzens
- \*A History of Birdwatching in 100 Objects by David Callahan
- \*The Passenger Pigeon by Errol Fuller
- \*The Birds of the Iberian Peninsula by de Juana and Garcia
- \*The Faroese Bird Migration Atlas by Hammer et al.

### Notable birds of the year (so far)

It has been a notable year for scarce and rare birds in the region, despite recording only one first – so far. It started off superbly with a juvenile drake Harlequin Duck on the River Don by Seaton Park on 4 January which brought folks in from far and wide, including all the big twitchers – it was more accessible than the other one in Scotland, a female off the coast at Brora. Discovered by Rob Leslie it stayed for a record duration until mid May and kept people coming back for second and more looks as it gradually evolved into almost mature plumage (many photographs on the internet and more to come eventually in the 2015 annual report). Officially it was the first for the region after a fly-by drake at Peterhead in 1999 was not accepted by BBRC. Another first for the region, but from last year, the Spotted Sandpiper at Inverallochy stuck around into the second week of January for the year-listers.

Other popular yanks in the area during the early part of the year were Green-winged Teal at Loch of Strathbeg in January, a drake American Wigeon on Meikle Loch and the Ythan Estuary in January & February, and a drake Ring-necked Duck alternating between Loch of Skene and Dunecht Estate's Policy Loch in late March. A single Bewick's Swan was also on Loch of Skene in March accompanying a group of migratory Whoopers.

White-billed Divers appeared once again off the north Aberdeenshire coast between Sandend and Portsoy between March and May, and several boat excursions from Portsoy were made by intrepid birders to view and photograph them.

'Elvis' the King Eider dutifully turned up again on the Ythan Estuary on 6 April and stayed as per usual into June.

A Rough-legged Buzzard appeared briefly at Rattray Kirk on 19 April before flying off south towards Rattray Head.

A ringed Great White Egret appeared on Loch of Strathbeg in early May, to be followed a couple of weeks later by a second, unringed bird. (And a third turned up in late July too.)



The next 'star' bird, however, was the region's second Black-winged Pratincole found by Hugh Addlesee at Loch of Skene on 3 June (the first was way back in 1976), having apparently relocated from Northumberland where it was located a few days before. It flew around energetically with the many swifts over the loch, sometimes close enough to allow the assembled birders to get a good look but sometimes high and occasionally disappearing from view. It stayed into the afternoon but then disappeared for good.

June also saw an Icterine Warbler at Inver, Crathie, and Red-necked Phalaropes at Ordie, Tarland and Rigifa Pool, and then the region's fourth record (after 2010 and 2014) of a Blyth's Reed Warbler by the River Don at Port Elphinstone, Inverurie, found and i'd by Andrew Stalker and Eric Meek. The bird was often hiding from view in the tall spruces across the river, but nevertheless advertised its presence by singing vigorously.



(a couple of sound clips of both the Icterine and the Blyth's recorded by Alan Knox can be found on the xeno-canto website:

**XC256806** • Icterine Warbler • *Hippolais icterina*  
<http://www.xeno-canto.org/256806>

**XC256807** • Blyth's Reed Warbler • *Acrocephalus dumetorum*  
<http://www.xeno-canto.org/256807> )



All went quiet for a while, then August kicked off with a juvenile Black Stork at Loch of Strathbeg on the 6th. It bore a French ring proving it to be a sibling of another juvenile down at Spurn in Yorkshire. Staying faithful to the low ground conveniently in front of the visitor's centre it stayed around until the 24th. In the meantime a White-rumped Sandpiper was on the Ythan Estuary for a couple of days (15th–16th), found by Chris Gibbins.

Then it all kicked off as a series of easterly–southeasterlies blew in a whole slew of migrants from the continent from the 19th. Less–common migrants included several of Wryneck, Pied Flycatcher, Red–backed Shrike, Reed Warbler, Wood Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Icterine Warbler, as well as the usual Redstart, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Spotted Flycatcher and Whinchat at sites ranging from Loch of Strathbeg plantation and Rattray Head, Collieston, Balmedie CP, Sands of Forvie NNR, Girdle Ness and down to Kinneff. The big 'stars' however were an Arctic Warbler on the Sands of Forvie on 19th–20th, found by Pete Shepherd, and only the third for the region, the last being in 1979!, followed by a Greenish Warbler on 24th–25th at the same site and another in the Loch of Strathbeg plantation on the 25th. Barred Warblers were found at Girdle Ness and Sands of Forvie, and a single Red–breasted Flycatcher at Kinneff Old Kirk. It then seemed to go quiet as the winds dropped and switched around to the more normal southwesterlies with just a few migrants sticking around to the end of the month. But... a very elusive Paddyfield Warbler was found in the Collieston Kirkyard on 28th, its id confirmed by Phil Crockett and Phil Bloor on the 29th. Viewing proved frustrating but with a lot of patience the birders perched on the roadside wall got enough to satisfy. Getting a good record shot photo was a lot harder however (see <http://colliestonbirding.blogspot.co.uk>). It was only the second for the region after a bird caught and ringed in the Logie Buchan reedbeds back in 2012, and only seen by a handful of birders. The afternoon of the 29th was spiced up with a nearby calling Bee–eater (did anyone actually see it?), which was probably the same bird that had been seen at St.Fergus on the 27th and then again earlier in the day as it flew south from the Loch of Strathbeg plantation.

And so into September and October – what may they hold for us?

One last interesting item concerned a common Whitethroat at Inchgarth with a very unusual song pattern. Ian Broadbent, who first heard it, takes up the story:

“ Whilst carrying out the monthly BTO WeBS survey at Inchgarth Reservoir on 14th June 2015 I heard an unfamiliar repetitive song coming from a small patch of gorse on the north bank of the River Dee, about 200m downstream from the reservoir. My first thought was “possible Lesser Whitethroat” – there are historical breeding records of this species from Lower Deeside. My unfamiliarity with the song had me convinced that I'd found something unusual, so I was more than a little disappointed when “just” a Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* popped out and continued to give the same repeated song. It was quite unlike any Whitethroat that I've ever heard before – a six to eight–note song with a buzzing quality, slightly increasing in pitch over the first three notes and then repeating the last three to five notes (“zu–zee–zi–zi–zi–zi–zi”), which it delivered from prominent perches and also in song–flight. It repeated the same song frequently, often with just two or three seconds between the repeated phrases. The bird only



issued this phrase and never gave anything approaching a normal Whitethroat song. (Recorded by Alan Knox and posted on the xeno-canto website: <http://www.xeno-canto.org/263837> & <http://www.xeno-canto.org/263839> )

No-one we've consulted has ever heard a Whitethroat sing in this way; Lars Svensson kindly commented that whilst he has heard several aberrant Garden Warblers and Blackcaps before, he's never heard an aberrant Whitethroat and certainly nothing like this bird.

The bird appeared to be feeding young, so it will be interesting to see (and hear!) if an unusual dialect is retained in subsequent years amongst the Inchgarth Whitethroat population."

*John Wills*

## Nightjars in the North-East in 2015



After the exciting discovery of perhaps 10 or 11 Nightjars inland in the North-East in 2014, hopes were high that breeding might even be confirmed in 2015. After a number of observers again braved the evening midgets in the local forests this year some birds were found but the results were not as spectacular as last year. Information is still coming in but it seems that Nightjars were briefly present at just two sites but there was no evidence of nesting. While the exceptional number in 2014 may have been an otherwise-unexplained aberration, it seems possible that our cold and wet late spring and summer may have knocked the birds back this year. Even so, finding

Nightjars again in 2015 was in itself quite remarkable. This this is still a good showing when you look at the pattern since the Second World War – it is the first time the same site has been 'occupied' in two consecutive years, only the third time (this year, last year and one time previously) we have had more than one in apparently suitable habitat in any one year, and indeed only the first time we have had birds in two consecutive summers at all. This all points in the direction that Nightjars seem to be making an effort in the NE (or we're getting better at finding them) and hopefully if we get a reasonable spring and summer next year, instead of the dreadful weather we've had this time, we might see more action again. Being at the edge of their distribution in Britain things are bound to be unstable from season to season, and 2015 has been a particularly grim. We're looking forward to 2016 already.

*Alan Knox*

## The Atlas Fund – a reminder

As a result of the publication of our local atlas, "The Breeding Birds of North-East Scotland" in 2011, we have a sum of money that is currently surplus. While we're not looking to spend it in a hurry (some, for instance, may be used to support a future atlas), the editors (Ian Francis and Martin Cook) along with the North-East Scotland Branch Committee have decided that money can be made available to support birds and ornithology in the region. For the purposes of the fund, this region comprises of Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City, in accordance with the published atlas. In order to ensure transparent distribution of any of the money, the following rules have been drawn up:

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate that their project will benefit ornithology in North-east Scotland (including Moray).
- Grants are available only for amateur projects.
- Applicants are expected to be existing members of, or to join, the SOC.
- Where applicable, it is expected that recipients will disseminate the results of their project to local birdwatchers. This may be by a talk to the local SOC branch(es) or through publication in the North-east Scotland or Moray Bird Reports, or Scottish Birds.
- Any publications relating to the project results should state that a contribution towards costs was received from The North-East Scotland Atlas Fund.



- The fund is administered by the North–East Scotland SOC Committee or by an alternative committee or subcommittee that they entrust with this role. Awards are entirely at the discretion of the awarding body.
- Applicants must state whether or not they have applied for, or intend to apply for or have received, grant aid from other sources.
- Where appropriate, applicants are expected to have applied for an SOC Research Grant and to be aware of other funding sources.
- The grant must be used for the purpose stated in the application unless otherwise approved in writing by the awarding body. The grant must be returned to the awarding body if it is not used by the recipient as agreed by the awarding body.

Applications may be made at any time by writing to the Secretary of the North–East Scotland SOC Branch ([grampian.secretary@the-soc.org.uk](mailto:grampian.secretary@the-soc.org.uk)).

## The North–East Scotland Bird Report

I'm sure that many of you already get and support your local bird report. In the case of North–East Scotland, the last published edition was for 2012, with the 2013 report shortly to be issued. The 2014 is currently at the compilation stage and hopefully will be issued in good time next year.

If you are not on the mailing list for the report, and would like to be, or would like to receive just the 2013 report, please contact Dave Gill, Quarmby, Nethermuir Road, Maud, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire AB42 4ND ([david@gilldavid1.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:david@gilldavid1.orangehome.co.uk)).

*Hugh Addlesee*

## Contact details

Details for the current North–East Scotland Branch Committee are given below. At the AGM in April we shuffled our structure to accommodate Hugh stepping down as branch secretary due to pressure of work: being editor of the region's annual report for one.

**We welcome nominations or suggestions for new members of the committee at any time.**

Jenny Weston (Chair & Programme Coordinator)	Tel: 01224 749915 Email: <a href="mailto:jenny.weston@rspb.org.uk">jenny.weston@rspb.org.uk</a>
John Wills (Secretary)	Tel: 01467 651296 Email: <a href="mailto:grampian.secretary@the-soc.org.uk">grampian.secretary@the-soc.org.uk</a>
Graham Cooper (Treasurer)	Tel: 01339 882706 Email: <a href="mailto:thejgcoop@aol.com">thejgcoop@aol.com</a>
Alan Knox (Council Representative)	Tel: 01224 861185 Email: <a href="mailto:a.g.knox@abdn.ac.uk">a.g.knox@abdn.ac.uk</a>
Hugh Addlesee	Tel: 01330 820949 Email: <a href="mailto:hugh@addlesee.co.uk">hugh@addlesee.co.uk</a>
Eric Meek	Tel: 01975 563316 Email: <a href="mailto:erandammeek@gmail.com">erandammeek@gmail.com</a>
Brian Pirie	Tel: 01224 713516 Email: <a href="mailto:bpirie8910@btinternet.com">bpirie8910@btinternet.com</a>