

CORNCRAKE (ONLY HEAD NOT SEEN) VERY RARELY

COOT 1950-1960

MOORHEN

Daisy Dunn

The Once and Future Wild

CURL WING

SKYLARK

CHICKOO

WOODCOCK POWYS

KESTREL

WILD BEESE → FLYING OVER IN WINTER

PARTRIDGE → IN GROUPS OF 8-12

SNIBE

PEEWIT (LAPWING)

GREEN WOODPECKER

20-30 in





Daisy Dunn
The Once and Future Wild
Powys

Our lost and
losing birds:
~~cornerake,~~
~~skylark,~~
~~cuekoo~~ and
snipe;
woodcock,
curlew,
flycatcher,
quail;
lapwing,
~~nightingate,~~
~~turtledove,~~
wryneck
and nightjar.

Our lost and losing birds: corncrake, skylark, cuckoo and snipe; woodcock, curlew, flycatcher, quail; lapwing, nightingale, turtledove, wryneck and nightjar.

The air was warm with the earthy scent of freshly made clay. With your eyes closed, the room was more a damp meadow or marsh than gallery, even as fog hung heavy outside the water-beaded window. The soft rhythm of thudding clay beat softly as the rain tap-tapped and a clay-smearing speaker propped against a water dish slowly accumulated smatters of greyish sediment. It continued playing regardless, oblivious to its state.

Here in the hills of Mid-Wales, the hedges grow tall and unkempt, filled with the gentle burr of the turtle dove. All fields lie bordered with weed and meadow, and scrub occupies much of the fertile land.

*It is a land with
great potential for
farming, currently
disarrayed.*

*Record of the
Agricultural Value
of Mid-Wales,
written 1869.*

Alongside the intensification of agriculture, attitudes toward certain habitats, like scrub, began to change. It is inconceivable to us now that such important habitats were considered a blotch on the landscape, to be tidied. Once they were cleared; now we must find space for them once again, else accept the loss of all wildlife once beloved to the countryside.

Once a hundred swallows, house martins and swifts may nest on a single house. Now you are lucky to find as few as five in a whole village.

Our fields are empty. Our forests are empty, our moors are empty. Here in this field Montgomeryshire's last corncrake cried, sixty-five years ago. They will not return, not even if the fields were today restored.... for this magnetic lighthouse guiding our birds home is forever extinguished. The same is true of our cuckoos, our nightingales.... flycatchers, grey partridge, eagles white tailed and golden... turtle dove and eagle owl.

"ODG Assembly talk, 2021."

Outside, the rain continued to smatter at the windowsill, beads bouncing off in glistening sheets.

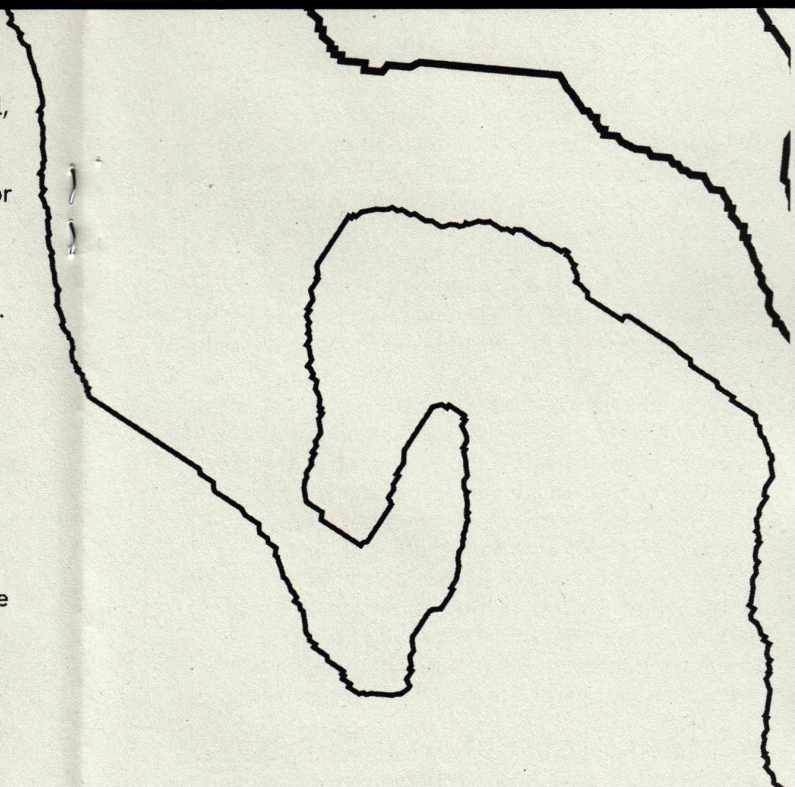
The ODG Assembly Initiative aims to raise awareness for the wildlife of Mid-Wales and the alternative management of land, taking into account the requirement for jobs and profit in the countryside. The Initiative has currently one hundred and fifty members... composed mostly of Montgomeryshire's young people.

"ODG Assembly website, 2022."

The lights came on automatically, triggered by the darkening sky.

The hedges grow free in many fields, once more capable of holding the nests of the absent turtle dove. Vital scrub has been restored; it calls home its missing refugees, clinging to the hostile bushes of abandoned coal mines, but the nightingales do not come. They cannot; their magnetic sense of home cannot expand when it is surrounded by unliveable country on every side.

The paths must be restored before this can be a common land for all.



List of Birds written by Daisy's neighbor

- CORNCRAKE (ONLY HEARD NOT SEEN) VERY RARELY
- COOT 1950-1960.
- MOORHEN
- ~~PROVER~~
- CURLEW
- SKYLARK
- COCKOO
- WOODCOCK
- KESTREL
- WILD BEESE → FLYING OVER IN WINTER 20-30 IN
- PARTRIDGE → IN GROUPS OF 8-12
- SNIFE
- PEEWIT (LAPWING)
- GREEN WOODPECKER

"ODG Assembly talk, 2027."

The first piece of moulded clay was placed on a table to the side with a damp thud. It rolled to the side on its rounded surface, a hollow sphere cut in half. At one end a circular hole nested through the clay. A doorway- for swallows.

The land of Mid-Wales is a wild one. Here, unprofitable land holds scrub and hedge, filled with the spring burr of the turtle dove, the harsh cry of corncrakes. The riches of this land are restored, and with them, its profit. It requires little management- the return of the stewards, cattle and pony, boar and beaver render it unnecessary. Jobs are found instead in the monitoring of this new ecosystem, the management of herds and research. To this end our wolves were two years ago returned. Landowners profit from this land too; wild meat is harvested where herds must be controlled, and hunting brings some profit, while more is brought by the land's unparalleled opportunities for eco-tourism. You no longer need travel to Africa for a safari. You needn't even leave your garden to hear a nightingale sing.

Pesticides abandoned, our swallows, swifts and house martins return. Here on the gallery itself nest ninety-five.

This year brings with it two new reintroductions. Our first lynx are released from their fences, free to roam the forest path from Newtown to Snowdonia. And finally, here in Newtown, the eagles return to Wales.

"ODG Assembly talk, 2036."

An especially large splash caused the speaker to fizz, hurriedly wiped away, but the podcast was over. Birdsong crept in its stead, the soft crick-crick of insects, the far-off lowing of wild longhorn cattle. Through the mist, a thousand silver butterflies flitted round a lichen-strewn branch, setting down for the night. The bushy tail of a red squirrel twitched and a small brown bird hopped in a patch of scrub. Wings sailed by- a nightjar scooping moths in the breeze. Somewhere, an owl hooted, and more cried in answer. The rhythm of a long-ago wild, a lost wild, a restored wild. The sound slipped in through cracks and corners, everywhere.

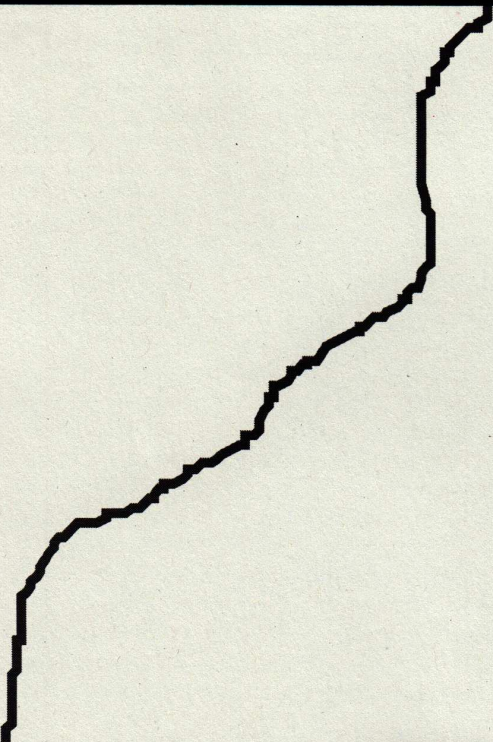
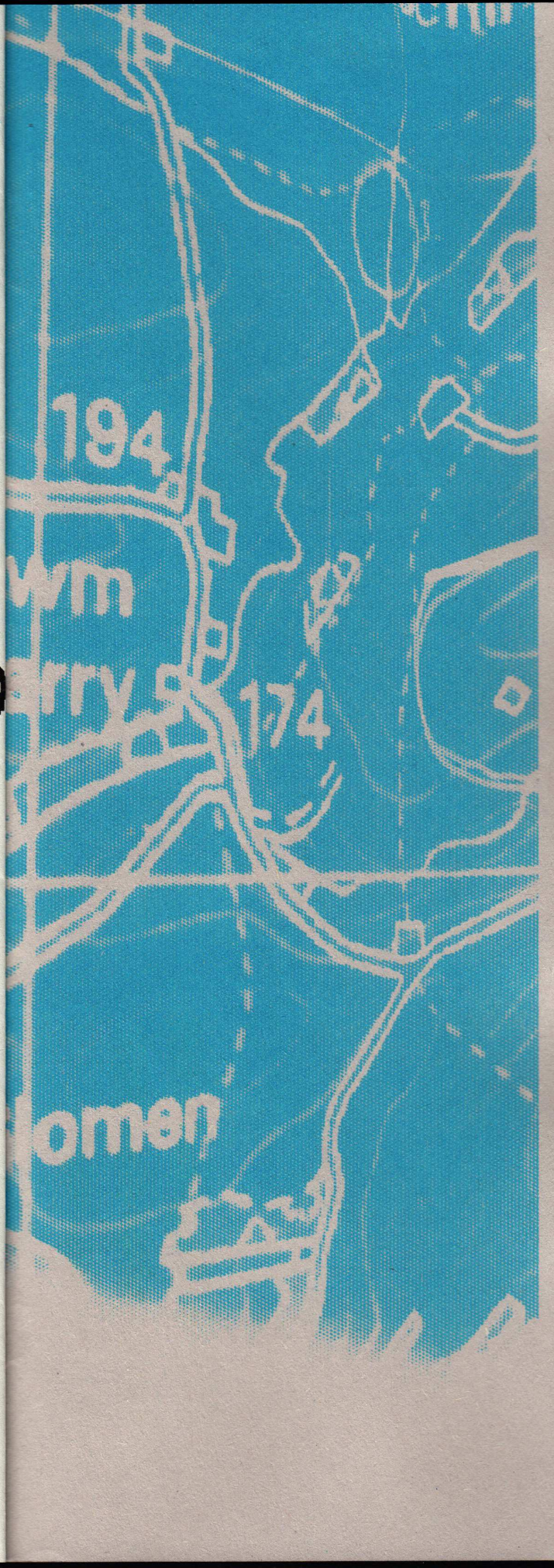
they seemed to subtly change colour in the leg as they moved, being very camouflage. Possibly another bird in a field further back, but too far to be sure.

One of the curlews from the



second site 291

30105 - Curlew heard calling near Kerins, from direction they flew from last time. Two curlews seen feeding at second site. One possibly seen flying over a field on left side of road on the way there, over a ploughed field. Third curlew N...



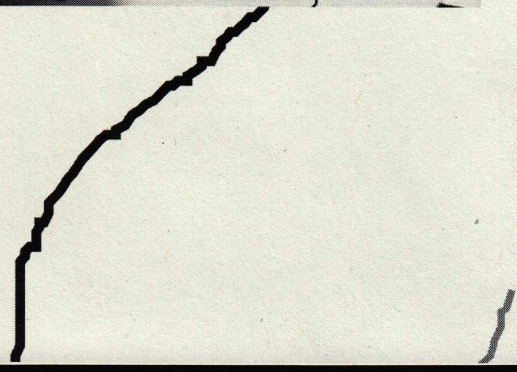
feed.
meadow
field,
29/05
(second
site)

Curlew flying back to its partner from



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- 4/06 - heard curlew in field to right past the rock (right heading away from rock). Another meadow-field.
- 10/06 - Saw two curlews flying over at end of track. Third calling.
- 11/06 - no curlews seen, but heard calling at end of track. Possibly caught glimpse of one flying off.
- 15/06 - Curlew heard calling very distantly at end of track. All hay/meadow fields around where we thought there may be curlews resting at Kuisin.





Writing by Daisy Dunn 2021
Design by Midge Press 2021
ODG Assembly 2021