

## **Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Malvern Group 1.12.16**

### **Ed Drewitt: Our Local Raptors**

In Malvern we are especially fortunate to have a good number of resident birds of prey and also several that visit us for part of the year. Many of us are familiar with the sight of peregrine falcons flying over the Hills or sitting on the tower of Malvern Priory. There are buzzards, kestrels, red kites, sparrowhawks, owls and occasionally a merlin or a hobby. However, many of these birds travel long distances and may well not be a “local”. Ed Drewitt, a well-known naturalist and wildlife photographer, gave us a fascinating insight into the itinerant lives of these birds. Some come from other parts of the UK; red kites for example are flourishing in Wales and Oxfordshire and are now appearing in Malvern with increasing frequency. In the winter short-eared owls visit our area, but they might be from Scotland or possibly even from Scandinavia. Peregrine falcons (*falco peregrinus*, the “wandering falcon”) have staged a dramatic comeback after suffering from pesticide contamination in the 1960s. Many now live permanently in our towns and cities, but some travel around the UK or across Europe.

These days many birds are ringed or have small transmitters attached to them, which give us a huge amount of information about their movements. Some of the data presented by Ed Drewitt was truly astonishing. Honey buzzards travel from Wales to the Ivory Coast and back every year, ospreys go to Senegal or The Gambia, hobbies cross the Sahara feeding on migrating martins and swifts as they go. These amazing journeys are often accomplished in just a few weeks.



Juvenile Peregrine Falcon. Photo by Ed Drewitt

The next meeting of the Malvern Group is on Thursday January 5<sup>th</sup> 2017, at 7.30 pm in the Lyttelton Rooms, Church Street, Malvern.

We will be celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Group. Philip Seaton will talk about “Orchids, Biodiversity and Conservation.”

Alison Uren