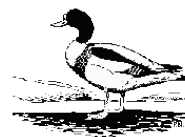


Teesmouth Bird Club

Newsletter

December 2016 (No. 65)



Reg. Charity 508850

CONTENTS

Monthly Summaries	1
Committee News	6
BTO Report	7
Ian Lawson Obituary	8
Local Outings January to April 2017	8
Stillington Forest Park Feeding Station	9
Wetland Bird Survey Autumn 2016	9
Subscription	11

MONTHLY SUMMARIES

Chris Sharp summarises the late Summer and Autumn sightings, which included a feast of rare birds in October.

JULY 2016



Spoonbill, Saltholme

Ian Forrest

The long staying Spoonbill was still around Saltholme Pools at the beginning of the month as were 1-2 Marsh Harriers. No proof of breeding was observed for the latter but with birds present throughout spring and summer it may not be too many years before we have Marsh Harriers breeding in the county.

One species which did breed successfully was Little Egret. Last year a single pair bred but this year the colony had grown to 9 pairs with at least 17 young being fledged. Most of the young birds were ringed and were subsequently recorded on the North Tees Marshes and places further afield.

A Cetti's Warbler was at RSPB Saltholme on 4th. Unusually 3 Goldeneye were also present here on this date. Wader numbers were slow to build up during the early part of the month. 1-2 Greenshank, Spotted Redshank and Common Sandpiper passed through the North Tees Marshes. Up to 19 Black-tailed Godwits were present.

The TBC Newsletter is published three times a year. Compilation and layout Eric James, distribution Chris Sharp, web download Jamie Duffie. This Newsletter was compiled by Sophie Horne. Any material for inclusion in the Newsletter is welcome. Please send contributions to tbc.projects@hotmail.co.uk

Mediterranean Gulls were back at Newburn from 5th and 2 were at RSPB Saltholme on 6th. A Wood Sandpiper was on Cowpen Marsh on 10th with 3 Green Sandpipers nearby at Salterns. A Wood Sandpiper was also at Scaling Dam at this time. A Bittern was at Haverton watch point on 11th.

Cuckoo is a declining species. Singles at North Gare and Huntcliff on 13th were presumably adults already on their way south. Mid-month was quiet though a juvenile Redstart trapped in Hargreaves on 17th led to debate as to where it might have bred.

Two Storm Petrels were trapped overnight on 20th at Marske with another at Hartlepool on 23rd. Marsh Harriers were in Sleddale at this time. A Hobby was at RSPB Saltholme on 22nd. Black-tailed Godwit numbers reached 65 at RSPB Saltholme on 23rd. Three Garganey were also here on this date. Seven chicks were present later in the month. Up to 7 Greenshank were around Tidal Pool on 27th and were accompanied by 700 Dunlin.



Black-Tailed Godwit, Saltholme

Ian Forrest



Marsh Harrier, Dorman's Pool

Renton Charman

AUGUST 2016

A Quail was at Eston Hills on 2nd. A Roseate Tern flew over Cowpen Marsh on 3rd. The first Little Stints of the autumn were 2 on Tidal Pool on 4th and the first Sooty Shearwater was off Old Nab on 5th.

A Long-tailed Duck was on the Long Drag from 6th. This species had been noticeably absent from Cleveland in the first half of the year. Six Sooties were off Old Nab on 10th and an Osprey was over South Gare. Six Goosanders on Saltholme Pool on 12th were unusual.

A Raven at Scaling Dam on 13th was all to brief. A long stayer would be much appreciated. Three Marsh Harriers were also present.

Wader passage began to increase mid-month. Good numbers of Black-tailed Godwit were present daily on the North Tees Marshes with often more than a hundred birds present.. A Temminck's Stint was on Tidal Pool on 17th. A Curlew Sandpiper was nearby on Long Drag on 19th. A small fall on this date included Pied Flycatcher, Whinchat and Redstart at South Gare.

A Black Tern was at Saltholme Pools on 21st. Roseate Terns enjoyed their best autumn in Cleveland for several years. Seaton Snook or South Gare proved the most attractive sites and small numbers were recorded here on most days in late August through to early September.



Little Stint, Saltholme

Ian Forrest



Greenshank, Saltholme

Ian Forrest



Redstart, South Gare

Adam Jones



Black-necked Grebe, Saltholme

Tom Horne



Curlew Sandpiper, Saltholme

Ian Forrest

Ospreys were over Zinc Works Road on 22nd and at Lockwood Beck from 23rd. This latter bird remained in the area until early September and was also regularly recorded at Scaling Dam. A Black-necked Grebe at RSPB Saltholme from 25th was present until late October and often gave close views. A Ruddy Shelduck was here on 27th and was seen intermittently into October.

Sea watching was generally poor this autumn. Both Long-tailed and Pomarine Skuas were off Hartlepool on 28th and a Balearic Shearwater was off Old Nab on 30th. A White-winged Black Tern was at Saltholme Pools 29th-30th. Cleveland has done well for this species in the past few years. The month ended with up to 7 Little Stints on Dorman's Pool and 3 Curlew Sandpipers at Greatham Creek.

SEPTEMBER 2016

A Great White Egret was roosting with Little Egrets at Greatham Creek on 1st but wasn't seen subsequently. 1-3 Marsh Harriers were on the North Tees Marshes and two were at Scaling Dam on 2nd.

A Cory's and 2 Balearic Shearwaters and a close in White-winged Black Tern were all seen off Old Nab on 4th. Single Cory's and Balearic were also off Hartlepool the following day. Up to 6 Roseate Terns were at South Gare at this time.

An Osprey was over RSPB Saltholme on 7th. What was presumably the same White-winged Black Tern as seen earlier in the month was off South Gare on 7th. It remained off the Cleveland coast until 15th being seen at Hartlepool but mostly roosting with other Terns at South Gare.

Ruff numbers increased to 31 at RSPB Saltholme on 9th. A Pectoral Sandpiper was on Tidal Pool the following day. This proved to be the rarest wader of another disappointing autumn for American shorebirds in Cleveland.

Five Black Terns accompanied the White-winged Black Tern off Hartlepool on 10th. Balearic Shearwaters were off Seaton Snook and Old Nab on this date.



Osprey, Zinc Works Road

Tim Robinson



Black Tern, Saltholme

Ian Forrest



Yellow-browed Warbler, Hartlepool

Simon Elliott



Greenish Warbler, Saltburn

Tom Horne

The first Yellow-browed Warbler of the autumn was at South Gare on 15th. This once former rarity is now expected in good numbers each autumn and this year was no exception with birds seen in small numbers on most days for the remainder of the month. A Greenish Warbler was at Saltburn 15th-17th. This proved to be the rarest passerine of a month which saw no large falls of migrants.

A good duck passage on 16th included an impressive 37 Pintail off Old Nab. A Balearic Shearwater was off here the following day along with 36 Sooty Shearwaters. A Red Kite was in Sleddale on 18th and an Osprey at Lockwood Beck remained until 23rd. Long-tailed Skuas were off Old Nab on 19th and 20th and a Lapland Bunting was at nearby Huntcliff on 19th.

The remainder of the month proved to be fairly quiet. A Pectoral Sandpiper was on Saltholme marsh 22nd-25th. 1-2 Little Stints and Curlew Sandpipers were around Saltholme Pool. The

Ruddy Shelduck was still at Saltholme Marsh and 3 Red Crested Pochards on Saltholme Pools were seen on 25th. Two drake Scaup were at Scaling Dam on 28th along with a Marsh Harrier. An Osprey was over Old Cemetery, Hartlepool on 29th.

OCTOBER 2016

October 2016 would prove to be one of the best month's ever in Cleveland for rare passerines. Two weeks of constant easterly winds from the beginning of the month was presumably the reason for this extravaganza.

Sea watching on the first two days of the month saw 3 Long-tailed Skuas, 20 Sooty Shearwaters and a Sabine's Gull off Old Nab. A Firecrest was at North Gare on 3rd. Yellow-browed Warbler numbers peaked on this date with 10 at Hunley Hall being the largest single count at one site.

A Common Scoter was a good record for Scaling Dam on 4th. Nearby another or perhaps the same Raven was seen in Sleddale. A juvenile Sabine's Gull was off South Gare. A Lapland Bunting was at Huntcliff on 5th. Rarer was the Little Bunting which showed briefly here the following day. A Red-breasted Flycatcher at Hartlepool remained for 10 days and was trapped and ringed.

Barnacle Geese passed through the area at this time. No large movements were recorded this year though flocks of 36 and 46 were over RSPB Saltholme on 7th. A Jack Snipe was at Zinc Works Road on 8th and Ring Ouzels were at Seaton Tip and Brotton. A Cetti's Warbler was calling at Dorman's Pool on 9th and a Balearic Shearwater was off Saltburn.



Pintail

Tim Robinson



Ring Ouzel

Ian Watson



Red Flanked Bluetail, Hartlepool

Brian Martin



Pallas's Warbler, Hartlepool

Ian Forrest



Shore Lark, Hartlepool

Martyn Sidwell

A very smart Red Flanked Bluetail was at Hartlepool 9th-10th was the 3rd record for the county and proved to be the first in a series of rare birds over the following days. A Pallas's Warbler was here the following day. It remained until 13th. Several Mealy Redpolls were at coastal stations at this time. A Shore Lark at Hartlepool on 13th was on the same bit of beach where the Bluetail had been. There was also one at South Gare but highlight of 13th was a Siberian Stonechat at Huntcliff which stayed and showed well for several days.

The pace didn't slacken. A Desert Wheatear by Old Cemetery, Hartlepool on the afternoon of 14th was the 4th county record and the first to be seen north of the river. There was also a Dusky Warbler present in nearby bushes at this time.

The 15th proved to be one of the days in Cleveland birding. A huge fall of thrushes in the morning suggested something rare was to be found. Huntcliff came up trumps with a Siberian Accentor. Until October 2016 this species had never been recorded in Britain. The Huntcliff bird proved to be the third of 14 records in the country this month in what was an unprecedented influx into Western Europe for this species. Sadly the Huntcliff bird was perhaps the most elusive of all the records and was only seen by about 15 people after its initial sighting. The supporting cast was also impressive with the Huntcliff area also seeing 2 Radde's Warblers, maybe 3 Dusky and a Pallas's Warbler. Frustratingly most observers spent the day trying to see the Accentor. Who knows what was lurking at the other coastal hotspots?



Desert Wheatear, Hartlepool

Martyn Sidwell



Siberian Accentor, Huntcliff

Martyn Sidwell



Twite, Seaton Snook

Ian Forrest

A Hen Harrier circled Huntcliff on 15th. Two Red-necked Grebes were at Greatham Creek on 16th. The Accentor showed again briefly to a single observer on 17th. White-fronted Geese were at Dorman's Pool on 17th and Scaling Dam on 18th, the latter four birds accompanied by a Tundra Bean Goose. The first Whooper Swans of the autumn were five on Saltholme Pool on 19th. A Corn Bunting at Redcar Fox Covert from 19th attracted a steady stream of visitors for this once common bird.

A Great Grey Shrike was at Scaling Dam on 20th and another Dusky Warbler was at Loftus on 21st. A Red-necked Grebe was a good record for RSPB Saltholme from 21st. A Waxwing flew over Brotton on 23rd. And a Red-breasted Flycatcher was in Locke Park on 24th. Numbers of Twite began to increase at Seaton Snook with 73 reported.

One of the rarest birds of the month was the Eastern Black Redstart at Skinningrove from 27th. This distinctive sub species had only been recorded in Britain on six previous occasions. It showed really well into November and proved attractive to the local photographers.

The run of rarities continued with a splendid 1st winter male Pied Wheatear at Redcar 29th-30th. Occurring 22 years since Cleveland's only other it proved to be a county tick for many and was a fine end to an amazing month's birding in Cleveland.



Pied Wheatear, Redcar

Brian Martin



Pied Wheatear, Redcar

Brian Martin



Eastern Black Redstarts, Skinningrove

Derick Pearson

TBC COMMITTEE NEWS

Club Chairman Brian Clasper summarises the latest work of the committee.

The Club trustees met in November to discuss the success of the Club's Five year plan which can be seen readily on our website and Former Newsletters. Certainly Barbara Crinson can be commended with support from various club members in the Educational aspect, regarding a feeding station at Stillington established with active Primary school participation. Also we are working with other schools in the region to promote Birdlife. All feeding stations can be found on the TBC's site guide.

It is also worth mentioning if you have any old Binoculars or Bird field guides lying around please can you pass them onto us so we can pass them onto the schools so we can develop up & coming Cleveland young birders.

If any members wish to shadow an existing WeBS (Wetland bird survey a count organised by the BTO) surveyor with view to being a monthly contributor to the survey please don't hesitate to contact any of the trustees.

Sadly for those members who haven't heard, our Editor and Stalwart of the TBC has had to temporarily pass on the post due to a very serious illness. We all wish Eric a very swift recovery & thank Pat, his wife, in difficult circumstances to aid us in the continuity of the Newsletter.

At this juncture can I ask if there is anyone interested in joining the Marketing committee, as also other dedicated good friends of the club have resigned from this committee, Chris & Anne

Brayshay, due to ill health? It won't stop them birding though. All of the best to them.

We continue to work with the Tees Valley Nature partnership which includes provision of Nest boxes in our region. We are active in the Tees Estuary Partnership including INCA and were kindly asked for suggestions of more dedicated areas for breeding Common terns, as we are one of the strongholds in the UK. Many thanks to Alistair McLee for his efforts for these and other matters. We are also invited to regular meetings by EDF at Hartlepool power station on relevant activity, being privy to the continuity and development of the site.

'Hen Harrier day', Sunday 7th August at RSPB Saltholme was a great success. I and John Fletcher manning a TBC stall there. The day's celebrity was Jimmy (Nic Miles) off 'Emmerdale Farm'. The day was well attended, all trying to highlight the aggression held against one of our stunning Bird of Prey species on the Grouse moors. The press did a great job promoting the day & the plight at a National level.

Can I congratulate members of the TBC for putting together The Birds of Saltholme booklet which includes a DVD, on sale for only £5 at the reserve. The profits raised going toward the large Vet's fees acquired due to the well-publicised sheep attacks by local dogs, mid last winter. It would be worth mentioning, as we work closely now with the RSPB Saltholme team, the new developments that are about to take place as mentioned at our April TBC evening meeting. The Wildlife watch point & Paddy hides are to be upgraded after Christmas. In the Late Summer improvements to the Saltholme hide will start, including a central tower and provision of better water management of the pools. Regarding Ted's tower on Dorman's pool the stumbling blocks recently regarding planning have been the redefining of the planning needed, as the Planning department has now deemed it is on a potential flood area. This hide reminds me of the words from the chorus of a famous song by Doris Day, 'Que Sera Sera.'

BTO REPORT

Vic Fairbrother summarises the progress of bird surveys that apply to the Cleveland area, including some where more volunteers would be welcome.

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY & WATERWAYS BREEDING BIRDS SURVEY

The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes of the UK's common breeding birds. Wild bird populations are an important indicator of the health of the countryside, and knowing to what extent bird populations are increasing or decreasing is fundamental to bird conservation. Data from 22 1 km squares in Cleveland have been submitted by local volunteers in 2016 which is much appreciated. The following additional Cleveland Region squares are now available to allocate for 2017. Only two visits during the breeding season are required so please consider surveying one of these squares.

NZ3019 Ketton Hall area.

NZ3114 Lingfield, Darlington area.

NZ4037 Tilery Farm area.

NZ4438 Hesleden area.

NZ6913 Cow Close Lane area.

NZ6914 Moorsholm area.

NZ6916 Buck Rush Farm area.

All BBS squares are valuable to the survey and it would be great to have full coverage.

HOUSE MARTINS NEST STUDY

In many areas 2016 was not a good year for House Martins and the nest study survey has been extended to include 2017. Surprisingly there were no returns from Cleveland in 2016 so please survey a colony if you can or encourage someone with nesting House Martins to take part. You can select any site to study. The ideal is one located on or close to your home or place of work so that regular observations can be made throughout the breeding season. Natural cliff sites are also acceptable.

BREEDING WADERS OF ENGLISH UPLAND FARMLAND

Four volunteers also surveyed priority upland farmland wader squares in Cleveland and one member covered a square in a neighbouring region. These were challenging tetrads counting breeding Curlew, Lapwing, Redshank, Oystercatcher and Snipe on farmland Inbye habitat as well as noting any other upland species. The results are awaited with great interest.

PROJECT OWL

Project Owl provisionally aimed for autumn 2017 has been postponed. Details are to follow later.

Full details of both surveys are on the BTO website www.bto.org where you can register or you can contact Vic Fairbrother directly who will be happy to provide additional information.

(01287633744)

vic.fairbrother@ntlworld.com

IAN LAWSON

It's a sad thing to write about a friend who has died, even if it wasn't unexpected. He's been ill for a long time. I've known Ian for well over 40 years, I met him on the Tees Marshes, there weren't that many birders around in those days and we soon found that we had common interests, our love of nature and birds the most prominent, our friendship has endured ever since. It soon became obvious how talented he was with his keen eye and incredible ability to draw what he'd seen; we've all benefitted from that in our club reports over the years, as well as individual works which we have on our walls at home. A thing which used to amuse me was the way he would use his talent to get by, for a lot of years we would go to the Isles of Scilly for a week in October, usually four of us. While the rest of us would save up for the occasion, Ian usually had just enough to get him through the first couple of days, then he'd be in the pub drawing the birds we'd seen, other birders soon latched on and come to see the results. When Ian said he'd draw their four best birds on one sheet of paper for a tenner, he couldn't do them fast enough, by the end of the week we were spent up, Ian took money home! Another talent Ian had was an ability to play the guitar, he was quite an accomplished musician, I recall a unique experience while camping on Salthouse Heath in Norfolk where Ian was singing and playing while in the background was the sound of Nightingale singing and Nightjar churring, unforgettable. I was fortunate enough to spend a lot of time with Ian in 2002 while we were part of the team looking after the Bee Eaters at Bishop Middleton, a highlight of both our lives. His observations and drawings certainly livened up the log book in the hide. He also made money for the Durham Bird Club with his designed Bee Eater tee-shirts. A special mention to Linda, Ian's wife, who nursed him through his long illness, she's obviously struggling to cope with her loss, a lovely lady. We've lost some colourful characters in recent years, Ted

Parker, Dave and Brenda Simpson, and now Ian, our club is poorer without them. Ian lived life to the full; it was a privilege to share some of it with him, R.I.P. to my good friend. Keith Ryan.



LOCAL OUTINGS JANUARY TO APRIL 2017

HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND

SATURDAY 21ST JANUARY 2017

Join Chris Sharp and look for sea-ducks and wintering gulls around the headland. Waders, such as Purple Sandpiper, Turnstone and Knot should also be seen along with divers and grebes. There is also a chance of a Mediterranean or Glaucous Gull. Meet at 9.30 a.m. by Heugh Gun Battery car park.

Leader: Chris Sharp Tel: 01429 865163

NORTH GARE AND SEATON SNOOK

SUNDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2017

Join Julie Mason and Chris Sharp for a walk to these two coastal localities. A good variety of sea duck including Red-breasted Merganser and Eider should be seen. Hopefully the bay should also hold grebes and divers. The Snook is a regular wintering spot for Twite and small numbers of Snow Buntings have been present in recent winters. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the North Gare car park.

Leaders: Julie Mason [Tel: 01642 614583](tel:01642614583) and Chris Sharp

COWPEN BEWLEY WOODLAND PARK

TUESDAY 25TH APRIL 2017

Join Dave Nelson to explore this local nature reserve. A good selection of common woodland

species should be seen and early summer migrants such as Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and Blackcap should be well established. Meet at the nature reserve car park at 10.00 a.m.

Leader: Dave Nelson Tel: 01642 824755

STILLINGTON FOREST PARK FEEDING STATION

The bird feeding station at Stillington Forest Park is now operational. The club wishes to thank the members of the working party for their concerted efforts, resulting in the construction and erection of this new facility. The team comprised Martin Blick, John Cutter, John Money, and Bert Mitchell, as well as three members of the local Friends' Group – Chris, John and Gwynn, their team leader.

Gwynn informs me that a class from the local primary school has already visited the feeding station and we hope that the children become actively involved with observing the birds and also with helping to maintain the site.

If anyone else in the club has old optics to donate, I should like to pass them on to their teacher. Please contact me on 01748 850476 or email me at barbaracrinson@hotmail.com

Take time to re-visit the Teesmouth Bird Club newsletter, dated August 2011 or alternatively, look at the Site Guide on our website. Here you will find a superb account, written by the late Ted Parker, detailing the background, location and birds associated with this local wildlife site. Hopefully, our latest efforts will help the reserve reach its true potential.



WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH – AUTUMN 2016 SUMMARY

All WeBS data are collected on behalf of the WeBS Partnership, which retains exclusive rights

to the sale or supply of these data for commercial purposes.

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY AUTUMN 2016 SUMMARY

A high rate of coverage was achieved with 109 out of 112 potential sectors counts completed.

Little grebe (92, September) and Cormorant (506, September) yielded their highest autumn maxima since 2002 and 2005 respectively.

In terms of terms of wildfowl, Gadwall had another record breaking Autumn with a total of 826 birds counted in September, the tally sustains numbers for those required for the estuary to be of international importance for the species. A dramatic drop in Greylag Goose numbers between September and October counts must surely be explained by the species habit of feeding on recently harvested arable fields away from the estuary.

A couple of Wader species, Avocet (117, July) and Black-tailed Godwit (171, September) also recorded their best Autumn maximum totals.

Adam Jones

Local Organiser

Tees Estuary Wetland Bird Survey

November 2016

WETLAND BIRD SURVEY TEESMOUTH AUTUMN 2016

	July 17	August 21	September 18	October 16
Little Grebe	14	46	<u>92</u>	50
Great Crested Grebe	<u>15</u>	10	5	3
Cormorant	127	492	<u>506</u> **	242
Little Egret	<u>68</u> **	48**	51**	31
Grey Heron	34	45	<u>56</u>	49
Mute Swan	45	54	<u>64</u>	23
Greylag Goose	180	98	<u>874</u>	2
Shelduck	104	<u>132</u>	116	48
Wigeon	5	32	653	<u>1293</u>
Gadwall	153	643**	<u>826</u> **	198
Teal	0	929	<u>1031</u>	506
Mallard	175	<u>469</u>	190	163
Pintail	2	3	8	<u>21</u>
Shoveler	6	73	<u>110</u>	97
Pochard	19	28	5	<u>28</u>
Tufted Duck	81	<u>94</u>	88	82
Coot	235	514	<u>655</u>	408
Oystercatcher	577	907	702	<u>1366</u>
Avocet	<u>117</u> **	42	4	0
Ringed Plover	46	<u>243</u>	166	52
Golden Plover	1	9	11	<u>89</u>
Grey Plover	0	0	15	<u>57</u>
Lapwing	517	432	1082	<u>1415</u>
Knot	3	229	98	<u>329</u>
Sanderling	13	72	59	<u>175</u> **
Little Stint	0	<u>2</u>	0	0
Curlew Sandpiper	0	<u>7</u>	4	0
Purple Sandpiper	0	2	2	<u>5</u>
Dunlin	113	406	<u>886</u>	510
Ruff	0	<u>33</u>	12	2
Snipe	1	24	<u>41</u>	28
Black-tailed Godwit	41	67	<u>171</u>	38
Bar-tailed Godwit	0	8	<u>83</u>	21
Whimbrel	<u>14</u>	5	0	0
Curlew	602	688	<u>863</u>	421
Spotted Redshank	<u>1</u>	0	0	0
Redshank	109	<u>929</u>	777	737
Greenshank	3	<u>22</u>	5	3
Green Sandpiper	0	<u>5</u>	3	0
Common Sandpiper	2	<u>6</u>	0	0
Turnstone	2	17	73	<u>212</u>
Sandwich Tern	149	<u>235</u>	40	2
Common Tern	<u>432</u>	217	13	0
Arctic Tern	1	0	0	0
Little Tern	1	0	0	0

Underlined counts indicate Autumn 2016 maxima

* Denotes count of >50% of national importance

** Denotes count of national importance

*** Denotes count of international importance

N.B. 'Teesmouth' includes Hartlepool Bay & the whole of the RSPB Saltholme Reserve.

TEESMOUTH BIRD CLUB

PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are due on 1st January and the current rates are:

Standard/Individual £12.00

Family £16.00

Junior £5.00

Please forward your cheque made payable to 'Teesmouth Bird Club' to Chris Sharp, 6 Maritime Avenue, Hartlepool, TS24 0XF. If you prefer, you can set up a Standing Order.



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