

CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Bulletin of the BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The Club's next meeting will be on Monday 18 October, at 6pm, via the online medium of Zoom, and will feature a presentation by Alexander Lees (Manchester Metropolitan University) on the topic *Does bird feeding help or hinder avian conservation?* Further details of forthcoming meetings in 2021 will be announced online via the Club's website: <https://boc-online.org/meetings/upcomingmeeting>, or follow the Club's Twitter (@online_BOC) and Facebook accounts (<https://www.facebook.com/onlineBOC>). Be sure to keep an eye on them!

OBITUARY

William Richmond Postle Bourne, MA, MB, B CH, MBOU (1930–2021)

Bill Bourne died peacefully at Keith, in Scotland, on 31 May 2021, aged 91. Bill wrote so much: papers in this *Bulletin* are noted below, and are illustrative of the breadth and depth of his ornithological interests and knowledge. Much has been written about him over his working life as a medic, in travel, in research and writing. Bill featured as the 12th in the series 'Personalities' in the April 1978 issue of *British Birds*. The authors' perception of Bill, a legend of energy, knowledge and eccentricity were shown to stand the test of time. He joined the BOC in 1956. When I first met him in 1969 at the Autumn Scientific meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union he encouraged me to do so too, and he proved to be a great friend as I forged my early contacts in the world of exploration, museums, research and societies.

Bill's energy and resourcefulness are well illustrated in his 1951 solo expedition to the Cape Verdes, as a result of which he contributed to the Bannermans' *History of the birds of the Cape Verde Islands*. His early enthusiasm for birds and their nests was imparted by three maiden aunts. At age seven his father introduced him to egg collecting, which he pursued for ten years, then saw the error, destroyed his collection, and joined the British Trust for Ornithology. He spent most of the war in Bermuda enjoying tropicbirds and terns, and learning about boats and seabirds. From this time his particular interest was the Tubinares. David Bannerman recounts how at the hottest time of year, with little money and no transport of any kind, Bill relied entirely on his wits in his solo Cape Verde endeavour. It says much for his stamina and enthusiasm that he walked across all of São Tiago, over the roughest country, while his journeys between the islands were performed in local schooners. With an interest more in ecology than in specimen collecting just one was taken, an example of a Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*, from a colony he discovered on São Tiago. He was struck by the paleness of their plumage and the specimen he secured was sent to Paris. After some years, a new race was named by the Abbé René de Naurois in Bill's honour, *A. p. bournei*.

Bill read medicine and zoology at Cambridge, and completed his training at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London. Service in the RAF took him to Malta, Jordan and the Middle East at the time of the Suez crisis, then Cyprus, where he was co-founder and first recorder of the Cyprus Ornithological Society. His passionate interest in islands and seabirds came to the fore when, in 1961, he proposed to found the Seabird Group, which eventually formed in 1965, a timely formation ahead of the *Torrey Canyon* disaster in March 1967. He became its first secretary, whilst in the role of adviser to the Royal Naval Bird Watching Society (RNBWS) he codified the collection of avian data from ships at sea (*Sea Swallow* 13: 9–16), including ocean weather ships in the eastern Atlantic at a time when reports were pouring in. During this period, when I first met Bill, he worked at Watford General Hospital as a geriatrician. Each year he would diligently analyse the RNBWS seabird reports and write them up for *Sea Swallow*, teasing out the distribution of various petrels and shearwaters. In the 1980s he was at sea himself, as a ship's surgeon and medic with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships (RFA) that serve to support the fleet at sea. In 1983 RFA *Olwen* took him to high latitudes in the South Atlantic after the Falklands War. A letter from the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff forwarded Bill's



W. R. P. Bourne (© Sheila Bourne)

report of watches in ten-minute blocks covering voyages to the Falklands and South Georgia via Ascension Island, where landing was not possible, but he made useful observations offshore. In the Falklands HMS *Bristol* gave Bill the chance to visit New Island and see one of the main seabird colonies. He also visited the British Antarctic Survey base on Bird Island. The RFA also took him beyond the Southern Ocean on one of three voyages to the Arabian Sea. RFA *Tidespring* saw him off Fujairah, from where he wrote complaining of being 'called back from leave three weeks early because they are six doctors under strength'. He noted the temperature regularly over 100°F, and said to be 145° in the boiler room; 'everyone including me has prickly heat, and if I do not look out as much as possible the trip will be wasted – there were Persian Shearwaters [*Puffinus persicus*] this morning, 10th August 1988'.

Many research papers on the taxonomy of petrels emanated from Bill and were published in journals on both sides of the Atlantic. In Europe, one of the islands to attract Bill was Madeira, and its enigmatic *Pterodroma* petrels. Frank Zino recalls their voluminous correspondence and Bill and his wife Sheila's visit in October 1993, including to the breeding site at Pico do Areeiro. He was a great help to those tracking down the *freira*, as it was known to the locals, or *Pterodroma madeira*. Bill came up with the suggestion that it be known as Zino's Petrel to honour the Zino family, who put so much effort into conserving the bird.

So, with that glimpse of a life filled to the brim with action, activity and results, I will sign off in the same way his perfectly typed letters came to me: 'Yours aye, Bill'.

Stephen Chapman

Publications in Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.

- Bourne, W. R. P. 1964. On the occurrence and nomenclature of certain petrels in North America. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 84: 114–116.
- Bourne, W. R. P. 1965. The missing petrels. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 85: 97–105.
- Bourne, W. R. P. 1968. Notes on the diving-petrels. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 88: 77–85.
- Bourne, W. R. P. 1983. The Soft-plumaged Petrel, the Gon-gon and the Freira, *Pterodroma mollis*, *P. feae* and *P. madeira*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 103: 52–58.
- Bourne, W. R. P. 1983. A Gon-gon *Pterodroma (mollis) feae* in Israel. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 103: 110.
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- Bourne, W. R. P. 1995. The origin and affinities of Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus bertheloti*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 115: 22–24.
- Bourne, W. R. P. & Casement, M. B. 1996. The migrations of the Arctic Tern. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 116: 117–123.
- Bourne, W. R. P. 1999. Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* on St Helena. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 119: 91–93.
- Bourne, W. R. P. 1999. The past status of the herons in Britain. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 119: 192–196.
- Bourne, W. R. P. 2001. The status of the genus *Lugensa* Mathews and the birds collected by Carmichael on Tristan da Cunha in 1816–1817. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 121: 215–216.
- Bourne, W. R. P. 2002. The nomenclature and past history in Britain of the Bean and Pink-footed Geese. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 122: 11–14.

Correction to holotype details for *Chordeiles pusillus novaesi* Dickerman, 1988

Paul Sweet and Thomas Trombone at the American Museum of Natural History, New York (AMNH), have recently drawn to our attention that holotype specimen details given in the description of *Chordeiles pusillus novaesi* by Dickerman (1988, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 108: 124) are incorrect. Instead of what is written there, the correct holotype details should read: *Holotype*. Adult female, AMNH 241906, Flores, state of Maranhão, Brazil, collected 1 October 1926 by Emil Kaempfer; original number 3775.

Friends of the BOC

The BOC has from 2017 become an online organisation without a paying membership, but instead one that aspires to a supportive network of Friends who share its vision of ornithology – see: <http://boc-online.org/>. Anyone wishing to become a Friend of the BOC and support its development should pay UK£25.00 by standing order or online payment to the BOC bank account:

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Friends receive regular updates about Club events and are also eligible for discounts on the Club's Occasional Publications. It would assist our Treasurer, Richard Malin (e-mail: rmalin21@gmail.com), if you would kindly inform him if you intend becoming a Friend of the BOC.

The *Bulletin* and other BOC publications

Since volume 137 (2017), the *Bulletin* of the BOC has been an online journal, published quarterly, that is available to all readers without charge. Furthermore, it does not levy any publication charges (including for colour plates) on authors of papers and has a median publication time from receipt to publication of five to six months. Prospective authors are invited to contact the *Bulletin* editor, Guy Kirwan (GMKirwan@aol.com), to discuss future submissions or look at <http://boc-online.org/bulletin/bulletin-contributions>. Back numbers up to volume 136 (2016) are available via the Biodiversity Heritage Library website: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/46639#/summary; vols. 132–136 are also available on the BOC website: <http://boc-online.org/>

BOC Occasional Publications are available from the BOC Office or online at info@boc-online.org. Future BOC-published checklists will be available from NHBS and as advised on the BOC website. As its online repository, the BOC uses the British Library Online Archive (in accordance with IZCN 1999, Art. 8.5.3.1).

