

Dear Swift Friend,

Well after a quite unusual start to the Swift season, with the enormous improvement in the weather our migratory birds are now very visible and displaying around the colonies. On 19th May and 24th May many more Swifts and House Martins were able to make the final leg of their migration. But with such a cold start to the summer this is definitely going to be a late breeding season.

Mart & Martha - Love on the Rocks?

Mart and Martha have bred in our camera box since 2016, Mart arrived back on 7th May and after waiting just 8 days he decided that Martha was not going to make it and had probably perished on the migration. On 13th May he brought a new partner home to the nest, they began pair bonding and literally feathering the nest but this new relationship was brought to an abrupt end on 19th May as Martha finally did make it home. A 45-minute fight ensued and the newcomer then decided to leave Mart and Martha to their scrap and left the box, they immediately stopped fighting and within 10 mins they were back on the nest and have since laid 3 eggs which is a good number for Swifts, we're looking forward to the hatching Swiftlets from 21st June.



Irlam Train Station - New Signal House is home for Swifts.

A few years ago I gave a talk to the Friends of Little Woolden Moss and since then they have been keen to do something for Swifts, the opportunity arrived when the Hamilton Davies Trust were renovating the very quaint Train Station at Irlam. The Signal House has been restored to its former glory and is to be used as a visitor attraction and even to hold afternoon teas! The Friends group working with HDT and with some advice from ourselves have funded the fitting of bespoke Swift boxes to the new Signal House, the boxes look very smart and have attracted attention from the Sparrows already, which is a good thing as it may help the Swifts locate them too, with plenty of boxes to go around, it's a super project!

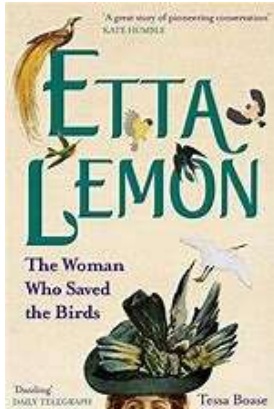


Newspaper article – Sarah Gibson

This is a great article published in the Guardian by Sarah Gibson, with a focus on the need to include Swift bricks in new builds. Sarah is an accomplished writer and the author of a new book, 'Swifts and Us' <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/18/securing-their-swift-return-how-a-simple-brick-can-help-migratory-birds-aoe>

The Woman who saved the Birds

On 1st July (2-5pm) the RSPB are hosting an event at Fletcher Moss Park in Didsbury to recognise one of their founding members, Emily Williamson, who had been sadly forgotten until author Tessa Boase uncovered the fascinating true story of the plucky women who fought the global Feather trade, that was leading to the steep decline of thousands of bird species. I will be at the park with our Bolton and Bury Swifts stand...there will also be the unveiling of 4 mini statutes to Emily and as part of the campaign to see one of them chosen as a permanent memorial to her.



Swift Awareness Week is 3rd to 11th July

We plan to host a Swift watching evening in a private garden at Bradshaw, Bolton. With the help of attraction calls the birds have taken up several bespoke boxes in the area and have been putting on some superb aerial displays around this brand new colony, during this hot spell of weather. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining us as places are limited. The date is yet to be fixed and depends on the weather but will be between 7th and 10th July, if the weather is good it promises to be a wonderful evening.

Your Swift Boxes & House Martin Bowls

A couple of you have been in contact to say Swifts have been flying close to the boxes, hopefully if this weather continues more people could get lucky this year, do let us know if you have some Swift interest. We are now selling and in some special cases donating House Martin bowls as artificial bowls are proven as one of the best ways to help them, these two species are often found nesting together and seem to make good neighbours, get in touch if you want to help them too but it is better if you already live near a House Martin colony. Also please check out this fledgling independent charity and their new website, if you join now there is no membership fee...

[House Martin Conservation UK & Ireland – Home of the House Martin](http://www.housemartinconservation.org.uk/)

Best Wishes,
Louise



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