

Some time back, when we held our meetings at the Bingley Rugby Club, some of you may recall my presentation entitled 'A Tale of Two Cameras' wherein I made reference to photography, for the most part, as being in the right place at the right time when all the ingredients of a good photo come together. When Paul asked me to write another article for Lapwing, I had to really think hard about a subject and especially the pictures I would use. Having selected the ones you see here, they reminded me of those family oil paintings you find in stately homes of the aristocracy, where the artist would have worked from a sitting, or standing, subject. Looking back now, it seemed my subjects appeared to pose with a similar desire to be portrayed digitally, rather than in oil paint, although I must admit that just a little stealth was involved to capture most of them.

In July 2011, I took a stroll on Timble Ings and noticed this juvenile Common Kestrel watching me approach. To my astonishment, it was so curious over my presence, that I was able to walk slowly past, on the opposite side of the track, just a few metres away from its perch. With the sun now behind me, I was overjoyed to capture this image. The tree stump is still there now, on the left just past the two pools, but sadly no more photo posers as yet!

My second offering came at the end of April 2014 when, just upstream of the Washburn valley pack horse bridge, I was attracted to the agitated noises being made by a Song Thrush and, following the direction of its posturing, eventually spotted why there was so much fuss. The Tawny Owl wasn't taking any notice and was also seemingly oblivious to my intentions although I really needed to be in a different position to get a clear view through leaves and also stabilize my camera against a tree trunk as the light under the canopy was not the best. The Song Thrush had given in and moved off, I walked on leaving the owl snoozing on its perch.

The following month, whilst out twitching on the Northeast coast with friends, a Red-backed Shrike came up on the pager and it was not too far away in Filey. These days, a spring male in Yorkshire is a rarity and an opportunity not to be missed. It was sunny and the initial view looking down from the Country Park towards the yacht club was good but sometimes obscured by the scrubby bushes or brambles. I suggested to ex B.O.G. member Stuart Hodson that it might be good to scoot down the steps into the ravine and position ourselves amongst the yachts below the shrike. Within a few minutes of our new location the decision to move was rewarded when it came down to the edge of the boat yard where this stunning subject was captured.

Finally, this juvenile rough-legged buzzard hung around near Grindale over the winter of 2014/5 and, after a few visits and a couple of 'dips', we got lucky. Driving east from Grindale, the bird was spotted hunting over the hedgerows ahead of us. We stopped and watched from inside the car as it came towards and past us to alight on a fence in a field to our left. We all quietly left the car and, using the roadside hedge as cover, peered over to find this spectacle not more than 50 metres or so away.



Rough-legged Buzzard

photo: Mike Bloomfield



Tree Sparrow

photo: Mike Bloomfield

What luck!