

I have lived in Sheffield for over 20 years moving the short distance from Barnsley, to go to university here. I got into birding through my husband, Chris who had been a childhood birder. I encouraged him to become re-immersed in the hobby as I saw the joy and relaxation it brought into his life, happily taking trips and walks to suggested locations provided there was a pub or coffee and cake along the way. On Christmas day 2012, I was promoted from "birders wife" to birder when I opened a surprise gift, my own pair of binoculars!

Over the years since then, birding has organically become a part of most of our weekends and holidays. The location of our house was chosen in part because of its proximity to the Porter Valley which has been my local patch for the past 8 or so years. It's in the Porter Valley where we regularly see kingfisher, dipper, treecreeper and my favourite, the nuthatch with its beautiful slate grey plumage.

Some of my other favourite places are the River Wye at Chee Dale for Dippers. Loch Insh in the Cairngorms for Osprey where I've sat for countless hours over several years watching Green DY and her partner fishing and feeding their offspring. We regularly nip over to Filey, Flamborough and Spurn for weekends away observing migration spectacles. I also love a day out at Old Moor, which is near my childhood home.

I don't keep a year list myself and I am not a twitcher or a competitive birder by far. Chris keeps my year list alongside his own. My personal best UK year list so far is only 175, I have also missed several good birds by taking car/bench/cliff top/sand dune naps during days out birding (Red Breasted Flycatcher and Long Billed Dowitcher to name but two).

For me, being out getting fresh air, walking and birdwatching is good for the mind, body and soul. It provides much needed headspace at the end of a busy working week. I am passionate about highlighting the issues around persecution of wildlife and have attended several Hen Harrier Days including the inaugural event at Derwent Dams where I was one of the #Sodden570 alongside Mark Avery and Chris Packham.

We joined Sheffield Bird Study Group in April 2015 and I am so glad we did. I have learnt a great deal over the years at the indoor meetings and met some brilliant people. We have enjoyed 7 years of field trips. I recently joined the committee as Honorary Secretary because they were looking for some admin support, so I volunteered to start taking minutes etc. I bring the expert levels, as well as the average age, down slightly(!) but I am happy to assist where I can to help keep SBSG ticking over.