



The Year of the Wallcreeper in the Isle of Purbeck - Simon Corbett

'Acute observations neatly put'

Trev Haysom's foreword

Illustrated with pencil sketches by Juliet Haysom

Written in 1971 (printed 2006)

July 18th 1971

In grass at the side of a quarry entrance at the sea, a Yellowhammer has laid two eggs in a nest at eye-level some five feet off the ground on a vertical bank – a site more typical of a Pied Wagtail, and a sensible one too, as it is not accessible to adder or grass snake, or even weasel. On the rock ledge a Common Sandpiper foraged, and a Grey Wagtail proceeding east along the coast had also paused to chase insects by the side of shallow pools, getting splashed by breaking waves. One Sunday morning last November a Kingfisher was catching fish in this very pool. Also on the rocks a Rock Pipit chases a dog with shrill invective. Crouching in the shadows of a rock sits a fledgling not long out of the nest, sitting motionless and patient while parent collects food among the crevices and pools, barely stifling an occasional yawn of boredom and eyelid drooping with irresistible sleepiness.

Simon Corbett was born and raised in the Old Malthouse in Langton Matravers, founded by his father in 1906. Retiring to Purbeck in 1963 Simon was a member of the Purbeck Ornithological Club.