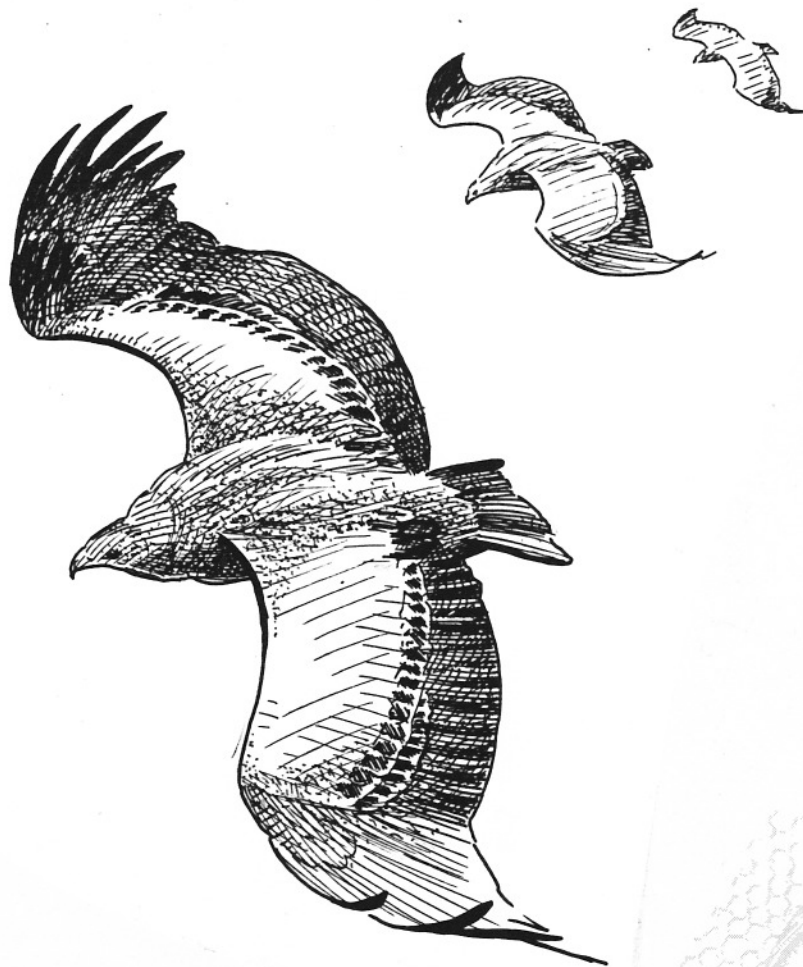


Honeyguide

WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

36 Thunder Lane Thorpe St Andrew Norwich NR7 OPX
Telephone and Fax 0603 300552 Evenings and weekends

MOUNTAINS AND MARSHES
OF NORTH EAST ITALY
30 May - 9 June 1993



Helping you enjoy wildlife



RECYCLED PAPER

Helping to protect wildlife

Mountains and Marshes of north-east Italy
30 May - 9 June 1993

List of participants

George Osmond	Berkshire
Valerie Osmond	
John Lennard-Jones	Hampstead
Verna Lennard-Jones	
Veronica Parker	King's Lynn
Anne Guiver	Colchester
Joan Ellis	Ilminster
Michael Pill	North Walsham, Norfolk
Vera Carrick	Glasgow
Christopher Burnett	Willington, Derbyshire
David Nicholas	Worksop
Paul Davis	Norwich

Leaders

Paul Tout	Duino, Trieste, Italy
Phil Shaw	Essex

Our hostess: Luciana Lauretano, Hotel Alla Pineta, Sistiana

Illustrations by Rob Hume
Front cover: griffon vultures

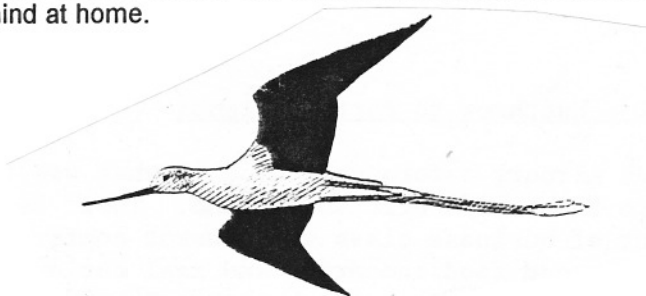
Report written by Phil Shaw.

Sunday 30th May - Heathrow-Venice-Sistiana

The descent and approach to Marco Polo Airport provided marvellous aerial views of Venice for those of us sitting on the starboard side of the aircraft. The flight had been on time and comfortable, the airport formalities brief, everyone's luggage had arrived, the sun was shining and Paul was waiting to meet us with the mini-buses. We were soon on our way along the autostrada, taking in the scenery and looking out for Montagu's Harriers.

Although we stopped off for our first taste of Italian icecream we were soon in Sistiana and installed in the Albergo alla Pineta. Then, before dinner, we just had time for a brief walk along part of the Rilke Path in the fading evening light. The Rilke Path, named after the Czech poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, is a clifftop walk situated conveniently across the road from the Hotel and provides both stunning views over the Golfo di Panzano and bird-watching opportunities - Peregrines being a regular feature.

Dinner was served "*al fresco*" giving us the opportunity to enjoy Italy's most valuable natural resource, its climate, and introducing us to Claudio's undoubted culinary talents. Liberal quantities of local wine were set before us and the holiday feeling was quite definitely beginning to take precedence over matters left behind at home.



Monday 31st May - Val Rosanda and Isola della Cona

Val Rosanda, in an area of limestone known as The Karst, is a short drive to the north-east of Trieste. Formerly these hills were grazed but are now reverting to scrub and woodland forming a mosaic of habitats. Initial progress was slow due to the beguiling richness of the butterfly fauna and the many unfamiliar plant species lining the paths. Eventually a splinter group of birders led by Paul headed off leaving the butterfly enthusiasts and the plant enthusiasts to indulge their interests at a more leisurely pace. The birding highlights included good views of Cirl Buntings and Ortolan Buntings and distant views of Honey Buzzard. The plants of the day were undoubtedly *Dictamnus albus*, the original Burning Bush, and *Jurinea mollis*, with large solitary heads of rose-purple rising above the waving plumes of the Feather Grass *Stipa erucifolia*.

Lunch, real old-fashioned sandwiches prepared by Paul and Anne, was taken on the hillside overlooking the valley. Most of our attention, however, was directed towards a thunder storm brewing-up on the next range of hills. Eventually discretion prevailed and Paul and Phil were dispatched to collect the minibuses.

The remainder of our lunch was consumed on the elevated verandah surrounding the visitor centre at Isola della Cona watching an immature male Marsh Harrier quartering the surrounding fields of lucerne. Isola della Cona is a re-created wetland reserve on the estuary of the Isonzo River. The main hide, a magnificent three level building constructed in a traditional vernacular style, is a short walk from the visitor centre. On the way we came across a most obliging Large Copper which posed for photograph after photograph while in the background, a Cetti's Warbler repeatedly launched into the opening bars of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony.

The main hide overlooks a mosaic of low islands, open water and reedbeds which invariably attracts a good range of wetland birds. Today's list included Spoonbill, Black-winged Stilt, Little Egret, Gull-billed Tern, Garganey, Ruff, Mediterranean Gull, Little Ringed Plover and Little Tern.

After dinner, Paul took a party to the grounds of the college where he works to tick Scop's Owl while the rest of the group got down to some serious relaxing with the remainder of the wine and the botanical manuals.

Tuesday 1st June - Ljubljana Moor, Slovenia

On crossing the border into Slovenia, the character of the countryside quickly changes. The uniform and featureless fields of wheat, maize and vines which dominate the plain in Italy are replaced by a patchwork of hay meadows and vegetable crops growing in the rich soil of the valley bottom and mixed forest on the hillsides. The country looks prosperous and conveys an impression of a prosperity gained by careful management of its natural wealth and hard work.

Our first stop was a Poplar plantation a little south of the capital, Ljubljana, noted as a site for River Warbler. From the roadside we could hear several birds calling. With patience, and eventually the aid of a tape, we were rewarded with splendid views of this skulking warbler with its extraordinary wide-gaping song delivery. A male Barred Warbler appeared, proceeded to forage conveniently among the outer branches of the trees, and showed well. As we ambled down the road we were tantalised by the unmistakable sound of Bee-eaters but none were seen. Haunting calls of Golden Orioles frequently emanated from deep within the Poplars but these birds didn't show particularly well. On the contrary, a pair of Red-backed Shrikes provided marvellously close views as they foraged, continually returning to a favoured perch close to the roadside.

We took lunch in the shade of some large Oaks where a Hawfinch was spotted and provided good views for several minutes. A puzzling botanical find was later identified as the leaves and previous years' seed capsule of Autumn Crocus *Colchicum autumnale*.

The first part of the afternoon was spent searching a nearby valley for Lesser Kestrel. A small population of this species, isolated from its main range, has flourished in this region until recently but is now declining. The area, particularly a small wet meadow, produced some interesting botany, including a swarm of *Dactylorhiza* species and hybrids, butterflies, and good views of a Buzzards nest, but sadly no Kestrels.

We moved on to another valley, also known for Lesser Kestrel. While the majority of the group investigated a distant female Kestrel on overhead wires a Black Stork appeared from the opposite direction and was seen only by members of the rear guard left with the minibuses.

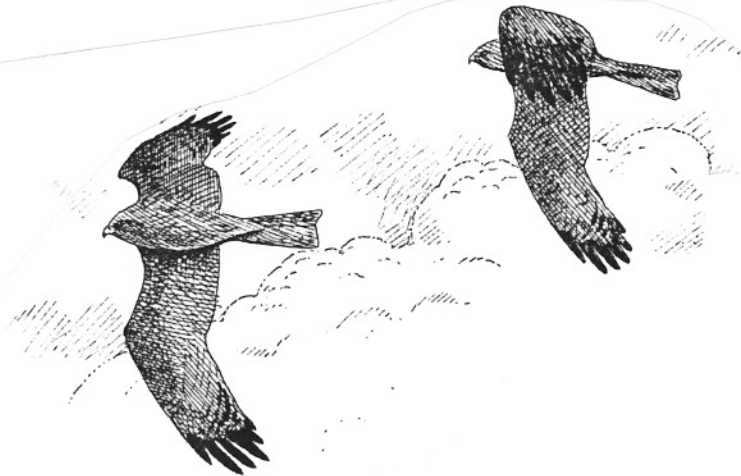
Wednesday 2nd June - Cornino, Prati di Osoppo and Val Venzonasse

Cornino, nestling in the foothills of the Carnian Alps to the north of Udine, is the site of a project for the re-introduction of Griffon Vultures. The viewing point over the release site benefits from the particularly marked micro-climatic effect of its proximity to the south-facing massif. It was extremely hot but we were rewarded with magnificent views of two Griffons, one released the previous year and one, a wild bird known as Elena, which had been ringed as a nestling in Plavnic. The resident flock of newly released birds, we were told, were settled nearby on the boulder strewn bed of the River Tagliamento, having gorged on the carcasses provided at the release site. Several of the group were able to empathise fully with the plight of the birds having done much the same on the several courses served at the hotel the previous evening. Other birds attracted by the prospect of a free lunch included several Black Kites and Ravens. Wrynecks were heard calling from the surrounding area of woodland but didn't show. The butterfly enthusiasts were diverted by the attractions of a neighbouring hay meadow and by a Lesser Purple Emperor which was attracted to a puddle of spilt water.

Lunch was taken on the bank of a trout stream in a nature reserve at Osoppo, a short drive from Cornino. The shade provided by surrounding woodland, from which rang out the incessant chanting of the local Nightingale population, was most welcome. The afternoon's walk through the reserve was curtailed because of the heat. Instead, a short drive to higher altitude brought us to an area of sub-alpine grasslands at Val Venzonasse where we found a breeze and some relief from the heat on the plain.

The breeze was sufficient to keep most of the butterflies grounded but not strong enough to prevent one from photographing botanical subjects for which there was plenty of scope. Sheets of Bloody Crane's-bill (*Geranium sanguineum*) covered the steeper slopes, undoubtedly voted "plant-of-the-day" on the basis of sheer spectacle, while the grassland was studded with the confident spikes of Meadow Clary (*Salvia pratensis*) set against imposing views across the valley, mats of Large Yellow Restharrow (*Ononis natrix*), Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) and tufts of the yellow Fleabane, (*Inula hirta*). Erect Clematis (*Clematis recta*), Round-headed Rampion (*Phyteuma orbiculare*), Slender Broomrape (*Orobanche gracilis*) and Swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum hirundaria*) were among the other finds.

Returning to lower altitude where the temperature remained high, another of Claudio's memorable meals, was followed by a disturbed night as a violent thunder storm broke-out.



Thursday 3rd June - Gonars and Isola della Cona

Gonars is an area of wet lowland heath, fairly unusual in Italy, and a site for Montagu's Harrier. The habitat, technically a soligenous mire, occurs along a spring line where the permeable rock of the Carnian Alps outcrops at the junction with the coastal plain. In the drizzle, a remnant of the previous evening's storm, the landscape evoked a certain Scottish flavour although this was quickly dispelled by elements of the flora which included gems such as Wild Gladiolus and the saw-sedge *Cladium mariscus*. Needless to say, the weather conditions were not ideally suited for spotting raptors, or for butterflies, and with no sign of the weather changing, we left for the coast.

Taking an early lunch at the visitor centre, we spent what remained of the morning and the afternoon in the hides at Isola della Cona. In the interval since our previous visit there had been an influx of Little Bitterns, and a Great White Egret had also turned-up. The Little Bitterns showed particularly well with three individuals clambering the reed stems and disputing territorial rights close to the hide. The Great White Egret remained sentinel-like for most of the afternoon but the Spoonbills performed a brief aerial circuit in response to a close approach by one of the several Marsh Harriers present. Good views of Marsh Warblers singing from perches in bushes of False Indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*) were obtained by the members of the group who ventured along the path to the other hide which overlooks an expanse of barrenas (the Italian term for saltmarsh) on the tidal part of the reserve.

By unanimous agreement we decided upon a relatively early return to the hotel. This gave those who needed it a chance to catch up on lost sleep caused by the storm, and those with extra stamina a chance to explore more of the Rilke Path.

Later, a magnificent dinner was served in-doors and we were visited by local LIPU members who talked about some of the successful projects which they had been involved with and some of the remaining challenges facing conservation organisations in this part of Italy. We had a delightful evening, lubricated, as always, with sufficient quantities of local wine.

Friday 4th June - Cernisko Jezero, Slovenia

Cernisko Jezero is an area containing turlough lakes which exhibit a marked seasonal fluctuation in water level. Our first stop was an area of marsh on the edge of the lake which supported a low, wet sward of grasses and sedges. Among the more notable plants were the large patches of Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*), unfortunately not yet in flower, and *Euphorbia palustris*. The marsh was alive with Ashy-headed Yellow Wagtails but the lake itself was rather disappointing in terms of birds. Marginal stands and islands of Bulrush (*Scripus lacustris*) were also rather unrewarding but stunning views of Hobbies performing overhead more than compensated. Brief and distant view of a White Stork and a White-tailed Eagle gave a tantalising glimpse of the potential of the area.

Our second stop, a little further on, was a site noted for White-tailed Eagles which habitually use perches in the branches of partly submerged trees from which they launch themselves at any unwary fish in the water below. However, our luck was out on this occasion.

Onward, and this time upward, into the forests on the surrounding hillsides. We encountered two main types of woodland, firstly Hornbeam with Beech and an understory of Hazel, then Norway Spruce with White Oak and Wild Pear. The ground flora in these woodlands is composed of an astonishing assortment of species, some familiar and other less so, which combine to form an unimitable natural garden. The following list is only indicative of this richness:

Wood Anemone	<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>
Dark Columbine	<i>Aquilegia atrata</i>
Goatsbeard Spirea	<i>Aruncus dioicus</i>
Coral-root Bittercress	<i>Cardamine bulbifera</i>
White Helleborine	<i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>
Lily-of-the-Valley	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>
Ivy-leaved Sowbread	<i>Cyclamen hederifolium</i>
Sowbread	<i>Cyclamen purpurascens</i>
Knotted Cranesbill	<i>Geranium nodosum</i>
Stinking Hellebore	<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>
Christmas Rose	<i>Helleborus niger</i>
Hepatica	<i>Hepatica nobilis</i>
Bird's-nest Orchid	<i>Neotia nidus-avis</i>
Scented Solomon's Seal	<i>Polygonatum odoratum</i>
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Great Meadow-rue	<i>Thalictrum aquilegifolium</i>
Lesser Periwinkle	<i>Vinca minor</i>

The woodland yielded some birds also, including Wryneck, Green and Great Spotted Woodpecker, Fieldfare and Goldcrest.

On returning to the valley bottom we made several short stops alongside likely hay meadows to try and attract Corn Crakes using a tape, again our luck with the expected had deserted us, but we were more fortunate with the unexpected, this time in the form of a very convincing Short-toed Eagle. Some good botanical finds were also made with Burnt-tip Orchid (*Orchis ustula*) and Bladder Gentian (*Gentiana utriculosa*) both making claims for the "plant-of-the-day" nomination. The butterfly enthusiasts, of course, were in their element and several species were added to the list including Glanville Fritillary, Purple-edged Copper, Little Blue, and Large Skipper.

A long but extremely rewarding day.

Saturday 5th June - Kocevski Rog, Slovenia

Whenever I think back to our visit to Kocevski Rog, an area of remote upland forest on the eastern border of Slovenia with Croatia unexplicably, the theme music to the movie "Jaws" also comes to mind.

We stopped at Ribnica, a small, bustling market town, for a quick coffee and to pick up Miro Terusek, a Forest Ranger, who would act as our guide for the day. There followed an interesting ascent in the minibuses along unmade forest roads to our lunch stop and point of departure into an area of authentic, virgin forest.

After a short but steep climb through a narrow zone of boulder-strewn spruce forest we passed into a forest of magnificent Beech. Almost immediately we came across bear spoor. Although not very fresh, Miro assured us that in the unlikely event of meeting a bear, they were not very aggressive.

Again, the ground flora within the forest surpassed all expectations. All of the previous days' plants were quickly ticked-off and more besides. There were rosettes of Martagon Lily (*Lilium martagon*) everywhere; Whorled Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum verticillatum*), Lesser Daffodil (*Narcissus minor*), the dainty May Lily (*Maianthemum bifolium*), Herb Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*), and that British rarity Sword-leaved Helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolium*) were among the other notable finds

The main objectives of the day, however, were to see Collared Flycatcher and Whitebacked Woodpecker. There were plenty of dead trees and the attentions of woodpeckers to these were clearly apparent although the birds themselves proved elusive for long enough to begin to cause Paul some mild embarrassment. The Flycatchers were also elusive but eventually showed. Firecrests were heard but remained unseen. As often is the case, the best finds are often accidental, certainly Miro hadn't mentioned anything about it before he "shushed" everyone and pointed ahead to a low branch furnished with two very large, well-feathered, young Ural Owls. The birds allowed us to approach quite closely without apparent concern, one then took exception and flapped, in an undignified manner, across to a more discrete perch out of view.

Our return, following the same route as our earlier ascent, allowed time for a couple of short stops. One, to photograph a magnificent specimen of *Clematis alpina* growing alongside the road and another, a little further on, a group of orange Carnolic Lilies (*Lilium carnolicum*) spotted from the minibuses earlier in the day.

Another long day, a late dinner, but a great feeling of being enriched by wild places and good company.

Sunday 6th June - Carsiana, Doberdo di Lago, Medea and Cava Romana Sistiana

The visit to the Botanic Gardens at Carsiana allowed us to identify many of the more puzzling plant species which we had encountered during the week. The Garden has been developed on the site of a large *dolina*, a collapsed underground cavern, which provides a complete suite of natural insolation and humidity gradients thereby creating favourable conditions, even for plants with the most exacting physical requirements, at some point around the perimeter. The Garden has been established as a living museum, growing only species found in the surrounding countryside. This makes for a much more enjoyable experience than a visit to an herbarium. The Garden also acted a magnet for butterflies demanding further depletion of our, now, dwindling stocks of film.

We moved on before lunch to Doberdo di Lago, the site of another turlough lake system, surrounded by a mosaic of deciduous woodland, small hayfields and abandoned pasture turned to scrub. This site is noted as the only reliable site for Europe's least common butterfly, the False Ringlet, and it proved to be an exceptional site for butterflies in general. Our second Lesser Purple Emperor was

recorded and Southern White Admiral, High Brown Fritillary, Blue-spotted Hairstreak and a convincing False Ringlet were added to the list.

It was very hot and there wasn't a lot of bird activity. We obtained reasonable views of Golden Orioles, good views of a Melodious Warbler, and finally, a Sardinian Warbler which had been eluding us all week.

Our next stop was a sand and gravel quarry at Medea where a small colony of Bee-eaters had taken up residence. Only four birds were seen; the population in this part of Italy has been declining in recent years.

The final visit of the day was to a Marble quarry not far from the hotel on the outskirts of Sistiana. The quarry usually supports a breeding colony of Alpine Swifts which is unusual so close to sea level. We had certainly seen Alpines mixed among the flocks of their commoner relative, wheeling across the rock face below the Rilke Path, but there was no sign of the birds that evening. As we watched, we picked out several Blue Rock Thrushes, Rock Buntings, and at last, another of the birds in the elusive category, a Hoopoe. This individual was carrying food; it was also extremely wary and so, presumably, breeding somewhere in the quarry below our vantage point.

Monday 7th June - Predmeja, Kucelj and Paraban, Slovenia

A pre-breakfast trip set off to visit a patch of local coastal scrub to nail another "bogey" bird - Subalpine Warbler - and to see the, now famous, Adriatic flock of Eiders. The Eiders, which have been resident in the coastal waters around Trieste for a number of years now, thrive by exploiting commercial stocks of mussels. No breeding has yet occurred, however, and it is thought that the daylength is not sufficiently long at this latitude to stimulate the requisite hormonal changes and initiate appropriate behaviour patterns. A flock of Kentish Plover feeding on the mudflats in the vicinity of the harbour, were added to our list also.

After breakfast we set off again into Slovenia. Our first halt was a brief stop on the roadside to view a Lesser Grey Shrike which had taken up a territory centred on an electrical substation.

Our second stop, again on the roadside provided magnificent views of a Golden Eagle nest site situated on a cliff face just outside the village of Predmeja. Two well-grown chicks could be seen, indicating no shortage of food, and an adult was present also, possibly performing guard duties against the marauding local Ravens. Everything had appeared on cue for a change, and the benefits of Paul's extensive research was certainly paying dividends to-day.

Re-boarding the minibuses, the next stage of the journey was a long climb through the forest to an area of Beech woodland and sub-alpine grasslands at Kucelj. Here we found a hunting lodge and, in an adjacent meadow, a host of Bright-eyed Ringlet butterflies and some conveniently situated picnic tables for lunch.

The first part of the afternoon was spent exploring fabulous, herb-rich grasslands below the Hunting Lodge. Drifts of blue formed by the combination of Large Speedwell (*Veronica austriaca*) and a Flax (*Linum tommasini*) created a delightful spectacle as did a local profusion of Round-headed Orchids (*Traunsteinera globosa*) on a smaller scale. The abundant, up-standing remains of last year's spikes of Great Yellow Gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) heralded another spectacle for later in the year. Another conspicuous feature of the hillside consisted of the hemispherical mounds of foliage formed by two umbellifers, Caraway (*Carum carvi*) and one of the Broad-leaved Sermountains (*Laserpitium* sp). Other finds included Tyrolean Milk-vetch (*Astragalus leontinus*), both Carnolic and Orange Lily (*Lilium bulbiferum*), Yellow Veronica (*Paederota lutea*), Sick-leaved Hare's-ear (*Bupleurum falcatum*) and Grassy-leaved Iris (*Iris graminea*).

The return journey via Paraban, the site of a large dolina located in an area of mixed Norway Spruce and deciduous forest, allowed us to examine the natural zonation of plant communities which occurs in association with these features and, upon which, the distribution of plants in the Botanic Garden at

Carsiana is based. As one descended the steep slope into the chamber of the dolina the marked change in both temperature and humidity was most apparent; indeed it was quite chilly towards the bottom. This property of the Paraban Dolina had been exploited to store ice as a commercial enterprise in the days before refrigerators became commonplace. Ice was deposited in the cave at the bottom of the chamber during the winter and then hauled out, for sale in the summer, using teams of donkeys to negotiate the steep winding track. The effect of the micro-climate produced within, was clearly reflected in the vegetation on the sides of the chamber which changed, over the space of a few tens of metres, from a typical woodland ground flora to a community dominated by ferns and alpine. The former included Beech Fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*), Green Spleenwort (*Asplenium viride*), Oak Fern (*Gymnocarpium dryopteris*) and Holly Fern (*Polystichum lonchitis*) and the latter were represented by species such as Wulfen's Primrose (*Primula wulfeniana*) and Hairy Alpenrose (*Rhododendron hirsutum*), one of the few species of this genus able to tolerate limestone.

An unfortunate incident occurred while returning to the minibuses when one of our party dislodged a large piece of limestone which toppled onto her leg causing a nasty injury and extreme discomfort for the remaining days of the holiday.

Tuesday 8th June - Val Raccolana, Italy and Mangart, Slovenia

To-day's destination, Mangart, is a mountain which stands astride the border between Italy and Slovenia, but, with vehicle access nearly to the summit, it is best approached from the Slovenian side. We made good time travelling on Autostrada 23, one of the main trans-alpine routes into Austria, as far as Chiusaforte. This is a graphically named, fortified settlement and a testament to the strategic importance of these alpine passes in history of this region. From here, our journey to the border took us up through the Val Raccolana, unfortunately disfigured by unsympathetic hydro-electrical engineering works. Half-way up this road, just below the Climbing School based at the Julia Mountain Refuge, we stopped to admire the aerial efficacy of a flock of Crag Martins which, together with a colony of House Martins, were feeding in the up-draft at the head of the valley; the familiar nests of the latter could be seen attached to the walls of the tunnel through which we had just passed.

There were few formalities at the Predel border post and we had soon commenced the long climb towards the 2677m summit of Mangart - a most interesting drive but not recommended for sufferers of vertigo. About 500m below the summit and with snow blocking the road a little way ahead, we found a convenient place to park and unpacked the lunch boxes.

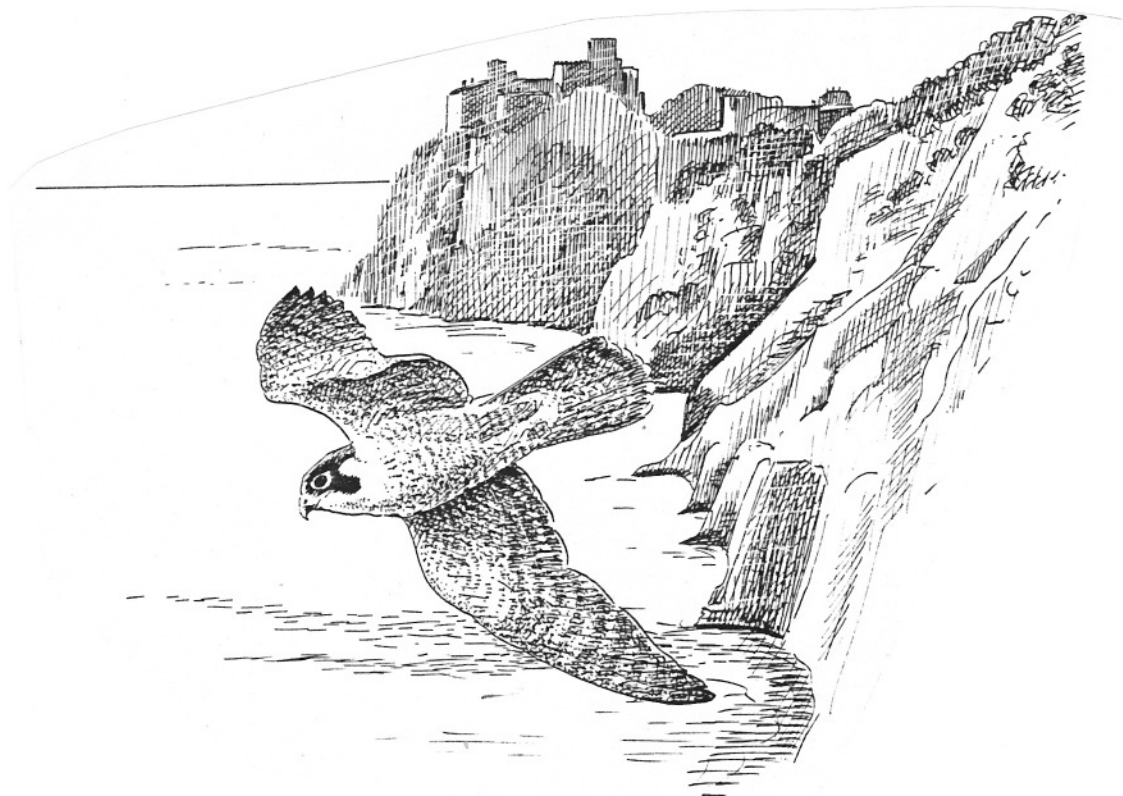
The afternoon was spent birdwatching and botanising along the track towards the summit. Our first bird was a Water Pipit, calling from a rock outcrop above our lunch spot. A flock of Alpine Choughs soon appeared and, initially, spent a good deal of time picking over an area recently deserted by a small party of German tourists, who had been the only other people on the mountain. The Choughs spent the rest of the afternoon wheeling in close formation from one hillside to the other, seldom out of view, and often alighting in areas from which members of group had recently departed. A pair of Snow Finches were located nesting in a rock crevice above the track and could be enjoyed at relatively close range and, after much searching, both Alpine Accentor and Ring Ousel were finally located and gave good views.

The plant enthusiasts were soon left behind, revelling in the delights of a natural rock garden which sported sheets of Mountain Avens (*Dryas octopetala*), tufts of Yellow Whitlow-grass (*Draba azoides*), Rock-jasmine (*Androsace* spp) and pockets of Alpine Pasque Flower (*Pulsatilla alpina*). Turves of Spring Gentian (*Gentiana verna*) and Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*) were found, many specimens of the robust Trumpet Gentian (*Gentiana angustifolia*) and the delicate Least Snowbell (*Soldanella minima*) were admired and much film expended. Some of the less precipitous, rocky slopes were covered with Dwarf Alpenrose (*Rhodothamnus chamaecistus*) which was smothered in bloom. Our other finds included a few specimens of Mezereum (*Daphne mezereum*), Auricula (*Primula auricula*), though not in flower, and a local variety of Purple Saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia* var *murithiana*). A few butterflies were seen but the more interesting specimens Peak White, Alpine Grizzled Skipper and Dewy Ringlet, were claimed only as possibles due to the taxonomic difficulties associated with these particular species.

The return journey via Treviso, put us quickly onto the autostrada and we were soon back in Sistiana, packing for our return to the UK. We were joined for dinner by Fabio Perco, the director of the regional conservation agency and instigator of many nature conservation achievements in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia. In his inimitably charming manner, he told us a number of amusing stories connected with sites we had visited, and something of his hopes for the future. After dinner Claudio produced a bottle of *grapa* and as the night wore on proceeded to instruct the recidivists in the group on the finer points of Italian wines - a splendid epitaph to a memorable day.

Wednesday 9th June - Sistiana - Aeroporto Marco Polo - Heathrow

One last glimpse at the Black Redstarts, Rock Buntings etc on the Rilke Path and an early breakfast, leaving promptly for the airport was the schedule for the day due the flight departure time of our flight. We made good progress and even turned up a new species *en route*, a Purple Heron beside the autostrada; still no Montagu's Harrier however. And so, after an uneventful flight, we arrived home, all more or less intact, with our baggage and precious memories entrusted to the Eastman Kodak Company.



Date	Location	Habitats
31 May	Val Rosanda	Woodland, shrub and karst limestone grassland
	Isola della Cona	Estuarine wetlands at the mouth of the River Isonzo
	Sistiana	Cliff grassland and pine scrub along Rilke path and urban areas around hotel
1 June	Ljubljana Moor	Lowland Poplar plantations, woodland and hay meadows
2 June	Cornino "Progetto Grifone"	Pre-alpine uplands with Evergreen Oak, dry river beds and deciduous woodland
	Prati di Osoppo	Deciduous woodland, riverine habitats and hay meadows
	Val Venzonasse	Sub-alpine valley woodlands and hay meadows
3 June	Gonars	Ombrogenous (spring-fed) bog, grassland and scrub
	Isola della Cona	Estuarine wetland and scrub
4 June	Cernisko Jezero	Turlough lake system, associated wetlands, hay meadows; mixed spruce and deciduous forest
5 June	Kocevski Rog	Upland Spruce forest containing areas of virgin Beech forest
6 June	Carsiana	Botanic Gardens
	Doberdo di Lago	Turlough lake system, marinal wetlands, scrub and hay meadows
	Medea	Sand quarry
	Cava Romana Sistiana	Marble quarry
7 June	Predmeja	Golden Eagle site - dolomitic rock pinnacles with Black Pine forest
	Kucelj	High sub-alpine grasslands and Beech Forest
	Paraban	Dolina -collapsed cave system in mixed woodland
8 June	Val Racco Lana	Crag Martin site - high altitude mixed forest
	Mangart	Alpine grassland above tree-line
9 June	Sistiana to Marco Polo Airport	Agricultural landscape

Species	Date									
	31 May	1 June	2 June	3 June	4 June	5 June	6 June	7 June	8 June	9 June
Swallowtail										
Scarce Swallowtail										
Black-veined White										
Large White										
Small White										
Green-veined White										
Peak White									?	
Orange Tip										
Clouded Yellow										
Pale Clouded Yellow										
Berger's Clouded Yellow										
Brimstone										
Wood White										
Nettle-tree										
Lesser Purple Emperor										
Southern White Admiral										
Peacock										
Red Admiral										
Painted Lady										
Small Tortoiseshell										
Comma										
Silver-washed Fritillary										
High Brown Fritillary										
Queen of Spain Fritillary										
Twin-spot Fritillary										
Marbled Fritillary										
Lesser Marbled Fritillary										
Pearl-bordered Fritillary										
Glanville Fritillary										
Knapweed Fritillary										
Spotted Fritillary										
Lesser Spotted Fritillary										
False Heath Fritillary										
Heath Fritillary										
Nickerl's Fritillary										
Marsh Fritillary										
Marbled White										
Bright-eyed Ringlet										
Dewy Ringlet									?	
Meadow Brown										

Species	Date									
	31 May	1 June	2 June	3 June	4 June	5 June	6 June	7 June	8 June	9 June
Small Heath										
Pearly Heath										
False Ringlet										
Speckled Wood										
Large Wall Brown										
Sloe Hairstreak										
Blue-spotted Hairstreak										
Green Hairstreak										
Large Copper										
Sooty Copper										
Purple-edged Copper										
Short-tailed Blue										
Little Blue										
Holly Blue										
Green-undersided Blue										
Baton Blue										
Chequered Blue										
Idas Blue										
Brown Argus										
Escher's Blue								?		
Adonis Blue										
Common Blue										
Grizzled Skipper										
Alpine Grizzled Skipper									?	
Red Underwing Skipper										
Dingy Skipper										
Large Chequered Skipper										
Chequered Skipper										
Small Skipper										
Large Skipper										

Daily log only completed on days 5-8; other records from memory only.

? = identification uncertain

Species	Date									
	31 May	1 June	2 June	3 June	4 June	5 June	6 June	7 June	8 June	9 June
Little Grebe										
Cormorant										
Little Bittern										
Little Egret										
Great White Egret										
Grey Heron										
Purple Heron										
Spoonbill										
Black Stork										
White Stork										
Mute Swan										
Greylag Goose										
Wigeon										
Gadwall										
Teal										
Mallard										
Pintail										
Garganey										
Shoveler										
Eider										
Honey Buzzard										
Black Kite										
White-tailed Eagle										
Griffon Vulture										
Short-toed Eagle										
Marsh Harrier										
Goshawk										
Sparrowhawk										
Buzzard										
Golden Eagle										
Kestrel										
Hobby										
Peregrine										
Grey Partridge										
Quail										
Pheasant										
Moorhen										
Coot										
Black-winged Stilt										
Little Ringed Plover										
Kentish Plover										
Lapwing										
Ruff										
Greenshank										

Species	Date									
	31 May	1 June	2 June	3 June	4 June	5 June	6 June	7 June	8 June	9 June
Mediterranean Gull										
Black-headed Gull										
Lesser Black-backed Gull										
Yellow-legged Herring Gull										
Gull-billed Tern										
Common Tern										
Little Tern										
Rock Dove										
Woodpigeon										
Collared Dove										
Turtle Dove										
Cuckoo										
Scop's Owl										
Ural Owl										
Swift										
Alpine Swift										
Bee-eater										
Hoopoe										
Wryneck										
Green Woodpecker										
Black Woodpecker										
Great Spotted Woodpecker										
White-backed Woodpecker										
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker										
Crested Lark										
Woodlark										
Skylark										
Crag Martin										
Swallow										
House Martin										
Tawny Pipit										
Tree Pipit										
Water Pipit										
Ashy-headed Yellow Wagtail										
Grey Wagtail										
White Wagtail										
Wren										
Dunnock										
Alpine Accentor										
Robin										
Nightingale										
Black Redstart										

Species	Date									
	31 May	1 June	2 June	3 June	4 June	5 June	6 June	7 June	8 June	9 June

Redstart										
Whinchat										
Stonechat										
Wheatear										
Rock Thrush										
Blue Rock Thrush										
Ring Ousel										
Blackbird										
Fieldfare										
Song Thrush										
Mistle Thrush										

Cetti's Warbler										
Fan-tailed Warbler										
River Warbler										
Sedge Warbler										
Marsh Warbler										
Reed Warbler										
Great Reed Warbler										
Melodius Warbler										
Subalpine Warbler										
Sardinian Warbler										
Barred Warbler										
Whitethroat										
Garden Warbler										
Blackcap										
Bonelli's Warbler										
Chiffchaff										
Goldcrest										
Firecrest										

Spotted Flycatcher										
Collared Flycatcher										
Long-tailed Tit										
Willow Tit										
Marsh Tit										
Crested Tit										
Coal Tit										
Blue Tit										
Great Tit										
Nuthatch										

Golden Oriole										
Red-backed Shrike										
Lesser Grey Shrike										

Jay										
Magpie										