

OBITUARY

PETER DAVIS 1929–2019

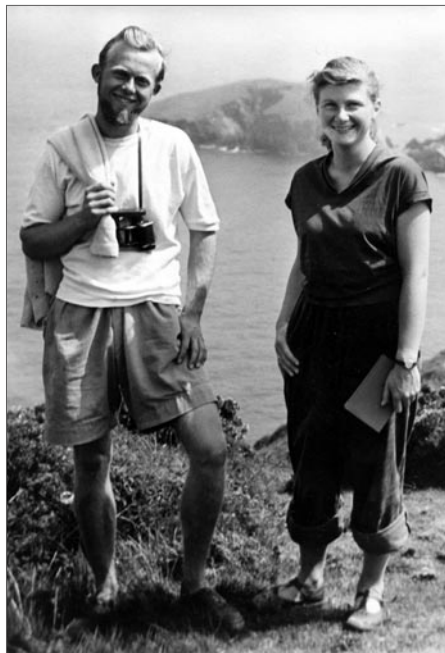
Peter Davis, who died on 28th October 2019 at the age of 91, devoted his life to the study and conservation of birds, beginning his career as Lundy's sixth LFS Warden from 1951 to 1954.

A Yorkshireman, born in Bradford on 8 October 1928, Peter was educated at Woodhouse Grove school in Apperley Bridge. He left the University of Leeds with a BA in geography in 1951, soon taking up the post of Lundy Warden, quickly proving himself not only a highly competent ornithologist but also very popular with islanders and visitors alike. In October 1952, he found an American Robin in the Terrace Heligoland Trap – the first of what, for him, would be three 'firsts' for Britain.

Sadly, tragedy struck a year later when, while counting cliff-nesting Guillemots and Razorbills, his fiancée, Wendy Anne Mitchell, higher up the cliff, slipped and fell to her death.

After Lundy, Peter became warden on Skokholm, off the Pembrokeshire coast, where he met his future wife, Angela Tame. In 1957 the couple moved to Fair Isle Bird Observatory, between Orkney and Shetland, where Peter spent six years as warden, finding Britain's first Song Sparrow, a North American vagrant, and first River Warbler, from eastern and central Europe.

In 1966, after a short spell with the British Trust for Ornithology in Tring, Hertfordshire, Peter, Angela and their three young children moved to Ceredigion in west Wales. It was here that he dedicated the rest of his working life to reversing the decline of the Red Kite – which at the time had been reduced to 23 breeding pairs – first as the Kite Recorder for Wales for over 30 years, and later as a founder and trustee of the Welsh Kite Trust.



He ended his long and distinguished career as the Nature Conservancy Council regional officer for south and mid-Wales. Although he retired in 1988, he was still recording, writing and advising on kites and other issues until well into his 70s. That Red Kites are now a common sight across much of Britain is due in no small part to Peter's dedicated efforts.

A gentle, kind man with a sharp intellect and keen sense of humour, Peter Davis inspired several generations of birders, naturalists and conservationists. He wrote or co-authored several books and more than 150 scientific papers, including *A List of the Birds of Lundy* (1954), *The Red Kites of Wales* (2005) and *The Birds of Ceredigion* (2010). He also edited the *Dyfed Bird Report*, the journal of the West Wales Naturalists' Trust, from 1967 to 1988.

He was awarded an MBE in 2007.

Tim Davis

Peter Davis with Wendy Anne Mitchell.