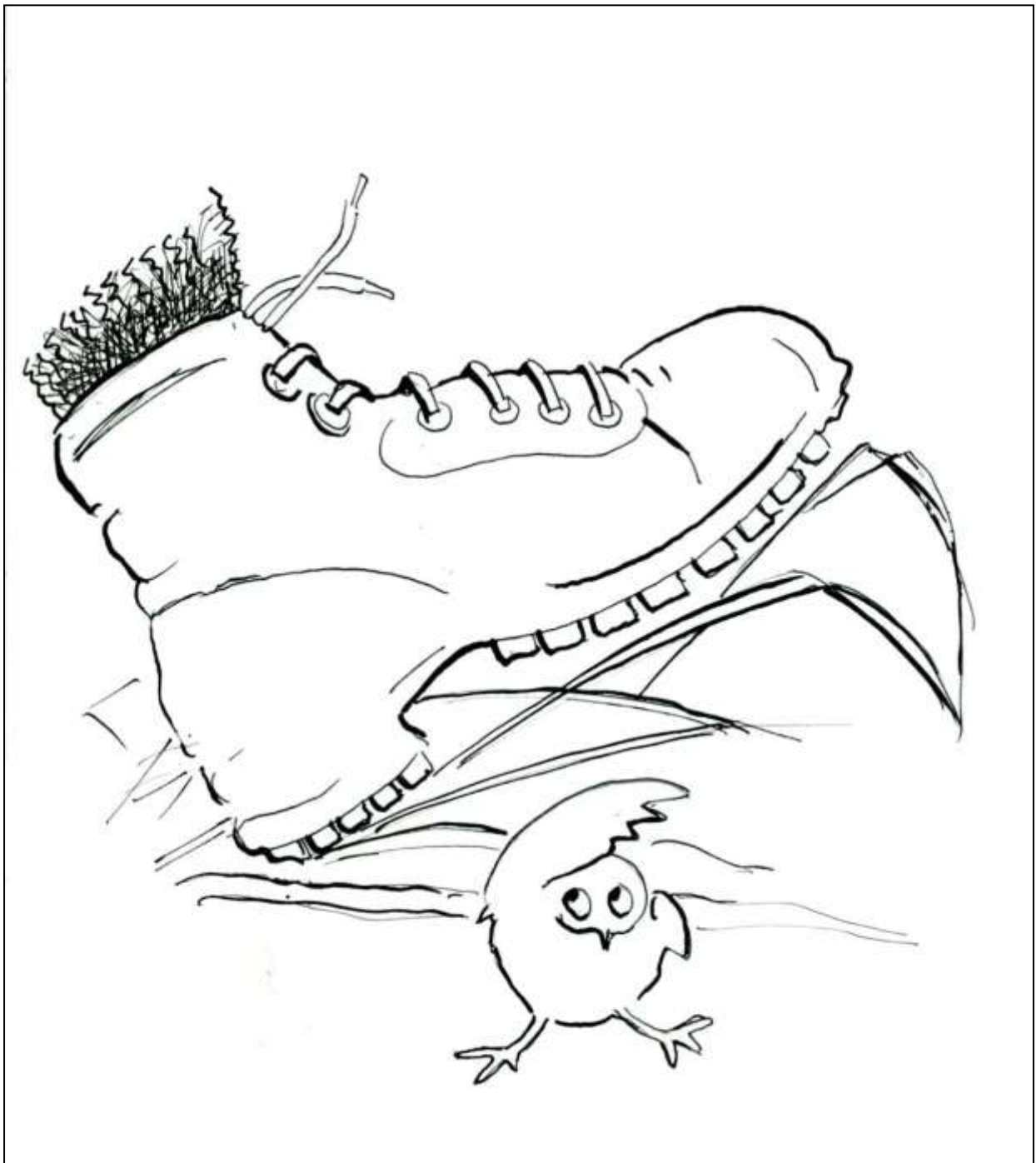


Cley Bird Club Web site poem

by Martin Woodcock

On the 24th September 2001 I went out on the Point for the second time to try to see the Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler that had blown in two days before. I had extremely close views of about 150 people and after three and a half hours of heavy rain I was soaked to the skin. I am absolutely certain that the bird found the event as unpleasant as I did, so to put the whole thing in a better light I resorted to doggerel while recovering in a hot bath.



**Confessions of a lost soul
or, Why it's not good to be a rare bird in Britain!**

The sea was grey, the waves were high,
the wind was blowing strongly
(I'd never seen the sea before!)
and then I knew that, wrongly,
I hadn't flown south-east, and guessed
that, like a fool, I'd flown north-west!

I tried to think of what to do -
my muscles ached, my throat was dry -
of course I panicked - wouldn't you?
I found it very hard to fly -
I couldn't concentrate or think
for fear of dropping in the drink -
I realised, IF my airspeed fell -
and then I thought, Oh what the hell,
and just about at my last gasp,
incredibly I saw the coast - a strip of sand -
some land at last!

I dropped down on a shingle spit
with bushes close behind
to try and find a bit to eat
and shelter from the wind.
While searching round, I straightway found
that I was not alone -
a relative, a family friend
was also far from home!

"You'd best be quick and get your grub,"
he said, and ducked
as crashing boots beat on the bush -
I thought, well I'll be .. damned....
I've flown five thousand miles
and nearly lost my life
and now I'm being trodden on
that isn't very nice!

I'd hardly time to have a bite -
no time at all to doze,
when twenty boots came into sight,
or say a hundred toes!
I had to move out pretty fast,
the bushes were being flattened,
and people now came running past -
I thought, whatever happened?

I hopped up on a higher bush
to get a better view,
and see the cause of all the fuss,
and straight away I knew,
for someone yelled excitedly
and they all began to run -
they formed a ring around me -
and one fell in a creek -
and I had to take to running
to avoid their ruddy feet!

The shouting grew more frantic -
"What is it?" one girl said,
"it might just be a robin,
I think I saw some red."
Such insults made me angry,
and filled me with despair,
a crisis of identity, just now, was far from fair!

And three whole days
they chivvied me.
I had to feed at night,
and hide among the slimy roots
to keep right out of sight!
My chum had hung around, too,
but never raised a stare,
and no-one harried him at all,
because he wasn't rare!