

Many congratulations to GOS President Steve Roberts, the recipient of the 2016 WOS Lifetime Achievement Award.

Iolo

Williams presented the well-deserved award to Steve at the recent

WOS

Conference in

Myddfai

. The citation reads:

Steve was introduced to a lifetime of ornithology by Bert

Hamar

, the founder of the

Gwent

Ornithological Society. Steve's father had died when he was young and Bert took him on his birdwatching

walks. Bert showed him a Mallard's nest full of eggs and young Steve was immediately hooked.

He has spent the rest of his time seeking out and researching birds and, particularly, their nests.

His work has been mainly on the rarer raptors: Hobby, Goshawk and Honey-buzzard. Steve's long-term monitoring of these species has added considerably to the accumulated knowledge of what had been thought of as difficult birds to study.

Steve, with others, has undertaken a long term study of Honey-buzzards, leading to two landmark papers published in

British Birds

in 1999 and 2014. For decades, the secrecy surrounding this special woodland raptor made it

difficult to bring together such knowledge, yet understanding of the species' habits and

behaviour

during the breeding season is a critical step towards their effective conservation.

Steve has not worked alone. Jerry Lewis is often his collaborator and Steve has shared his knowledge with others willing to help, including

WOS

President

Iolo

Williams. Steve is an accomplished and apparently fearless climber. The work at the nest is almost always Steve's. This makes him a much sought-after specialist and he travels

worldwide to climb to, study and photograph iconic species, however fearsome their reputation.

Steve is also an accomplished artist, having taught art at a local comprehensive school, and his line drawings and paintings appear in many bird reports and books. This award is to a man who has pushed the boundaries of our knowledge, usually from high in the canopy of a tree.