10% to Save the Swift

You Can Do It!

Edward Mayer

SWIFTCONSERVATION

KEEPING THE SKIES ALIVE

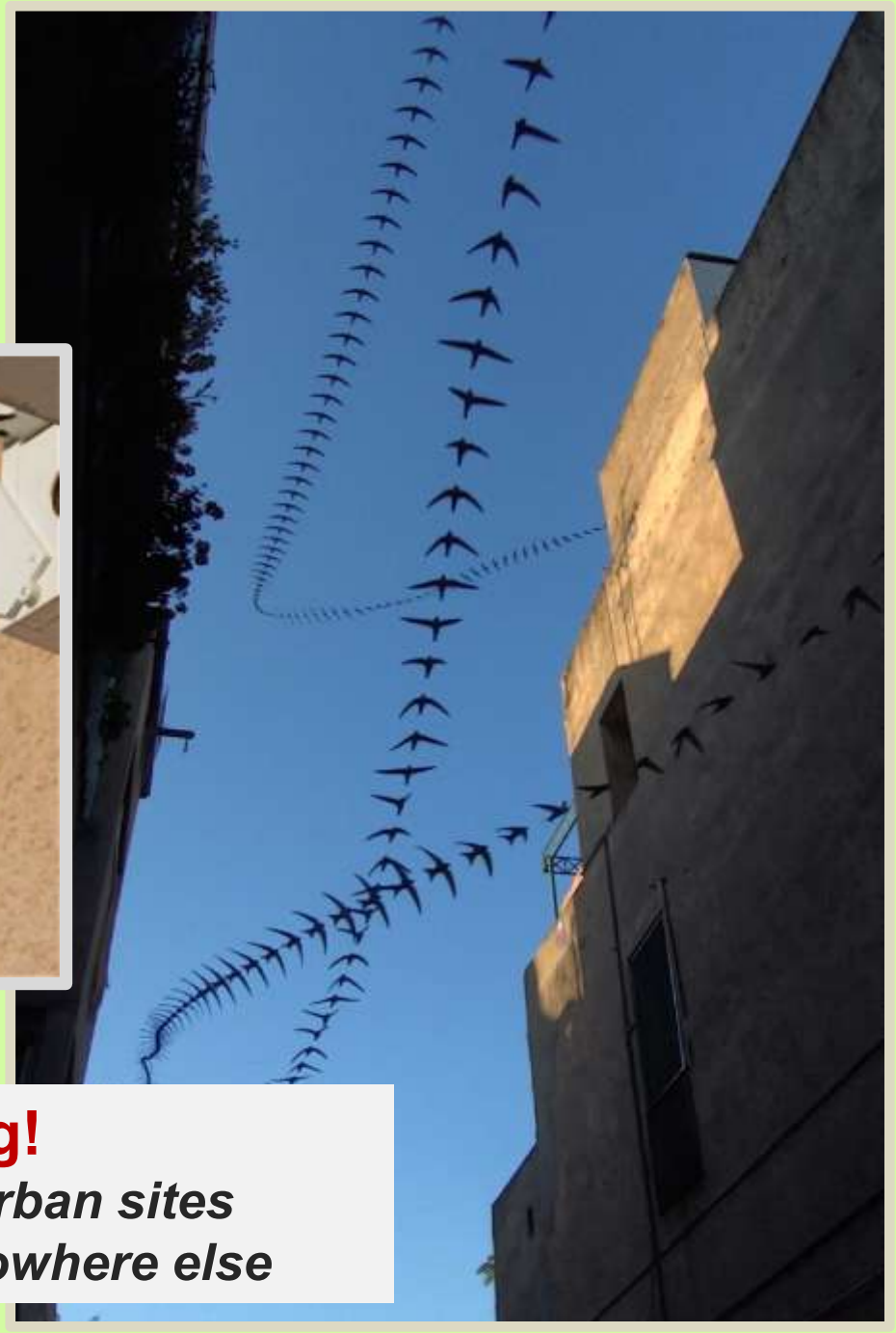
www.swift-conservation.org

How grim can our world get?

This is the view from Worcester Cathedral….. Do you like it?

Green & Beautiful Places bring health, happiness and contentment – we all want to live in them!

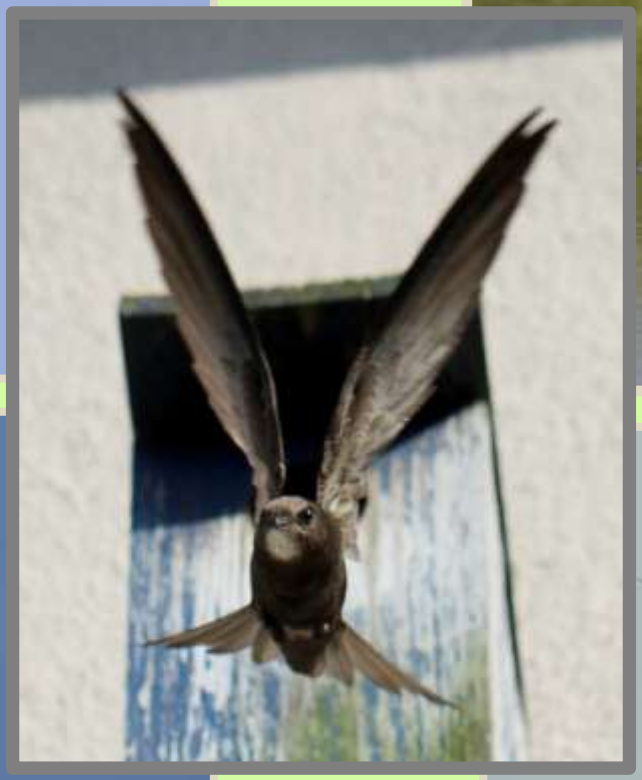
So Why Swifts?

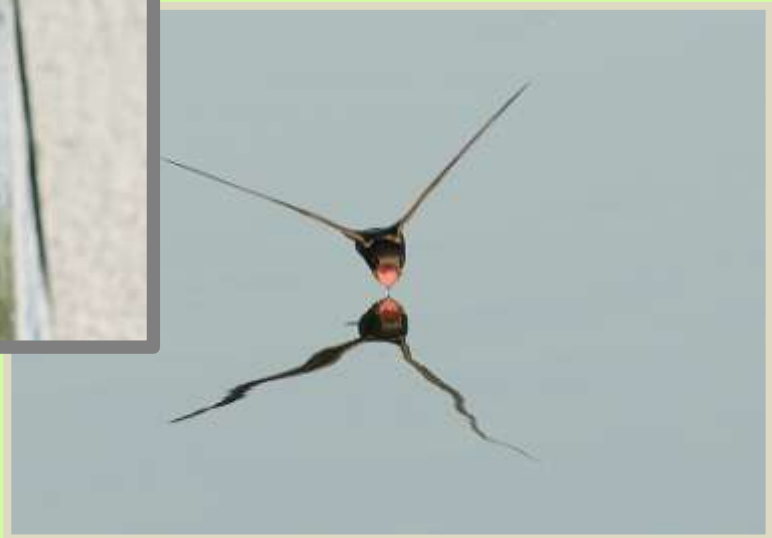


Beautiful! Dramatic! Exciting!

this bird can live in the grimmest urban sites
they only nest in our buildings – nowhere else

Amazing birds!





Superbly skilful flyers, Swifts drink, feed and mate in flight
and they eat countless harmful insects too

Living Incredible lives

always flying, except when nesting in our buildings

travel 14,000 + miles each year

winter in Africa – summer in Europe & Asia

faithful to their mates & nests

slow breeders

have long lives

suffer little predation

still very mysterious

But Swifts are in trouble

Dead Swifts found at a demolition site

From 1995 to 2012 BTO figures show Swifts declined by

England minus 36% Scotland minus 62% Wales minus 43%

Swifts are decreasing every year by 3%

The Reason? Loss of nest places!

Re-Roofing
Intolerance
Building Regulations
Insulation
New building materials
New “sealed” buildings

Why 10%? A little history….

Until the 1920's 10% of UK homes had apertures available for Swifts to nest in * but re-roofing & insulation have since removed most of them & new buildings have none – so we must get back to that number to save Swifts

* "Homes for Birds" "British Birds" November 2002

First – find out where the Swifts are

Swifts nest places are usually well-hidden – be sure to search all open eaves, gables and holes thoroughly for nests & broken eggshells
This warehouse in Antwerp was demolished with many Swifts nesting in it
Result - €80,000 in fines and compensation payments

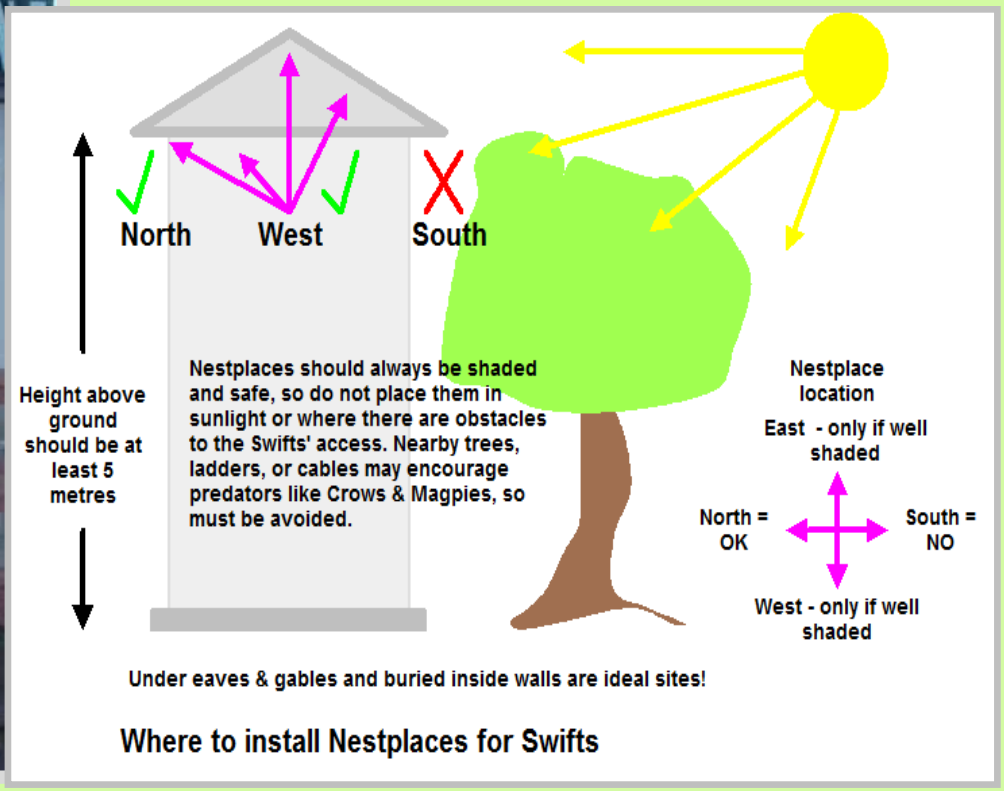
Second – Save their nest sites

Henley on Thames – the Old Chantry House
While re-roofing went on we housed the Swifts in temporary nest places mounted on the scaffold in front of the eaves & their old nests

Third – Replace lost nest sites

Baku , Azerbaijan – restoration of the ancient Maiden Tower meant the loss of the many Swifts nest places, so hundreds of nest boxes were put up on adjacent buildings & the Swifts attracted with calls – it worked!

Swift Nestboxes – external, easy



For longevity adapt eaves & gables

You can make minor changes to gables & eaves

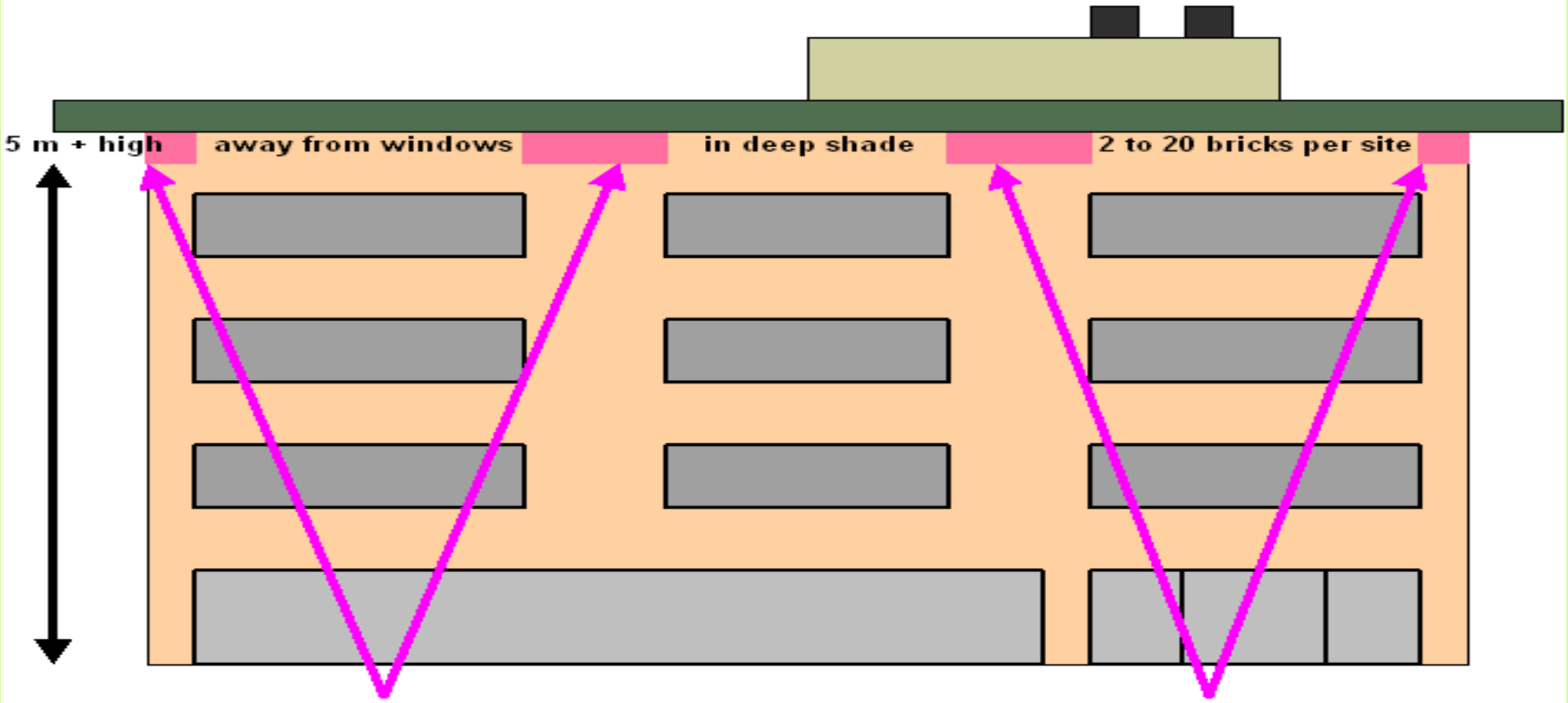
Or walls as here at Fulbourn

You can easily design-in nest places into insulated walls

Internal nest boxes behind the access holes house the Swifts

But easiest may be "Swift Bricks"

Where to Install your Swift Bricks



Install the Swift bricks under the roof, in the top course of blockwork, in shaded areas out of direct sunlight, (shown here as pink blocks) and away from windows. Swift Brick installations do not usually generate any problems with droppings, but the Swifts may be disturbed by people staring at them!
Minimum height from the ground should be 5 metres, and the boxes should not be obstructed by trees, ladders or aerials.

An integral commercial solution

Highly cost-effective

Last as long as the building & maintenance free

New buildings must host Swifts if the species is to survive

New Build Housing Association

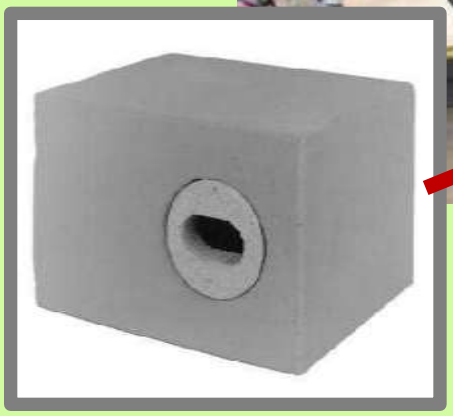
Commercial "Swift Bricks" are the long-term solution

Just insert into suitable walls

No maintenance needed

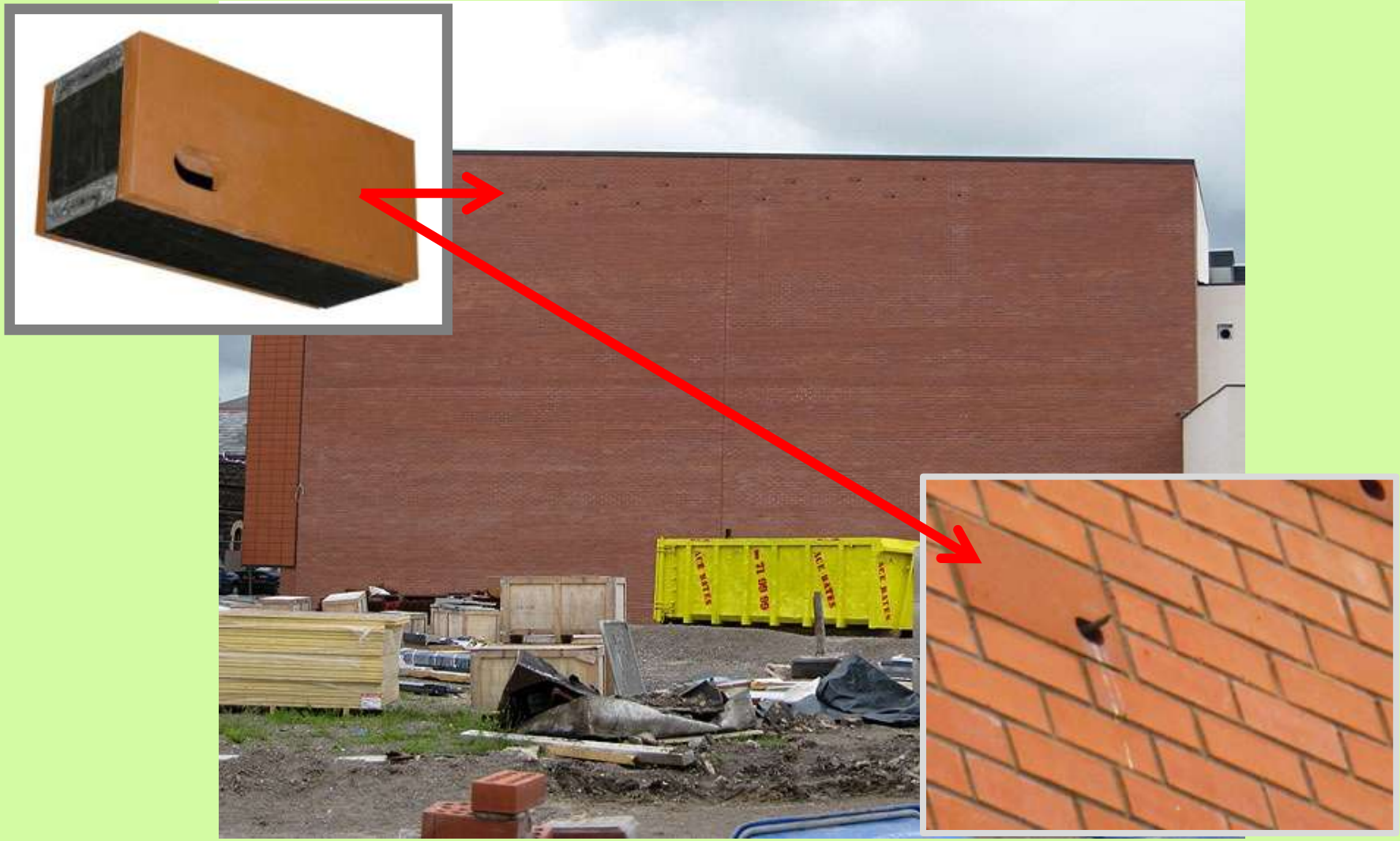
Schwegler lightweight "Swift Bricks" installed in new housing by Derby Homes

New Build Medical Centre



Schwegler Swift nest bricks installed in the walls of this project in New Barnet, London, at the request of neighbours

New Build Public Library



Ibstock Swift Bricks successfully installed in Antrim Public Library

Liverpool's Everyman Theatre

Winner of the Stirling Prize 2014

Swift Bricks are fitted at rear of roof air vent "chimneys"

Swift Towers – Exeter & Cambridge

There are Swift towers now up in Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic & Northern Ireland as well as in England

Using Call Systems

A timer controlled CD or MP3 player is ideal for playing Swift Calls from "tweeters" in the nest boxes

This is proven to attract Swifts to check out new nest places

Good Practice

Use data provided by the Biological Record Centres in Suffolk and Norfolk to check for records of colonies

Work with developers and their ecologists to set up new nest place projects

Make contact with Swift conservation organisations to help with information on design

Aim for the 10% target overall
House – 2 / 3 nests
Office Block or School – 10 + nests
Warehouse / Factory – 20 + nests
Bridge / Water tower – 20 + nests
Multi-storey car park – 30 nests

Camden Council installed Swift Bricks while doing cavity wall insulation work on the Regents Park Estate flats – saving money on access equipment

Record the Local Swifts

Look out for low flying screaming Swifts – Keep Notes!
Submit records to the RSPB's Swift Survey & BirdTrack
www.rspb.org.uk/helpswifts
http://app.bto.org/birdtrack/main/data-home.jsp

But above all –
Tolerance, Affection, Love

Chris Richards loves his Swifts

What a delight to see on a summer evening!

If Swifts are already nesting make sure their nest places go undisturbed

Please Help Swifts!

Together we can do it!

For advice & help

Swift Conservation www.swift-conservation.org

mail@swift-conservation.org

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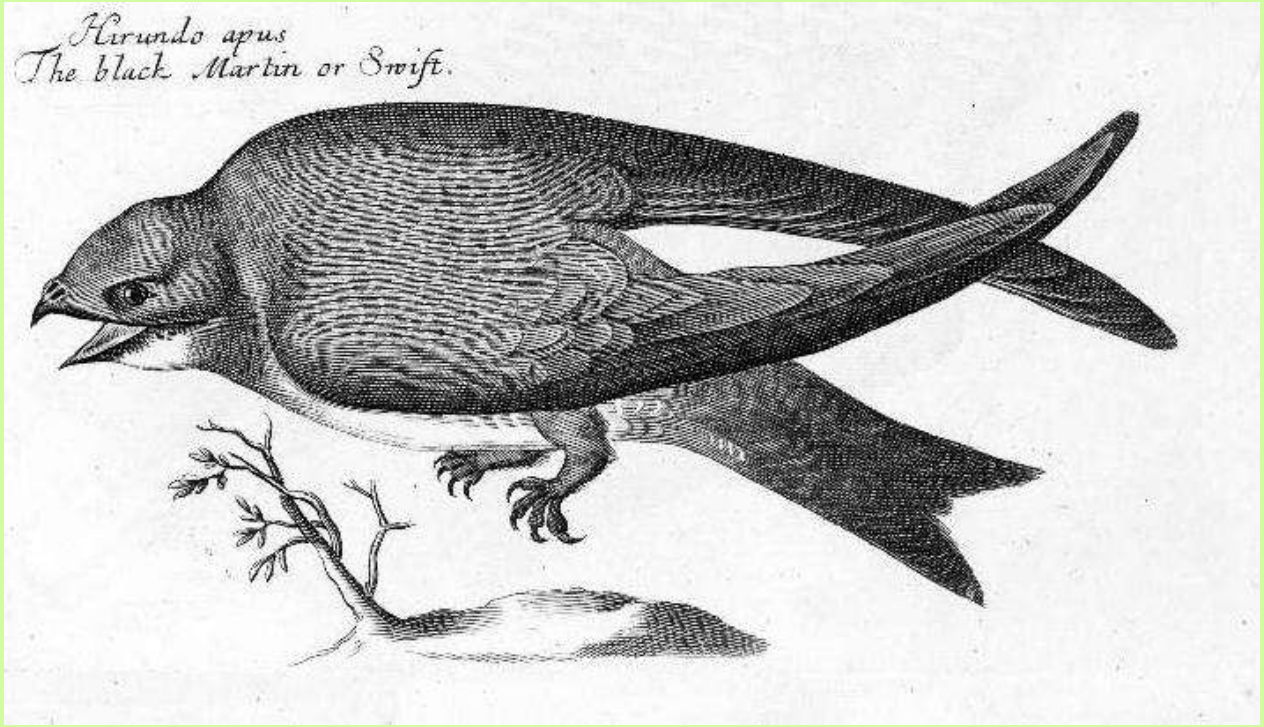
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