

# WRAXALLS

STONE MERCHANTS & LANDSCAPING SUPPLIES

It has been suggested that it is possible for birds to pick up and subsequently drop 20mm, or 40-20mm roofing shingle (ballast), causing a potential hazard to property and personnel. In these cases 40-60mm is generally substituted.

I have been unable to substantiate any case where this can be shown to have happened. My investigation has covered the following areas:

## The Internet

Using the keywords birds, gulls, shingle, ballast, pebbles, stones, grave, roof, damage, hazard, bird strike in combination, I have searched Google, Ask, Yahoo, BBC and Alta Vista. Whilst this is not exhaustive coverage I believe it would have produced results for a common problem.

## RSPB

The society has told me it is not aware of this as a problem. It is likely to be physically impossible for any bird smaller than a gull to become airborne carrying shingle, nor is this a recognised behaviour of gulls. RSPB cannot say that this activity would never be carried out by gulls but it is not described in their literature as typical.

[www.rspb.co.uk](http://www.rspb.co.uk) | 01767 693680

## RIBA

The associations' helpline had not encountered the problem. They directed me to a number of Building and Quarry Trade Associations.

[www.riba.co.uk](http://www.riba.co.uk) | 0207 580 5533

## ROSPA

The associations' information library was unaware of the problem. In the most recent sample of stone and pebble related injuries, dropping by birds did not appear.\*

[www.rospa.co.uk](http://www.rospa.co.uk) | 0121 248 2000

## Building Research Establishment

This organisation carries out consultancy and testing for construction and the build environment. They participate in setting international standards and building codes including the UK building codes. Their Health and Safety Division was not aware of this as a problem.

[www.bre.co.uk](http://www.bre.co.uk) | 01923 664000

## National Federation of Roofing Contractors

Leading trade association for the roofing industry. Technical Officer has no previous knowledge of birds removing stones, although birds have sometimes destroyed bitumen and other roofing materials.

[www.nrfc.co.uk](http://www.nrfc.co.uk) | 0207 436 0387

## Quarry Products Association

Trade body for organisations supply quarry products. Their Health and Safety department had not heard of this as a hazard and are currently investigating to see if they can find recorded instances.

[www.gpa.org](http://www.gpa.org) | 0207 963 8000

## **Roofing Industry Alliance**

Previously, the Flat Roofing Alliance. An alliance of trade associations with an interest in the UK roofing industry. Sponsored by the Government and has the support of the DRI. They no immediate knowledge of this situation and are investigating.

**01444 440027**

## **Mastic Asphalt Council**

Provide technical information to the roofing trade. They had heard the situation mentioned as a concern but had never come across any occurrence.

**[www.masticouncil.co.uk](http://www.masticouncil.co.uk) | 01424 844400**

## **Conclusion**

This report will be updates as new information becomes available from the sources and authorities listed above.

My conclusion on reviewing the current information is that either the hazard never occurs, or that the chances of it doing are vanishingly small.

\*Victims of accidents involving being struck by/against stones, pebble or gravel, 2000-20002. These cases are taken from the Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System (HASS/LASS) database. This database is sample data taken from a sample of 16-18 UK hospitals. It does not include fatalities and the latest data available for 2002. Data collected by the Department of Trade and Industry.

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