

Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 9

Summer 2000

SKATEGROUP TRIUMPH

Many people gathered to watch the Mayor, Cllr Roy Butler, open the Majestics Skate Ramp at the Country Park. Peter Chalmers introduced the Mayor and Jordon, who is the chair of the Majestics Skate Ramp Group.

Jordon thanked RBC for making it possible to have the ramp and he hoped that everyone would enjoy the opening.

The Mayor said that it was a long awaited occasion and the Majestics had worked very hard for the facilities that were there. He was delighted that so many people had turned out and was looking forward to the demonstration of skating which was to take place after the opening. He said the RBC were very impressed with the group and thanked all the parents and other supporters who were there.

After that Jordon and another boy gave a demonstration of roller-blading which was eagerly watched by all and applauded at the end.

CARPETING

Another successful day for the FORCP was making bat boxes for the Country Park. It was a bit chilly even so the hardy helpers managed to make 7 boxes. To start with they had to erect a large marquee as it was needed for the following weekend and that caused quite a bit of laughter. But once it was up it was ideal to work under and be at least partly sheltered from the wind.

This is the second year that the Friends have made bat boxes and this time it was the new improved version, which included putting carpet in the box. Apparently the carpet makes a good draft excluder - bats don't like drafty boxes. This is obviously a sign of the times, when even the bats have to have fitted carpets. Will it be central heating next, I ask myself!!!! Let us hope that many bats will take advantage of their new homes, so that they can be seen flying around at dusk in the summer.

SCILLY ISLES

On a recent visit to the Scilly Islands, whilst the weather was very cold and stormy, our group managed to go out every day and tour most of St Mary's and Tresco, to see the famous gardens. The most amazing plants were the echiums, (a bit like delphiniums) which grew to about 12 feet tall, but there were many other unusual plants and cacti. We also went by open boat to St Martins, St Agnes and Bryher, where small populations live and work.

We had been given a list of 90 species of birds which we might see and although I didn't tick them off I think we saw about 80 of them, including many seabirds. However, the birds which made the most impression were the song thrushes which were everywhere! Every time we turned a corner there seemed to be another thrush bashing a snail against a stone and they joined the sparrows and finches begging outside the island cafes. Another common bird was the cuckoo and we managed to track them through binoculars. They seem to puff themselves up to call 'cuckoo' and the deflate again, as if they were attached to a bicycle pump.

On one boat trip we were taken round the uninhabited islands to see a colony of seals. In fact we saw two separate groups of grey seals. They seemed quite unworried by a boatful of visitors and draped themselves over the rocks so that we could take close-up photographs.

With such a variety of habitats I am sure you could see all sorts of wildlife at any time of the year but apparently the best time is during the migration in early spring or late summer when the birds are returning south, so it will mean another visit when the weather is better!

Marie Burley.

Editor - Don't think the FORCP can stretch to a visit to the Scilly Isles.



VISIT TO BRIERLEY FOREST PARK

On Saturday 6th May a group from FORCP travelled to the north of the county in several cars to visit Brierley Forest Park, situated between Huthwaite and Stanton Hill. We made our way to the recently opened well-appointed Visitors Centre where we were warmly welcomed by Mr Terry Birch, Chairman of the Friends of Brierley Forest Park, who showed us around the Centre where we admired some of the displays in the various rooms. Over a cup of coffee Terry gave us a brief history of the development of the park and the forming of the "Friends".

Apparently the park covers some 250 acres of land which includes Dawdonie Golf Course, recreational and agricultural land, the old site of Sutton Colliery and spoil heap. It is named after the miners of Sutton Colliery, which was known locally as Brierley Pit, because many of the first miners came from Brierley in Staffordshire. Most of the land within the park is owned by Ashfield District Council, with whom the Friends have a very good working relationship. Brierley Forest Park is part of the Greenwood Community Forest providing countryside recreation for everyone.

Terry then led a walk through part of the park along the walkways. The park is rich in wild life, vegetation, woodland, ponds and wetland, trails and nature conservation areas. We were a little early in the year to see the full glory of the wild flower meadows but the cowslips were beginning to make their appearance. There are over 3 miles of trails with routes for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and disabled people. At several points in the park there are wooden sculptures and several artefacts reminding one of the diverse local history and events, including coal mining, railway, agriculture and the hosiery trade - a sculpture of a group of miners who died in a pit disaster many years ago; pit head winding wheels, giant carvings of cones and bobbins depicting the hosiery trade in the area and various items depicting the natural history of the park.

We ended a very enjoyable sunny day by returning to the Visitors Centre for a picnic lunch by the pond. Our conversation with Terry continued as we discussed environmental issues and future developments.

"Nature stretches out her arms to embrace man. Ours is this thought be of equal great." (Emerson)

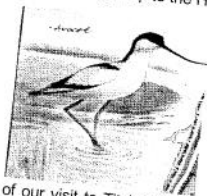
Quote from Brierley Park leaflet

Ivy and Eddie Barber

The Avocet - A Conservation Success

On a recent visit to Titchwell Nature reserve in Norfolk, we were captivated by a graceful white wader with black markings and a long up-curving bill. More than 40 pairs of avocets were nesting there.

The avocet was extinct in England for over 100 years, when a pair nested at Minnesmere in Suffolk. They did not appear the following year, but were discovered nesting in the nearby Havergate Island which was still a military base. A small colony of avocets established themselves there, then a few birds returned to Minnesmere to breed. Since the early 1950s avocets have spread all along the east coast on nature reserves and in other suitable places right up to the Humber.



Near the end of our visit to Titchwell sudden alarm calls rang out over the lagoons. Flocks of birds rose into the air as panic ensued. Even the birdwatchers became animated as a marsh harrier appeared overhead. It dived and flew away with its prey. Within two minutes the agitated birds, hundreds of them, began to settle again. A pair of marsh harriers require 2,500 acres of reed bed to breed successfully and rear young. This is 10 times the area of the entire Country Park. We shall see neither avocets or marsh harriers in Rushcliffe but it is good to know that both can be seen and enjoyed in their native habitat.

E M Lawson

LAZY DOG FOX

This title sounds like an air-traffic control sign but it is an account of a recent fox sighting in Ruddington. It occurred on 21st May at approximately 9.30 pm when a young and very confident dog fox called in for a meal in a private garden. He leisurely took what was on offer outside the kitchen window and then retreated 3 or 4 metres to a nearby rose bed where he sat down, looked around and began to groom himself in full view. After several minutes he settled down for a doze and apparently fell fast asleep. On waking he ambled off with complete confidence and after exploring various corners of the garden he trotted off. In total he was in full view for at least thirty minutes.

KHL



WILLOW THE WISP

The Willow Workshop took place in early April and was a great success. 23 folks from all walks of life came together for the weekend, and with much team spirit and inspiration created wonderful willow sculptures; which I hope you'll agree, look very at home by the lakeside.



The workshop was run by 2 environmental artists from Bristol - Stewart Edmondson and Mike Jones, who were delightful to work with, giving guidance while allowing people to create as they wished.

Many people passing by were intrigued by the work being carried out; including Sue Crabtree who helped fund the workshop through Nottinghamshire Next Stage, who was most impressed with the progress. The workshop was also funded by Rushcliffe Borough Council.

The Willow has now taken root and the sculptures are growing and turning green with willow leaves. With some tender care we hope the sculptures will last many years to be enjoyed by visitors to the park.

Photographers
f r o m
Nottinghamshire
Next Stage recently
returned to the
park to take pictures of our
wonderful willow, as well as the
wicked wood carvings and
marvellous mosaics, (which they
also funded), to put together a
'Nottinghamshire' display for the
Millenium Dome. Fame at Last!



LETTERS BE THANKFUL

YES, THE RUMOURS ARE TRUE. RCP
NOW HAS A MAIL BOX! HURRAY YOU CRY.
SO IT'S GOOD BYE TO SOGGY
ENVELOPES AND CHIPS IN FACT, THIS
BABY IS EVEN BIG ENOUGH TO COPE
WITH ALL RANGER, HEM'S PAN M A I L.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WISH TO ADMIRE THIS
AMAZING FEAT OF HUMAN ENGINEERING, (THE
BOX, THAT IS, NOT HEM) OR IF YOU WANT TO SEND
THE RANGERS A LETTER, IT IS SITUATED TO THE
RIGHT OF THE MAIN CAR PARK GATES. (THE
METAL ONES).

FRIENDS, ROMANS, CONSERVATISTS...

FORCP are a registered charity. We aim to help improve Rushcliffe Country Park. For the benefit of visitors and wildlife.

We achieve this by, working in partnership with the Borough Council, via the Ranger service, by fundraising for projects such as the History Trail and by assisting the Rangers with habitat management. We also have some great social events.

To continue to be successful we need your support. We are constantly looking for people of all ages, with different skills to offer, from letter writing to hole digging.

Even if you are not sure what skills you have, but would like to get involved please let us know. To join the Friends there is a minimum subscription of £1 to help with the production of the Newsletter but you only need to give the time you can spare.



For more information or an application form speak to one of the Rangers or phone
0115 921 5885

Rushcliffe Country Park

VOLUNTEER DATES

Unless otherwise stated, all volunteer events are free and open to members of FORCP and non-members.

JULY

Sun 2nd	Visitor Count	Please let the Rangers know if you can help between 10.00 am and 5.00 pm.
Wed 5th	Community Garden	Sprucing up the mosaics and tending to the hedgerows.
Sat 15th	 Wildflower Survey	Continue to help the Rangers collect valuable data which will be added to the management plan.
Wed 19th	Wildflower Survey	Last chance to look at flowers in the meadow. Don't forget your sunhat and shades.
Sat 29th	 Tree Nursery	Finishing off the access gate and giving the trees some much needed TLC.

AUGUST

Thurs 3rd	Summer Social	A walk along the Roundhead route. (Leave your muskets at home) Members only. Meet at the Rangers Office at 5.30 pm.
Wed 9th	Community Garden	Only practical day during this month. Some jobs to do but also a chance to enjoy the fruits of our labours.

SEPTEMBER

Sat 2nd	 Aquatic Transplanting	Help improve the wetland habitats within the Country Park. No scuba gear needed but wellies may come in handy.
Thurs 7th	Monthly Meeting	St Peter's Rooms, Ruddington. 7.30 pm
Sat 9th	Visit	A visit to the heart of the National Forest in Leicestershire to admire the wildlife and check out the visitor centre. Members only. Contact the Rangers for more details.
Wed 13th	 Community Garden	Monthly visit to keep the garden looking splendid.
Sun 17th	 Let's Go Fly a Kite	Helpers needed to attend a FORCP stall.
Sat 23rd	Tree Nursery	Preparing the raised beds for autumn seed collection.
Wed 27th	Newt Pond	Come and help build amphibian hotels for newts and other winter hibernators.



This symbol denotes the activity is working towards the Notts Biodiversity Action Plan.

Meet at the Rangers Office at 10.15 am.
Unless stated all events run from 10.30 am - 3.30 pm.
Don't forget some lunch, sturdy boots and waterproofs.
For more information contact the Ranger's Office
0115 921 5865.



British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
An independent group affiliated to the
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers,
a registered charity.

Supported by



Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park
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