

Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 11

Winter 2000/1

BANNER MAKING

On the afternoon of Thursday 26 Oct several members attended an Event organised for the 50 Plus 'Activity' Week.

This was led by Jessica Kemp who had previously attended a Friends meeting and explained her intentions and sought ideas.

As the banners were intended for the Country Park it was decided, after much discussion, to feature the wildlife of the Park and the visitors.

This idea, coupled with that of the Four Seasons was incorporated into the final design and 'templates' prepared accordingly.



Frames were made and, after applying elastoplast to the injured (guess who), silk was stretched over and fixed in place with special architect pins and masking tape. We were then able to transfer the design to the silk using an anti - spread agent called Gutta.

In theory this stops the paint spreading from one area to another.

On our design any gaps (and the smudges) were deliberate to create a more artistic effect.

We had a very interesting time applying the paint and

using different types of paint, high-lighter pens, and even cooking salt to create our masterpieces.

Unfortunately time was short and we found we needed to rush the work. We did however finish four banners showing -

Spring - March Hares and Easter Eggs

Summer - Kite Flying, Picnic Tables and Butterflies

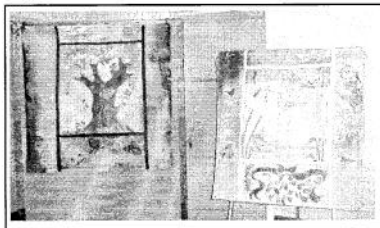
Autumn - Autumnal Tree, Pumpkins and Spiders

Web

Winter - Swan, Owl and Squirrel

An enjoyable exercise for all concerned, one we would like to repeat at a more leisurely pace.

Norman Ecob.



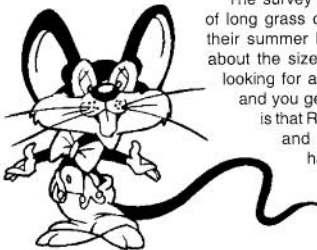
MICE TO SEE YOU

The Harvest Mouse is Britain's smallest species of mouse, it's head and body only measuring between 5 and 7 cms.

It can be found in a variety of habitats from long grass and crops to reed beds and grassy hedgerows.

Harvest Mice were once widely distributed but are now thought to be declining, mainly due to loss of habitat. However as they are thought to be under-recorded, their true status is unknown.

For this reason Notts Wildlife Trust have been conducting a survey on selected sites around the Nottingham conurbation this autumn.



As RCP has lots of suitable Harvest Mouse habitat, it was selected as part of the survey and the Rangers enlisted to do the surveying.

The survey consisted of picking areas of long grass or reeds and searching for their summer homes, small round nests about the size of a cricket ball; imagine looking for a ball of hay in a hay-stack and you get the idea. The good news is that RCP does have Harvest Mice and although only three nests have so far been found, they are distributed widely across the park which probably indicates that there are more around.

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GIBBIES BROOK AND GIBBIES FIELD

In 1930 'Rambles Round Nottingham' by Lewis Richmond was published. Ramble no 16 went from Ruddington to Bradmore, and back again by a different route. The walk began at The Green and went down Asher Lane; then - "A stile on the left of the lane invites us into lush meadow across a tiny rippling brook - Gibbons Dyke - where children fish for minnows, and adults seek that tea-time delicacy, water cress."

The inviting stile was very close to the Asher Lane gate into the Country Park, the lush meadows and rippling brook just inside it. Local children called the stream 'Gibbies Brook'. It flowed from a spring, near the new pond, diagonally from SE to NW under Asher Lane, across the allotments and on into Fairham Brook. When The Depot was built in 1940 the brook was put into a culvert, but it still flows underground and can be heard gushing along after heavy rain below inspection hole covers in the Country Park.

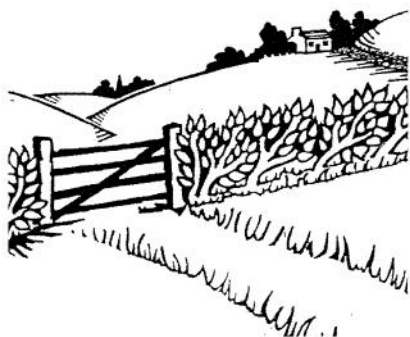
Ruddington Local History Society's Newsletter No 5 was published in October 1968. It had a short article called 'Can You Remember?' Among places and items mentioned is:-

"Gibbies Field from The Elms to Asher Lane. There was a footpath crossing it to Bradmore and a dyke." It is likely that both Gibbies Brook and Gibbies Dyke were named after Arthur Gibson who lived at 'The Elms'. He was bailiff to Philo Mills, of Ruddington Hall from about 1881 - 1907. The small brook had been straightened to improve the drainage of the area by 1856 but Arthur Gibson laid land drains, canalized the stream still further and managed the surrounding wetland as water meadows. These held flood water in winter and provided grazing land in summer, perhaps after a hay-crop had been taken.

Barleylands Estate now covers most of Gibbies Field, but could the name be preserved by using it for some

feature of the Park? What about a Gibbies Gate from Barleylands into the Park or Gibbies Way for one of the central paths. Has anyone any better ideas?

E M Lawson



SOWING THE SEEDS

In November, Angie Forman, who works at RCP, was lucky enough to receive a Groundwork Millennium Award, which provides training, advice and support for environmental projects. Angie's chosen project for the award is the community tree nursery, situated near the Rangers Office.



Action for the environment

Already through the award we have been able to secure funding for a trip to Ryton Organic Gardens, near Coventry. As well as a guided tour we will be specifically looking at a garden designed for wheelchair accessibility. (See back page for visit details.)

Hopefully, with the support of Groundwork over the 6 month duration of the award, we should see lots of progress in the development of the tree nursery, as an educational resource and as a wheelchair accessible site.



FREE TRAINING

Don't forget it's not too late to book on one of the free courses being offered in Rushcliffe.

The courses are being provided as part of the Community Action for Wildlife (CAW) project - a partnership between BTCV, the Notts Biodiversity Action Group and Rushcliffe Agenda 21.

The courses are:-

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Hedgelaying - | Jan 20th |
| Pond creation - | date to be announced |
| Volunteer Management - | March 17th |

To find out more and to book a place, contact Darren York at the BTCV office on 0115 931 3316.





WATCH OUT!

**Wildlife
Watch comes to
Rushcliffe
Country Park**

Wildlife Watch is the junior section of the Wildlife Trust and is the UK's leading club for young environmentalists. Now Rushcliffe Country Park is to have its own Wildlife Watch group for young people aged 8 - 13

years old.

The group will provide a great way to find out about wildlife, with fun activities to investigate nature on our doorstep and in the wider countryside.

The Heritage Centre has kindly allowed the group to use one of the railway coaches as an indoor facility, so come rain or shine we will be able to run an activity.

Rushcliffe Country Park's Wildlife Watch starts on 13th January 2001 at 11.00 am - 1.00 pm and then continues on every 2nd Saturday in the month.

Wildlife Watch is supported with Landfill Tax Credits from West Recycling Group and by TOTALFINA.

So if you know of any budding conservationists who are bored of Saturday TV tell them to ring the Rangers Office on 921 5865 for more details.



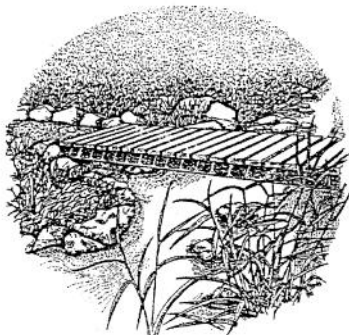
The Twinning Association are planning a visit to Ruddington's twin village of Grenay, France. The visit is to take place in May 2001 and will last 2 to 3 days. Accommodation will be provided by local families so the price of the trip will only be around £50 (the cost of travel).

For further details contact the Chairman on 0115 921 1204.



SQUELCHING ALONG

On 3rd July at 5.30 pm a group of intrepid Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park ignored the thunderstorm which had been raging over the area for the past hour and set off in a small convoy of cars for East Leake. Torrential rain enroute ceased as boots and waterproofs were put on and we set off on The Roundhead Route towards Ruddington. A muddy track led uphill and within minutes boots were clogged with heavy clay. From the crest of the hill we could see the Trent Valley spread out below through a veil of mist, but the view behind to the south was blotted out entirely. Going down hill was a choice between slithering around in mud, or walking in the long wet grass on the verge getting trousers, socks and boots soaked. A short diversion was necessary to avoid an impassible field of unharvested rape seed before we crossed Bunny Lane. The path went through three fields of standing wheat, then we crossed the bridge over Fairham Brook. The



route turned left along the bank and then right onto a track. Soon we could recognise well-known landmarks from an unfamiliar angle, a row of pylons, Moor End Cottage, buildings on the Business Park and the spire of Ruddington Church.

Gentle rain began to fall, and suddenly a mobile phone rang. "Where are you and how long will you be?" asked Hem, who had stayed behind. "Just about to go through the South Gate into the Country Park. See you in 10 minutes," replied Paul. Decidedly damp and dirty but not dispirited, we quickened our pace as the rain increased and were glad to reach the marquee erected beside the Rangers Office. The drivers were given a lift to collect their cars, while the rest of the group huddled together beside the buffet which awaited us. We tucked in on their return and departed in the deepening dusk in a downpour.

Escorting a baggage train full of weapons and ammunition at night along this route in the Civil War during the seventeenth century must have been an unenviable task after rain.




Any articles for the next edition of the Friends News can be sent to 6 Peacock Close, Ruddington NG11 6JF, left at the Rangers Office or email JMuy@aol.com

Rushcliffe Country Park




VOLUNTEER DATES

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


January

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| Sat 6th | Walk to Griffin Inn | Meet at Flaworth Churchyard at 11.00 am. 3 mile round trip to The Griffin at Plumtree. Phone Rangers Office for more details and to book a place. (FORCP only) |
| Wed 17th  | Hedging | Rushcliffe Country Park has miles of young hedgerows |
| Sat 27th  | Hedging | some of which need layering to create a solid boundary |
| Wed 31st  | Hedging | and an improved habitat for wildlife. No experience necessary. |

February

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|---------|
| Thurs 1st | FORCP Meeting | St Peter's Rooms, Ruddington. A talk by Eric Palmer, The Otters and Rivers Project Officer for Notts Wildlife Trust | 7.30 pm |
| Wed 14th  | Woodland Management | As yet another plantation begins to look more like woodland, valuable thinning work needs to be done to encourage strong growth. It is also a final chance to cut home grown stakes and binders before the hedge laying season ends. | |
| Sat 17th | Visit | Free trip to Ryton Organic Gardens near Coventry. With 32 display gardens its the place to find out about organic gardening, farming and food. Transport by mini bus. To book a place ring the Rangers Office. (FORCP only) | |
| Sat 24th  | Hedging | Building on the success of last years hedge laying, we will be working in a different area of the park to prevent disturbance. | |
| Wed 28th  | Hedging | More of the above. | |

March

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------|
| Thurs 8th | FORCP Meeting | St Peter's Rooms, Ruddington. AGM. | 7.30 pm |
| Sat 10th | Willow Weaving | Time to repair the willow sculptures to bring them back to their former glory and a chance to add new pieces to the original design. Please ring the Rangers Office to let us know that you are coming along, as places are limited. | |
| Wed 14th | Mystery Day | A mystery activity, come along to find out what we have in store. | |
| Sat 24th | Community Garden | A chance to see the garden's winter colours plus a few jobs to get ready for spring. | |
| Wed 28th  | Tree Nursery | Come along and watch the little trees playing in the nursery. (Only joking!) | |



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.

Produced by the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park
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