

# Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 18

Autumn 2002

## Swan News

The Annual Swan Ringing Ceremony took place on Wednesday 11th September. An impressive number of people turned up to watch or help and six out of the seven youngsters were caught. The remaining one was ringed the following day. All the swans were sponsored and hopefully certificates will be issued in due course.

However, on a more sombre note, the adult female was attacked and injured by a dog during the early afternoon and it wasn't until Friday that she could be captured and taken to the Ruddington Veterinary Centre for treatment. She remained in "hospital" until Tuesday 17th when she was released back onto the water.

Our thanks must go to Inspector Dave Macadam of the RSPCA who supplied the boat to make the capture swift and successful and to Hugh McLoughlin of the Ruddington Veterinary Centre who treated her for her injuries.



*On the 20th September two RSPCA officers turned up at the Park to take X6076 off the water to investigate a large lump in the bird's neck. After a trip to the Ruddington Veterinary Centre the young swan was returned to the water. The lump turned out to be a large ball of fishing line and waterweed and would have eventually killed the bird by preventing it eating and drinking. Happily, the swan has made a full recovery thanks to the RSPCA and Hugh at the Vet Centre.*

## Rare Species On the Increase

As you may have noticed, the population of rangers in and around the Country Park has increased by 100%. We are delighted to welcome two new members to our group, **Rob Carrier** who is a seasonal ranger and **Mick Thompson** who is assistant ranger in place of Paul.

Some of you had expressed concern about the dwindling numbers of rangers, and no doubt wondered if the species would disappear from the Park altogether. However, thanks to the financial support of the Rushcliffe Borough Council, numbers have doubled from 2 to 4.



We are hoping that, with continued support from the Council, the population of the Rushcliffe Country Park Ranger, will remain stable for the foreseeable future.



# Moths

## by Moonlight

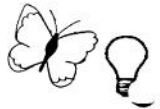


In August, the Rangers with the help of moth enthusiasts, Mr and Mrs Naylor, carried out the first moth survey to take place at the Country Park.



The survey was set up at night, as the majority of moths fly after nightfall. To attract the moths two powerful bulbs were set up, powered by a small generator. A moth trap was placed under one light, and a white sheet was placed under the other.

There is as yet no definite explanation as to why moths are attracted to the light. One theory suggests that the moths are confusing the artificial light with the light of the moon. Some scientists think that moths use the moon as a primary reference point, and are able to gauge their flight paths as the Earth's rotation causes the moon to move across the sky. So the moth's attraction to the artificial light could be related to orientation, and cause confusion and disorientation, as the moth does not expect to actually get to the moon, or be able to fly above it.



The moths were readily attracted to our lights and the survey finished at midnight. In that time 31 species of moths were identified. Some of the moths were taken home to be identified, as with over 2,000 species, it is not easy to identify them all.

The records from this survey will tre at Wollaton Hall.

Hopefully we will be able to undertake found, moths can be just as impressive



be sent to the Biological Records Cen-

moth surveys every year, for as we as their pretty butterfly cousins.

Canary Shouldered Thorn

## THE AUGUST SUMMER SOCIAL



On Thursday 8th August a group of us met at the Park Office at 6.00pm in the evening, and drove in convoy to Clifton. After leaving our cars near the shop in the Old village we set off for the woods, better known as Clifton Grove, high above the River Trent. As this is part of the area covered by Paul in his new post working for the City

Council, we were keen to see how much he had already learned about his new domain.

Paul showed us first of all the fantastic view through the trees and across the river to Beeston and Attenborough. He then pointed out how the site had developed over the years since the original Colonel Clifton acquired it. Much of it is a haven for birds and other wildlife, as well as being a place of retreat for people, away from the A453 and its traffic.

We then descended to the lower path from which we looked up to see exposed rock where the surface soil had slipped away, leaving alternate layers of Keuper Marl and

Gypsum. Paul told us that it is likely that this site will be pronounced a SINC (Site of Interest for Nature Conservation).

We then wandered a little further to Holme Pit Pond which has been brought back to life by a local group of volunteers. As the pond was becoming clogged by litter and weed and reed growth, the local anglers have formed an Action Group to carry out regular maintenance where it is required. It has now improved to such an extent that whereas bird life was minimal in the area, a pair of swans have decided to call it 'home' and produced cygnets this year.

Leaving the pond we walked across a couple of fields to a collection of riverside dwellings, where Angie has a wooden chalet in a delightfully peaceful setting. We enjoyed a picnic of donated items of cold savouries, sweets and cold drinks, accompanied by music from a caravan, before the midges and mosquitoes persuaded us it was time to head back to Clifton.

A very enjoyable evening, thanks to Angie and Paul.



Marie

# The Return of the Scilly Ranger

After leaving the Country Park last year, I moved out to the Isles of Scilly to work for the Wildlife Trust as a Volunteer Warden. I remember calling a friend to let her know where I was off to, and she said 'WOW, that sounds great - that's somewhere near Italy isn't it?' So for those of you who don't know, it's about 28 miles SW of Land's End.

From the start, I figured that it was going to be a bit of an adventure - my flight from Newquay got cancelled due to gales, so ended up at Land's End 'International' Airport waiting for a break in the weather. As soon as it came, the two of us that were flying that day were bundled into a tiny plane - taxied onto the GRASS runway, then had to turn back because my co-passenger had still got his mate's car keys! During the crossing our plane got battered about in turbulence while I made acquaintance with Dave the island's Window Cleaner. On arrival, as Dave and I went on our separate ways, he said 'wait until the sun comes out-you'll love it.' - we had storms for the next month and a half.

The Isles of Scilly is an unusual archipelago, with a climate that can often be closer to the Mediterranean's than the mainland. This means lots of strange flora species flourish here - most being introduced (which doesn't help with plant I.D.!) Dutch Elm disease never reached the islands, so although there is little woodland to speak of, a lot of the trees are Elm, which is a sight that may never be seen again on the mainland.

Other than tourism, the main industry on the islands is flower farming, where they are able to pick daffodils far sooner than most places due to the climate - and the patchwork fields of yellow help to brighten up the winter days. During the Autumn months the islands become inundated with 'Twitchers', who, armed with telescopes and bleeping Pagers, run around looking for rare migrating birds that get forced to land on the first land mass they see, after getting blown off course from the Americas and Southern Europe. The islands also play host to rare breeding native birds, such as the Puffin, Storm Petrel and Roseate Tern. Scilly is also the most Southerly breeding ground of the Grey Seal, which is by far the biggest wild mammal in Britain. Many Cetaceans also visit the islands, such as Porpoise, Common and Bottle-nosed Dolphins, Pilot Whales and even Killer Whales, which can sometimes be seen in deeper waters.

As a Warden, my role was to work as part of a team, with the management of several Nature Reserves, coastal paths, archaeological sites, all the uninhabited islands and 23 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.'s). This included jobs such as footpath maintenance, Bracken control, Boardwalk and bridge building and surveying and monitoring of the flora and fauna. It wasn't all hard work - during the evenings and at weekends you'd usually find me either canoeing or sailing, and if not somewhere near the beach then probably down the pub!

**Rob Carrier**  
Seasonal Ranger

## Wildlife Recording



Amongst the various duties of the rangers is the recording of the wildlife seen on the park. This embraces everything from plant surveys, of which some of you will have taken part, to noting the type and numbers of butterflies, dragonflies, moths and mammals to name but a few. All the records generated during the year are eventually collected together and sent to the Biological Records Centre at Wollaton Hall.

All visitors to the park, including FORCP members are encouraged to record anything seen and let the rangers know.

To help in the recording an all-weather notepad will be attached to the outside of the Rangers' cabin in the near future.

## Wildlife Highlight

### Grey Partridge,

which has become a rare sight on farmland over the last twenty years, rewarded us with the sighting of mum and four chicks running along one of the paths on 4th September.

## New Species



Before Paul left to take up his new post with the City Council he discovered two new species of plants growing on the Park.

These are:- *Smith's Pepperwort*, *Lepidium heterophyllum* and *Meadow Brome*, *Bromus commutatus*.

Mike, the new boy who took over from Paul from the first of September, has also recorded two new species, these being *Hornet*, *Vespa crabro*, recorded on the 3rd and 7th September, and *Lesser Spotted Woodpecker*, *Dendrocopos minor*, also recorded on the 3rd September.



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Any articles for the next edition of the Friends News can be sent to 11 Peacock Close, Ruddington, NG11 6JF, left at the Rangers' Office or email LMculjim@aol.com

# Rushcliffe Country Park



## ACTIVITY DAYS

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

### OCTOBER

- |          |  |   |
|----------|--|---|
| Wed 2nd  |  Tree Nursery | Help us collect seeds to produce the next generation of trees |
| Sat 5th  | Woodland Path Project  | Plan the route for the community woodland path                |
| Wed 16th | Willow Weaving   | Tidying the willow sculptures after this year's growth        |
| Sat 19th | Woodland Path Project  | Scrub clearance for the new path access                       |
| Wed 30th | Community Garden   | Autumn tidy up, ready for winter                              |

### NOVEMBER

- |                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Sat/Sun<br>2nd/3rd |  Offsite Woodland Management | Come along to Home Pierrepont and help to manage the nature reserve woodland.<br>For further details ring Mick at the Rangers' Office       |
| Thurs 7th          | FORCP Meeting   | St. Peter's Rooms, Ruddington. New Members welcome. <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 2px;">7.30pm</span> |
| Wed 13th           |  Tree Planting               | Planting trees to create a new hedge around the tree nursery  |
| Sat 16th           | Coppicing   | Continuing clearance of the woodland path   |
| Wed 27th           | Coppicing   | More clearance of the woodland path   |
| Sat 30th           | Woodland Path Project   | Positioning of the gate for the woodland path.  |

### DECEMBER

- |          |                       |  |
|----------|-----------------------|--|
| Sat 7th  | Christmas Social      | Wrap up well for a country walk to a local hostelry<br>Meet at 10.30am at the Rangers' Office. |
| Sat 14th | Mystery Santa Special |  |

 *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 Rangers' Office **0115 921 5865**

Produced by the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park  
Registered Charity No 1079665



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