

# Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 21 Summer 2003



TO

## Butterflies



The long awaited book 'Bombs to Butterflies' will be published on Saturday 5th July. It tells the story of the Country Park site to the present time in the words of the people who are part of its history, in so far as that is possible. The book has 123 pages and contains 45 photographs or illustrations, about half of them in colour, within its attractive glossy cover. The local MP Kenneth Clarke has kindly written a forward to the book. It will cost £4 per copy, but if bought on the day of publication will be available at a special discount price of £3. Copies will be available from the Rangers' Office, Ruddington Village Museum and other local outlets after the launch event which will take place at St Peters Rooms, Ruddington at 11.00 a.m. on 5th July. Refreshments will be served and an exhibition of the work of the project will be on show.

The 2 year project ends on 30th September 2003. Before then an audio visual display, 2 exhibitions and 2 illustrated lectures have to be prepared. In addition all the photographs, documents, tape-recordings and transcripts of interviews etc which have been collected during the project have to be catalogued and stored away in special storage boxes and files in the Village Museum. New volunteers who would like to join in this final stage of the project would be warmly welcome.

Please ring 9211545 for more details or contact the Rangers' Office on 9215865



*E M Lawson*

## SCULPTURE TRAIL

As you are aware we are in the process of opening up one of the woodlands by creating a circular walk, which will be completed in autumn 2003. To really bring the walk to life we are creating a sculpture trail around the path. Nottinghamshire County Council Next Stage is kindly supporting the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park with this exciting project by providing an artist/wood sculpture - Richard James. Richard led 12 sessions of wood carving during the summer of 2000, and as a result there are carvings already in place around the country park; Ruddy's Throne in the community garden; the kissing seat, with a grass snake; and the newt.

It is hoped that the new sculptures will be on a wildlife or even historical theme. We also have the option of using stone or other materials for the sculptures.



**Sculpture dates in August/September:**

WEDNESDAYS 13TH, 20TH, 27TH AUGUST  
SATURDAYS 16TH, 23RD, 30TH AUGUST  
WEDNESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER

Meet at the Rangers' Office at the usual 'activity day' time. It is important to book a place for this event. Please ring the Rangers' office on 0115 9215865.

There will be extra dates in October/November for completion of the project and installation.



## BEE ORCHIDS

During January, 17 rosettes of leaves were found near the rangers cabin and the area roped off to prevent mowing. On 10th June a quick count was undertaken and only 7 were found, two of which were in flower. Most of the others having been burnt by the sun during the mini-heatwave in May.

Counts in other areas of the park have produced 8 along the pathside between the business park and the perimeter road and 5 in grassland G6, giving a total of only 20 for the whole park. I'm sure we've missed some but further counts need to be undertaken just to see how many we do have.

## NEW SPECIES

Two more wildflowers have been found on the site, both in the Tree Nursery; these are:-

*Lilac Ivy-leaved Speedwell*  
*Veronica hederifolia ssp lucorum*  
and

*Wall Speedwell Veronica arvensis.*

This brings the total of flora found on site to 291. However, with the new wetland areas now installed, more waterplants have been bought in from Naturescape 'all native' so a further list will have to be produced



## WHAT'S IN A NAME? GIBBIE'S WOOD

If Arthur Gibson had not carried out his ambitious drainage scheme for the boggy land to the south of the village of Ruddington more than 100 years ago, it is highly likely that Rushcliffe Country Park would never have come into being. The land would have continued, as it had been for centuries, wet and suitable for summer grazing only in very dry weather. The Depot could not have been built on it in 1940, and so the site would not have been available, as derelict land in 1990, for re-development as a Country Park.

In about 1881, Arthur Gibson was appointed land agent to Philo Mills, the local land-owner who lived at Ruddington Hall. Philo Mills was an American manufacturer of textile machinery, but was keenly interested in agricultural improvements and development. He made Arthur Gibson responsible for carrying out the practical work of improving the estate and making it more productive. As he lived in 'The Elms' on The Green in Ruddington, Arthur Gibson's first project was to drain the land immediately adjoining his house, (now the Barleylands estate and Rushcliffe Country Park).

By about 1883 he had laid land drains over the whole area which carried surface water into the small stream which flowed across it from the south east to the north

## FOXES AT CHURCHWICK

We have had foxes at neighbours at Churchwick for ten years and our first Spring sighting in 2003 was at 8.00 a.m. on 25 April when we saw a Vixen with a very small cub. Everything seemed to be normal but in the evening four days later, a very distressed Vixen appeared at our feeding station on the front lawn.

I was able to approach very close and throw food at her feet but she remained motionless and was obviously unwell.

She eventually made her way to a nearby shrubbery where we later found her body, and next day I arranged to take her to the local Vet in Church Street. This was the second time in recent years that I had done this because he is afraid of the possibility of infectious disease which could be transmitted to other animals.

The diagnosis however was that the likely cause of death was delayed concussion, probably as a result of impact with a motor vehicle.

For us it was a rather sad and moving event but cubs are thriving and have become regular visitors. Throughout this episode we have only seen the dog fox once.

*Kenneth Lawson*

west. This stream, known then as Jury Dyke, was deepened and straightened to take away the excess water into Fairham Brook and the River Trent. The scheme was highly successful and profitable farming was carried out in the area for the next 50 years. The small stream was re-named Gibson's Dyke in his honour but was usually known as Gibbie's Brook. A field between Asher Lane and 'The Elms' was also given his name and was called Gibbie's Field by local people.

Gibbie's Field is now covered with houses, and Gibbie's Brook is invisible, because it flows in a twin culvert about 2 metres below surface level across the Courtyard Park. The culvert was laid and the land raised to level above flood level. When a name was needed for the first plantation to be opened up to the public, it was suggested that it be called *Gibbie's Wood* to perpetuate a name in use for features on the site for over 100 years.

*E M Lawson*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Thurs. 24th July *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* 7.30pm (£10/£6)** Heartbreak Productions present this famous Shakespeare Comedy, in aid of Rainbows Children's Hospice. Bring a picnic and enjoy the show. Tel 0115 9452114 for tickets.

**Sat. 6th September *The Green Picnic*** A free, family-friendly Eco-Day at Rushcliffe Country Park. The day will feature the unique Green DIY Roadshow, product demonstrations, exhibitions and advice on everything 'green' including recycling, energy efficiency and conservation. In the big top you'll find a fabulous farmers' market with a host of delicious local produce to sample. There is plenty of entertainment for the kids courtesy of children's entertainers as well as a range of exciting Eco arts and crafts to keep them busy.

As the sun goes down enjoy the sensational sights and sounds of the Bollywood Brass Band and watch as kites tumble and turn as part of the magnificent Sky Symphony. The fun starts at 1pm and goes on until 10pm. Bring a picnic and make a day of it

**Sun. 7th September *Kite Day - Rushcliffe Festival's Annual Kite Day*** returns to Rushcliffe Country Park on Sunday 7 September from 11am. There's plenty of kite related fun for all ages, from novice to expert courtesy of the Midland Kite Flyers. Musical entertainment will be provided by the world's best junk band 'Weapons of Sound'. In the afternoon sit back and relax to the sounds of smooth jazz as Nottingham Rhythm Club present Jim Shelley's Frisco Jazz Band.

# Open Day at Wilwell Cutting - Sunday June 1st

Friends of the Country Park led by Angie visited Wilwell cutting on a fine sunny day.

Those intending to walk met at the Rangers office for 10.30 a.m. Those who did not feel like walking met at Wilwell cutting at 12 noon.

Five of us walked via the Fifty Steps and footpath out onto Clifton Road and then the long straight stretch of Ruddington Lane cycle track until we came to our destination.

Wilwell cutting is a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest'. It consists of an area of woodland, marsh and fields. Being an 'Open Day' many of the plants and trees were labelled which made identification much easier. There were also notice boards with pictures of plants, butterflies and moths which might be seen.

A made path was followed through all the different types of habitat bringing us back to our starting point. The highlight of the visit was the view of hundreds of marsh orchids in bloom which looked absolutely wonderful. I have seen many different orchids on various visits around Britain but never quite so many in one place. Another part of the walk followed where the railway used to be and is now an avenue of silver birch trees. These have to be managed otherwise the seedlings just grow everywhere and the site of the track would be lost.

At the end of the visit cars were available to take everyone back to the park but five intrepid visitors decided to walk. This did include a stop for a rest and some liquid refreshment at a local hostelry before wending our way back.

Our thanks to Angie for organising the visit and leading the walk.

*Audrey Turner*

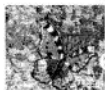
## RECENT SIGHTINGS

*Since the last newsletter recording is back in full swing on summer visitors and emerging butterflies.*

### January

The earliest sighting of a butterfly was of a Small Tortoiseshell on 3rd Jan.

This butterfly had emerged from hibernation due to the warm and sunny weather during the afternoon.



### March

A kingfisher flew over the Park on 22nd March. It flew over from Woodhouses' farm.



### April

Notable recent sightings include 80 Fieldfare flying SE over the park on 1st April and Comma, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies were seen most days until 8th May when the weather turned cold and changeable for about a week.

Also seen over the Park on 17th April was a Buzzard



### May

A Hobby was seen flying over the Park on 16th May



On 3rd June, whilst setting up for a volunteer day, a Nightjar was disturbed from plantation P23 between the lake and the business park. It is thought that this bird was overtaken by daylight as it migrated up-country to its breeding grounds (maybe) in the north of the county.

### June



Painted Lady butterflies put in an appearance from 3rd June with 9 being recorded on the park and in the business park area. These animals migrate from North Africa and the mediterranean area every year to a greater or lesser degree. Counts are 9 (3rd), 4 (4th), 11 (5th) and 2 (7th).

Finally, whilst surveying wildflowers in plantation P25A near the A60 roundabout, a pair of birds were seen in the canopy which took all day to identify. They eventually turned out to be White-throated Laughing Thrush which originate in India and Pakistan. It is thought that they were almost certainly escapes.

***Just a reminder: Subscriptions are now due to remain a Friend of Rushcliffe Country Park. Minimum £1 for the year. Bargain!***

# Rushcliffe Country Park

## ACTIVITY DAYS

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

### JULY

Thurs. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	FORCP Meeting	St. Peter's Rooms, Ruddington. New members welcome. 7.30pm
Sat. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Bombs to Butterflies	Book launch at St. Peter's Rooms 11am-3pm
Wed 9 <sup>th</sup>	Willow Weaving	Weaving and trimming the new growth, to keep the sculptures looking their best
Sat. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Mystery Day	Another exciting surprise!
Thurs. 31 <sup>st</sup>	FORCP Summer Social	Meet at Paddy's house for a summer knees up! (FORCP only) 6.00pm

### AUGUST

Wed 13 <sup>th</sup>	Woodcarving	
Sat 16 <sup>th</sup>	Woodcarving	Return of the much requested woodcarving workshops, lead by the artist Richard James.
Wed 20 <sup>th</sup>	Woodcarving	
Sat 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Woodcarving	This year's workshops will create sculptures for the woodland path. Beginners welcome.
Wed 27 <sup>th</sup>	Woodcarving	Pleasering the Rangers' office to book a place.
Sat 30 <sup>th</sup>	Woodcarving	The workshops are free.

### SEPTEMBER

Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Wood Carving	See above
Thurs. 4 <sup>th</sup>	FORCP Meeting	St. Peter's Rooms, Ruddington. New members welcome. 7.30pm
Wed. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Swan Ringing	Time to ring this year's cygnets 6.00pm
Sat. 20 <sup>th</sup>	Hay Rake	Make hay while the sun shines
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup>	Willow Weaving	Tidying the sculptures
Sat. 27 <sup>th</sup>	Wetland Management	Transplanting aquatics and managing the reed bed.



*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  
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