

# Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 22

Autumn 2003

## "HIP, HIP, HOORAY!"

The cheers rang out from St. Peter's Rooms in Ruddington on Saturday 6th July when the long awaited book 'Bombs to Butterflies' was published and put on sale. A large crowd had gathered in the hall for the event. Seated at the front were people who had lived and/or worked at Ruddington Depot (now Rushcliffe Country Park) and who featured in the book. Behind them were volunteers who had taken part in the project, together with members of the community who were interested in what had been achieved, and were eager to buy the book. Some of them had found seats, but many had to stand while the short ceremony took place. After the Chairman welcomed everyone the Editor of the book spoke appreciatively about the enthusiasm and support which had been shown throughout the project by the local population, and thanked all those who had been in any way involved. It had been a community effort which had captured the imagination of a large number of people, and in which it had been a pleasure to participate.

The men and women who had been interviewed by volunteers, and whose recollections were recorded in the book, were each presented with a complimentary copy. The proceedings came to an end when a large iced cake, decorated with 'bombs' and edible butterflies, was cut and served with cups of tea or coffee. Over 200 books were sold on that day, and since then most of the first edition of 1,000 copies have been distributed. The response of readers has been quite overwhelming. They have found it both interesting and enjoyable. The most common comment has been "I couldn't put it down". The attractive appearance of the book, the quality of the illustrations and the clarity of the print and lay-out have been much appreciated. The local community and everyone who contributed to the publication can be proud of the book which encapsulates an important part of the local history.

*Margaret Lawson, Editor-Bombs to Butterflies*



*Friends  
of Rushcliffe Country  
Park enjoying wood-  
carving during the  
summer*



## HOOTS MON!

Since the Barn Owl boxes were first erected on the Park seven years ago the only birds to use them for breeding have been Little Owl, Jackdaw, Kestrel and Stock Dove. That is until this year. On 26th May a Barn Owl was seen to fly out of one of the boxes. On 10th June the female was caught and ringed and a check of the box revealed three small youngsters.

Only two remained on the 16th July when they, too, were ringed, the smallest probably being a meal for the largest. Both successfully left the nest sometime after 27th July.





Dear Friends,

*I am writing to wish you a fond farewell, as I head off to the frozen north! I'd like to say thank you for being such a great group of people to work with. You have given me loads of support and encouragement and have been incredibly kind to me.*

*I know that as long as the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park exist, the Park will flourish. All the best for your future endeavours.*

*Of course I will immediately become a member of the Friends, so I can keep in touch with what is going on. I can't wait to come back and see the classroom.* **Angie**

## A Summer Celebration

The Friends were invited to go to Paddy's House on 31st July for supper in the garden. Although the preceding days had been very hot and sunny, the 31st was quite cool and cloudy. However we still received a very warm welcome from Paddy and her husband and were shown to garden chairs on the lawn where a small marquee had been erected in case of rain.

Everyone arrived with mysterious covered dishes and boxes containing a variety of savouries and sweets, as well as bottles of wine and juice. Once these were unloaded we were able to stand back and admire the garden, which was very colourful indeed. The lavender vied with the large clumps of phlox in an eye-catching display, and in the background were morning glory, crimson lobelia and lilies. The path into the orchard was lined with sweet peas and clematis and the fruit looked as if it would be ready for picking in a few weeks time.

After filling our plates from the buffet we enjoyed sitting in groups chatting whilst Norman took some photographs for the Rogues' Gallery, (see below) and the bottles were rapidly emptied into wine glasses. As a finale Paddy showed us her 'Pad' which she had made by weaving willow into an archway, where she could sit and survey her lovely garden. It was a very enjoyable evening for all concerned. Thank You. **Marie**

This year's summer social was held at 'Notts Land-ing'! The picture opposite shows a corner of their beautiful garden. We will have to think about a colour version of the Newsletter. A tour of the garden was included, with a compulsory inspection of the compost heaps. Paddy says there is no truth in the rumour that Righton Organic Gardens consulted her prior to installing their own.

Many thanks to Paddy and Peter. It is understood that a repeat next year is scheduled and Angie has promised to come! Oh yes she has! **Norman Ecob**



## The Merry Wives of Windsor



On the evening of 24th July an enthusiastic audience gathered in the Park in anticipation of the fun and frolics to be had from the performance of Heartbreak productions in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' by William Shakespeare.

We arrived with assorted chairs, rugs, delectable looking picnics and a fair few bottles of wine.

We were not to be disappointed. The acting was superb as were the costumes and the imaginative set. There were a couple of minor or hiccups when the rain came down and the umbrellas went up, but in the good old British tradition 'rain did not stop play'.

It was in aid of a wonderful cause, the Rainbows children's Hospice, Loughborough. The Company went off to resounding applause and the hope that they would return to entertain us some time in the future. **Jenny Smith**

## New Species

Since the last newsletter eight and possibly nine new species have been either found or seen on the site. Four are plants and four, maybe five, are animals.

The plants are:-

*Fig-leaved Goosefoot Chenopodium ficifolium*

Pale Persicaria *Polygonum lapathifolia*

*Yellow Oxalis Oxalis corniculata*

Celery-leaved Buttercup *Ranunculus scleratus*

The animals are:-

*Black-tailed Skimmer Orthetrum cancellatum*

Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*

*Clouded Yellow Colias croceus*

Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*

A further member of the Dragonfly family was seen but not positively identified, so it remains as just a possible. This was:-

*Common Hawker Aeshna juncea*, and is not as common in Notts as its name suggests.

## RECENT SIGHTINGS



*Painted Lady*. Since the last report seen most days to date - 16/9/03

*Clouded Yellow*. An uncommon visitor this far up the country. All sightings were over an eleven day period (13-23/8/03) with a max of 5 on the 14th.

*Silver Y moth*. Another immigrant to Britain but seen every year. Max numbers were 133 (14/8/03) and 107 (16/8/03).

Waders have started to pass through with *Common Sandpiper* 2 (28th) 1 (29th) 2 (30/8/03) and *Ringed Plover* 1 (28/8/03) being seen on the edge of the lake.

Both **Great Crested and Little Grebes** bred successfully with each pair raising four young. However, the Little Grebe had two broods of two, both of which reduced to a single young one.

On Sunday 14/9/03 two **Grey Heron** were having a territorial dispute on the side of the lake. It lasted for two or three minutes and ended only when one beat a hasty and somewhat battered retreat

## CYGNET RINGS

The annual swan catching ceremony took place again on Wednesday 10th September in glorious sunshine with a good turn out of participants and interested onlookers.

Amazingly, all the eight young ones were caught on the night so I didn't have to spend time later in the week, as I normally do, trying to catch 'the one that got away'.

Keen-eyed observers will have noticed that the style of rings used have changed from large aluminium type to a smaller and thinner more compact ring. The only drawback to this being that the numbers are harder to read without catching the bird.

All the cygnets have again been sponsored and certificates will soon be winging their way to the respective 'owners'. Future sightings will, as usual, be sent on to their 'owners' and also reported in the newsletter.

*This sounds a lot easier, although maybe not as colourful, as Swan Upping. Here are some extracts from an article sent in by Audrey Ecob:*

Counting the newborn cygnets is cause for a colourful river pageant between Walton-on-Thames and Whitchurch every July. A flotilla of six boats, flying pennants and flags, sets out upstream. On passing Windsor Castle, the oars are raised in salute and the cry goes out 'Her Majesty, the Queen, Seigneur of the Swans!' When a family of swans is spotted, the crews shout 'All Up!', the boats are carefully manoeuvred and the swans and cygnets are gently lifted out, lightly restrained and inspected. These swans are marked on the beaks, some belonging to the Vitners' and Dyers Companies, with all unmarked ones belonging to the Queen. The cygnets are then marked the same as the adults. Although the tradition of pomp and ceremony is still carried out, nowadays the occasion is a chance to check the birds' health and record other information.

# Rushcliffe Country Park





## ACTIVITY DAYS

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

### OCTOBER

Wed 1st	Woodcarving Workshop	
Wed.15th 	Woodland Management	Clearing the route for the pathway
Sat 25th 	Woodland Management	More clearing to open the route for the digger

### NOVEMBER

Sat 1st 	Woodland Mangement	Coppicing areas around the woodland path
Thurs 6th	FORCP Meeting <i>11/Dec</i>	St. Peter's Rooms, Ruddington. New Members welcome <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">7.30pm</span>
Wed 12th 	Hedgelaying	First attempt of the season at Weggie Walk
Sat 22nd 	Hedgelaying	At Weggie Walk
Wed 26th 	Hedgelaying	Still more at Weggie Walk.

### DECEMBER

Sat 6th	Christmas Social and Winter Walk	Wrap up well for a country walk to a local hostelry. Meet at 10.30am at the Rangers' Office
---------	----------------------------------	---

The Rangers apologise for the paucity of volunteer days during October to December due to the loss of one member of staff *Jan state*



*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



An independent group associated with  
BTCV  
a registered charity