

Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 28 Summer 2005

wild plum in blossom



This Wild Plum in the Park is believed to have been there since the Enclosures Act. A check of the inner branches shows where previous heavy fruiting has weighted the branch to the floor where it has rooted and formed a new tree, only for the same procedure to happen all over again.

Concentric Rooting?

At Long Last!

After many years of negotiations and considerable hard work by your committee, the Visitor/Educational Centre was built and officially opened on Monday 11th April 2005.

The then Mayor of Rushcliffe, Councillor Bryan Tansley and a representative of John Saunders, Chief Executive of Global Operations for Experian did the honours and unveiled a plaque. (See right)



Friends, with MP Kenneth Clarke, standing in the Display part of the Audio/Visual display supplied by Bombs to Butterflies project

It is nice to see in the photos so many volunteers in their official T shirts despite the Friends only receiving four official invitations!

Norman Ecob - who also took the photos



WILDLIFE UPDATE

BAD NEWS AGAIN, I'M AFRAID!

Six **Swans** hatched on 22nd May, but overnight on Wed/Thurs 8th/9th June four went missing. We have no idea what happened.

Two pairs of **Barn Owls** bred on the Park this year but their chicks also disappeared. However, it is believed that due to bad weather the chicks died, (adults unable to hunt), and were eaten. The fact that the parents have relaid, (both pairs had one egg - a replacement on 3rd June) would suggest that it was a natural disaster and the chicks were not stolen.

But things get better!

Peter Wootton, our caretaker shouted me on Thursday 9th June to say he had a large moth crawling on his trousers. On checking the identity it was found to be an **Eyed Hawkmoth** - another new species recorded here and certainly not common in Notts.



A new butterfly found on 15th May - A **Green Hairstreak**, and also not common in the County was seen up until 9th June when cold and wet weather probably laid them low. Maximum numbers were 4 on 3rd June. Hopefully they have mated and will re-appear next year.



Wildflowers have also come to the fore with five new species identified and one species known to be on the Park but which was not on the list.

The five are **Perennial Cornflower**, **Mouse-Ear Hawkweed**, **Field Pepperwort**, **Greater Birds-Foot Trefoil** and **Hairy Bird-Foot Trefoil**. The species known to be on the Park is **Honeysuckle**, which has been seen whilst hedgelaying and has just been overlooked. The total number of species of wild flowers now stands at an impressive 266.



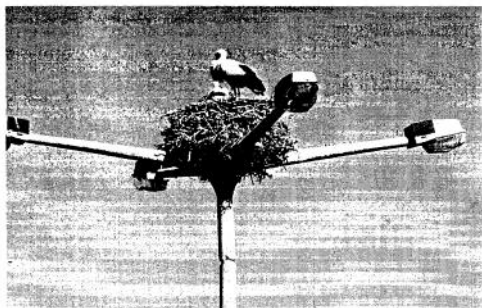
Mouse-Ear Hawkweed

Storks in the Algarve

Having just returned from the Algarve, never having been there before, my first impressions were of Jacaranda trees, fancy chimney pots and stork nests. The trees are a delight and an avenue of them in Faro is most impressive. Pity they are not frost hardy but Audrey is going to 'have a go'.

Stork nests could be found on most high places, even in busy town centres and I was told that they are a protected species and return to the same nest year after year. This means if the nest is on top of a large chimney they cannot demolish it. Looking for more information I came across an article in a Portuguese electricity magazine parts of which are reproduced on the next page.

Norman Ecob





REPLACEMENT OF DUCK ISLAND

As you may have noticed the Duck Island which slipped its anchor between Christmas and New Year has been replaced at its accustomed anchorage. Many thanks to Mick and Brian from First Stage Diving of Kirk Lane, Ruddington who came on 11th May to find the anchors and 26th May to move and re-attach the Island. Without their help the ducks and herons, not counting the 2 Red-Eared Terrapins, would have nowhere to loaf in the sun.

STORKS AND TRANSMISSION - FINDING A MIDDLE GROUND

Storks and the transmission of electrical energy may appear to be completely unrelated topics. However, in Portugal, the nesting habits of these large birds has had a detrimental impact on the reliability of the Rede Electrica Nacional (REN; Lisboa, Portugal) transmission system.

For centuries, Portugal has been visited by the white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), which builds its nests atop tall, available structures. Thousands of years ago, trees were the bird's habitat of choice, but when the bell towers of churches started to appear, storks sought these as alternative sites for their heavyweight nests. After adapting to the religious landscape, storks saw other opportunities in abandoned industrial chimneys.

With the advent of high-voltage (HV) towers, the birds opted to nest in these tall structures, which offered numerous advantages. First, many were located close to feeding grounds and were remote from the threat of humans. Furthermore, unlike bell towers, these structures were noiseless. The number of storks using HV towers for nest sites rapidly increased, and their impact on system performance became a matter of concern.

The Portuguese utility REN, showed a correlation between the presence of stork nests on the towers and the number of line faults. Thus, in 1993, the utility added a specific data category - incident caused by stork - to its network incidents statistics. Because the stork is listed as a 'vulnerable species', REN embarked on a Strategy for Storks Nests Management program, which has succeeded in reducing the number of circuit outages.

The stork is a large bird that stands 1m (3.3ft) high, has a wingspan of 2m (6.6ft) and feeds on large insects, eels and other fish, crustaceans, small mammals and birds. While storks prefer wetlands, marshes and rice fields where food is ample, they sometimes nest near cultivated fields. They migrate over the large distance between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa in the first half of the March/April breeding season. However following a decline in their population, this protected species has recovered and now some storks no longer migrate.

The storks are protected by the convention of Bonn on Migratory Species, the Convention of Bern on European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, and the Birds Directive of the European Union. Since destroying the birds and/or nests was not an option, REN faced a major dilemma. The main cause of fault outages because of stork nests on transmission line towers is the bird excrement, which pollutes the insulator strings to a point where they lose their insulation characteristics.

Even without touching the insulators, the excrement 'jet stream' may also create a zone of low dielectric resistance within the strong electrical field in the insulator vicinity, triggering an electric arc along the string. In addition, faults can arise from the sticks, the raw material from which the nests are constructed, which can fall near the insulators, causing a line fault. To inhibit nests from being sited at bad locations on towers, REN began using nylon strings, a practice that was abandoned after a few years at the 400-kv pylons. These strings broke, contributing to the occurrence of line faults. However, they are still in use and being mounted on 220-kv and 150-kv pylons. Also used is an inhibiting device, which looks similar to an anemometer. This wind device is most effective on towers positioned at windy locations, but amazingly some storks are so reluctant to give up their favourite nest position that they place nest sticks under the wind device to stop its rotation.

The last component of REN's strategy is the relocation of nests. Before doing this however, careful consideration must be given to their size and weight. A complete nest may weigh more than 150kg (330lb) and moving it to an acceptable position on the tower is difficult. To encourage the relocation, not destruction, of nests to new platforms, environmental organisations count the existing nests. Data confirms that the storks accept approximately 75% of relocated nests.

Faults caused by stork nests have decreased from 0.74 to 0.07 and the costs associated with this nest management program are mainly labour related, as the devices used are simple in design and use inexpensive materials.

Rushcliffe Country Park

ACTIVITY DAYS

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

July

Sat 2nd	Pottery (Classroom) / Workshop (Outdoors) - Prep for Map Reading Trail
Wed 6th	Plan Tree ID Trail (Outdoors)
Wed 13th	Woodcarving Workshops Planning & Discussion (Classroom) Install Map Reading Trail (Outdoors)
Sat 16th	Gibbies Wood - Construct entrance & exit Archways to Log Maze
Wed 20th 	Wildlife ID Walk
Sat 23rd	Install Tree ID Trail

August

Wed 3rd	Woodcarving Workshop
Thurs 4th	FORCP Meeting 7.30pm - RCP Classroom. New Members welcome
Sat 6th	Woodcarving Workshop
Wed 10th	Woodcarving Workshop
Wed 17th	Woodcarving Workshop
Thurs 18th	Summer Social at Paddy & Peter's 6.00pm. (FORCP Members only)
Sat 20th	Woodcarving Workshop
Wed 24th	Woodcarving Workshop
Sat 27th	Woodcarving Workshop
Wed 31st	Woodcarving Workshop

September

Sat 3rd	Woodcarving Workshop
Sat 10th 	Hayrake with Wildlife Watch Group
Wed 14th	To be announced
Sat 17th/Sun 18th	Kite Festival
Wed 21st/Sat 24th/Wed 28th	All to be announced



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

Meet at the Rangers' Office at 9.30 am.

Unless stated all events run from 10.00 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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