

Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 32 Summer 2006



Toothill School Project

Friends may like to know a little background on this planned activity. Toothill Comprehensive is a school near Bingham that every year carry out an activity week prior to breaking up for the holidays. They like their children to engage in a conservation project serving the local community. It has been arranged that approx 50 pupils and 5-6 staff and parents will arrive at the Park on Monday 17th July. The day will be initially to familiarise the pupils with the park layout and facilities. They will visit Gibbies Wood and in 4 groups be introduced to their design projects.

A soil sculpture to be excavated out of the bank by the scrape pond. A proposed log snake in the glade where the soil hill was excavated. A mini 'fit-trail' will comprise a series of log structures giving young children safe challenges, to be installed along some of the paths and glades.



The pupils will set about designing and planning in teams from each starting brief. Tuesday 18th-Thursday 20th July - over these three days the groups may switch tasks as appropriate and work with the Rangers who will be equipped with chainsaws to size the logs used. The activities will be led by the staff from Toothill and the 'Friends' are there in a supportive role only. ALL are very welcome.

Friday 21st will be a day to finish off and review the week's achievements. The children will plan and carry out a presentation of their work in school on Friday evening where they will find out what other groups have done around Nottinghamshire.

Fund Raising

On Easter Sunday and Monday and May Day Bank Holiday, Paddy did a great job in organising a small team to serve teas, coffees, juice, biscuits, and cakes made by Paddy. It was a great success. We only gave three hours of our time each afternoon and raised £130.75. This will be added to our Restoration Fund for the Park.

It was interesting to meet the people who use the Park and to hear how much the projects we do on the Park are appreciated. If you can spare a few hours of your time to help out occasionally please contact Paddy or leave a message with the Rangers. **Jean**

Here we see Paddy in charge of Betty Broadberry and Jill Thurgood taken on one of the days. Congratulations to all ladies taking part which I know also includes Jean, Margaret and Grace.

I know a certain other lady would have taken part but declared herself 'arm-less' to get out of the washing up!

Hope it is repaired now.

Norman Ecob





OUTING TO TRESSWELL WOOD

A happy crew of Friends set out on Wednesday 26th April for Tresswell, near Retford. Morris provided transport - a Transit minibus - and in no time at all we arrived at the wood to be met by our host and a couple of his colleagues. We were treated to a fascinating walk and an account of the management of this ancient piece of woodland. We visited a site where the coppiced timber, mainly hazel, was made into hurdles and garden furniture. We were also given an interesting demonstration of how a charcoal kiln works.

Along our walk we saw plenty of nesting boxes and wild flowers were in profusion. One of Tony's friends also had us interested in his hobby - studying slugs...lovely? It was a very enjoyable day. Thanks again to Morris for driving and organising transport.



Roger Byrne

WILDLIFE UPDATE

Summer finally arrived and our third moth trapping session went ahead in perfect conditions. Unlike the first, in which we caught NO identifiable moths but over 30 male ichneumon wasps, and the second which was cancelled due to cold and wet weather.

The trap was operated from 21.00-04.30hrs and a total of 212 moths of 41 species were caught. Five species of Hawkmoth were captured, Lime (2), Elephant (4), Small Elephant (1), Eyed (2) and Poplar (5). Small Elephant is not common in Notts and is a very good record for the Park. In all, a total of 26 new species were caught on the night.

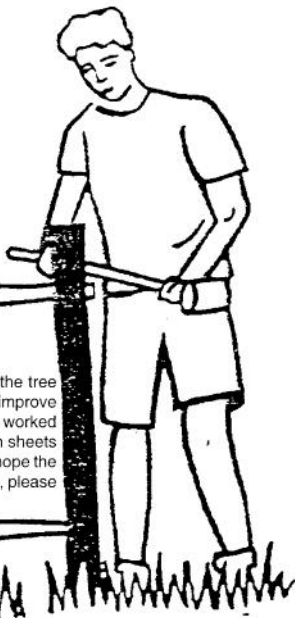
Since the last Newsletter no less than 38 species have been added to the lists; these include 31 moths, 5 wildflowers, 1 grass and 1 bird. The wildflowers include Pyramidal Orchid, only the third species of orchid for the site.

Here is a shot taken at a recent photo course where Speedy was a model. You are required to guess the caption for it by using a well-known saying (or two).

Clue: It is not a flea in his cap!

Look closer.

Norman



TREE TRAIL

Some of the Friends may have learnt that the gate and posts on the tree trail had been damaged. Work has now been completed to repair and improve the trail. The gate is now re-hung on substantial hinges and the Friends worked hard on carving numbered log markers for each tree type. Identification sheets have also been glued to other logs and all installed with stout pegs. We hope the public will enjoy and respect this super trail. If you haven't tried it out yet, please do!

Roger Byrne



Here are four stalwarts of Willow Weaving, the others were hiding around the corner in supervisory mode.

Not sure whether they are keeping us out or keeping themselves in.

On the same note the willow was placed in the "Lake" to keep moist and I spotted a pair of mallards preparing to move in the following day.

Must have been taking lessons from the travellers.

Norman

A GARDEN VISITOR

At this time of year if you are very lucky and very quiet, at twilight you may encounter a hedgehog in your garden. These delightful animals are nocturnal, but as the days are so long at the moment they quite often appear before nightfall. Our hedgehogs visit us on a nightly basis for a supper of chopped peanuts, sultanas and chopped boiled egg (**never, ever put down a saucer of milk or any dairy products as this is poisonous and will kill!**). We have been in our present house two years now and our hedgehog population has grown, the first year we only had one, last year we were lucky enough to have a mum and four babies turn up every evening for eats, and this year so far we have had eight at one sitting.



Of course there are also two dishes of water available, especially important with the general shortage of rainfall this year. In fact most of the hedgies when they appear make straight for the water bowl to refresh themselves before they commence their supper. The peanuts are chopped because whole peanuts can easily become trapped between their teeth. They are very noisy eaters.

Please do not use slug pellets, if you have a hedgehog he will take care of them for you. Also ponds can be death traps for them. Always make sure that anything that falls in can make an escape, use a brick or some chicken wire hung over the side of the pond like a scrambling net. Tennis nets are also dangerous and need to be rolled up out of harm's way. For further information please contact the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, 01584 890 801.

Angela Hall, a contributor by request.

Angela will be delighted to collect your used ink cartridges (via Norman) on behalf of the above society

THE MODEL OF THE PARK

The 3D model near the classroom had suffered from winter weathering and needed improving. The paint was blasted off and a base coat of fibre glass applied. Sue and Roger then worked hard to repaint the model. This was then covered with two more coats of fibre glass resin. It is hoped now that the model will last for a considerable time and require minimum maintenance. Many thanks to all who helped in the project.

Roger Byrne

SWAN UPDATE

As I write (15/06/06) there are still no cygnets. As they hatched on 21/05/05 last year they are now 3 weeks late.

Mick

MOTH TRAPPING SESSIONS


There will be one trapping session per month during July, August and September. Dates are not yet available due to holiday period but please keep an eye on the noticeboards.

Rushcliffe Country Park

ACTIVITY DAYS

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




July

Sat 1st	Community Garden
Wed 5th	Community garden
Sat 8th	Path edging with soil in Gibbies
Wed 12th	Photo workshop. Path edging in Gibbies
Thur 13th	FORCP Meeting 7.30pm - RCP Classroom. New members welcome
Sat 15th	Preparation for Toothill school project
Mon 17th	Toothill school will be carrying out project in Gibbies (‘Friends’ welcome all week)
Sat 22nd 	Summer Walk - Mini - Beast Safari
Wed 26th	Photo workshop and Revet and woodchip snake glade
Sat 29th	Revet and woodchip snake glade

August

Wed 2nd 	Woodcarving - natural sculpture forms and planting wild flowers along path edges
Sat 5th	Woodcarving
Wed 9th	Woodcarving. Planting Community Garden
Sat 12th	Maintain tree trail path
Wed 16th	Photo workshop. Collect coppiced timber for den building area
Thur 17th	Summer Social at Kate's. 6.00pm. FORCP members only
Sat 19th	Woodcarving - Installation in glades
Wed 23rd	Woodcarving - Installation in glades

September

Wed 6th 	Restocking tree nursery - collecting seedlings from around park
Sat 9th	Hay Rake
Wed 13th 	Restocking tree nursery - collecting seedlings from around park
Sat 16th	Plan NHP trail route and interpretation board sites
Wed 20th	Prepare trail route markers - paint/carve etc
Sat 23rd	Install trail route markers
Wed 27th 	Autumn Walk - Fungi Foray
Sat 30th	Install trail route markers



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.

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