

Friends News

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park (FORCP)

Issue 35 Spring 2007

Natural Heritage Project

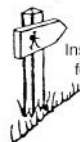
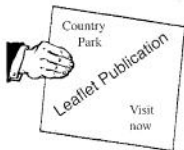
The conception and implementation in October 2006 of the Natural Heritage Project was a major undertaking by the Friends, but a challenge that has been met and surpassed with their usual hard work, creativeness and enthusiasm. Three quarters of the way through and with the end in sight (Hurrah I hear you Cry!) a great achievement has taken place and I feel all those who have contributed should be congratulated. In particular I would like to mention Margaret Lawson, Jean Gray and Roger Byrne who without their commitment, this Project, would never have taken place.

The development of Gibbies Wood since the first Project has created a real plus for the Park and one that will flourish in years to come. Seeing the enjoyment of those who have found Gibbies and comments such as "A hidden Gem" and "Better than the Play Area" make it all very rewarding. Well done everyone.

To date nearly 5000 voluntary hours and 15 different volunteer groups have been involved in the Natural Heritage Project and, seen the creation of: a new coppice woodland, wildflower verges and glades, a live willow birdhide, domes and a caterpillar, a new water habitat, a very popular log maze, a new willow mixed species coppice, woodcarved benches & flower seats, and a trim trail ending with "the piece-de-resistance" the grasshopper.



So what's left to do? The final stage work to be carried out between April to September 07 is the following:



Installation of Marker posts for Natural Heritage Trail

Mammal Trapping Workshop

Addition of soil to Gibbies Scrape to create Marsh habitat



Addition of home grown/collected saplings/wildflowers



Habitat stacks & pipes

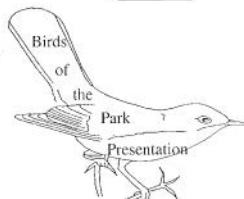
Seed Collection



Photographic collection



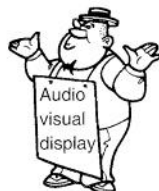
Website



Birds of the Park

Presentation

Mammals of the Park presentation



Audio visual display

PEBBLY BEACH REVISITED

Whilst the Christmas meal/walk was scheduled as Colwick Park Lakes access was through a housing estate and climbing over railings (there is an easier way, even a car park.....but not the same spirit of adventure). Once over the railings and up a grass bank it was 'Power walkers to the right and strollers to the left'. Guess who strolled.

As I proceeded in a westerly direction, I realised that this was the scene of my childhood fishing experience. Way before the gravel pits and lakes this was the original site of **Pebbly Beach**.

During the war years (not the Crimea) my mother introduced me to the ancient piscatorial art of jam jar fishing. You tied a piece of string around a jam jar, put a piece of bread inside and threw these into the river remembering to hold on to the other end of the string....waited a few minutes and then drew the jam jar out hoping for a fish inside. I eventually caught a stickleback.

Bearing in mind you have one jar, how do you keep your catch, continue fishing and manage to keep the jar intact? It cannot be done hence the name of Pebbly Beach.

Anyone want to buy some string, used once?

Back to the stroll.....I too came across the black swan (see picture) and it would appear to have the same temperament as the Rushcliffe one, i.e. hanging about with the white swans and suffering the occasional peck to have a nibble at any food available.



I retraced my way to the left-hand side of the housing estate and used the correct way to egress. Over to the Restaurant where all had a good meal. One member chose the exotic menu and had Ostrich. The notice on the bottom of the sweet menu 'bottomless custard jugs' was regarded as a challenge by quite a few members.

Norman Ecob



*Enjoying the meal at the end
of a good day out*

A VISIT FOR "FRIENDS" TO COLWICK COUNTRY PARK

On the 10th January twenty one Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park met at Colwick Country Park.

We walked for about 3 miles around the lake in very pleasant weather, pleasant company and pleasant surroundings. We saw lots of water fowl including an elegant Mandarin Duck, a Red Crested Pochard and a Black Swan. We thought the Swan was the one that had frequented Rushcliffe Country Park lake for a while, it did look vaguely familiar!! I don't suppose we will ever know.

At lunchtime we all went to the Toby Inn which did an excellent carvery and is well recommended. They obliged us with two large tables and the chatting continued.

We thought it would be nice to go to a different area where some people had not been to and they were very pleasantly surprised. It's not quite on our doorstep but a short car ride away.

The next destination for a short walk is already being talked about.

Dorothy Pearson



WILDLIFE UPDATE

On Friday 12th January, Radio Nottingham rang the Park to ask if a reporter could interview one of the staff regarding the unseasonably warm weather and the effect on the wildlife. In the event, 8 species of Wildflower were found flowering, six of which were between 2 and 4 months early. Since then 24 species have been found including Lilac Ivy-leaved Speedwell and Smooth Sowthistle.

Since the last Newsletter 3 new species of moths have been found on the new building, having been attracted to the lights overnight. The first, a small Brindled Beauty (17.02.07); this moth is stated as having its habitat in "mature oak woodland - seldom wanders from oaks". - I wonder if it could have been wind-blown from Sherwood Forest?

The second, a Dotted Border, first found on 25.02.07 and seen subsequently on 08.03.07 (3), 09.03.07 (1), 12.03.07 (1), 14.03.07 (1) and 17.03.07 (1) is more likely local as the caterpillar feeds on a wide range of trees and shrubs - but, the females of both these species are wingless and stay on the foodplant for their whole lives. Ignoring the small Brindled Beauty due to its dependence on mature oaks, does this mean that Dotted Border females are marching towards the Park - or have we imported eggs on trees and shrubs we've planted around the Park during the last year? I suspect the latter.

The third species, Dark Chestnut, is common throughout south and central Britain. The female flies during October to March and the male October to January. I suspect ours was a female as it was also caught on 25.02.07

Buff-tailed bumble bees put in an appearance on 06.03.07 (3) and have been seen on most days since with a maximum of 8 on 17.03.07, and a buzzard was seen over the Park on 08.03.07

Lastly, the (new) pair of swans have built a nest on the edge of the reedbed. Clearly visible from the area of coppiced willow it is positioned over deep water and hopefully out of reach of foxes, dogs and other predators.

Mick



GLASS PICTURE

The end of February saw the completion of a glass wall display in the foyer. The artist responsible was our dear friend 'Canadian Sue'. In one of her courses at college she made a glass picture with a water theme. Each glass brick was cast in a mould along with fine wire mesh to create underwater images.

Gordon very kindly took up the challenge of mounting these 24 glass bricks so that the light from the window could stream through Sue's creation.

Gordon designed an ingenious wooden frame with hidden steel support bars and each course of bricks was then laid with the special grout. Congratulations on your efforts. Sue will be receiving a photo of her work presently.

Roger Byrne

The new Willow Caterpillar



Subscriptions for the year 2007 - 2008 are now due - minimum £2.00. If you wish to continue receiving your quarterly newsletter please fill in the form below and return it to the Rangers' Office, Rushcliffe Country Park, Mere Way, Ruddington, Nottingham NG11 6JS

*Delete as applicable

*I/We wish to renew *my/our Subscription to the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park

Name.....

Address.....

Phone Number.....

Rushcliffe Country Park

ACTIVITY DAYS

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

Task Dates

April

Wed 4th
Wed 18th
Sat 21st
Wed 25th
Sat 28th

May

Wed 2nd
Sat 5th
* Wed 9th*
Wed 16th
Sat 19th
Wed 23rd
Sat 26th
Wed 30th

*Task plus FORCP Meeting 2.30pm
New Members Welcome*

June

* Fri 1st*
Sat 2nd
Wed 6th
Wed 13th
Sat 16th
Wed 20th
Sat 23rd
Wed 27th
Sat 30th


Moth Trapping (Dusk to Dawn)

Tasks to be Done

Creative signage for the Education Centre
Woodcarving

 Rescue the Dragonfly Pond


Revet & Woodchip the Tree ID Trail
Create the Bog Monster

 Collection & Transplanting of our own tree saplings

 Willow Planting

 Barley Straw Sausages

 Wildflower / Wildlife Identification Walks

 Help out our local Junior School St. Peters

Make ready the Den building area

New pond dipping area



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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BTCV
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