



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - MARCH 2009

Once again I am able to report that we have had another really successful year at the Park, the *Friends* having worked a total of 4511 hours during the last twelve months, an increase of 511 hrs over the previous 12 months. This averages at just under 87 hours per week, every week and does not take into account all work done at home by officers and the 'thinking' time by our very imaginative creators.

This is a considerable achievement and has contributed greatly to make Rushcliffe Country Park what it is today. I often stand back and think how lucky I am to be part of such a great team, every *Friend* having something to offer, whether it is coming up with ideas, putting them into fruition or enthusiastically using the tools of our trade.

What has all that time been spent on you may wonder? Well briefly, we have had the continuing maintenance of the previous projects i.e. the maze, seating, carvings and willow features. We have also started new tasks. Notwithstanding all this we have also found time to do conservation work, none more rewarding than hedge laying, planting new hedges followed by wood chipping the paths. Whatever the task it is always done willingly and cheerfully.

Some of the 'New' tasks completed in the last 12 months are:-

- Snake replacement
- 10 year seat
- Wooden puzzle
- Silhouettes
- Composting bin in tree nursery and Community garden
- Raised beds in Community garden
- Willow archways to Gibbies Wood
- Mushroom and toadstool carving and planting
- The piece de resistance, the wonderful dragon fly

I, for one, cannot wait until the bluebells are out, which we planted around the 10 year seat, to see what a splendid sight they look.

We did, of course, enter ITV's The People's Millions which was broadcast in November 2008. We were hoping to raise money for adult keep fit outdoor equipment. We were up against children from a poor estate in Leicester so did not stand a chance on the night. Everyone of the *Friends* made a great effort towards this project. Unsuccessful it may have been, but it proved again to me how united the *Friends* are.

As Chairman I would like to thank you all for the contribution you have made to our group of well motivated, skilled and very friendly *Friends* who have so much to offer Rushcliffe Country Park. I think Jean and Marie deserve a special mention and thank you, for the paper work they do behind the scenes.

Of course I would also like to thank Keith and the Rangers for their help and guidance in the past, which I have no reason to think will not continue.

*Dorothy*

## WILDLIFE UPDATE



The year got off to a flying start with two new plant species being added to the lists during January.

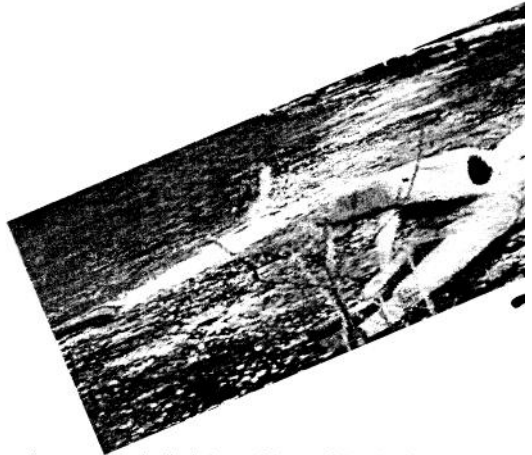
Whilst hedgelaying at Weggie Walk on 31st, Keith found Gorse growing in the hedgerow adjacent to the railway. On adding this to the database it was noticed that Broom (of which there are a few scattered plants) was also missing. This brings the total of wildflowers and introductions to 315.

Whilst bird ringing during February, a Reed Bunting was caught carrying colour rings which were added as part of a breeding study organised by the RSPB. This bird was originally caught in 2004 and aged as an adult making its known age not less than 6 years. i.e. it could not have been hatched after 2003 - a good age for a small bird.

The recording of mammals is normally only by sight, so if you're looking the wrong way you miss them. Not so in early February. The snow covering made it easy to identify five species by their tracks so Red Fox, Rabbit, Grey Squirrel, Brown Hare and Brown Rat were recorded in varying numbers. **Mike**



## WORK UPDATE



both the tree felling and the adjacent hedgelaying.

The snake in Gibbies was completely revamped 'fangs and all' with some of the felled sycamore and looks very impressive. The Lizard is next!!

Removal of the trees on the car park banks and shrubs were carried out, in the continued programme to improve car park visibility and security. Hedgelaying for this season was completed in February and hedgerow planting and gapping up commenced and completed in March.

Following a request from the Heritage Centre about the small woodland bank adjoining our car park & their new railway platform, coppicing & thinning was started. They were concerned about the heavy leaf fall on the platform creating a health & safety risk to their visitors. The work consisted of reducing the level of overstocked trees, crown lifting of the large trees, which will allow more light in, thereby enabling the creation of two new hedgerows either side of the bank. The coppiced hazel and ash was also used as stakes and binders for hedgelaying.

The winter work is coming to an end and thoughts are turning to spring and summer tasks of willow maintenance, barley straw sausages, flora & fauna walks, woodcarving, constructing benches, revamping the rest of the trim trail & log maze, and who knows what else? Watch this space!!

Thanks to everyone for all their hard work through the winter months. **Zoe**

# Swan News

On Wednesday 25th February a pair of swans dropped on to the lake and the residents immediately commenced hostilities. On Thursday 26th a male bird was noticed in P22 behind the reed bed, captured and taken to Holme Pierrepont for release. This bird carried ring number W14716 and was caught as an adult on 30th December 2008.

Keith captured the female near the Tree I.D. Trail on Saturday 28th Feb (wearing W14702) and this bird was also taken to Holme Pierrepont. W14702 was ringed as a juvenile on 10th September 2003 - her name Wilhelmina, the sister of the resident female.

W14716 is her second "husband", after her original mate was shot and died later on the way to the swan rescue centre.



## The Snake



### COFFEE AND CAKES AT RUSHCLIFFE COUNTRY PARK EVERY WEEKEND



This is just a dream at the moment! But it was decided at the A.G.M. that, with the generous offer from Keith that we may have the use of the Education Room on a regular basis, to trial a regular Sunday opening over this summer. This would be an added incentive for visitors to visit our lovely park and may make some money for the *Friends'* fund.

Many *Friends* relish the outdoor work within the park and come solely for that, but others would like to serve the park in other ways ie serving teas, coffees [once a year may be] and making cakes [ingredients refundable], as well as, or instead of, bark spreading and hedge laying etc.

I have offered to try to coordinate those who would like to help and to try to do this on Easter Sunday and then the first Sunday in each month. Also, if possible, to continue the custom on special days as has been done in the past.



If you would like to help, please leave your name and number at the Rangers' Office (9215 865) so that I can contact you and discuss your involvement. Please support this new venture occasionally or regularly - WE NEED YOU!



Sue Jackson

# Rushcliffe Country Park

## WORK DAYS

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

The Friends' Work Days will be held every **Wednesday and Saturday** from **Wednesday 1st April 2009 - Saturday 27th June 2009**

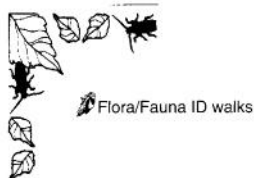
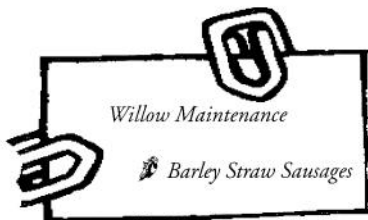
New Volunteers and Members always welcome. See tasks below.

### Notable Dates

FORCP Meeting - Wed 13th May 2009 - 1.30pm RCP

FORCP Meeting - Wed 8th July 2009 - 1.30pm RCP

### Tasks



Reburishment of log maze



Make benches from felled sycamore

Subject to weather and probably not until May or June, Moth Trapping sessions will begin - dates to be arranged.



*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**.