



Ruddington Spring Fair 2011

Margie Richards

We're very happy to report that overall takings at £1123 were within a pound or two of last year's result. In fact we anticipate the final result will be well ahead of last year's since the quiz sheets will continue to be sold for another three months. So thank you, shoppers, for your support. We hope you rewarded yourselves with refreshments in Marion's Café where excellent value home-made cakes and cream teas were available.

We hope you managed to find something to inspire you on the plant stalls as careful looking will usually reveal some unusual specimens. If you prefer the tried and trusted, there are always plenty of tomatoes!

The book stall must rival the organisation of the best kept library anywhere but the librarians' efforts were well rewarded with more books than ever being sold so we hope hours of reading pleasure will be experienced by the buyers.

This year saw even more



newcomers to the baking team and we had the most amazing array of cakes from regional, middle-eastern, traditional, to the unashamedly "damn-the-diet" variety. We also had some beautiful preserves and eggs from happy hens.

We could not hold this event without our many helpers. These are the people who provide plants, books, and cakes; these are the people who come along on Friday evening to help set everything up; these are the people who serve on the stalls, or help in the café; these are the people who stay behind at the end to help load up cars, sweep the floor, and put away tables. It's called 'The Big Society!' Thank you to all of you.

Ant attack!



Is an ants' nest a garden problem? Not when it's acting as a bird feeder for a green woodpecker! In summer, when ant colonies are particularly active, these colourful birds are attracted to the nests and will use their powerful beaks to dig out both ants and eggs, even from between paving slabs.

SF FAQ

We are often asked, "Do you manage to sell everything at the Spring Fair? And, "What happens to unsold stock?"

Well, home-baked cakes and the café usually sell out (or our team of volunteers polish-off any leftovers!) But we usually have unsold plants and secondhand books – there's a limit to how much we can sell in two hours.

Most surplus plants go to the NWT's Attenborough Nature Centre, which now sells plants to raise funds, and a few go to other local charities.

We keep some books for the next year's fair. Others go to local groups (e.g. Notts/Lincs Air Ambulance) or to charities such as Oxfam and BHF.

Of course this works both ways, as we sometimes benefit from donations of unsold goods from other people's fund-raising events...

Autumn talks

Our three talks this autumn have a theme, in that they're all given by speakers who are noted wildlife photographers as well as experts in their fields. Local falconer David Fox explores the relationship between wild birds of prey and falconry (we hope this talk will be attended by a special guest!). Next botanist Ian Whitehead contrasts the flora of Norway, alpine plants of the mountains and far north versus species of the sheltered fjords. Finally, Les Catchick lifts the winter blues by taking us on a wildlife tour of the colourful tropical rainforests of Costa Rica.

Wildlife recording

Many people take an interest in the wildlife they see, but did you know that sending the NWT a note of what you see helps us understand how wildlife is distributed in Nottinghamshire? If we don't know what's there then our conservation efforts are less effective. So please let our County Recorders know what you see and where you saw it. Our website has full details of the county recording system and contact details for the recorders.

www.southnottswildlife.org.uk

Our web site has information about local reserves (Wildlife Trust and others) with species records. Also details of our walks, talks and work parties, and other items relating to wildlife and nature conservation. The online edition of this newsletter is there, along with links to local and national wildlife related web sites.

www.nottsbirders.net

The Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers record bird life throughout the county, running many surveys of birds, habitat and rarities. Their excellent website is a portal into all this detail, and well worth a visit!

Newsletter contact details

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Out & About Programme

Saturday 20th August – *Staunton Quarry Nature Reserve* – Dragonflies, butterflies, midsummer wildflowers and pond dipping. 10am at Elton/Orston railway car park. Take A52 Bingham to Grantham, at Elton turn left by Manor Arms (signed Orston), car park ¼ mile on right. We will then drive to reserve. Contact: Gordon Dyne (0115 878 4842)

Saturday 10th September – *Countryside in Autumn* – Meet 10am at Rushcliffe Country Park Environment Centre, Ruddington for a day's walk in the Rushcliffe countryside across Ruddington Moor etc. Bring a packed lunch. Contact: Gordon Dyne (0115 878 4842)

Saturday 8th October – *Farmland Bird Walk* – Led by Neil Pinder. Meet 9am in Keyworth Square. Contact: Neil Pinder (0115 914 4896)

- Please wear appropriate outdoor clothing and boots when attending Out & About events
- There are no Out & About events planned for November and December 2011

Reserve Work Parties

Many south Notts reserve work parties take a midsummer break, so please check with reserve managers regarding July / August dates. The main work programmes on the reserves then begin in the autumn.

All work parties welcome new members!

Training and equipment will be provided. Please bring protective gloves and boots when attending a work party.

Bingham Linear Park – The work party meets on the third Sunday of each month, 10am at the Tithby Road bridge, Bingham. Contact Bill Bacon (0194 983 8585)

Bunny Wood – Meets at reserve entrance off A60 on Bunny Hill. 10am–4pm, third Sunday of each month from September to April. Work includes hedge laying, coppicing, etc. Contact Chris Terrell-Nield (0115 937 4906)

Keyworth Meadow – Offers of assistance on Sunday mornings between 9am and noon will be gratefully received. Contact Neil Pinder (0115 914 4896)

Sharphill Wood – Work parties are on the fourth Sunday of every month except August and December, 10am–4pm. Contact Bill Logan (0115 914 6999; email sharphillwood@yahoo.co.uk, or complete the form at www.sharphillwood.org/contactusform)

Skylarks – Work parties are arranged on an ad hoc basis so contact Keith Wakerley (0115 933 3280)

Wilford Claypit – Autumn and winter work is pond clearing, scrub, willow control and path laying. Dates are 10/9/11, 8/10/11, 12/11/11 and 10/12/11, 1pm–4pm. Contact Derek Rudge (0115 910 0712 or 0795 021 1083)

Wilwell Farm Cutting – Meets on the first Saturday of each month, 1pm–4pm. Contact Gordon Dyne (0115 878 4842)

Any last minute changes to dates, times and venues will be posted on the Group's website.

See the What's On diary at
www.southnottswildlife.org.uk

Talks Programme

Talks are held on the first Thursday in the month, at 7.30pm in room 5 at the West Bridgford Methodist Church, which is by the junction of Patrick Road with Musters Road, West Bridgford. (See www.southnottswildlife.org.uk for street map.)

Admission (including refreshments at the interval): adults £2.50 / children free.

6th October 2011 – *Birds of Prey and Falconry* – A talk about birds of prey and their place in falconry by David Fox, a local Nottinghamshire naturalist and falconer.

3rd November 2011 – *The Wild Flowers of Norway* – An illustrated talk on the plants to be found in Norway by Ian Whitehead.

1st December 2011 – *The Wildlife of Costa Rica* – An illustrated talk about the wildlife of this spectacular country by Les Catchick.

Talks contact: Dennis Heffernan (0115 923 1838)

Working for Rushcliffe wildlife

Gordon Dyne

Over the last few years Rushcliffe Borough Council has been funding Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to undertake additional activities to promote conservation in the area under a Service Level Agreement (SLA), a method of funding that has subsequently been picked up by a number of other councils in Nottinghamshire. The following is a précis covering the work the Trust (staff and volunteers) does in Rushcliffe.

In the past three years NWT have created management plans for Sharphill Wood, The Hook, The Green Line, Meadow Covert and Owthorpe Fishponds. It has also helped set up or provided advice and support to eight 'Friends' Groups, on a whole variety of issues from work parties to fundraising and websites. In addition we continue to manage our five nature reserves, which provide a range of opportunities for volunteer input and act as educational and training resources. In 2010/11 some 6,924 volunteer hours (estimated as worth £45k) were recorded for practical conservation work around the borough (not including committee or wardening or survey work). Further, a number of training opportunities were provided including first aid, hedge laying, survey and other practical skills.

The Trust also provides advice to landowners on wildlife-friendly management – carrying out 12 visits in 2010 plus 10 visits to Farmland B&B sites, 10 to Blue Butterfly and Grasslands for Wildlife sites.

A very important area of activity is in education and during 2010/11 our Education Officer has worked with 8 schools, 2 nursery schools and several Brownie & Guide groups, delivering 28 sessions in school grounds and on nature reserves. In addition 6 schools received detailed advice on improving their school grounds.

At a local level the South Notts Local Group has been busy attending summer fêtes and organising a year round programme of walks and talks. As well as running a web site, newsletter and generally promoting wildlife.

Hopefully this gives a feel for the range of activities the Trust undertakes in Rushcliffe on a shoe string budget (by no means all funded by the SLA). Truly an example of the 'Big Society' at work before the slogan was even coined!