



Really Wild!!



The Newsletter of the Mansfield & Ashfield Local Members Group
of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

Winter 2005

"Bringing the work of the Trust to your doorstep"

Memorable Moments in 2005

by Carol Pritchard

January- snowy walk at edge of Clumber Park. Could see deer grazing in the woods. They spotted me but did not flee. Not sure which type of deer as had missed that talk with Wildlife Trust!

February- talk about slugs with Wildlife Trust. Learned more than I believed possible, or necessary! Had not brought specimens but managed to inspect those brought by others & appreciate the differences. Not the cuddliest of beasts.

March- woodland flowers starting to appear including dogs mercury, wood anemone & wood sorrel. Early morning walks in Sherwood Forest. Very noisy woodpeckers to be heard, but rarely seen.

April- cowslips & early purple orchid on Hills & Holes in Warsop. Buzzard being mobbed by crows just off A60. Walk along Southwell trail enlivened by Chairman of group falling into culvert. Wonderful primroses at side of stream. Heard cuckoo in Warsop on 29 April. Bluebells starting to appear.

May- lots of tree & house sparrows feeding in the garden. Thrush doing well too smashed snail shells as evidence of their diet. Walk at Meden Vale in a delightfully wild area very close to habitation & a road. An oasis for birds & mammals. Saw water vole. Quality of river Meden has improved over last few years & looks very healthy. A worrying moment when it appeared Warsop Carrs status as a local nature reserve was under threat. Attended meeting when it became clear that only a few people were against it. The majority of the large audience clearly appreciated the improvements that have been made to the area & supported the future plans. Very pleased & inspired to hear the views of the majority.

June- nightjars on Budby Common spectacular noise of churring. Saw my first tree pipit the same night. Charming bird with parachute type flight. Also saw woodcock. Three types of orchid at Portland Park & other meadow land flowers on a chilly but bright evening. Meadow flowers in Warsop also impressive.

July- saw the Jacobs ladder flowers in Lathkil Dale. Only appear naturally in very few spots in the country. Are enclosed to prevent the sheep grazing them before they have flowered; beautiful colour.

August- tawny owl (I think) perching close to our house, or on it, in the evenings & screeching. See the English Longhorn cattle in Sherwood Forest. Excellent sunsets. Pond dipping at Rainworth introduced me to another strata of wildlife which I had barely noticed before. Walked along the canal near Worksop & saw hares in the adjacent field. Lots of butterflies too.

September- holiday in Northumberland purple heather on moors, huge nests of wood ants, stunning views, Druridge Bay full of wading birds, Kielder Water ferry trip. 1,000 tons of timber felled in Kielder each day, but it grows at the same rate & is therefore sustainable.

Fungi starting to emerge in Sherwood Pines & Sherwood Forest- large fly agaric in the cattle enclosure. Lots of russula as well.

October- hoping for spectacular autumn colour & plenty of sweet chestnuts.

Got a story to tell or comment to make?

For those of you with access to the internet we do publish all of our news items on the web site, and our selection for this newsletter on the whole is taken from those. We are interested to hear your views on wildlife issues or any interesting stories you have. Contact details are spread throughout these pages, so please make your comments freely.

YOUR GROUP NEEDS YOU!

If you have interest and/or energy, we need you! Our small band of volunteers needs extra hands. Enthusiasm for Nottinghamshire's wildlife rather than expertise is needed. -Join our friendly team.

Contact Rob 0870 748 4795

THE NATURAL CONNECTIONS PROJECT.

Nature on your doorstep

by Andy Lowe - Natural Connections Officer, Mansfield District Council

A green & pleasant place to live, a freely accessible landscape with woodlands, ponds & grasslands on your doorstep; with threatened or declining species such as white-clawed crayfish, water voles & kingfishers. You may be surprised to know that the area described is actually within Mansfield.

The Natural Connections Project is an exciting venture, working within Mansfield District Council to develop, designate & promote areas that are rich in wildlife as a series of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). The project was set up by a joint venture between Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust & Mansfield District Council; NWT had the foresight to see the opportunity to obtain funding for this project from English Nature's Wildspace! Fund. This would allow the Wildlife Trust to work in partnership with Mansfield District Council to deliver both of our organisations objectives.

LNRs are designed to protect important local habitats & wildlife for the enjoyment of the local community, the council designates the sites after consultation with English Nature. It is recommended by English Nature that "everyone should have accessible greenspace within 300m of their home... & that LNRs or green open spaces provision should be a minimum of 1 hectare for every 1,000 population". Mansfield District Council has committed itself to achieving this goal & is already much further advanced than any other council in the county, having declared a total of nine LNRs covering approx 70 hectares, the council requires a total of one hundred hectares to meet the EN target.

The plan is to create interconnected reserves along the two main river valleys that flow through the district. This will provide a green corridor for wildlife to move along through the town enabling them to populate new areas. Many of the species already present on these reserves are present in higher densities than the surrounding area, & many have been lost completely in the wider countryside. Another function of the LNR's is to provide communities in Mansfield access to green space & wildlife, with easy access to the wider countryside.

The Natural Connections Officer produces management plans for each reserve to guide

the future management of these important sites to protect & encourage greater biodiversity. These plans are sent out for consultation to a wide range of people & copies are made available for local communities at public buildings such as libraries, council offices & via web-sites. Questionnaires are also sent to adjoining properties to solicit opinions.

The final management plans & their instigation will hopefully protect & enhance the reserves existing habitats & landscapes for the benefit of the wildlife. Many of these sites contain Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) priority habitats & species, for example wet broad leaved woodland & water voles & many of these species are now rare or in some cases have been lost altogether from the wider countryside.

Through the development of the LNRs the project is also working to increase the amenity, recreation & education value of these sites for local communities by providing volunteering opportunities such as through membership of Friends Groups, which are encouraged on all the LNRs. The sites are well publicised to increase awareness & use of the sites for recreation. One of the ways that this is achieved is through a programme of events for the general public including a dawn chorus / health walks & school visits. It is hoped that through these events people can learn more about the wildlife of Mansfield.

The sites that have been designated as Local nature reserves are:-

The Carrs Market Warsop; Maun Valley Park; Meden Trail; The Bottoms Meden Vale; Quarry Lane Walkway; Oak Tree Heath; Oakham; Ravensdale; The Hermitage.

So, enjoy the countryside & wildlife areas of Mansfield & remember that local nature reserves are protected sites for the enjoyment of all.

The Natural Connections Project is a partnership between Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Mansfield District Council, English Nature & the New Opportunities Fund.

Visit our Web Site

<http://www.nottswildlifetrust.org.uk>

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Culture & Nature on Two Events

John Woods, Sherwood Ranger & budding poet led us on two consecutive events in July & August as well as entertaining us with his own poems inspired by the area in which he lives & works

Rainworth Water Walk

We met just off the new bypass but were soon able to forget the traffic & immerse ourselves in the surroundings & his local tales & poetry inspired by the area. Much work is being done to improve the habitat for wildlife from its industrial period. The trees are perhaps still too young & regimented but there was evidence of areas for butterflies in particular. We looked for the dingy skipper that is keen on birds foot trefoil but sadly could not spot it.

We spent some time watching kestrel on the hill who were watching the rabbits & hoping for prey. There was an obscure bird on a telegraph pole which turned out to be a magpie trying to disguise itself. It is a very peaceful area (when the motorbikes are not around) & an excellent example of what can be done to improve old pit areas for wildlife & human enjoyment.

Many apologies to those who did not manage to find our meeting spot that evening. I understand they had an alternative walk on L lake & saw seal, otter, kingfisher & possibly a puffin!!! Don't believe a word of it.

Pond Dipping- Tippings Wood

It was a barmy evening – sorry I'll start that again. It was a balmy evening in August. We met at a picnic site near Blidworth (& managed to get everyone at the same meeting point this time!). Our leader was John Woods again & he was armed with nets & species guides & poems. The pond did not look very inspiring at first but as we dipped many squiggly beasts emerged into our trays.

I managed to identify leech, water boatmen, various larvae, tadpole & snails. There were also toad, mosquito larvae & scorpion larvae. We had a fascinating insight to a different world. We heard larger fish jumping but I did not manage to spot them – rumours of carp & pike!

We also walked over the rest of the site which is a large area of restored pit tip. There are lovely views & the sunset was wonderful. Learnt the difference between pendicular & sessile oak (stem on the leaf & no stem on the acorn makes it sessile, stem on the acorn & not on the leaf makes it pendicular) & heard a poem about Mike the Mallard. The volunteers that work in that area have achieved a great deal. It is a wonderful area for a variety of habitats.

Spring by Rainworth Water

by John Wood - March 2005

The Aspen trees of leaf are bare,
Beside the water rippling by,
Blue Tit, on a Hawthorn, perched,
His form, against a cloudy sky.

Greefinch, his strangled call emits,
Snipe towers high on fleeting wing,
& from the plank which spans the stream,
I listen to a Goldfinch sing.

Carrion Crow from Alder calls,
By the gurgle & the gush
Of Rainworth Water passing by,
Relentless, on its daily rush.

Winter's silence, broken now,
As birds awake with strains of spring,
The coming season & the joys
it brings to every living thing.

Rushing, Gushing,
Forcing Bud,
Birdsong, electric,
Fresh, so good,
Busy hedgerow,
All a-ring,
I wait to hear
The Warblers sing.

Send in your pictures

Derek, our web master is still looking for member's pictures to put onto our website galleries. If you have any pics you would like to share with the rest of the membership & indeed the whole world let Derek know by email or phone - he'll be pleased to hear from you



If you are keeping up with the news as published on our website (too much to print on these pages) you will be aware that our Jeune Price was nominated to be a Trustee and our webmaster Derek was co-opted to the Resource & General Purposes Committee for the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. If you can spare a couple of hours once a month to help on this or any of the other committees I am sure Paul Learoyd at The Old Ragged School would be pleased to hear from you.

Visit our Web Site

<http://www.nottswildlifetrust.org.uk>

Design & Artwork by

Hartwood Communication 0870 747 6481



Recycling with a Wormery

Jeune Price

It took me an hour this morning to sort out the wormery. This involved persuading the worms to move into the layer below leaving me with 3 buckets of wormless compost to do with as I wished. Most of the worms had burrowed down overnight after I left the lid off, but some didn't want to move.

As a result of ferreting around I can tell you what takes the longest to rot down: avocado skins; fruit stones, particularly cherry & avocado again; tea-bag outers; egg shells and RHS membership cards even when shredded. (The card seems as lasting as the laminate).

In passing, a stray thought has struck, if you dislike worms then maybe it's better to give a wormery than to receive one.

My wormery arrived four years ago. I'm sure because it coincided with the arrival of granddaughter number 1. Both were Christmas presents and needed immediate care.

The bin had to be set up out of the cold & the worms introduced. No, they couldn't be left for a fortnight.

We were three hours away from home. Daughter was thrilled to have a wormery in her basement kitchen.

The good news was that the worms travelled well. Once home they have wriggled & munched their way through four years worth of kitchen waste & provide gunge for the garden. (compost & liquid feed).

They just get on with it, simmering gently. The wormery is sited in the garage for most of the time, being quick & easy to get to & frost free. They survive on little attention. I throw in the waste, sometimes chopped, sometimes whole. The worms don't seem to care, the latter just takes longer to break down. Twice a year the wormery is given a sort-out.

It's good the wormery: good idea, good design, complete. It produces food for the plants & provides me with a sense of smug satisfaction when irritating bits of paper disappear into the worms & reappear as compost. It allows me to recycle righteously.

Catastrophe Averted

As our talks season gets underway our scheduled speaker for the September talk had some distressing news and had to fly overseas at the last minute. This left us with only 3 days to find an alternative speaker. So we extend our thanks to Keith Stringfellow for stepping in at short notice to present his 'Patterns in Nature' talk. We would hope to bring you Phil Palmers talk on the History of British Bird Watching later on in the season.

Can You Hear Me Mother?

As you will know we have been trying to raise money to purchase a PA system for the group so that our guest speakers can compete with the heating system in the School Hall. Well we haven't quite made it yet, but with the help of Hartwood Communications we have been able to order the equipment and it will be available for the October talk (so bring your ear defenders).

Forthcoming Events

Our programme of walks & talks continues throughout the rest of the year & though the dates below are set we still have to confirm the topic of some of the talks. For up to date information please look on our web site <http://www.nottswildlifetrust.org.uk/events.htm> or telephone any of the numbers displayed at the bottom of the pages of this newsletter. The Talks are held at Abbey Gates Primary School, Vernon Crescent, Ravenshead at 7.30pm. Entry to talks is £1.50 (including refreshments) to members & non-members alike.

Monday 10 October

Talk: **'By the hand of man...'**

County archaeologist Ursilla Spence gives a fascinating account of how the Nottinghamshire landscape was formed

Monday 12 December

Talk: **'Fantastic Mr. Fox'**

Derek Warren gives us an insight into the life of our favourite urban animal from his vast experience studying foxes.

Monday 14 November 2005

Talk: **'Wildlife through a lens'**

Local birdwatcher & photographer Chris Gunn shows us how to improve our wildlife photography.

Monday 9 January

Talk: **'A big country'**

Charles Langtree sets out NWT's ambitious vision to create large areas for wildlife in Nottinghamshire

Visit our Web Site

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