



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

Jul 2025
to
Sept 2025



Rangers Office
0115 921 5865

Our website
www.friendsofrcp.org.uk

Issue 108

Friends Newsletter



Photograph taken on the dawn chorus walk by Janet C.

Green Flag Award 2025/26



We are happy that our park has been awarded the Green Flag award for the nineteenth consecutive year. <https://www.greenflagaward.org/park-summary/?park=72> A great deal of effort from our management, staff and volunteers is needed to maintain the necessary standards.

Our neighbours at Sharphill Wood have also received the award for their third consecutive year. They do not have rangers; all the onsite physical work is done by volunteers and the administration for the award is done by Alastair.

John Y editor.

Carving

We still had some pieces of Norway maple sourced from the park and these have been used to make perch benches for the ladybird trail and Gibbies wood



Photos by Austin S

Photo by John Y

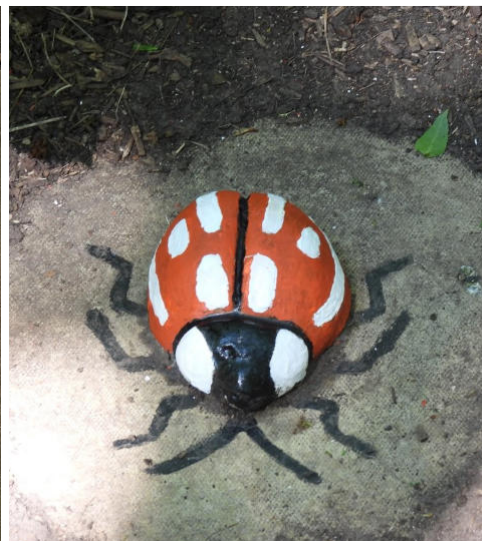
Mushrooms and Ladybird Trail



Friends may notice that the mushrooms have been refurbished. Ranger Steve sourced some new timber off the park and began creating new mushrooms. I assisted with John Hubbard to route and paint new numbers. On Thursday Steve and myself removed the old mushrooms and installed the new. Steve also added fresh wood chip.

Roger

Photo by Steve



Several weeks ago, I was tasked on repainting the ladybirds. I had collected new paint and brushes . Eight volunteers came forward to help and set forth on the project. With so many hands available we finished the trail to a high standard. Thanks to all who helped

Roger



Photos by Janet C

New Season's Honey

The hot dry weather this year has suited the bees. Almost every day has been a foraging day. The bees have been busy collecting nectar which they convert into honey before storing it in super boxes placed on top of the hives. These supers have been filling up fast.

When the stored honey has the correct moisture content, the bees cover the cells with a thin wax capping. This tells us the stored honey will keep well. To extract the honey for jarring, we first clear the worker bees from the super boxes, uncap the frames and then spin the frames in a honey spinner. Thankfully, we now have an electric motor to help us, as using a hand crank is pretty tough on the shoulders! The resulting honey is then double sieved before jarring.



Our first extraction for 2025 has yielded 180 jars from 5 super boxes. Jars are available to buy at £6.50 each from the Friends' shop on a Wednesday morning, the Coffee and Cake kiosk by the lake, or from the Heritage Centre café.

We have just performed a second honey extraction so plenty more jars of delicious park honey are on the way!

Jan Riffat (on behalf of the beekeeping team).

Au revoir to John's Jottings And Hello to Janet's Nature Diary

Thank you very much John Elwell for writing your regular column since issue 66 published in March 2015. This is a big 10 year achievement.

We welcome, starting on the following page Janet's Nature Diary written by Janet Crowe. Please support Janet by providing information and photographs.

John Youngs editor.

Janet's Nature Diary

April All photos in this article by Janet C except where stated.



Rainfall (in nearby Keyworth) was only 8.5 mm for the month (as against 94mm in 2024).

A warm and extremely dry month saw the Mute Swans nesting in the same area as 2024 and at least two pairs of Coots with chicks, who on the one hand attentively feed their young, whilst on the other, assertively defend their territory and family.



Holly Blue Butterflies appeared late in the month joining Brimstones, Orange tips, Peacocks, Speckled Woods and various Whites.

Marsh marigolds provided a welcome splash of colour on the lake margins and in the woodland, delicate white wood anemones.

A Reed Bunting was heard and seen amongst the reeds and Reed Warblers too were making their presence known, as was a very vociferous Wren at the end of the staff car park.



A single majestic Great Crested Grebe has returned to the lake and Little Grebe are seen regularly.



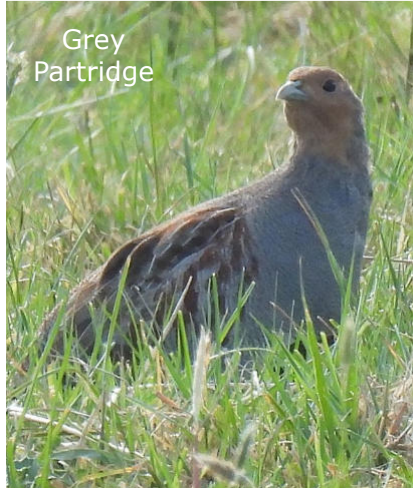


May

Rainfall 11mm (69.5 mm in 2024)

Another warm dry month.

Ranger Chris encouraged several of us to brave the early hour and attend a Dawn Chorus Walk on Sunday May 4th. It was a glorious morning (see sunrise cover photo) and we heard/saw 28 bird species including Blackbird, Wood pigeon, Robin, Rook, Chiffchaff, Song Thrush, Blackcap, Moorhen, Goldfinch, Coot, Reed Warbler, Wren, Mallard, Mute Swan, Chaffinch, Tufted ducks, Blue Tit, Dunnock, Magpie, Pheasant, Green Woodpecker, Crow, Jackdaw, Whitethroat, Great Tit, Reed Bunting, Great Crested Grebe and Stock Dove. Back at the visitor centre we were then treated to toasted muffins and a cuppa, very nice too!



Grey Partridge

Reed Warbler



Black-tailed Skimmer Female

Stately Yellow Flag irises brightened the lakeside and the Marsh Orchids were starting to flower.



Sarah made the first Damselfly sighting of the year with a teneral (young) Common Blue on Wednesday 5th, followed later the same morning by myself seeing Common Blue, Large Red, Blue-tailed and Red-eyed damselflies amongst the reeds. Later in the month came the Four-spotted Chaser and Black-tailed Skimmer Dragonflies plus Azure Damselflies.

In the middle of the month, the keenly watched Swan pair hatched 5 cygnets and they are growing fast.

Common Partridge have been seen, first reported by the Rangers and later spotted by me in the meadow at the Bradmore end of the park.

June



Large White



Meadow Brown



Small Skipper



Small Tortoiseshell



Female Emperor



Banded Demoiselle
Photo by Sarah G

Rainfall 26mm (28mm in 2024)

It has been very hot at times with warm drying winds and near the end of the month some trees are shedding a few leaves.

Floral treats of the month have included Marsh Orchids, Marsh Marigolds, Ox-eye daisies, Monkey flower, Buttercups, some Common Spotted Orchids, a few Bee Orchids and colourful wildflowers around the visitor centre.

Rosemary had a brief sighting of a Common Redstart near the seasonal pond after the Bird ID Merlin app had picked it up.

Emperor Dragonflies have been very active over the lake with the males patrolling their patch while the females lay eggs into the lake surface vegetation. The occasional Banded Demoiselle has been spotted and Black-tailed Skimmers pose for photos whilst sunbathing on the pathways.



Black -tailed Skimmer M

A beautiful few months for my first Nature Diary. Janet Crowe

Some new additions to the Park's species list this summer



Spindle Ermine Moth caterpillars, *Yponomeuta cagnagella*. Many of you will have seen the denuded spindle trees covered in webs and caterpillars at the far end of the Artex Plantation. The caterpillars are predated on by birds, spiders, insects and mammals, the remaining ones have now pupated and the trees have a good covering of new leaf.



Garden Chafer, *Phyllopertha horticola*. found on the lake side grass. This is a common, large foliage beetle in the Scarab family first described by Carl Linnaeus in 1758. It lays its eggs in the soil, where they hatch and remain feeding on roots, taking 2-3 years when eventually they pupate, emerging as an adult insect in the early summer.



Crescent Plume Moth, *Marasmarcha lunaedactyla*. This attractive moth was found on the lakeside; the larvae feed on Rest Harrow, *Ononis repens*, which is abundant on the lakeside and gets tangled in the machines during the yearly mow, hence the common name of Rest Harrow.



Plant Bug, *Deraeocoris flavilinea*, found in the regenerating patch behind the Park boundary boulder. This bug was originally described in Sicily but rapidly spread eastwards, eventually reaching the UK when it was first recorded in 1996.



Potato Capsid, *Closterotomus norvegicus* feeds on a variety of plant especially nettles, composites and clover. It is preyed on by birds and ground beetles.



Black Beetle, *Chrysolina oricalcia*, it's favourite foods are cow parsley and hog weed, feeding on the leaves and possibly pollen. The domed elytra (hardened forewings) are black and covered in dimples, it is relatively common in Nottinghamshire. Pictures by Sarah G Rosemary

Park Orchids 2025

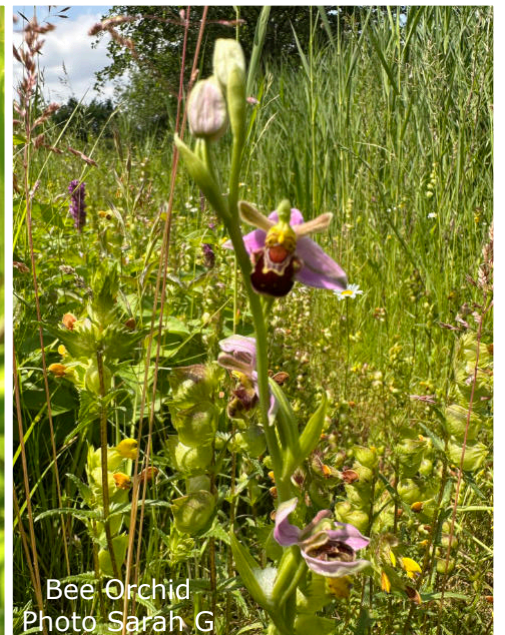
The annual Lakeside orchid count was done on 11th June, a hot and sunny day. This summer has been very dry. The last significant rainfall was over the night of the 27th/28th May when 17mm fell, recorded locally by Janet.



Southern Marsh
Photo Janet C



Common Spotted orchids
Photo Rosemary D



Bee Orchid
Photo Sarah G

There were 1080 Southern Marsh orchids, *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Compared to 1433 in 2024). There were 7 bee orchids, *Ophrys apifera* about the same number as last year; a few more of them have been found elsewhere in the Park.

A week later Common spotted orchids, *Dactylorhiza fuchsia*, have flowered around the Park, their leaves are green with purple oval spots. These were first recorded in the Park in 2004 and they are the most common orchid in the UK.

Mick, Rosemary and Sarah.



RUSHCLIFFE COUNTRY PARK WILDLIFE DAY

Tuesday 26th August 8.30pm – Bat walk

Wednesday 27th August 10am to 3pm – Main event

Come and join us in identifying and counting the wildlife species living in the park.

It's free, just come along and join in with the activities.

Tuesday 26th August evening

8.30pm Bats Walk - meet outside the visitor centre for an evening stroll looking for bats around the park.

Wednesday 27th August 10am to 3pm.

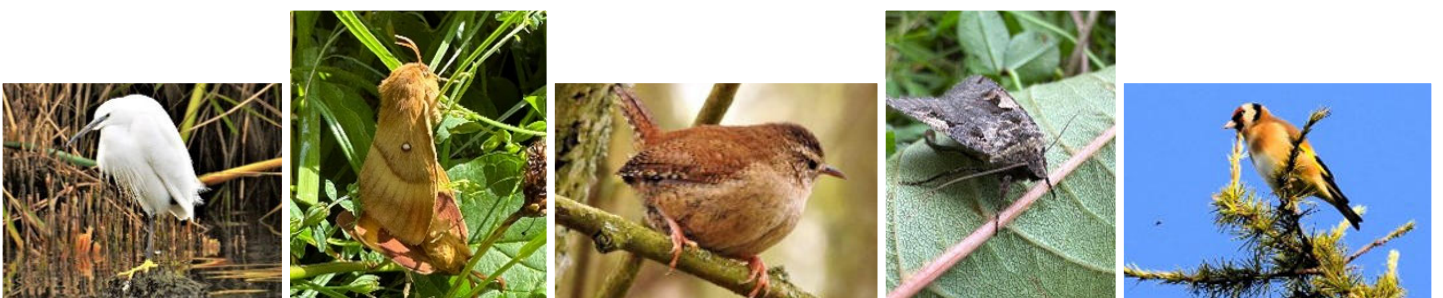
Join us by the play area for various walks, stalls and activities throughout the day. Do your own survey or accompany our experts looking for birds, plants, dragonflies or mini-beasts.

Join in walks at various times during the day starting by the children's play area.

When you arrive please check the times of the activities and book in.

Various other stalls and children's craft activities will be running during the day.

A selection of guides will be available to help in identification. If you have a smartphone, apps or websites are useful for identification purposes (e.g. the iNaturalist or Flora Incognita apps, or the iSpot website). It is worth exploring these in advance of the event.



From the Editor

Thank you to the authors who have contributed articles and photographers who have sent photographs to me. So far, looking through this newsletter you might imagine that we are mainly a wild life club. Of course that is a proper major part of our activities. I try to maintain a balance of material in the newsletter so here are some pictures, one from Austin but mainly my own illustrating what we do as well as recording the wildlife in the park. Please for the next issue will you make my job a little easier by writing articles on our varied activities. John Youngs.



Socialising before the morning briefing.
Photo by Austin.



Repairing Potholes



Gardening



Preserving Sculptures





Above. Maintaining the Tyre Maze
Left Tool Sharpening and Bridge Painting
Below Tea break.



Removing the fence from around the Artex Plantation. It is intended to let this blend into the surrounding woods with woodland paths.

Dates

There will be a Nature day on 27th August and bat walk on the preceding evening
Details in the flyer above.

Work Days

**The Friend's work days will be held every Wednesday.
Meet at the Education Centre at 9.30 am.
New volunteers are always welcome.**