

# Shipley Country Park Newsletter - Summer 2008

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## Our Feathered Friends In Summer

Shipley Country Park is home to many types of bird who live here throughout the year. There are, however, many other species who are regular visitors, arriving here every Summer to breed after spending the Winter in Africa or the Mediterranean countries. We have been joined by our regular Summer visitors. The most easily seen are the Swallow and the Swift as they spend a lot of time on the wing often feeding on insects over open fields or areas of water.



Swallows usually return to the same locality each year and often to exactly the same nesting site. Swifts spend virtually their whole life in the air, feeding, mating and even sleeping on the wing.



They are such proficient flyers, they can even out fly birds of prey.

Another well known Summer visitor is the Cuckoo, whose arrival is a sure sign that Summer is underway.

The male bird announces his presence from a high perch using the same monotonous but musical note "coo-coo".



The females call consists of an explosive bubbling chuckle. The birds are far more often heard than seen. The female lays up to 12 eggs singly in other birds nests and then takes no further part in their upbringing. The young cuckoos are raised by their foster parents often at the expense of their own young.

Many of our other Summer visitors belong to the Warbler family. The most common and easily heard is the Chiff Chaff (shown), named after the notes of its

song, a high pitched "Chiff" followed by a lower "chaff", often sung from a high perch in a tree or bush.



A very similar looking bird is the Willow Warbler, which frequents any area of woodland or shrub, not just Willows.

A third member of the family is the Blackcap, a small greyish bird, the male with a glossy black cap and the female with a brown cap. If disturbed its scolding call is "tacc-tacc" and sounds like two stones being stuck together.



It nests in woods, tall hedgerows or gardens and some individuals have recently started to overwinter in Britain due to the warming of the climate.

## Wildlife Garden

We are currently spending some time on the development and management of the wildlife garden. The intention is to improve both the garden and the pond to benefit the resident and visiting wildlife. We have managed the hedgerow at the rear of the garden by the traditional method of hedge-laying. This helps to prolong the life of the hedgerow and thickens out the base of the hedge to provide a better habitat for wildlife.

We have introduced more wildflowers and have also seeded part of the garden with a wildflower mixture. The bushes alongside the Volunteer Base have been trimmed to allow more light to the floor to encourage the growth of wildflowers. We have been assisted by the young people from the Nature Watch Club in providing a bird table and home made bird feeders and nectar feeders to encourage visits by birds, butterflies and mini-beasts.

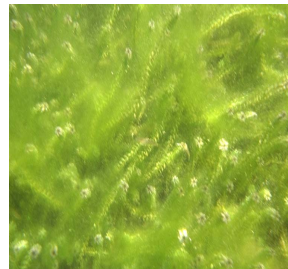
Future plans include the introduction of more native wildflowers and more aquatic vegetation for the pond. We are also going to place Barley straw in the pond to discourage the growth of algae. The Nature Watch Club are going to construct bird and bat boxes and create habitat piles to encourage more wildlife to make use of the garden.

## Barley Straw in Adams Pond

You may have noticed the Straw Boom floating on the surface of Adams Pond, held in place by the buoyancy of plastic footballs. The Straw is Barley Straw and it is being used to control the development of algae.

Algae causes a number of problems in water. It impedes the flow of water, blocks pumps and sluices, interferes with recreational use particularly fishing. It is unsightly causes odour problems and reduces the oxygen levels in the water.

In extreme instances it creates a health hazard to humans and wildlife. The Barley straw is used because once it starts to decompose it releases chemicals which inhibit the growth of algae. Barley Straw offers a cheap, environmentally acceptable way of controlling algae in water bodies ranging from garden ponds to large reservoirs with no known undesirable side effects.



ALGAE



BARLEY STRAW

## Green Flag Award Scheme



The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. The award scheme began in 1996 as a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country. It was also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas. Awards are given on an annual basis and winners must apply each year to renew their Green Flag status.

Shipleigh Country Park was visited by the Green Flag judges on Friday 9th May 2008, and the judges spent most of the day with us and were shown around the park by the Area Manager John Holmes. We were judged against eight criteria including Healthy, safe and secure, Clean and well maintained, Conservation and heritage and Community involvement. We are expecting to hear whether we have achieved Green Flag status later in the Summer.

## Lodge Farm Opencast Site

The opencast mining application at Lodge Farm was approved by the Secretary of State in 2007. The land on the edge of the Country Park is currently being prepared for mining operations to start with trees and hedgerows being removed, fencing under construction and footpaths being diverted. The mining operations are planned to last for four years and six months and will have progressive restoration. Derby University will monitor the water quality of Mapperley reservoir and the Green Health organisation has been commissioned to grow the trees which will be planted as part of the restoration process. An Opencast Liaison Group has been formed to keep local organisations informed of the progress of the scheme.

## Footpath Improvements

We are currently in the middle of a series of improvement projects to footpaths and bridleways around the park. The paths to and around Osbornes Pond have been renovated and a flight of steps at the inflow end of the pond have been improved. The footpath through John Wood, previously virtually impassable for many months of the year, has been improved and now provides dry access throughout the year, linking Bell Lane to Mapperley Reservoir. A third route currently under repair is the footpath link from Cinderhill Coppice into the fields leading to Shipley Hill. We are stoning up the area around the access gap to ensure the route is usable all year round.

## Friends Of Shipley Country Park

The “Friends of Group” met on the 16th April and agreed a constitution, elected their various officers and started the process of opening a bank account. The membership fee for the first year was agreed at £2 for adults and £1 concessions - under 16's, students and pensioners. More members are actively being sought and if you are interested in joining the “Shipley Friends” please contact Gary Wain on 01773 719961. The group are keen to start some of their own projects in the park and have already identified some possible tasks. The intention is to also start to fundraise, so that some larger scale habitat development and management projects can take place. The next meeting for the group is to be held at the Visitor Centre, in the Country Park on Wednesday 12th June at 7.00pm.



## TOP TEN BIRD SOUNDS OF SUMMER



Willow Warbler	Sounds like ball bouncing down the stairs (musical scale)
Blue Tit	See see “shut up” churrup
Great Tit	Tee cher, Tee cher
Wren	Sounds like a machine gun
Robin	Warbles and trills
Blackbird	Alarm call sounds like “Chuck tchook
Chaffinch	Listen for “atichoo” at end of song
Chiff Chaff	Sings his name
Goldfinch	widow wit, widow wit chew up
Yellow Hammer	Little bit of bread and no Cheeeese



# SNIPPETS!

## **Trim Track Consultation**

We have recently carried out a consultation exercise amongst the park users regarding the future of the Trim Track. We received a very good response from the public with a large majority in favour of retaining the Trim Track exercise points. We have decided to retain most of the Trim Track exercise points and also to seek funding to revamp it during the year. Some obsolete and dangerous pieces of equipment will be removed.

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## **We're growing our own bird table**

Visitors to the Country park may have noticed that we have cultivated an area of land near the adventure playground, on the western flank of Cinderhill. This is an experimental sowing scheme to provide wildflowers in the Summer and seed for wild birds during the coming Autumn and Winter.

Loss of Winter food is a major factor in the decline of farmland birds, including Sky Lark, Linnet, Yellow Hammer, Grey Partridge and the rare Corn Bunting. We are hoping this small area may attract a variety of these birds over the coming months. If successful, we plan to extend the area next year.

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## **Vandalism**

The Country Park has suffered from a spate of vandalism over the last few months. The notice board opposite the volunteer centre has been destroyed and the interpretation panel and finger post in Coppiceside car park have been badly damaged and had to be removed. The vandals have also targeted trees and have sawn down 2 Poplars, 3 Silver Birch and a Field Maple in and around the car park, as well as a number of Willows at Osborne's Pond. The police have been contacted and are working closely with us to try to ensure the vandalism is stopped. The CCTV cameras on the nearby industrial estate are to be trained on to the Country Park to try to catch the vandals. If anyone observes any vandalism, please contact the police or the Country Park on 01773 719961 with the details, but do not under any circumstances approach the vandals yourself.

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## **Mini-Beasts**

The new exhibition featuring mini-beasts will be on show in the Visitor Centre starting from Saturday, 21st of June until Saturday the 6th of September.

## **Forthcoming Summer Events 2008**

### **JUNE**

#### **Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th June (1pm - 5pm) - Derbyshire Literature Festival - Wondrous tales from around the world**

A children's and family storytelling festival with children's activities, creative play and storytelling. Joint event with Amber Valley Borough Council.

### **JULY**

#### **Sunday 6th July (11am - 4pm) Insect Show**

Join Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society for their annual show, with live insects plus gifts, books and plants for sale.

#### **Sunday 13th July (1pm - 5pm) Stanley Stroll**

Explore the network of footpaths around Smalley, Stanley Common and Mapperley and discover the natural history of the area.

**To book** on to events please contact : 'Call Derbyshire' - 08456 058 058.  
**For further information** about events, including charges, please contact Shipley Country Park Visitor Centre (01773 719961).