

Issue No 10. Autumn 2006

This is the time of year when we sit down to discuss the Winter work programme. A bit like gardening, habitat maintenance sees much of its work done when plants are dormant. This means that the Reserve is ready to be enjoyed in the Summer months when only a light programme is needed to keep it looking its best.

And speaking of which I think we should congratulate Sue, Jez and our volunteers on the work they have done this year. I can't remember the Reserve ever looking better in the years I have been involved with it. In particular, the pathways have been beautifully maintained and access to every part of the Reserve has been much easier as a result. The new steps on the Woodland Walk and the improvements to some of the walkways are just two examples of what has been done.

Many of you will remember from past years that we have had "volunteer weekends" when we ask as many people as possible to come in to give us a hand with some of our larger projects. This year is no exception and we will be holding weekends in December, January and February. I look forward to seeing you all here on the day!

Over the coming months access to the Reserve is likely to become rather tricky. Our usual entrance through Cambrai Barracks will be closed for long periods as the regiment is deployed abroad. Also, the redevelopment of whole of the area around Ava Road has already started at the north end. This means that access through Alma barracks will become the norm. We would urge anyone who is unfamiliar with the route through Alma barracks to ask for directions at the guardroom or ring Sue or Gez on 01748 83113 and ask for an escort. We apologise to all our visitors but regret that there is nothing we can do to improve the situation.



Bird Ringing Milestone

The bird ringers have passed a milestone in the past few weeks - they have reached a total of 30,000 new birds ringed at Foxglove since they started in 1993. Congratulations to them, this is a huge effort and a great contribution to our understanding of birds and their place in our ecology. There can't be many places in the UK that have a better record of ringing than Foxglove and it is a tribute to Tony that he has kept the group going for such a long time.

Some of you may remember that in the spring 2005 edition we reported about a Robin, P105957, which we had captured 27 times and you might have wondered what has happened to him over the months since then. Well, P105957 was captured twice more, on 13 Mar 05 and again on 20 Mar 05. Since then, however, we have not seen him and we must assume that he is, sadly, no longer around.

If we look at our birds with the greatest number of captures we will see:

Ring	Species	Times	Last Capture
P105957	Robin	29	20 Mar 05
CF85616	G S Woodpecker	28	3 Aug 05
P726685	Blue Tit	27	2 Jan 06
N924300	Coal Tit	25	24 Jun 06
P308914	Great Tit	23	30 May 05
CF13071	G S Woodpecker	22	17 Oct 04
VV90977	Great Tit	21	20 Jul 06
R084872	Marsh Tit	21	11 Jun 06
P308974	Blue Tit	20	29 Jan 06
N924287	Blue Tit	20	6 Jun 04
9G9123	Treecreeper	20	25 Jun 03

From this we can see that there are still a number of contenders to take over from P105957 as our most captured bird. Those we have last ringed in 2006 are likely to be still with us and just waiting to jump into a net.

The only bird who we know who won't increase his score is CF85616 who we found dead on the Reserve in August 2005. However, it seems unlikely that CF13071, N924287 and 9G9123 have survived.

Incidentally, our records now show us that we have handled 37806 individual birds, of which 31365 we have ringed just once and never seen again. That leaves 6441 which we have captured more than once.

LNR Week

In Late July we took part in LNR Week. This was a country-wide week of events aimed at publicising the work done by LNRs. We put on eight ecology-based events including two on tree identification, two evening mammal walks, two wildflower walks and two aimed at discovering dragonflies. Many of these events were well attended - 25 people attended one of the dragonfly walks. In all over 60 people took part.

This was a good way to get the Reserve into the public eye again and many of the people who came along were visiting for the first time.

Richmond Walking Festival

We had a similar programme in late September as part of the Richmond Walking Festival. This annual event is organised by the Richmond Walking Club and included a variety of walks in and around Richmond over a two-week period. Our contribution was two guided walks, one of which was organised in the evening and included a talk on bats.

Friends Group

The Friends Group has had a good summer as we have been joined by seven new members, including one new Corporate member. However, we have also lost some members who have not renewed their membership for the coming year. This means that we currently have 55

Our new members are:

Ann Bradshaw	Catterick Village
Elizabeth Harrington	Richmond
Zach Hopwood	Richmond
Robert Hudson	Thornton Rust
Sue Kaiser	Scotton
Roy Willingale	Maunby
The Dales School	Morton on Swale

We would particularly like to welcome Zach as he is the first person under the age of sixteen to join our Friends group in his own right. Zach first came to Foxglove with a group of students from Askham Bryan College as part of an environmental Diploma course. See our article and picture below.

The Dales School, our new Corporate Friend, has started to use Foxglove as their site for running a wildlife and environmental module for young adults with special needs. Each Tuesday they bring 8 students to do work around the Reserve. We are delighted that we have been chosen for this project and so are the students - we have a report that one student woke her Mum at 5 am with the excitement of coming to Foxglove. We know just how she feels!

Save the Whales

Anyone who is interested in helping to put a stop to whaling for so-called scientific research might like to visit www.whalesrevenge.com where you will be able to sign an on-line petition which aims to collect 1 million signatures to present to the International Whaling Commission. They have currently some 270,000 signatures so there is quite a long way to go.

Moth Trapping

We held a highly successful moth trapping evening and night in July where we recorded no less than 209 different species - a huge number for so short a period of time. This total included 2 species which were first time records for the county. These were the July Belle, appropriately enough, and the Poplar Kitten.

Visitor Numbers

The Reserve has been particularly well used by visitors this year which must be a measure of how well our name has spread throughout the region. All through the school holidays hardly a day passed without a visit from one or more families who had come for a walk round. Besides these casual visits we played host to a number of different groups who wanted to base their activities at Foxglove.

Here is a list of some of our larger visits this summer:

- 650 students from 9 schools
- 20 different WI groups
- 60 people from Yorkshire Institute of Biology

- 80 disadvantaged children with St John Ambulance
- Numerous Cub and Guide groups

In addition we have had the RSPB, Defence Estates and Richmondshire District Council all using Foxglove for meetings and conferences. If we look at visitor number by month since the spring we will see:

May	405
June	819
Jul	735
August	274
September	384
Total	2617

From these figures it is possible to see the strong influence that school trips have on our numbers - there is quite a drop once we reach the holiday period.

All this activity means just one thing - Foxglove is well and truly on the map and our fame as a venue is spreading.

Photographic Competition

We were very pleased with the entries to our 2006 photographic competition. This year we had a number of new entrants and a total of 38 photographs to choose from. Many of the entries were taken in close-up – hardly surprising when we know how difficult it is to take a picture of a view in Foxglove. However the entries ranged from a single leaf to a winter panorama and from a dragonfly to a fly agaric toadstool. If anything the standard was even higher than last year and our judge Colin Newlands was hard put to come to a decision. In the end he chose the following winners:

First, Christine Whitehead for her picture of a Common Spotted Orchid.

Second, Christine Whitehead for her picture of the lake on a winter's evening. (See the enclosed Christmas Card leaflet.)

Third, John Joyce for a picture of the Sparrowhawk in the Centre.

Prizes are on their way to the winners and all the entries will be on display in the Centre until Christmas.

Askham Bryan

We have been lucky enough to have a band of very

willing people working on the Reserve for the past few weeks. These are students at Askham Bryan College who are doing a Diploma in Countryside Management. They have undertaken a number of tasks aimed at giving them a practical insight into habitat management. So far they have been involved in removing gorse from the heath and an area above the lake, cleaning unwanted growth inside tree guards and clearing excess brash in the conifer belts.

The students, all aged 15 or so have worked very hard and we have been delighted to have them. Our thanks to both them and their teachers for their excellent work. We wish them all well with their studies. Our picture below shows them, together with their mascot.



Dates for Your Diary

Here is our calendar of events for the next few months. If you would like to attend any of the events, please let Sue or Gez know on 01748 831113.

9 November	Coffee Morning Town Hall
25 November	Winter Tree Identification Walk
2 - 3 December	Working weekend
20 December	Christmas Party
13 - 14 January	Working weekend
10 - 11 February	Working weekend

The Coffee Morning in the Town Hall on 9 November is a good opportunity to get some publicity for the Reserve and to make a bit of money for our funds. We would gratefully receive donations of tombola prizes, cakes for the cake stall and offers of help on the day. If you can help please tell Sue (01748 831113) or Winifred (01969 625522, e-mail winifredhodge@beeb.net).

This year we have scheduled three working weekends and we hope we will get as good a turn out as we did

last year. If we run out of jobs before we get to the end of the programme, we'll cancel any we can't use.

As usual our Christmas Party is open to all our Friends, Volunteers, Bird Ringers and anyone else associated with Foxglove. We are going to run it as we did in the past on a bring and bite basis. Please let Sue or Gez know if you'll be coming.

We are also hoping to revive the Birdsong Breakfast and Birdsong Supper this year. However, as they won't take place until April we haven't yet set the dates. When we do we'll let everyone know in plenty of time in our next issue.

News in Brief

As you can see from the enclosed leaflet, our Christmas cards are on sale in the Centre or by post. Like last year they feature photographs taken in Foxglove and will cost £5 for a pack of 12. Please support us if you can.

We now have a regular slot on Garrison Radio on frequency 1287 am. This is recorded by Sue and is transmitted once a month at 9.30 am on a Monday.

During the Summer we had a visit from the BBC who were making a film about the Yorkshire Dales. This is due to be screened in the near future. Unfortunately, we don't have a date for this so please keep an eye out for it.

We had a bat presentation by John Drewitt on 9 September which was, unfortunately, rather sparsely attended with just 6 people taking part. Those who were there, however, enjoyed the evening which was full of useful information..

On 14 October The North East Fungi Group walked around Foxglove and found a huge number of species including the first record of Leaf Spot fungus of hazel for North Yorkshire. They will send us the full results of their survey later in the year.

Gillian Mackenzie, the first person to become a Friend of the Reserve has very kindly offered to buy a new bench for the Woodland Walk. It will be sited at the top of the steps at the start of the walk. Our thanks to

Gillian for this very welcome addition to our facilities.

Forty members of the Richmondshire and Hambleton RSPB Group visited us on 15 October for a guided walk. They were able to watch bird ringing which included Bullfinches and Goldcrests. They also spotted a large flock of Redpolls just waiting to get in our nets.

Competition Corner

The very hot weather this summer followed by a damp autumn has meant one thing - this is a fabulous year for fungi. The woods in Foxglove are covered in all sorts of mushrooms and toadstools and the same can be said about our competition.

Can you find the names of 20 different sorts of fungi which we have hidden cunningly in the grid below. In all but one case we have used the common, English name but there is one where we have used a Latin species name.

Answers, as always, to my hat by Christmas and a prize of enormous proportions (£5) may be yours.

T	W	Z	F	B	Q	F	E	H	R	E	A	F	R	G	I	G	Q	L	A
R	O	E	B	J	E	S	F	B	J	O	Z	C	P	L	C	G	C	Z	H
N	O	E	B	D	M	E	G	L	B	E	B	R	A	C	K	E	T	U	O
F	D	M	G	O	O	L	F	A	K	G	C	F	R	O	S	J	F	P	B
J	B	O	L	E	T	U	S	S	I	C	N	O	A	W	C	O	N	D	C
O	L	R	D	C	V	R	N	H	T	F	D	Q	S	V	T	E	L	B	H
E	E	E	E	F	C	O	U	I	F	E	G	L	O	H	X	A	D	P	A
D	W	L	S	C	L	P	U	F	F	B	A	L	L	H	Z	R	V	S	N
H	I	U	T	J	M	Y	Z	P	F	V	E	K	H	S	B	T	Z	O	T
R	T	I	R	C	I	Q	A	V	J	L	S	X	T	F	M	H	E	S	E
T	O	G	O	C	R	E	U	G	V	Z	E	I	J	E	W	S	E	A	R
T	Z	T	Y	A	D	P	U	F	A	T	R	I	I	O	F	T	A	M	E
R	X	X	I	O	B	B	Z	U	E	R	V	B	S	I	U	A	D	S	L
L	S	G	N	U	H	L	U	N	S	T	I	N	K	H	O	R	N	M	L
B	V	T	G	T	P	U	O	Z	M	P	N	C	G	B	O	F	U	P	E
L	Q	E	A	S	H	S	H	I	T	A	K	E	O	D	J	C	W	D	L
G	S	N	N	R	V	H	N	M	I	A	C	X	S	F	I	E	B	U	E
B	M	S	G	B	W	E	J	V	D	E	A	T	H	C	A	P	L	R	I
I	X	M	E	X	K	R	F	Q	U	C	P	E	N	N	Y	B	U	N	O
D	G	E	L	J	D	D	I	L	G	I	E	E	N	C	X	I	P	Q	N

and Finally . . .

When did the catfish?

When the dog rose.