



Friends of Red Kites

in the North East of England



www.friendsofredkites.org.uk

Newsletter Issue 07 February 2011

Dear Friends,

Membership News Judy Summerson

By the first week in January, one birthday present and four Christmas presents of membership of the Friends helped us reach our 2010 target of 300 members. Thank you all for your support, and thank you in particular to those of you who have helped promote membership.

The more members we have, the louder the voice we will have to encourage interest and involvement in protecting and maintaining the kite population in the North East of England. The kite population in the north-east seems to be surviving this cruel winter well, but our help and support are still needed so please keep promoting membership of the 'Friends of Red Kites'.

Presentations and events Sylvia Jones and Judy Summerson

Once again the team has been very busy. We have done eight presentations since the last newsletter and eleven more are already booked for the coming months. We get an excellent response to our visits and make many new friends.

Our target area is Hexham this year. Several groups have been approached and we are planning to use a Go Northeast Red kite bus for our Hexham launch. More details about this event will be available later.

We had another excellent members evening buffet at Chaplins and 39 members were able to attend. Thank you to Chaplins for their support with previous events.



The postponed December Roost Watch will now take place on Saturday February 5th – 3.00pm at Winlaton Mill car park and 3.30pm at Red Kite Hill. Further information from Ken Sanderson on 07779413471, or www.friendsofredkites.org.uk

Corporate Membership of Friends of Red Kites David Jones

The membership of Fork has now passed 300 thanks, in no small measure, to the efforts of our membership secretary-Judy Summerson – ably supported by committee colleagues.

We have decided to contact local firms to see if they will become corporate members. We are offering three levels of corporate membership with a range of different benefits for each level. The levels are:

Silver – £50 minimum

Gold – £100 minimum

Platinum – £150 minimum

If you have contact with any companies that you think may wish to become a corporate member please send us their contact details via our website.

Thanks to our Graphics Team for the Certificate design.

Health Walks Update Jackey Lockwood

Since the last newsletter in September Health Walkers have really been getting in to their stride! There are regularly 12 or more walkers out on Monday afternoons enjoying the fresh air, countryside and wildlife of the Derwent Valley. The level or gentle gradients over 3 miles mean fitness levels can be built up gradually. On many of the days we are joined by new walkers, so if you are able to, please do come along.



In **September** Gateshead organised a Walking Challenge called "Walk This Way". It involved groups and individuals recording the mileage walked in the month and sending their totals in to the organisers. Gateshead's target was 1045 miles (the distance needed to link each Olympic 2012 venue to Gateshead Quays) which was easily exceeded. A total of 6862 miles was walked. Framed certificates were presented at a closing ceremony, and

I am pleased to report that the contribution made by the Friends of Red Kites Health Walkers earned us a merit award for the highest contribution of any voluntary group. Well done and thank you to all those who participated.

The momentum continued throughout **October** with high numbers of walkers enjoying the splendid autumn colours. An extra "event" walk was included towards the end of the month for the regulars. A group of 18 people walked the 7 mile section of the Red Kite Trail over hilly terrain from Lintzford through Chopwell Woods to Barlow, then Thornley and finally to Winlaton Mill. The day was enjoyed by all.

November provided some challenging conditions for walkers, first mud then snow. However, all but one of the walks went ahead and there were close-up views of a variety of birds on the rivers Tyne and Derwent. **December** continued where the previous month left off! The depth of snow meant the usual walk from the Vale of Derwent car park through Rowlands Gill had to be substituted with the Derwent Walk. For those walkers who braved the cold, snow and ice the rewards were plenty of wildlife to be seen, particularly birds feeding during the short hours of daylight, and a welcome cup of tea when we got back to the start.

Now that we are in to **January**, and those New Year resolutions are not yet forgotten below are the details of the Monday afternoon walks which are always from 1.30pm to 3.00pm although the venues change each month. Hopefully see you there.

Winlaton Mill car park, Derwenthaugh Park	January	3rd	10th	17th	24th	31st
Blaydon (old swimming pool) car park, Shibdon Pond	February	7th	14th	21st	28th	
Swalwell B&Q car park, Lower Derwent	March	7th	14th	21st	28th	
Winlaton Mill car park, Derwent Walk and Park	April	4th	11th	18th	25th	

All details are on our website www.friendsofredkites.org.uk under Health Walks.

Friends of Red Kites in Hexham

On Saturday 12th March, Friends of Red Kites will board the Red Kite Bus, loaned once again by Go North East, and will take the message to the people of Tynedale. It will leave Winlaton Mill at 9.30am and park from 10am until 2pm at Wentworth Car Park, Hexham.

Do join us if you can. Become guardians of our Red Kites as they continue to breed.

Autumn/Winter Kite Monitoring Ken Sanderson

Following a successful breeding season the focus for autumn/winter monitoring was switched to kites at roost. Red Kites form communal roosts outside the breeding season. The post-breeding trend in previous years had been for juvenile kites and failed breeders to form a roost in early September at Sherburn Towers Farm in Rowlands Gill. Not so last autumn. Kites did assemble, up to eight regularly seen flying the ridge above the farm, but were prevented from roosting in the wood around the farm by the resident breeding birds. The kites would then disperse, and presumably return back to their own territories. At the same time a small roost of up to eight kites had formed at the west end of Rowlands Gill, which contained birds with territories in the Beda Hills/Lintzford area.

It wasn't until late October that the kites started to form the main roost. Twelve birds were recorded at Hollinside Manor in the Lower Derwent Valley on the 27th and by the 15th November this had built up to 31 kites. The numbers at roost were significantly reduced during the snowy period and prolonged sub-zero temperatures with an average of 15 kites recorded per visit. A minimum number of ten kites was recorded at Hollinside Manor on the 30th November. Whilst some kites may have succumbed to the weather there is some evidence to support that kites may leave the area to forage elsewhere. In Dumfries and Galloway birds fitted with radio transmitters have disappeared off the "radar".

Numbers have recovered somewhat in January with counts of twenty-two on the 1st and 12th and twenty-one on the 17th. The kites are now roosting near by in Snipes Dene on the Gibside Estate with the best places for viewing this nightly spectacle being "Kite Hill" or the Nine Arches Viaduct on the Derwent Walk.

Most of the sightings of red kites outside the Derwent Valley were reported in the autumn. Singles have been reported from Alnwick, the Ingram Valley, Ponteland, Brampton, Mickleton in Teesdale, Hetton Lyons Park in Sunderland with three birds seen together near Blanchland. Recent sightings have been limited to a single kite near Waskerley Reservoir, near Edmundbyers and of a couple of kites near Whittonstall.

Many thanks to both Friends of Red Kite monitoring teams, and also to all those who have submitted sighting records.

Stop press: I've just had a report from East Yorkshire that one of our juveniles from 2009, wing tag C5, has been observed at the communal roost there.

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Keep up-to-date by visiting our Website: www.friendsofredkites.org.uk

Website June Atkinson

6,125 hits illustrate people's increasing interest. We welcome any kite photographs and appreciate those which have already been submitted. Comments and questions are welcome; please submit via our Webmail.

Stop press

Our thanks to Patrick and Karen Malone, who have prepared the Newsletter on this occasion.



David Feams