



NEWSLETTER Issue 02 August 2009

Friends of Red Kites in the North East of England launch in style with Go-North East

Friday, 10th July 2009 was a fantastic day and a huge success. Thanks go to everyone who supported us, especially Go North East and Gibside National Trust. The bus driver, Ian, was excellent and



Photo: Patrick Malone

became a very good member of the team. At Lintford and Gibside we promoted the red kites, the work of the Friends and the area for wildlife and walks. Our ten enthusiastic members met the general public, who were very interested in the kites' re-establishment after 170 years, their increasing presence throughout the region and the growing support which they enjoy in the local community. The success of the day reflected team work and the positive response of the public was encouraging.. Membership has now reached one hundred!

Red Kite news

Latest news on red kite breeding success is that there are sixteen chicks confirmed as fledging and with up to an additional 12 territories yet to check this number could easily reach thirty. Recent bad weather will certainly have had an impact on the young kites but it is too early to assess the situation.

Ziggy and Jammy Dodger, the kites nesting at the Highland Cattle Centre, and featured in the last Newsletter, have successfully fledged one chick. The young kite has been seen regularly from the café and the Visitor Centre, making short flights with its parents.

C6 made its maiden flight in the full glare of the local and national media. Having fallen out of the nest, its indomitable parents, Red Philip and Flag, continued to feed it. Walkers found it and after time in rehab, C6 was set free on Kitewatch Hill. This is the final chick to be released in the Northern Kites Project.



Photo sequence: David Jones

Kites have been seen regularly at Beamish and Causey Gill in Co. Durham, as well as at Ninebanks, south-east of Hexham, and in various locations in east Northumberland.

Another kite family has been closely monitored by John and Muriel Allan of Priestfield. Their interest began in 2007, when Simon Withrington visited them to say they had a red kite's nest in their ancient woodland.



They were delighted to follow the fortunes of kites nesting in their ancient woodland and one chick was eventually ringed as A6, here seen with John, Keith Bowey and Muriel, In 2008 two chicks survived. “This year we had a completely new pair of kites using the same nest. We elected to watch more closely ourselves this spring and found one chick progressing into a beautiful specimen, so we kept regular watch. Our activity seemed not to bother either parent.

Our own thoughts were that one bird was close to fledging so we invited the Head of Rowlands Gill Primary School to bring a group of children to see the nest. This was fortuitous as the bigger of the two chicks was clinging to an adjacent branch making tentative take-off moves whilst the smaller bird watched from the safety of the nest. The parents were circling above whistling, it seemed, in encouragement. After some 30 minutes or so the larger chick plucked up courage and flew uncertainly and in an ungainly fashion through the new foliage and away above the treetops. What a truly spectacular moment the assembled group was privileged to witness! “

Photo: Louise Withrington

Red Kite at Baltic Square, Gateshead

Many of our members took part in an event which was a finale to the Northern Kites Project. One Volunteer shares her experience of that day when a Red Kite took the Quayside by storm!



Photos: Patrick Malone

Judi Postle (outer right wing Tile 14) reports: “As a Northern Kites Volunteer, it was a pleasure to take part in this Event, to mark the success of the Northern Kites Project. The atmosphere was buzzing as we all gathered. A huge amount of planning and preparation had gone into this celebration of five years’ effort to bring back the red kites.

A film crew and photographer were ensconced on the Baltic roof and the weather was dry. Passers-by were intrigued as over 150 people, who had all contributed in some way to the success of the Project, held up tiles which created the world’s biggest red kite, with a wingspan of over 23 metres. What a sight! As we travelled home on our specially laid-on Red Kite Bus, courtesy of Go- Northeast, we all felt proud to have been part of such an amazing Project, despite a few aching shoulders. High as kites, in fact!”



Photo: www.KaleelZibe.com

Events and Presentations

Eco-Fest at Christchurch Primary School (North Shields)

Everything was ready outside when, just on starting time, the heavens opened with thunder and lightning and very heavy rain. We raced indoors into the hall and had a most enjoyable afternoon with children from a number of schools, other wildlife organisations and members of the public. We made some useful contacts and launched a Friends poster campaign to be judged later.

Derwentside Rotary Kite Walk

After a very successful evening with a presentation and meal, the group decided to come to 'kite country'. We met at the Golden Lion, reserved our meals and, as it was a beautiful evening, we enjoyed our walk even though no red kites appeared. The group were impressed with the heron and the dipper as well as a group of feeding swallows.

Mural is unveiled at Tesco in Rowlands Gill



Alan Mould, a local artist and photographer, created this set of six panels to celebrate the return of the red kites to our northern skies. This was the final contribution made by the Northern Kites Project.

Promotional stands, with Friends in attendance

Sunday August 9th – Jesmond Dene Environmental Fun Day, 12noon until 4.00pm

Friday 21st August – Saltwell Park. Celebration of Durham Biodiversity, organised by Northumbrian Water. From 11.30am and will include a Kite Safari up the Derwent Valley.

Health walks

Monday September 14th – FoRK Health walks start up. Venue and time to be confirmed later.

Presentations

10th September – Friends of Prudhoe; 23rd September – Westerhope Wesley Guild.

Other events

Monday 14th September – Roost watch, from 5.30pm until dusk at Sherburn Towers.

Wednesday 7th October – Geordie Kite Night at the Golden Lion, 7.30pm

Saturday 7th November – Red Kite Walk. 4 mile round walk from the Black Horse at Barlow, meet 10.30am

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