



FRIENDS OF RODLEY NATURE RESERVE NEWSLETTER

Registered Charity No. 1070744

Spring 2017

Peregrine Falcons at Rodley

Since the ban on DDT Peregrine populations have recovered and birds are now nesting on buildings in many cities around the country. Peregrines have been present in Leeds for some years now and sightings have increased considerably, particularly so last year. The majority of sightings at Rodley are on the farmland and the top of the pylon behind the Manager's Garden is always worth checking.

This year is looking like being even better than last year with sightings reported on 12 dates as at the middle of March. The year started well with a peregrine flying across the Scrubland, calling constantly with a stock dove in its talons. The bird flew over the farmland where a second bird could be seen on a pylon. An interesting development has been the sighting of an orange colour-ringed bird thought to be a juvenile. Peregrine falcons have nested on a nest box platform on Wakefield Cathedral in both 2015 and 2016 and are being closely monitored by Wakefield Naturalists Society. In 2016 four young were raised and these were ringed with an orange Darvic ring on the left leg. The ring numbers were 3Z, 4Z, 5Z and 6Z. Sadly, 3Z and 4Z were killed when they collided with man-made structures but two male birds 5Z and 6Z are unaccounted for. Could one of these be "our" bird? If you are fortunate enough to have a close view and can read the ring number please do let us know and we will notify Wakefield Naturalists Society.

The Wakefield birds brought a wide variety of prey to their nest. These included a swift, a variety of wading birds, little grebes and numerous racing pigeons. At Rodley a black-headed gull, jay and stock dove have all figured in their diet and the remains of a teal found on the River Path in March bore all the hallmarks of a peregrine kill.



The Sand Martins are back

In 2016 the first birds arrived back from Africa on 26th March and by the middle of April 77 nest holes had been excavated in the man-made nesting bank on the Lagoon. The earliest ever date for this species was 22nd March in 2014 and 2015. This year a single bird was seen on the very early date of 5th March. Numbers built up rapidly in the last few days of March and by 4th April 8 nesting holes had been started. Let's see if we can beat last year's record of 186 nesting holes.



Harlequin Ladybirds are out in force

Native to Eastern Asia and one of the most invasive insect species in the world, the Harlequin Ladybird - *Harmonia axyridis* - arrived in the UK in 2004. It reached Rodley Nature Reserve in 2009 and has continued its march north since then. More than 100 different colour forms have been recorded but the orange version with 15 to 21 black spots and the black version with two or four orange or red spots are certainly the commonest here.



Harlequins hibernate in large numbers in houses and other buildings and in March this year many hundreds suddenly appeared in the Reedbed Hide, having presumably emerged from the various nooks and crannies in the hide. These insects have an unfortunate habit of "reflex bleeding" when agitated, releasing a foul smelling liquid from their legs and it can stain. Not a good idea to sit on them if you can avoid it. Harlequins have voracious appetites and in addition to aphids they will feed on other ladybirds eggs and larvae and even the eggs and caterpillars of moths and butterflies.

The Harlequin was introduced to North America in 1988 to control aphids and scale insects. It quickly spread across the United States to become the commonest ladybird there. It may have arrived here wind-aided following its spread across Europe when it was introduced from North America, again for aphid control.

Your Newsletter

In the 1940's and 50's spam was a much sought after commodity, and subsequently Monty Python's Flying Circus highlighted its desirability. But in modern times things have turned full circle and spam of a digital nature is considered a nuisance. Internet Service Providers spend millions of pounds setting up sophisticated filters so that their customers are not irritated by unwanted spam. It was into this Hi-tech web that your humble FORNR Newsletter was ensnared in January.

Since appointment as membership secretary in 2015 I have been issuing emails from my private email service with either a pdf attachment (currently 2.4MB) or a weblink to all who request it. In January that was 268 of you in total. This was spotted and, to cut a long story short, it was made clear to me that if I was to continue I would lose my email facility.

So an alternative was required. We therefore enrolled a Campaign Manager and refreshed it with a dollop of Orange Crush and as hopefully many of you will already have seen we now have a solution. Sadly the issue of a pdf file is now greatly frowned upon and I hope you find the alternative download option satisfactory. If you are unhappy with this solution and are unable to collect a hard copy from the Visitor Centre please email me on FriendsofRNR@sky.com and I will add you to the list of those who receive a posted copy. Finally, as I have had around 350 renewal forms printed last December I intend to continue to use them, so if you choose either "Via Weblink" or "In pdf format by email" as your newsletter delivery option you will receive this single means of delivery. Next year's form will only have the one "Emailed Download" option.

Howard Smith
Membership Secretary

PS For those of you wondering, Campaign Manager is the software we now use and Orange Crush are our IT advisors



Rodley Robins Achieve Bronze!!

The RSPB recently launched an award scheme called Wild Challenge which prompts children to connect with and learn about nature through a series of fun and engaging activities. The scheme is all about investigating wildlife and doing practical things to give nature a safe and welcoming home. There are 24 fun activities to choose from and Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards to achieve depending on how many challenges are completed.

The activities are divided into two sections – **Help Nature and Experience Nature** and to earn each level of the award 3 activities from each section must be completed.

Bronze Award: 6 activities need to be completed in total, 3 from Help Nature and 3 from Experience Nature.

Silver Award: 6 further activities need to be completed, another 3 from Help Nature and another 3 from Experience Nature (making a total of 12 activities completed).

Gold Award: Another 6 activities need to be completed, again 3 more from Help Nature and 3 more from Experience Nature (making a total of 18 activities completed).

To achieve our Bronze Award, we completed 6 activities and sent the evidence to The RSPB. The 6 activities we did were: - built a small pond to attract frogs, toads and other watery wildlife; built bug hotels for the minibeasts; planted Spring bulbs and sunflowers to attract a world of amazing wildlife. We also went on a minibeast safari; used our best detecting skills to look for tracks and signs of birds and animals in the reserve; and took part in The Big Schools Birdwatch. Here are some pictures of us.



The RSPB have sent Rodley Robins and each individual member a Bronze Wild Challenge Award together with special wildlife sticker sheets. We are very proud of what we have done so far for wildlife and have displayed our Rodley Robins Award on our Notice Board for everyone to see. You can also read "Our Story So Far.." in our red book which you will find in The Visitors Centre.

We have already made a start on working towards our Silver Award. In February, we built bird boxes for National Nest Box Week. We have also created log piles to give shelter to insects and small mammals, and we've made cakes and kebabs with bird seed, fruit, cheese and nuts to feed the birds. In March, we went pond dipping to discover the amazing world of nature which lurks beneath the surface of the water.

If you are inspired to have a go with your children all details about The RSPB Wild Challenge can be found on their website www.rspb.org.uk/kids-and-schools

Denese Swann
Robins Leader



"Nature is an adventure
waiting to be had.
Get Out! Get Busy! And
Get Wild!"



RODLEY NATURE RESERVE EVENTS 2017

April 16 th 11am	Easter Egg Hunt	A fund raising day for all the family including a walk round the reserve to find hidden eggs and win a prize, tombola and hook-a-duck	Start the hunt near the visitor centre
May 21 st 9am	Bird Walk	Join us for a walk round the reserve to look for summer visitors	Meet at the main car park
June 24 th 9.30am	2 nd Leeds Birdfair	A full day of activities including various exhibitors, equipment demonstrations, hands-on activities and BBQ	Visitor centre area and round the reserve
July 22 nd 9pm	Bat Night	Walk round the reserve to look for bats and listen to them on our bat detectors	Meet at visitor centre – booking essential
July 29 th 8.45pm	Bat Night	As above	As above
August 2 nd 10am	Moth Trap Opening	Join us to see some of the many interesting moths around in August	Meet at visitor centre
August 9 th 10am	Moth Trap Opening	Another opportunity to join Dave Nesham opening moth traps	Meet at the visitor centre
August 16 th 10am	Moth Trap Opening	As above	As above
August 19 th 11am	Summer Fair	Our annual summer fair with many stalls, BBQ, tombola, bouncy castle and mini steam engine rides	Near the visitor centre
August 23 rd 10am	Moth Trap Opening	Moth Trap opening	Meet at the visitor centre
August 30 th 10am	Moth Trap Opening	As above	As above
October 28 th 11am and 2pm	Pie & Peas and Fungus Foray	Our final event of 2017 Pie & Peas from 11am until sold out followed by a Fungus Foray starting from the visitor centre at 2pm	Visitor centre for Pie and Peas – booking essential to avoid disappointment

Reserve Opening Times

Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday 9am - 5pm (4pm Nov– end Feb)

Visitor Centre Opening Times - 10am - 4pm

Telephone No on open days - 0113 2040441

For Rodley Nature Reserve Trust Matters: Trust Secretary: Peter Murphy Tel: 0113 2930188 Email: pandbmurphy@ntlworld.com	Education Bookings: Sue Henderson Tel: 0113 2298919 Newsletter: Peter Murphy
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