

Leisure

Rugby

All Blacks' legend returns to Nottingham!

NOTTINGHAM Rugby's ambitions have had a double boost over the last week. Their 26-10 win over London Welsh at Meadow Lane last Friday consolidated their position in the promotion play-off group, lifting them to fourth place in the Championship table.

Their best performance of the season saw them dominate most of the game, with a strong set piece providing the platform. The only blot on an otherwise outstanding display was an injury time lapse of concentration that allowed the visitors to run in a consolation try.

And this week came the news that All Black legend Ali Williams is to return to the club as a Director.

Williams, capped 73 times by New Zealand, suffered a career-threatening injury three years ago but fought his way back to play a part in the All Blacks' World Cup winning campaign. The first, crucial step along that path was a month spent at Meadow Lane earlier this year in which he played four games for Nottingham, impressing everyone with his professionalism and dedication.

"Nottingham played a huge part in my return to

rugby and I owe them a lot," he said. "I'm a huge supporter of the club and, after starting me off on the road to recovery, I feel a real affinity with the people at Nottingham Rugby and want to repay the favour." Williams will take up a position on the board in an advisory role, helping to strengthen the pathway at Nottingham for players from the southern hemisphere. The Green and Whites continue their British and Irish Cup campaign this weekend with a trip to Edinburgh for a first-ever meeting with Scottish Premier 1 side, Currie.

Cricket

Attenborough Cricket Club chairman retires

AT Attenborough Cricket Club's recent AGM, Paul Chambers, chairman of the Club, retired from frontline club duties after 11 years voluntary service.

During Paul's period in the Chair, he worked to promote cricket in and around Broxtowe.

Achievements during that time included the club being awarded 'ECB Clubmark' accreditation; Premier Cricket for the first time in the club's history; fielding six adult teams catering for all abilities; a thriving youth section, maintaining an excellent facility at The Strand - the club's home ground; bringing more cricket to the borough through partnership with Broxtowe Borough Council in playing cricket on a 'second' pitch at Long Lane and providing a platform for

community events, such as the firework evenings, to the benefit of those in the local community.

Successor to Paul is Nick Allcoat, who has had a long association with the club. Nick led and developed the youth section for many years - indeed, many of the players now playing 'Senior Cricket' came through the club's junior ranks. Paul Shoemaker, who has also been involved with the club for several years, will support Nick as his vice chairman.

Floodwall for 2012

The 2012 season will see completion of the floodwall around the ground at The Strand. The Cricket Club is pleased to report that the building works are progressing well and are currently on schedule.

Expectations are that the building work will be finished by June 2012, with the reinstatement process seeing the playing surface fit to use by the autumn.

The club committee is very keen to stress that it is 'business as usual' as far as the cricket is concerned. Plans have already been made to play cricket on alternative venues during the 2012 season, and would like to thank the Nottingham University, Chilwell Cricket Club and West Hallam Cricket Club for their very kind offers of support.

Attenborough cricket Club welcomes new members, whether it be in a playing, coaching or administrative capacity.

For further information contact the Club's website at www.attenborough-cc.net

Wildlife Watching

Local news and views of the natural world

THE controversy over housing development on green belt land in Broxtowe rumbles on.

No sooner do we learn that one area of greenbelt in Toton has been saved from being covered in houses it emerges that another one, Field Farm on the borders of Stapleford and Trowell, is likely to suffer exactly this fate. Broxtowe residents and other interested parties have every right to feel confused as to where planning policy is going and exactly how many houses need to be built in the borough.

The Field Farm site consists of farmland and an area that was, until a few years ago, an opencast coal mine! It is used by some of the wildlife characteristic of agricultural land and, whilst it does not contain wildlife habitats of special value, it is bounded by areas that do - the Nottingham Canal LNR and the Hemlock Stone

woodlands. It is regarded as valuable open space and its potential loss has caused serious concern about the erosion of the green belt in Broxtowe.

In truth, the earmarking of Field Farm for housing was probably the 'least worst' option for Broxtowe council in responding to new planning conditions which require the identification of areas for housing within a robust Local Plan, the absence of which could mean that virtually all areas could be under a presumption in favour of development.

There have been numerous objections to the proposal to identify the Field Farm site as suitable for housing development from both local residents and those worried about the loss of land in the green belt. Our local MP has weighed in stating her opposition to all housing development on green belt land in the borough - despite

her party being leaders of the coalition which introduced the planning policies that seem likely to bring this about. Given her statement of interest in Parliament that her partner was a director of one of the country's biggest building companies, it is not hard to see that her adoption of a position of objection to house building on green field sites in general could lead to a little friction in the Soubry household.

Residents of Broxtowe might reflect that what happens in their home environment is too important to become a battleground for those trying to make party political capital.

It is not just housing which is included in the government's apparent policy of solving the country's economic woes. There has been the announcement of several major infrastructure projects, including the

widening of the A453. Although the inadequacy of this road as a route into Nottingham is widely accepted this will inevitably cause the loss of some wildlife habitats, though hopefully not as many as is the case with the work being done to 'improve' the A46.

A big worry has to be that the 'nightmare scenario' of a new road and bridge along the Trent valley could be revived. This would degrade and destroy wildlife habitat, notably at Holme Pit SSSI, and ruin both the landscape and the peace and quiet currently enjoyed by visitors and residents.

This local project is,

however, small beer compared to some that are being proposed around the country. There has been a revival of the idea to build a new airport for London in the area of the Thames estuary. Building this on either side of the estuary would cause huge environmental damage and the loss of internationally important wildlife areas. There has even been a proposal, often reported as Boris's Island (after the Mayor of London) and accompanied by the word "bonkers", to build the airport in the estuary itself. This could have an incalculable and irreversible impact on the ecology of the whole estuary.

Trying to build your way out of recession in the way that the government proposes is fraught with danger. Most of the economic benefits are short term but the impact on the environment is permanent. Opening the door to increased building on green field sites will result in the loss of wildlife habitats, but closing the door on many of the legal grounds on which objections can be made may mean that it will only be those with the loudest voices, the deepest pockets and the best connections that have any chance of doing so successfully.

Jack Smith
Local ecologist

Remember:

Your next issue of
The Beeston
Express
will be out on
6 January 2012



Thought for the Fortnight

To many, no doubt, he will seem blatant and bumptious, but we prefer to regard him as being simply British.

Oscar Wilde
(1854-1900)

