

Leisure

Rugby

Green & Whites make new signings

NOTTINGHAM Rugby will be looking to keep their recent good run of form going when they head south to take on Esher this Friday evening.

Wins in their last two Championship games have consolidated their position in the promotion group, and opened up a 15-point cushion between themselves and the four sides battling it out to avoid relegation.

Bottom-placed Esher is one of those sides, having lost every game so far this season.

The Green and Whites underlined their recent improvement with an emphatic 62-20 win against

Midlands rivals Moseley last weekend. In the process, they ran in eight tries, with James Arlidge converting them all and adding a brace of penalties along with a fine individual try.

The last couple of seasons have seen Nottingham finish their league season well, only to run out of steam over the course of the promotion play-offs.

With that in mind, Glenn Delaney has further strengthened his squad with the addition of experienced scrum half Sean Romans. The 26 year-old New Zealander will join up with

his new team mates in December, alongside fellow new recruit, Samoan international second row Felipe Levi.

Delaney is delighted with his latest signing.

“Sean’s signing provides us with greater strength in depth and a healthy competition for places in the scrum half position,” he said. “We’re almost half way through the season, but we’ve got a long way to go to be in with a chance when it comes to the play-offs and cup knockout.

“We have always wanted to expand the squad – both in terms of quantity and quality”.

Christmas Carols

Beeston Methodist Carol Choir

THE Beeston Methodist Carol Choir was first formed during the 1870s by members of the Methodist congregation on Chapel Street. Their object was to raise money for a local charity called the Beeston Benevolent Society, which helped the local “poor and needy”.

In the early days up to 1914, singing took place outside the homes of the chapel’s own members in an area which ranged from the central parts of Beeston (around The City) through the newer districts by the railway, the Park district in Chilwell and as far as Meadow Lane. At this time, the singing took place throughout Christmas night until breakfast and the choir was made up of men only!

During the First World War, many members were called up to the forces and it was decided to invite ladies to join the choir. They readily agreed and the choir developed into one with four parts and mixed voices.

The rapid expansion of Beeston between the wars made it impossible for the choir to continue to sing to all church members, thus efforts had to be confined to the areas north of the High Road in Beeston and the Park districts of Chilwell. The choir still goes out singing every year on Christmas Eve, but since the late 1950s it has also been necessary to sing on one or two evenings before Christmas in order to cover such a large area. Nor is it any longer socially acceptable for singing on the streets to continue late into the night, so singing now concludes at around 10pm.

The amount of money raised by the Carol Choir has increased steadily and now provides the Beeston Chilwell Road Methodist Benevolent Society with its only income. The Society (founded in 1826) distributes money and gifts to the sick poor and needy of the area irrespective of race, creed or sect and is still fulfilling a great need in the area.

2011 Itinerary Monday, December 19

Bramcote Drive, Fellows Road, Sidney Road, Holden Road, Louis Avenue, Cyril Avenue, Hope Street, Bramcote Road (top)

Thursday, December 22

Newcastle Avenue, Elm Avenue, Vicarage Road, Devonshire Avenue, Bramcote Road (bottom), Glebe Street, Cromwell Road (bottom), North Street, Hampden Grove, Ireton Street, Imperial Road, Silverwood Road, Collington Street, Imperial Avenue, Gladstone Street, Harcourt Street, Newton Street

Christmas Eve

Charnwood Avenue, Larch Crescent, Cumberland Avenue, Park Road, Park Road North, Grove Avenue, North Drive, Cedar Road, Dale Lane*, Richmond Drive*, Solway Close*

(*provisional)

All routes starting at 7.30pm

Wildlife Watching

Local news and views of the natural world

Waiting for winter – and birds!

WHAT a difference a year makes! At this time last year we were already experiencing sub-zero temperatures and snow but recent mild weather this year has resulted in unseasonable wildlife activity, with some plants putting out new growth and even flowers.

Despite the passing of the official first day of winter, there has yet to be anything approaching a proper frost in urban Nottingham or anything resembling the conditions of the last two winters. “Don’t talk to me about global warming,” is something you might have heard from those shivering in the prolonged freezing temperatures they brought but anyone who hoped that these were evidence that it is not happening should check the difference between climate and weather – closely related but not the same thing.

Our summer visitors are now long gone but autumn and winter brings many other migrant birds to Britain, some of which swell the numbers of our familiar native species. As well as this there are distinctive winter visitors such as the redwing, fieldfare and the waxwing. The waxwing is a formerly uncommon winter visitor which has been seen in increasing numbers in recent years and which has already been recorded this year. All of these species could be spotted in your garden but a better place to seek fieldfares and to a lesser extent redwings is on open grassland and in particular playing fields where large flocks can gather to feed. Both fieldfares and redwings will take berries. If you have berry-producing plants in your garden they will be the best place to look for them feeding. It is the waxwing that is the berry specialist

and they seem to have taken a particular fancy to those produced by trees and shrubs planted around supermarkets and retail developments. Keep your eyes peeled for them whilst out Christmas shopping.

This is also the time of year when birds are attracted to garden feeders in the greatest numbers and those that are will help to shed light on the recent debate in these pages regarding the apparent lack of birds in reader’s gardens.

Current observations in the west of Beeston suggest that there were very few birds around with the only species well represented being the ubiquitous wood pigeon and the – pariah to some – the magpie. The acid test will come if the weather begins to bite. A perceptible drop in numbers of birds at this time and throughout the winter would be an indication that something is wrong but identifying exactly what is no easy task. There are known to be disease problems in some of our garden birds and two successive harsh winters must have taken their toll but other factors could be involved. For anyone concerned about falling numbers of garden birds, this winter will be a good one for making sure that feeders are well stocked and for keeping a close eye on what is happening at them.

Lonely this Christmas

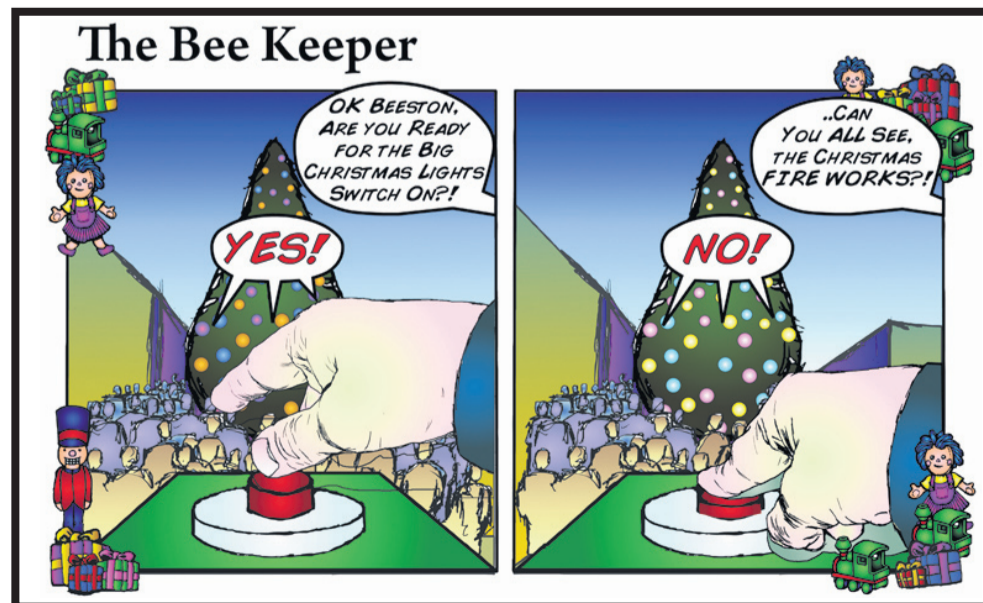
The appearance of a squacco heron at Attenborough recently certainly seems to have got the ‘twitchers’ in a frenzy and although those who saw it may have been thrilled to do so, for some enthusiasts the whole thing is a little sad. The only reason that this bird has arrived at Attenborough is because it is hopelessly lost – a migration from the south of France to Africa should not begin with

a detour 1000 miles north. Unless this young bird can find its way back to the wintering grounds used by the rest of its species – and fast – its chance of survival may be slim, especially if winter closes in quickly.

The squacco’s plight mirrors that of many other twitcher’s targets – often a lonely bird thousands of miles from where it should be with little chance of staying alive and no chance of breeding.

Some of the rarities they seek, such as the cetti’s warblers which bred at Attenborough this year, are representative of a welcome and natural expansion of their range into the suitable habitat that exists there. In the case of many others you can only wonder how often the list-tickers excitement is tempered by the fact that the bird which is the source of it is, in all probability, doomed!

Jack Smith
Local ecologist



Thought for the Fortnight
Roadworks
Seek out the road to success, but don't be surprised if you find it's still under construction.