

Leisure

Rugby

Nottingham pipped by Munster

A RECORD Meadow Lane crowd saw Nottingham Rugby put up an impressive fight against Munster when the two sides met in the British and Irish Cup last week.

Although it was the Green and Whites who scored the only try of the game, the visitors took the points by the narrowest of margins.

It was a thrilling contest, and every bit as close as the 14-15 final score suggests.

All Black Ali Williams played the best part of 70 minutes, and it was his lineout steal that set up the try for David Jackson.

Any disappointment at that defeat was quickly swept aside, though, as Nottingham travelled down to Esher in midweek for a re-arranged league game and recorded an emphatic 43-12 win.

A Tom Youngs hat trick and a brace from Tongan No 8 Sione Kalamafofi set them on their way, whilst Junior Sifa and Andy Savage also got on the scoresheet.

And the action is coming thick and fast now as they try and catch up with games lost to the weather before Christmas.

This Sunday they are in cup action again when

Scottish side Melrose come to Meadow Lane, followed by the visit of Rotherham Titans on Tuesday evening. Coach Glenn Delaney sees this busy period as an important stage in his side's development.

"It was always going to take a little time for us to be going at full throttle," he said. "The process of new players gelling has reached the stage where we can rotate the squad and still expect very high results.

"We've improved over the season and we'll be looking to get even more clinical and creative in the upcoming games."

"Help for Heroes" and Worcester

ON February 6, the Green and Whites will head into battle with table-topping Worcester Warriors as Nottingham look to secure their place in the promotion play-offs.

The club is proud to host an extra special "Help for Heroes" event at the match, which will be headed up with a unique talk by former RAF Tornado Navigator, Gulf War veteran and best selling author John Nichol. John was shot down on the first low-level daylight raid of the Gulf War. He was subsequently paraded on television provoking worldwide condemnation

and leaving one of the enduring images of the conflict.

The game will also see the Nottingham based Mercian Regiment man a climbing tower, laser booth and shooting range for fans attending the key fixture.

Representatives of the armed services, military dignitaries and even the Mercian Ram will also be attending the game, which will be raising money for the charity, which aims to help soldiers wounded in Britain's current conflicts.

Glenn Delaney's men took two points from the home

of the former Premiership side in the autumn, and will be looking to take all five against their high-profile opponents at Meadow Lane – so get set for an exciting encounter.

Members of the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force will be able to purchase two tickets at £5 each when they present their ID card at the ticket office, while the general public can gain entry to the 3pm Sunday kick off for the following prices:

Adults: £16
Concessions: £12
Students: £7
Children: £4

Wildlife Watching

Local news and views of the natural world

MUCH of the recent coverage of wildlife issues in *The Beeston Express* has centred on the destruction of wildlife habitats in Attenborough Nature Reserve resulting from the floodwall scheme, and some of the habitat 'creation' projects that are being funded because of it. Amidst this furore there has been little attention paid to the single factor which most limits the value of the reserve to wildlife – the quality of its water.

Those whose knowledge and appreciation of the area that used to be known as Attenborough Gravel Pits and goes back many years will recall that it initially achieved its status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by processes of natural succession in the worked-out gravel pits and with no human help in

the form of the extensive management schemes that we see today. Unfortunately, the hand of man was, at the time, more likely to result in damage to wildlife – and this was the case with an event that damaged the reserve more than any other.

In the early 1970s, the westward progression of gravel workings at Attenborough meant the River Erewash was breached and much of its water flowed through to the reserve. At the time, the Erewash was badly polluted and its waters had a serious effect on the aquatic biota at Attenborough. Although the river is now cleaner and some ponds have been isolated from its flow, at least outside times of flooding, much of the reserve has never really recovered.

The inflow from the Erewash breach resulted in high levels of organic

pollution leading to low oxygen levels in the water. This in turn led to a reduced diversity of aquatic life. In addition, the nutrients present in the polluted waters led to a dominance of algae, which is why the waters of much of the reserve are a deep green colour, especially in summer.

The most obvious and serious manifestation of this problem occurs in the form of the blooms of toxic blue-green algae, which occurred at the reserve as recently as a couple of years ago. Waters such as this are known as 'eutrophic'.

The recent re-alignment of the Erewash and the reduction of its connection with the reserve to a gap wide to accommodate a gravel barge was touted as a solution to this problem. It is claimed to yield a substantial reduction in the volume of polluted water entering the reserve.

Although it is still early days for the effect of this reduction to become fully apparent, it is likely that those with a serious interest in the ecology of the reserve would like to know if these claims are valid, and what is being done to assess and monitor the water quality at Attenborough.

When assessing and measuring water quality

in watercourses, chemical analysis of the water is an essential tool but one which is, on its own, insufficient unless undertaken on a continual basis. Occasional sampling may fail to detect pollution even if it occurred only a few days before the sample was taken. Because of this, the presence or absence of some aquatic invertebrates is often used to generate indices to give a better picture of pollution over a longer period. Perhaps this information, or details of how to obtain it online, could be incorporated into the regular weather reports from Attenborough that appear in

The Beeston Express?

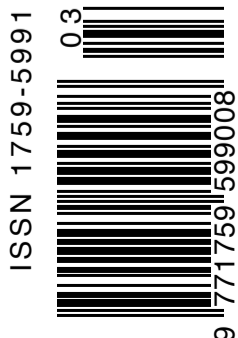
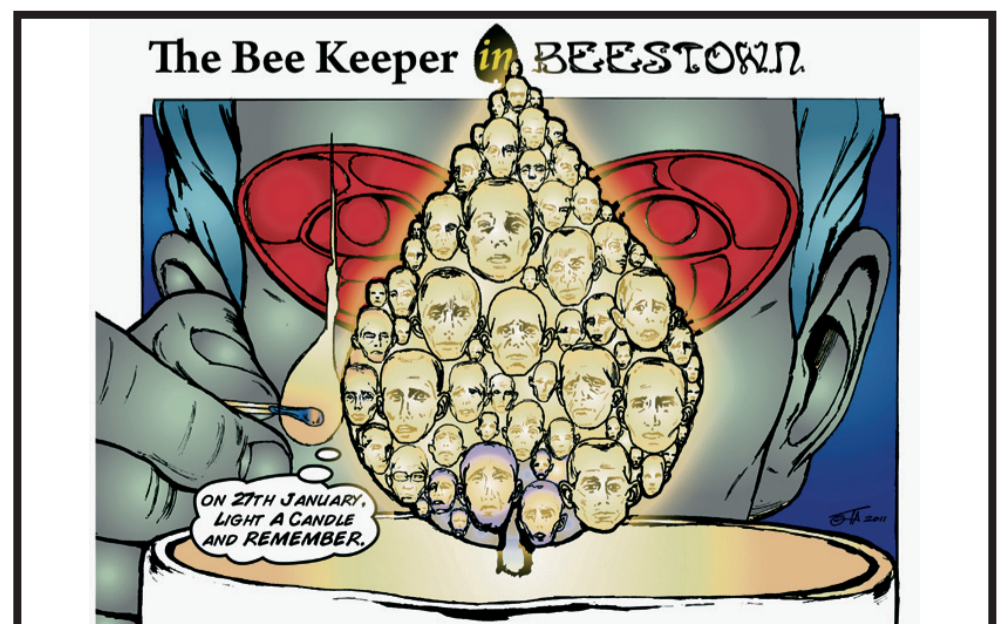
The best option for reducing the pollution problem remains, however, with the total isolation of the reserve from the Erewash by blocking the new barge passage and restoring the bund on Barton lane.

This would depend on Cemex closing their Long Lane works. Although they obviously see the site as still commercially viable, with their active workings reaching ever further away from it and a flood wall about to be erected through the site, this may have been the time, if the all relevant authorities could have got

their planning 'ducks in a line' to have made the effort to enable Cemex to move to a location closer to their current and future gravel extraction.

Because of their close working relationship with Cemex, this may be an option difficult for the Wildlife Trust to champion – but it would be more difficult for them to argue that the reversal of eutrophication in the reserve's waters would be of greater benefit to its wildlife value than habitat 'experiments' like the one at the former Wheatear field.

*Jack Smith
Local ecologist*



Thought for the Fortnight

A reed before the wind lives on, while mighty oaks do fall.