

Leisure

Hockey

THERE are just five weeks until Nottingham becomes the focus of the hockey world when it hosts the Samsung FIH Champions Trophy, so the England Hockey Board (EHB) is taking to the road with a series of road shows in and around the city.

With support from the National Hockey Foundation and in conjunction with local hockey clubs, the EHB is taking this fast and exhilaration sport out and about. The road shows will

get children involved with fun activities; there will be chances to play hockey, pick up information about the sport and the local clubs and meet some of the England stars hoping to win medals this summer.

EHB's National Manager for Young People and Students, Jo Duff, said: "The purpose of the road shows is two-fold. Firstly, we want to highlight the fantastic opportunity that people have in coming to Nottingham to

see world class international hockey being played on their doorstep. Secondly, by linking up with local hockey clubs, we are offering people the chance to pick up a hockey stick and have a go – whatever their age! If they have never tried hockey before this is a great chance to have a shot."

From Saturday, July 10, the Highfields Sports Club will become the epicentre of world hockey activity for the women's Samsung FIH Champions Trophy and the men's four nations international tournament. It

is the first time that England has hosted the Champions Trophy tournament.

Visitors to Highfields between July 10 and July 18 will be able to see the England women's team take on Argentina, China, Germany and New Zealand as well as the current World and Olympic champions, the Netherlands.

In the men's tournament, Great Britain will play against Olympic champions Germany, New Zealand, and Japan.

Beeston Road Show

Visit the road show in Beeston Square on Saturday, June 5, between 11am and 2pm.

Cycling

Get on that bike!

"IN the last issue of *The Beeston Express* (May 21, p10), it was good to be encouraged to get on our bikes to explore the countryside on the free programme of *Rural Rides around the county and to take part in the Great Nottinghamshire Bike Ride on June 20*," said Jill Burn of Chilwell.

For the many people, though, who lack the confidence to ride on and off roads, or maybe don't even have access to a bike, help is at hand. Jill is involved with the newly launched 'Get Cycling!' project and has provided information about a scheme now available to people in Chilwell and Beeston.

Jill continued: "The 'Get Cycling!' project provides free help to encourage you with the cycling you want to do, to the places you want to go, on routes that are right for you. From your home to the local shops, to your place of work, to friends, to parks and trails... you choose."

Chilwell's first 'Get Cycling!' participant has just completed her short course of free lessons and is proud of her new confidence and enjoyment of cycling.

Eva Aguiriano learnt to ride as a child in Spain but really took to cycling whilst living in Japan 20 years later. In Japan, everyone rides a bike and there are no rules of the road. In fact, it's perfectly acceptable to ride on the pavements or in any direction!

After moving to Nottingham with a young

daughter, Eva didn't ride for several years. However, she bought herself a new bike last year and was keen to get back in the saddle. But the English roads terrified her, she didn't know good cycling techniques or her rights as a cyclist, and she didn't know the best routes to take. With expert help from Adrian Juffs, a local qualified cycling instructor, Eva has learnt how to check her bike for safety, how to position herself safely on the road, about navigating roundabouts, using gears, learning new routes – and just how much fun and convenient cycling can be.

Eva said: "I've really appreciated learning new and safe ways to get to places I want to go. Did you know that you can cycle to the Showcase cinema in Dunkirk via the canal from Chilwell! I've been enjoying going out cycling for sheer pleasure as well, even spotting a kingfisher by Beeston canal."

Funding

The Broxtowe 'Get Cycling!' project is part of the nationwide Cycling for Health scheme. It has funding from NHS Choosing Health and Ridewise to provide free cycle training in this area.

Whether you are a newcomer to cycling and physical activity or already cycle, Broxtowe Cycling for Health 'Get Cycling!' is for you. Even if you don't have a bike, you can borrow one, free of charge, to get started.

For further information, please contact Adrian Juffs on 07905 068 420 or broxtowecfh@ridewise.org.uk

Wildlife Watching

Local news and views of the natural world

AS the new government settles in and the joint policies under which it will operate become apparent, wildlife enthusiasts will be looking for good news on the conservation front.

Any of these who have a fondness for badgers – and there are few who do not – would have found very bad news in the coalition agreement made by the Tories and LibDems. This states: "As part of a package of measures, we will introduce a carefully managed and science-led policy of badger control in areas with high and persistent levels of bovine tuberculosis (TB)."

Together with a badger culling programme that has been initiated by the Welsh Assembly, this represents the government caving in to the farming lobby, who are keen to portray the badger as the prime, or even the only, suspect for the prevalence of bovine TB in Britain. Although the government is keen to emphasise that this will be a "science-led" policy, the credibility of this is governed by what scientific advice is taken when making

and implementing it. Despite the hundreds of millions of pounds that bovine TB has cost the country, there is a dearth of good scientific evidence into its links with badgers.

There is evidence that some badgers do carry bovine TB but there is a lack of published research identifying exactly how TB might be transmitted from badgers to cattle. A study by the previous government into the effects of culling suggested that, although proactive culling did reduce the incidence of bovine TB in the cull zone, it could actually help spread the disease faster as animals fled to surrounding areas.

Whatever the effect of these 'targeted culls' on bovine TB in the areas in which they are carried out, it will be bad for badgers. If the culls result in no significant reduction in bovine TB, then it will have been a senseless slaughter. If carrying out these culls can be presented as having a significant effect, then it may herald a much wider killing programme – and possibly

even attempts to eliminate the badger altogether.

Many might wonder how we have come to the situation where one of our best-loved and protected animals could come to be threatened in this way. The root of the answer lies in the economics of farming. By presenting British cattle as being free of TB, their products can command a premium in the marketplace and be exported more widely. Tuberculosis has, of course, been virtually eliminated in the human population of many countries by mass vaccination and it is possible to vaccinate cattle against TB. The crucial problem is that the test currently used to detect the disease cannot differentiate between cattle that have been vaccinated and those that are actually infected, and so it would not be possible to still claim that the British herd is TB free.

Vaccination, for both cattle and badgers, does at least appear to be very much on the agenda now, but the earliest that cattle vaccination could be deployed is, it is claimed, 2015. In view of the huge cost of compensating farmers for the compulsory slaughter of infected cattle, vaccination is an option whose serious consideration is, in the eyes of many, long overdue.

The adoption of vaccination as the future of controlling bovine TB makes the proposed cull look

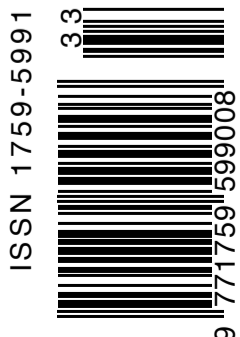
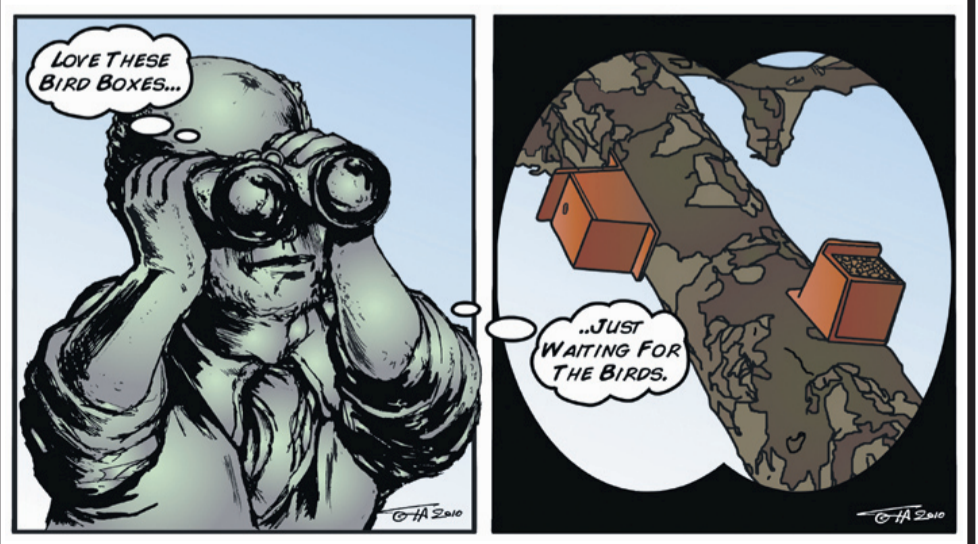
even more like a symbolic gesture to appease farmers. If badgers do, in fact, have a role in the spread of bovine TB, it is a role which could do more harm than good.

This issue of badger culling is one which divides the farming community from the rest of the population to an even greater extent than the fox hunting which the last government managed to (sort of) ban. The badger-culling programme is part of the coalition agreement but has already attracted criticism and opposition from some LibDem MPs, so there is just a chance it could still be stopped.

If the policy for bovine TB control is really to be 'science-led' then it should be. The science justifying it simply does not add up!

Jack Smith
Local ecologist

The Beekeeper



Thought for the Fortnight

"A smile, along with your word and your heart, is something you can give away but still keep."