

Leisure

Rugby

Green & Whites get ready for Championship play offs

HAVING completed their British and Irish Cup campaign with a 45-nil thrashing of Esher, Nottingham Rugby turn their attention to what has always been the main focus of the season: the Championship promotion play offs.

Coach Glenn Delaney, along with many of his counterparts, has used the cup competition to give some of his up and coming young stars valuable game time. But with a weekend off coming up this week, rather than have his squad kicking their heels, he sent a full strength side to Esher.

It was a vital part of the preparations for a run of six

games – on a home and away basis - against Worcester Warriors, London Welsh and Bristol.

“It was good to give one of our strongest line ups a run out in a match we knew would be a good test,” said Delaney. “We can now regroup and make sure everything is ready for the first play off game down at London Welsh.”

Skipper Craig Hammond also recognised the value of last week’s trip to Esher. “We’ve had a lot of rugby and all the players have had a good opportunity to show what they can do,” he said. “We were very pleased with

the performance we put in, but are now fully focused on what’s coming up in the next weeks.

“It’s been a tough run, playing week after week at a very high peak level, so having this rest week is crucial to how we perform in the next round.

“There’s no way you can play your top game when you’ve got three matches each week, so getting this rest time in will set us up for next week when we’ll be raring to go for London Welsh in what will be one of the most exciting times of the season.”

Cricket

Attenborough Cricket Club gets ready for a new season

ATTENBOROUGH Cricket Club is eagerly anticipating the forthcoming cricket season as they hope to build upon the successes of recent seasons.

The club will again be fielding four senior Saturday league teams this year, with the 1st XI playing in Division A of the South Notts Cricket League and two Sunday sides playing both league and friendly cricket. Indoor net sessions for all senior players will continue in the Sobers Hall at Trent Bridge on Thursday nights from 8 – 9pm until April, and any prospective

new players are welcome to attend. Outdoor net sessions start at the ground on The Strand, Attenborough, at the end of April and continue throughout the season on a Tuesday evening.

The club also runs a thriving Youth Section at Attenborough, with four junior teams ranging from Under 11s to Under 15s and two Kwik Cricket sides. Indoor practice sessions have been taking place throughout winter and the outdoor season begins at the end of April. Again, any potential new players thinking of taking up cricket are very welcome.

For details about the annual Youth Section Registration Evening for new and existing members, you are invited to visit the club website www.attenborough-cc.net

In addition, Attenborough Cricket Club also welcomes any potential non-playing members, as a spectator watching the cricket at weekend matches or by enjoying the facilities in the friendly Club Bar, which is open to members every Tuesday club night and at weekends during the season.

Wildlife Watching

Local news and views of the natural world

Forestry Commission

THE announcement that the government was to conduct a review of their proposals to privatise some of the Forestry Commission has been rapidly followed by a further announcement in Parliament that it was to drop the idea altogether. On the face of it, this would seem to be good news for those concerned about the effect the plans would have on access and wildlife conservation.

Those with objections to the proposals might do well to hold off victory celebrations for the time being. Although the announcement that the sell off proposals were being dropped was accompanied by profuse apologies and admissions that the government had ‘got this one wrong’, students of politics may detect a more practical reason. A number of elections,

including the referendum on changing the electoral system – on which the future of the governing coalition may depend – are fast approaching. It may well be that, in the face of such widespread and vocal opposition, the decision to kick this issue ‘into the long grass’ has been made as quickly as possible in the hope that the electorate may have forgotten about it by May 6, the date of the elections.

There is, however, the possibility that the sell off proposals may be revived in the future. The legislation which would enable this is already well on its way through parliament, attracting the support and vote of our local MP in the process. Once this act (the Public Bodies Bill) becomes law, a sell off could be re-introduced in its current or a modified form without any further parliamentary debate. Given

the furore it has already caused, it may be decided that any future privatisation plan should be implemented as quietly as possible.

There is also a question as to whether the Forestry Commission be allowed to maintain, let alone expand, its role in promoting access and wildlife conservation on its estate. There have already been 450 redundancies announced in the Commission’s workforce, with more to come. If it loses enough personnel, it may be able to be portrayed as ‘ineffective’ or ‘inefficient’ with privatisation offered as the only solution.

This battle may have been won but it is by no means certain that the war is over. It looks like interested parties will need to keep a close eye on developments at the Forestry Commission for some time yet.

Nottingham falcons

AFTER confirmed reports some years ago and rumours amongst wildlife enthusiasts since then, it has now been officially announced that peregrine falcons are nesting on Nottingham Trent University’s Newton building and have been doing so for several years, successfully

raising 12 chicks in the last four years alone. This nest site has been studied for the last 10 years and it has now been fully secured with cameras installed so that the nest can be watched by the public over the internet via the site: www.ntu.ac.uk/falcons.

Any keen-eyed wildlife watchers who have, over the last few years, managed to spot peregrines on the wing in the skies over Nottingham, or even perched on its buildings during their breeding season, might have been able to deduce that there was a nest site not too far away. Identifying

peregrines requires the ability to differentiate them from the ubiquitous urban pigeon. This is not too hard to do and, once you can, you may be surprised how often it is possible to spot them around the city centre. The Newton building would be a good place to start and to ‘get your eye in’. Care is needed though – the city centre can be a more hazardous environment for the distracted bird watcher than many more ‘natural’ habitats!

You may even be able to find a new nest site. The breeding success of the Nottingham falcons and their counterparts in Derby means

that there could be a number of these birds looking for nest sites in the area that they were born – perhaps even in Beeston!

If you do spot a possible peregrine nest site it would be best to report this to either the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust or the British Trust for Ornithology. They may not be aware of it and the earlier they know about potentially vulnerable nests, the sooner they can safeguard them and help to maintain the peregrine’s conservation success story.

Jack Smith
Local ecologist



Thought for the Fortnight

Don't throw away
the old bucket
until you are sure that
the new one holds water.