

# Leisure

## Rugby

### Usasz named for USA Eagles squad

NOTTINGHAM Rugby scrum half Tim Usasz has been named in the USA Eagles squad for this summer's Churchill Cup campaign in Denver and New Jersey, despite an injury-plagued season at Meadow Lane.

Usasz has had a frustrating time since injuring a hamstring back in December but hopes that a week of intensive rehabilitation with the USA medical staff in April has done the trick.

"I am obviously really pleased to be selected for the USA again this year," he said. "But more importantly, I'm just looking forward to

getting out there and playing some rugby.

"This has been a very frustrating season for me and I haven't played a lot of rugby so it will be good to get back out on the pitch.

"I spent a week with the medical staff in the USA which, along with the treatment I have been getting at Nottingham, has got me back up to fitness so hopefully I will have a good summer and be ready to go for next season.

"The Churchill Cup looks a bit different this year with France A, Japan and Uruguay coming into the competition. "We kick off with Japan, who

I haven't played against before. Then we've got a really tough test against England Saxons, whom we played last year.

"It's really good to go out there and play against sides that you've not played before and to test yourself against some of the top Premiership players too."

Meanwhile Greig Tonks has agreed a move to Guinness Premiership side Northampton Saints. The Nottingham-born England U20 centre has spent the last three seasons on loan from Leicester Tigers, making 55 appearances.

## Softball

### Not quite so soft for the Alley Cats

THE Beavers and Alley Cats Softball teams were both in action on Thursday, May 13, 2010.

#### Beavers

The Beavers were on Pitch 2 at Chilwell Olympia for their game against the University of Nottingham's team, Swingers 2.

An evenly matched game saw the Beavers hold the lead until the 7th inning when the Swingers piled in five runs, to which the Beavers could only respond with one of their own. A great catch in the outfield and a home run was a welcome return for Stewart, and a couple of hits in her first full game for Amy.

The final score was 10-9 for Swingers 2. It was a close game that the Beavers couldn't quite hold on to.

The defeat left them fifth in the division but having played at least two more games than the teams below them.

The Most Valuable Players were Amy for the ladies, and Stewart for the men.

#### Alley Cats

This game saw the Alley Cats' debut in the league this season, with two thirds of the team completely new to softball. In only their second game, they were up against Thieves – the best team in the East Midlands, if not the country – creating a very interesting match. A last minute drop-out also meant they were unable to field a full side.

The result went as expected but, as always, there were some positives

to take from the game. A first game for Glyn saw some good fielding at third base, Alan provided one of the three hits for the side, some good stops by Jenny at second base and good cover at first by Nat ensured the score wasn't as bad as it could have been.

The final score was 22-0 to Thieves. It was a tough game and the score went as expected, quite a baptism of fire. However, continued improvement surely means the Alley Cats first league victory isn't too far away and everyone involved is working hard towards that.

The Most Valuable Players were Nat for the ladies, and Alan for the men.

*Report from the  
Legendary Willie Bobbillit*

# Wildlife Watching

## Local news and views of the natural world

AFTER the saturation coverage of the general election and its aftermath, we now have a little time to reflect on what it all means. Whilst the hung parliament that resulted was widely predicted, the subsequent Conservative/LibDem coalition was a surprise to many.

In the process of forming this coalition, there will be a good deal of give and take when adopting the parties' respective manifesto commitments and where this leaves those made in the area of wildlife conservation is anyone's guess at the moment. The LibDem's manifesto was in any case rather thin in this area and their one stand-out policy – to end the practice of 'garden grabbing' for housing development – is one that

might not find widespread support amongst their new Conservative partners and could be a prime candidate for the chop.

The Conservative manifesto contained a number of potentially useful measures, many of which would attract the support of LibDems, but there has to be a question mark over how many of them will flourish into something meaningful in an atmosphere of budget cuts and 'recovery' through economic growth.

While the unexpected union of former political foes is credited with 'changing the face of British politics', the election produced another result, which could have an even greater impact – the election of Caroline Lucas as Britain's first ever Green

Party MP. At last there will be a strong and independent voice on environmental issues, including wildlife conservation, in Parliament and it should be hoped that she is given every opportunity to provide this voice, both in the chamber of the house and in committee. There is also a good case for the Greens taking up one of the spare 'slots' at Prime Minister's Question Time that have become available now that the LibDems are in government. Having an MP elected to parliament, particularly under the first past the post system, greatly increases a party's credibility and authority and it is likely that the Green MP will now be called on frequently by the media for comment and analysis. It is here, as much as anywhere else, that political arguments are won and lost.

Although the Green's policies cover all aspects of government, wildlife conservation would be for many something with which they closely identify the party. The Global Biodiversity Outlook report, which was recently published by the UN, would be a candidate for their

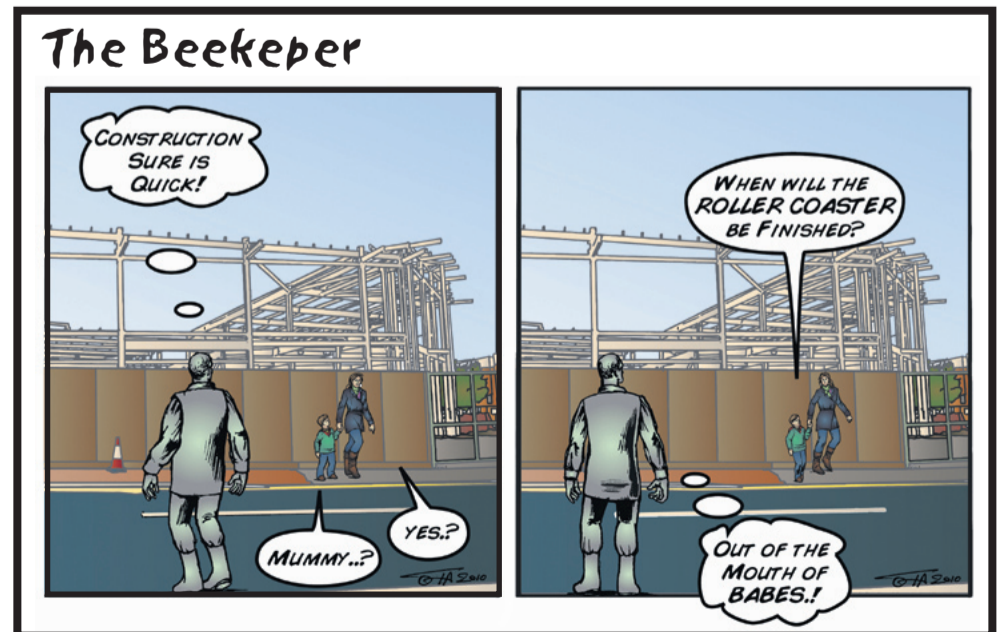
early attention. This sets out the failure of governments, including our own, to fulfil their commitments as part of the 2002 Convention on Biological Diversity and describes how biodiversity loss has increased, rather than reduced, since then.

How successful their MP is in exposing and influencing the new government's policies could have a significant effect on the numbers of Green Party MPs in future parliaments. The reason for this is the issue on which the new coalition will stand or fall

– electoral reform. If the coalition holds together long enough to introduce the alternative vote system, the beneficiaries are likely to be the 'smaller' parties and there could be, in effect, only two choices of major party at the next election. Though some may succumb to the charms of UKIP, the BNP, the Monster Raving Loony party or others, it is the Green Party that would attract many people's alternative vote and this, in turn, could result in more of their candidates being elected to parliament.

The position of Britain's first Green MP carries with it both responsibilities and opportunities. If her election leads to environmental issues being central to government policy, rather than something to which politicians pay lip service when it is convenient, it would represent real change in the political landscape. Interesting times indeed!

*Jack Smith  
Local ecologist*



### Thought for the Fortnight

*When you say that you agree to a thing in principle you mean that you have not the slightest intention of carrying it out in practice.*

Otto Von Bismarck

