

Leisure

Bowls

Report from Attenborough Village Bowls Club

FINALS Day at Attenborough Village Bowls on Saturday, September 11, produced the following results.

Club member Alan Oxley said: "The outdoor season is now closed until April 16, 2011, although our members continue to compete at the Erewash Indoor Bowls Club.

"If you are interested in joining a bowling club that is both competitive and social, please contact the club secretary, Doreen Mellers, for more details. Tel: (0115) 972 4123."

Leslie Lowndes Open Pairs

Alan Brooks & Peter Hill beat Brian Simmons & Barry Griffiths

Harold Bone Open 2 Woods

Brian Simmons beat Jack Hailwood

Bill & Mary Walker Veterans Trophy

David Brook beat Doug Bucknall

Mary Hazell Open Handicap Singles

Doug Bucknall beat Jack Hailwood

Percy Barsby Singles

Rex Mellers beat John Stratford

Ladies' Singles

Mary Antcliff beat Jill Barrett

Men's Singles

David Brook beat Bob Barrett

Rugby

New Zealander Arlidge displays his tactical prowess

NOTTINGHAM Rugby have made a strong start to the new season, with three wins from their five games so far. Only league leaders Worcester Warriors, relegated from the Premiership last season, have scored more points than the Green and Whites.

Leading the way on that front is James Arlidge. The New Zealand born outside half has been capped at international level with Japan, and that pedigree certainly shows. He joined Nottingham from Newport Gwent Dragons over the summer and is already proving to be a player capable of rewriting a few club records with his

accurate goalkicking.

He slotted over another twenty points in last week's win over Esher at Meadow Lane in a game that provided plenty of satisfaction for coach Glenn Delaney.

"It was a pretty efficient performance," said Delaney. "We played some good, constructive attacking rugby but the thing I'm most proud of was our defence. That was as efficient as I've seen from our guys.

"Esher defended very well, but the difference this week, compared to the game at Rotherham the previous week, was that we were patient.

"It was a nice, clinical performance, orchestrated by James Arlidge with his kicking and tactical nous, backed up by a group of guys who worked very hard for each other."

Next up for Nottingham is a tough trip to Doncaster to take on one of their fiercest rivals.

Last season they played four times, with two wins apiece. But Doncaster's victories both came in the play offs and effectively ended Nottingham's promotion challenge.

Wildlife Watching

Local news and views of the natural world

Bleak days for 'Brock'

THE future is looking grim for Britain's badgers, as details of the coalition government's plans for culling them begin to emerge.

Before the last general election, the Conservative party manifesto stated: "We will introduce a carefully-managed and science-led policy of badger control in areas with high and persistent levels of bovine tuberculosis." (No such plans featured in the Liberal Democrat manifesto ahead of the election.)

Apart from the use of the word 'control' instead of 'culling' this is, as political pronouncements go, a pretty clear statement of intent. It is also a reversal of the last government's policy.

If early reports of how this cull might be carried out are accurate, then it will be neither science-led nor carefully managed. It appears that farmers and

landowners will be allowed to apply for a licence to cull badgers, if all farmers and landowners in a certain area agree to do so. The cull would then be carried out either by trapping and killing or, more disturbingly, by 'free shooting' – taking pot shots at the badgers around their setts or elsewhere.

Requiring this to be done by (and at the expense of) the landowners themselves has an obvious cost benefit to the government, over the alternative of employing personnel to carry it out in what might be a more humane way. It is difficult to see how this will assist 'careful management', but easier to foresee that this culling could descend into vengeful bloodlust if farmers who have themselves been affected by bovine TB carry it out. Even worse, establishing the acceptability of private individuals killing badgers may encourage some people

outside the licensed areas to think that they can get away with some 'unofficial' culling. There is the danger that a de facto open season on badgers could be created.

As for this policy being science-led, the best piece of research available to the government, often referred as the Krebs trial, concluded that even well-managed culling can result in the disease becoming more widespread because of the phenomenon of perturbation – where the survivors of family groups that have been partly culled wander far and wide, thus spreading the disease to new areas. The proposed culling regime looks likely to exacerbate, rather than control, this effect.

The decision to adopt a culling policy seems particularly perverse, coming as it does just at the time when the use of a vaccine against bovine TB for badgers has been approved. It seems that landowners will be given the option of a 'licence to vaccinate' instead of a 'licence to cull', but who will foot the bill for this work is not yet clear.

Many would contend that the best approach, on scientific and humanitarian levels, would be to undertake a large-scale trial to assess the effectiveness of vaccination

in limiting bovine TB in badgers. Trying to cure badgers of the disease that they have caught from our cattle has to be a preferable option to killing them because of it.

Buzzards over Beeston

ALTHOUGH there have been a few sightings of lone individuals, it was a first for your 'wildlife correspondent' to spot a pair of buzzards soaring over Beeston last weekend. The birds were performing what looked like a food pass and, quite possibly, prospecting for territory. As the pair flew

overhead, a sparrowhawk – perhaps spooked by their presence – made a swift low flight to a safer spot. This all took place after several nights when the calls of tawny owls could be heard.

Add to these birds the increasing numbers of peregrine falcons nesting in cities and it becomes apparent that living alongside humans is becoming a viable option for an increasing number and variety of birds of prey. For some species, this is likely to be a combination of necessity and opportunity, born of a lack of optimal territories due to their increasing breeding success.

This is probably the case with the buzzard, whose numbers have shown a big rise over the last few years. Urban woodlands and parks could provide buzzards with one of their main requirements – a suitable nesting site. However, these urban areas might struggle to provide good hunting territory, which is also essential.

Despite this, buzzards may be forced to 'have a go' in areas such as Beeston, so it is worth looking out for them. They are hard to mistake for anything else you might see locally!

Jack Smith
Local ecologist



Thought for the Fortnight

We never disclose our character so clearly as when we describe another's.

