



Derby City Pond Wardens Association – Autumn 2009

Since our Summer 2009 publication, the DCPWA group has had a second attempt to hold its annual Day of Pondomania, supported the Wild Derby Big Day Out event at Sunnydale Park, held its own Pond Dipping event at the Bridle Gate Lane pond, undertaken a review of the problems at Alvaston Boating Lake and promoted its wares at the Ecofest event in Markeaton Park. Its pond wardens have also been busy doing their annual pond surveys on some ponds. There is also some good news on our Wild About Ponds funding application.

Day of Pondomania

Despite the cancellation of the Big One Carnival due to wet conditions, DCPWA attempted to undertake this annual family event at Chaddesden Park on 7th June 2009, but were hampered by atrocious wet and windy weather on the day. Three or four members of the public did, however, turn out to catch newts and other creatures and we managed to do a live broadcast with BBC Radio Derby before calling it a day just after lunch, by which time we were all soaked to the skin.

As the Big One was subsequently re-scheduled for 2nd August 2009, we decided we would make a second attempt to hold our event. However, déjà vue, the Big One was cancelled again, we had thunderstorms and lightning and went home wet having entertained a few brave 'dippers'.

Big Day Out at Sunnydale Park

A first for DCPWA. As Sunnydale Park had no active "Friends" group, DCPWA were asked by Wild Derby to provide the resources to help run this family event, which included story-telling, meadow-sweeping, den-building, 'Wildhead' making, drawing and pond-dipping (of course). Helen Wright, Maggie Cooper, George Daly and Derek Golson helped Beverley Rhodes and Groundwork staff entertain about 35 children and their parents for the day. The weather stayed fine and a good day was had by all, and DCPWA funds benefited by £200.



Meadow-sweeping Catch

Big Day Out at Sunnydale Park – 11th August 2009

Bridle Gate Lane - Pond Dip

Bridle Gate Lane pond (or Elvaston Lane pond as it was originally known as) was the venue for the second of the DCPWA's contribution to the year's Wild Derby programme.

Nervousness about a third consecutive washout had receded on the day as bright sunshine met the team putting up the DCPWA gazebo first thing in the morning.

A steady, but not overwhelming, flow of members of the public continued throughout the day. Whilst the pond was showing signs of being overtaken by Typha, there were one or two open patches of water available for dipping. Highlight of the day was an enormous Water Beetle caught by a young lad, which must have measured 40-50 millimetres in diameter.

Thanks go to Trevor Taylor, Helen Wright, Pat Sear, Vanessa Amaral-Rogers, Nigel Barker, Maggie Cooper and Derek Golson for helping out on a successful day.



DCPWA Gazebo



Dipping by the Public

Bridle Gate Lane Pond Dip – 16th August 2009

Alvaston Boating Lake

Alvaston Boating Lake has attracted some poor press recently, due to an ongoing issue with algae, which is killing the fish and blocking the outflow. It also suffers from a litter issue and over-feeding of the local Canada Geese.

A meeting was convened by Derek Golson, involving DCC Parks, Wild Derby, Friends of Alvaston Park and DCPWA, to confirm the issues and to formulate corrective plans. A successful meeting was held with Alf Bousie, Beverley Rhodes, Phillip Ollershaw, Joseph Nowicki (our Pond Warden) and Derek Golson. Agreed plans included the introduction of barley straw bales and the construction of floating reed beds to improve oxygenation, to counteract the algae and thereby improve the habitat for the fish. This would be funded through an Environment Agency grant, which had to be spent by March 2010.

Other work would aim to improve the inflow and outflow arrangements for the lake. DCC Parks would investigate the re-design of the outflow (possibly similar to that at Allestree Lake), and provide details to FoAP and DCPWA to secure funds. DCC Parks would also investigate, via their Building Maintenance Dept, whether the inflow could be extended to the centre of the lake and an underwater sprinkler system introduced to improve oxygenation.

FofAP and DCPWA were willing to help clearance of the litter, algae and invasive plant material, and have insurance for agreed group activities. It was stressed that such work must not be undertaken without the prior approval of DCC Parks Dept and insurance. People working singly put themselves at risk and is therefore not permitted without DCPWA Committee approval and DCC Parks permission.

The Boating Lake would be designed for birds and fish. A separate (and new) pond would then be planned for macro-invertebrates, this new pond would be used for educational

purposes by local schools and groups. This latter initiative would be revisited when the results of a recent DCC/DCPWA funding application to SITA was known (see below).



Alvaston Boating Lake – Algae Issues

Alvaston Boating Lake – September 2009

Ecofest

This was the first year that DCPWA had a dedicated stand of its own, and Maggie Cooper, Pat Sear and Derek Golson helped staff it over the two days. DCPWA had its stand in the Do One Thing for Wildlife marquee. A fairly high degree of public interest was maintained over the two days, with a tank exhibiting the results of a five minute pond dip at the Porters Lane pond attracting in the children.

On show were Smooth Newts, Dragonfly Nymphs, Damselfly Nymphs, Freshwater Shrimp, Leech, Hoglouse and Water Boatmen, with Rigid Hornwort providing the cover for them. Maggie even caught a Water Scorpion on the early Sunday morning dip.

Tim Pickering visited the stand, and is now our resident Pond Warden for the City Hospital pond. He replaces Leon Hayward, who moved to Chesterfield some weeks ago.



Wild Derby Pond



Wild Derby Animal Shelter

Ecofest at Markeaton Park – 19th/20th September 2009

Wild About Ponds Project

The Wild About Ponds project is designed to raise awareness of the importance of ponds and was introduced in our Summer 2009 newsletter. It will provide the necessary training and support for pond wardens to survey and produce 30 mini-management plans. The knowledge, resources and confidence acquired will enable the group to continue to manage and restore ponds beyond the end of the project. The Wild About Ponds Project will provide the necessary professional resources, through expert tuition and supervision, to create and restore a number of ponds.

The scope of the Wild About Ponds project will be to restore 14 existing ponds, maintain six high-quality ponds and create five new ponds within Derby City over a period of 2-3 years. The application was submitted to the SITA Trust's Enriching Nature Programme during February 2009, was reviewed at their Board Meeting held on 16th June 2009 and, following clarification on some points, £91,881 was awarded to Derby City Council in September 2009.

Work on this project must start before March 2010, and will involve Wild Derby, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, BTCV, Groundwork and DCPWA. A kick-off meeting is being scheduled and work cannot commence until a formal contract is in place. Debbie Alston will be our reporting point of contact.

Bits 'n' Pieces

Maggie Cooper and Derek Golson represented DCPWA at the Alvaston Park Families Day held on 9th August 2009. A fair amount of interest was shown, but no Pond Wardens recruited.

Pond Surveys were formally undertaken at the Porters Lane, Mickleover (Murray Park) and Sinfin Moor ponds during August and early-September 2009. Results have been posted on the National Pond Monitoring Network and PSYM scores derived.

Maggie Cooper attended a BBC provided Media Training workshop at Derby's Quad on 24th September, so if you need any advice contact Maggie on maggiegolson@aol.com.

Maggie Cooper and Derek Golson attended a workshop on Attracting, Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers at Cromford Mill on 30th September 2009. The workshop was run by two representatives of Volunteer Centres-Derbyshire, and handouts have been placed in the DCPWA Library.

DCPWA Committee

Contact Derek Golson (DCPWA Chairman) or Maggie Cooper (DCPWA Secretary) on 01332-830657, or by email at dcpwa@aol.com, if you want further details on adopting a pond. Our final quarterly Pond Warden meeting for 2009 will be held on 17th December, when we will be pleased to welcome any new people interested in joining the DCPWA. All meetings will be held in the Council Offices in Corporation Street, Derby and commence at 19:00 hours. It would be great to hear from you or see you there. Further details on the DCPWA and other events can be found at www.dcpwa.org.uk.
