



Derby City Pond Wardens Association – Spring 2009

Since our Autumn/Winter 2008 publication, the DCPWA group has supported work on the second phase creation of the new pond at Chaddesden Park and cleared invasive grasses on the Radbourne Gate pond in Mickleover. We have also been working closely with WildDerby on two major initiatives; 1) development of the programme of work for the WildWeek on Ponds planned for 1-7 June 2009, and 2) an application to SITA for a 3-year programme of work on a number of ponds. The DCPWA gave a presentation on the group's objectives to the Friends of Chaddesden Park on 14th January 2009, and were represented at two presentations of Plants and Great Crested Newts organised by the Friends of Mickleover Meadows. Pat Sear (our Pond Warden for Mickleover Meadows) has reached the heights of an on-site interview with BBC Radio Derby. We were also represented at the 2009 WildDerby launch in Derby's Market Place on 6th March 2009. Our Secretary (Maggie Cooper) attended a St.Johns First Aid Course over the weekend 7/8th February 2009, and is our first official DCPWA First Aider.

We are also pleased to report that our new web site (www.dcpwa.org.uk) went live on 2nd January 2009. Our thanks go to David Musk (our Pond Warden for Dale Road in Spondon) for making this happen.

Chaddesden Park Pond Creation

After three aborted attempts due to rain, snow and ice, the DCPWA (Maggie Cooper and Derek Golson) were involved in a long day on 16th February 2009 helping modify the structure of the first pond, by rolling back the liner, building the dividing bank with the aid of a mechanical digger, and then rolling the liner back over the bank. The second phase of work was to put a new underlay and liner on an adjacent marsh/swamp area and then covering that will soil/clay with the help of the digger. This liner sat on top of the dividing bank as well, which was then topped with soil/clay.



Constructing the Dividing Bank



Finished-Marsh/Swamp Area in Foreground

Chaddesden Park Pond Completion – 16th February 2009

The clay was unbelievably hard to work with, and even the professional digger driver had problems getting it free from the clasp at times. The intent is that the pond area retains water all year round with marginal plants, whilst the marsh area will have plants across the whole

area and could dry up in warmer periods. We now need a good rainfall to fill both sides. This work was done in conjunction with WildDerby and Derby City Council Parks.

The next phase of work to be completed was the plant laying on 24th March 2009. This entailed both meadow and aquatic plants being planted by various groups of local school-children and scouts during the course of the day, complemented with members of the public. Nine types of aquatic plants were laid around the pond margins and in the marsh area, including Iris Pseudacorus (Yellow Flag), Mentha Aquatica and Lythrum Salicaria. Let us hope that everything has matured nicely by the time of the Day of Pondomania!



Members of the public laying plants in the Marsh area, under Groundwork guidance

Chaddesden Park Pond Plant Laying – 24th March 2009

Radbourne Gate Pond Maintenance

Radbourne Gate pond is situated on a new housing development located in Mickleover. The pond was suffering from an invasion of grasses which were slowly taking over the water surface area and, in time, would have transposed the pond into a field. Pat Sear was our temporary Pond Warden and during a pre-survey on 16th January 2009, she was fortunate enough to be approached by a local resident who was inquisitive as to what our plans were.

To cut a long story short, that resident (Neil Baldwin) has become our latest recruit and is now the Pond Warden for Radbourne Gate. Once again, bad weather forced a couple of postponements, and work finally got under way on 20th February 2009. We were all keen that the work got completed before the end of February to avoid breeding amphibians. Pat Sear, Neil Baldwin (and his partner Liona), Maggie Cooper, Derek Golson and Peter Roberts set to work at 09:30 on a bright and sunny day. Neil and Derek took the waders to draw off the grasses, whilst Pat and Maggie drew it away from the pond and into barrows, Liona and Peter barrowed it to a safe position on one side of the pond. The work was much more onerous than expected, as the grasses had taken a secure root. Further work will be required later in the year, when hopefully Neil has contrived other residents to help.



Before – Pat Sear Surveying Depths



After – Notice the Longer Arms Below!



A Job Well Done!
(Pat, Liona, Neil, Derek, Maggie & Peter)

Radbourne Gate Pond Maintenance – 20th February 2009

BBC Radio Derby

DCPWA's association with Radio Derby continued during the period with two sessions of note. The first involved a recorded interview at the Mickleover Meadow pond, involving Pat Sear, Peter Roberts and Derek Golson on 29th January 2009. Peter, as Chairman of the Friends of Mickleover Meadows (FoMM), had setup the session to bring public awareness to the decline in ponds and the work that FoMM and DCPWA were doing to maintain them. The interview was held with Dave King, and a transcript can be found at http://www.bbc.co.uk/derby/content/articles/2009/01/30/mickleover_meadows_feature.shtml.

The second session was held on 19th February 2009, with Gary Andrews and Anthony Issacs of the BBC, to discuss the details of the Wild Week on Ponds (see next article in this newsletter), aspects of which will be transmitted daily and live by Radio Derby.

Wild Week on Ponds

Wild Week on Ponds is the brainchild of Beverley Rhodes from WildDerby, and follows on from the successful Wild Week at Sinfin held during 2008. The programme includes a number of activities, both with and without public involvement, and takes place between 1st and 7th June 2009. Creation of the new ponds will form Derby's contribution to the Million Ponds Project recently launched by the Ponds Conservation Trust and Natural England.

Insofar as the DCPWA are concerned, the primary task will be to manage the creation of new ponds at Chaddesden Wood, Sinfin Moor Park and Mickleover Meadows, and Maggie Cooper, Nigel Barker and Pat Sear have agreed to take on the management role respectively. Some ponds will be hand dug, whilst the Mickleover site will use a mechanical digger. One of the ponds will be lined. The work will be closely tracked by BBC Radio, with on-site broadcasts occurring on every day of the week. Whilst the details are still being finalised, public activities will include moving bluebells, building bird boxes, worm hunts, planting pond plants and, not least, helping to dig the ponds. DCPWA will be supported by a number of agencies, including Derby City Council, BTCV, Broomfield College, Derwent Green Gym, RSPB and Groundwork to name but a few. The final day will be our annual Day of Pandomania, which this year will form part of The Big 1 Carnival being held at Chaddesden Park on Sunday, 7th June 2009.



Pond Dipping & Identification – Day of Pandomania 2008

Wild About Ponds Project

The DCPWA Committee have been working closely with Beverley Rhodes of WildDerby, to help construct a funding application to the SITA Trust's Enriching Nature Programme. The Wild About Ponds project is planned to raise the awareness of the importance of ponds. It will achieve this by providing the pond wardens with the necessary training and through surveying and the production of 30 mini-management plans, the resources and confidence to continue to manage and restore ponds beyond the end of the project. With this information, the Wild About Ponds Project will also 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 during February 2009 and a decision is awaited, but a clarification meeting was held on 10th March 2009.

.....and Finally

Spring is in the air and the frogs are mating. Frogspawn was first noticed at the Chaddesden Wood pond on 28th February 2009, with the Porters Lane pond closely following on 10th March 2009. Our records show this was about a week later than 2008; probably due to the recent cold weather. However, Derwent Valley Fishery ponds and drainage ditches still await spawn, although some tidying up work had been undertaken at the ponds and that the profusion of water lily plants had disappeared along with much of the pond side reeds.



Frogspawn



Mating Frogs

Porters Lane Pond – 12th March 2009



Derwent Valley Pond – 15th March 2009

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 quarterly Pond Warden meetings for 2009 will be held on 26th March, 18th June, 24th September and 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.
