



# Friends of Red Kites

in the North East of England

[www.friendsofredkites.org.uk](http://www.friendsofredkites.org.uk)



## Newsletter, Winter 2016

### Red Kites coming home to roost - Paul Danielson



On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006 the first roost watch of the year took place - ten red kites in total came to roost in the area around the Nine Arches Viaduct in the Derwenthaugh Park. They eventually settled into three small roosts within the immediate vicinity.

Later in September two visits were made to Victoria Garesfield which was a regular roost-site for many kites in 2015. However, there were no birds seen on either occasion.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> of October a small new roost was found near Hamsterley Hall where five kites were seen dropping into trees to roost. This was close to the nest which, last year, produced four chicks and this year three. One tagged bird (L0) seen here was one of the chicks tagged at Urpeth earlier in the year. Later in October, six red kites were seen to arrive at this same roost (four juveniles and

two adults); one of the juveniles did have a wing-tag but was unable to be identified.

On 17<sup>th</sup> October, sixteen birds came in to roost at the Nine Arches Viaduct eventually splitting into two roosts in the immediate vicinity. Birds identified from photo's at this roost were K9, L6 and H0.

The last roost-watch of the month was at Hamsterley Hall where seven kites roosted.

Two roost-checks were conducted in November at the Nine Arches Viaduct and one at Victoria Garesfield. The two watches at Nine Arches had 19 and 15 kites roosting respectively; on both occasions kites elected to sit on electricity pylons for a good time before displacing to trees later on. The Victoria Garesfield area again had no birds roosting.

Other areas checked for roosts have been Ebchester, Bradley Hall and Causey. No red kites were seen roosting at any of these sites.

The numbers of red kites found to be roosting have proved to be very disappointing; for instance, on 23 November 2016, 19 birds came into roost at the Nine Arches Viaduct. The same week in 2015, 41 kites were seen coming into roost at this location! Comments made by many members of the public reflect these low numbers where people are stating that they are seeing far less kites in the area than previously. This is clearly of concern to FoRK and we will continue to monitor the situation.

On the weekend of the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2017, an International Roost Watch will take place. We will be taking part in this and will be inviting members of FoRK and other members of the general public to join us at the Nine Arches Viaduct roost in Rowlands Gill to witness the kite roost. Members of the FoRK committee will be on hand to answer any questions people may have. A further announcement about this will be made nearer the time.

### **STOP PRESS**

**12 kites were seen dropping into roost along the edge of the woods at Victoria Garesfield on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.**

## **Fellside Church Share Coffee Morning – Fiona Clapham**

Whickham Fellside Church holds regular Share coffee mornings aiming to: *Share a coffee, Share a chat, Share a homemade cake and help a charity.*

One of our health walkers, Avril Arbon, organises these events once a month at the church where people get together for a brew, a bun and a blether with donations welcomed, going to a specified charitable organisation. Avril proposed a morning in aid of the Friends of Red Kites. We readily agreed!

Delicious treats were made by Friends and church members and laid on what would become a groaning table of cakes, assorted scones, cupcakes, calories etc. on the morning of Saturday 26th November. It looked fabulous. Come 10 o'clock members of church, community and health walkers were made to feel at home with a cuppa and cake or two. The event was well supported by contribution and attendance and the church hall had a real buzz. The head count at one time was 45 but there will have been more than this overall.



The Kite-info stall greeted folk as they came in before assorted Friends and church members served up tea and coffee!

All in all a lovely way to while away a Saturday morning and it was remarked on how well FoRK members supported the event. If you missed it you can go in future on the last Saturday of each month (except for December which will be on the 17<sup>th</sup>).

Many thanks are due to Avril and Fellside Church as well everyone from FoRK (names too numerous to mention!) who helped make this such a successful event where the fantastic sum of £312 was raised for FoRK funds.



## **Membership - Judy Summerson**

By the end of August 2016 we had 290 members (equating to 180 households). Membership renewal took place in September – October. The response was quick and very encouraging with 18 members now paying by standing order. However, replies gradually dwindled and, by the beginning of November, 230 members (equating to 150 households) had renewed their membership. This is a loss of 60 members (or 30 households) which is disappointing but, perhaps, expected. People are not seeing the red kites as frequently and folks are less keen to pay out their hard-earned cash.

Membership is very important to the Friends. It raises awareness and provides essential money to pay for the conservation of these magnificent birds of prey. Word of mouth is the best way to encourage people to join so please can I ask everyone to try and enroll at least one new household. Membership makes an excellent Christmas present. Membership forms can be found in Thornley Woodlands Centre, St. Mary's Resource Centre (Gateshead) and on our web site [www.friendsofredkites.org.uk](http://www.friendsofredkites.org.uk).

### **Kitecam 2017 Project - Harold Dobson**

Your FoRK Committee is currently working on the above project which will involve positioning a camera near to an active red kite's nest in May 2017, after the chicks have hatched, and recording the images for about six weeks which will be edited/streamed via our website. In addition, we may show edited footage at selected venues with FoRK members present to provide information and answer any questions.

The proposed nest has been active for the last three years and the territory has been chosen to minimise disturbance to the nesting red kites.

We are working in conjunction with 2020Vision, an award-winning CCTV camera systems company, which was instrumental in setting up a camera on an osprey's nest at Foulshaw Moss Nature Reserve for the Cumbrian Wildlife Trust in 2015.

As it is illegal to disturb an active red kite's nest, our Schedule 1 Licence holder, who is formally authorised to ring and wing-tag our chicks, is currently investigating whether this project can be included on his licence.

Watch this space for an update.

### **Looking for a special Christmas Present?**

Do you fancy an original red kite painting for a Christmas present? If so, then Eric Nicholson (FoRK member) has **five** of his paintings for sale at Thornley Woodlands Centre.

Shop early in order to avoid disappointment!

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