



# Friends of Red Kites

in the North East of England

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



## Newsletter, Spring 2018

### Roosting Red Kites - Ken Sanderson & Paul Danielson



Red kites form communal roosts in the autumn and continue to gather at dusk throughout the winter. In the longest nights of winter they can spend up to sixteen hours a night perched at roost.

The first red kite roost came together last autumn, towards the end of September, when four kites were noted dropping into trees at Lockhaugh Meadow, near the Nine Arches Viaduct, in Gateshead's Derwent Valley. Numbers built up steadily over the next month with twenty-two being recorded there on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Numbers fluctuated thereafter at this location, probably due to the forming of another roost site further up the valley at Lintzford which held a maximum of twenty-five kites on the 16<sup>th</sup> November.

A co-ordinated roost count on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> January produced the highest roost number of the winter, when fifty-eight birds used four different roost sites. Broken down by location, thirty-one birds dropped into Gibside, nineteen gathered at Lintzford Garden Centre, six used Chopwell Woods and two were noted at the Pontburn Viaduct. The roost check on that evening was part of an International Roost Count carried out at all locations in Europe holding red kites. Last year, fifty-seven kites were counted locally on the corresponding weekend. Figures for the UK have just been returned (last year's counts in brackets): There were 823 (637) in Scotland and 945 (550) in England which represents a significant increase.

Unfortunately no roost counts were made in Wales.

The roost will disperse during February as birds move back onto territory to start the breeding cycle all over again. At this time of year spectacular displays of red kites interacting in pairs can be seen, especially on warmer days, as they court their mates with speed-chasing and talon-grappling.



## **Part 2 - Red Kites visiting us**

Over the years we have had several visitors from other projects:

### ***Harewood House, Yorkshire*** (left wing tag = orange)

**Orange/Green 1 Soar** (born 2006) – settled in the Gateshead area from October 2007 before successfully pairing up with **WT68 Lyons Lightning** (born 2006) from 2008 and raising seven chicks through to 2013. She then had a brief fling with **WT15 Red Philip** in 2014 raising 2 chicks; the following year she failed to raise chicks with an unknown kite. Her last sighting was in February 2017.

### ***Black Isle, Inverness*** (left wing tag = royal blue)

**Royal Blue/Red 8P** (born 2012) – spent its first winter with us being a regular visitor to our pre-roost and roost, mainly seen near the Nine Arches Viaduct, between September and December 2012. Sadly its body was found just below the Derwent Reservoir in March 2013, we were unable to determine the cause of death.



### ***Argaty, Central Scotland*** (left wing tag = red)

**Red/Purple T2 Trunkle** (born 2007) travelled to Gigrin Farm, Wales in 2009 before settling near Causey Gill, Co. Durham and successfully pairing up with **WT84 Shiver** (born 2006) for three years 2010 – 2012, raising 5 chicks. Sadly after losing her partner, who died in 2012, she was only seen on one further occasion on territory in February 2013.

**Red/Red C7, ?8 and Z3** (all born 2012) – all three visited us on a few occasions each between December 2012 and February 2014; again either at the pre-roost or main roost near the Nine Arches Viaduct.

**Red/Green 4** (born 2015) was seen on two occasions at the pre-roost at Sherburn Towers in January 2016.

### ***Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland*** (left wing tag = green)

**Green/White R** (born 2002) was recorded on at least, three occasions between November 2006 and January 2007, twice at the Sherburn Towers roost.

**Green/Green 4** (born 2006) also spent the winter here being seen on several occasions between October 2007 and December 2008, again mostly at the Sherburn Towers roost. It was then seen again in October 2015 at Victoria Garesfield.

**Green/Purple 10** (born 2007) was seen on many occasions between September 2007 and July 2008, roosting mainly at Sherburn Towers, but also being recorded at different locations around the lower Derwent Valley.

**Green/Mid Blue P** (born 2010) – paired with an untagged kite for two seasons near Dryderdale Hall in Weardale, 2012 and 2013, successfully raising, at least, one chick in 2012; the outcome was unknown in 2013.

**Orange/White 3** (born 2011) was a more regular visitor between June 2012 and December 2013 – first being seen at Muggleswick before spending two winters at our main pre-roost and roost sites. It was also seen on one occasion, near Edmundbyers in April 2013 carrying nesting material.

**Orange/Red 1 and 28** (born 2012) were also seen at our winter roosts on a couple of occasions each between October 2013 and February 2014.

**Orange/Black 1** (born 2017) was seen recently near Edmundbyers in September 2017.

## **Health Walks - Jackey Lockwood**

Since writing my last report in the summer Newsletter the Health Walks have continued to be popular and to attract many participants. As well as our usual walking locations along the course of the River Derwent, we followed a new route in August through Watergate Park and Washingwell Woods. Although it was slightly more challenging everyone appreciated the varied landscape and slightly different wildlife. We are so fortunate in Gateshead to have such a range of accessible routes in open spaces where it is possible to keep fit through outdoor exercise and have close views of local flora and fauna.



At least twice a year Glenn, one of our Walk Leaders, organises a slightly longer walk at the coast. In October there were 32 Walkers out enjoying the area from Whitburn to Tynemouth via refreshment stops at Marsden and South Shields. Another Health Walk Leader, Sue, organised a very enjoyable and sociable meal at the Marquis of Granby. Many thanks to both, it is appreciated.

The colder winter weather did not deter the Health Walkers from getting out in to the fresh air. During December the walk along the Lower Derwent included a section of the River Tyne. The refreshment stop for a welcome cuppa was either at the FACT building or in the Skiff Inn. On our last walk of the year the Walkers, in festive attire, enjoyed singing Carols at the Skiff. Many thanks to Kevin, one of our Walkers, who did the organising and, along with family members, provided musical accompaniment.



Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our twelve trained Health Walk Leaders for their continued commitment and enthusiasm. Their knowledge of the wildlife and the area adds to the enjoyment of the walks. Our thanks also go to the regular walkers themselves who make the walks a pleasure to organise and who do so much to support FoRK activities. So far in 2018 the average number of walkers out each week is 45 (compared to 44 at this time last year). Keep up the great start!

## **Events - Sylvia Jones**

We had a very successful Christmas meal for the health walkers at the Marquis of Granby, Sunnyside. We have planned to have our Spring Members' Evening at the same venue on Monday March 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be a good choice of main courses and desserts. As usual, members will be given an update about the red kites. We are collecting raffle and tombola donations so contributions will be gratefully accepted. As always, suggestions will be welcome for future events.

As last year, we also plan to have a fund-raising coffee morning at Fellside Church in Whickham in June.

We will also repeat the very successful Family Fun Day at Gibside in June with the support of Go North East buses and the National Trust.



## **Presentations - Judy Summerson**

Since the start of the New Year, Harold (Dobson) and I have already given six red kite presentations ranging from a local History Group in Killingworth to a group of Brownies and Rainbows at Sheriff Hill. This has raised awareness of the kites to 156 people, young and less young, who have all been very interested and asked some very good questions. We have a steady stream of talks during the coming months.

If you know of a group that are looking for a talk please ask them to contact me:

judith.summerson@blueyonder.co.uk



## **Changes to Data Protection Legislation - Judy Summerson**

The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the result of four years work by the EU to bring data protection legislation into line with new, previously unforeseen, ways that data is now used.

Irrespective of current Brexit negotiations, the regulation comes into play in May 2018, supercedes the Data Protection Act (1988) and, more specifically, will affect how we operate the Friends of Red Kites (FoRK) membership. At the moment, as we understand the changes, we need to inform all members:

- what personal information we hold. (This is your name, address, telephone number and email address you gave us when you joined FoRK).
  - how we use this information. (Sending you our quarterly Newsletters and information about planned events).
- that you will need to give your consent, or otherwise, for us to hold and use this information. If you disagree, and wish to opt out, we will not be able to communicate with you!

In order to achieve the above please complete and return the form below.



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Please return to Judy Summerson, 12 Sunnidale, Fellside Park, Whickham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE16 5TT

I am aware of the personal information you hold about me and (please tick **ONE** box):

☐ I wish to continue to receive information from FoRK.

**OR**

☐ I do NOT wish to receive information from FoRK.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

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