



Friends of Red Kites

in the North East of England

www.friendsofredkites.org.uk



Newsletter, Summer 2018

Kite Camera 2018 - Paul Danielson



In March 2017, FoRK were approached by the BBC Springwatch research team to ask if we were willing to take part in a project to install a video camera on one of our local nests. Although the publicity would have been excellent the answer was "No" as it was considered far too late to install a camera as the kites would have already started refurbishing their nests and it was unacceptable to disturb them. The BBC went ahead with an installation elsewhere and successfully monitored a nest with the footage being shown on Springwatch.

This, however, led to a decision to install a camera on one of our nests this year. A local company, Aceda, who specialise in video security, offered to supply the equipment to capture the footage.

In January 2018, Harold Dobson and I met Michael Lynch, from Aceda, at the proposed site to undertake a survey to ensure the nest would be suitable to install a camera. The site was chosen as it was on private land and the nest had been successful in previous years. It was deemed to be suitable so a date was set to attend with our regular tree climbers to install the camera.

We arrived at the site on a very cold January morning and, with Michael's guidance, the camera was successfully installed with the assistance of the tree climbers.

In February, the pair started to refurbish the nest and footage was captured of the male bird bringing in nesting material - twigs initially followed by their favourite lining - lots and lots of white material. Three eggs were laid and have been incubated, mainly by the female, on some very cold and snowy days, with the male taking short stints to allow his partner to stretch her wings and feed. Two of the eggs hatched successfully and we now have great views of the chicks growing rapidly in the early six weeks of their life. Edited footage is available to view on the Friends of Red Kites website.

Thanks must go to Michael Lynch (Aceda), Mark Connolly (our tree climber), Glyn Stables and Mick Render (who helped sort out software issues) also the owner of the wood where the nest is located who has given permission and unlimited access to the site; without their help this project could not have been undertaken.

Kite Welfare - Allan Withrington

I am sad to report that an injured red kite had been found recently at the Derwent Gorge. The vet checked it over and decided the best option was to euthanise it. X-Rays showed it had been shot but this was not investigated further by the Police. The RSPB subsequently issued a local media release about the incident. One report of the incident and photographs can be found at <https://raptorpersecutionscotland.wordpress.com/2018/05/21/red-kite-shot-blinded-in-north-pennines-raptor-persecution-blackspot/>

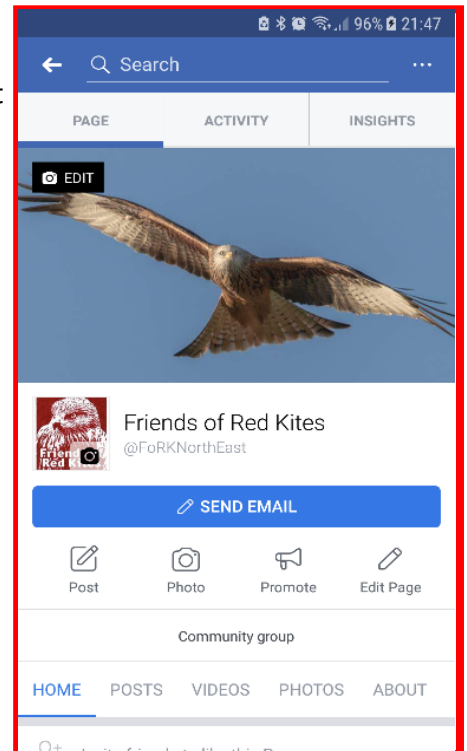
Also, the decomposed remains of a red kite had been found on the slopes of Strother Hills (near to Rowlands Gill).

Kites Arrive on Social Media! - Amanda Miller

We now have a dedicated Facebook page for the Friends of Red Kites. This page is open to all and we have over 60 people - including possibly you? - following us already. This page is a great opportunity to spread the news about the red kites, share images and our personal stories about these amazing birds (wherever you see them), promote membership of FoRK, steer new people to our website, promote any events we hold, or will be attending, and anything else you can think of! This is a great platform to raise awareness and reach a broader range of people and it's particularly helpful for engaging with young people.

Here is a screen shot of the page the way administrators of the page (that's Paul Danielson, Mick Render and I) can see it but if you, or any of your friends and family, are on Facebook it's better to visit it here <https://www.facebook.com/FoRKNorthEast/> to see the great pictures and videos which have already been posted.

If you have any ideas about what we could be posting on this page please let us know or feel free to post something yourself or share the news with your followers. We hope you like this new venture and, as always, any feedback will be gratefully received.



General Data Protection Act (GDPR) - Judy Summerson

Thank you very much for giving your consent for us to keep a record of your name, address, email address and telephone number which you gave us when you joined the Friends of Red Kites and allowing us to use this information to send you newsletters and information about FoRK events. All emails will be sent out as BCC (Blind Carbon Copy).

Should you choose to resign, or fail to pay your annual subscription, then your details will be kept for thirteen months, you then have the 'right to be forgotten' and your information will be destroyed.

High Flight - Jim Third

Last Summer I was watching one of our magnificent red kites wheeling and soaring very high up in the sky and was reminded of a poem written by an American airman, John Gillespie. The poem is called "High Flight". I've altered a few words to make it from a red kite's perspective:

*Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth and danced the skies on laughter silvered wings;
Sunward, I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds and done a hundred things
you have not dreamed of: wheeled and soared and swung.
High in the sunlit silence hovering there, I've chased the shouting wind alone and flung through foot-
less halls of air.
Up, up, the long delirious, burning blue I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace where
never lark or even eagle flew.
And while, with silent lifting mind, I've flown the high un-trespassed sanctity of space, put out a wing
and touched the face of God.*

Events - Sylvia Jones

30 members attended a successful meal at the Marquis of Granby on March 12th. We pre-ordered a two course meal which was served hot, table by table, by Gillian and her staff team. She also provided a £10 meal voucher for the raffle. We raised £50. Thank you to everyone for their donations. Harold gave an update on the red kites. Judy got a number of her new data consent forms signed. The picture quiz was won with full marks by the winning team.



Dates for your diary:



Fellside Church at Whickham holds very successful community charity coffee mornings on the last Saturday of each month. FoRK will receive a donation for funds raised on Saturday June 30th from 10.00 a.m.-12 noon. We ask that you support this event with donations of your own specialities and attendance at the event if you are available. Last year over £300 was raised for FoRK.

This year the Gibside Red Kite Family Fun Day will be held on Sunday July 22nd. Once again, a Go North East red kite bus will be parked in the Market Square and will be the focus of attention for entertainment including face-painting and a bubbleologist! FoRK members will have an

information stall plus the very popular tombola. Any donations for this will be gratefully received plus help on the rota for those able to attend.

Thank you for your continued support and attendance at our events.

Health Walkers Longer Walks, April 2018 - Jackey Lockwood

Each year we do a couple of longer walks in a coastal location to make a contrast to our weekly Derwent Valley health walks. This April we did one of our favourite walks of about 7 miles along Northumberland's outstanding coast. There were 32 walkers out on a rather grey breezy day which did brighten later. We started from High Newton and shortly after that there was a welcome coffee break at Low Newton! From there we walked mainly on the beach then over some dunes and around Dunstanburgh Castle, perched on its cliff top site, with gorse in flower all around the area. It was then onto the village of Craster where most stopped for lunch and a look around. A few walkers carried on to Cullernose Point and back to Craster.



We were doing the walk about a month earlier than usual so found the ground rather muddy! The vegetation was not as far on but the birds such as fulmars and kittiwakes had returned to the cliffs and were establishing nesting sites. The scenery was as stunning as ever. Our particular thanks go to Glenn Dawson for organising these walks and to other Health Walk Leaders who give their support, but also to the walkers themselves whose participation and enthusiasm always make these walks very rewarding.

Annual General Meeting - Harold Dobson

You should, by now, have received your invitation to, and paperwork for, our ninth AGM which is to be held on the evening of Wednesday 27th June at Lintzford Garden Centre. Hopefully, the meeting itself should last no more than 30-40 minutes and is followed by a choice of main meal followed by a choice of fresh cream cakes.

We are always on the lookout for new members to join our Management Committee which usually meets on the first Monday of the month.



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