



# Friends of Red Kites

in the North East of England

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



## Newsletter, Winter 2017

# Merry Christmas

### **Roost Watching - Paul Danielson**

The winter roost watches started in early September with previously favoured sites, such as the Nine Arches Viaduct, in the Derwenthaugh Country Park, and Victoria Garesfield, being initially monitored. Early roost watches proved to be very quiet with only a couple of red kites flying through at Victoria Garesfield and a very small number roosting at Nine Arches.

Members of the public had reported up to 7 red kites seen in the Lintzford area both last thing at night and first thing in the morning so members of the monitoring team set up to watch this area from a vantage point at Lintzford Bridge. Again, few birds were seen – one pair most likely on territory, a juvenile flying through and three birds perched in a tree in Chopwell Woods.

The first significant roost occurred late September. After weeks of bad weather twenty-two kites roosted in the trees above Lockhaugh meadow. One kite dropped into trees near Hollinside Manor and one dropped into the bowl below the Column to Liberty on the Gibside Estate. Earlier there had been seven/eight kites at the pre-roost near Thornley Gardens.

However, since this night only two or three red kites had been seen at the roost; it is thought that kites were remaining on territory as it had been unusually mild.

On 12<sup>th</sup> November, 11/12 kites were noted at Hamsterley Mill estate mid-afternoon. These numbers were also reported by a FoRK member in the same area on a separate occasion. Also in November six kites were seen, four on a pylon, at Thornley Gardens at 2.45 p.m. Two of the kites on the pylon were identified as H5 and N2. N2 is one of the juveniles wing-tagged this year.

A new red kite roost has been found in the Pontburn Wood area. The kites, which had previously been reported gathering on the Hamsterley Mill estate, were seemingly part of this new roost. 25 red kites were counted coming in. Other areas being monitored were the Muggleswick/Derwent Gorge area and the area around Causey Gill/Arch. No roosting activity had been noted at either site.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November, members of the monitoring team noted 29 kites in the air and dropping into roost on the Gibside Estate. The numbers seen may be an indication of the colder nights.

We expect the numbers of kites at roost to increase throughout December to February as the nights turn colder and the weather gets inclement. We would appreciate it if any members do notice gatherings of kites, at either sunset or sunrise, that this is reported to either myself or our Chairman, Ken Sanderson. Contact details are available on the website.

We are again to take part in the International Red Kite Roost Watch in January which sees roost watches undertaken throughout Europe on the weekend of 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> January. Several sites will be watched throughout our area with the general public being invited to attend one of the sites. This allows us to contribute to data held on the current state of the red kite populations throughout Europe.

## Facts and Figures from the Friends of Red Kites Database - Marian Williams

### Part 1 - Our furthest travelled red kites

Several of our red kites have been adventurous in exploring the British Isles:

**Wing tag 1 Speedy** (born 2004) was seen in the Chilterns, Buckinghamshire between February and July 2006 before settling down in Yorkshire and breeding successfully there for several years.

**WT 2 Scarlet** (born 2004) visited Gigrin Farm in Wales on, at least, two occasions in 2004 then was recorded in the Chilterns, Buckinghamshire, in March 2005 before also settling in Yorkshire and breeding successfully there for some years.

A few more of our kites also made brief trips to Gigrin Farm in Wales – **WT33, WT34, WT72** (also seen in Yorkshire).

Several of our kites have been recorded in Scotland, usually on one occasion each – **WT8, WT14, WT21, WT26, WT27, WT50, WT62, WT69, WTE4.**

More of our kites made usually several trips each to Yorkshire – including **WT16 Flag** (born 2004) in 2005 before returning to partner up with WT15 Red Philip, **WT18 Zeus** (born 2004) who also bred successfully for some years in Yorkshire, **WT45, WT47, WT67, WT70, WT72, WT91, WTC5.**

Further random sightings have been **WT49 High Flier** (born 2005) seen in Northampton in 2012, **WT61 Wrekenton Warrior** (born 2006) seen in Worcester in 2007, **WT45 Golden Rainbow** (born 2005) seen in Dorchester, Dorset in 2006 (also seen in Yorkshire) and a juvenile **Pink/Orange** (born 2014) kite seen near Gainsborough, Lincolnshire in 2014.

Probably our furthest travelled red kite is **WTJ7** (born 2014) seen in St Ives, Cornwall in 2015, before being seen in Yorkshire at the beginning of this year.



Fledgling J7 at wing-tagging

### **Autumn Members' Night - Sylvia Jones**

On Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October, 33 FoRK members met at the Red Kite pub for a social meal and a red kite autumn update. I welcomed the members and Harold gave information about roost watch activity. A bird quiz was distributed to complete during the meal. Louise and her team served a pre-ordered meal very efficiently. I then asked the members to give their answers to the quiz and some very interesting birds were suggested. There were two winning teams even after tie-breaker questions. We then enjoyed the rest of the evening.

We used our new sound system which is available for presentations, monitoring team meetings and our AGM. Thank you to everyone who helped to organise this successful evening.

Please send any suggestions for future events to me at:

[Sylvia.david@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Sylvia.david@yahoo.co.uk) or 07974 810364



### **Membership - Judy Summerson**

Thank you all for renewing your membership for 2017-2018. Our membership remains strong and very supportive with, currently, 221 people. Annual membership of the Friends spreads the word about our activities and ensures your friends and family members get their own copy of our newsletter. Most importantly, a growing membership helps to raise the profile of the kites as one of the icons of the north east of England, so please do encourage your friends to join us.

**Would you like to know more about Red Kites? - Harold Dobson**

At a recent Monitoring Team Meeting and at the last Members Night, it was suggested that some of the membership may be interested to know more about the red kites by hearing the 40-minute "The Red Kite Returns" powerpoint-assisted presentation which Judy Summerson and I give to community groups e.g. photographic societies, Church groups, WIs, U3As, Wildlife Groups, etc.

The talk chronicles the fascinating story of the re-introduction of the red kite in the north-east of England after an absence of over 170 years. It includes the history & natural history of this magnificent bird of prey and outlines our work as custodians of the red kites.

To assess demand could you please let me know by either email: [hfdobson@btinternet.com](mailto:hfdobson@btinternet.com) or text: 07801 907832 if you would be interested in attending the talk which we plan to hold in the early Spring. If the numbers are sufficient we may make this into the next Members Night!



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