
Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Spring 2003 no 46

Through The Chair

Making Waves

Looking at the state of Rivelin Mill Pond, we can only wish. There's only a tiny pool of muddy water for the moorhen to paddle in. All that greets you at the main car park for accessing the Rivelin Nature Trail is a scene of dereliction and abandonment. April has arrived and still not a word from our City Council. It didn't look promising when no action was taken during the winter to take any trees down ready for dam action. All we have seen is no dam action. If like me you feel like swearing, maybe it's time to really make waves – rock the boat – or anything which will get some attention. We've had some really good press lately with all the footpath and bench improvements. This week I received the invitation to take part in Sheffield City Council's "Clean up" campaign. What a shame the department responsible for keeping Sheffield tidy cannot write to another one which is making it looking a mess! Or the one responsible for keeping our public rights of way open, cannot take issue with another one which is keeping a footpath closed.

Even with no water in it, I am asking each of you to make some waves in Rivelin Mill Pond. A letter to the press – a councillor – an MP – anyone who might listen and have some influence to persuade the officers concerned to stop just looking into the hole in the dam wall actually do something about it.

Roger and Out

Contacts

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Please note

We now have an e-mail address
rvcg@supanet.com

Task Team News

January 26th

Well here we are again back in the Upper Hag Woods. This job seems to be like painting the Humber Bridge, by the time we get to one end we will have to start all over again at the other. The council need to get their act together and provide the Ranger service with the correct sprays for treating the cut lines of privet. After the early January task day and a couple of visits by the Rangers with their chain saws, a lot of material was on the ground so we decided to go in and have three or four big bonfires. Even though this sounds like a fun day let me tell you that after five hours of dragging large privet trees up the banks to the fires it really begins to tell.

Welcome to a new member of our team Roger Case who as you might say had a baptism of fire. He edged too close to one of the fires and lost half of his fringe and eyebrows, much to Roger's consternation and the hilarity of the rest of the team. Welcome Roger. You will get no sympathy off this lot mate.

February 23rd

This Sunday sees us down at Malin Bridge, having a good clear up and thinning a lot of the self set trees now growing out of the old stone work. Without trying to keep these trees down some of these old goyts and workings would be lost to us forever, similar to the ones further up the valley. Whilst we don't like cutting down trees we do have to have some kind of management of these areas and believe me we plant a lot more than we cut. The corner of Holme Lane and Rivelin Valley Road was also cleared and the old railings re-painted. Hopefully we will soon have a new 'Welcome To Rivelin Valley' sign to put up in there.

Welcome to three new team members - Denise, Gina, and Vicky all students here in Sheffield, helping us to put something back into your valley.

Sheffield University Union of Students (Just do it scheme)

This is the first time that the students' union has run this scheme, inviting local groups to find a task for the students to do over a day or a weekend period. Grants of up to £500 had been made available to the Successful groups. We applied to this scheme and suggested that we tackle the 274ft length of footpath that runs at the bottom of the green area, opposite the old hospital site. This footpath has been on our agenda to do for some time but we have never had the proper resources to tackle it and this scheme seemed ideal.

I am happy to report that the group was successful with its application and through a lot of pre-planning the work took place on the Sunday 9th March. Fourteen volunteers from the Sheffield University Students Union; young people from all parts of the country came together with seven members of our team and spent six hours digging out and relaying a new footpath. This involved laying 70 Tons of new material, a job that in itself would have been impossible without Frank Revitt and his digger who we had hired for the day. My apologies to all of the people who came out for a quiet walk in the country on this day and came across our team with its wacker plates making enough noise to be heard down at Malin Bridge.

Many thanks to the fourteen students involved who gave their all on the day and to the seven members of our team who gave up another Sunday so soon after the last Task Day.

Sunday 27th March

Back down to the above footpath again just to finish off the edges and install two new seats. One in the middle of the path looking out onto the green and the other opposite Black Brook, which had rotted away. If you have not been down to see this new path, put it on your list and just remember the tremendous amount of hard work that has gone into it by people who don't get paid and are representing you and the group. I can't finish without thanking the team for the hard work and commitment shown over the last three months. We have had superb turnouts on all of the Task Days so far this year. Students sometimes get a bad press here in Sheffield, but as this report shows they are making and paying for great improvements to your valley, we thank them all on your behalf.

Keith Kendall

Government money for the Planning Service.

The Government has given the minimum grant of £75,000 for improvements to the Planning Service to Sheffield Council. This compares with much higher grants to other local authorities. For example, Chichester District Council, a much smaller authority than Sheffield, has been awarded £474, 679. The basis for the level of grant is how well an authority has performed. In Sheffield's case the low award is a reflection of the extent to which the Planning Service has been run down by the Council. RVCG has in the past made a number of representations to the Council about maintaining a good Planning Service. A properly staffed Service is essential to ensure that unacceptable development in areas such as the Rivelin Valley is prevented, and that the attractive and valuable environment of the Valley is conserved.

In response to a letter which has been sent to the Council urging that the Planning Service be adequately resourced, the Head of Planning has replied indicating that the full amount of the government grant will be used to improve the Service. Also, an Action Plan setting out ways in which the Service will be improved, is to be brought forward.

Sheffield Development Framework
Sheffield planners are gearing up for the new development planning system referred to in the last Newsletter. A family of documents will be prepared including a City Plan to replace the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), action area plans and supplementary guidance. A letter has been sent from the Group urging that key land use and development policies in the current UDP, for example Green Belt policy, should be included in the new Plan and given full statutory status. The Council's planners are now starting work on new policies and the opportunity has been taken to reiterate the Group's previous comments on matters to be included in the new Plan (as summarised in the Autumn 2002 Newsletter).
Wind Energy

You may have read in the Star (27th March) about the possibility of wind turbines being built on the western edge of Sheffield, perhaps in the Lodge Moor area. This would be a major issue for the Group and would require careful consideration of the pros and cons, for example, clean energy on the one hand but environmental intrusion on the other. Watch this space.

Derek Hastings

A Big Reminder **Membership Renewal**

A lot of you have paid your 2003 subscriptions but some of you haven't. If you have forgotten please send £3 to –

M Sanderson
35 Den Bank Cresc
Sheffield S10 5PB

Don't worry if you haven't got a form – just give your name and address. If you can't remember if you have paid, please give a ring. Don't make this your last newsletter.

**Don't Forget – Renew Membership
if you haven't already**

Donations

Many thanks again for your donations. It is all a great help for the work done in our valley. Brazil Colton Flinders Gwynn-Jones Davey Hastings Linley Saunders Stubbins White Davidson Hobson Kitchen Lewis Owen Sharpe Greatorex Lyon Swift Toseland Trantor Glaves Mason Morrell Toplis Whiteley Peter Cressey Perrett Brookes Grace and anonymous

THANKYOU

Some Forgotten Place Names?

The last newsletter had a report of how a 1925 map showed the council's plans for the development of Crosspool. It also showed a few place names and buildings which must be almost forgotten now that the area is built up.

Middleton Buildings These were cottages at the top of Stephen Hill.

Tapton Rise Farm On the site of Lydgate Junior School.

Cliff Farm Opposite the top of Darwin Lane.

Cliff Tower At the junction of Whitworth Road and Watt Lane.

Ceres Cottage On the site of King Edward's Lower School, Watt Lane.

Holly Rise The area at the junction of Watt Lane and Sandygate Road where the bungalows are.

Henry Place At the top of Ringstead Crescent.

Hollywell Place At the end of Watt Lane.

M Sanderson

Open Meetings

Just in case you haven't been to one please try to join us at our next meetings at Stephen Hill. Our meetings are not only popular in our group but also attract non-members too. Bring a friend.

In February Peter Robinson entertained us on his visit to Botswana (Bechuanaland). Here he saw a wealth of creatures from birds and mammals to exotic plants, insects and crocodiles.

Our March talk was Marjorie Dunn on the Brontes and as usual for her it was packed full of facts such as a letter to Patrick Bronte from his soon to be wife, Maria addressed to 'My dear saucy Pat'. Imagine that when you next see his dull solemn image. Also how frightened he was of fire, having buried so many children in Haworth that curtains in the parsonage were forbidden. The stuffy image of three sisters in a remote parsonage was soon demolished as they visited friends, travelled abroad and in Charlotte's case fell in love with her tutor (married). But it all ended in death through tuberculosis for most of the family and not one heir to their remarkable talent.

M Sanderson



Graham Appleby

Please Note

MAY TASK DAY

With Mayfest happening 24th/25th May in Hillsborough Park the same weekend, Task Day has been moved on to 1st June.

POND AND RIVER DIPPING

On a fine Sunday morning a few adults and two children gathered together for our annual event. Here are the accounts of the two children.

As told by James aged four.

That man knowed all the names of the creatures. That big man caught them with a fishing net. Some had wings. One was a larva. I caught them in the river but not the sea because we weren't at the seaside. We wouldn't like to live in the water and we wouldn't like to eat them. My Daddy took me back to the car because I got wet. I liked the stepping stones too.

As written by Chloe aged six.

First of all we tried to catch the ceechers which lived in the river. Roger was best at catching them with nets. We put them in the trays. We transferred them into plastic boxes and locked them with keys. We threw magnifying glasses. It was absolutely amazing. We saw caddis fly larva and I was best at catching them with a spoon. We helped to carry the nets and trays.

The adults enjoyed themselves too and we were all very surprised to see that so many little creatures had their homes in the river and ponds. Next year why don't you come as well and take a look at this hidden world which is right under our noses.

M Sanderson

The **RVCG AGM** was held on Tuesday 8th April and what an interesting night it was for those who attended. The existing committee members were re-elected and individuals gave a summary of their current roles over the year. Photograph displays and Margaret's photo albums gave a great insight to the work and history of the group. An array of some 50 photographs of Rivelin from all periods adorned the walls in an identification competition.

Dan Higbid was awarded a certificate and a bottle of plonk after handing over the finance to David Lyon; a retired Yorkshire Water employee. Glenda and Arthur were presented with flowers in gratitude of their wonderful catering support.

Graham Appleby

Reports

My article on 'Going Bats' in the last issue stimulated Joanne Peck to write a lovely letter describing a bat that regularly entertains her family around dusk at Malin Bridge. Her back garden is popular with a variety of birds including wrens, blue tits and great tits. Another regular sighting is of a heron winging its way gracefully down the course of the river. According to my 'Birds of Britain' book, the deep mellow hooting you hear is probably a Tawny Owl that also has a 'Tuwitt' shriek. Other common British owls are Long Eared, Short Eared and Barn although the numbers of this bird have dropped dramatically over the last ten years mainly due to changes in farming practices.

Wednesday 19 March, Bob Townrow was out walking along the South Side of Rivelin Valley, then up to Rod Moor and back. On route he witnessed a curlew around Corker Walls and a couple of dozen lapwings in the field just North of Crowshaw Farm around midday. Only two or three skylarks were seen on the moor. Around 2pm around a dozen redwings were witnessed in the grounds of Barncliffe Hall opposite Hallamshire Golf Course.

Larvae of the white letter hairstreak moth spotted on Hagg Lane beyond Samehill Farm 5 March by Martin Greenland. What! Never heard of one. No neither have I. My countryside book lists 47 varieties and that's not one of them but it's good to hear of something a bit unusual.

Roger Kite reports:

Curlew and lapwing on 19/3/03 at the back of Ash Cabin Flat at Redmires and also the first peacock butterfly of the year.

First Ducklings and Mallard on 3rd Coppice 9 April 2003. Also sparrowhawk pair in trees opposite new bench at Swallow Pond.

Two goldfinches were seen in Margaret Sanderson's Garden and Long Tailed Tits in Keith's Garden both on Den Bank Crescent.

Finally Howard Sanderson reported a Blue Budgerigar on his bird table on Marsh Lane – anybody missing one? In fact I think I've seen this advertised in Crosspool Post Office!

Many thanks

Graham Appleby