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# Newsletter



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Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

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**Summer 2003 no 47**

## **Through The Chair**

### **Summer Eclipse**

Did you miss it? I hope not. The eclipse I mean is that period when everyone disappears and then suddenly pops out again all refreshed and raring to go again! The birds have a summer eclipse period when they go through a moult. Soon now we'll see again the mallard drakes once again with gleaming glossy green heads and brand new flight feathers with a smart blue speculum (wing bar to the non ornithologists). While the flight feathers are being renewed they have difficulty getting airborne which is why we see so many on the mill ponds. A few RVCG members have been spotted around the ponds as well. Not all migrated to be nearer the equator. More work took place at First Coppice and there are two more mill markers in place. To get to see these wonderful sculptures means walking the Nature Trail. Not easy in some places nowadays. This autumn will see a renewed programme of improvements working jointly with the Council. Want to get involved? – either physically or as a support to the team – make sure you're on Keith's list. As well as manual labourers, we need help with transport, soup kitchen, traffic control and P.R. Hope you had a good eclipse – how are your flight feathers?

Roger and Out

### **Contacts**

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<http://www.rivelinvalley.org.uk/>

## **Task Day Reports**

### **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April The litter pick**

Well who was it that said life could be so cruel? Here I am obeying her that must be obeyed and taking a well-earned short break with the family in Scarborough, away from the stresses and strains of work and RVCG. Bearing in mind that this is the first task day that I have missed in four years. And what happens, my old mate Howard decides to do his impersonation of a dying duck and gently lie down in the river. Now soaked to the skin and trying to look cool under the present situation, Howard decides to drive home with his waders still on and as every good 'or bad' fisherman will tell you once you have had your waders full of water it is very hard to get them off due to the suction.

Well the reports coming from friends and neighbours on Marsh Lane as H rolls around on the lawn trying to remove the waders.

I will considerably spare you all of the dreadful details, but just to say that counselling has been offered to all that witnessed it.

Sadly this mammoth event was missed by everyone with a camera and only had Karen as a witness, but still not half an hour after the event had happened and yours truly being over 100 miles away, was falling about laughing. Thank you for modern technology.

Can we have a replay for the cameras H? Oh and by the way the litter pick went well again, well done to all who turned out and help fill yet another skip with other people's rubbish.

Thanks to Danny and Action For Stannington for the help and support.

## **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June**

The footpath from Upper Cut to Hind wheel had been identified as our next project as this length of path was showing signs of extreme wear especially on the goit side. Thanks to the public rights of way lads for making a start and especially Nick for giving up his time on a Sunday and bringing all of the tools. A poor turn out and a late start meant that we had to get a move on if we were to get anything done. Unfortunately yours truly jumped into the river and tried to lift a medium sized rock out for the edging.

**Big Mistake** The back went click and that was me done for the day. Still it was nice to walk round and watch the others grunt and groan. Well done to all who did turn up. A 25ft length of the path was completed and some really heavy stones moved. Well done Nick for building the sledge. We could not have moved some of these big stones out of the river without it. I think to complete this path it is probably going to take around two years. There is so much work here.

But who knows we may get other bodies involved later in the year. And for a nice change we actually covered the cost of the day's materials from book sales and donations from passing members of the public. As they say on that beer advert -  
THAT MAKES A REFRESHING CHANGE

## **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2003**

Well here we are again back to full fighting strength having had 3 weeks off work and a load of pulling and tugging by a physio to get the old back working correctly.

This Task day sees us split into two groups, the first group descended on part of the nature trail just beyond the children's play area. Howard had spotted an area along the river (whilst doing his duck impression) just to the right over the bridge as having three large sections of the wall collapsed and only the concrete tops were holding the bank up. Nine of our team took a load of sand and cement down and spent a very pleasant morning re-building the three sections.

The second team spent a very hot morning at the Hide clearing up and getting ready for the annual BBQ.

Now having been told by our chairman that the condition of the hide was quite good we

sent the larger party to see to the wall. Another big mistake upon opening the gates to the hide it resembled something out of a Malaysian Jungle and took the superhuman efforts of all six of us to get it looking something like reasonable. But at least we got there and I hope you all think of the efforts made when enjoying your burger and glass of Rioja.

Together making a difference

Yours truly

Keith Kendall

## **Sparrows on Holiday**

During a recent holiday in France and Spain I may have stumbled on one of the reasons for the decline in the sparrow population in the UK. Whilst staying with my brother-in-law at the Spanish seaside resort of Peniscola, I noticed that each morning a significant number of sparrows would congregate on the grass opposite his house. They were clearly enjoying the sunshine and like so many British tourists before them, had obviously found the Spanish weather to their liking. No doubt they will return when they tire of the sun sea and Spanish food, but in the meantime it is reassuring that so many of them are alive and well and having a good holiday. Other highlights of the holiday included several sightings of red kites in the Rhone Valley and along the Tarn Gorge. It is good news that the breeding programme for these birds in North Yorkshire has been such a success and they are becoming well established again.

Derek Hastings.

## **Hay Meadow Success**

Although the wild flowering period came and went very quickly this year, our early purple orchid on Carver Fields has been joined by field scabious. This has come in by itself—presumably from the lovely drift in the tennis court area.

Frank is still disappointed in his wild flower meadow even though it has a rich flora – but it did give the best show in Rivelin of harebells.

You get a superb view of them from the top of his fine new stile.

### **Even more 'fora'**

No – it's not a typing error. We refer to yet more meetings if this is the term for the plural of forum. The Crosspool Forum is now underway. Please make sure your views are known. We have representatives on the committee but anyone can attend the Forum meetings. Your Chairman has also been invited to the Council's new Local Access Forum. If you have an issue you would like aired or suggestions for Rights of Way Improvement Plans, let him know.  
R Kite

### **Question**

Three-quarters of this remaining valuable world asset is held in Britain. (Statistic from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Rivelin Valley has a bit of it and it is quite noticeable at this time of the year. What is it?

### **Answer Heather moorland.**

We are lucky to have this in our vicinity. Ex-Sheffielders can't wait to see it again and we have our own bit on Den Bank. Is this the nearest bit of moorland to the centre of Sheffield? Also amongst the heather can be seen cowberry and bilberries. Much moorland has been lost in recent years because of overgrazing, forestry and the march of bracken. We are doing our bit, keeping a watchful eye over it so let's hope Den Bank Edge and the stretch alongside Manchester Road at Moorbank remain for our descendants.

### **A NEW COURSE**

The Workers' Educational Association has sent details of this course which is starting in September.

#### **The Landscape and Natural History of the Rivelin Valley**

**Tutor – Paul Ardron**

**St. Mary's Church Hall**

**South Road Walkley**

**Commencing Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September**

**1pm – 3pm, initially for 10 weeks**

For full details phone Ian Horsefield

0114 2855627

or June Fisher 0114 2724983

You can enrol at the first class

### **Some recent events**

We will soon be starting a new series of events and please come to our meetings if

you haven't been before. You can bring anyone with you – they do not need to be a member. There is a small charge at Stephen Hill Church and of course we have Glenda's refreshments. The first one is on Tuesday 9th September at 7.30pm on **'Rivelin Valley and the importance of conservation.'**

Our summer events were well attended.

Our evening walk during Environment Weeks took us through the valley and finished at Coppice House Farm where our non-RVCG visitors and we had refreshments provided by the Revitts. Our thanks to them for their generosity.

Our barbecue followed previous traditions by remaining free of rain. A lot of people went into making this successful as usual but of course our hats go off to the Heanes for providing the excellent cooking once again.

Our moth watch (thanks to Sorby) fortunately remained dry, unlike last year when no self-respecting moth was to be seen taking in the night air. Once more we were astounded by these amazing little creatures which have such remarkable names such as White Ermine, Clouded Brindle and Ingrailed Clay. Also how dark it was in the woods even though we were close to Hagg Lane.

There is always something going off in the group so please join in. Whatever you do is of value.

### **Thanks Again for Donations**

Since last time thanks to Culmer. Givans, Shaw, Green, Catlin, Cousins, Drinkwater, Morton, Andrew.

All this helps our work and we are grateful for more than £200 given so far this year.

## The Great Rivelin Duck Race

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> June**

Winners list

1 <sup>st</sup>	£50	513	T Saunders
2 <sup>nd</sup>	£25	133	R Allen
3 <sup>rd</sup>	£15	49	P Hassall
4 <sup>th</sup>	Duck with a lot of bottle (Croft Original)	301	E Hoyle
5 <sup>th</sup>	£5	496	B Fletcher
6 <sup>th</sup>	£5	214	S Ellis
7 <sup>th</sup>	£5	543	Dobson
8 <sup>th</sup>	£5	624	S Givans
9 <sup>th</sup>	£5	796	F Rawson

Last – but by no means the least (The most heroic Duck – Jar of Heroes Chocolates) S Boyd

935 Swimmers (and a Red Whale which was disqualified for underwater swimming) Well done to all who supported the event, especially those who came out to make the morning so memorable a one. If you missed it there is a full account of the race in the Sheffield Telegraph. (Post script – Sam Darwent actually had his money on number 644. Bad luck Sam – better duck next year)

Roger Kite

### Reports

Thank you for the following articles. The first one is from Steve Kershaw from way back in March 2003. Pair of Grey Wagtails below the weir at Frank Wheel, Kingfisher on Swallow (nice to sit watching a bird like that on a pond I helped in a very small way to create), pair of Dippers under the bridge at Rails Rd. and the Brambling flock still present near the end of Moorbank.

10/3/03 treecreepers (at least 4) at various points on the walk, grey wagtail at Frank Wheel but no dipper or kingfisher. Still, a total of 21 species on the walk including a party of bullfinches. The bramblings had also disappeared which is a pity as two of the males were really beginning to get into their breeding plumage.

Louise Sanderson 5/5/03 large tawny owl flew across Hagg Hill at 6pm on a bright sunny day. Also swifts seen over valley.

David Curry 21/5/03 spotted a dipper at the foot of one of the weirs – not uncommon in the valley and interesting to watch.

Micah Shaw 21/6/03 on her way to see the duck race saw the electric blue back of her first kingfisher as it flew off from a mill just east of the start (Swallow Wheel?)

Margaret Sanderson reporting from Carver Fields saw Hairy Male Fern, Early Purple Orchids and Yellow Rattle in abundance. Common Toad Flax is still growing on Hagg Hill grass verge as Margaret used to pick it as a child. Back in her garden she had a jackdaw on her garage roof.

She also found a dead shrew apparently with its throat cut (Midsomer murders!) and lots of shattered snail shells from the eagerly feasting thrush. A blackbird stands on a lily pad in her pond snatching water snails as they swim by.

Jonathon England's memories were stirred by one of our recent articles by Barbara Barnsley regarding her Great Aunt Nellie Furness of No1 Rivelin Cottages. Nellie would visit their home providing love and support and was a wonderful family friend and she was always delighted to see them when they were passing on the way sticklebacking. She apparently became Nellie Hague in later life. This sounds like a person I would love to have met. I think most people can probably think of someone similar in their life. Mine was my school music teacher Mr Shaw.

I seem to have had a bumper crop of soft fruit this year probably due to the pleasant weather conditions. The moors have been covered in bilberries and the allotment lanes are still adorned with wild blackberries. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Graham Appleby