
Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Autumn 2003 no 48

Through The Chair

Did It Happen For You This Summer?

I'm sitting here this morning looking out of the window at a lovely rainbow. That means as well as the usual sunshine, it's raining – an unusual event this year. We haven't seen too much precipitation lately, or have we? If they were still there, the wheels of Rivelin might be turning only slowly but lack of water in the millponds and goyts is just one thing that stirs RVCG into action. There are always things happening to precipitate action by an alert and active committee. Are you all doing your bit? It doesn't take a thunderbolt or even raindrops falling on your head when walking in our valley to feel that something needs to be done. The mythical 'they' are never to hand however, but a burst of activity can have the effect of changing a 'Low' into a 'High'. What has stung you into action lately and did it make you feel better?

The Task and Planning Teams have been responding to precipitous events all summer so when you're asked to lend a hand – or even to pay next year's subs don't say, "That's a bit steep"!

Over and Out

Roger

Contacts

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------|---------|
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Please note

We now have an e-mail address
<mailto:rvcg@supanet.com>

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

Thanks Again for Donations

Maas, Warrender, Monach, Noble, Givans.

We are very grateful for this and it will be put to good use. We have had donations of over £300 this year, much of it from people who can't take an active part in the group.

THANKYOU!

First Meeting of

CROSSPOOL FORUM

Friday – 28th November
7.15pm

St Columba's Church Crosspool

RVCG Foot Soldiers

Roger talked about the mythical 'they' and we all know the 'why don't you' folks as well. Once a member of a working party down the valley was imperiously asked by a horse rider to, 'Just chop that branch off will you?' so that he would be spared the effort of bobbing his head down on his Sunday morning ride. Had he forsaken Sunday papers and a lie-in to slog away clearing, fixing, repairing and all the other things the group does? (Rather tempting to say 'Get off your horse and do it yourself'.) Fortunately, a lot of non-members do appreciate the work done by the group, all unpaid and in spare time, using a variety of skills. We have members who slog away doing jobs and this is a mention of a few of them – those who are involved in the distribution of our newsletter. I send membership details, as they arrive to Roger and the cash is sent to our treasurer. Details of new members are sent to Margaret Townrow who sends out new member's packs. Roger then works out delivery areas and this is an ever changing

job as members come and go. Then Derek Hastings takes the newsletters and any other information to 77 year old Denis McDermott, who helped by his wife sorts them out into delivery areas and parcel them up. This job takes two to three hours. Denis remembers seeing men working in the Rivelin Valley mills as a child and he and his wife are also Friends of Porter Brook. Derek then takes the newsletters to the deliverers (approximately 20) who at a moment's notice are up and off in all weathers to bring them to you. Needless to say some of our deliverers are of retirement age. Our thanks to you all. We can't do without you and everyone else who contributes to the smooth running of our group.

M Sanderson

Latest on Rivelin Mill Pond

RVCG has made representations to Sheffield City Council and has been assured by Gill Furness, Chair of Environment and Leisure that it is in hand. Also, the Lord Mayor has seen the site so let's hope that we will soon see the end to footpath restrictions and eyesores after three years of shilly-shallying.

Open Evenings

Why don't you come and join us at our winter talks and events?

Our new season started with Roger talking about conservation in Rivelin Valley. Rivelin has been the poor cousin of our parks for a long time but with the hopeful appointment of an assistant for Nick Selwood, our Woodlands Officer, we hope for improvements. Roger talked of the problems we faced such as unstable paths, trees which cause erosion and the ever growing problem of cyclists who cause further erosion and danger to walkers. Our successes grow – five silted ponds re-flooded with the Ponds Conservation Trust, commemorative benches, tree planting and much restoring, maintenance and tidying up.

We had a return of Howard Smith in September, this time to talk about the bridges of the Derwent Valley. As usual he raised some interesting points. How often do we drive over bridges with our eyes closed? (metaphorically speaking) We

never stop to see what the bridge is really like and you have to view it from down below to appreciate its true grandeur. Also, why is the Yorkshire Bridge Inn three miles from Yorkshire? Because its on the bridge leading to Yorkshire. This seems obvious when you're told but it must be a puzzle to some. We were taken back to pre-bridge times by place names – Grindleford, Cromford and Ashford, and for the need for better transportation of goods such as grindstones, lead and the products of mills such as Arkwright's at Cromford. Keep looking at your programme and join us. Bring a friend and enjoy Glenda's tea and cake.

M Sanderson

Stannington Carnival

A Highlight of the local community calendar and a good fund-raising event for us, this event was threatened with extinction through lack of support. Two otherwise busy members of the group have volunteered to sit on the committee to ensure that it survives. Any others, preferably from that side of the valley, who would be prepared to help please get in touch with Roger.

R Kite

Mill Markers

Three of these sculptured cast iron posts have been in position for some time now. They seem to be well received so we are going ahead with a lottery bid to complete the scheme for each mill site. Letters of support would be welcome to accompany the bid.

R Kite

The following is taken by permission from an article in 'Beer Matters' by Nick Lister, the Sheffield area magazine of CAMRA.

The Grouse and Trout Redmires

In 1830 Sheffield was a rapidly expanding town with a population of 30,000. The water supply from a few small reservoirs at Crookesmoor was proving inadequate and an act of parliament enabled the construction of the first Redmires Dam. Within 15 years the population had quadrupled and a further two dams were sanctioned. The building of the dams required hundreds of navvies working for several years. These rough and ready men lived on the moors in tented encampments.

Local farmers struggled to make ends meet. The opportunity to supplement incomes by brewing beer was not one to miss and two neighbouring farms obtained the £5 licences issued under the Beer House Act in order to cash in. The beer houses were named the 'Grouse and Trout' and 'Ocean View'. Both establishments commenced trading in the 1840's and initially were brewing their own beers. Hundreds of loud and often violent navvies descended on the beer houses and would often pass out in the barns and outbuildings rather than put up with the discomfort of the camps. With the completion of the dam it might be thought that the status quo would return but ramblers soon arrived to take in the spectacular views and fresh air that Stanage Edge offered. By 1885 several other farmers had cashed in on the act. The Three Merry Lads and the Sportsman now competed. The Ocean View called time in 1885. The death of the Grouse and Trout was more protracted. The end came as a result of quite unexpected circumstances. By 1913 motor vehicles had arrived and charabancs started to bring the masses on the moors. All this was too much for the moor's owner who was frightened that poachers would be attracted to the pub and spoil his shooting. He demanded the pub's licence be revoked. For years after the Grouse and Trout served pots of tea and cakes. Following closure the building was totally demolished. All that remains is a marker stone that had acted as the pub sign. It stands by the road, bearing a carving of a grouse and three trout. There is a Latin inscription 'Ich Dien Dinner' - I serve dinner.

Thanks to Campaign for Real Ale

Reports

I hope you caught sight of the 'Star' news article 9 October following a visit from the Lord Mayor of Sheffield Diane Leek. This helped to highlight the excellent work of the group and gives strength to our conservation voice.

Reports

Maureen Owen was proud to report a Great Spotted Woodpecker as a regular visitor to her garden this summer during 2 weeks in August and again 8 September. This bird

is amazing if you ever come across one. About the size of a blackbird with striking black and white plumage with a splash of red on the rump and on the back of the male head. I saw one fleetingly in my garden this summer. Rita Whiteley also had one on her nut feeder at Stannington this summer.

Roger Kite reported a Nuthatch on his new nut feeder on Den Bank Close 26/8 and a flock of 24 Canada Geese grazing the wild flower meadow at Coppice House Farm 27/8. You must ask Roger about his interesting little story whilst stalking these geese.

Rita Whiteley had amazing success with an upturned bin lid used as a bird bath! Later in the afternoon following the Mayor's visit to Havelock Dam 29/09 we stood and watched two weasels playing by the pond side. David Mason also spotted one in a garden rockery on Stephen Hill.

"Just wanted to record that, since we have started to fill up our 4 bird feeders for the Autumn with sunflower seeds, we have been inundated by hordes of greenfinches, coal tits (as well as the other tits), the occasional goldfinch and a pair of nuthatches who visit us daily. We have to fill up the feeders nearly every other day but the entertainment from our lounge window is worth the expense."

Philip Walshaw (Cairns Road)

Tuesday 23rd September was our annual bat walk. With a zero rating last year, probably due to the weather, we tried a different tack and went along to the Rivelin Dams at the bottom of Wyming Brook. Meeting in the new car park we were immediately met with the frantic activity of several Pipistrelles which is the smallest British bat and one of the most likely to be seen. They can eat up to 3000 small flying insects per night. Several more were detected as we walked along the back of the dam to a grassy clearing where we expected more bat activity only to be disappointed. Making our way back we distinctly detected a slower wing beat; probably that of a Daubenton's Bat. A fairly common medium sized bat. A further trek to Rails Road produced very little and so it was off to the Rivelin for a nightcap.

Graham Appleby

Thank you for all your
support during 2003

Merry Xmas

and a

Happy New

Year!