



Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Winter 2005 no 53

Through The Chair

Reaping the Benefits

Having talked last time about planting for harvest and confused a few with cryptic anagrams (well done all those Countdown fans), it seems natural to go on to the subject of reaping and storage to see us through the winter months. How many of you, like me, store up memories of Rivelin Valley – its landscapes and the wildlife – to pull out during the dark days; lift the heart and brighten the spirit. Few will remember the dragonfly larva we discovered at Second Coppice during the March Pond Dip, and even fewer the glorious sunrise over the Bole Hills at the start of the Dawn Chorus. Shame on you! But all must have some thoughts to share with the rest of us though. Was that the fleeting glance of the kingfisher, the first violet or simply the joy of a warm summer's day among the heather on the edge of Hallam Moor? The last was so rare this last year, such a special occasion is worth recording. The Editor of this "link with other members of this Group" called our Newsletter is just waiting for all those interesting anecdotes. Go on - try changing the gloomy winter skies into a riot of summer colour. Why not get really seasonal and Spring into action.

Roger and out

Contacts

Chairman	Roger Kite	2306194
Task Force Coordinator	Keith Kendall	2307144
Membership/Newsletter	M Sanderson	2306790
Treasurer	David Lyon	2302660
Group Recorder	Graham Appleby	2660203
Events	Janet Bowring	2307570

Mail to : rvcq@supanet.com
Web: www.rivelinvalley.org.uk

Help Needed

As you can see, Derek spends a great deal of time on planning matters and he would very much like some help, no matter how small. We depend a lot on voluntary work by our members and although this subject may seem intimidating, we know that one of you talented members out there could help. (Or perhaps a couple would like to do it together). Derek would be able to enlighten and help anyone who volunteers. We would especially like someone who could be active in the Stannington area; perhaps someone who lives there or regularly walks on that side of the valley. Just to take a little off Derek's load would be very welcome.

Please contact Derek Hastings on 2302679

Also we would all appreciate feedback on planning matters and anything else we do in our group. We do after all represent you.

More Cryptic Quizzes

"Residents here find more ups than downs in their new found freedom"

"A store of memories here"

"Wits wend their way to a bend where they have a good blow"

Answers to last time

*Stannington
Hopwood Tofts
Parkside*

Hope you solved the conundrum 'silver unlovin tree' and are planning to join them sometime.

Roger

More Help Needed

Just as Roger said, we would like to hear your stories of Rivelin. You are all in the group because of your love of Rivelin and you must have a wealth of interest you could share with us all, whether personal recollections, wildlife or history. Perhaps you can remember the time when you could see 'Rivelin Hotel' written in white on the roof - or when you could see the nearby 'man's head rock' which is now largely obscured by trees. You might have knowledge of old time Rivelin 'worthies' or perhaps you wandered the valley in childhood and got up to all kinds of monkey business that would amuse us. I would often disappear with a friend onto Moorbank as a nine year old (a long time ago!) and be persuaded to climb the crags below the golf course. Every handhold and foothold would be pointed out to me by an eleven year old 'expert' and I innocently reassured my father that, 'No, no I've not been on the crags' when he got wind of it. But then, those were the days when children were allowed to roam at will. Perhaps you remember fishing expeditions, carrying your fishing net and dangling a jam jar on a string. My own fishing trips used to end in utter boredom as we children stood forlornly on the bank, watching our fathers cavorting in the river like five year olds. It's no wonder that I found wild flowers more exciting. Please tell us all any interesting Rivelin stories you have, no matter how small. We all want to know. Contact M Sanderson 2306790

Membership Renewal

Yes, it is time for membership renewal. Please use the enclosed form. Some of you have already renewed in the last few weeks. If you are a new member, joining September - December 2004, then you are covered for this year, so in either case please do not renew. Try giving your membership form to someone else, as we always need new members. Thanks for the encouraging notes that some of you put in with your renewals. If in doubt about membership renewal for this year please ring M Sanderson as above.

Donations

Thanks so far this year to Coates and Lyon. We appreciate all donations. Last year, we had a bumper year with over £450 being donated by you. It is all put to good use. There is a great big sump in Rivelin which, constantly devours items such as air pumps, strimmers, hook bolts, sand, sledgehammers, numerous pairs of task team gloves, wheel brackets, brush cutter helmets, stereo headphones for bat detectors (specially contrived to eliminate bat squeaks while listening to your favourite CD), rat traps (we know who those are) walkie talkies (makes you look efficient), lock and chain (there would be no Task Team without these), quick-setting cement (for disobedient Task Team members? - especially useful near water), 12 fat balls (**what?**) and a deep fat fryer - contact Keith for the purpose of this. Is there a connection between the last two? So now you know where the money goes.

M Sanderson

Events in Loxley

Once more we have some event details from the Wadsley and Loxley Commoners. For any enquiries contact Hannah Isherwood on 2335331

Sat 29 Jan 'Women only' Tree felling on Loxley Common with the Ranger Service. Meet Long Lane car park 11am.

Tues 22 Feb 7pm Wisewood School 'The Isles of Mull & Iona' Andy Firth

Sat 12 March 8-11.30 Pea & Pie Barn Dance £6.50 Wadsley Church Hall

Tues 22 March 7pm Wisewood School 'Place Names & Surnames' Ray Battye

Tues 26 April 7pm Wisewood School 'Brush with Nostalgia' Margaret Clarkson

Woodland Project officer

John Darlow spoke at our last Open Meeting and explained his new role in our valley. Although there is not a great deal of cash, he will be involved in various ways which includes an audit of what is there, tree safety, access, ecological records, ancient woodland restoration and education.

Carol Sing

Another year and one of our favourite events reappeared at the Rivelin Hotel. Once more it was very well attended. There is something timeless about this evening and it is a jolly good start to the festive season. We keep alive the traditional carols that have been sung in this area for over a hundred years. Once they were sung in church until vicars decided that they needed something a little more decorous and introduced trained choirs leaving the more unruly to sing in the streets or more cosily to resort to the nearest pub.

According to Jack Goodison's 'Collection of Local and Traditional Carols', they have been sung in Stannington and other nearby villages since the 1870's and passed on from generation to generation. Easier forms of transport in the 20th century meant that tunes and words were passed on. Local people wrote many of the words and musical arrangements. Mrs. Dyson, a late organist of Stannington Church wrote 'Bradfield' and 'Stannington'. Many more have local names such as 'Spout Cottage' and 'Malin Bridge' but how on earth did 'Liverpool' and 'Pentonville' get there?

Included this year, we sang 'Christmas Tree' with its cheery lengthy chorus of 'Oh! Ho! Oh! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho; Ho; Ho; Ho; Ho; As usual, Ian Sharpe accompanied us tirelessly, and Neil Henderson and friends led the way. With RVCG, there were of course some regulars who thought that they had gone into the pub for a quiet drink but were agreeably surprised to find themselves in slightly rowdy company but generously donated to our collection that raised more than £40. Bread and dripping and mince pies contributed to the atmosphere – thanks to the Rivelin Hotel.

Thankyou to Everyone

A lot of people play a part in running our group and we can't do without you. All of this is voluntary and there are many skills that you bring to the group. Keep up the good work and a very HAPPY NEW YEAR to all of our members.

Keep your eyes on our new programme of events and please . . .

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

November Open Meeting

Early History of the Hallamshire Cutlery Industry David Hey

This was another entertaining evening from our own South Yorkshire historian. It covered over 700 years of cutlery making and rather surprisingly, Hallamshire has not always been the centre. Until the Middle Ages, London was the more important but there were also centres in Salisbury, and Thaxted, Essex. The earliest Hallamshire reference was Robert the cutler who paid his taxes in 1297 but that does not mean to say that there weren't cutlers before. The well-known Chaucer reference of the 14th century shows that Sheffield knives already had a reputation. These knives would have had a very pointed blade and were carried in a sheath from a belt around the waist. Blades for cutting food remained pointed for many years as they served the purpose of a fork as well. Until Elizabethan times no forks for eating were used. At the time of the Commonwealth the 'foreign' custom of using forks was considered foppish but after the restoration, King Charles and his followers who had been exiled abroad, brought the custom here. After this knives for eating were developed with the rounded end that we use today. The mud banks along River Thames have been a fruitful place for finds and include 16th century Sheffield knives. Sheffield then concentrated on cheap 1d knives for the common people. Penknives were also being produced and a 1590 book of advice on quill pens said 'get a good Sheffield knife'. Sheffield was well placed for the cutlery trade having fast flowing rivers for power, coal for furnaces and local stone for the grinding wheels. Benjamin Huntsman brought further refinement with crucible steel that gave a good cutting edge. David's talk was so full of information that there were hardly any questions but some interesting points were raised. Why don't we have a dedicated cutlery museum? Also we refer to 'cutlery' which strictly speaking only refers to knives from the Latin 'culter' - knife' but it was agreed that things change and we now include forks and spoons.

M Sanderson