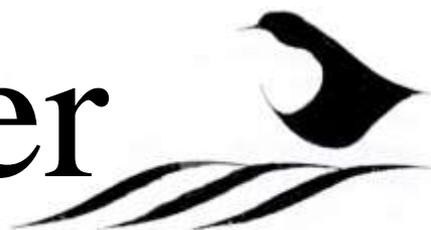




Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Summer 2005 no 55

Through The Chair

Keeping in Touch - with Reality?

So, what for you is the real world? We are always being told, "Get a grip" but on what? It's easy to get confused by the artificial world and situations caused by humanity and think that this is how it was always supposed to be.

Out there though, there is a wonderful world of creation – albeit moulded to a certain extent by having to fit in with what we've done to their habitats. Where do you go to find real empathy and re-creation? For me there's no better place than Rivelin Valley. Of course there are the things that really wind me up – usually to do with one department or other of Sheffield City Council – but remember it was the same body that took the decision to make it Green Belt and create the Nature Trail in the first place (if only Members and Officers today had the foresight and clarity of service to the community).

To wander the paths of Rivelin or sit beside one of our ponds helps to keep me in touch with what really matters – and I always feel a lot better for it.

Talking about keeping in touch – we could always do with new volunteers to help deliver this Newsletter. Some folk's rounds are getting a bit onerous as the group grows. Please give me a ring if you can help.

Roger and Out

Contacts

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Donations

Thank you for the following donations – Cauwood, Hobson, Hoyland, Shaw, Barton, Buckland and Mason. All this is very valuable to us and much appreciated. Please, everyone, encourage others to join our group. We always need new members and Rivelin would not be the same without us.

Crosspool Garden Open Day

A great success again, this event is becoming part of the annual calendar locally. A huge success for the charities supported by the different gardens with over £1400 being donated in total. Thanks in particular to Margaret, Keith and Howard who were collecting for RVCG, but also to all those who supported the event and enjoyed exploring the horticultural delights of Crosspool. We now know that Keith doesn't just get his green fingers from painting railings.

Roger Kite

Visit to the General Cemetery

Please read on – don't panic, they don't want any new inhabitants. The Sheffield General Cemetery Trust is actively working to preserve, protect and promote the cemetery. It is a great historical site with many notable Sheffield people being buried there and also a good habitat for flora and fauna. The Trust has a regular series of events and we are going to join them on one of their guided walks – **'An introduction to the history and residents of the cemetery'**.
Date Sunday 2nd October 2005
Time 2pm
Meeting Place – At the cemetery gatehouse at the end of Cemetery Avenue off Ecclesall Road. (Please do not mistake this for Cemetery Road).
You do not need to book.

There should be plenty of parking around the area.

The tour will take around 1½ hours. It is free but donations are welcomed as the trust is doing a lot of conservation and archive research work.

Just to whet your appetite here are one or two notes on a few of the residents, taken from one of the 'Friends' publications, 'Danger and Despair'.

Death by fire was common in Victorian times and there are several tales of voluminous skirts being set on fire. Susannah Sharpe, in 1841 died as a result of stooping with her back to the fire to tend her child. Sarah Goddard, age 9 died in 1839 because she wafted the fire with her pinafore. A skating accident caused Alfred Atkinson's death on a dam on Crookesmoor in 1850. Only the day before, the ice had been broken at the same spot. In 1854, five Sheffield men set off on an outing in a four-wheeled carriage. They travelled from town, over Lydgate and Sandygate to Redmires where they visited the Grouse and Trout inn. On their return, nearing Mount Pisgah, the vehicle was dashed over and smashed after colliding with a pile of ganister resulting in death to one of the party and serious injury to another.

Please don't let this depress you, this site is part of our history and the trust has worked hard to keep it in good order.

We will look forward to seeing you for an entertaining visit.

To Ironfounders and Others

When you destroy a blade of grass
You poison England at her roots:
Remember no man's foot can pass
Where evermore no green life shoots.
Gordon Bottomley 1874 - 1948

Wadsley and Loxley Commoners

Here are some of their events which may be of interest.

AGM Monday 26th September 7.30 pm

Wadsley Church Hall
Speaker – Ron Clayton
'Old Wisewoodian'

Monday 17th October 7.30pm

Wadsley Church Hall
Aileen and George Wade
A slide show on the 'Mary Rose'

Sunday 30th October

Work on the common
Meet Long Lane Car Park
A 'Women Only' event
10.30 – 4.00

Monday 31st October

Halloween Ghost Walk (7 - 8.30) followed
by Pea and Pie Supper
Meet at 7pm – Rose and Crown Wadsley
There will be a fancy dress prize and scary
stories

To book the Pea and Pie Supper ring Evelyn
on2343385

For enquiries regarding the Wadsley and
Loxley Commoners please ring Hannah on
2335331.

Some Recent Events

Evening Walk 10th May

This is becoming a regular event and is an introduction for many who do not know the valley but hear of us because it is part of the Environment Weeks' programme. It takes place at a particularly pleasant time when the leaves are still many shades of green. It was a still evening and we enjoyed the reflections in the ponds as we walked down the valley. As in the past we ended up at Coppice House Farm for refreshments. This was quite a surprise for new visitors who found themselves sitting in a barn imbibing coffee and cakes. As usual, we gained a few new members who were very impressed with our work in the valley. We send our thanks to the Revitts who provided the hospitality.

Garden Open Day 2nd July

You have heard something of this from Roger. This year it did not rain and it wasn't windy. A lot of interested people came from all over the city –Gleadless, Woodhouse, Stocksbridge and many more places, making a good day out with many finishing the day at Crosspool Summer Fayre.

RVCG Barbecue 24th July

This year we got very wet. It was the first year that it poured down from beginning to end. One year we had slight drizzle as we were packing up and another time we had a clap of thunder but never a non-stop downpour. We wallowed in puddles and the wine became watered down. The rain threatened to put out the barbecue and the bread became soggy but we all stayed the course including our cook, Glenda and her right hand man, (her husband). The numerous umbrellas put out nobody's eyes and all the food disappeared. It was lovely to be able to finish with hot tea and coffee for the first time and thanks to all those who brought cakes etc. No one can accuse RVCG members of being namby-pambies. Getting wet wasn't the only problem. A fearsome wasps' nest had to be destroyed by Keith but not before it had caused his children a visit to the Children's Hospital. Please join us next year. Despite all, we had a merry time.

M Sanderson

Strange Goings On

Has anyone lost an egg? It is an ordinary uncooked hen's egg with a sell by date of June 6th this year. It was found buried in a neighbour's plant pot on Den Bank. Who put it there? Was it an extraordinarily powerful squirrel? Was it the same creature that was responsible for the removal of a microwave from a nearby skip? Perhaps it also caused a pair of Spiderman pants to appear in the same skip on the same day only to disappear by the next morning. We presume that somewhere there is an extra large squirrel wearing Spiderman pants looking for a super sized plant pot in which to bury a discarded microwave. Perhaps it wanted to cook the egg. Pity it couldn't read the sell by date.

M Sanderson

Diary of a Blue Tit Family

In early March the blue tit parents were busy investigating a nest box and before long one parent was busy making the entrance hole larger from the outside. Last year's inhabitants made the entrance larger from the inside causing a mysterious tapping noise. The birds must be very keen on home improvements. By the 19th April the birds were busy flying in and out with nesting material, spending two or three minutes inside, occasionally poking their head out. Sometimes very large lumps of moss were wedged in entrance.

By the end of the month, the parents were making an efficient job of clearing greenfly from a neighbouring honeysuckle. By the 17th May the birds were in and out of the box relentlessly, sometimes crashing into each other in the entrance. They even ignored me standing below, watching them. One parent was frequently seen feeding the other with nuts in the entrance. By 21st May little cheeps could be heard from inside the box and cats could be seen taking an interest but a washing up liquid bottle filled with water can work wonders. The cheeping got more and more raucous and then one morning there was nothing there – an empty nest.

Soon fluffy little blue tits were appearing on the bird feeders. Cycle completed.

M Sanderson

We would love to hear from you

Do you have a story for our newsletter? Have you an interesting tale, perhaps about Rivelin wildlife or childhood adventures. Perhaps you have knowledge of old characters or industries of the valley. Please contact Margaret on 01142306790. We will look forward to hearing from you.

Don't Forget

Roger needs help for newsletter delivery. Please note our new programme and join our events. You can bring someone with you, they do not have to be members.

RECORDER

Apology's for not writing my column in the Spring issue. This was due mainly to computer problems so some of the reports go back to March this year.

Derek Hastings, our RVCG planning officer reported first sightings of Lapwings 6/3 in fields below Redmires Lower Reservoir and 7/3 the first sighting ever of Long Tailed Tits in his back garden at Lodge Moor.

Jo Flower is our latest recruit to the RVCG Committee. She reported seeing 2 Curlews late afternoon in the field below High Riggs Road opposite Lodge Lane 21/4 also 1/5 two pairs of Lapwings near Flash Farm, The Riggs, Stannington.

More Curlews were reported by Derek again at Wymingbrook 4/4.

The next one was quite interesting for us. Marika Szabo reported seeing Snake Head Fritillary in the meadow opposite Wolf Wheel pond. Has anyone any idea how they got there? We suspect they have been planted but nevertheless they naturalise in wet meadows and this could be the ideal spot. The Fritillary is unique and hangs its head like a large Bluebell. The majority are pinky-purple colour with a curious pattern of squarish markings hence 'Snake Head'. There is also a white variant.

The Hanaghans sadly reported the loss a large Goldfish out of their garden pond. The culprit was that well known local fish collector known as Heron. If you will have your fish on open display, it's like a shop window for them. I suppose you now have some sort of netting in place. This is also a good idea to keep it safe from children. A frightening number drown in innocent looking garden ponds each year. One report came through our recently refurbished website.

Thank you Margaret Mantaj for showing everyone how easy it is to submit a report and have it published in our newsletter. The article referred to the New Norfolk Arms near the Rivelin Dams and read:- Maternity pipistrelle roost (orphan returned to roost). Access point back of the building via air vents under gable. Owners bat and wildlife friendly!

We have been criticized in the past for publishing articles on Badgers as they are treated as vermin by certain folk. As you may have read recently, there are high levels of tuberculosis (TB) being reported by some farmers amongst their cattle to such an extent that some farmers could go out of business. It is thought that Badgers may be responsible for the spread of the disease and roughly a quarter of culled badgers are found to be positive. There are mixed opinions as to the solution but surely culling all badgers cannot be the answer. I suppose anything that threatens your livelihood has to be dealt with seriously but it would be better to find an inoculation that protected the cattle rather than a mass cull. Farmers have similar problems with foxes and crows which kill young lambs but I would hate to see them obliterated from our countryside. Many of these wild animals now inhabit our suburbs as food is probably easier for them to obtain which brings me to a Badger report from Mary Brazil at Crosspool who says that her neighbour normally puts food out for foxes but she has recently seen Badgers feeding there.

Both myself and Keith Kendall have had success with our RVCG nest boxes which have been inundated with Blue Tits. Keith came across two fledglings on the ground which had left their nest too early. He quickly fitted a spare nesting box onto his fence so that the parents could continue to feed them safely. A big thank you from the RVCG and of course all the local Blue Tit population. Well done Keith.

Apology's that the copies delivered to members doors were titled:
Summer 2005 no 54.
This was incorrect and should have read Summer 2005 no 55

Task day reports.....

Back in February the RVCG descended on Upper Cut Wheel at the S bend on Rivelin Valley Road. Previous task days had seen us rejuvenate the pond, provide benches and footpaths. On this occasion we fitted a new driveway gate, rebuilt the stone entrance of the footpath and further improved the footpaths with stone chippings. The large boggy area has now been seeded and this should be a delight for all visitors for many years to come. It is here around 130 years ago that there were rowing boats on Upper Cut pond for public hire and swing boats on the grassy area we have just seeded. Hard to believe but we have a post card prove it.

In May the group worked on the Roscoe retaining wall and stepping stones although I wasn't available on that day. Our most recent task day was again at the S bend but on the other side of the road this time at Nether Cut Wheel. The footpath here is quite popular but was becoming quite muddy due to poor drainage. We therefore diverted a natural stream under the footpath and rebuilt the retaining walls. We then laid a good depth of stone chippings along that stretch so that should make walking a little less sludgy in future

If you have any concerns or suggestions for the Rivelin Valley or would like to join our task team then please contact Keith Kendall or Roger Kite whose numbers appear on the front of this newsletter or email rvcg@supernet.com.

If you would like to contribute to our newsletter please contact Margaret Sanderson or Graham Appleby at grahamappleby@btopenworld.com

Graham Appleby