



Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Autumn 2008 no 68

Through The Chair

It Colours Your View

What does? Well – sense of ownership for a start. Whether it's your child with a school report or your valley up for discussion before a Planning Authority. October seems to be a good month to look at the perspective for change. Standing on any one of the amazing vantage points above the valley, this seasonal transition from shades of green to vibrant yellows, oranges and reds highlights what a wonderful place we have on our doorsteps. Seasonal change is one thing. Unfortunately we can also see a transition of one of the jewels of Sheffield's green belt into an unsightly sprawl of urban fringe. What was, for every Sheffielder only a few years ago, their right to a breath of fresh country air, Rivelin is now having to be fought for all over again. Ownership brings with it certain rights but also responsibility. It may be someone's land but it's our Green Belt! There are supposed to be rules governing how it is managed and tight constraints as to any development. Yet we understand council planners are discussing potentially harmful sites. Why cannot we just say no? When owners despoil our environment where is the Authority with the power to take action? Why are they so slow it always takes rearguard action? If, like me you are seeing red, please let your local councillor know.

Roger and Out

Donations

Thanks for donations to RVCG from Crellin, Frith, Melvin, Woolham and Couldwell. We are very pleased for your help in financing our projects. So far this year we have received £528 with your membership.

Contacts

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To Bob M

Many thanks for your Membership renewal and we are pleased that you have regained your equilibrium after being cornered by R.V.C.G. secret police. I can understand that your 10-year payment of subs is to avoid being hauled over the coals again by our nameless 'enforcer'. Our success depends on such methods. The Task Force Team are at this moment being rounded up and held incommunicado as they frequently try to avoid the next round of boulder heaving, chain saw massacres, water torture and enforced route marches in atrocious weather if left to themselves. Let this be a warning to everyone. Please note, you implied that we might use thumbscrews and the rack but I assure you that we have far more subtle methods. We look forward to hearing from you in 2018. Many thanks for the donation as well. I hope you have stopped shaking by now.

M Sanderson

Bats About Rivelin Nature Trail

Tuesday 23rd September saw more than the usual small band of stalwarts mustering at Rivelin Mill. For a change, our bat walk evening turned out warm and dry – and full of bats! Assisted by a friendly expert from SY Bat Group and armed by our own detectors and floodlights, we acclimatised ourselves to the falling darkness around the pond identifying the occasional Pippistrelle. A walk down the Trail as far as Third Coppice however, soon threw up Daubenton's and Brown Long-eared as well. The highlight was returning to the packhorse bridge and floodlighting the pool under the bridge and above the weir and in that magical atmosphere watching a group of Daubentons skimming the surface of the water for about twenty minutes. Back at the car park our de-brief was continually interrupted by detectors going off yet again. Not just a lovely night time experience along the Rivelin but a successful nature watch as well.

Roger Kite

Please come to our Open Meetings. You can bring anyone with you. Where else can you get tea and cake for 50p?

Task Team News

Sunday 7th December 2008

A small group of committed volunteers took a leisurely walk down the Rivelin Valley with big rakes, jumping in and out of goits and inlets trying to clear them of logs, sticks and twigs before the fall of leaves from the trees which would block the inlets completely. It turned out to be a nice day and we certainly left things flowing a lot quicker than before so well done to the daring few.

Sunday 26th September 2008

Great news, we have managed to get the funding in place to finally complete the picnic area above Rails Road Pond. Many thanks to **South Yorkshire Community Foundation** for providing this funding. With this funding in mind, we started to clear the area and lay a base for the picnic tables which should be in place next month.

We also managed to complete the handrail up the few steps to the picnic area. The picnic tables have been purchased along with all of the wood and other bits required to complete this area, so providing that the weather is kind to us, we should have them installed by the time you receive this newsletter.

We have also decided to install a willow walk in this area, so once this is completed, then maybe we can start to do more work along the valley which has been ignored a little since our time seems to have been taken up at Rails Road for the last 18 months.

Many thanks to all of the volunteers who have turned out in all weathers to help build something special at Rails Road. You can all be extremely proud of your efforts. Well done and keep up all the hard work.

Keith Kendall

Some Wadsley and Loxley Commoners Events

All events-Wadsley Church Hall at 7.30 pm.

Monday 17th November

Geraldine Hughes

My Adventures as an e-bay Trader

Monday 15th December

Malcolm Nunn

Origins of Christmas Carols including a sing along of local carols. Monday 19th January
Aileen and George Wade Recovery and Conservation of the Mary Rose.

If you have any enquiries about the above, ring Hannah on 0114 2335331.

CPRE also have two events to be held at St Thomas' Church Centre, Crookes, Sheffield both at 7,30 pm

Tuesday 18th November

A sustainable future for Upland Farming
Chloe Palmer - Challenges for the future.

Tuesday 17th February 2009

Peak District National Park Ranger Service
Terry Page – on the vital work of the Rangers.

SOME CHANGES TO OUR PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Tuesday 9th December

The Carol Sing at the Rivelin Hotel is cancelled – We are sorry but this annual event will not take place this year due to conflicting dates and lack of available leaders for the singing. There are other days and other venues locally if you want to give the carols an airing.

Sunday 14th December

Christmas in Rivelin – a fun event for all the family and the Pudding Ladies Café will be open.

This event will now be on 21st December – 11.am – 3.pm

Some Recent Events

Our barbecue in August went very well with the change of venue. Many thanks to Ken for lending his garden to us. The weather was fine and we were amazed to be in this extensive oasis in the heart of Crosspool and we appreciated the ease of getting food and equipment there.

We also had the excellent accompaniment of Graham on the guitar. Thanks to everyone for their help and to Glenda for the cooking.

Monitoring the Aliens 9th September

This was a talk by Paul Richards (Senior Curator of Natural History at Weston Park) about alien species, mainly of the insect world that have arrived here naturally and are breeding. Sheffield turns out to have the best recordings of wildlife in the world. Pollution levels are lower and with climate change and increased travel, we are seeing alien species arrive. Even dragonflies are being spotted at Meadowhall.

The speckled wood butterfly, once unseen is seen in this area and the garlic snail has appeared. The large scolopendra centipede appeared in Firth Park and is breeding and it will bite you (but not too badly). The red harvestman spider was found in Essex in 1999 but now seen in four Sheffield locations including Crookes and we need no reminder of the elm bark beetle which brought disease to our elms. The Harlequin ladybird, introduced to USA to kill insects on crops is now in Crookes and Broomhill.

It eats our ladybirds. These were just a few of the aliens we were introduced to and we also had the pleasure of inspecting specimens that Paul brought with him.

Visit to Kenya Graham Appleby 14th Oct

Graham's visit to Kenya could have been cancelled because of tribal disputes but it was deemed to be safe so we all saw the results of his travels. If you closed your eyes, you could imagine yourself there because we heard a recording of the whistles, whooping and chirruping of the bird life. If you opened your eyes you saw Graham in his safari suit. We saw a tribal village of semi-nomadic people with their spiky acacia hedges to keep animals out. The ladies wore huge circular necklaces that whizzed around when they danced and the men had ornamented themselves with enlarged ear lobes. Kenya is a country of charging elephants, snoring buffalos and weaverbirds decorating trees with their hanging nests. Elegant giraffes minded their babies and termite mounds looked like mini sculptures. Our tour ended with a visit to the second generation of 'Treetops', the place where Princess Elizabeth learned that she had become Queen in 1952.

M Sanderson

We printed the following in 1993. There can't be many people around now who have such memories, so it is worthwhile to reprint it. It was written by Edwin Marsh who survived the 2nd World War in Burma.

Growing up in Rivelin Valley

I was born in one of the little cottages above Roscoe Wood, the waterwheel and dam. There was no electricity or water closets at the time. We had water in the taps, but only middens for sanitation and oil lamps at night. It was countryside and herds of cows passed the cottages. I remember going to Wragg's Farm off Stannington Road for milk with a small pail. The milk was often still warm from milking. My father was a pocket blade grinder and worked at Roscoe Wheel. This was a two-storey building. He had previously worked at Holmehead and Wolf Wheels. Before I went to school, my mother used to take me

down to the waterwheel at the bottom of the wood to take a hot meal to my father working there. Once my father objected to the red spotted handkerchief tied over it, as he was an ardent Wednesdayite. Nestling by the side of Roscoe Wheel were three small cottages and the goyt from the wheel ran under them. At weekends and holidays, the Guites and Sampsons living in the cottages used to make tea for the 'townies' who used to picnic in the area in front of the dam. Earlier, the dam had rowboats on it. By the end of the 1920's, it was beginning silt up. Roscoe Wheel was closed during the slump of 1931, never to open again. Grinders died early. I was taken to the funeral of an uncle before I was five in a horse drawn carriage, possibly the last in Rivelin. The age of the motorcar was fast approaching. I was sent to Sunday School at Rivelin Glen Chapel. The Superintendent was firstly Mr Stancer from Woodland View, later my uncle, George Froggett, helped by Mr Gilbert Hall. There were Whit Monday Walks and the Harvest Festival. People came from all around, as it was part of the social scene. The Whit Walk was a fine time for children. We met at chapel, had our breakfast there and proceeded to walk to Stannington to meet other Sunday Schools. Then each Sunday School followed their respective banners, with the Stannington Brass Band in front and paraded round the village. All of us ended up at Stannington Church for the service. During the afternoon, we sang at the Rivelin Glen cottages, Guites Samehill Farm across Den Bank and at Booth's House, the largest in the area. At the age of five, I attended Stannington Church School, having to walk a mile and a half to get there. After school we used to play football, cricket, pitch and toss, marbles and whipping tops according to the season. No television but wireless was just beginning to come in. Uncle Enos, a tram driver lived in the end cottage and he got one in 1935. We were invited to hear a commentary from Wembley and E-I-Addio, Wednesday won the cup. Now, as a grandfather, I often walk in Rivelin and would like to think that my grandchildren and theirs will enjoy the same.

RECORDER

Hi Graham

My name is Jason Wilson, I have lived overlooking the valley all my life and have also looked after "our back yard" in regards to taking litter out of the river etc and making year upon year observations. I am also a keen angler and have made sure that the ponds remain free from Litter and other stuff! (as much as I could anyway)I would be very keen to join the RVCG, I live on Low Road overlooking the valley and walk right up the valley on average twice a week I applaud the recent work which has transformed the Mill pond I cant tell you how many times I rang up to report its sad demise, but to no avail, Has there been any fish stocked in there? like most residents of the area I caught my very first fish there over 30 years ago. I have put a lot of work into the conservation of the Valley; always making sure anything I did, did not upset the delicate balance of things. A few years ago I removed a lot of silt and branches etc from the inlet at the head goit at the first dam (fire station dam) not sure if it was called the Hollins mill, perhaps you could tell me!! The pond was not getting any water through. I have fished this pond for 30 years plus and have seen its decline and resurrections over the years. I can remember on more than one occasion turning up at 5.00 am to see someone had dumped a car in there !!!!I would be most interested to join, or failing that to attend any meetings you may have. I take my hat off to all of you and long may you continue !!!

Highest Regards Jay Wilson

Thank you Jason. A membership form is on its way.

Reports

Margaret Peter 12/8/08 Gatekeeper butterfly on her conservatory window and remained there long enough for her to get her reference book and identify it

Mary Brazil 12/8/08 spotted a Red Kite at Padley Mill. Sparrow Hawk was holding down a pigeon in the middle of Whitfield Road at Fulwood with cars going round it.

Keith & Carol Warrington 28/8/08 2.15am Arran Road – woken by howling sounds and looked outside to see a fox trotting up the pavement.

Derek Hastings 26/9/08 Three butterflies - a peacock, a speckled wood and a comma all on the same sedum spectabile "brilliant" at the same time.

A neighbour of Keith Kendall claims to have seen a pine martin in their back garden on Den Bank Crescent. We decided this is unlikely and it was more likely to be a weasel or possibly an escaped ferret! Butterfly sightings include a gatekeeper, a peacock and red admirals. Also an emerald moth. Margaret Sanderson has seen a nuthatch in her garden and Dave Lyons greater spotted woodpecker in his garden

12/9/08 a flock of geese were seen flying West over Den Bank and an even larger flock in early October.

The RSPB is reporting a healthy increase in Red Kites following their re-introduction. Spanish Red Kites were imported in 1989 to bolster the tiny ailing population in the Chilterns. One of the greatest conservation success stories of the 20th century.
Hi Graham

I have just joined the RVCG, having moved here a few months ago. I see from the newsletter you collate sightings of birds and mammals in the Valley. I don't think that what I have seen counts as 'rare' but I was pleasantly surprised to encounter two species.

The first, earlier in summer, was a pair of bullfinches feeding on the catkins on the silver birch in my garden above the valley and allotments that I border. I had not seen them around Sheffield myself and though not rare I have heard they are declining.

More recently in mid September while I was looking for Blackberries in the hedges below Hag Lane allotments, when I realized that the small gap in the wall was filled with the head of a weasel. It looked out, peering from side to side for a minute or two before turning within the small space and disappearing into the wall. Whenever I have seen weasels before, it has been in movement from afar so this, for me, was a rare face-to-face meeting. They are, I presume and trust, common but usually more fleeting.

I look forward to more encounters in the Rivelin Valley

Yours

Robin G Smith

...and I look forward hearing of yours and anyone else's encounters in the Valley (ed.)

Joan Buckland 15/10/08

In the quiet secluded Den Ban Close, a female sparrow hawk was seen to catch a blackbird and pummeled it with its feet and as if that wasn't enough it was also mobbed by two magpies and a crow. Such violence in the suburbs!

RVCG website is 5 years old. It has currently had 10365 hits – mostly from outside the UK!

Sheffield Folk Chorale - winter programme

Sat 6 Dec, Stephen Hill Methodist Church, Sheffield

All concerts are in the evening unless otherwise stated. Please check times etc with contact names nearer the date. Hope to see you at one of the above events where you'll be able to hear some old favourites - and lots of new material as well.

Bob Hodges 0114 230 3207

Sadly, this summer, we had to say goodbye to an old friend and a regular member of the task team



Roger Kite's dog 'Bracken'

Please come down and see Rivelin Mill pond off Rails Road to see what a wonderful place it has now become. You can even stay for a picnic on one of our new tables. We're just lacking the burger van and an icecream van!

Thank you for all your letters and emails and I look forward to hearing from you this winter.

Graham Appleby
RVCG Group Recorder

A Happy Christmas to all our Members



