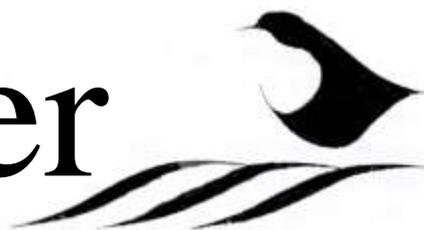




Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Winter 2013 no 85

Through the Chair

Welcome to 2013 and the winter addition of our quarterly newsletter. I checked my Pears cyclopaedia to see what events took place in 1913 and.....actually nothing is recorded for Britain and only the end of the Balkan Wars in the rest of the world. 1914 seems to have been a bit more exciting. The RVCG currently has 10 dedicated committee members at its disposal and together with its members, is one of the largest and most active of South Yorkshires volunteer groups and a status we're all very proud of. As the SCC suffers further cutbacks, they recognise that community volunteer groups are becoming a valuable asset. We are the eyes and ears of the Rivelin Valley and take an ever important role in the maintenance of its footpaths and dams. We are keeping an eye on a number of unwanted foreign visitors trying to get a foothold in the Valley in the form of 'Japanese knotweed', 'Himalayan balsam' and now 'floating pennywort'; an invasive species from North America recently identified at the Hind Wheel dam. We have the opening of the new paddling pool facilities at Rivelin Park to look forward to in the spring and along with the Rivelin Café and the newly refurbished toilets this has become a real gem for the local community. We are operating a programme of bench replacement and installation along the Valley with an increasing number of people requesting memorial benches for loved ones. Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to the challenges of the new year.

Graham Appleby
RVCG Chairman

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Renewal of membership for 2013 is now due.

We are still only £3 per annum. (Quite an advantage in this economic climate.) Please use the enclosed form.

A few of you have already paid for this year and if you are a new member joining after September 30th 2012 then your membership also covers this year.

If you are a new member in doubt about when you joined or if you are not sure if you have already paid for this year, please contact M Sanderson. See contacts list. Please try to renew early as it saves us from sending out reminders.

Why not persuade someone else to join our group?

Donations

Once more you have been very generous. Donations this quarter from – Tetchner, Warrington, Moorhouse, Warrender, Slack, Ward, Sampson, White and Grocock.

This brings the total amount of donations for last year to £1080. We are very grateful for this boost to our coffers.

**This Newsletter is sponsored by
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equipment.**

Do you have anything to say in this newsletter?

We like to hear from people with any Rivelin stories perhaps from childhood and family visits or did you work or live in the valley?

Please contact Margaret Sanderson.

Here's a poem for anyone with a wood burning stove.

Song of the Forest Trees

Oak logs will warm you well,
That are old and dry;
Logs of pine will sweetly smell
But the sparks will fly

Birch logs will burn too fast,
Chestnut scarce at all;
Hawthorn logs are good to last –
Cut them in the fall.

Holly logs will burn like wax.
You may burn them green;
Elm logs like to smouldering flax,
No flames to be seen.

Beech logs for winter time,
Yew logs as well;
Green elder logs it is a crime
For any man to sell.

Pear logs and apple logs,
They will scent your room,
Cherry logs across the dogs
Smell like flowers of broom.

Ash logs, smooth and grey,
Burn them green or old,
Buy up all that come your way –
Worth their weight in gold.

The original of this poem is taken from the "Poem book of the Gael" and is in the Irish Ossianic tradition, (named after the poet Oisín). Printed above is a version from Dartmoor according to the poet/writer Robert Graves and retold in his book "The White Goddess".

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Margaret Sanderson

No Task Day news this quarter. Normal Service will be resumed as soon as possible. Keep fingers crossed that it won't rain! Our Task Team members are used to getting wet in the river and dams but don't need to work in Somme like mud. If you would like to join in the fun contact Keith Kendall.

Thanks to all who have sent information about Lodge Moor and King Edward's hospitals.

So far there has been no information on Crimicar Lane. This hospital is now demolished but its gates remain. It was built by 1901 but it is believed that previously there were wooden huts on the site for the isolation of smallpox victims. It treated silicosis, a disease common in Sheffield cutlery grinders and later TB.

A plaque on the gates says–

**THESE ARE THE GATES
OF THE FORMER
CRIMICAR LANE
ISOLATION HOSPITAL
OPENED 1901
CLOSED 1956**

Is there anyone out there who knows more of its history or perhaps was a patient or nurse there? They are probably aged 70 or more by now.

More on Rivelin's Hospitals

King Edward's

The following is taken from a lengthy report of the Medical Superintendent, C Lee Pattison covering the hospital's first two years, March 1916 to March 1918, already a time of great expense being at the time of WW1.

Firstly, he regrets that all tubercular children could not be treated there and in reality two hospitals were needed. He applauded the cooperation between private generosity, mainly the Duke of Norfolk for donation of the land and S Meggitt Johnson for £5,000. Wards were named after each of them. The fund amounted to £10,000 altogether.

The hospital was then maintained by local government and ratepayers. He noted that the first hospital of this kind was the Lord Mayor Trelcar Hospital at Alton in 1908 and he expresses his gratitude to H J Gauvain of this hospital for the help and advice

given to him.

King Edward's had an administrative block and accommodation for nurses, also was lit by electricity. There were workshops for a joiner who made all wooden and metal appliances and a leather worker was also employed.

Treatment for TB of the bones involved plenty of fresh air on open verandas but sheltered from rain. Whenever possible the patients were treated with heliotherapy – exposure to sunlight. An electric lamp was used when there was no sun. Teeth and eyes were examined as part of the programme, no doubt much needed by the poor of Sheffield. The diet was to be plentiful and varied and pasteurised milk was to be used.

Treatment also involved absolute bed rest, at first with immobility of the affected limbs. Later, more movement was allowed but with the affected part immobilised with plaster casts.

There was a waiting list of patients to be admitted and they were given similar treatment at home until a bed was free. Dr Lee Patterson noted that the children enjoyed the hospital school and by 1918, there were 96 children enrolled.

The average stay in hospital was 516 days. He was keen to provide after care for the children and Women Health Inspectors were appointed to check on children after they left. These women also supervised parents in the dressing of suppurating wounds, common in children with TB of the bones but parents had to contribute to the treatment which usually involved splints and dressings. He did stress that parents who could not afford this were not turned away.

Thanks again to Claire Toplis for lending me the papers of ex Matron Marion Gould.

More Hospital Information

"E" worked on maintenance at Lodge Moor and King Edward's Hospitals in the 1970/80's.

He was well acquainted with Dennis, the last person in the country to live in an iron lung who spent time at both King Edward's and Lodge Moor. He was paralysed because of polio and unable to breathe for himself.

Dennis lived an active life with friends and family visiting also had excursions in a specially converted vehicle. Various adaptations were made so that he could control his own radio and TV.

Part of the work "E" did was to maintain the mortuary and he had to put up with working alongside bodies and during a flu epidemic the mortuary was very full. When those in authority decreed that speed bumps were to be put on the long hospital drives, no one told the ambulance drivers. Speed bumps and incoming spinal injuries don't mix.

He worked at King Edward's when the authority was updating the operating theatre. A new one way window was put in so that the staff could enjoy the view of the woods and people on the nearby path could not look in. It was put in the wrong way round but the expensive new theatre was never used because it was decided that the hospital was to close. "E" now 87 still has to make hospital visits for a check up because he worked with wiring lined with asbestos.

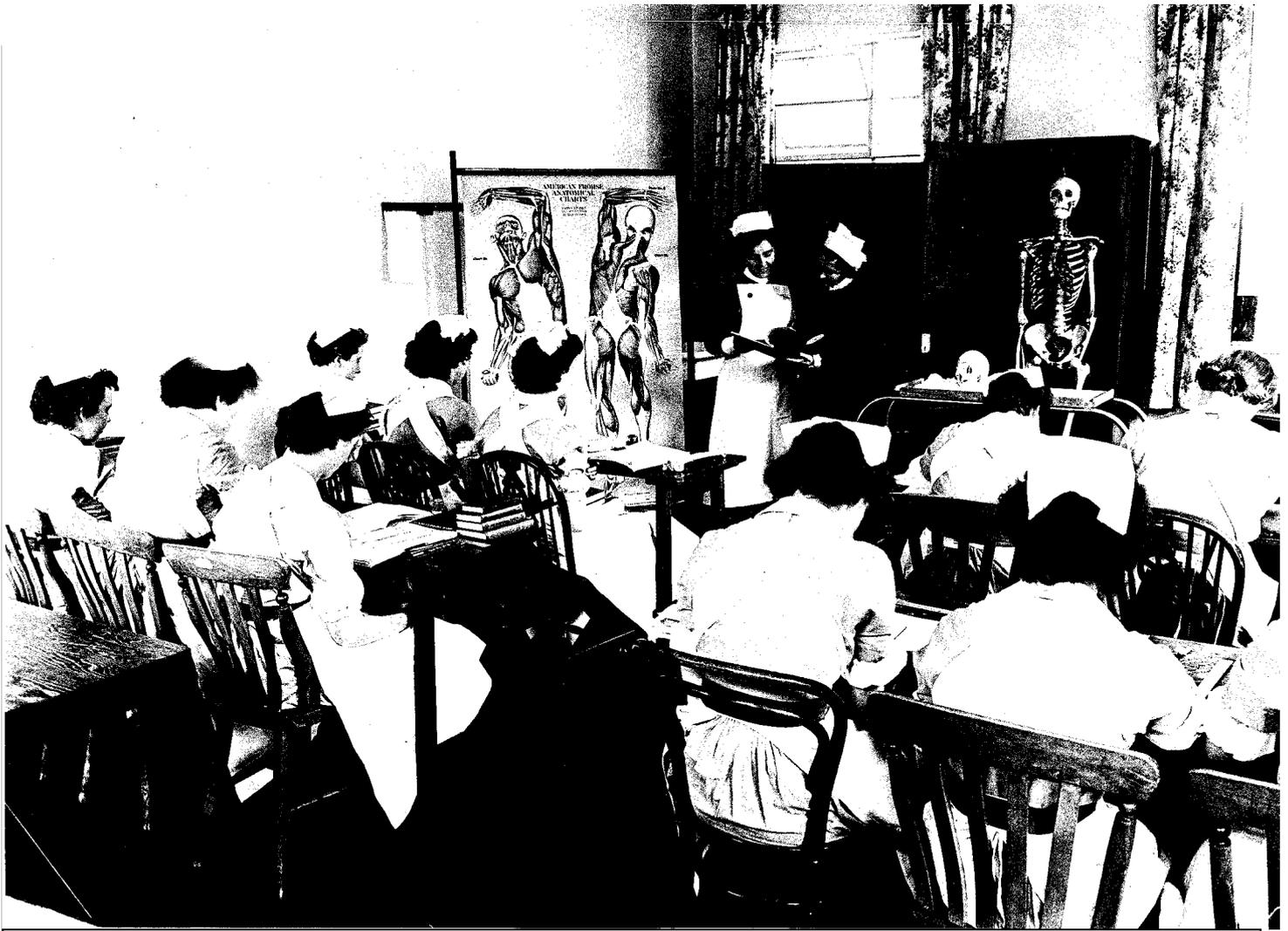
An RVCG member, Alan Tann also worked at King Edward's on electrical maintenance and the matron (possibly Marion Gould) asked his men to chat with the children and they were visibly moved by the children's plight.

Another member, Pat Machin wrote that her husband, Roy had to go to King Edward's as a very young child for treatment and was taken there from Parson Cross by his big sister. He was told that his legs weren't strong enough for him as he was an 11lb baby. He was put on a bed attached to ropes and pulleys. This was probably as an outpatient to treat rickets. He was also fitted with callipers that were fitted into the heels of his shoes. It worked and now his wife reports that he has very straight legs.

Roy maintains that his love for Rivelin Valley stemmed from when he played there as a boy in school holidays and that it has not changed much.

Margaret Sanderson

Thanks to the above for this information.



Nurses at the King Edward VII Hospital as referred to in Margaret Sanderson's article

Photos courtesy of Claire Toplis



Some Recent Events

13th November 2012 The Derwent Valley and its History - Bill Bevan

Bill is an archaeologist and has worked in the valley. We learned the history of its landscape, farming, buildings and people.

8th January 2013 Surnames and place names

Ray Battye

A fascinating insight into this subject, full of facts about our everyday words that we have gained from our invaders.

Please join us at our open meetings – you can bring a friend or family. They don't have to be members.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYBODY

Recorder

Wet, wet, wet – that about sums up this year, apart from one or two good weeks in Spring, and it is still raining. There are many flood warnings in operation. Some areas of the U.K. have been flooded more than once this year. I cannot imagine what the people are going through.

Seasonal flooding has always taken place, but until fairly recent times the floodplains took care of the extra water. In Yorkshire, until the drainage of the Yorkshire Fens and the Humberhead Levels, from the 17thC onwards, most of the lowlands were wetlands (fens and marshes), with settlements being built on higher ground. Doncaster had marsh on its northern side, and York and Hull were virtually islands. With the cutting of drainage ditches and dykes the fields took on a more uniform appearance and eventually became the countryside we know now. This happened all over the country. Villages and towns expanded onto low lying ground and now, with global warming, which, for the U.K., means less predictable weather including much wetter years like the present one, the water has nowhere to go. The fens and marshes were teeming with fish and wildfowl, which sustained many villagers. After the drainage many people lost their livelihoods and the wildfowl had to find other wetlands. Even now traditional feeding grounds are being accessed for other purposes and birds are largely restricted to a few precious nature reserves.

Birds need high energy food to keep them healthy in cold, wet weather and sunflower seeds and fat balls are excellent. Also bird roosts placed around the garden will greatly help to keep them warm and dry. The task team has a huge job in keeping on top of incidents in the valley. These can include fly tipping, careless litter dropping, leaking dams, theft of stonework and introduction of 'aliens'. You may think 'What aliens?' We have a number of aliens in the valley, mainly Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and the American Signal Crayfish. There is now a new plant that is very invasive – Floating Pennywort

Hydrocotyle ranunculoides. This originates from North America and was introduced for aquaria. Someone, in Essex, had too much and thought it would look nice in the local pond/river from whence it has rapidly spread to many areas of the country. It has been discovered in the valley and is so invasive that it is actually smothering the native Horsetail. Steps are being taken to eradicate this plant by numerous agencies, but it will be very difficult as tiny pieces of stalk can grow (like Japanese Knotweed). The moral is – do not plant anything from your garden in the wild, it can cause enormous problems for our native flora and fauna, not to mention the task team. Gillian Drinkwater walks along the valley every week and says she has not seen a heron for a while and wonders where they go. I phoned the RSPB at Old Moor and they said the herons go where the food is. David Mason had a heron in his garden on Denbank Close on the 14th October. It was peering intently into his pond, so maybe that is the answer. Has anyone else seen a heron lately?

I had roses and marigolds in flower on Christmas Day. Two particularly heavy frosts put paid to everything else. My snowdrops are just about to flower. Keep on the lookout for winter visitors – colder weather is forecast.

Thank you to all who sent in records:-

Maureen Owen – 10/2012 – saw a Sparrowhawk in her garden for the first time – she wondered where all the small birds had gone!

Vivian Falshaw – 8.10.12. – Nuthatch in garden and flock of Long-tailed Tits opposite house.

Mary Grimes – 9.10.12 – Great Spotted Woodpecker and a weasel in her garden in Lodgemoor.

Mavis Roadhouse – 19.10.12 – was still feeding a large hedgehog in her garden in Crosspool. On 25.11.12 saw 150-200 Waxwings near Lydgate Middle School.

Bob and Margaret Townrow 13.9.12 – saw a Great Spotted Woodpecker climbing a willow tree.

Heather Cousins – 25.10.12 – Saw 200+ geese going north (Pink Footed?), and also saw a flock of Waxwings in Crosspool on

11.11.12.

Roger Kite – 9.11.12 – saw about 80 Waxwings at Crookes.

Janet Lee - has a veritable aviary in her back garden, which is near to the Golf Course. Through the year she has had the pleasure of watching lots of Goldfinch and their young eating the niger seed, with Blue Tits, Coal Tits and Long-tailed Tits and Sparrows on the fat balls and various feeders. She also gets Blackbirds, Pigeons, Crows, Jackdaws and Magpies which soon clear up the fallen seeds and crumbs.

Occasionally she has also seen a Green Woodpecker and Jay but 'NO Thrush again'.

Has anyone seen a Thrush in their garden?
Gillian Drinkwater – 15.11.12 -40 geese flying north; 4.1.13 – 80 noisy geese flying north (probably Pink-footed).

Joan Buckland - Male Sparrowhawk occasionally; 9.15am 26.10.12 – about 250 thrush size birds flying quite high and going from north to south caused some excitement for a flock of rooks that were flying at a lower elevation in the opposite direction. 22/23/30.11.12 and 2.12.12 – 1 pair Bullfinch. 15.12.12 – 1 Redwing; 7 Blackbirds; pair of Robins all December.

6.1.13 – flock of 50 geese flying north.

Joan Buckland
RVCG Recorder

Fungus Walk Sat 13th Oct with Dave Buckle

This event was not very well attended and yet was a wonderful experience. We met at the car park at the top of Lodge Lane and walked down to the Rivelin Dams. It was an unexpected pleasant day following a period of foul weather and found a fair selection of fungi to investigate.

Wood Blewit, Cortinarius, Birch Bracket, Razor Strop – once used to put an edge on a barbers razor

Hedgehog, Fly Agaric – this is the bright red fungus with white spots and famous for various Xmas folk stories.

Apparently fed to reindeer which filter out the poisons and their urine contains

the hallucinogenic that is then consumed by the locals. Delicious! David then revealed the contents of his huge rucksack which contained all the ingredients for a fantastic fungus fry up including primer stove, saucepan, crème fraiche, parsley, onions, lemon, garlic, parmesan and lots of crusty bread, all freshly prepared. A tastier option than the reindeer beverage I guess.

It was a bright clear day and the Rivelin Dam was so calm it presented a mirror image of the beautiful alpine looking panorama but unfortunately my camera battery was flat and so missed a wonderful photo opportunity. We ventured up the bridleway towards Wymingbrook and into the adjacent woodland on our final fungal hunt and were very fortunate to discover a fruitful area of Chanterelle; one of the best known of all edible fungi. So this was a very fortunate find and the perfect finish to a wonderful day.

Graham Appleby

River Don Catchment Plan (Pilot)

The European Water Framework Directive came into force in December 2000 and became part of UK law in December 2003. It gives us an opportunity to plan and deliver a better water environment, focussing on ecology. A plan has been created for the Don Valley catchment area including its tributaries by the Environment Agency & Yorkshire Water on behalf of the Don Network which are a group of stakeholders with an interest in improving the Don Valley catchment area. Stuart Jenkinson is the Don pilot co-ordinator of the Environmental Agency. This is the first ever plan following extensive consultation.

Because of organisations and people who care, the Don is cleaner today than in living memory. This is an opportunity to finish off the job and to encourage more wildlife to make full use of the river and its tributaries. Only 15% of the water bodies in the Don catchment currently meet the framework standards.

Much of the Don catchment area lies within the Peak District National Park – the first in the UK which itself can trace its origins back to the Kinder Trespass in 1932 when city dwellers demanded right of access to wild spaces and much of this passion lives on today. Most cities straggle rivers close to the sea but Sheffield is unusual in being the meeting place of several small fast flowing rivers and far from the sea; Loxley, Rivelin, Porter and Sheaf which gave its name to the city. The Don flows past Blackburn Meadows waste water treatment works which is the second largest in the country and the first to be built around 1886 and is perhaps the most important determining factor of water quality in the Don.

Huge engineering works were undertaken to divert the River Don into the River Ouse instead of the Trent which was mainly to drain the wet peat lands of the Thorne and Hatfield moors. Over the centuries, 86% of the rivers and streams in the Don catchment area have been significantly changed by engineering works of one kind or another. Hundreds of weirs have been built to provide water power. The Environmental Agency are looking at improving the rivers and tributaries for wild life by removing or improving unnecessary manmade constructions like goits. For example creating 'fish passes' to allow fish to negotiate rivers.

Interested parties were invited to comment on local proposals and initiatives of theme groups and to make additional suggestions. They are looking for local groups such as our own to maintain stretches of the river and its tributaries.

A particular issue in the Don catchment area is the large number of weirs. These were often built to support now vanished industries but remain an effective barrier to fish and wildlife. But removal can be expensive and complicated for water management, legal and heritage reasons. Fish passes can be a cheaper compromise. Invasive plant and animal species is an important issue in the Don catchment. Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and more recently Floating Pennywort, often out compete local species and dominate the aquatic environment where control may not be widely understood

The above is a summary of the River Don Catchment Plan from December 2012

Graham Appleby