



Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Summer 2013 no 87

Through The Chair

Welcome to our summer edition of the RVCG newsletter. The weather has been much kinder to us this year and you have made me aware of lots of bees in your gardens which has got to be a good sign. Our bumble bees and solitary bees usually have a queen that survives over winter and lays eggs in the spring. The new brood hatches and become nurse maids to a second lot of brood and so on. But solitary bee nests remain small and bee numbers rarely exceed 400. Compare this with a honey bee hive where bees number some 50,000 in the height of the summer. Therefore if you have a solitary bee nest then its best just left alone unless it's causing a real problem. If you are invaded by a large swarm of bees, these are likely to be honey bees and you can contact the Sheffield BKA for advice or visit their website <http://www.sheffieldbeekeepers.org.uk/swarm-of-bees-in-your-garden-or-house/>. This will lead you to the BBKA website where inputting your post code will give you the contact details of a local bee keeper or contact myself directly.

The RVCG stall was in attendance at the opening of the Rivelin Park splash pools and again at the Crosspool Fayre at Coldwell Lane. It was a pleasure meeting local residents and listening to your stories and issues.

Again we have an interesting selection of speakers for our autumn programme although Janet Bowring is to step down following the AGM in 2014 and therefore we are looking for a volunteer speaker organiser and press secretary for spring 2014. I would like to welcome Mavis Roadhouse who has volunteered to manage our refreshments at our open meetings and I look forward to meeting some of you there.

Graham Appleby
RVCG Chairman

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Congratulations to RVCG member Pauline Higbid. She raised more than £1000 for Bluebell Hospice on Crosspool Open Gardens Day.

Many thanks to the following for donations to RVCG

Cotton, Fletcher, Loasby, Richards, Kershaw, Cousins, Heane, Thompson, Wilson, Bradshaw, Habershon, Harston, Palfreyman, Purslow, Rotchell and Swinsco amounting to over £70. Your membership and donations are very valuable to us in our work in the valley. (Please note some of your donations might not have been processed at the time of writing.)

Wadsley and Loxley Commoner Events

Saturday 21 September Fungus Foray,
Meet at Rural Lane Car Park 10am,
21st October

A meeting at Wadsley Church Hall Worrall Rd and AGM

'Wentworth in 1500' by Melvin Jones
7.30pm.

Contact 2335331

Task Days

Sunday 26th May 2013

Only a small turn out for this task day but that did not stop us doing the jobs in hand. We managed to install a new bench above the steps at Hind Wheel and clear the self set islands at the bend in the river just after the Hind Wheel. These islands had become overgrown and had started to dam

the river at this point and clearing them made such a huge difference to the approach to this part of the nature trail. Thanks to Robin and his hard working team for clearing the drainage pipes that run under the nature trail just before Hind Wheel. These pipes had become blocked and were causing the trail to flood at this point.

These are all small jobs that make such a huge difference to walking the nature trail and are jobs that we do on a regular basis that largely go unseen and unrecognised so well done to all.

Sunday 30th June 2013

Once again, a disappointing turnout with only 11 of our team making the effort. I had arranged with SPRITE to go on the field opposite Rails Road and clear the Himalayan Balsam. On a very warm Sunday morning what better than to take it out on Balsam?

Eleven of us and about twelve of the SPRITE members soon made huge headways into the field and within two hours we had cleared what had taken a lot more of us a full morning to clear two years ago, proof that we are making a difference. THANK YOU TO SPRITE AND ALL OF YOUR MEMBERS FOR YOUR HELP AND HARD WORK. I hope the fishing afterwards was worth it....

Graham and Tony had the job of replacing the bench adjacent to the footpath opposite the dam which had recently been burned down.

We are lucky in not getting much vandalism in the upper part of the valley but when we do it is still very frustrating with benches costing £160 each.

A big thank you to Amey, the contractors that are doing our roads. I successfully applied for a grant of £250 to enable us to run a competition to have some cards made depicting the four seasons in the valley and also some Christmas cards for us to send and sell. (More details soon)

Keith Kendall

**Would you like to join the Task Team?
Keith will be very pleased to speak to you.
Please see contacts list.
(They actually have quite a merry time
while escaping down the valley.)**

Well done to BBC Spring Watch for visiting Rivelin and showing part of a Sheffield University study of nesting long tailed tits. They discovered that a male relation of the nesting birds helped in the feeding of the newly hatched chicks, the first time this has been noticed. Unfortunately there is a high casualty rate for these birds in the valley owing to predators. Can we persuade Countryfile to come north to Rivelin and do something better than their seven minute visit some time ago? It concentrated on our industrial past and dirty rivers with aerial views of built up areas. It just showed a short glimpse of a man fishing under an unnamed bridge!

**This newsletter is sponsored by Clarity
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Help Wanted**

Does anyone have any information on Carver Fields for our newsletter? (It has only been called Carver Fields in recent years.)

We are interested in any personal stories or events that took place. Perhaps you played sports there or took part in the Whitsuntide activities.

Also there must be many of you out there that have an interesting story to tell us about Rivelin. You might have worked and lived in the valley or remembered it from childhood. We would like to have your memories. Please contact Margaret Sanderson – see Contacts List

More on the plane crash on Lodge Moor Hospital 9th December 1955

This information has been sent by Pauline Higbid who was a nurse there at the time. This was taken mainly from newspaper reports at the time.

The American pilot was Lt Roy Evens who was 24 at the time and flying an F84 Thunderstreak that had set off from Sculthorpe, Norfolk for Burtonwood, Lancs on an instrument training flight.

The pilot reported a "flame out" while over Derbyshire and tried to restart the engine several times. He ejected over Derbyshire at 2,500ft, landing on the moors east of Hathersage.

The aircraft hit the hospital at around 5pm at an estimated speed of 300mph and tore off the roof of a ward, demolished a corridor, ploughed through a sanitary block and then burst into flames.

The engine of the aircraft came to rest 10 yards

from the ambulance station that contained about 1,000 gallons of petrol.

The local fire brigade put out the flames of the burning wreckage. One patient, Elsie Murdoch was killed and seven had superficial injuries. A lucky patient had just left her cubicle when the plane crashed into it.

Brigadier John Miller along with four American colonels visited the site and also the dead woman's husband. Messages of "deep regret" were sent from the Commander of the US 3rd Air Force

The Thunderstreak was extensively used in the Korean War for low level strikes and was the first aircraft to carry atomic weapons.

Thanks to everyone that has sent information on our local hospitals for the last two newsletters

Please note - it is not too late to renew membership if you haven't already.

A Spooky Story

Around fifteen years ago I was in a hiking group and we were due to go on day's walk in the hills above Derwent and Ladybower. We met in the car park but our leader decided to change plans because there was a light covering of snow and the sky looked as if more was to come. Instead it was decided that we would just keep to a lower level and walk around the dams.

As we set off police cars started arriving and we were asked where we were going. The police said a man had gone missing overnight and asked us to look out for him.

We had to stand to eat our lunch as the snow was falling around us. We were overlooking the spot where the village of Ashopten had been drowned when the dams were constructed.

Many years ago the church steeple still showed above the water but had to be demolished as it had become a danger to inquisitive swimmers. Just at this point we heard a bell tolling. It was very close to us and seemed to be coming from the water. It certainly was not a church clock striking the hours but the steady sound of a bell tolling for a funeral just as they used to years ago. We all felt uneasy. As we walked back to the car park divers were at work in the water and the mountain rescue volunteers were arriving.

Overnight a man's body was discovered but those tolling bells will ring forever in our minds.

(From 'Anon')

Has anyone else got a spooky Rivelin story?

Please contact Margaret Sanderson

The Paddling Pool in Rivelin Valley

The refurbishment of this popular paddling pool has at last been finished and will be very welcome to parents and children during the hot weather and holidays. It was officially opened on July 13th. Sheffield Council used part of the "Aiming High" grant to restore the pool to its former glory. It has a new filter system, a splash pad and many water features, accessible to all abilities with aqua wheelchairs on loan to disabled persons. The toilets have been improved to give easier access to all. For enquiries contact the Council's Parks and Countryside Service. Tel 0114 205 0500

Old Country Sayings

"When gorse is in flower,
Britain will never be conquered."
"When gorse is out of bloom,
Kissing is out of fashion."

Why not come to our new season of Open Meetings, mainly at Stephen Hill Church? You can bring friends or family. There is a small charge.

THE RECORDER

The official spring was very wintry and the cold weather continued into May to give the coldest 'prolonged' spell for 50 years. Surprisingly, we had very good weather for the May bank holidays (is this a record?). Despite being later than normal everything has caught up. The first broods of baby birds have fledged, froglets are hopping around the pond and swifts are screaming overhead, but no reports of the cuckoo yet. A lot of plants flowered late – snowdrops, bluebells and daffodils were out together. Some people reported narcissi in bloom at the beginning of June, and my dark purple tulips are still in flower. The cotoneaster flowers are beginning to open and are attracting a few bees, but not as many as usual. Bees have had a hard time again in the cold and wet weather.

The local foxes had 6 cubs, but are now down to 4. They were born in April and food was very scarce then, and the fittest have survived. The vixen came into my garden one day and dug a hole in the corner of the lawn under a holly tree. I thought she was digging to Australia when her head and shoulders disappeared. After she left I filled the hole in – this happened two more times. She appeared to be eating grubs or pupae. I gave up filling the hole in and planted a foxglove in the hole and surrounded it with a barricade of twigs. So far so good, and the plant is thriving.

On bank holiday Sunday, 5th May, my husband and I were carrying out a river survey for invertebrates in the valley, when a young fisherman told me that there was a dead bat suspended on a fishing line over the river, near the Packhorse Bridge. The line was

entwined on a sycamore branch. I waded out to it - the water was, unfortunately, over welly level - and broke the twig off. The bat was still alive, so we cut the line and carefully took the bat home. The hook was wedged inside the poor creature's cheek. I dribbled rain water into its mouth which it lapped up eagerly. None of the regular vets were open and the local 24 hour vets were inundated with emergencies, but they directed us to their branch in Doncaster. To cut a long story short, the wonderful ladies at Vets Now in Doncaster took the 'barbed' hook out, and we released a very lively bat the next evening near to where we found it. This is a plea to all anglers to retrieve their lines if they get entangled in trees. This bat was very lucky to survive. Its face and ears were like a pipistrelles, but it had a large body and could have been a whiskered bat (pers.comm. Derek Whiteley).

At the end of March, Rachel Wileman, who lives near Glenbridge, found three dead birds of prey – a Kestrel, a Tawny Owl and a Barn Owl. The Kestrel's body had been scavenged by corvids; the Tawny Owl had possibly been knocked down, but the Barn Owl looked perfect. The Tawny was heavy and the Barn Owl was very light – it may have starved. Both are with Weston Park Museum for investigation. Many Barn Owls, countrywide, have died of starvation this winter.

Things to look out for – coloured butterflies, hoverflies, ladybirds, baby birds, froglets, bumble and honey bees. If you go for walks early in the morning or late evening, keep a look out for roe or muntjac deer which are becoming

more numerous in the area. Also look out for dying leaves on the ends of the branches of Ash trees – this should be reported as soon as possible.

Thank you to all who have sent records in. If I miss you out it will be in the next newsletter as I am actually writing this from Sweden.

Graeme Hodgson 26.3.13 – Kingfisher at Hind Wheel at noon. This seems to be a good place to see this beautiful bird. 10.4.13 - 2 pairs Canada Geese also on Hind Wheel. Hope you all enjoyed the wonderful display of celandines that Graeme noticed were about to flower. Dandelions also brightened up the road verges after the gloomy weather, and now Cow Parsley is giving a good display.

Mavis Roadhouse S10 – 27.12.12 – a Sparrowhawk ate a pigeon for an hour on her lawn. 13.1.13 – 50 very noisy starlings in tree at Marsh Lane allotments. 31.5.13 – bumble bee nest in compost.

Andy at the Holly Bush Pub S6 – 23.4.13 - saw deer (probably roe) in the garden early in the morning.

Keith Kendall S10 – 29.4.13 – had 2 swallows on the TV aerial, and also 15 – 20, 7-spot ladybirds in garden.

Rachel Wileman S6 – 19.5.13 – Swallows spotted going in and out of field shelter and excitedly chirruping in the lime trees. She is looking forward to seeing young birds in a few weeks.

Doreen Best 16.4.13 – 3 roe deer grazing in field below Bell Hagg Craggs 7.30 am. Doreen gives the grid ref.

SK304869, which is very useful.

Sue Thompson, Ken Shail S10 - 18.4.13 – vixen with 6 small cubs near den in the evening.

David Mason S10 – 17.4.13 – male sparrowhawk in garden.

Roger Kite S10 – 3.4.13 – frogspawn, 16/17.4.13 male & female blackcap on

fat balls. 7.5.13 – Holly Blue.

Joan Buckland S10 – 7.5.13 – Holly Blue, male & female Orangetip.

5/6.5.13 – 2 noctules. 8.5.13 swift, 1.5.13 – Valley Garden Centre – black variant of 2 spot ladybird.

Joyce Green and her son, from Stannington, are keen bird watchers and have a great variety of birds in and over the garden. Here is her list starting with the very common birds and ending with the rare visitors and birds flying over. Feral pigeons, wood pigeons, house sparrows, blackbirds, starlings, blue tits, chaffinches, dunnocks, collared doves, greenfinches, great tits, coal tits, wren, siskins, jackdaws, rooks, magpies, long tailed tits, song thrush, mistle thrush, bullfinches, brambling, yellow hammer, sparrow hawk, great spotted woodpecker, black redstart (7.4.13), black headed gull, heron, lapwing. A veritable nature reserve. Joyce's frog spawn appeared on 10.3.13 - just one day later than last year, despite the bad weather.