



Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Autumn 2013 no 88

Through The Chair

Welcome to the autumn RVCG newsletter. I usually start off talking about the weather and we can't complain about the summer we have had this year. One of the best I can remember for a long time after a very cold and miserable spring where all our plants and trees were late coming into leaf. The average temperature in the UK didn't reach double figures until June and even then it was still below average until the long heat wave in July. And after a pleasant summer we are still well in double figures coming to the end of October which is also very unusual.

One of the benefits of the long summer warmth was the hedgerow fruits that provided us with berries in abundance. The bees seem to have made up for their late start providing lots of honey as compared to the previous year. Recent rains have swollen the River Rivelin almost to the level of some of the adjacent paths and with a weather warning imminent I can see lots more work for Keith Kendall and his task team who have been busy repairing footpaths, installing benches and cutting back shrubbery at the upper end of the valley below King Edwards Hospital.

If you haven't attended our recent open meetings then you have missed a treat and recommend you attend our next open meeting at 7:30pm on Tuesday 12th Nov with a stunning selection of wildlife images by Steve Drinkall at Stephen Hill Church. We are still looking for a new speaker organiser for Autumn next year as Janet Bowring is stepping down. Please let me know if you can help.

Graham Appleby
RVCG Chairman

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Rivelin Water Treatment Works

In early 2011 planning proposals were submitted by Yorkshire Water Services to construct an additional building at the Rivelin Works to add an extra filtration stage to the treatment process. This was part of an £16 million upgrading of the works to both replace old equipment and to meet Drinking Water Inspectorate requirements following water quality failures.

The Rivelin Valley Conservation Group became involved in the planning process objecting to the proposal to construct the new building with wood cladding rather than build in stone to match the rest of the buildings on the site.

The Group had meetings with YWS and their consultants Mott McDonald Bentley but were only able to influence the appearance of the building to more closely follow the contours of the existing stone buildings. Sheffield Planning Department were satisfied that with the restricted views of the new building from surrounding vantage points the wood cladding was adequate.

Members of the Group's Committee had liaison meetings with YWS and their contractors during the construction phase and it was agreed that a visit to view the whole site would take place once the work was completed. This visit took place June 2013.

There has been water treatment works on this site since 1912 treating water from the

then newly constructed reservoirs in the Derwent Valley. The works was extended over the years and by 1952 could treat 60,000 cubic meters (13.2 million gallons) daily. This works could not meet the E.U Drinking Water Standards and the new treatment works was built and commissioned in 1995, capable of treating 75,000 cubic meters (16.5 million gallons) daily.

The group's visit started at the inlet to the works which incorporates a hydro generator providing some of the electrical power to the site. The incoming untreated water is primarily sourced from the Derwent Valley via the Rivelin Tunnel. However following the closure of the Redmires Filter Station in 2001 it is now supplemented with water from the Redmires Reservoirs via Wyming Brook.

The Sirofloc Process developed in Australia is used to treat the water. Magnetite (finely divided magnetic iron ore) is added to the water together with acid and mixed in contact tanks. Under the acidic conditions a positive charge forms on the surface of the magnetite which attracts the negatively charged impurities in the water. The adsorption process is enhanced by adding a small dose of polyelectrolyte to the water. The water containing the loaded magnetite flows from the mixing tanks into 3 large circular contact tanks after passing between the poles of magnets located in the pipework. The induced magnetic field causes the magnetite particles to bind together causing rapid settlement in the clarifiers. The magnetite falls to the base of the clarifier where it is scraped to a central outlet cone and pumped into the regeneration system for cleaning under alkaline conditions using sodium hydroxide, before being returned to the start of the process.

The clarified water flows upwards through the clarifiers and is collected in hoppers at the top of the clarifiers and from there it flows through magnetite recovery tanks allowing any remaining magnetite to settle out before the water is filtered in the first stage of rapid gravity sand filters. The magnetite adsorption process followed by filtration removes naturally occurring

colour, turbidity, aluminium and iron from the water to E.U drinking water standards. After filtration sodium hypochlorite (generated on site) is added to the water for disinfection together with sodium hydroxide to increase the pH of the water. Under these conditions the natural manganese present in the water is converted into an insoluble form which can be removed by the manganese contactors (similar to rapid gravity filters) in the new filter building.

Prior to the building of these new contactors the manganese in the water was removed on the first stage filters together with any remaining iron. The new contactors allow better process optimisation ensuring that the treated water meets the requisite drinking water quality standards.

After final adjustment of pH and chlorine levels the water is pumped to the treated water storage reservoir, located on the opposite side of the road to the works, prior to distribution to customers.

During the course of the visit in addition to the new filter house the group were also shown the other upgrades including pipe work modifications, new chemical dosing and control systems together with the refurbished chemical storage area.

The group found the visit both interesting and informative particularly as following the closure of the Redmires Filter Station, the works distribution system also now supplies the Lodge Moor and Crosspool areas. It is a pity that Yorkshire Water Services cannot be persuaded to open the treatment works for public visits but Health and Safety concerns rule this out.

The new filter building has won the Institution of Civil Engineers Yorkshire and Humber Award for excellence in concept, design and execution. Yorkshire Water's press release for the award acknowledged RVCG's role in the planning process.

David Lyon

Donations

Once more thanks for your generosity to Stirling, Bakewell Fly Fishing, Beardmore, Ollin, White, France, Roe and Byles - now more than £850 for this year and you will know it will be very well used in our valley.

Bomb Site

In a Daily Mail article of 31st August this year it was stated that after the WW2 Sheffield blitz, a number of unexploded bombs were moved along the A57 to Rivelin. The lorries flew red flags and sounded their horns then pulled into a field on the south side of the road near to the water works. After a few days the bombs blew up. It is not said if this was accidental or deliberate. The water mains were ruptured causing half of Sheffield to be without water.

Does anyone know more about this strange event?

Would you like to join the Task Team? Please contact Keith Kendall – the more the merrier.

Why not come to our Open Meetings, mostly at Stephen Hill Church Crosspool. Everyone welcome – you do not have to be a member so why not bring a friend.

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This is the time when our prickly friend, the hedgehog will be starting to hibernate. They already have a lot of enemies - pesticides, strimmers, traffic, badgers also walls and fences that do not allow free passage for their nightly food searches. So don't be too tidy in your garden but leave them some fallen leaves in a cosy corner to make a winter hideaway.

You might have seen the Crosspool "Well Dressing" at this summer's Crosspool Festival. Thanks to the RVCG members who made this possible.

Anyone for Tennis?

What is now known as Carver Fields on Hagg Lane was once the playing fields of the Carver Street Methodist Chapel. Ordnance Survey maps show that there were three tennis courts in the 1920's increasing to six in the next decade. The

courts are now overgrown and the pavilion is reduced to its brick foundations – but RVCG member Joyce Keen can remember the site in its heyday in the 1930's when she was between 6 and 15 years old. "I was a Carver Street girl, christened and married there, attended Sunday School and taught there, sang in the choir and a member of the youth club. We often went to the field during the week (possibly making ourselves nuisances)."

"It was a regular meeting place on Saturdays, in the summer and at holiday times (Whitsuntide and Bank Holidays), nearly all the members, young and old alike, came to the field. Tea and lemonade were available in the hut and the ladies brought refreshments and made sandwiches. This continued into the first few months of the war, but gradually tailed off as we youngsters were not available to do the maintenance."

Joyce says two of the courts were kept in good condition for matches but that another two were already uncared for. Intriguingly, there was also a 9 hole putting green, a railway carriage, two see-saws and a swing. Joyce says she kept out of the way when "work seemed imminent!"

Members may be pleased to know that children were not allowed in the meadow below the courts in case they disturbed rare plants. Nature conservation is clearly not a new preoccupation.

If anyone else has any memories of Carver Fields they would like to share, please contact the editor. Perhaps you remember the football pitches, the cricket nets or the putting green? Or do you have any photographs we could publish?

Jeremy Youle

Thanks to Joyce Keen for this information.

The Carver Fields area and Den Bank Edge must have a lot of memories for old time Sheffielders. I was reliably informed many years ago by a person who was born in 1897 that the edge was known as a "monkey rack", that is a place where young people walked up and down in the hopes of making a hit with the opposite sex. He and his

friends travelled all the way from Pitsmoor for this occupation.

Please contact M Sanderson if you have any more information or stories about Carver Fields fields or Den Bank Edge.

RVCG BBQ

Many thanks to Ken for letting use his lovely garden for our annual BBQ. Once more we had a fine day.

Some Recent Open Meetings Tuesday 12th November Diana Rybinski Disaster of the Aral Sea

Not many of us have the opportunity to visit Uzbekistan so it was very entertaining to see Diana's account of this area that was once part of USSR and became independent in 1991. She arrived in Tashkent, the capital via Uzbek airlines.

The people were friendly and children wanted to practice their English on her. Food included salads, pike, beetroot, quail, rice, apricot jam and horse sausage. Nescafe and green tea were drunk.

On the first day, she set off across the desert by turbo prop plane and a 4x4 vehicle. The journey to the north was through flat scrubland and the party had to endure camping in gale conditions and cold nights.

The Aral Sea is now very much depleted thanks to the USSR diverting rivers for their own irrigation purposes and so the area became a dried up environmental disaster. The local fishing was lost and when the winds blew, salt laden dust was carried afar, reducing soil fertility and causing health problems. However new schemes hope to revitalise the area.

A curious fact – there are no coins in Uzbekistan, just notes.

Tuesday 8th October Malcolm Nunn Around Dungworth, Storrs, Stannington and Rivelin

Once more an entertaining evening of local history with Malcolm Nunn.

This time we were back in Knowle Top Chapel, Stannington. Malcolm has a large collection of historical photographs of our area and here are just a few examples of those we saw. Mousehole Forge, now gone though the house remains. Here anvils with the trademark "mouse" were forged and exported around the world.

The first motor charabanc disaster was at Hollow Meadows in 1907 where several people were killed

Then there was the Royal Hotel at Dungworth where the old game of knur and spell was played using a spinning clay ball.

Horatio Bright who lived in Lydgate Hall (now gone) built a mausoleum for his wife at Moscar and was said to have placed her in a glass coffin where he also installed an organ so that he could play to her. Her body is now removed from the site and strangely is said to be in Kelham Island. Does anyone know more about this?

Margaret Sanderson

Thanks to Mavis Roadhouse who has stepped into our "caterers" shoes, providing refreshments at our Open Meetings.

Do try to come to our Open Meetings – we always have something of interest

THE RECORDER

Autumn has definitely arrived. The leaves are turning, mornings are misty and there are lots of berries. The rowans look spectacular and my cotoneaster is covered in berries. Hopefully these will sustain the winter migrants – Waxwings, Fieldfares and Redwings, especially if we have another hard winter. This year, as opposed to last year, most people have had good fruit crops due to the plentiful supply of water in the snowy spring and the beautiful, sunny weather of the summer. If you have not been out blackberrying you have missed a very bountiful harvest.

As a result of the good summer weather the bees have had a better year and there should be some honey to spare for those, like me, who love it. The birds also enjoyed the better weather and some of them had two or even three broods. I have never seen so many Sparrows in my garden, 30 plus in July, and immatures were still being fed on the 17th August. There were also more Magpies and Rooks in the garden than usual during May and June seeking out the nestlings. The Sparrowhawks took their share also. On the 8th July, at 5.30 pm, there was a rumpus in the plum tree with lots of crashing about and 5 Magpies and several Starlings creating such a din. This went on for about three quarters of an hour. The female Sparrowhawk had caught a Starling and ate it, seemingly ignoring the cacophony round it.

Coloured butterfly numbers picked up in August - small Tortoiseshell being the most numerous with a few Peacock and the occasional Comma, Red Admiral and Painted Lady. Small and

Large Cabbage White Butterflies have been very numerous much to the annoyance of vegetable growers.

This year I have seen more little mammals in the garden, also probably due to the sunny weather. I have Fieldmice in the dry stone wall and Common Shrews running about under the creeping Periwinkle. The cat caught two Shrews which were, apparently, unhurt. Shrews do not taste very nice to cats and are not eaten. One stayed in the porch for a while and I fed it on slugs and worms which it ate with relish, before returning to the garden. They are delightful little creatures with long hairy muzzles which twitch incessantly.

Now is the time to collect seeds from any plants you wish to grow next year, but try to leave some for the birds and also leave some hollow stalks which are good for insects to overwinter in. I always leave a few Ragwort plants in my garden. Hover flies love the flowers and finches love the seeds. I have already had Goldfinches eating the seeds. What I have not had for a few years are the black and orange striped caterpillars of the striking black and red Cinnabar Moth. If you have seen these please let me know. I, also, have not seen a Hedgehog, dead or alive, for a number of years. Are they living and breeding in your garden? Please let me know.

Keep an eye open for a male Peregrine falcon with a red band on its leg. It was reared in the nest on St George's Church but damaged its flight muscles after crashing into a building. It has been nursed back to health and released in the area. Visit www.sbsg.org to report sightings.

Swallows have been making their way south this month (Sept.). The last ones I saw were at 3pm on 23rd September. A flock of about 100 were wheeling around above a field off Ringinglow Road. The Swifts went back in August and I last saw 4 swifts above the house on the 14th. Did anyone see them later than this?

Roe Deer and Muntjac are being seen more frequently in the valley. If you are not an early morning or late evening dog walker or jogger, you may see their footprints in the mud if not the animal. Take the children/grandchildren down the valley and look for animal spoor. While you are down there look out for dippers – has anyone seen one lately?

You may have read recently about the dramatic decline in species over the last few decades. We can all do our bit by making our gardens as wildlife friendly as possible.

The more ponds we have the better!!
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/science/stateofnature/foreword.aspx>

Thank you to all who have sent in records.

Doreen Best 16.7.13 - female Sparrowhawk visited garden on 16th and 24th July, probably the cause of the remains of a dead pigeon on the lawn.

Graeme Hodgson – regularly walks in the valley and has seen the following butterflies – many Comma, Holly Blue, several Peacock, Orange Tip and Small Tortoiseshell. 26.6.13 – at Swallow Wheel – in the evening a Tawny Owl swooped past and landed on a low bough. Had a good eye to eye and flew

off soundlessly. Also saw a Heron at same location. 6.8.13 – Third Coppice Wheel – Kingfisher perched on branch. 18.8.13 – Wolf Wheel – Kingfisher swooped over in full sunlight like an azure dart, and then saw it again perched over Swallow Wheel. – Lucky man! (JMB). 11.8.13 – Upper Coppice Pond – 3 immature Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

Janet Bowring S10 – 5.9.13 – 10 Long Tailed Tits in garden. Stephen Hill Church 27.9.13 – 7 Small Tortoiseshell, 1 Peacock, 1 Red Admiral and 1 Painted Lady on Buddleja (spelling follows Stace 1997).

Shirley Foster S10 – Still had tadpoles in a bath on her Hagg Lane allotment.

Mary Brazil S10 - 11.9.13 – Wolf Wheel – Kingfisher busy fishing from low branch over water.

Joan Buckland