



Newsletter

Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

Autumn 2017 no 104

Through The Chair

Welcome to the autumn newsletter which has been printed on the RVCG's brand new A3 colour printer and will hopefully add a new dimension to any pictures we print. The early newsletters were originally printed locally but once I joined the committee around 20 years ago I began printing the newsletter which gave us a lot more flexibility and a chance to make last minute changes and we are now on our fourth printer. The £3 annual membership fee was originally introduced to pay for the newsletter and due to the many generous donations, we have never found it necessary to increase this fee. Co-incidentally, the RVCG projector has also developed a fault and we have decided to replace this at the same time. We use the projector at events and to give public presentations and the last thing we need is an unreliable projector. So that's Xmas come early for the RVCG but hopefully both will give us many years of reliable service. This is the final newsletter of 2017 and membership renewals will be requested in the January newsletter in 2018. Therefore it leaves me to thank you for your generous support over this and previous years and to the many volunteers who actively support the RVCG.

Graham Appleby
RVCG Chairman

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Donations

Many thanks for the following donations from Bown, Cossham, Duggan, Harshon, Rotchell, Toplis, Warrender, Willdig, McDowell, White, Redman, Bragg, D Shail, Frith. Up to the time of printing, RVCG received your donations that amount to £131.

Your generosity will be put to good use in our valley. We know you all appreciate the work we do. If your name is not here, it is because it arrived after being sent for printing.

Good News

Pauline Higbid, an RVCG member once more opened her lovely garden to visitors in aid of the Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice and raised £1562. If you haven't seen this garden before, it is an eye opener. There is not one square inch that is not covered with an array of flowering plants of every colour imaginable. As this is not a flat garden it must make planting and weeding a difficult job.

Also on sale were plants, books and other hospice fundraising items such as tea cloths and note cards.

To add to the visit Pauline had an army of ladies who made countless cups of tea and coffee served with her own delicious homemade cakes. Bluebell Wood certainly has a very good supporter in its work.

Task Group

Ever since the inception of RVCG 26 years ago, we have been blessed with fantastic support for our working Task Team. The team turn out in all weathers and undertake the many different tasks; some easy and some more challenging, but we still maintain a very healthy team who I have the upmost admiration for and the absolute pleasure of leading.

This year we seem to have lost our way a little as other events have fallen on Task Days and we have not been able to run both events at the same time and for this I apologise and will try to make sure this doesn't happen next year.

Whilst I have worked hard to maintain the Task Team it did get to the stage where we had so many volunteers it almost became a full-time job for me and I let it get to me a little bit, even making a mumbled attempt at resigning at the last AGM.

Having had 4 months away from it this summer things are looking a little

brighter but I could still do with a good reliable assistant to help run events. I have 3-4 jobs lined up to do in the valley over the next few months but having won grants to install the new benches it is important that we complete this in the 12-month deadline that we have been given.

I look forward to seeing you all again fired up and full of enthusiasm after our long summer break and don't forget we don't charge for the use of our green gym.

Keith Kendall

Help

Have you any Rivelin stories for this Newsletter? Over the years, several members have told us of their childhood and other memories of the valley. We would like to read more of your personal stories in this newsletter no matter how long or short.

Sheffield Trees

Michael Gove, the Environment Secretary has stepped into the debate of Sheffield's tree felling. He says he will look at the "legal or policy avenues" to end the scheme that has brought so many protests by local residents.

He has asked the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs lawyers to help in making the Council pause and think again but the Council have resisted his demand to halt the programme. 6,000 trees are to be chopped.

The Council has already spent £250,000 on legal fees defending its actions and £149,660 for a court order stopping people from standing within safety zones.

Recently "The Guardian" newspaper printed a beautiful picture of Rivelin Valley Road and its lime trees where some are going to be removed.

The Council says they only take out dying, dangerous or diseased trees. Many local residents dispute this.

Badgers in Trouble

There are 11 new licences to cull badgers in the south of England to prevent them from spreading TB to cattle. It is said that 33,000 badgers have been killed.

Is it not known if Rivelin Valley badgers have TB or if any farmers or residents are worried by them?

There are certainly a few badger setts around, one quite near to me.

The local badger sett looks like a bomb site caused by their excavations. They visit my garden and make holes in large plant containers, looking for worms. I hope they don't decide to make a sett here.

They also like broad beans and leave their tell tale zigzag marks on them. That is until I covered them with netting but then I worry that they might get caught up in it. Does Monty Don have this trouble?

Thank goodness badger baiting has come to an end locally. It is a cruel sport. The fines for being caught are now great.

M Sanderson

Some Recent RVCG Events 30th July 2017 Summer Garden Party

Once more we had our annual get together in Ken's lovely garden. His extensive green lawns and summerhouse rival Chatsworth and are a perfect backcloth for our annual event.

The weather was fine though a few showers at the end did not bother us because we sheltered under the awnings. Thank you to Ian and Steve from the Crosspool Forum for the loan of their gazebo which they also helped install.

We enjoyed the burgers from the local

butchers and Graham was kept busy at the barbecue. Other good things to eat were brought in by members. Keith managed the drinks and there was plenty of cake.

We were then entertained by Margaret and Bob Townrow singing and then Graham on his guitar finishing with the RVCG song "Messing About in the Rivelin". What talented members the RVCG has got.

The party ended with Ken sending us all home with a Ferrero Rocher chocolate. Many thanks to those who contributed time and effort to making the party go with a swing.

M Sanderson

Thank you to Valleyside Garden Centre for their continued support of the RVCG.

Open Meeting 12 September 2017 The Roman Diploma of AD 124 Mike Dyson

Rivelin Valley was not the same as it is now when the Roman Diploma was deposited in the valley. There were no main roads, just wandering tracks and plenty of woodland.

We know that the Romans were here because a diploma was found in 1761 by Edward Nichols from Rails Farm. This was for a soldier who had been granted lands after serving 25 years in the Roman army. This is much the same time as a regular soldier of today. At the time of the find, the valley contained several farms that still exist today.

The diploma was the equivalent of today's army discharge document. Two diploma plates were found bound together by brass rings but only one plate now exists. Mike Dyson hopes that the other half is still around in

someone's possession and who does not know of its value but of course there is a strong possibility that it has been destroyed.

Other Roman articles have been found in this area. Roman coins found south of Stannington in 2012, an oil lamp at the lower end of the valley and another at Malin Bridge. In 1921 a mortar probably used for grinding cosmetics was found at Broom Hall.

Mike Dyson has written an extensive book relating to all aspects of these and other finds – "The Roman Diploma of AD 124".

As a footnote – a few years ago my friend and I visited the British Museum and I asked where the diploma was. We were told that it was in storage and they would need three days notice to bring it out. It should be here in Sheffield where our school children can see their heritage. The replica that is at Weston Park will never replace the real thing.

M Sanderson

Blast From The Past

What was written in past newsletters? In November 1994 we had a fungus walk with our local expert Patrick Harding.

We learned that fungi are in a group of their own, neither plants nor animals. Autumn is the best time to see them. The fruiting body contains billions of microscopic spores. The hidden part of fungi, mycelium is underground or under your floorboards if you have dry rot. Also

humans aren't exempt. Athlete's foot and thrush are fungi.

But fungi can be useful. Without it we would have no bread or beer. Yeast is an essential part of our lives. I don't know if Patrick Harding's fungus book is still available but it is a wonderful source of information.

M Sanderson

A New Sighting

A pine martin has been spotted in North Yorkshire Moors on Forestry Commission land, the first confirmed record in 35 years. It was spotted on a wildlife camera. They are the second rarest carnivorous mammal in the UK.

A Bat Story

When I was a teacher on yard duty in a deprived area, I found a crowd of children huddled in a corner. On the ground lay a bat, hardly moving. One child was hitting it with a stick. I took it inside and we contacted the Bat Conservation Trust who told us to wrap it in a warm cloth and give it frequent drops of water. Someone would come to pick it up. We gave the feeding job to children and they enjoyed the job. The next morning it was found dead. It had died of old age but we were told we did the right thing. Some children were crying. A week at Wood Lane Farm also calmed the most difficult children when they cared for animals. They were very disappointed if they didn't get to clean out the hens. Are we giving these children the correct education?

M Sanderson

THE RECORDER – Autumn 2017

The Recorder

The autumn leaf fall is well underway with some spectacular colour this year. This is due to a mild May and June and a wetter summer. Yet again records have been broken, with this year, even so far, being the warmest worldwide. I took a photograph of the valley from Carver Fields on the 22nd September and the line of the Lime trees stood out as they took on their autumn colour. The last House Martins I saw going south were on the 22nd September. Has anyone seen any later than this? The geese are on the move as well; I saw and heard a very vocal flock of at least 200 geese at 9.55am on the 9th October travelling NE. They were so high they appeared in gaps in the cloud cover. The family of Buzzards is still around. I saw four together over Clough Fields at 10.30am on the 18th September, with the latest sighting of a pair down the valley on the 8th October. There are a few butterflies around, mainly Red Admiral and Peacock, together with the wasps and the hover flies they are making the most of the nectar rich flowers on the ivy. Now is the time to spot various Shield Bugs in the garden. The ones you are most likely to see are the Forest Bug, *Pentatoma rufipes*, the Hawthorn Shield Bug, *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*, and the Common Green Shield Bug, *Palomena prasina*. They can often be spotted on brambles and raspberries. Margaret Peter sent me a beautiful drawing of a 'beetle' she found on her raspberries, which she could not identify. It

was, in fact, a nymph of the Common Green Shield Bug. Identification can be difficult as the nymphs have several different instars (stages) before they become adult and hibernate for the winter. Has anyone come across a relatively new house spider to the area? This is the Daddy Long Legs Spider, *Pholcus phalangioides*. It has a thin body with legs similar to a harvestman's. This is another species that is spreading from the south. It makes a very untidy web in any nook or cranny. It breeds prolifically and can have several broods a year. The sad thing for me is that it is killing my Wolf (house) spiders, which I am rather fond of, you know, the one that you usually see, out of the corner of your eye, scuttling across the floor. This new house inmate has stronger venom and kills the larger bodied Wolf spider. If there is no food around it will also turn to cannibalism – a good way to get by on scarce resources. We went away for a couple of weeks in the summer and they had even made their webs inside my kitchen cupboards. Looks like I will have to dust more often! Research has been ongoing for a while to try to find a way to get rid of or control Himalayan Balsam. This alien plant, which has become ubiquitous, especially in damp places, was introduced to Kew Gardens in 1839. It crowds out native species and may reduce diversity by 25%; it also destabilises river banks as it leaves bare ground when it dies back. After five years of testing a rust disease, which only lives on

Himalayan Balsam, will be introduced, and after August 2020 it will be illegal to buy plants. Let us hope this works as sometimes one thing introduced to deal with another alien causes more problems.

No-one has reported seeing a hedgehog lately, but if you are having a bonfire please check that this endearing little animal is not sheltering there before lighting it. Also do not be too tidy in your garden, fallen leaves and dead herbaceous borders are winter protection for many creatures.

Thank you to the following for sending in their records:-

Vivien Falshaw S10 – Had a Goldfinch nest in the laurel; 29.9.17 – lots of Goldfinch and first time seen a Nuthatch on her feeder.

Mr & Mrs Lampeter, S6 -26.7.17 - Excited about seeing a Hedgehog in their garden.

Keith Kendall S10 – took a lovely photo of a Red Admiral on his house wall.

Two sightings of crayfish in the valley –

Lindsey Hodkin 23.6.17
L Farrington – 27th and 30th
August, 2017 – the American Signal Crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) in the lower part of the river. Water Vole on the island in river at Malin Bridge.

Gillian Drinkwater S10 – 17.9.17 – While walking along Hagg Lane saw a skein of about 40 Geese, flying SE, quite high but still audible.

Malcolm Gibbons 19.9.17 - A huge Wasp's nest about 40cm high and a few centimetres from the river surface near Holme Head Wheel. Seems a bit of a perilous site!

Margaret Sanderson S10 - has had 2 House Sparrow nests in the garden; Jackdaws becoming more numerous (probably this year's juveniles), and had a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers on 5.9.17.

Sue Shaw S6 - garden at Walkley Bank - 10.9.17 – 3 Red Admiral and 1 Peacock Butterflies; 16.9.17 – 2 Coal Tits, Blue and Great Tits, Thrush, Blackbird, Jay and Sparrows; 3 Jays below Carver Fields; about 38 Mallard on Rivelin Corn Mill pond; Heron on Wolf Wheel and Nether Cut.

Joan Buckland S10 – Buzzard sightings over valley – 1.9.17, 18.9.17, 28.9.17, 8.10.17. 9.10.17 – 200+ Geese going NE (probably Pink-footed). 28.9.17 – 2 Nuthatch; 29.9.17 – female Bullfinch.

Two reasons to love living in Den Bank – 2.10.17 – beautiful rainbow stretching over the valley and there for about two hours (is this a record?). The next evening there was a fantastic sunset – what could be better?

Joan Buckland
11.10.17

Rivelin Valley Conservation Group



WINTER PROGRAMME – 2017

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- Sun 26th Nov **Task Day** – If you would like to participate and not currently a member then please give Keith Kendall a call on 01142307144
- Sun 26th Nov **Xmas Event** at Wood Lane Countryside Centre
- Mon 25th Dec
A Merry Christmas
from the Rivelin Valley Conservation Group
- Sun 7th Jan **Task Day** – If you would like to participate and not currently a member then please give Keith Kendall a call on 01142307144
- Tues 9th Jan **Fourth Open Meeting – Lloyd Powell** presents the '**Early Medieval Lords of Sheffield**'
- Sun 28th Jan **Task Day** – If you would like to participate and not currently a member then please give Keith Kendall a call on 01142307144
- Tues 13th Feb **Fifth Open Meeting - Peter and Trish Kohn** present '**KERRACHER**' a Scottish Garden
- Sun 25th Feb **Task Day** – If you would like to participate and not currently a member then please give Keith Kendall a call on 01142307144
- Tues 13th Mar **Sixth Open Meeting - John Kirkman** will give a presentation on '**Sea Birds**'
- Sun 25th Mar **Task Day** – If you would like to participate and not currently a member then please give Keith Kendall a call on 01142307144
- Tues 17th Apr **RVCG 27th AGM** with Pie and Peas

Open meetings begin at 7:30pm and normally held at Stephen Hill Methodist Church, 547 Manchester Rd, Sheffield S10 5PL unless otherwise specified. There is a small entrance fee which includes drinks and snacks for all Open Meetings
All meetings are "open" – Non-members are always welcome



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group



Some 2017 Events

30th April was our annual litter pick day which always makes quite a noticeable difference ..well at least for a few days! Unfortunately it's hard to stop the determined litter lout from dumping waste in our car parks. We just hope that evidence in the litter can be used to track down the culprit



Sat 1st July was the 'Big Draw Day' in the Rivelin Valley. Local families were invited to try their hand at sketching nature and the drawings were later displayed at various venues. This is part of a national effort to link families with their local environment. If they understand it, they will learn to love it and hopefully try to protect it for the future.

This year we have been working very closely with the SCC to help design new Rivelin Valley panels to replace the old ones outside Rivelin Park Café and at Rails Road car park. The new panels are now in place and how well they look!



The essence of the RVCG is its proud and determined task team and here they are after replacing the benches at our outdoor classroom at Rivelin Mill. We also cleared debris and sludge from around the perimeter of the car park while another team tweaked the willow tunnel into shape

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