



# Newsletter



Rivelin Valley Conservation Group

## Summer 2016 no 99

### Through The Chair

Welcome to the RVCG Summer newsletter and congratulations to RVCG on its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The RVCG began its life in 1991 fighting local campaigns and so the fight is set to continue. The threatened loss of our mature Rivelin Valley lime trees is still ongoing and we now have a new proposed threat of two large new reservoirs as part of the Sheffield Flood Plan; the details of which are enclosed. I encourage you to send your comments on the link provided so that the SCC is aware of all the issues. The restriction of flood waters is necessary to protect lives and property but we must ensure all viable options are considered before our beloved valley is changed forever.

All of our new internet enabled Mill Markers have been sponsored, purchased and installed. So on your next walk down the valley please look out for them and try out the QR function for smart phones. If you have any comments or any old photos of the dams please send them to me.

We have also been busy helping design new replacements for the Rivelin Valley panels. One at Rivelin Park Cafe and one at Rails Road and the new ones will be in place very soon.

I hope you are enjoying the summer and becoming skilled in the art of shower dodging. As we head towards the autumn season, Irene Harrison has lined up a good selection of speakers from September through to March 2017 and I hope you will take the opportunity to spend an enjoyable and often educational evening with us.

Graham Appleby  
RVCG Chairman

### Contacts

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### **Donations**

Once more, you are being very generous. Many thanks to the following – Albans, Allcock, Archer, Atter, Baines, Brown, Bruce, Coldham, Culmer, Dyson, Edmonds, Harston, Larkin, Hodgson, Moorhouse Nockells, Ollin, Packham and Packham- Shah, Parker, Piermatti, Redman, Robertson, Shail, Sharpe, Smith and Craven, Tetchner, Toplis, Tuckley, Woodward and Woollen. This amounts to £434 and includes £200 from Chris Baines for Post Sponsorship.

Thank you for your contributions to our work. If your name is not here, your contribution would have arrived after this newsletter was sent for printing and distribution.

**We thank Valleyside Garden Centre for their continuing support.**

### **Slugs and Snails**

Don't we all love these little creatures! Gardeners want a solution to their endearing ways of gobbling up prize vegetables. How horrible to cut a home grown potato in half and find it full of holes. Slugs are at the top of the list of garden pests but pellets are not very helpful to our declining hedgehog population though there are some that are deemed safe but they do not last for long. I had an aunt who would go out in the dark to collect them and then put them in a bowl of water with a lid on top to stop them crawling out. She was certain that the slimy water helped her vegetables to grow and the dead creatures ended up on the compost heap. This is a good place to put them when alive as they grind up your decaying vegetable peelings. Perhaps if there were more thrushes around it would help. I no longer see one in my garden but it used to be very satisfying to see a thrush bash a snail on a stone.

The Royal Horticultural Society along with the chemical company BASF is doing a research project on finding ways to tackle them. Despite slug pellets and other forms of control such as nematodes and copper strips there does not seem to be a satisfactory solution. Let's hope that this research brings a solution and as the RHS hopes, "Slugs and snails will drop to the bottom of the table of the most troublesome garden pests."

As for slugs gobbling potatoes, a Gardener's Question Time programme long ago suggested putting slug pellets in the hole when you plant your potatoes as the slugs will eat them underground and there they will die, out of danger to hedgehogs.

M Sanderson

### **RVCG AGM 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

This was our 25<sup>th</sup> AGM and many stayed on to enjoy a pea and pie supper.

Many thanks to Chris Baines, our guest of honour who knows Rivelin well as he was brought up in the valley and has written articles for our newsletter. What a nice surprise for Roger Kite and self to receive a Sheffield made pie slicer for being in the group for 25 years.

**Have you anything to say in this Newsletter? We want your stories. Please contact M Sanderson.**

### **Red Kites**

Red Kites, once a rarity have been seen in the Chilterns, Wales and other areas also at Lodge Moor. The RSPB suggest that it is not a good

idea to feed them as they need to do their own hunting and not eat human food. On grouse moors, they have been illegally shot. They have also died through eating illegally poisoned carcasses put out for foxes. Some years back, a red kite flew low over myself and granddaughter in the garden. We could feel the blast of air as it swooped low over us. It landed in a silver birch tree and stayed 15 minutes. It then circled seemingly without effort, looking for prey. No wonder children's kites were named after them. Have you seen any in our area? Please tell our recorder Joan Buckland.

### **Task Team**

Well the last Task Day turned a bit of a non event as we decided to work with a group calling themselves Balsam Busters which turned out to be Balsam Buster.

Despite notices in the valley, the turnout was very poor from the public which is quite unusual as we normally get a good response to events like this.

13 members of our Task Team turned up and we split into two groups, the first tackling Himalayan Balsam around the paddling pool area and the second group clearing the gateways to the fields on the left of Rivelin Valley Road and the overflow at Rails Road. Once we had done this, we tried to find some more Balsam around Upper Coppice but to our surprise it was clear so we did a little cutting back around the area which always makes a big difference.

Thank you to all who turned out on a day when the weather threatened to turn nasty but in the end was quite nice.

Keith Kendall

**Would you like to join the Task Team? You don't have to be a navy. There are jobs for all. Contact Keith**

Also thanks to all our "behind the scene" workers - those who trudge around in all weathers, up and down our steep hills delivering our newsletters - hard work as many modern letterboxes want to bite your fingers off!

We are always pleased to hear from you and here are some of your Rivelin Stories -

### Notes from the Past

Over 25 years of RVCG, we have had many interesting stories from our members in our newsletters and here are some more.

#### A Rivelin Story –

As a child, I lived at Sandygate. My Mum and I used to catch the Outer Circle bus round to Rivelin Paddling Pool. On one occasion, I slipped whilst paddling with my clothes on and had to travel back on the bus wearing just my Mum's cardigan and my Macintosh as all my clothes were wet through. It was very humiliating.

Kath Finch

Yes Kath, the same thing happened to me when I soaked my shoes and socks but my Dad carried me on his shoulders. I think it reminded him of when he was a soldier in WW1 but it frightened me as he was so tall and I thought I would wobble off! I loved to hear from him the stories of why the dams were there and how he used to watch the wheels working as a child while the workmen toiled away.

MS

The following story was sent by Susan Thackeray –

I am not sure at what age my Dad took me to Rivelin on Sunday mornings but it was always magical

Having lived in Stannington from 1950 until 1970, I still have friends there – and we went to school together.

Taking a net and jam jar, I always managed to catch sticklebacks and snails – then set them free.

But my memories of Rivelin are much with much affection, my Dad appreciated and respected nature all his life, which in turn I do too and he always encouraged my three children – all grown up now. Carrying on this tradition, my grandchildren enjoy nature too. A gem of advice my Dad always said was that if you wanted to see anything you must be quiet.

Hoping to visit Rivelin in the not too distant future and if very lucky enough to spot a Kingfisher, I would have tears of happiness. Another memory I have when going to Rivelin on Sunday mornings with my Dad. It was in winter when I was complaining about my feet being cold. My Dad said to

take my shoes off and he would rub my feet in the snow and it would warm them up. I was horrified! But it worked and my feet became warm and I thought my father was so clever.

While reading the Newsletter, I am very pleased to say we have hedgehogs in our garden. Also two robins which are regular visitors to our bird table along with a wren, a strong contingent of blackbirds. Sometime ago, a greater spotted woodpecker came to the table very briefly, the first time I had seen one, also a nuthatch and yellow hammer. I am hoping they will return.

Our dog spotted a fair sized toad recently, again I hadn't seen one for a very long time but very encouraging.

Susan Thackeray

**Thanks for sending your Rivelin stories. We love to hear them. Please keep them coming.**

After 25 years our newsletters have had a lot of Rivelin stories and information in them here are a few.

Edwin Marsh was born in the cottage above Roscoe Wood in the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. The family had a midden for sanitation and oil lamps at night. They drank unpasteurised milk. His father was a pocket knife grinder working at Roscoe Mill. Grinders died young – there were no health and safety rules then and Edwin was taken to his father's funeral in a horse drawn carriage, at the age of five.

In May 1995, two men who lived in Stannington and Walkley were fined a total of £1250 for "obstructing" a badger sett.

The badger would be tethered to a post and made to fight a specially trained dog that had been starved to make it hungry. This is an illegal sport once common

In May 1991, we had a walk in the fields near Rails Road and found a scarlet pimpernel.

We learned about the Quaker Burial Ground (Bowcroft) on High Riggs Rd and heard about the hardships of the Quakers in the 18<sup>th</sup> C.

The grave of George Shaw of Brookside who died aged 75 says he "suffered much for his faith". Only Christians could be buried in the parish churchyard then so Quakers had to make their own arrangements outside the parish. They were persecuted then by the prevailing Anglican church. Cash and household items were regularly taken from

their houses. This graveyard is worth a visit and the views are wonderful across the valley.

### **Botany Under Threat**

The first Professor of Botany, Robert Morison was awarded his chair at Oxford in 1669. At this moment nobody holds this position. In 2013, the last botany students in this country graduated and now nobody can study this subject at university.

Plant science is offered at some universities but these are concerned with genetics and biotechnology. Few taking this subject can name wild flowers. The world's varieties of wild flowers are now diminishing due to agriculture and ignorance. At least we have Kew Botanical Gardens as a place where wild plants can have a voice.

M Sanderson

### **Stargazing**

When did you last see the night sky as it used to be with the Milky Way in its full glory and planets clear and bright? Sometimes the Plough and major planets are visible here in Sheffield.

The worst spot for light pollution according to CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) is Tata Steel in Rotherham followed by Tower Hamlets, the City of London and Manchester Football stadiums.

New methods of farming using giant greenhouses are also polluters. Tata steel say they are having a programme to replace their lighting with low energy units.

The last place I saw the night sky as it used to be here was in Aswan, Egypt and it was certainly memorable. A strange result of too much light at night is that the human eye is losing the ability to adapt to the dark. About 26% of British people are said to be affected.

The best place to see the night sky in England is said to be Kielder Forest. Let's hope our grandchildren will fare better.

**Keep sending your Rivelin Stories to me. See above contact number.**

### **The Recorder**

We are still getting some strange unsettled weather. June was the wettest for about 30 years. At the end of June and the beginning of July last year we had a very hot week with temperatures well into the twenties each day and the highest recorded temperature for the 1<sup>st</sup> July. This year I recorded a maximum of 17° C and minimum of 10.4° C on the same day. We have also had many windy days. On the 24<sup>th</sup> June when the well dressing was due to be blessed at 7pm, the heavens opened at 6.45pm with hail and torrential rain, which was followed by the most beautiful double rainbow. The rest of the evening was sunny and festivities continued (with a few repairs to the well dressing!). The wetter weather suited my little frogs and I put them into the garden a week earlier than last year. I also started picking raspberries a week earlier. The butterflies have not liked the weather. I have had the odd Holly Blue and Speckled Wood in May and then two weeks with no sightings. The Speckled Wood and a Painted Lady appeared on the 21<sup>st</sup> June and the occasional Small White. Bumble bees have fared better and the Cotoneaster and Geraniums have been covered with Tree, Buff Tipped and Red Tipped Bees. At first I had quite a few Honey Bees but they have now disappeared – have they also succumbed to the wet weather? I have had juvenile Blackbird, Robin, Sparrows, Starlings, Blue Tits and Great Tits in the garden. The Tits have been fun to watch as they discover which plants will or will not hold their weight. I was clearing out the wet leaves from the saucer under a plant pot when one of the leaves moved. On closer inspection the head of a larva appeared out of a beautifully constructed case. This turned out to be the larva of a micro- moth, *Incurvaria pectinea/masculella*. The larvae of these tiny moths (wing length 6-8mm) construct cases in different designs and with different material, and are easily overlooked. They are like land caddis flies and many construct their cases using the leaves of their food plant. The moth lays an egg on the food plant and the larva is a leaf miner, which then cuts out pieces of leaf to sew together to make a case. Pupation takes place in the case. There are more than 1,600 species of micro-moths and compared to the larger

macro-moths they have a wider diversity of form and habit. Many are exceedingly beautiful. Check them out on Google. If you have noticed anything different in your garden this year let me know. How have your birds fared and have you seen a hedgehog or signs (small black faeces) of one?

Thankyou to all who sent in their records.

Mary Brazil S10 – 15.3.16 – 8 Peewits at Lodge Moor and also at Stannington.

Sue Shaw S6 - 5.4.16 – Chiff Chaff on Bolehills. (I went a walk to Wyming Brook on 22<sup>nd</sup> May and heard nothing but Chiff Chaffs – maybe they are having a good year.) 5.5.16 - 1<sup>st</sup> sighting of 6 swifts over Walkley Bank; Saw a dipper plus juvenile bobbing on stones near 2<sup>nd</sup> Coppice; a Heron stalking along the river; 2 Grey Wagtails passing through and a Peacock Butterfly and a pair of mating Orange-Tips. Also saw 30-40 screaming Swifts over Walkley/Malin Bridge on the 23.6.16. (that is the most seen so far, I have seen up to 15 over Den Bank).

Pauline Higbid S10 – 9.4.16 – 6 Siskin on niger seeds, regular visits of Goldfinch; Blue Tits, Long-tailed Tits, Goldfinches and Wrens all collecting nesting material which is provided.

Margaret Sanderson S10 – June/July - Male Blackbird taking worms into hedge; lots of Sparrows in front garden; regular visits from Jackdaws; pair of Blue Tits; Small Cabbage White and Orange Tip Butterflies.

Joan Daines – 4.4.16 – Frequent sightings of dippers, grey wagtail and an unusual overhead view of a Kingfisher as it flew under the bridge at Hollins Lane.

Christine Wright – 11.4.16 – Saw a Dipper with a ring on its right leg near Frank Wheel.

Micah Shaw 15.5.16 – On an eventful walk from Rails Road to Mousehole Forge saw a Tree Creeper feeding a juvenile; dippers bobbing on a stone and gliding along the river; a Wren, Coot, Orange Tipped Butterflies and a fish leaping to catch a hover fly at Hind Wheel.

Roger Kite S10 – 21.4.16 – Brimstone , female Orange Tip, Tortoiseshell & basking Terrapin at Hind Wheel; Male Orange Tip and Peacock butterfly at Swallow Wheel. Successful

fledging of Starlings from (sparrow terrace) nesting box.

K Kendall S10 – 12.5.16 – Red Kite flew low over his garden.

Bob & Margaret Townrow S10 - 18.5.16 - delighted to have Starlings actually in their garden after years of seeing them in the neighbourhood. Perhaps they had an infestation of leather jackets in the lawn that the birds discovered as I have had a similar experience.

Hagg Lane Allotments S10 – 22.5.16 – 2 female Roe deer; have also seen a Kite and there appear to be plenty of moles this year.

Roger Butterfield – 30.5.16 – lovely patch of Meadow Saxifrage in field off Rivelin Valley Road. (I went to have a look and they were still lovely on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June).

Mrs J Green S6 – Joyce is a longstanding member who loves watching the birds in her garden and she certainly has a lot to watch. She has two small ponds in the garden and puts food out daily - it sounds like a little nature reserve. She has had Sparrows, Dunnock, Blue, Great, Coal and Long-tail Tits, Chaffinch, Bull Finch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Greenfinch, Goldcrest, Robin, Jackdaw, Crow, Rook, Magpie, Wren, Wood and Feral Pigeons, Collared Doves, Starlings and Pied Wagtail and Red Poll in the winter.

Margaret Peter S10 – 5.6.16 – Was lucky enough to see an elusive Weasel which ran across Hagg Lane when she was walking towards the valley.

Mavis Roadhouse S10 – 27.5.16 – 1<sup>st</sup> Swifts (6), Sparrowhawk chasing Sparrows; On a walk round Redmires saw Water Vole, Curlews, Lapwings, pair of Goshawk plus chick, Hare; 12.6.16 – Blackbirds busy in holly bush but Jay took eggs/chicks; 7.7.16 – Blackbirds again busy in holly bush – so fingers crossed this time. Plenty of Sparrows, 4 – 6 Starlings on lawn, increase in Jackdaws (not good for the Blackbirds!) and occasional Hedgehog poo.

Joan Buckland  
10.7.16

**The 25<sup>th</sup> RVCG AGM** was held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April at Stephen Hill Church. We had an excellent turnout including two special guests who I would like to thank for their support, Dave Aspinall, the SCC Woodlands Manager and Chris Baines, one of Britain's leading environmentalists. The AGM was followed by a pea and pie supper provided again by Mr Lamb, S10 butchers, Broomhill who took the trouble to add 'RVCG 25' to the pie crusts. They were cooked in Stephen Hill's Church kitchen and served by members of the committee and Mavis Roadhouse and Sally Turnbull. Thank you for your efforts in helping make the evening such a catering success.

Some of the highlight of the evening were presentations for a full 25 years dedicated service to the RVCG by Roger Kite MBE, (chairman 1991-2010) and Margaret Sanderson (newsletter editor and membership secretary). Chris Baines presented each of them with a silver pie server manufactured by Carrs of Sheffield and mounted in a dedicated presentation box with an inscribed brass plaque. Their lifetime contributions deserved something a bit special and this was followed by an address by Chris Baines who gave an inspiring talk about the importance of conservation and volunteering.

The existing committee were unanimously re-elected including our new membership secretary, Christine Roe, who recently joined the committee and who has also volunteered to become the minute secretary, a role previously held by Derek Hastings. Christine and her husband Graham, have volunteered to maintain the RVCG membership and newsletter distribution.

Derek Hastings has done an excellent job as the RVCG minute secretary for many years and Chris Baines kindly presented him with a garden patio shrub as a small token of our appreciation. Derek remains on the committee as Planning adviser.

### **2015 / 2016**

We had 74 members who actively supported the group, which included:

- 9 committee members
- 25 Newsletter deliverers
- 36 Task team members
- 5 Support members

### **New**

Christine Roe – Committee Member/Membership Secretary/Minute Secretary

Graham Roe – Newsletter Distribution

### **Resignations**

None

## **Key RVCG Contributors 2015/16**

### **Committee** (As at April 2016)

Graham Appleby	Chair/Newsletter Production
Keith Kendall	Vice Chair/Task Team Leader
Margaret Sanderson	Newsletter
Roger Kite	Environmental Advisor
Joan Buckland	Wildlife Recorder
Derek Hastings	Planning Advisor
Sue Shaw	Publications
David Lyon	Finance
Helen Beardmore	Publicity
Christine Roe	Membership / Minute Secretary

### **Speaker Organiser**

Irene Harrison

### **Refreshments**

Mavis Roadhouse/Sally

Turnbull

### **New Membership**

Margaret & Bob Townrow

### **Website / Posters**

Jonathan & Emma Paragreen

### **Garden Party Hosts**

Ken Shail & Sue Thompson

### **Accounts Auditor**

Tony Davenport

### **Newsletter Distribution**

Graham Roe

### **Newsletter Delivery**

Goodwin, Roger & Young, Louise. Roe, Graham and Christine. Hastings, Derek and Linda. Appleby, Graham & Elizabeth. Albans, Helen & Keith. Cooper, Martyn and Evelyn. Shaw, Sue & Pilkington Mike. Lewis, Gareth. Robertson, Noel. Horsfield, Christine & Ian. Hill, Euin & Patricia. Fish, Pat. Saunders, Margaret. Whiteley, Rita. Bateman, Mark. Addison Graeme & Janet. Ollin, Ros. Edmonds, David & Margaret. Hague, David & Marjorie. Owen, Maureen. Roadhouse, Mavis. Hill, John and Jill. Davenport, Tony & Jenny. Moorhouse Leslie & John. Kite, Hilary and Roger

### **Task Team**

Audrey Small, David Mason, Derek Hastings, Graham Appleby, Graham Wheatcroft, Greg Isherwood, Anna Isherwood, John Bowring, Jonathan & Emma Paragreen, Keith Kendall, Julie Lawrence, Peter Mason, Roger Cose, Sue Shaw, Tony Davenport, Roger Kite, Lyn Cork, Dave Cork, Chris Nuttall, Scott Berg, Jenny Ryan, Ken Rutter, Noel Robertson, Peter Klensberg, Robin Smith, Sue Lindley, Trevor Prew, Gareth Lewis, Mike Smith, Helen Beardmore



RVCG bench testers Dan Higbid and Ken Shail in action

Smartphone technology has been introduced into the Rivelin Valley this year with these new mill post panels



**THE RIVELIN CORN MILL 1600**  
 Together with the Sheffield City Council, the Rivelin Valley Conservation Group have helped regenerate this area where the Rivelin Corn Mill once stood. We have a new pond and dipping platform, an outdoor classroom and picnic tables for public use and enjoyment



The RVCG task team help rebuild Rivelin Mill Dam 2006



A few members of the Task Team – maybe the RVCG's greatest asset



A load of rubbish collected by the RVCG annual Rivelin Valley litter pick

**Rivelin Valley Conservation Group**  
 1911 - 2016  
**25<sup>TH</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**

Working to Promote the Protection and the Management of Rivelin's Countryside and Wildlife

**Thanking you for your support**



Keith Kendall pond dipping on the new oakwood platform at Rivelin Mill



University students help construct the willow tunnel at Rivelin Mill



The Rousseau family bench - one of many memorial benches installed by the RVCG task team



Frank Hill and his wife stand by the Frank Wheel post sponsored by their son Gary Hill as a xmas gift. All 20 mill posts have now been sponsored



Just four of these cast iron mill markers were produced as the high cost failed to attract sponsors



Graham Appleby bird box building at a xmas fayre at Rivelin Park cafe