

Autumn 2023 no 126

Welcome from your Newsletter editors

We are still without a chairperson.

In the meantime, the Committee are keeping the Group functioning. But we do need more volunteers to help run the group, in particular organising events, finding speakers and checking for planning applications. No experience is necessary – enthusiasm is what matters. If you would like to help in any way, email the Committee at rivelin.valley@gmail.com for more information.

In this issue you will find some interesting articles about:

- Storm Babet and its effects on the Valley, which will obviously keep the Task Team busy for some time.
- River health.
- Reports on Group activities.
- The Recorder's regular wildlife report.

The Group are hoping to have Open Meetings in the New Year, but no details are available yet. We will let you know nearer the time.

The next Newsletter will appear at the end of January and will include an invitation to renew your membership. We welcome contributions from you about the Valley.

Keep enjoying the Valley as we move towards Winter, taking care as some paths have been affected by the recent storm.

Graham & Christine Roe

Margaret Sanderson

We are sorry to let you know that Margaret Sanderson has recently died. She was a Founder Member of the Group, a friend to many people, and edited the Newsletter for many years. A full appreciation will appear in the next issue.

The funeral will be at Hutcliffe Wood Crematorium on Saturday 4th October at 11.45 am.

Contacts

Chairman	VACANCY
Treasurer	Christine Roe
Secretary	Jacqueline Diaz-Nieto
Membership	Graham Roe
Task Team	Graham Appleby
Newsletter	C & G Roe
Group Recorder	Joan Buckland
Website	Greg Shaw
Speaker Organiser	VACANCY
Conservation Advisor	Roger Kite

If you wish to contact us please email
rivelin.valley@gmail.com
or visit the website
www.rivelinvalley.org.uk

Major work at Wyming Brook to remove diseased trees

If you've been up to Redmires recently you will have seen that the car park and footpaths around Wyming Brook are currently closed. The Temporary Traffic Regulation Order runs from 11th September for up to 6 months and allows foresters and hauliers to fell and remove the trees affected by the larch disease, *Phytophthora ramorum*, to avoid further spread. Similar work has been carried out around Rivelin reservoir.

Updates on the works can be seen at
<https://www.wildsheffield.com/wyming-brook-works/>

South Yorkshire Local Heritage list

We are delighted to say that Mousehole Bridge and the Long Causeway Milestone 5 have been accepted on the latest round of listings for the South Yorkshire Local Heritage List, to join the listings of the mill sites that are already there. You can view the listings on the following web pages:

Mousehole Bridge: <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/south-yorkshire/asset/9871>

Milestone 5: <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/south-yorkshire/asset/10905>

Also good to see the Lodge Moor Prisoner of War camp listing, which was nominated by someone else.

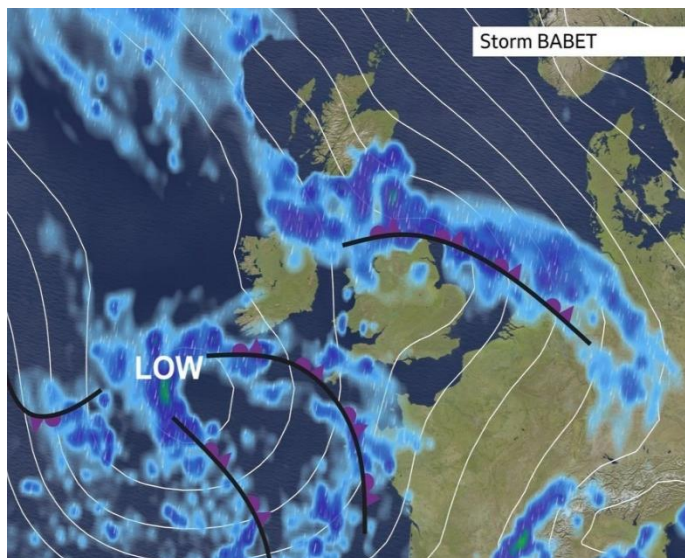
Lodge Moor POW: <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/south-yorkshire/asset/12213>

Sue Shaw

Storm Babet October 2023

On 20th October 2023 Storm Babet swept across the UK dropping huge amounts of rain and causing widespread flooding and damage. The Rivelin valley was badly affected as it damaged mill races and ponds, undermined bridges and tore away paths.

Rainfall radar of Storm Babet over UK (Source BBC weather)



Storm Babet, the second named storm of the 2023-24 storm season, originated from Bay of Biscay where the seas were unusually warm. This slow-moving depression moved up from the south-west and was joined by a second low pressure system and started moving across the UK on Wednesday 18th October.

The storm was predicted and the Meteorological Office issued yellow warnings (possible travel delays and possible risk to life and property) for much of the UK. Amber warnings (potential traffic delays and risk to life and property) were issued for over much of the Midlands and northern England (including the Sheffield area). Aberdeenshire saw a very unusual red weather warning (Dangerous weather with substantial disruption and widespread damage to property).

Storm Babet arrived in Sheffield in the early hours of Friday 20th October. It rained continually and heavily until 9 am on Saturday 21st. In this period the weather station at Weston Park recorded 66 mm of rain had fallen in less than twenty-four hours. To put this in context Sheffield on average receives 831 mm of rain in a year and normally the entire month of October sees 78 mm of rain. This is similar to the rainfall received during the Sheffield floods of 2007. Then ~88 mm fell on 14th June and a further 51 mm fell on 25th June in a short period of time. During Babet Aberdeenshire was, as predicted, hit the worst with ~250 mm of rain falling around Brechin causing widespread flooding of properties.



Environment Agency flood warnings for Rivers Don, Sheaf and Porter Brook as of 2pm Friday 20th October 2023

In Sheffield the Environment Agency had to issue flood warnings for River Don, Sheaf and Porter Brook. Fortunately newly completed flood protection works for the Upper Don held although elsewhere there was flooding at Catcliffe and widespread localised flooding.

In the Rivelin, Rivelin Valley Road was closed due to flooding and floodwater rose to almost the top of the arch on Hollins bridge, in doing so flooding the Rivelin park paddling pools and the foot bridge from the playground to the allotments. Luckily the Café and playground were beyond the flood limits. Elsewhere floodwater ripped away parts of the Rivelin trail, breaching pond retaining walls, took out stepping stones and weirs and undermined bridges.

At present the full extent of the damages is not known. For safety reasons, the Council has had to close some parts of the trail whilst damage is assessed and repairs can planned and carried out. It may take months or years for the Rivelin Trail to recover from Storm Babet.

Mark Bateman



The Chair sculpture near Roscoe bridge covered in flood debris



Left – Hollins bridge with flood waters almost at the arch. Right– water on Saturday 21st covering the Rivelin Trail up valley from Hind wheel.

Open Meeting September 2023

Anne, The Bustle Lady arrived in her Victorian Walking Costume to talk about 'Plant Hunters and Alien Invaders'.

She talked about the Victorians being involved in progress in many aspects of life and how the educated and cultured young men did Grand Tours of Europe bringing back pictures of what they had seen, including plants. Queen Victoria agreed to the founding of the Royal Horticultural Society and plant hunters went looking for plants around the world and collecting seeds so people could grow them to enhance their estates and show off their wealth. When Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward invented a glass travelling case live plants could be brought safely back as well. This fuelled a passion for greenhouses and conservatories, Walled gardens and Winter gardens. Cast Iron pipes from Sheffield were used to heat the greenhouses and exotic plants and vegetables were grown. Gardening books, magazines, tools, seeds and pottery containers all began to be marketed at this time.

Some of the plants, such as Monkey Puzzle and Redwood trees grew well and plants such as Agapanthus and Acer settled in our gardens. Unfortunately some grew too well and became invasive and now cause problems in countryside and gardens. Himalayan balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Spanish Bluebells and Rhodedendron are all difficult or impossible to eradicate.

Anne's knowledge and enthusiasm for all things Victorian made this a very interesting talk.

Christine Roe

Open Meeting October 2023

John B. Taylor give an illustrated talk about 'Follies, Myths and Fancies'. This was wide ranging and packed with anecdotes.

He began by giving us a tour of the Blackpool Tower, built in 1894 and inspired by the Eiffel Tower. It is a construction of iron and steel and houses the famous Ballroom and an indoor circus ring both designed by Frank Matcham, an architect specialising in theatres.

We were then entertained by stories of various follies around the country. The Broadway Tower in the Cotswolds was built to please the Countess of Coventry and much later had a nuclear fallout shelter built underneath it. The 6-storey brick-built Freston Tower in Suffolk was built in 1578 and is probably the earliest folly built. A lighthouse tower folly was built near Lincoln by Sir Anthony Dashwood to shine light on the road to protect his wife from highwaymen. Sir Anthony also had several follies on his estate at West Wycombe, including the octagonal Temple of the Winds. Sir Clough Williams Ellis had a whole fantasy village built at Portmeirion in Wales.

John also talked about the myth of Robin Hood, probably a composite figure, interpreted by various people and cultures; and Little John, based on a local man called John Little in Hathersage.

We also learnt about the follies at Wentworth Woodhouse, where there are more follies than anywhere else in Britain, including the Needle's Eye and Keppel's Column. Not to be outdone Wentworth Castle also has a collection.

We finished with a trip to Hull, where a Statue of Queen Victoria sits above noteworthy public toilets and mention of the 100-foot Faringdon Tower in Oxfordshire, the last major folly to be built in England.

Christine Roe

Heritage Open Day 2023

After a sweltering week in Sheffield, Sunday 10 September started damp and cloudy with a threat of thunderstorms. Nevertheless, our team assembled outside the Rivelin Café to erect the gazebos and tables for our displays. (We are very grateful to the Crosspool Forum for lending us their large gazebo, and to Steve and Ian for erecting it and removing it at the end of the day.) After a brief morning shower, the rest of the day was warm and dry.



Christine and Trevor with our main display

The main gazebo housed displays on the history of the group and the Rivelin Artists Colony, a selection of books and other items for sale, including our own publication *Walking the Rivelin*. As usual, there was a lot of interest in the two models we had on display: a working model of a water wheel and workshop, and a scale model of the area now housing the Sculpture Trail.



Derek with the two models

Separate gazebos, one with natural history displays and activities for children organised by Joan Buckland, the Group's Recorder, and one by the Sheffield Beekeeping Association proved popular.



The Sheffield Beekeeping Association gazebo

Thanks to Mark Baldwin, the owner of Mousehole Forge, we were able to run several guided walks exploring the remains there, where world famous anvils were once produced. Jenny Hockey and Fay Musselwhite led a poetry walk along the river during the afternoon where people could read their own poems.



Graham preparing for a walk to Mousehole

Text C. & G. Roe; photos Joan Buckland

**RVCG would like to thank Valleyside Garden Centre
for their continued support**

The River Rangers

Our local River Rangers have got off to an excellent start and all those trained in ARMI (Anglers Riverfly Monitoring Initiative) have sampled their locations at least once which is great news because we're now building up a baseline river health score for the Rivelin. All the Rivelin sites have been registered and logged on the official Riverfly Partnership database (check out the registered sites on the Rivelin on the map below!). John Blewitt, who is highly experienced in riverfly monitoring is checking and validating these results, giving us the confidence that the scores entered are trustworthy and a good indicator of the river health.

There are five sites being monitored by the River Rangers and if we work our way downstream the initial results are as follows:

Cliff face downstream of the stepping stones scored 8

Glenn Bridge scored 7

Downstream of Holme Head Mill dam scored 6

We are going to be building on the riverfly invertebrate monitoring with chemical sampling of the river. RVCG provided funding to purchase an Angling Trust chemical sampling kit which John Blewitt procured at a good price.

The River Rangers agreed that we want to get the message out there to as many people as possible to keep an eye on the river and report anything untoward or of concern. The Environment Agency pollution hotline is 0800 80 70 60.

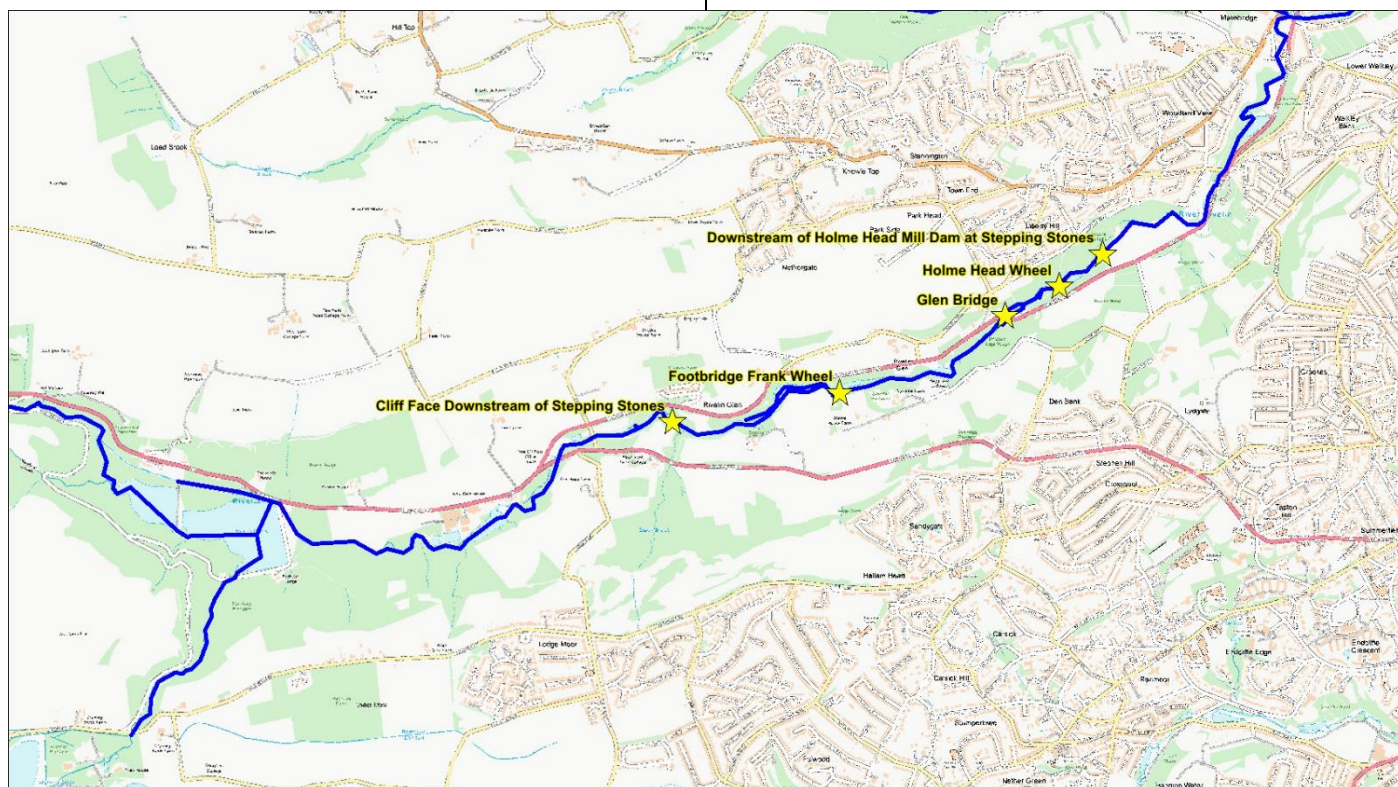
We'd love to get more local citizen scientists engaged with the River Rangers by joining our WhatsApp group and receiving our updates via email. It's a great way to ask questions about what you are seeing on the river and share experiences and in that way we learn together what good river health looks like and what we can do to protect our rivers.

The Sheffield River Rangers have created a local database too where anyone can enter records of what is seen on the river. Anyone can add observations, so please to make a note of this web address and become a citizen scientist and enter any observations

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdOuRUMaenZHEwaKCO5N-q5S4CU8REkZpSSL4TDGelijpLh3uA/viewform?pli=1>

Anyone interested in joining the WhatsApp group can send an email to Jacqueline at rivelin.valley@gmail with a telephone number to add to the group. Also look out for further details as we create a Facebook page for the Sheffield River Rangers.

Jacqueline Diaz-Nieto



Invasive species

Members of RVCG attended a very good session on Biosecurity run by Tom from ARUP. We learn about the common INNS (invasive and non-native species), how to spot them and what the typical control measures might be. The main plant species to look out for are Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam and Japanese Knotweed. We also learnt about some of the animal INNS species including the Signal crayfish and Killer shrimp. Himalayan balsam, flotation



Pennywort and American Crayfish have been reported in the Rivelin. A key message to get out there is not to handle or try to deal with the signal crayfish if you think you have spotted one. For the non-trained eye, they can be confused with the white clawed crayfish which is a protected species for which you need a licence to handle. As per Tom's top tips – don't try to fish them or handle them, but report INNS to the Environment Agency and on the INNS mapper. STOP THE SPREAD.

Jacqueline Diaz-Nieto and Mark Bateman



New tool for mapping Invasive Non-Native Species

INNS Mapper is an app and website for the reporting of sightings, surveys and management of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) in England, Wales and Scotland.

<https://innsmapper.org/home>

INNS Mapper is free to use and aims to provide an effective resource to support INNS programmes and coordinate efforts. Data reported to INNS Mapper is open access and publicly available for anyone to use. The website also includes useful identification guides and a map showing where the species have been recorded.

We encourage everyone to get involved with using INNS Mapper to report sightings of these species, which in our area include Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, floating pennywort and the American signal crayfish.

RVCG visit to Limb Brook valley 19th July 2023

About a dozen RVCG members enjoyed an evening visit to the **Limb Brook Nature Based Solutions project**, with our guide Roy Mosley, Head of Conservation and Land Management at Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust (SRWT). As mentioned in previous Newsletters, this is a natural flood management pilot project that stretches from Ecclesall Woods to Lady Canning's Plantation, which has been delivered by the Environment Agency, Sheffield City Council and SRWT. The work will help protect Sheffield and the region against future flooding and with the addition of tree, scrub, and hedge planting, will support a range of wildlife including birds, insects and amphibians to help improve the area for wildlife. The project was officially launched on 6th September 2022, so it's early days, but monitoring is in place and information gathered will be used to inform future similar work in the Upper Don catchment.

The project has used several different methods, including over 50 'leaky dams' built on the Limb Brook – these are made by securing piles of logs and other natural materials in a water course, which creates a barrier to slow the flow of water and catch debris during heavy rainfall, while still allowing fish and invertebrates to pass through. It has also created a series of 'attenuation ponds' on Whirlow Playing Fields and another series in Lady Canning's Plantation. Attenuation ponds are designed to collect and hold rain and flood water, then slowly release it – their design means that they always hold a small amount of water to provide a permanent habitat for a range of species, including frogs, newts and dragonflies.

We didn't have time to visit all the whole site, but we were shown the new Whirlow ponds and some of the leaky dams in the Limb Brook. These have already been successful in holding and slowly releasing excess water thereby helping to reduce the likelihood of flooding downstream.

We have started talking to the Council about implementing some natural flood management techniques

around the Rivelin Valley to help reduce the flows of excess water down into the river during storms, so it was very interesting to see this 'demonstrator' project for ourselves. For more information about the project see website at:

<https://www.wildsheffield.com/discover/nature-based-solutions/limb-brook/>



Photos from Roy Mosley



Photo from Joan Buckland

SCC awarded funding for beaver reintroduction project

In July 2023, Sheffield City Council was awarded £96,725 to look at the possibility of reintroducing beavers into Sheffield and surrounding areas because of the extensive, positive influence that they have on the environment and ecosystems. The successful bid to the Yorkshire Regional Flood & Coastal Committee will see the council work with neighbouring local authorities and agencies such as Natural England and The Environment Agency to gain a greater understanding of the benefits that beavers have on our landscapes. The study will look at how the building of beaver dams can improve water quality and reduce flooding, and how beaver habitats positively impact on a multitude of wildlife all helping to tackle our nature and climate emergencies.

We understand that the Rivelin catchment was examined in a previous phase and ruled out as not suitable. It will be interesting to see if any other locations can be found in the Upper Don catchment. For further information see:

<https://sheffnews.com/news/funding-to-explore-bringing-back-the-urasian-beaver>

Sue Shaw

Sheffield Green Spaces Forum

We are a member of this organisation which helps voluntary groups who work in Green Spaces across Sheffield. It meets bi-monthly and liaises with the Parks and Countryside department of the council and other bodies to exchange information and news.

At the September meeting, Ruth Bell, head of Parks and Countryside talked about issues identified by the Forum as affecting green spaces:

1. Dogs. Sheffield is consulting with other local authorities about management of professional dog walkers with large groups of dogs. Sheffield council is replacing dog waste bins with dual use bins.
2. Cyclists. Considerate cyclists should be welcomed in green spaces, but signage may be needed to set out what is acceptable.
3. Motor Bikes and Quad bikes. Council is working with the police and incidents should be reported to the police if seen.
4. Ash Die Back and other tree diseases. The situation was very bad last year with many trees felled but seems better at present. Surveys are now taking place to determine next steps.
5. The Parks and Countryside department has a limited budget and is keen to work with voluntary groups. We hope to meet with them in the near future.

Christine Roe

Task Day in July

Again, Havelock Dam was the target destination for the RVCG Task Team partly because of a memorial bench installation and because the whole place was again looking overgrown just a few months after our last task day there. Lynn Ellison contacted us to request a memorial bench for her mum, Kitty, who had lived on Rivelin Valley Road for many years. Lynn wanted the bench close to Mousehole Bridge and we found the perfect location. Thanks to Roger, Graham and George for completing the perfect installation.



The bench team: Roger Cose, Graham Axelby and his grandson George.



The perfect location for Lynn's memorial bench



An economical replacement for the RVCG notice board at Havelock.

The RVCG notice board in Havelock had recently blown down and so rather than an expensive replacement I chose to mount a piece of weatherproof board on the remaining post costing about £15. I also added a waterproof holder for our RVCG leaflets.

As well as a general clear up and trimming back, we also came across a burned-out motor bike on the footpath. Probably somebody's stolen pride and joy. I reported it to the Council who later came and collected it. Thank you to all our volunteers on the day.

Graham Appleby

The recorder – Autumn 2023

Autumn is upon us and may be turning to Winter soon by all accounts. We have had more unseasonal weather with August having some hot days but also some very wet days. It was the warmest September on record, and it is on track to be the warmest year on record. Storm Agnes (27/28th September) did not really affect us. It was windy but we are used to that here. Up to 10th October it was very mild and mostly dry giving people time to tidy up the garden ready for Winter. Then the Jet Stream moved bringing a change. Over the night of 10th October, it was 15.9° C and very windy and on the 11th it was 8.8° C. Time to put the heating on.

Many people noticed the smoke on 9th October. The grouse shooting fraternity had decided it was a good day to burn the heather on Hallam Moors. I noticed it at 11.15am and it was still floating across the entire horizon towards Barnsley and down the Rivelin Valley at 6pm. People in Darnall and the city smelled the smoke. All the invertebrates and any other ground living creature not quick enough to escape will have perished in the fire, and they say they are doing it for conservation. What are they conserving, not the local people who will all have breathed in the toxic fumes. In my opinion it is time for this practice to stop.

On the last warm day (10th) the ivy in the ginnel in Den Bank Close was absolutely humming with activity. The heavy scent of the flowers had attracted lots of wasps, honeybees, and hover flies. Some people are frightened of the wasps, but the strategy is to keep walking and not flail your arms around which will only aggravate them. I also counted six Red Admirals, which is my highest number over the summer. Has anyone seen more than this all together? When I looked more closely at the ivy, I noticed many specimens of the introduced Harlequin ladybird, a few 2-spot ladybirds, and several Green Shield Bugs. It was like a mini nature reserve. When the flowers have died, they will be replaced by small black berries, which the Wood Pigeons and Blackbirds find irresistible. If we get any migrant Thrushes from Scandinavia this year, and it is a possibility as they have already had snow in northern Sweden, they will also gobble them up. If you have room in your garden for ivy it is a true all-round plant, and to think some people wanted Amey to cut it down.

It has been a good year for berries such as Rowan and Cotoneaster, which will help sustain the bird and small mammal populations. My apple trees were not as prolific which is not surprising after last year's bounty. Blackberries were also in plentiful supply again. The weather has also suited Runner Beans which have been abundant. My vegetable plot is still looking very healthy, so I hope the frosts hold off a little longer.

We shall stop trapping moths in late October. As the weather has been so mild lately, we have had a good selection of attractive moths including the striking green and black Merveille du Jour, Red-green Carpet, the lovely

orange Barred Sallow and Blair's Shoulder Knot. A surprising visitor to the trap was the beautifully marked orange and black Sexton Beetle. Although I enjoy counting the moths it will be nice not to get up at the crack of dawn to check them. Hopefully our Noctule bat will have eaten enough to survive the winter.

Birds are on the move coming back from their summer breeding grounds to spend the winter here. Sue Shaw saw a large skein of geese (probably Pink-footed) at Redmires on 24th September. My husband heard a noisy flock flying over in the mist a few days later. Also, the Swallows and Martins are on their way south to warmer climes for the winter. Derek Hastings saw a flock of Swallows/Martins on the power lines near Wyming Brook Farm, which seems to be a favourite place for them to gather.

I hope you enjoyed the wildlife in your gardens and the beautiful countryside we have around us. Nature, I find, is the best medicine to calm the mind and ease the stress of this troubled world. I would love to hear your nature stories. Have you experienced that special nature moment? There is still plenty to see before the cold, damp days arrive.

Joan Buckland

13.10.23

