

# Newsletter

Promoting and protecting heritage and wildlife



## Spring 2025 no 132

### Welcome to our new Chairperson

At the AGM in April, Neil Porter was elected as the new Chairperson of RVCG. Here is a brief introduction written by Neil:



I have been captivated by the Rivelin valley since moving to Sheffield in 1974; the avenue of lime trees was such a beautiful sight but it took some time before I learnt the valley's fascinating history.

I managed to buy a house in the valley in 2008 but was previously close by at Hallam Head. Given the proximity to the city centre it is remarkably rural.

I worked in the NHS in Laboratory medicine and diagnostics for 46 years and since retiring have devoted my energies more to conservation matters. I had been carrying out local surveys around Sheffield for the British Trust for Ornithology for a number of years but in 2009 started annual waterway breeding bird surveys in the Rivelin Valley. My passion is birdwatching and for many years I have been on the Stanage Forum as a representative of the Sheffield Bird Study Group. Latterly I have been the Chairperson and whilst the forum is a fairly unique group of recreational users, landowners, farmers and residents working with the Peak District National Park Authority, many

of the issues are very similar to those we face in the Rivelin Valley. Particularly since Covid finding the balance between promoting the benefits of the local trails, flora and wildlife and managing the increasing visitor pressure is not easy. On top of that we can see the effects of climate change and the damage that recent storms have caused along the river.

I am therefore looking forward to the challenge of chairing the RVCG and working alongside a very committed and hard-working committee. I think the initial priorities will be working with the council to restore the damage done by Storm Babet and making progress on establishing parts of the valley as a Local Nature Reserve.

Neil Porter

### Membership

Many thanks to those members who have now renewed their membership for 2025. If you are one of those who have not yet renewed there will be a reminder with this Newsletter. The simplest payment method is via our website at <http://rivelinvalley.org.uk/join.php>. (If any details have changed since last year, please tell me at [rvcg.members@btinternet.com](mailto:rvcg.members@btinternet.com).) Cost remains the same at £3 per household.

If you have any queries about your membership, or whether you have paid for this year, you can email me at [rvcg.members@btinternet.com](mailto:rvcg.members@btinternet.com).

Graham Roe, Membership Officer

### Contacts

Chairperson	Neil Porter
Treasurer	Christine Roe
Secretary	VACANCY
Membership	Graham Roe
Task Team	Graham Appleby
Newsletter	C & G Roe
Group Recorder	Joan Buckland
Website	Greg Shaw
Speaker Organiser	Ciarán McInerney
Conservation Advisor	Roger Kite

If you wish to contact us please email [rivelin.valley@gmail.com](mailto:rivelin.valley@gmail.com) or visit the website [www.rivelinvalley.org.uk](http://www.rivelinvalley.org.uk)

## Task Team January Task Day

We began the year by returning to Hind Wheel where a winter storm had created more problems. The goits feeding Frank Wheel and Wolf Dam were completely blocked with shale and twigs and the dams were running dry. The newly repaired footpaths around Hind Wheel had been washed away and the temporary diversion at Plonk Wheel was left in a sea of mud. We were also unable to get any footpath material to site as access for the large delivery vehicles is limited and instead had to use a small pile left over from a previous job. However, 16 keen volunteers and Ranger Bob got stuck in to do the best they could with what was available. *All photographs by Graham Appleby except where stated.*



*Andrew eking out the remaining footpath material left at Hind Wheel.*



*Hind Wheel: Volunteers recover footpath material swept off the footpath and into the dam in a recent storm. Photo: Roger Kite*



*How to double the workforce: Footpath material is carefully barrowed around Hind Wheel in this reflective photo*



*Large stones are used to fill the footpath voids before being covered in finer material.*



*The footpath voids at Hind now repaired to make a more comfortable and safe passage for its visitors.*

The volunteers were split on the day and a small team were sent up the valley to clear the goits at Frank and Wolf dams.



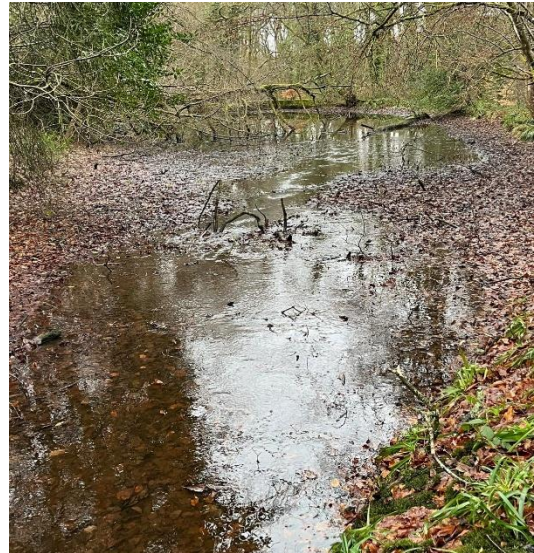
*The Wolf Goit completely blocked with mud, shale, twigs and leaves following a winter storm.*



*We all know children like playing in mud. Who would have thought that this valuable experience would have been put to such good use in later life!*



*Frank Goit dug out by its proud volunteers and the water now free flowing into its dam. Photo: Graham Axelby*



*The water now flowing freely into Frank Wheel dam*



*End of task day group photo with a few remaining volunteers*



*Hind Wheel dam (1580) still looking magnificent after 400 years*

This is why the RVCG task team work so hard to keep water flowing into Rivelin's historic dams. Not only for the physical beauty but for the wildlife it supports. The remaining mill dams are under threat and government funds are very limited for such work due to other priorities. Thank you to all our volunteers for doing such a magnificent job.

Graham Appleby, RVCG Task Team Leader

## March Task Day

Having tweaked my back in February, I had no choice but to cancel the task day event. However, having made a full recovery, I was ok to run the March task day, and we got the go ahead from PROW (Public Rights of Way) to attempt the damaged Upper Cut goit just below Hind Wheel. This meant lots of waterproof cement and volunteers who were good at jigsaws but using large stones. The goit and adjacent footpath were severely damaged in Storm Babet Oct 2023 and repairs for the Sheffield City Council are very challenging, both physically and financially. We have a joint meeting in June to discuss the footpath repair options. There is a temporary diversion using the bridleway via Hagg Lane although most people ignore this and attempt the obstacle course to continue their walk. Meanwhile, lack of water to Upper Cut and subsequently, Nether Cut, which are either side of the S Bend (Glen Bridge) meant the lower dam was running dry.



*Oct 2023: Hind Wheel to Upper Cut footpath and goit wall severely damaged by the swollen river on the left leaving the goit on the right without water.*

Sunday 30th March, 18 task team volunteers met at Hind Wheel. One team would attempt the Upper Cut goit repairs whilst the remainder cut back the brambles and small trees surrounding Hind Wheel and effected a few footpath repairs.

*All photographs by Graham Appleby unless otherwise stated.*



*To begin with, a large tree had fallen across the goit and had to be sawn up and removed before repairs could begin.*



*First goit section being repaired. In the background, a family with a dog attempting to negotiate the damaged footpath despite RVCG path closure signs!*



*Great teamwork. Cement mixers, cement transporters and wall builders all work together to achieve the goal. Photo: Roger Kite*



First section of wall completed. Not particularly pretty, but it did the job.

Having run out of time to finish the second goit wall, a few volunteers agreed to come back the next day and finish the job.



Day 2 volunteers, Father & son, Kevin and Ed McManus (front) and Gary Cliff (rear): The second larger section of goit wall in progress.

It proved impossible to stop water leaking through completely due to lack of sandbags,

but the wall contained enough water to restore the goit waterflow.

Meanwhile, other volunteers...



Removing logs and debris from Hind Wheel dam. Photo: Roger Kite



Trimming back the saplings and brambles from around Hind Wheel. Photo: Roger Kite

Not photographed but equally important, a couple of volunteers litter picked Rivelin Valley Road around the S Bend section. But the ultimate goal was to see Upper Cut wheel flowing once again. Success!



Graham Appleby, RVCG Task Team Leader

## Rivelin Footpath Repair Proposals

The Sheffield City Council Public Rights of Way (PROW) have asked the RVCG for comments on proposals for several Storm Babet damaged footpaths in Rivelin.

One of the footpaths being considered is the stepping stones at Roscoe Weir. Actually, these have already been repaired since Storm Babet but in a more recent storm, a huge floating tree has caused further damage to a couple of the stepping stones.



FP470 Stepping Stones at Roscoe Weir

Other footpath repairs being considered are:

The footpath off Manchester Road between Blackbrook Farm and the bridge at Wolf Dam

The bridle ford behind Havelock Dam with full replacement of its stepping stones

The stepping stones and bridge linking the lower footpaths at Third Coppice.

Repairs to the riverbank and footpath at Plonk Wheel (near Hind Wheel)

Probably the most significant footpath damage is between Hind Wheel and Upper Cut (at the S bend). This footpath is seriously eroded in several sections and the alternative is to use the bridleway via Hagg Lane although most people ignore this and try to negotiate the eroded footpath anyway. The RVCG task team has just restored the waterflow in the goit at this point but the existing goit wall remains critical until the footpath is restored. A meeting has been organised by PROW between interested parties including the RVCG in June to discuss the options.

The new financial year is with us and quotations for repairs by contractors are being sought. Many of these repairs are beyond the scope of the RVCG task team but the RVCG will do all it can to help maintain existing footpaths

and dams through funding and the heroic efforts of its task team.

Graham Appleby

## Open Meeting, 13th February 2024

*"Haddon Estate: fish, wildlife and conservation – a sustainable future"*

Jan Hobot is the Head Riverkeeper at the Haddon Estate near Bakewell. He gave a very interesting and enlightening talk. Jan started working at Haddon Hall in 2007 after attending Winchester Agricultural College. The estate comprises four farms with a total of 3,500 acres. There are four rivers through the estate with sixteen miles of banks to care for. The rivers Bradford, Lathkill, Derbyshire Wye and Derwent are all different due to the underlying geology. The River Bradford is on limestone and is one of the few rivers to still have our indigenous White Crayfish. As the farmers are tenants of the estate Jan has more control of the amount of spraying of chemicals and requires buffer strips of eight metres from the river. This prevents the grass being grazed and allows nature to take its own course.

In the past at Haddon the rivers were managed just for anglers. In 1890 Wild Rainbow Trout were introduced from California (the Victorians have a lot to answer for), and stockfish (farmed fish) were fed twice a day in tanks with Sand Eel pellets. When these were put in the river it introduced parasites. In 2003 it was presented to Lord Edward, who was interested in nature, to change the system, so they stopped stocking the rivers. Gradually the rivers were managed to be a more natural habitat so that all stages of fish growth were accommodated. Meanders were made, weirs were removed and gravel put in the river for the Alvin's (hatched fish). Walls were also taken down and the stones put in the river to protect small fish. Every five years the Willow and Hazel are harvested and put into bundles which are put in the river and Willow fences made as a refuge for small fish. Fallen trees are left to form leaky dams and habitat for numerous creatures. In 2007 the Environment Agency did a survey by stunning fish in a specific area to see what was there and took samples of the scales of the fish to estimate their ages. They counted 66 wild trout and four years earlier there had only been one. The colouration of the trout is quite different in each river which shows how an environment can affect the creatures that live in it. There are monthly water checks and if any problems are spotted Jan gets in touch with the water company. Riverfly also monitors the water quality and the creatures that live in it.

The change in management has had some amazing results. The fish are thriving as are creatures associated with rivers such as Ducks, Little Grebes, Water Voles, Otters, Bats, Herons, the occasional egret, Kingfishers, and Dippers. What Jan calls 'vermin' are also attracted to the rivers and can become a nuisance such as Cormorants, Goosanders and introduced American Mink. Poaching around Bakewell is also a problem and since Covid many more people actually go in the river, which is not good for the wildlife. The rivers are still managed for angling for the Haddon Fishing Club members. Instead of daily permits they must have a yearly contract which puts less pressure on the angler and fish and catches have to be released. The anglers also have a social club and events. They can also be involved in various studies on nature and work with farmers. As Jan says 'it takes time and patience', but it certainly seems to be working.

Joan Buckland

### Open Meeting 20 March 2025

*"Rivelin River Health: the good, the bad and the ugly"*

John Blewitt gave a fascinating talk about the work of the Rivelin River Rangers to a well-attended open meeting of over 50 people. John has been walking the valley for over 70 years and freely admits it has a special place in his heart. He wanted to get involved with the River Rangers having noted changes that have happened in the valley. More trees have grown up through time. He has also noticed fewer finches, frogs, toads and song thrushes but increases in raptors, magpies and pheasants. Where the river has a good canopy of trees with an understorey growing right down to the river, river health is good and brown trout thrive in the submerged roots. Working with Jacqueline



Diaz Neito, Sally Hyslop and other keen volunteers, the Rivelin River Rangers have been monitoring the water quality and invertebrate populations for some time now. The talk centred around their observations which range from the good through to the bad and ugly.

The good: Invertebrates are an important way of measuring water quality. The River Rangers assess the frequency of 8 groups including shrimps, stoneflies, caddis and May flies. They also monitor water quality in terms of temperature, conductivity, nitrate, phosphate and ammonia concentrations. Several sites down the Rivelin are monitored by volunteers once a month with results reported to the Environment Agency. Overall, their findings suggest the Rivelin is generally healthy.

The Bad: Not so good are the appearance of exotic cray fish in the Rivelin which prey on indigenous species, and the growth in places of the invasive Himalayan Balsam. The latter could be kept in check but requires clearance from the top of the catchment downwards to prevent regrowth from plants washing downstream. Also not so good for the Rivelin river health is bank erosion by dogs and wild swimmers. Anti-flea chemicals used on dogs is also getting into the river water and impacting on invertebrate populations along with microplastics from surrounding farmland.

The Ugly: The worst impacts on the Rivelin river health are sewage outflow events along with aluminium rich and iron rich (Ochre) outflowings from gannister and coal seams into water courses. Sewage from outfall pipes located in the Rivelin introduces among other things e-coli into the river. It is hoped in the next two years the Holme Head Wier sewage outflow will be upgraded to reduce the impact of sewage on water quality.

The take home message from the talk was that anyone can get involved in monitoring or reporting on things affecting the Rivelin. The more eyes and ears on the river the better. For more information on the Rivelin River Rangers go to :

<https://five.epicollect.net/project/sheffield-river-rangers-p>.

Mark Bateman

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

## AGM and Social 2025

The AGM was held on 10th April at Stephen Hill Methodist Church in Crosspool. Roger Kite opened the meeting. We approved the minutes of the previous year and had reports from some members of the committee. Graham Appleby spoke about the Task Team and repairing storm damage in the valley. Sue Shaw spoke about excellent sales of the 'Walking the Rivelin' book and improvements to the website. Joan Buckland spoke about letting her know what we wildlife see in the valley and the problems caused by more people and dogs using the valley. The Treasurer's Report was adopted and the committee for the year elected. We were very pleased to welcome a new Chairperson after managing without one for the last 2 years and 2 new volunteers.

The meeting passed the following resolution:

Where the RVCG Planning Adviser recommends that a planning application within the valley of the Rivelin will impact on either its Heritage or Wildlife; then the RVCG Committee can submit comments on behalf of RVCG members.

After the business of the meeting, we enjoyed a Pie and Pea supper (provided by Helen's Bakery), an illustrated review of the last year by Graham Appleby and ended with members singing the Rivelin song, with Graham Appleby on guitar.

Christine Roe

## RVCG Website news

We've created new pages about the Arts, to add to the information about the Rivelin Artists. There is a page on Victorian poetry and one on contemporary poetry, and we are planning to add another page about sculptures.

<https://rivelinvalley.org.uk/rivelin-arts/>

We've also added to the list of links that you can use for reporting various issues you might spot when you're out and about around Rivelin (things like fly tipping, damage to footpaths, fallen trees, blocked gulleys or even anti-social behaviour). There is also a link to the Council's map of Public Rights of Way, which shows all the footpath code numbers, which makes it easier to give a location. You'll find the links on the 'CONTACT US' page.

<https://rivelinvalley.org.uk/contact-us/>

Sue Shaw

## Heritage Fair event at Millenium Galleries Sheffield 25th-26th January

We had a display stall for 2 days at the Heritage Fair this year, where we were able to talk to people about what we do in the valley. Many people were upset by the damage done by storms and keen to see repairs underway. We were able to explain the work we can do as volunteers and what must be arranged by the council and will take longer. We also gave out information leaflets to lots of people. Our display materials were admired and some books, including copies of the 'Walking the Rivelin' were sold. We also signed up some new members and had a chance to talk to volunteers from other organisations from across the region. Many thanks are due to members of our group who ran the stall.

Christine Roe



Photo: Sue Shaw

## Come to an Extra Open Meeting on 15th May

As May continues the march toward summer, we invite everyone back together for an extra open meeting on 15th May. This additional meeting will be a two-parter all about water voles in the region.

Our first speaker will be Derbyshire Dales' Christine Gregory: author, photographer, and painter. Christine will tell us about the plight of the water voles, one of Britain's most endangered mammals. She has developed relationships with the many custodians of Derbyshire's waterways, having spent years studying its water vole population and capturing their behaviour through her photography. Christine will talk about the visionary work of conservationists that gives much cause for hope.

The second part of the talk will zoom in locally to talk about the water voles of the Rivelin Valley. Jennifer Stagg and Deborah Dawson from the University of Sheffield have been looking into the families of water voles



that live in the Rivelin, their spread, and how they interact. This talk will be a sneak peak at Jennifer's yet-to-be published Master's thesis. Some DNA-sampling equipment used for the research will be displayed. You'll also have a chance to pick up your own copy of Christine Gregory's local books, including *The Water Vole*, *A River In Time*, *Brown Hares in Derbyshire Dales*, and *The Land That Made Us: The Peak District farmer's story*.

Ciarán McInerney

### **RSPB Sheffield Local Group report on a walk around Redmires on Saturday 22nd March**

16 people attended, 22 bird species identified. Leader: Bob Russon. Thanks to John Robinson for this report.

Even before we set off from the car park, we could hear the plaintive call of a Mistle Thrush and then suddenly a Curlew flew overhead calling loudly; what a wonderful start to the walk. After scanning the top reservoir, we managed to add Greylag and Canada Geese to our lists along with Mallard and Tufted Duck. As we turned onto the conduit a lovely pair of Grey Wagtails were perched in a silver birch tree, whilst beneath them in the water was lots of frogspawn along with several amorous frogs.

As we strode out along the conduit we were serenaded by Skylarks and Meadow Pipits to our left and displaying Curlew and Lapwings on our right. Spring was definitely in the air. Amongst our party was a very keen young lad called Quillan with his mum Tess, who managed to spot a pair of Common Buzzards and a Red Grouse long before us. The highlight of the walk was when several displaying Snipe gave us an award-winning performance as they jinked and tumbled through the sky. It turned out to be a truly memorable walk, despite the fact that we heard both Crossbill and Golden Plover, but failed to see them; that's birding for you!

Birds seen: Canada Goose, Chaffinch, Coal Tit, Common Buzzard, Crow, Curlew, Greylag Goose, Grey Wagtail, Kestrel, Lapwing, Mallard, Meadow Pipit, Mistle Thrush, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Red Grouse, Skylark, Snipe, Song Thrush, Tufted Duck, Wood Pigeon, Wren. **Star bird: Snipe.**

Sue Shaw

### **Wildlife Reflections**

Its early spring and I'm standing in a field in Norfolk full of dandelions and daisies but where have all the insects gone? On numerous occasions this year I have observed grasslands and meadows and have become desperately aware of such few insects around. Moths accumulating around lights used to be a

common sight but not anymore. As a child, I remember my father's car being covered in squashed insects after our long trip down to Cornwall for a holiday, but I rarely witness this anymore. Dandelions can provide an early source of nectar (energy) for emerging bees. I have read that the pollen (protein, lipids, minerals, and vitamins) from dandelions while ok, lacks certain amino acids and so a mixture pollen from different plants and trees is thought to be best for the bees.



*Spring dandelion in Norfolk. The insect is likely to be one of some 225 species of solitary bee living in Britain. It has all the features of a bee and has a black abdomen and a yellow furry back and so probably a mining bee.*



*The common chiffchaff (*phylloscopus collybita*). Healthy populations according to the RSPB. Photo: Birdlife Ireland*

Another trend I have noticed having travelled around this spring, from Sheffield, to Cumbria and Norfolk, is the very dominant bird sound of the common chiffchaff (*phylloscopus collybita*). Not a bird I am particularly familiar

with and in fact I had to look it up to find out what one looked like. A small olive brown warbler with a pale eye stripe. As an insectivore, it's not a bird you are likely to see feeding at the bird table and probably the reason why I don't remember seeing one before. If they don't appear at feeding stations, it makes you wonder how the population is counted unless they just use it's prominent call? Let's hope the insect population stays buoyant enough to continue to feed our populations of birds and small mammals.

Graham Appleby

### **The Recorder – Spring 2025**

By the time you read this, Spring, hopefully, will have finally decided it is here. Meteorological Spring started on 1st March. The weather was a mixture of sun, rain, sleet, frost, mist and cold winds until the end of the month. Actual Spring (the vernal equinox) began on the 20th March which was the warmest Spring first day since 1972. Nature was stirring and creatures were on the move. The displays of snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils on the grass verges have been glorious, and now the blossoming trees are at their best. The pollen count, mainly from the catkins of Alder, Birch and Hazel, has been very high this year and I have suffered for the first time (not nice).

I first saw signs of movement in the pond on 21st March and the frogspawn arrived on 23rd March. Surprisingly this was not laid in the actual pond but in the small tank I had put on the patio. I always put a small amount of spawn in a tank to breed out the tadpoles and save them from being eaten by the Palmate Newts. They, therefore, have saved me the job of handling the jelly, which is a bit messy. The next day there was another clump of spawn in a smaller container which was on the patio. This will be put into the pond to fend for itself. The frogs are still in the pond so there the next frogspawn will be laid - are they trying to tell me something? The newts are also on the move so they will be laying their eggs on the pond weed soon. On 26th March I went to Redmires in the evening to help the Toad Patrol move toads and newts safely over the road to the reservoir. There is a lot of road traffic until quite late into the night and many amphibians get squashed. Every one that is saved helps to preserve them for the future as, like many creatures where humans are intruding their space, they are on the decline. It was a cool night so not many toads were seen but the patrol will continue for a while.

Following on from John Blewitt's talk on the state of the river, there has been interesting

research carried out on flea treatment for pets by the University of Sussex. They are now recommending that animals should not be treated for fleas unless they have them, due to the harmful effects of the chemicals used on the ecosystem. They say, 'Pesticides used in regular flea treatments are in 98% of English rivers, often at higher levels than those deemed safe.' The spot on treatments contain fipronil, which is banned in the UK and EU for agricultural use, and imidacloprid, which is a neonicotinoid, and was banned in the EU as a plant protection product in 2018. Birds often collect animal fur to line their nests, and the study found that every nest with fur in was contaminated, which is having dire consequences on the bird population. When brushing your pet do it indoors or in a sheltered area and collect the hair afterwards and dispose of it in a sealed bag. There are other forms of flea treatment including injections which last longer. Use of a flea comb and vacuuming bedding regularly are also good methods of control.

Queen bees are searching for suitable nesting sites and exploring the stone walls in the garden. I collected for Marie Curie at the Crosspool shopping centre on 28th February and 1st March, which were nice sunny days. Several Honeybees investigated the tray of yellow daffodils which was interesting. It suggests that the colour attracted them and not the scent, although they are very realistic looking flowers. The Forget-me-nots and Dandelions growing in the ginnel next to Den Bank Close are coming into flower. Last year they gave a beautiful display in blue and yellow, which I think is a lovely combination. Think of the Ukrainian and Swedish flags. The insects make the most of these early flowers. See if you can spot the little black Pollen Beetles which are particularly attracted to the Dandelions. Hopefully we will get more butterflies than last year when the Valerian flowers later in the year. Meanwhile enjoy the Spring flowers which are all too soon over.

We started to monitor moths again at the beginning of March. The first time we got one moth – aptly named the March Moth. Since then, we have had Oak Beauty, Clouded Drab, Hebrew Character and Early Grey. Look out for the lemony-yellow Brimstone moths and butterflies which also fly in Spring. Another early flier to look out for is the unmistakable male Orange Tip butterfly. The females lack the orange colour and could be mistaken for a 'Cabbage White' butterfly.



*Oak Beauty. Photo Joan Buckland*

Look out for the return of the Martins and Swallows followed by the Swifts and hope the weather is favourable for them on their long journey back. Plant lots of flowers to attract insects so they have enough food to raise their young and have the strength to return to warmer climes for the winter.

Thank you for your sightings:-

Gillian Drinkwater S10 – 6.3.25 – first frogspawn laid; 40 Geese in a wonderful V skein flying East over Taptonville Road.

Philip Walshaw S10 – 8.3.25 – first frogspawn in pond.

Ciaran McInerney S6 – 22.3.25 – watched a Dipper on a stone at Wolf Wheel for a few minutes.

Neil Porter S6 – 16.3.25 - On his monthly survey down the valley saw 11 Curlew feeding in fields west of Rails Road + 1 Mistle Thrush (great to see them back); 24.3.25 – 3 Dipper, including 1 near the plunge pool (hope it does not get frightened off); 3 Grey Wagtail; 4 Robin; 2 Great Tit; 2 Blue Tit, 1 Coal Tit; 1 Goldcrest; 1 Treecreeper; 1 Grey Heron; 1 Chiffchaff; 4 Wood Pigeon and 3 Nuthatch. He regularly has quite a variety of birds in his garden including 4 – 12 Jackdaw, all the Tit family, Pheasant, Dunnock, Robin, Blackbird, Chaffinch (has anyone else seen one in their garden?), Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Carrion Crow, Jay, Song Thrush, Wren, heard Tawny Owl calling in the daytime and saw his first Chiffchaff on the 21.3.25.

Graham Appleby S10 - Regularly in garden – Wood Pigeon, Sparrow, Great Tit, Jay and Robin. During January had a Great Spotted Woodpecker on nut feeder and a Pheasant.

12.2.25 – 6 Male Blackbirds chasing each other around the garden (this would probably be the resident male trying to evict the Scandinavian winter visitors), 16.2.25 – 3 Collared Doves (glad to hear they are still around as I have not seen one for some time).

Susan Thackeray, North Anston – 1.11.24 and 18.11.24 – Had a Merlin sitting on top of the bird table (what a treat) In the garden – Blackbirds, Starling, Tree Sparrow and House Sparrows in good numbers; Blue Tits, Great Tits, 3 Robins (a pair and probably a male on its own). No sign of her 3 Hedgehogs yet. The nights are still quite cold so they may be lying low.

Sue Shaw S10 – 1.2.25 – Saw a Barn Owl at the bottom of Hagg Lane which landed on a wall near the road and flew over Calver Fields and into the wood. Her partner, Mike, watched 2 Hares boxing on the 2.2.25 near King Edwards (how wonderful – you have to be in the right place at the right time.)

Joan Buckland S10 – 1.4.25 – Sparrow nesting in box; 9.3.25 – 2 -7 Spot Ladybirds; 26.3.25 - 1 Speckled Wood butterfly.

Joan Buckland 1.4.25

### **New book about former King Edward VII Memorial Hospital**

We have been contacted by Helen Parker-Drabble - a Sheffield born author who now lives in Bristol. She has written a book about her late father's experiences in the hospital he referred to simply as 'Rivelin' - the old King Edward VII Memorial Hospital, where thousands of children were treated for bovine tuberculosis. [This is the former hospital on Rivelin Valley Road, not far from the Rails Road junction, that closed in 1992 and was converted into residential apartments.]

Helen "is committed to preserving a poignant and often overlooked chapter of Rivelin's history alongside its natural beauty and heritage. When her father, Harry was a toddler he spent 2 years in the hospital and his story sheds light on the harsh realities of mid-20th-century healthcare and the impact of unpasteurised milk which exposed thousands of British children to bovine tuberculosis, leaving many with physical disabilities and psychological scars. In addition to highlighting these challenges '...Yet' celebrates Harry's resilience. Against all odds he defied expectations of disabled people and built a life of his own choosing."

Helen will be coming to Sheffield to promote the book: "...Yet" A Story of Triumph Over Childhood Separation, Trauma and Disability. You can read more about Helen and her writing by following the link below:  
<https://helenparkerdrabble.com/coming-soon/>

# Rivelin Valley Conservation Group



## SUMMER PROGRAMME - 2025

- Sat 26<sup>th</sup> Apr [Sheffield Environment Weeks](#) (start)
- Sun 27<sup>th</sup> Apr \***Task Day**
- Tue 13<sup>th</sup> May [Revelling In Rivelin](#) – Evening walk including visit to Mousehole Forge with Graham Appleby. 7pm at the Sheffield Flood memorial at Malin Bridge near Lidl.
- Wed 14<sup>th</sup> May [Revelling In Rivelin](#) – Morning walk including visit to Mousehole Forge with Graham Appleby. 10am at the Sheffield Flood memorial at Malin Bridge near Lidl.
- Thu 15<sup>th</sup> May **Open Meeting:-** With speakers **Christine Gregory, Jennifer Stagg, Gwydion Elliott and Deborah Dawson** with two talks: "The Plight of the Water Vole" and "Track and Trace, eDNA monitoring of Ratty at Redmires"
- Sun 25<sup>th</sup> May \***Task Day**
- Sun 22<sup>th</sup> Jun \***Task Day** (to avoid clash with Crosspool Festival)
- Fri 27<sup>th</sup> Jun [Walkley and Crosspool Festivals](#) (start)
- Sun 29<sup>th</sup> Jun **Crosspool Festival Street Fayre** (RVCG Stall)
- Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Jul [Stannington Carnival](#) (RVCG Stall)
- Sun 27<sup>th</sup> Jul \***Task Day**
- Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Sep [Walkley HOD](#) Venue to be confirmed (RVCG Stall)

\*RVCG Task Days are run by Graham Appleby ([taskteam@btinternet.com](mailto:taskteam@btinternet.com))

Open meetings begin at 7:30pm and normally held at Stephen Hill Methodist Church, 547 Manchester Rd, Sheffield S10 5PL unless otherwise specified. The entrance fee is £3 for members and £4 for non-members which includes refreshments. Non-members are always welcome.

