

Newsletter

Promoting and protecting heritage and wildlife



Summer 2026 no 137

From the Chair

Since the Spring newsletter and AGM our focus has changed to outdoor meetings and festivals. We have recently been subjected to two heatwaves and different sorts of pressures on the valley both in terms of the visitor experience and impacts on the natural world.

On 25 April, Gerry Firkins led a flora walk along the valley, and on 1 May we had a bat walk led by Bob Croxton from the Sorby Natural History Society. Reports on these events can be found later in this issue.

At the end of May we had a further meeting with Ness Lyons, the Councils Woodland Manager. This was primarily to meet our new ranger Nick who has a lot of relevant experience and also impressively came armed with a litter picker. Our previous ranger Ryan has moved on to a new site. We appreciated his input during his time with us. Also in attendance was Andrew Phillips who has managerial responsibility for several of the local parks. Ness confirmed that the footpath between the S bend and Hind Wheel has another 6 months closure applied to it, but that options for repairs were being prepared. Of course funds may not be available as it will be a significant cost. We visited the very popular plunge pool and put up notices aimed at safety in the water, rather than DO NOT SWIM posters which would have been ripped down quickly. However, we discovered an elaborate rope structure that crossed the river with a swing over the waterfall, which was removed later that afternoon by Ranger Ryan. The recent hot weather has brought a very large number of people to the river which I'm sure was a pleasant experience. Fortunately most of the nesting birds have fledged young by this time and have not been affected. The trend for wild swimming may impact on the invertebrates and fish, but is difficult to assess, although we do have an ongoing student project looking at river quality. Interestingly we have just discovered that there are more river fly monitoring sites along the Rivelin than we thought, including one just below the plunge pool, which may give us some data on trends in the river fly population.

Contacts

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

Despite previous repairs to the dam wall at Frank Wheel, a substantial amount of stonework has collapsed, which presents a significant safety problem. It should have been fenced off by now, as immediate repair is unlikely.



Environment weeks walk with Graham Appleby outside Rivelin Café

Photo: Joan Buckland

Graham Appleby successfully ran walks in mid-May for Environment Week. (Full report on last page.) Following a request from Rivelin Primary School, Graham arranged a morning

session with their very own Eco Warriors in June. There is a full report of this in this issue, but I can't stress enough how important it is to engage the minds of our young children into the wonders of the natural world, particularly on their own doorstep.

Talking of our own doorstep on 22 June Graham, Sue and I met Stephen Elliot who is giving a talk to RVCG about the Rivelin trail in March next year. He opened up a completely new opportunity for us to prepare a digital trail of the Rivelin which could be based on the excellent work from Sue and the 'Walking the Rivelin' book but also has potential to expand into whatever theme we wish. Nothing seemed to be impossible, and we can get this with no charge as his company Llama Digital can use it as a marketing tool. We can include videos and even record wildlife on it and any digital content we wish. Their platform 'Situat' is in use worldwide for museums, conservation bodies such as The Woodland Trust and a number of nature trails. Via Joined up Heritage, Stephen is able to offer this to a number of groups in Sheffield but I believe we get first crack at it. A feather in our cap although no doubt more work for us but with potential to target perhaps a younger demographic with this high-tech approach. Very exciting stuff.

Personally, I completed the annual British Trust for Ornithology surveys of the valley. In April I recorded 24 species of birds and in May, 22 species. I recently bumped into one of the University Long Tailed Tit survey students recently and enquired how they had done this year. Apparently nest numbers were good but there had been a significant amount of predation. It has been a similar story at Stanage and Burbage where Ring Ouzel nests have been particularly targeted by predators. Prof Ben Hatchwell is booked to give us a talk on Sheffield University's impressively long running Long Tailed Tit surveys in the Autumn.

We continue our involvement with the Waterways Strategy Group and Sue has participated in a pilot assessment of weirs near Malin Bridge prior to the Committee taking a role in the assessment of all the weirs on the Rivelin in the context of introducing fish passages whilst preserving the heritage value of the valley. These assessments will be replicated across all of Sheffield's rivers.

On 2 July, Graham Appleby, Christine and I attended the annual Environmental Volunteer event at Hillsborough Stadium. This is an opportunity for the Council to thank all the volunteer groups in Sheffield and for everyone to network and see examples of good practice across the city.

We have also now been present with our stall at the Crosspool Festival and Stannington

Carnival and managed to recruit a few more members. So following this current very hot summer, I look forward to seeing new and existing members at our Autumn open meetings.

Neil Porter

Coming in the Autumn

Open Meetings

We will continue our good form in autumn, starting with Paul Hobson on 10 September. Paul is mostly known for his wildlife photography but on this occasion will be speaking about the intriguing life of Henry Seebohm: ornithologist, steelmaker and traveller. Paul's talk will take us through the life of a man, from Bradford to Ireland to Sheffield, and through crucibles of steel and a passion for birds. It is sure to be a truly well-rounded talk for RVCG, linking our interest in heritage and nature.

On 8 October, we will hear from Professor Ben Hatchell about the University of Sheffield's long-term study of long-tailed tits in the valley. The 30-year study has been uniquely thorough and has revealed insights into the ways that cooperation between social birds evolve. In addition to the fascinating science, be prepared for heart-warming findings about how unsuccessful long-tailed tit parents step in to help raise the chicks of relatives.

And closing out our 2026 line-up of speakers on 12 November will be Debbie Coldwell from the Don Catchment Rivers Trust. Debbie will be giving us an insight into the natural flood management in which the Trust have been engaging. This approach to management help to 'slow the flow' of water into rivers during high rainfall. Rather than building large and expensive concrete flood defences in towns, their methods such as creating new wetland areas and 'leaky dams' hold back high water using natural processes for a fraction of the cost.

Ciarán McInerney

Walks in the Valley

We plan to have a Fungi Walk on Tuesday 13 October with Ziggy Senkans, and a Winter Tree Walk on Saturday 14 November with Gerry Firkins. Details to follow: keep an eye on the Website.

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

The Recorder Introduces Himself

I just thought I would introduce myself now I have been kindly welcomed onto the committee. Some of you might have met me on the spring plant walk or when I gave a talk last year. For those that haven't my name is Gerry Firkins and I used to be a professional botanist working freelance in the 80s and 90s (yes, I am getting on a bit!). Customers were organisations like the RSPB, Sheffield University, and the Workers Educational Association. I'm now retired after working for the NHS (where I crossed paths with your chairman) and for the last 6 years I've been back doing talks and leading walks around Sheffield (and one in London) as well as tutoring for an identification course for the Botanical Society of the British Isles.

I'm looking forward to getting to grips with the recorder role and for now do continue to



Gerry with a giant *Paulownia* leaf (not found in Rivelin)

send in any sightings you get through the year as you have done using the current recording form on the website. For plants in particular, I'm happy to just receive just a picture if you

are unsure of the identity, so indicated on the form if this is the case and I'll get back to you. I'm looking to move to collecting the records on iNaturalist, but more on that later as the catchment area which needs setting up first. There are over 4000 records in the app for Rivelin already. Can I also take this opportunity to thank Joan Buckland for her work and realise I have big shoes to fill.

There have been two important sightings since I got involved. Firstly, and sadly I spotted a few plants of Large-leaved Avens (*Geum macrophyllum*) just before Mousehole Forge. 'Sadly' because this is seriously invasive plant and has caused serious damage to the flora of the Porter Valley. I removed what I could and the site needs watching, and I shall be visiting from time to time.

On a positive note however, I was really excited to find over 300 plants of Townhall Clock (*Adoxa moschatellina*) near Roscoe wheel. It's called Townhall Clock as it has a flower on all four faces and actually one on top too. See the pic below. This is a rare ancient woodland indicator in Sheffield; currently the

only known site! Some clearance of the nearby Himalayan Balsam has already been done so thanks to the wonderful Task Team.

Happy Recording!

Gerry Firkins



Townhall Clock (*Adoxa moschatellina*)

Yorkshire Water works on Hagg Lane and Carver Fields, Crosspool

As part of an £8.3bn environmental investment, YW is working on its underground network to help protect the Rivelin river from storm-related sewer discharges. This involves increasing the capacity in the sewer network by building a new underground storage tank underneath Carver Fields. By doing this the number of discharges into the Rivelin at the CSO overflow near Holme Head weir (as noted in the recent RVCG 'Winter' Newsletter) should be reduced from hundreds to less than ten per year.

As a result, there will be some disruption to Carver Fields access for about 18 months. Hagg Lane will also be closed for periods while YW upgrade parts of the sewer network beneath the road.

A map of the area affected, and more details can be seen at:

<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/investing-in-yorkshire/investing-in-the-rivelin-valley>

Crosspool Forum has also posted an update on their website at:

<https://crosspool.info/2026/07/06/yorkshire-water-works-on-hagg-lane-project-update/>

Sue Shaw

Task Team

It seems a long time since the last task day back in November 2025. Due to the Winter storms and my long absence celebrating my septuagenarian birthday abroad, we only managed to get together at the end of May, meeting at Havelock Dam. The turnout was fantastic with 22 enthusiastic volunteers eagerly waiting the distribution of tasks, of which there were many.



Cutting back at Havelock Dam

The first area to be tackled was cutting back the saplings from around the dam wall and removing undergrowth from the banks and widening the footpaths. There have been a couple of unused and unloved metal signposts in the carpark, and the Council have given the RVCG permission to utilise these and so I had them cleaned and painted ready for new signage.



Signpost painters Wendy Hall and Mark Bryan

Volunteers also litter-picked Rivelin Valley Road from Havelock Dam to Rivelin Park and beyond.



Just some of the trash collected

Other volunteers were sent further afield. Trevor and Jane Louth were given the task of maintaining the three planters outside Rivelin Park café and another two at the entrance to the splash pools. The plants and compost were kindly donated by the Valleyside Garden Centre.



Trevor and Jane Louth attending the Rivelin Park planters



Balsam pulling at Roscoe Weir

The Hayward family of five, first time attendees, were asked to help remove balsam from an area of ancient woodland near to Roscoe Weir where a rare plant species has been discovered and so, along with experienced volunteer Alex Manning, they set about the onerous task.

It's not a job that I enjoy doing but the loss of our more native species due to this over-rampant giant busy lizzie is just too much to bear although the bees love it.



A sea of Himalayan balsam at Roscoe Weir spells the death knell for many local plant species

The plan was to uproot the balsam and to black bag it but this now feels so wrong as it uses a lot of plastic bags and is really contributing to plastic pollution. Not only that, but a black bin bag full of balsam is very heavy to carry and so the logistics of removing balsam is challenging. Bagging and removal is also very time consuming including further transportation to the dump site. As a trial, I piled up the pulled balsam and monitored it over the coming week and it just composted down to almost nothing. The stems are mainly water which probably explains why they are so heavy to carry in bulk.

I recently stayed on a campsite in Bury called Burrs Country Park. It's an old cotton mill where a few industrial artifacts remain including the enormous chimney and whose grounds have been turned into a country park. It has the added attraction of the ELR steam railway run by enthusiastic volunteers. However, the railway cuttings and adjacent riverbanks are serious over-run with Himalayan balsam. There was a notice advertising an organised effort to remove the balsam with instructions how to do it and this is what I would recommend in the future.



I was immensely proud of our efforts in making such a difference to this area of the valley for its visitors to enjoy. There will be no task day at the end June due to our attendance at the Crosspool Street Fayre, and so the next event will be the end of July.

Graham Appleby



May Task Day at Havelock Dam

June 10th Rivelin Primary School and the Eco Warriors.

Liz Bunting, the assistant headteacher at Rivelin Primary School, contacted the RVCG with a request for us to share some of our conservation knowledge with a few pupils selected from each of the different years and given the grand title of 'Eco Warriors'. After some careful thought, we decided on a river dipping exercise to show the children one of the ways in which water quality can be monitored. We eventually settled on a date of June 10th when several members of the RVCG met with Liz Bunting and 12 pupils and a few guardians outside the Rivelin Park Café.

After introductions, Graham Appleby introduced the pupils to the RVCG model mill to explain how mills, ponds and weirs were constructed, how they worked and what they produced.



The Eco Warriors look on as Graham Appleby demonstrates the working RVCG model mill

Joan and Paul Buckland provided the river fly equipment. Roger Kite donned his wellies and armed with a fine net, leapt into the depths of the river to scour the bed for river flies. A number of river flies were caught, identified and shared with the children in magnifying containers.



Roger Kite and Paul Buckland peruse the morning's catch....



Eco Warriors give the specimens a close inspection





Eco Warriors compare their specimens with the river fly chart.....

Liz Bunting has written a letter of thanks, some of which is reproduced below:

"Thank you so much for your email, the lovely photographs and, most importantly, to you and your fantastic team of volunteers for giving up your time to work with our Eco Warriors. The workshop exceeded our expectations and was such a valuable experience for the children.

Our Eco Warriors thoroughly enjoyed learning about the important work the Rivelin Valley Conservation Group does to protect the River Rivelin. They were fascinated by the water sampling, identifying the different organisms living in the river and discovering how these creatures help us understand the health of the ecosystem and food chain. It was wonderful to see the children learning through real-life fieldwork in such a special local environment.

Thank you also for your kind comments about the children's behaviour. We were incredibly proud of them. On Wednesday, our Eco Warriors led a whole-school assembly where they shared everything they had learned during the visit. They explained how you monitor the health of the River Rivelin by identifying the organisms found in the water, spoke about the importance of protecting local ecosystems, and encouraged the rest of the school to become involved in our environmental initiatives, including paper recycling and our new school uniform reuse

initiative. It was wonderful to see them confidently sharing their knowledge and experience with the rest of the school.

We genuinely hope this is the beginning of a long and rewarding partnership between our Eco Warriors and the Rivelin Valley Conservation Group. There are so many exciting opportunities for our pupils to learn from your expertise while developing a deeper appreciation of their local environment. The workshop worked brilliantly, and we would be delighted if our new Eco Warriors could take part in a similar session during the Autumn Term.



This is a picture of the lovely thank you card we received from the children. It was a pleasure entertaining such well-behaved children ages 5 to 11 who asked questions and showed enormous interest in the proceedings. Thank you also to the RVCV volunteers who supported the event and we look forward to providing similar events in the future.

Graham Appleby

New interpretation boards and marker posts in Loxley Valley

Friends of the Loxley Valley (FoLV) are celebrating the installation of new heritage and nature signs along the valley bottom footpath between Malin Bridge and Rowell Bridge. Interpretation boards show information about the water power remains and nature along the valley, as well as maps, photos and artwork. There are also four posts marking the remains of historic industrial sites along the path, with QR codes linking to the FoLV website (much like our Rivelin posts).

<https://friendsoftheloxleyvalley.com/2026/04/27/new-heritage-and-nature-signs-in-the-loxley-valley>

Sue Shaw

'For the Love of Flora and Fauna' at Rivelin Valley

In March we welcomed into the Rivelin valley nine students and their tutor Dr. Kaisu Koski from the Fine Art degree course at Sheffield Hallam University. The Rivelin valley was chosen as an open-air studio for an environmental project 'For the Love of Flora and Fauna' under their 'Professional Practice' option.

The students were keen to learn from RVCG about wildlife and conservation in the valley and subsequently visited several times over four weeks, being inspired by ecology, traditional knowledge about nature, environmental activism, spirituality of nature, and their own sensory experiences on the site. They created work in response to the natural environment, including its plants, animals, microorganisms, soil, water, and seasons. A wide variety of different media were used to create imaginative artworks including photography, fabric art, drawings, paintings, sculpture and text, some made from natural materials, glass and pottery found in or beside the river. They also wrote three collaborative poems about their experiences.

Students: Emily Barnes, Shannan Chapman, Gabby Jivkova, Izabela Kaminska, Abby Mathieson, Chloe O'Neill, Kira Sotheran, Molly Tomlinson, Evie Wilson

Tutor: Dr. Kaisu Koski

Sue Shaw



Artwork by Emily Barnes

Planning Update

Perhaps it is fortunate that we can say it has been a quiet first half to the year, in terms of planning. The two most-impactful items to report concern Coppice Farm and Same Hill Farm.

On Coppice Farm, three barns will be converted to dwellings. Visually, the sites won't change much but there will be increased car access, and a major concern from the council was the change to drainage from the site. No work will begin until more-detailed drainage plans are submitted and accepted. I am happy to report that the approval conditions include integrated bat boxes and swift boxes in every dwelling, nesting cups for swallows and house martins, and further installations of bird boxes.

Those who have been following the developments at Same Hill Farm might be aware that the owners built an equestrian centre without approval. The council submitted an enforcement to remove and repair the site, but the owners submitted an appeal in February and the status is "Pending consideration". The site owner's grounds for appeal are, essentially, that the proposed enforcement (i.e. demolishing everything) "*exceed[s] what is necessary to remedy any breach of planning control*" (Town and Country Planning Act 1990, 174(2g)). This isn't a particularly strong argument but it opens things up to negotiation. We have yet to hear the outcome of the appeal.

Ciarán McInerney

An Evening Bat Walk along the Rivelin 1 May 2026

At dusk on a fine dry evening a gathering took place in Rails Road Car Park. Passing cars may have wondered what was going on. Why had over 30 people gathered in the gloom? It was on the promise of a guided bat walk down the Rivelin. Bob Croxton, a local bat expert, led this as he had the last time RVCG had a bat walk back in 1990.

After a quick summary of the types of bats found in the locality bat detectors were turned on and we were off. As it was still over 10°C (bats tend not to fly in the cold) we did not have long to wait to see some bats as there were plenty of bats around the Rivelin Mill pond and the bridge at Rails Road. First spotted were some pipistrelles flying between the trees. Then, with the aid of powerful torches, we were able to see some Daubenton Bats skimming over the water of the Corn Mill pond catching insects. We then walked down the valley to the Packhorse Bridge, where more bats were spotted flying under and around the bridge. All amazingly agile and of course completely silent

(unless you had a detector to hear their ultrasonic clicks).

The Bat monitor picked up 1 record of Whiskered/ Brandts, Leisters and Noctule Bats, 169 records of Pipistrelles and 24 of the Soprano Pipistrelle. That doesn't mean there were 169 bats, but how many times the monitor heard them. Daubentons were there but difficult for the detector to pick up.

Mark Bateman ed. Christine Roe

A Spring Walk along the Rivelin 25 April 2026

Gerry Firkins delighted and entertained a group of over 20 people with his knowledge of plants. Starting off at the former Spooners Wheel (a.k.a. Rivelin café) we barely crossed the river before Gerry was burrowing in the hedgerow and showing us all sorts of plants. He showed us how to identify them, what they indicated and how amazing the world of plants is. Some plants of note were several different ferns, young Elm trees and a Gooseberry bush along the riverbank. Some he showed us were invasive and potentially a problem for the valley. This included quite a lot of Himalayan Balsam, just beginning to sprout. If allowed to grow and flower, it can seed further along the valley and smother native flora. (The Task Team followed this up in May: see the Task Team report.)



Photo: Mark Bateman

Although industry impacted on the valley in the 17th to 20th Century significantly reducing the ancient woodland, ancient woodland plants are re-establishing themselves if you know where to look. The walk finished with Gerry revealing a plant which he has not found anywhere else in Sheffield making it locally unique to the Rivelin.

Mark Bateman, ed. Christine Roe

Nature Notes – Summer 2026

How are you and your garden coping with this hot weather? Some plants are beginning to wilt as I am. There was some rain in June with a short thunderstorm with heavy rain in the morning of 26th June, which replenished my water butts, but none since. It has been very hot with the hottest Mayday ever recorded and 24th June was the hottest June day ever recorded. For the last seven days somewhere in the UK had a temperature over 30 °C and there is no let up for the hot, dry weather in the next few days.

No mow May in my garden extended to the present day with paths mowed for access. One lawn is covered in buttercups and Cat's Ears and another with Dog Daisies. Where have all the tiny black pollen beetles gone? One year even the washing on the line was covered with them but we have not seen any this year. Foxgloves gave a good display which resulted in Foxglove Pugs appearing in our moth trapping during June. With the hot weather we have had more moths in the trap, especially grass moths, which is good news for the Noctule bat. Larger moths are now appearing, and we have had Elephant Hawk moths.



Deilephila elpenor - Elephant Hawkmoth

The caterpillar feeds on Willow Herb plants so leave some in your garden which will help these beautiful moths to survive. I think the flowers are lovely and they are easy to pull up later. We have also had the lovely Light Emerald Moth whose caterpillar feeds on a wide range of deciduous trees and shrubs. The Beautiful Hook-tip with its unusually shaped wings is a striking moth. Riband Wave is frequently in the trap, and it is one of my favourite moths. Its caterpillar feeds on Dandelion and Dock amongst other things. Not so welcome is the appearance of 17 Box Moths in the trap.

Although a beautiful moth its caterpillars live on Box, *Buxus sempervirens*, which they can completely defoliate. They are tent caterpillars and spin a web under which they devour the leaves. So, if you have a Box hedge keep your eyes open for it.



Cydalima perspectalis - Box Moth

More butterflies are about due to the hot, dry weather and the wind easing. The garden is a hive of activity with Large and Small Whites, Ringlet and Holly Blues. A Large Skipper has also been in the garden for a few days. Earlier the Red and White Valerian attracted the odd Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Painted Lady and Red Admiral but in no great numbers. On 12th June I saw a Hummingbird Hawk Moth in the gennel but have not seen it since. With these fast flyers it is usually a case of being in the right place at the right time.

Look out for Shield bugs which blend well into their backgrounds. They like brambles and can often be seen on blackberries. I discovered a Common Green Shield Bug laying eggs, like little green jellies, on a leaf of my courgette plant. I was very lucky also to see two Parent Shield Bugs actually doing what their name suggests. They were on the same leaf and were brooding young of different instars (stages). I have also seen a Grasshopper on my lawn which happens in very hot summers.

My tadpoles have not fared well. Out of 4 small tanks only one had any left, which I moved to a safer place after finding the guilty party, a male Palmate Newt, in one of the tanks. The remainder are doing well, and I have put 9 froglets near the pond. A neighbouring pond was being filled in before new owners moved into the house. I was concerned about the creatures living in it and approached the builders about this. They subsequently kindly brought me three large frogs they had rescued, which I put in my pond. They may even be frogs that I have reared in the past. The more people who have a pond or even a small sink or similar in their garden to attract amphibians the better. They need all the help they can get especially in these heatwaves.

Despite the lack of rain most things look lush, but the humidity has been high. Some plants are showing signs of stress. Rowan berries are almost ripe which does not bode well for the winter visitors, such as Waxwing, who rely on these berries. Maybe they will come to feeders. It has also been very windy and we need rain soon.

Derek Hastings S10 – 17.6.26 – Derek was coming back from a walk and stood for twenty minutes watching three Red Kites circling above Rivelin and Lodge Moor. He says that for the most part two were together with the third eventually flying towards Stannington. On several occasions the Kites were chased by what looked like a Crow. To cap the experience there was a Kestrel which was hovering, probably above Lodge Lane. It then flew over the Hospital Site towards Redmires Plantation in the direction the Red Kites had flown. It was quite a sight to watch them ascending and then swooping low over the field below the Hospital Site.

Sue Shaw S10 – 6/2026 – Sue also had an experience 'Worthy of Springwatch!' whilst on an evening walk. She was walking down Coppice Road keeping a lookout for deer which are sometimes seen in the fields beyond Bell Hagg, when a Barn Owl appeared hunting over the fields. She watched it until it drifted behind trees. She walked further down and saw a Buzzard being mobbed by a Kestrel. Next minute the Barn Owl appeared and flew off with a small mammal in its talons, closely followed by the Kestrel. They both ended up on the ground. The Kestrel lifted off, apparently 'empty handed'. She did not see the Owl so thought that was still on the ground eating the prize. How exciting to see interaction between three different birds of prey.



Aeshna cyanea -
Southern Hawker -
Larva

Christine Roe S10 - 27.6.26 - Christine noticed some strange insects on iris leaves in her lovely pond. This turned out to be the ferocious predatory larva of the Southern Hawker dragonfly, *Aeshna cyanea*. (Probably the empty larval cases from which the adult dragonflies had emerged.)

Jack Nuttgens S6 – 6.7.26 – On his walk from Walkley up the Rivelin he saw 3 Kingfishers in different places; 2 Herons – 1 juvenile and 1 adult; 1 Grey Wagtail; Nuthatch; 2 Jays; and lots of Swifts in Walkley. He also saw lots of butterflies in a meadow at the end of the walk including Large White, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, and Gatekeeper. There are more butterflies around lately so now is the time to go a walk in the fields off Manchester Road before the weather breaks.

Joan Buckland

Two Items from Other Sources

Kids Plant Trees

Kids Plant Trees is a local organisation whose purpose is to help children and nature thrive together. (Their website is <http://www.kidsplanttrees.org>.)

Volunteers are currently needed in Stannington: see below.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We're looking for passionate volunteers to help get our community tree nursery up and running. Be part of this exciting project for Sheffield and South Yorkshire!



Tree Nursery Tuesdays

Adult volunteer sessions, 11.30am-2.30pm (term time only)*
Townfield Head Farm, Stannington, Sheffield

*Other days and times may be added - see booking page for upcoming sessions

What you might be doing

- Planting tree seeds, repotting saplings
- Digging beds, weeding, mulching, watering
- Building raised beds and protective frames
- Other tasks - there's something for all abilities
- Help behind the scenes also welcome



Find out more and book your place
Visit tickettailor.com/events/kidsplanttrees/2178027, scan the QR code or email us at treenursery@kidsplanttrees.org



Rivelin Valley Bus Service?

You may be interested in this petition asking the South Yorkshire Mayor to fund a new bus service between Rivelin Valley and Hillsborough Interchange to alleviate congestion and pollution along Rivelin Valley Road.

<https://www.megaphone.org.uk/.../bring-back-a-rivelin...?>

Crosspool Festival June 2026

One of the Crosspool Festival highlights is the Crosspool well-dressing, sponsored by Layers, beautifully created by the Crosspool Forum Well-dressing Team, in support of local charities. Coming up with the theme and the design, gathering the materials, and creating the final display is an enormous achievement. It is unknown whether a well actually ever existed in Crosspool, but the presence of underground springs is reason to celebrate the life-giving water.



Crosspool Festival 2026 Well-dressing celebrating 40 years of Care in Crosspool.

The RVCG play an important part in soaking the boards for a week in its trailer and then delivering the boards to the well-dressing team, who disappear into a garage for a few days. On Friday 26 June the RVCG trailer was used to transport the completed boards to their location at the junction of Watt Lane and Selbourne Road where it was installed by a small group of volunteers. In the evening the well-dressing was blessed by the Revd Tracey Morris during a short ceremony.

Sunday 28th June was the Street Fair on Selbourne Road where the RVCG had a double gazebo. Unexpectedly, the clouds gathered and rain threatened which wasn't forecast but fortunately there wasn't enough to spoil the event. There was a lot of interest in the RVCG stall with its model mill from the passing public.

It was lovely to meet so many people interested in the Rivelin Valley and the work of the RVCG Task Team and we are very grateful for all your generous contributions.



The RVCG model mill attracting passing families. Photo: Joan Buckland

Graham Appleby

Stannington Carnival 11 July

Once again RVCG had a stall at the Stannington Carnival. It was a gloriously sunny day and the RVCG gazebos were a godsend for providing shade. Lots of people showed an interest in the work of RVCG, shared their memories of Rivelin and signed up to become RVCG members. Younger people enjoyed the activities provided by Joan Buckland and the model of the mill created quite some interest.

Mark Bateman

Environment Weeks Walks 23/24 May

As usual Graham Appleby organised a guided walk beginning at Malin Bridge with a gentle mile stroll to Rivelin Park. The history of Main Bridge is mostly about the Sheffield Flood of 1864 and there is the working water wheel of the old Malin flour mill. The walk then begins looking at the confluence of the Rivelin and Loxley rivers, then passing the site of Grogam Wheel. The highlight of the tour usually includes entrance to Mousehole Forge, however, due to circumstances beyond our control, this was not possible and we had to be satisfied staring through the old Mousehole gates. We then progressed passing Mousehole dam, Havelock Dam (originally Walkley Bank Tilt Forge), Hollins mill weir, the longest in the valley and finally coming to a close outside the Rivelin café which was the site of Spooners Wheel. People seemed quite enthralled, and RVCG gained a few new members and sold some Walking the Rivelin books. Hopefully, Mousehole Forge will become accessible again for future events.

Graham Appleby

Wildlife Reflections

Relaxing on my patio surrounded by lots of plants gives me the opportunity to observe the visiting insects. The *Alchemilla Mollis* and flowering oregano are a magnet for many insects such as honeybees, bumblebees, cabbage whites and small brown butterflies and a myriad of solitary bees. The lengthy hot dry summer appears to have benefitted the insect population which in turn will benefit the bird and bat populations. Most bees live in walls or underground and so are mostly insulated from the intense heat. Honeybees are very good at dealing with the heat and the cold and so I wouldn't expect this current heat wave to cause them a problem and many beekeepers can expect a bumper harvest.



Honeybee (apis mellifera mellifera) on oregano

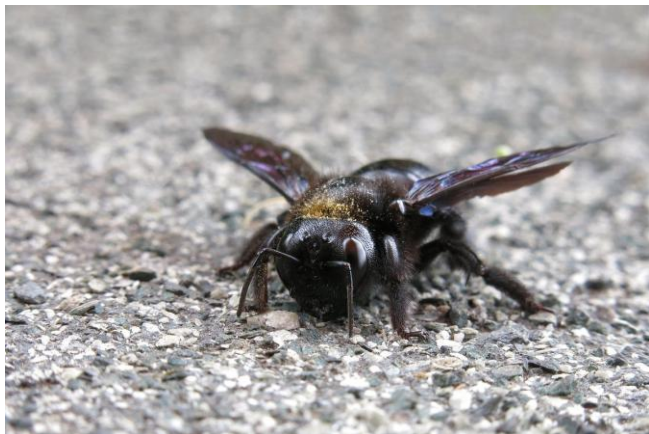
I am also a volunteer swarm collector. Anyone with a honeybee swarm can go to the BBKA website and obtain the contact details of a local beekeeper. However, it has been particularly quiet this year which is also a bit of a concern considering I had about 10 calls by about this time last year. Some calls are from people with bumblebee problems and while we are specifically organised to rescue honeybees, I usually attend bumblebee calls and give advice as a duty of public service. I have had two recent bumblebee calls, and, in both cases I managed to successfully relocate the nest.



Bumblebee nest found under a garden flagstone

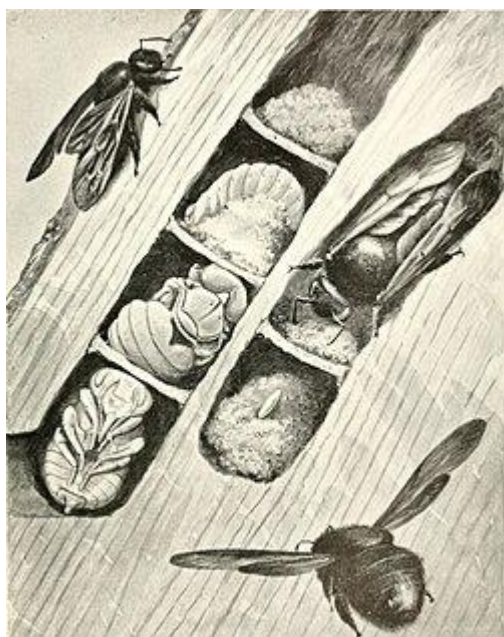
I will only remove a nest as a last resort usually in the interest of public safety. Bees and wasps will rarely attack you unless you stumble into close proximity of their nest and usually most people are stung by accident. Bumblebees are particularly gentle and it is best to just gently waft them away if they come too close.

Another type of bee drew my attention on my patio. I have a pile of logs waiting to be chopped up and in the end of one of them, I noticed a bee with a green leaf disappear into a tiny hole in the log. Over a few days, more holes appeared, I assume dug out by the same bee into which it deposited a green leaf which seemed to come from a lemon verbena and just used to line the nest. This was a 'carpenter bee' one of 250 species of solitary bee in the UK and why popular insect houses are full of holes to provide ready-made homes for these insects.



Carpenter bee (Xylocopa xylocopinae)
Photo: beekeepercorner.com

Its life cycle is as follows: In the spring, an adult will mate and then bore a hole into soft wood and create a number of wax cells which it fills with pollen and nectar and deposits an egg after which the adult dies. Male eggs are laid towards the entrance so that they emerge first. A male egg is an unfertilized egg. The adult female will probably deposit 6 or 7 eggs in its lifetime. The babies are born in the summer and fatten up ready to hibernate through the winter. In the spring the whole cycle starts again.



The carpenter bee nest (courtesy of Wikipedia)

I, like many, have allowed the grass to grow in my garden. You only have to walk through it gently to see the insect habitation. Clover is particularly attractive to bees, and the long grass also harbours many moths. Also, the longer grass has protected the lawn from the intense heat we have all been experiencing. Where I have cut paths through, the shorter

grass has turned brown although it will probably recover once the rains return. Another interesting aspect of allowing a lawn to grow naturally is the variety of plants that pop up in different areas of the lawn.



Common yarrow (Achillea millefolium)

I recognised this flower as a variety similar to one I had tried to grow unsuccessfully in my flowerbeds and here it was, growing naturally in the lawn. I have now cut the long grass back which was a bit harrowing as I realised I was removing a wildlife habitat which was full of moths, a couple of frogs and amazingly, a smooth newt! But it did offer them a temporary respite over summer.



Smooth newt (Lissotriton vulgaris)

Graham Appleby