

FRIENDS OF NORTHCLIFFE



# Northcliffe News

June 2011

1990 - 2011 21 Years of Caring for Northcliffe

## Events

(All contact details on page 7.) For more events please see [www.friendsofnorthcliffe.org.uk](http://www.friendsofnorthcliffe.org.uk)

### **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 7 - 8.30pm Conservation Evening**

Himalayan balsam control. Meet at the model railway near the Cliffe Wood Avenue entrance. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear. Contact: Julia.

### **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 10am - 12pm Conservation Morning**

Himalayan balsam control. Details as above.

### **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2pm - 4.30pm Northcliffe Rae Gala**

Join us at the model railway for an extended range of traditional activities including a variety of live acoustic music, Hall Royd brass band, belly dancing, children's dancing, donkey rides, ferret racing, coconut shy, children's activity corner, face painting, wet sponge throwing, giant games and storytelling to suit all ages. The owls and the hedgehogs will make their regular visit and, for those who require a little therapy, we have Indian head massage and the Drum Circle's thumb drummer. Raffle prizes can be won on the day for all those wanting to help us raise funds for the future development of Northcliffe. Asian food, cakes and sweets are all available for those wanting a tasty treat. Contact: Melanie.

### **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2pm - 5pm Northcliffe Cream Teas**

A new venture - Fairtrade tea and coffee, homemade scones and cakes and good company at the Northcliffe Community Hut, Northcliffe Allotments, Northcliffe. Contact: Hugh.

### **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 7 - 8.30pm Conservation Evening**

Himalayan balsam control. Details as 21<sup>st</sup> June.

### **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 7pm Planning Meeting**

At Northcliffe Bowling Club, Rae Road. Members and prospective members are welcome. Contact: Sheila.

### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 12pm to 4pm Northcliffe Family Olympics - Marie Curie**

Support us in raising awareness and funds for cancer care. Details of how to enter and sponsorship forms will be available on our website soon. Contact: Melanie.

### **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 7pm Planning Meeting**

At the Kirkgate Community Centre, Kirkgate, Shipley Members and prospective members are welcome. Contact: Sheila.

### **Easter - October Railway rides**

On most Sunday afternoons Bradford Model Engineering Society will be operating trains.

### **Cover picture**

Germander speedwell on Norman Rae Playing Fields by Keith Scott

## **Chair's Chat**

Welcome to the latest edition of Northcliffe News. After the snowy winter and hot and dry April I wonder what awaits us over the coming months? Whatever the weather, I hope you will be able to get out and enjoy Northcliffe and perhaps join us at one of our many events or conservation activities.

### **Membership**

A warm welcome to the following new members: Simon Allan, Richard & Rebekah Ashworth, Jenny and John Biglands, Barbara Binder, Paul Bruzzese, Sue & Gordon Butler, Liz and Andy Dale, P W & J Ditchfield and Mark, Lydia, Martha and Reuben Drake, Val Ellis, Hazel Fawley, Lou & Ged Futter, Geraldine and Nola Graham, Aly Guy, Jim Jennings, Georgina Katborg, Jennie Kiff, John Lee, Phil and Nikola Morrison, Ken Shipley, Clive Spendlove, Debs Tighe, Irene and Jim Vidler, Anita, Ryan and Elhana Wilkinson, Annette and Paul Wilkinson, Anne Wooff and, last but not least, Anthony and Andrea Bourke. Membership subscriptions were due on 1<sup>st</sup> April - thank you to all who have renewed. Those of you who have yet to do so should find a final reminder with this mailing. The good news is we have decided not increase membership rates for this year.

### **Blast from the past!**

When doing some much needed tidying up I came across the first few copies of Northcliffe News, produced 15 years ago. Like now, Sheila was Secretary, Lisa was Newsletter Editor, Jenny was a Committee member and I was Chair. However, Lisa and I subsequently took rather long sabbaticals! In those days we were planting the pond, carrying out woodland management and planning for the Gala. Some things never change! I hope to add the newsletters to the website soon.

### **Events - help needed**

As we organise more and more events we need help to ensure they are successful. With this newsletter you should receive a plea for help from Melanie. Please help if you can.

### **News from the AGM**

I am pleased to report that all the Committee, except June Carter and Margot Rowan, have opted to continue. June and Margot have made a long standing contribution and will continue to be actively involved when time allows. They will be joined by Steve Bruzzese who will take over as Deputy Chair. The remainder of the Committee consists of Hugh Firman (Chair), Jenny Burnell (Committee Member), Sheila Parkin (Secretary), Joan Newman (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Melanie Bruzzese (Events and Promotions Officer), Julia Pearson (Conservation Officer), Lisa Chadwick (Newsletter Editor), Keith Scott (Website Officer), Joan Stevens (Committee Member). The Annual Report is enclosed. Copies of the accounts are available from Joan on request.

### **Communications**

Keith and his daughter Sam continue to work enhancing the website. Please take a look and let him know what you think. If you would like to receive your newsletter by email, enabling us to direct more money into improving and promoting Northcliffe please let me know.

Hugh Firman, Chair

## Conservation News

The winter task of thinning beech saplings from the bluebell areas continued until the end of March with well attended and productive mornings in Northcliffe and Old Spring Woods. We have also started mapping the areas that should be a priority for next winter's thinning.

The water levels in the pond and stream have fluctuated greatly through recent months, from inundation to fairly dry. However the autumn and spring planting of flag iris, meadow sweet and ragged robin are looking successful. The remainder of the plants that the Shipley Area Committee funded to create the marsh area were planted up by Hugh, Joan and me.

The next task in June and July is the removal of Himalayan balsam. This is an invasive non-native weed that has recently been added to the Wildlife and Countryside Act which lists the plants that it is 'an offence to plant or otherwise cause ... to grow in the wild...'. An extensive stand of Himalayan balsam will significantly reduce species richness in the wood and when it dies back in winter the bare ground is prone to erosion. The seeds spread up to 7m when the pods pop, or further if they are transported by water and each plant can produce 800 seeds so colonisation can be rapid. It is essential that plants are removed before the flowers set seed. However, the seed only remains viable in the soil for 18-24 months so a persistent seed bank does not build up. We can use this fact to give us hope in the monumental task of tackling the significant population of balsam in the woods. For inspiration we can take heart from the success that residents have had in Chellow Dene between Rhodesway and Fairweather Green - once rampant, the balsam is now limited to a few plants.

Although you will see bees using the balsam as a source of nectar, this does not compensate for the loss of diversity and the wildlife supported by the plants that are smothered. We will continue to focus on the slopes in the pond area where bluebells, wild angelica, wood sorrel, red campion and many ferns will benefit from the removal of the balsam. See the events page for details of volunteer sessions.

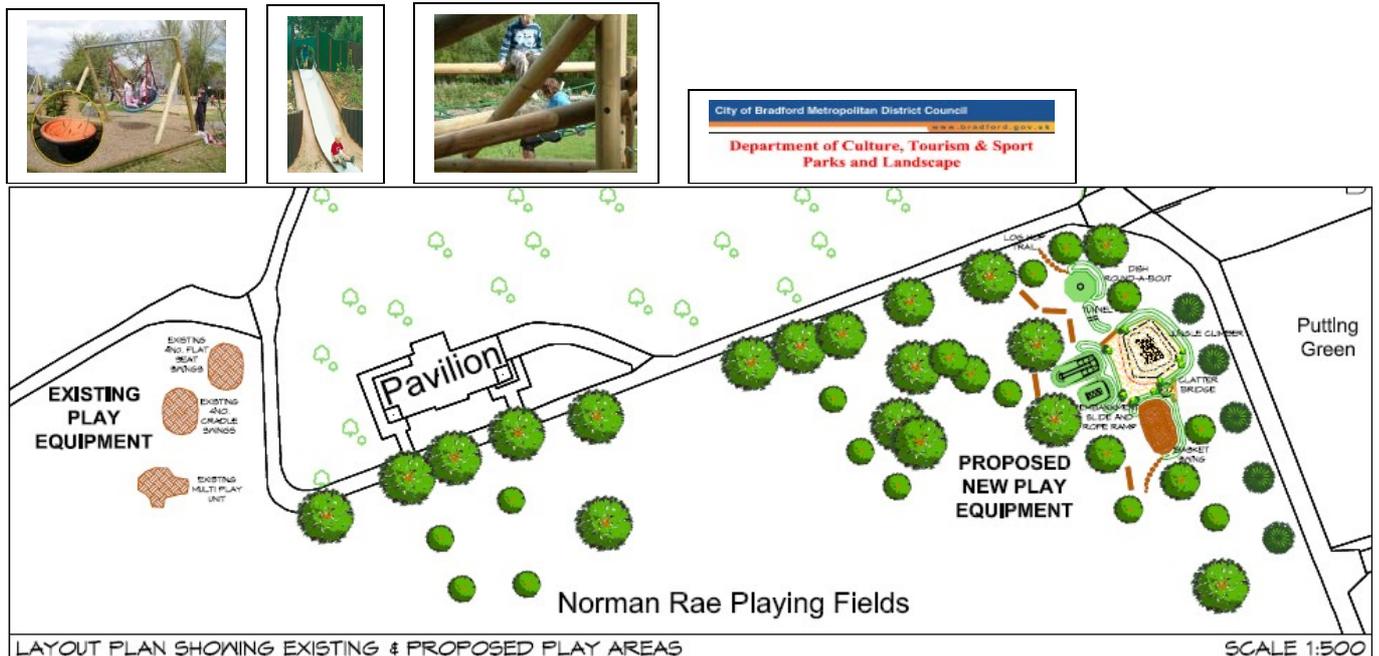
If you feel confident in identifying the plant - once it flowers at a height of 1-2 metres it is unmistakable - please help by pulling some out as you are walking in the woods, piling any plants sensitively. If you would like to 'adopt' a small area to keep free of balsam please let me know.

We have recently heard that funding has been secured from the West Yorkshire Bat Group to installed bat boxes at Northcliffe. If you would like to help with this project please contact Hugh or me or check the website.



Julia Pearson, Conservation Officer

## Children's play area - Funding update



Bradford Council worked in collaboration with the local community and the children of Shipley C of E primary school to design and plan the new children's play area in the Norman Rae Playing Fields. Initially £67,000 of funding was secured by the Council. Unfortunately, due to the cuts last year, that funding was pulled from the local councils. Early this year, 50% of the money was reinstated on the provision that the money was spent by the end of March and the remaining funds were found elsewhere. Friends of Northcliffe has joined forces with Bradford Council and together we are working to secure the remaining £35,360. An application for the Jubilee Lottery Fund put forward by the Friends of Northcliffe early this year was unsuccessful and we are now looking for sponsorship from local business to support us in our efforts. We need 10 to 15% of the total monies before we are eligible to apply for other sources of grant funding. The equipment purchased so far consists of an Amazon jungle climber, tube slide, rope ramp, mini tunnel, intertwine, triple swing and a tree house. All equipment is currently being stored by Bradford Council ready to be installed. If you would like to support us in our efforts please contact Steve or Melanie Bruzzese. [stevebruzzese@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stevebruzzese@yahoo.co.uk) [melbruzzese@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:melbruzzese@yahoo.co.uk) Tel: 530142.

## Northcliffe Nature Notes - Springwatch

A select few (where were you sleepy heads!) enjoyed the Dawn Chorus walk in Old Spring Woods in early May. The chorus and bluebells were magnificent. One of the highlights was a hedgehog snuffling around. After the walk, I spent a glorious morning sitting in the meadow.

I love walking home from school at this time of year. The meadows at the top of High Bank Lane have been stunning; a sea of golden buttercups and the horses looking beautiful. Whilst enjoying the view, I was really pleased to see a beautiful vixen. She crossed the road and ran down into the valley above the golf course. We stopped and stared at each other for ages

before she disappeared into the gorse. I love the path that goes along the top of North Cliffe towards Nab Wood Drive. There is a wonderful patch of bilberry there - worth a visit in July. Yum, yum! There is a little bit of moorland; presumably once there was a lot more. Whilst I was sitting on a tussock, enjoying the afternoon sun and views towards Baildon Moor and St Ives I suddenly sensed that someone was watching me. There was a tawny owl sitting on a branch less than 3 feet away from me. Wow! We looked at each other for a few minutes before it flew off, silently. It just goes to show that it's always worth stopping for a while to drink in the view. Often if we are still enough for long enough the wildlife will come to us.

Scargill highlights - we spend a lot of time volunteering at Scargill House near Kettlewell, which also has glorious meadows! We have been busy controlling bracken for the limestone flora and the rare northern brown argus butterfly. On evenings we love to watch the sunsets and enjoy the spectacular aerial displays of swooping swifts, swallows and house martins.

Recently we've enjoyed some sensational sunsets from the top of the Norman Rae Playing Fields. The meadow is looking glorious and the woods are full of wildlife including lots of baby birds. I do hope you can get out and enjoy them.

Lisa Chadwick Firman

### **Northcliffe - My Spiritual Home**

Dear all,

I have just read your latest newsletter, and I was very moved by the letter from Roger Clarke, he talks of his love of Northcliffe and the comfort it brings to his beloved wife. I to find Northcliffe a truly spiritual place, as I was born in Shipley Maternity home (now Shipley Hospital ) in 1944 I lived in a street now long gone called Ferrand Road. My name was Linda Wilkinson I was baptised at St. Peter's church and went to Albert Road Junior School then to what was, Bingley Modern school.

My love of Northcliffe came from a very young age when my parents Jessie and Fred Wilkinson took me walking over the hills and woods of Northcliffe, when I was old enough to go out alone I played for hours with my friends, hide and seek and rolling down the hill overlooking the glen, playing on the swings and slides. riding my bike over to the Branch side and having a welcome drink in the fountain.

Why I call Northcliffe my spiritual home is because no matter where my life has taken me I always long to be in my favourite place. In 2003 I lived with my husband and daughter in Wharnccliffe Road, where sadly my husband died suddenly , it was cold day in January and as the days moved slowly on I took my little dogs on a daily walk over Northcliffe, and as the seasons changed from winter to spring then into a what was a glorious summer. I found such comfort and felt he was with me, then in 2007 I lost my lovely daughter Debbie, again my long walks through Northcliffe got me through.

On to the present I am now married to a wonderful man and I have moved away to Heckmondwike so I can't get to my Northcliffe as often as I would like, so I want to thank all those people who keep it looking so wonderful, I will be back when I can and I have instructed my family that when I die I want to be scattered Northcliffe - in my spiritual home. God bless Norman Rae. Thank you.

Linda Twohig nee Wilkinson

## Contact details

**Events:** Melanie Bruzzese Tel. 530142 melbruzzese@yahoo.co.uk

**Conservation activities:**

Julia Pearson Tel. 590898 juliapearson24@googlemail.com

**Membership, donations and mailings:**

Joan Newman 42 Moorhead Crescent Tel. 583004

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**Planning meetings:** Sheila Parkin, Secretary, 10 Springswood Avenue Tel. 594518

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**Newsletter:** Lisa Chadwick-Firman, 23 Lynton Drive Tel. 594109

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**Website:** Keith Scott Tel. 585694

keith@the-scott-family.org.uk

**Everything else!:** Hugh Firman, Chair 23 Lynton Drive Tel. 594109

hugh.firman@calderdale.gov.uk

**General enquiries:** friendsofnorthcliffe@talktalk.net

**Web site:** [www.friendsofnorthcliffe.org.uk](http://www.friendsofnorthcliffe.org.uk)

If you are not a member of Friends of Northcliffe but are interested in joining please complete the form below and send it with cash or a cheque made payable to Friends of Northcliffe to Joan Newman at 42 Moorhead Crescent, Shipley, W. Yorks BD18 4LQ

### Friends of Northcliffe membership form.

*Please tick the appropriate boxes*

Individuals £4    Family £6    Concessions £3    Family concessions £5

Donation            New            Renew

**Name(s):**

**Address:**

**Telephone:**

**Email:**

Cheque / cash enclosed for: £

The membership subscription year runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012

## Easter Bunny Steams into Northcliffe Woods

Sunshine brings out families in their hundreds to picnic with the Easter Bunny.

More than 250 people enjoyed a picnic with the Easter Bunny, rides on the model railway and many other activities on the first ever Easter Event in Northcliffe Woods. As the sun shone, children enjoyed an Easter egg hunt, egg throwing and an egg and spoon race. Story tellers, egg decorating, tombola and face painters kept up the interest. Bradford Model Engineering Society provided joy for so many children giving rides on the model railway, with the Easter Bunny being a frequent traveller.



It was lovely to see so many people enjoying the event and we've been surprised at how many turned up. We've got an ambitious programme for Northcliffe this year. We're trying hard to raise funds for a new playground, as well as the conservation work we carry out, so it's great to see everyone coming out to support us.

Thank you to all those volunteers who supported us with their enjoyable and fun activities, the atmosphere would not have been there without you. Despite the success of the event, more volunteers are needed to help with events. If you'd like to get involved or find out more information please call me.



Easter bunny rides the steam train



Racing for the Easter eggs



Children enjoying the storytelling

Melanie Bruzzese