

FRIENDS OF NORTHCLIFFE



1990 - 2010

20 years of caring for Northcliffe



January 2010

Northcliffe News

## **EVENTS**

### **PLANNING MEETINGS**

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January

7pm at the Kirkgate Community Centre, Shipley

Please check the website or contact Sheila for details of future meetings.

*Members and prospective members are welcome at all the meetings.*

### **GUIDED WALKS**

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March, 9<sup>th</sup> May, 5<sup>th</sup> September and 24<sup>th</sup> October

Meet Veronica at 1.45pm for a 2pm start at the Cliffe Wood Avenue entrance for a free gentle walk around Northcliffe Woods to explore the wildlife through the seasons. Veronica Youngson is an extremely knowledgeable local botanist. Please bring suitable clothing and footwear. Contact Hugh for further details.

### **GO WILD IN SHIPLEY!**

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March

10.00am – 12.30pm Shipley Library

An opportunity to learn more about local wildlife. Tea/coffee and light refreshments.

Free admission. Friends of Northcliffe will attend alongside representatives from

seven local wildlife groups. Contact Hugh for further details.

### **CONSERVATION MORNING**

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March

10.00am - 12.00 Meet by the bench at the Golf Club entrance.

Woodland management. Please bring suitable clothing, gloves and footwear and loppers if possible. Contact Hugh for further details.

### **NORTHCLIFFE OPEN EVENING**

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April

7.30-9.30pm Shipley Library

Details to follow

### **COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER**

1<sup>st</sup> April

For further information please visit our website at:

[www.friendsofnorthcliffe.co.uk](http://www.friendsofnorthcliffe.co.uk)

To see a colour version of the Newsletter go to the web-site, **Events and News** page,  
**Keyword is:** woods

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Front Cover

**Old Spring Woods by Lisa Chadwick-Firman**

## **(Acting) Chair's Chat**

I am writing this on yet another glorious winter's day, with the sun glistening on a carpet of fresh snow. I hope you have been able to get out and about in Northcliffe over the last few weeks. I feel really privileged living within walking distance of this special place. If this report is shorter than usual it is because I have yielded to the temptation of Northcliffe and headed out for another walk!

2010 is a very significant year for Friends of Northcliffe. Not only does it mark our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is 150 years since the birth of Sir Norman Rae and the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his gift of Northcliffe to the people of Shipley. Happy New Year!

### **Can you help?**

I make no apology for making yet another plea for help. We still need a **Treasurer** (my grateful thanks to Joan Newman for temporarily filling this role), **Conservation Officer** (to take the lead on conservation matters), **Events Officer** (to coordinate the events programme) and **Promotion Officer** (to promote Friends of Northcliffe and Northcliffe). Existing committee members (many of whom have other voluntary, work and family commitments) are temporarily performing these duties as best they can but if we are to be effective in caring for and promoting Northcliffe we urgently need to fill these positions. Please have a serious think about whether you can help and also consider whether a friend or neighbour might be able to help. Please contact me if you would like a chat about what is involved.

### **Guided walks and events**

I am pleased to report that Veronica Youngson will once again be leading guided walks for us. Veronica will be well known to many of you and is extremely knowledgeable about Northcliffe Woods and its wildlife. We are taking part in the first 'Go Wild in Shipley!' event on 13<sup>th</sup> March. Why not pop along and say hello? If you would like to help set up the display or help on the day please contact me. The next Rae Gala will be, as usual, held in June. If you would like to help organise it, please contact June Carter.

### **The 'Norman Rae Meadows'**

In the last newsletter I enthusiastically reported that Bradford Council had changed the management of large parts of the Norman Rae Playing Fields with the intention for it to be transformed into a hay meadow. The idea was to replace the frequent cuts with a single hay cut in late summer /early autumn, removing the cuttings being essential to maintain the diversity of wild flowers. Unfortunately, it was not possible for the hay cut to be removed in 2009.

### **The Children's Play Area**

As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, Bradford Council are seeking our views on introducing 'natural play' and moving the play area to a more accessible location. Please read the article and respond to the consultation if you have any views.

## **Communications**

If you would like to receive occasional short email updates about Northcliffe events, wildlife sightings and news please email [friendsofnorthcliffe@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:friendsofnorthcliffe@blueyonder.co.uk).

## **Other News in Brief**

Northcliffe Allotments Society now has a meeting room and educational centre on the allotments. Bradford Council is carrying out improvements to the Bowls pavilion. A small 'woodland circle' has been created for use by Woodcraft Folk and Forest Schools.

## **Thank you**

To all the contributors, Lisa, of course, for editing and Margot and Saffron for computer loan. Bradford Council despatched the postal copies and a small team of volunteers delivered local copies.

Hugh Firman, Acting Chair

Thank you Hugh, for that and for your dedication, working away indoors, on a glorious, sunny Sunday afternoon! I felt it my duty (on the other hand) to get out and around Northcliffe. Well, I needed a photo for the front cover!! Hope you appreciate my sacrifice too!!! ED.

## **Northcliffe Nature Notes**

Happy New Year!!

It's Monday 4th January and I'm sitting on a bench in Northcliffe, in the warm winter sunshine, writing these notes and enjoying the view from the hilltop across Ilkley Moor. The hills look stunning in the snow. I have a flask of nice, warm tea with Christmas cake and cheese; I could be on holiday, it's so glorious up here. The moors look a lot closer, with their snowy blankets on. I feel as if I'm having a good day's walk in the Dales. We're so blessed to have all this on our doorsteps. Thank you Sir Norman Rae! I know for some of you it's difficult to get out in the snow; but may I encourage you, if you are at all able, to get out and enjoy these glorious scenes. I try to get out every day....it's such a good cure for the winter blues. If you can't get out I hope you can enjoy these nature notes.

I've just seen a sparrow hawk flying low along the trees below me....he's no doubt hoping to flush something out! Yesterday, as I was walking through Old Spring Wood, I was alerted by a very indignant sparrow shouting at the top of his voice. I looked up to see him being chased very closely by a sparrow hawk in hot pursuit! I'm afraid I'd never make a BBC camera woman, as they have to vow not to intervene. I instinctively shouted, 'NO!! NAUGHTY! GET OFF HIM!! ' ....and to my relief (and no doubt, his) the spuggie got away....I know Mr Sparrow hawk needs to eat and I apologize to all you purists...I just couldn't stop myself!

Earlier, on my walk through Old Spring Woods, I spotted a tiny wren fly in and out of a hole in some tree roots. The roots of this tree must provide cover for many a wee beastie, as they are very gnarled with many a nook and cranny providing warm and dry hideaways, which much be appreciated in all this snow! I wondered if it was one of the fledglings from our nest box two years ago; a timely reminder that soon it will be a good time to clean out our nest boxes. This reminds me of a story told to me in Scotland..... A young man was intending to clean out the nest boxes in his garden, so he dutifully brought them inside the house with every intention of cleaning them. He left them in the kitchen for a while, no doubt enjoying a well earned cuppa. When he returned to his kitchen it was alive with tiny wrens, flying and hopping sleepily about everywhere! Over 20 had been crammed into one tiny nest box, snuggled up together to keep warm. The heat of the house had stirred them and they were now very groggy and confused. (I know that feeling...every morning!) Wrens will often group together like this to keep warm. So, perhaps we should leave those nest boxes a little longer?!

I have also recently seen a lot of finches in the woods, finding seeds in the tree tops. There has been a lot of goldfinches and long-tailed tits in Old Spring Woods this year. I have also regularly seen a woodcock at dusk, just below the sledging hill. It must be over wintering with us.

I have loved watching everyone enjoying the park, in the snow. It has looked glorious. We have had great fun watching all the sledgers. Can you remember those wonderful meadows we enjoyed over the summer on those gloriously long summer evenings? It seems so long a go now! However, I can see my snowdrops pushing up through the snow, bless 'em. They bring me so much joy and a reminder that spring is only around the corner!

Lisa Chadwick (Ed)

### **Conservation News**

On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November I was joined by Joan Newman and Sheila Parkin for a productive morning's work. We were working at the west end of Northcliffe Woods, near the Golf Club entrance, where there is a good display of bluebells in Spring. However, the bluebells are threatened by the spread of the beech, which is not native to northern England. We cleared large areas of beech saplings but there is still much to do. Why not join us on March 27<sup>th</sup>?

Hugh Firman

## Northcliffe in a Wheelbarrow

On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July a small part of Northcliffe came to Shipley when we entered the Shipley in Bloom 'Garden in a Wheelbarrow' competition. Joan Milligan planted up a child's bath, in a pram, with small plants and trees and decorated it with fungi, leaves and bark. The result was a beautiful and intricate miniature woodland which attracted lots of interest. Thank you Joan!



Photo by Joan Milligan

## Congratulations!

.....to Marlene Young (now Benham) who in December married Richard and has moved to live with him in Burley-in-Wharfedale. Marlene was a long standing committee member and known to many as a permanent fixture in the information tent at the Rae Gala. I am pleased that she will continue to support Friends of Northcliffe. Wishing you both a long and happy life together!



Photo by Joan Newman

## Northcliffe Play Area Consultation

I am pleased to report that Bradford Council's Parks Department has secured £50,000 from the Government's Children, Schools & Families Playbuilder funding scheme to be spent on improving Natural Play for children. This can include the installation of logs, rocks, dips & bumps for more informal & imaginative play, rather than the more structured play that play equipment facilitates.

The Parks Department would like to consult with the Friends of Northcliffe with regard to the following questions:-

- What you think of the current play area?
- What do you think about the possibility of relocating the play area to part of the former Putting Green?
- What are your feelings about natural play?
- Any suggestions, comments, etc. would be greatly received. Please send to Susy Feltham Parks Technical Officer on 01274 432553 or email [susy.feltham@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:susy.feltham@bradford.gov.uk) by February 2010

The Parks Department is engaging with local children to find out how they would like the play opportunities in Northcliffe Park to be improved. Initial comments from children taking part in the summer play schemes related to the long, steep access to the play area and some thought that it would be good to have somewhere to serve refreshments.

Further, more detailed consultation has taken place at Shipley C of E School and these ideas will be collated to produce a draft outline design for a new natural play area. This final design requires approval from the funder in April 2010 and has to be installed and completed by March 2011.

Gillian Biggs, Project Development Officer, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Dec 2009

### Current Play Area



Current Play Area



Proposed location of new natural Play Area

# FRIENDS OF NORTHCLIFFE



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

### Friends of Northcliffe membership form

*Please tick the appropriate boxes*

Individuals £3  Family £5  Concessions (if you cannot afford standard rate) £2   
Donation  New  Renew

**Name(s):**

**Address:**

**Telephone:**

**Email:**

Cheque enclosed for £

### Membership Subscriptions

The membership subscription year runs from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

You can use the above form to renew your membership.

**When you have read this newsletter please pass onto a friend or neighbour**