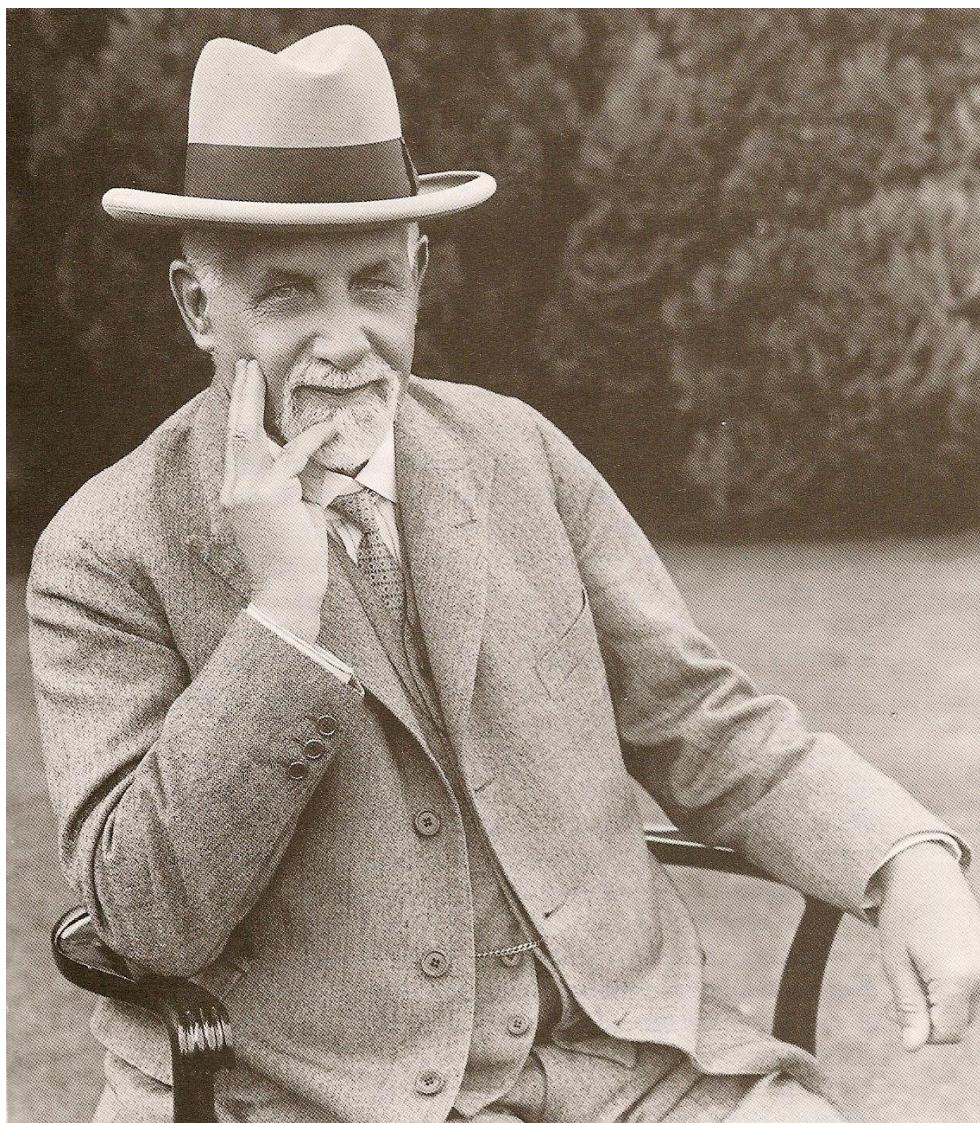




1990 - 2010  
20 years of caring for Northcliffe



Sir Norman Rae - born 1860 - 150 years ago

# Northcliffe News

May 2010

## GUIDED WALKS

For all guided walks please wear suitable clothing and footwear

~~Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September Guided walk - cancelled~~

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2pm Fungi and Fruits Woodland Walk**

Meet Veronica at the Cliffe Wood Avenue entrance for a free gentle walk around Northcliffe Woods to discover the rich variety of fungi and fruits and enjoy the autumn colours. Veronica Youngson is an extremely knowledgeable local botanist. Contact Melanie for further details.

## NORTHCLIFFE RAE GALA

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2 - 4.30pm** See next page for further details

## CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

For all conservation work parties please wear suitable clothing and footwear and bring gloves and insect repellent. For more information contact Julia on 590898.

**Friday 25th June**

Friends of Northcliffe will join with BEES (Bradford Environmental Education Service) Conservation Volunteers to make a start on Himalayan Balsam removal. We will start in the area near the pond, where we will also work to clear the silt trap at the inlet and repair the revetment on the bank to prevent further slippage of soil into the pond. We will also do some path clearance. **Meet near the miniature railway at 10.15am** or find us in the woods later on. We will work until 3.30pm. BEES mobile is 07970 621732

**Wednesday 7th July 7pm - 8.30pm**

An evening of Himalayan Balsam control. Meet at the gate on Cliffe Wood Avenue

**Tuesday 27th July 7pm - 8.30pm**

More Himalayan Balsam control. We will return the patches we tackled in earlier sessions to remove any re-growth. Meet at the gate on Cliffe Wood Avenue.

## PLANNING MEETINGS

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July**

7.30pm at the Kirkgate Community Centre, Kirkgate, Shipley

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

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

## OTHER

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 10am onwards**

Bradford Model Engineering Society Open Day, Northcliffe Woods

## COPY DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

**1<sup>st</sup> September**

# Let's Celebrate

## 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Sir Norman Rae

## 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

The Gift of Northcliffe

## 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Friends of Northcliffe

## 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Rae Gala

# Rae Gala

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June

2pm to 4.30pm

This year's Rae Gala is a celebration not to be missed and will be bigger and better than ever. As usual it will be held adjacent to the miniature railway near the Cliffe Wood Avenue entrance to Northcliffe Woods. Here is a taster of some of the events we will run on the day:

Live music	Miniature Railway rides	
Ferret Racing	Pony rides	Indian head massage
Children activity corner	Raffle prizes	
'Grow Your Own' stall	Asian food stall	
Face Painting		

If you are interested in having a stall please contact Melanie. Donations to help support the Gala should be made to Joan Newman. All donations will be mentioned in all PR in the lead up to the Gala.



## Chair's Chat

### Thank you!

I am delighted to announce that Mr Norman Woodhead, grandson of Sir Norman Rae and a life member of Friends of Northcliffe, has recently made an extremely generous donation of £1000. It is extremely timely, this year being 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. We are considering how to appropriately spend the money. If you have any ideas please contact Joan Newman or me.

### Welcome!

A special welcome to those who have joined the Group since the last newsletter: Anne Bryan, Brian Byrne, Roger & Bronwyn Clarke, June Coulton, Phillip & Pat Dewhirst, Bob Firth, John & Catherine Kershaw, Humera Khan, Jane Liddle, Elizabeth & Duncan Milwain, Melanie Obeney, Steve Buzzese, Julia Pearson, Alex Ross, Sarah Shaw, Barbara Winslow, Betty Dickinson and Mary Narayn-Lee & family.

## **Can you help? Yes we can!**

It makes an extremely pleasant change not to be appealing for officers and I am delighted to welcome Melanie Obeney and Julia Pearson onto the Committee. Both live locally and bring enthusiasm, skill and a love of Northcliffe.

## **News from the AGM**

We held an extremely well-attended Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. 17 heard presentations of the Annual Report and the Annual Accounts. The Committee to serve for the next year was elected and consists of Hugh Firman (Chair), Jenny Burnell (Deputy Chair), Sheila Parkin (Secretary), Joan Newman (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Melanie Obeney (Events and Promotions Officer), Julia Pearson (Conservation Officer), Lisa Chadwick (Newsletter Editor), Keith Scott (Website Officer), June Carter (Rae Gala Coordinator), Margot Rowan (Committee Member), Joan Stevens (Committee Member). Tracy Sidaway stood down. Many thanks for your work over the years, Tracy.

## **Membership subscriptions**

It was agreed at the AGM to increase subscriptions by £1 to help to cover running costs, including the cost of producing 3 newsletters each year. I hope that you will view the rates as good value. If you have not yet renewed you will receive a letter with this newsletter.

## **Guided walks and events**

We attended the first 'Go Wild in Shipley!' event on 13th March, alongside seven other local groups. This proved a great opportunity for people to learn more about friends of Northcliffe. On 29<sup>th</sup> April twenty people attended our first Open Evening and heard a presentation about Sir Norman Rae and watched Keith's excellent pictures of Northcliffe wildlife. Susy Feltham described Bradford Council's plans for a new play area and everybody had the chance to learn about forthcoming events and have their say about the management of Northcliffe.

## **Conservation News**

We had a good turnout for the second woodland management morning of the winter. I was joined by Sheila, Joan, Ann, Bob\* (who joined Friends of Northcliffe just a week earlier!), Keith (but don't tell Mrs Scott!) and Julia (our new Conservation Officer). We made excellent progress at the west end of Northcliffe Woods clearing beech saplings. Beech, which is not native to northern England, if left unchecked will create a dense shade and bluebells will eventually die out. Watch out for more woodland management work parties next winter. Meanwhile, why not join Julia and help control the Himalyan balsam menace?

## **Communications**

If you would like to receive occasional short email updates about Northcliffe events, wildlife sightings and news email: [friendsofnorthcliffe@taktalk.net](mailto:friendsofnorthcliffe@taktalk.net) (note the change of address)

Hugh Firman, Chair

\* I am sorry to report that Bob Firth was recently severely injured in a road accident. He is now at home and on the mend - we wish you well, Bob!

## About Sir Norman Rae and the Gift of Northcliffe

Norman was born 150 years ago, in 1860, the son of James Rae, a Congregational Minister and Elizabeth Dewey, whose family farmed in the Listerhills Area.

On leaving school, Norman chose an apprenticeship in the wool trade rather than studying at University. He began his career as a wool buyer for Abraham Brookes, a wealthy wool merchant in Batley. He also was a member of Hanover Congregational Church, as were the Rae family - a man of scrupulous honesty in all his dealings.

Norman worked hard and progressed well - he was a competent organist and loved music. He married Miss Emily Cass of Carlinghow in 1883 - she was a well known soloist in the Batley area. They were married at Batley Independent church, with Norman's father performing the ceremony. Their first home was in Batley, but they later moved to North Park Road, in Bradford. By now Norman had his own business as Abraham Brook had ceased trading. He later moved to Harrogate and, in 1904, he was elected to the West Riding County Council - he was a staunch Liberal.

When war was declared in 1914, he made an arrangement for all the men who worked for him, and were called up, to have their army pay brought up to the same level as they were receiving from him before the war started. He also took them all back after the war finished. In 1918, the Liberal Party selected Norman as their coalition candidate for Shipley and he was duly elected with an overwhelming majority.

In 1919, the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rosse put Northcliffe Woods and the adjacent fields up for auction. When it was bought for the people of Shipley it was described as 'A useful agricultural occupation - known as North Cliffe Farm with well equipped farm buildings. The farm house is now used by the Bowling club and stands at the side of the bowling greens. Northcliffe Cottage and gardens, with workshop, was also included. Each lot to include part of Northcliffe woods. When it came up for sale, Shipley Council showed an interest with a view to it becoming building land for houses. They withdrew at the last minute. Presumably the asking price of £12,500 for the 114 acres was too costly.

On hearing of the sale of the land, Norman Rae decided to view the site. He was greatly impressed and, before leaving Shipley that evening to return to his home in Harrogate, he intimated that he might bear the cost of the purchase. The only condition which he would make was that the whole of the estate should be devoted to the benefit of the people of Shipley. If you look to the left of the main gates, you will see a plaque to that effect. This action fulfilled Norman Rae's dream of bringing the countryside nearer to the people for their pleasure and relaxation. A special meeting of the Council was held and the members were pleased to accept Norman Rae's offer to purchase the land for the people of Shipley, with the condition that it was kept for that purpose.

Ninety years ago, on June 12<sup>th</sup> 1920, the official Opening was held when Norman Rae would officially hand over the deeds to Shipley Council. The ceremony was performed at the new entrance by the Keepers Cottage at the entrance to the woods. Elaborate plans were made for the opening. 4,000 school children met at Otley Road Council School and processed to the woods with the Shipley Brass Band. Norman Rae was accompanied by his wife, family members, Council officials, the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Bradford and many other dignitaries. It was a beautiful summer day and his grand-daughter Marion Jean Woodhead declared the woods 'open'. You can see from the photograph, taken from the official book, that she was just a small girl. Norman remarked in his speech that amassing wealth merely for the love of money was a sorry business at best, and by the use we make of our opportunities, whether by deed or gift, we must be judged.



Sir Norman Rae died on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1928, just two years after his wife. Fortunately, through Friends of Northcliffe, his legacy remains an important part of the life of the town.

June Carter (based on information in "Sir Norman Rae, Local Benefactor" by Gladys Shuttleworth and Margaret Walker.

Copies of this wonderful book, that contains a wealth of information about Sir Norman Rae and Northcliffe, are available at the bargain price of £2. To obtain your copy, telephone Roger Clarke on 01274 592944. All proceeds to Friends of Northcliffe and Saltaire History Club.

## Northcliffe Nature Notes and Lynton Garden Ramblings

**WOW!** What a marvellous month of May we are having!

It's been a glorious month and I'm glad to say that for some of it I did not have my car! The walks home from school, along High Bank Lane, have been glorious! The meadows are brilliant yellow with buttercups. I love stopping to feed the donkeys (they're soooooooooo cute!). Where else could be better!

Hugh and I have spent several evenings at the top of Northcliffe enjoying the evening sun and wonderful sunsets. One evening, I did not get home from school until after 11pm! It was such a beautiful evening; rounded off by the most stunning sunset I have ever seen anywhere in the world! Then I was captivated by the bats and the owls and the beautiful moonlight. It beats watching telly!

I have never known the bluebells in Old Spring Woods as glorious as they have been this year. I could catch their scent as I walked down High Bank Lane from well above the golf course!

Ten of us enjoyed a wonderful dawn chorus walk on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>. The singing was glorious. The blackbirds were awake first then others joined in: robins, wrens, wood pigeons and collared doves were most common. We heard warblers too; chiffchaff and others. The bluebells were a superb backdrop to our avian treat. We also were treated to watching a pair of greater spotted woodpeckers nesting and feeding their young.

I have regularly seen lesser spotted woodpecker too, flying out of Old Springs Wood and across the slopes near the golf club, whilst enjoying a well earned rest on my way home from school!

Don't underestimate the humble dandelion! They were so wonderful this year. A fabulous show along Avondale Road and below the golf club really cheered me up on my way to work!

I enjoyed a brief excursion yesterday and the meadows by Lee Lane and North Bank Road are looking absolutely stunning again. As I stood to admire them I was treated to a glorious skylark duet. All this less than a mile from Shipley! Why go any further? Let's do our bit for the planet and save carbon and get out and enjoy Northcliffe!

The woods and meadows are looking superb just now, in their glorious Spring splendour. I do hope you can get out and enjoy them. Three cheers for Norman Rae!

Thanks also to Hugh, for serving as acting Ed this time, as I've not been well and working full time is seriously cramping my style!

God bless.

Lisa Chadwick (Ed)



## CONTACT DETAILS

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**Membership, donations and mailings:**

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joanandmartin@tiscali.co.uk

**Planning meetings:** Sheila Parkin, Secretary, 10 Springswood Avenue Tel. 594518  
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**Everything else!:** Hugh Firman, Chair 23 Lynton Drive Tel. 594109  
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**General enquiries:** friendsofnorthcliffe@talktalk.net (please note new address)

**Web site:** www.friendsofnorthcliffe.co.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, West  
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 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011