



# FRIENDS OF NORTHCLIFFE

NEWSLETTER  
March 2015



#### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The beginning of another year, where did last year go, and this is a special year for Friends of Northcliffe. In November 2015 it will be the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of Friends. During the year you will be hearing more about this – particularly in the winter edition of the Newsletter. Thinking that far ahead if anybody has any old photos of Northcliffe that they would like to share, or memories, etc please do send them in to me – the sooner the better please so that the committee has time to consider everything (I am hoping to be deluged with items!).

I am wondering if the Conservation Officer is aware of a new breed that seems to be multiplying at the golfcourse end of the park and seems to flourish during the winter – this photo was taken in February. In all seriousness though, if any of these items belong to you would you please remove them. Another thing which we would like to see removed from the park is the “dog poo”! There is an increasing amount being left and this is a health hazard as well as being unsightly and is an unpleasant discovery when you get home and find that you have trailed some, unwittingly, into your home. Please see the notice boards to remind yourselves why it is important to remove “dog poo”. Hopefully in the very near future (if not already) the Green Dog Walkers Scheme will have started in Northcliffe.

Liz Hansen  
Editor



Cover photograph/ Lisa Chadwick-Firman

## WELCOME



The spring weather still seems to be making up its mind whether it's here or not, but the woods and the wildlife seem to have made up their own minds. Bulbs sprouting, woodpeckers hammering, buds bursting – Northcliffe is springing back into glorious Technicolor after what seems to have been an unusually short winter.

A new year brings new opportunities. At our AGM in January, my wife Melanie stood down as Events Officer after five years in the position. It's not just me saying it (I have to, I'm her husband!), but lots of people have said many kind words about the tremendous difference Melanie has made in that time. She leaves a legacy of successful and vibrant events that have a unique sense of community to them, something that's always been important to her. The opportunity for the committee to be creative and support each other in keeping the events calendar going, in the absence of a successor to Melanie.

There's also a tremendous opportunity to get more people involved in, and enthusiastic about, all that Northcliffe has to offer. I have to admit feeling a great sense of pride in proofreading the content for this newsletter. The Northcliffe Heritage Project is really gathering momentum, and delivering some wonderful insights into the archaeological story of Northcliffe, so I feel proud that Friends of Northcliffe are supporting their work. I feel proud that groups like 'Get Out More', who you can read about in this issue, feel the work of Friends of Northcliffe is valuable enough to give a donation (many thanks to Annie and Get Out More for their generosity). I look at the combination of conservation activity, community events and research, and feel proud that we're really putting something back into the community of which we are a part.

My foreword to this newsletter is often tinged with some sadness, and it is with much sadness that we heard of the passing of Jim Vidler, husband to Irene (who is the secretary of Northcliffe Allotment Society).



On a personal note, I have fond memories of Jim – he was a constant companion to Irene up at their allotment, and always had a smile ready. We'll miss him, and our condolences go to Irene and family at this sad time for them.

A new year brings a new committee too. We carried out our elections at the January AGM, so I'm pleased to introduce our 2015 committee, consisting of the following people: Steve Bruzzese (Chair), Hugh Firman (Deputy Chair), Sheila Parkin (Secretary), Joan Newman (Treasurer and Membership), Julia Pearson (Conservation), Keith Scott (Website), Liz Hansen (Newsletter), Val Harris (Northcliffe Heritage Project), John Bromley (General Committee Member), Guy Barford (General Committee Member), Joan Stevens (General Committee Member).

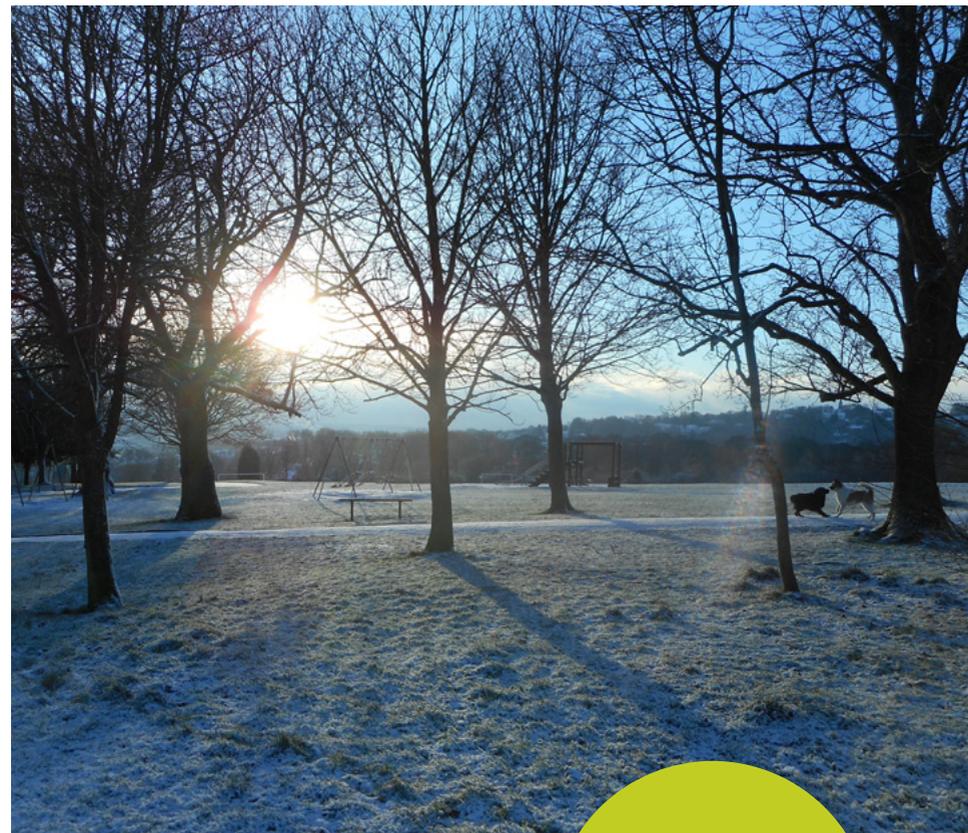
Unfortunately, we have still been unable to find anyone to fill the vacant posts of Events Officer and Promotions Officer. So, I'm appealing again for anyone who is interested, or who knows anyone that may be interested, to get in touch with me on 07976 714 580 or email [stevebruzzese@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stevebruzzese@yahoo.co.uk)

The role of Events Officer involves the planning, co-ordination and running of the non-Conservation activities for Friends of Northcliffe – things like the Rae Gala, the Easter event, Big Lunch, etc. Melanie will be on hand to support the next person coming into the role, so you won't be cast in at the deep end. The Promotions Officer will work closely with the Events Officer, Membership Officer and other committee members to promote events, membership and Northcliffe itself. For both roles, enthusiasm and commitment are more important than previous experience.

I'd like to end by saying a massive thank you to everyone who was involved in the hugely successful Santa Special. What a mammoth task, and what a lot of work on the day, but the excitement and joy on all the children's faces made it all worthwhile. To everyone who helped, my heartfelt thanks, you made a lot of families very happy!

I do hope you enjoy the best that Northcliffe has to offer this spring, and that the summer is as kind to us as it was last year.

All the best,  
Steve



Why not treat yourself to a new Eco cotton shopping bag or buy one or two for gifts. These good quality bags will be on sale for £3 each or two for £5.

Bags will be available for purchase at events and at other times please contact Liz and Peter Hansen on 01274 594 690 or Liz and Geoff Morrison on 01274 580 794.





## CONSERVATION NEWS

By Julia Pearson

**We have now completed our winter programme of removing small beech saplings from the woods. We have held 4 sessions and welcomed several new volunteers to the group. The work is part of our contribution to the Council's biodiversity management plan for the woods.**



Beech is native in the south and south east of England roughly to the border with Devon and South Wales in the west, into the Severn valley, the East Midlands and up to the border of Norfolk at the north-east of its range.

Beech made a slow return to Britain after the last ice-age. Within its native range beech rose to dominance in woods which were disturbed by woodcutting and pasturage. It can spread vigorously after introduction to woodlands further north and west. Forestry Commission ecologists suggest it may, given time, have spread further north, but the original woodlands were mostly cleared before it had reached its climatic limits.



The beech was planted in Northcliffe, and other northern woodlands, as timber for bobbins for the textile industry. I have found very little specific information about this and gather that no clear records of what was planted or harvested in Northcliffe have been found.

Beech creates a very dense shade and in the woodlands in this region this limits the amount of ground flora, for example bluebells, that grows beneath its boughs, and the number of oak, rowan and birch saplings that regenerate.

Regular members will know that our summer schedule of work focuses in removal of Himalayan Balsam. Again, this is an introduced and invasive species that, if it is left unchecked, can reduce the woodland biodiversity by 25%, and lead to erosion problems on the hillsides.

At the April planning meeting we will be discussing the conservation programme for the following year or so. This will be a chance for us to review what we have been doing, hear ideas and suggestions from members and consider what we want to get involved with in the future.

- Are there ways of increasing our capacity? Would you like sessions at a different time?
- Are there members who would like to train as conservation leaders so we can run more sessions?
- Are there tasks you would like to see Friends of Northcliffe getting involved with? Or things you think we shouldn't do?
- How can we support the Parks and Woodlands teams as Local Authority budgets shrink and their resources continue to reduce?
- One idea that has been suggested is to start a more thorough process of surveying and recording the impact of management in the woods. This could involve fixed point photography and Quadrant surveys. This would complement the documentation being created by the Heritage Project.

I would welcome thoughts and suggestions at any time but the meeting will give us a chance to have a full discussion. We hope the Assistant Woodlands Officer will be able to join us. On 30<sup>th</sup> April we will have an evening walk in the woods to reflect on the ideas and clarify plans.



# WHAT'S ON? EVENTS DIARY



## Picnic with the Easter Bunny

Saturday 4th April

12pm–3pm

Bring a picnic and meet the Easter Bunny in the top field past the miniature railway. The Easter Bunny will be strolling around meeting the children, and the miniature railway will be open all afternoon for rides – you might even get to ride the same train as Easter Bunny! There will also be an Easter Bonnet competition, prizes for the best bonnets. Other attractions to be confirmed are decorate your own egg competition, face painting and sweet tombola.

## Saplings Forest School Play Group

Starts Thursday 16th April, then every Thursday during term time.

10am–12pm

These sessions are run by Sponge Tree. Meet at the old playground (up the hill from the new playground, opposite the football pitch). For more information or to pre-book call Paula on 07914 389726.



## Dawn Chorus Walk

Saturday 2nd May

4.45am

Enjoy the wonders of the English dawn chorus with Lisa and Hugh. Meet just inside the woods at the end of Lynton Drive for a one hour stroll through Old Spring Wood admiring the bluebells and listening to the bird song. So as not to disturb residents please do not drive up Lynton Drive. Parking is extremely limited, especially at 4.45am! Bring a flask and breakfast bun unless you want to rush back to bed. Please wear suitable footwear and clothing. For more information or questions ring 07712 867610.

## Go Walkies

Monday 4th May (TBC)

A sponsored walk for dogs in aid of Guide Dogs. Time and meeting place to be confirmed.

## Kite Sunday

Sunday 10th May

2pm–4pm

Weather (and wind) permitting, bring your kites up to Northcliffe Meadow and enjoy a fun afternoon. Those who turned up last year had a great time, see if anyone else can keep their kite aloft for the whole afternoon – one person did manage it! Flying a kite is one of life's simple pleasures, come along and join in.

## Big Lunch

Sunday 7th June

12pm–3pm

Bring a picnic and join in the nationwide event that's about eating food with neighbours as a community. What better place to enjoy your picnic than the beautiful woodland glade next to the miniature railway? Our friends at Bradford Model Engineering Society will be running trains all afternoon.

## Nocturnal Wildlife Walk

Saturday 27th June

9pm–10.30pm

Meet at the main ornamental gates on Bradford Road (almost opposite the Branch).

Join Lisa and Hugh and a visiting moth expert to discover the secret night life of Northcliffe; bats, deer, hedgehogs, foxes, owls and the wonderful, fairy like, ghost moths. Please wear suitable footwear and clothing and bring a torch. For more information or questions ring 07712 867610.

## Rae Gala

Sunday 28th June

2pm–4.30pm

Come and join us for our annual celebration of the gift of Northcliffe to the people of Shipley. More details nearer the time.

## WOODLAND MANAGEMENT SESSIONS

### Spring Conservation Walk

Thursday 30th April

7pm

Meet at 7pm at Cliffe Wood Avenue gates. We will walk up through the woods, past the pond. We will be looking to see what our conservation options and priorities are for this year, following on from the discussion at the planning meeting in April.

### Himalayan balsam control

Tuesday June 9th

Wednesday June 24th

Thursday 23rd July

7pm

Meet at the Miniature Railway. We are pulling areas of balsam to allow the native woodland plants to dominate. We will be working on the hillside so please wear strong shoes and suitable clothes. We will provide gloves, but you might want insect repellent.

Please always check the Notice Boards in case an event has been cancelled.





# GET OUT MORE!

Annie Berrington from Forest Schools tells us about the Company that runs this programme and the activities they run at Northcliffe (Get Out More Is a Community Interest Company)



If you've been wandering through Northcliffe Woods wondering what the big group of kids and adults are up to, kneeling around a fire circle, constructing dens or dangling from trees on ropes, chances are you have stumbled across a forest school.

Forest schools are a programme of play and learning in a woodland environment where children visit woodlands on a regular basis, supported by qualified forest school leaders. As many good educational ideas do, the idea came from Scandinavia as an approach to early education, but has now been adopted

in the UK for people of all ages in many different settings. Forest schools aim to be an inspirational process which offers participants regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence through hands on learning experiences.

Since 2010 Get Out More CIC has been running forest school programmes in Bradford woodlands including St Ives estate, Middleton Woods in Ilkley, Hirst Wood in Saltaire and Northcliffe Woods. Local groups Bradford Community Environment Project and Sponge Tree Arts are also running regular activities in Northcliffe.

Get Out More runs a range of creative and accessible outdoor activities but forest schools remain at the heart of what we do. At our holiday forest schools children come along to enjoy adventurous woodland games, crafts and activities, or simply to let themselves and their ideas run wild in a beautiful woodland setting. Qualified and experienced forest school leaders support children to push their boundaries, learn new skills and feel a sense of achievement through activities such as using tools or fire lighting. All the activities are carried out with permission from Bradford Council's Woodland Management team and are risk assessed to ensure we get the right balance between adventure and safety. We strive to minimize our impact on the environment and maximize participants' connections with nature through quality outdoor experiences in their local woodlands.



Get Out More CIC a social enterprise with a mission to help people engage with nature to feel better about themselves in mind and body, or as we put it, we want people to get more out of life through getting outdoors more. As a social enterprise we reinvest any profit we make back into the communities in which we work. Last year we made a small profit which we have used to provide some free outdoor activities, using the rest to support conservation in the woods which we are lucky enough to use. We were pleased to be able to make small donations to Friends of St Ives, Hirst Wood Regeneration Group and Friends of Northcliffe. We know you are doing great work to look after the woods we all love.

To find out about our next programmes visit our website [www.getoutmorecic.co.uk](http://www.getoutmorecic.co.uk) We can also be found on Facebook; Get Out More; forests schools, outdoor learning and play and on Twitter @getoutmorecic



## NORTHCLIFFE BIRD FEEDING AREA

By Hugh Firman



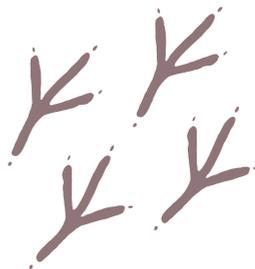
In January when we were blessed with excellent weather, about 60 adults and children came along to see and count the birds as we took part in the world's biggest wildlife survey, the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. This survey has been running since 1979 and has provided some invaluable conservation information. Examples are house sparrow numbers, which have dropped by 62% and starling numbers which have reduced by a staggering 84% in that time.

We counted birds at the bird feeding area over a period of two hours and 14 different species were recorded including nuthatch, bullfinch and a solitary house sparrow. The most abundant bird counted was the great tit, with a maximum count of 8. Perhaps the highlight was a fly past of 5 ring-necked parakeets!



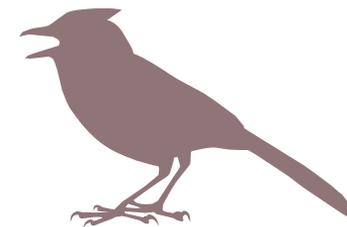
Thanks are due to all who helped on the day including members of the Airedale and Bradford local group of the RSPB for their expert assistance and Northcliffe Allotment Society for providing use of their clubhouse.

Tim Clark wrote just after the production of the last Newsletter to say: "Delighted to espy a Nuthatch up by Allotments the other day – brought a real smile to my face. Have only seen once before and that was climbing Cadair Idris." (Ed – This is part of a Horseshoe walk in northern Wales, considered by many to be the best in Wales.)



## HERITAGE AND SURVEY UPDATE

By Derek Barker



Throughout the winter small groups of Northcliffe Heritage Project volunteers have been surveying signs of the area's industrial past. The intention is to get as much work completed as possible before the bluebells and other spring flowers grow up. We believe we now understand how Northcliffe's two major coal seams were accessed and we have identified huge heaps of spoil from Hard Bed collieries along the Northcliffe dike path. Above this activity there is a stratum of valuable sandstone known as Stanningley rock. This was evidently quarried extensively. On the Northcliffe Golf Club side there were a small number of larger, nineteenth century, quarries. On the Northcliffe Park side of the woodland there were many much smaller quarries of uncertain date.



The top field of Northcliffe Park, close to the golf clubhouse, was once known as Coal Pit Close. A number of roughly circular features can be seen on aerial photography which must, we think, be colliery shafts. They are too close together to be 20–25m shafts reaching down to the Hard Bed. We assume they are 'bell pits' exploiting a thin higher seam known as the 36 Yard Coal. The historians in our group are convinced that mining was occurring here in the late seventeenth century which is far earlier than we believed possible when the project began.

In the very near future Bradford University will be undertaking a geophysical survey in this field to establish how extensive the mining has actually been. This is a most exciting development and we hope that the geophysicists may also be able to estimate the depth of the shafts. The Friends of Northcliffe have funded all this work for which we are very grateful. The volunteers are determined that they shall have value for money, and already we believe that a story of great interest can be told.



# MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

## APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016

### Membership Updates

Thank you for all the support we have had in the last year. At the time of writing we have 177 families signed up as members of FoN, and of these 69 are happy to receive the newsletters by e-mail only.

Welcome to new members:  
Jim Baird; Derek & Phil Barker;  
Khemasara & Penny Rowen

Subscriptions have remained the same for this year:

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

Send your details with cash or a cheque made payable to Friends of Northcliffe to:

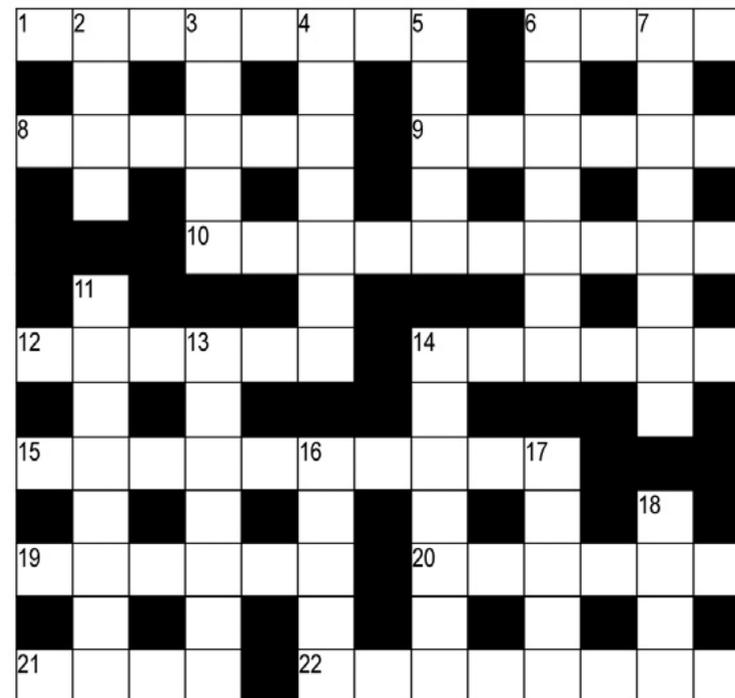
Joan Newman  
Treasurer  
42 Moorhead Crescent  
ShIPLEY  
BD18 4LQ

Again we ask you to think about donations as these helped us considerably last year, especially towards bird food for the feeding station, as well as to general funds.

A membership form is included with this newsletter and can also be downloaded from our web site – maybe you could enrol somebody(?).

### NORTHCLIFFE CROSSWORD

No. 9



### Across

- 1 This woodland bird is happy upside-down (8)
- 6 Vase alters to become what we should do with paper, cans & plastic bottles (4)
- 8 A plant or animal lacking pigment (6)
- 9 A colour in a rainbow, or a fruit (6)
- 10 Folk who keep accounts (10)
- 12 Take the strain in Northcliffe at weekends (6)
- 14 Not breaking the legal rules (6)
- 15 Another name for the Hedge Brown butterfly (10)
- 19 Of an insect – the act of changing from a larva (6) or 'little dog munched' (3,3)
- 20 When it rains we need an ----- occupation (6)
- 21 Seat turns & becomes meals in the afternoon (4)
- 22 A fermented milk product, often mixed with fruit (8)

### Down

- 2 A large citrus fruit grown mainly in Jamaica (4)
- 3 A device for raising a load (5)
- 4 Small instruments for digging (7)
- 5 Shoot turns to become owl calls (5)
- 6 A small brown bird which nests communally (7)
- 7 Description of fast growth (8)
- 11 Often used as a synonym for an animal (8)
- 13 When we need to know all the answers (2,5)
- 14 Wig plan turns to become a peewit (7)
- 16 The opposite of friend (5)
- 17 Wireless communication (5)
- 18 Peat free compost often contains this fibre (4)

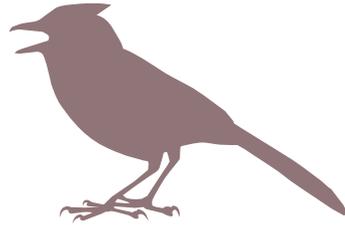
The answers can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

Composed by Douglas Lumb and Joan Newman



# NORTHCLIFFE NATURE NOTES

By Lisa Chadwick-Firman



**Isn't this a wonderful time of year? The sun is getting higher and the days are getting longer and brighter, hallelujah! I love this time of year; the birds are beginning to sing more too.**

Our faithful robin, who has cheered us up all winter long with his beautiful song, has now been joined by a very melodic song thrush. He is heralding in the spring and boy is he rejoicing loudly! The other birds are beginning to join them too, warming up their voices, over the last few days. I love our sparrows and starlings; they chatter away all winter, brightening those grey winter days.



The crocuses and the snowdrops are looking good again at the top of High Bank Lane. Reminding me again, when I see them, of the brownies that helped us plant them many years ago. Don't miss the chance to see the crocuses on the avenue again this year. They were absolutely stunning last year, I wonder if they will be that good again this year? (Ed – they are flowering at the golf course end along with the snowdrops and look wonderful, again.)

When I was walking through Old Spring Wood, earlier in February, I was amazed at how far advanced the bluebell leaves were! A sign that this winter has been fairly mild so far, though you may not agree with me!

I love to get out for a walk up Northcliffe on these winter days. The silhouetted trees against a clear sky look stunning. Every season has its beauty! I was fortunate to get out for a few walks in the snow on gloriously bright days. Northcliffe looked spectacular and I took many photos! I have seen some superb winter sunsets too.

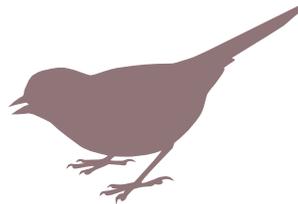


Often adding to the atmosphere at this time of year, are flocks of geese calling as they fly over Northcliffe on their migration. We also saw a good number of redwings this year, visiting us from the cold north. I do hope you are able to get out and enjoy our beautiful Northcliffe, despite the cold. You will be well rewarded if you can, and remember to pop by the bird feeding area to see what's there; you never know you may see our flamboyant parakeets!



## WOODY'S SPOT for younger friends

By Jeannie Kopasz



**ONE OF MY FAVOURITE STORIES IS ABOUT A WATER RAT AND A MOLE WHO BECAME THE BEST OF FRIENDS AND HAD LOTS OF ADVENTURES TOGETHER.\***

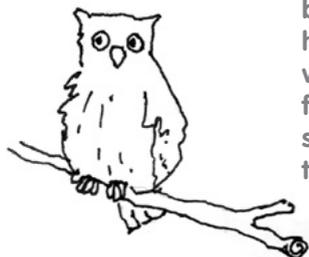
Mole left his own home and went to spend the summer with Rat. One day, the two friends had been out exploring and had got a bit lost. Suddenly Mole stopped in his tracks – he had smelled a very special smell. It made him feel excited and tingly all over. It reminded him of something. It reminded him of HOME, his own little home which he hadn't seen for such a long time. Mole had enjoyed living with Rat but suddenly he knew that he MUST follow that scent and return to his own place.

Animals can pick up strong signals from smells that humans never notice. Sometimes these signals combine to make them act in certain ways. Mole had picked up a scent that he just couldn't ignore. Perhaps frogs pick up similar signals. Maybe they get to feel tingly inside when they are drawn to return to the very same ponds year after year to lay their eggs.

Our most common frog has a smooth, moist skin which may be green, grey, yellow or brown. It may also be speckled with dark blotches of black, brown or red. And, as if that isn't enough to help it to stay hidden from other animals who would like to eat it, the frog can lighten or darken its skin to blend in with its surroundings!



Once the lady frog has returned to her chosen pond, she will shed up to 3,000 eggs at a time. That sounds to be an awful lot but most of these eggs (and the developing tadpoles) will be eaten by birds and pond creatures. Each egg has a coating of jelly which swells in the water to form frog spawn. As the spawn floats to the surface it is warmed by the spring sunshine and quite soon a little tadpole will wriggle out of each egg.



Metamorphosis is a complete transformation in the way an animal looks as it changes into an adult.

By now, the tadpole is completely independent and the parent frogs will have already left the pond and gone to live in moist grass or dense undergrowth. To begin with, the tadpole will cling to a water plant but within four days it will be able to swim about and find its own food. At this stage it will be breathing through feathery little gills such as fish have. Very soon, the gills will disappear and the tadpole will breathe at the water surface using its newly developed lungs.



Next, our little tadpole will grow legs – first the back ones and then a tiny pair of front legs. It is almost a frog! What do you think has to happen now to make the change (or metamorphosis) complete?

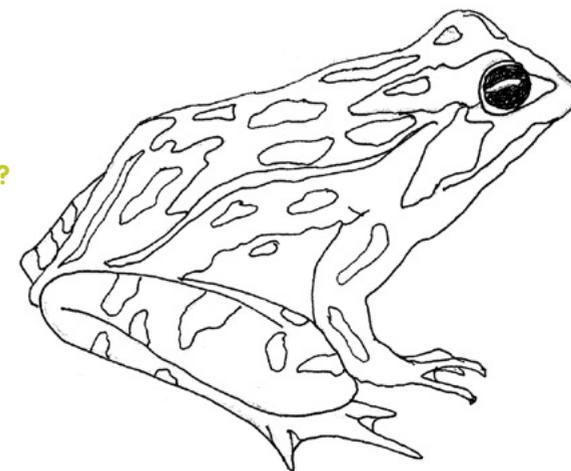
LOOK,  
NO TAIL!



It has taken about four months for our tiny tadpole to change into a proper little frog. Now it has to watch out for other predators. It would be a tasty snack for a rat, a grass snake or a hedgehog. Stay safe, little frog!!!

## Froggy Jokes (croaks!)

- Q. When is a frog's favourite time of the year?  
A. Leap Year!
- Q. Where do frogs borrow money?  
A. From a river bank!
- Q. What do you call a frog with no back legs?  
A. Unhappy!
- Q. What do frogs order from McDonald's?  
A. French flies and Diet Croak!

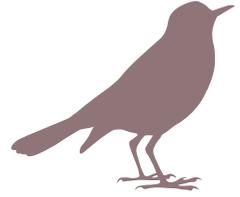


## Colour the Frog





# FRIENDS OF NORTHCLIFFE



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Answers to Crossword no 9

### Across

1 Nuthatch; 6 Save; 8 Albino; 9 Orange; 10 Treasurers; 12 Trains;  
14 Lawful; 15 Gatekeeper; 19 Pupate, or Pup ate; 20 Indoor; 21 Teas;  
22 Yoghourt;

### Down

2 Ugli; 3 Hoist; 4 Trowels; 5 Hoots; 6 Sparrow; 7 Vigorous; 11 Creature;  
13 In exams; 14 Lapwing; 16 Enemy; 17 Radio; 18 Coir;

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Phil Morrison