

FRIENDS OF NORTHCLIFFE



# Northcliffe News

December 2011

1990 - 2011 21 Years of Caring for Northcliffe

## Events

(All contact details on page 8.) For more events please see [www.friendsofnorthcliffe.org.uk](http://www.friendsofnorthcliffe.org.uk)

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2012** 10am-12noon Woodland management - beech thinning. Tools provided. Meet at the bench near Moorhead Lane. Contact: Julia 01274 590898

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January Planning Meeting** 7pm at the Kirkgate Centre, Shipley  
To include a discussion about the Northcliffe woodland management plan with Colin Whitfield, Assistant Tree and Woodland Manager, Bradford Council.

For more information please contact Sheila.

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

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February Planning Meeting**

7pm at the Shipley Club, Rae Road, Shipley

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

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

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> April 12pm to 3pm Northcliffe Easter Festivities**

Easter Egg Hunt, orienteering, egg and spoon race, decorate your egg competition, egg throwing competition.

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm Northcliffe - Wildlife and Conservation**

Illustrated talk by Hugh Firman. Joint event with Bradford Urban Wildlife Group at Shipley Library.

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 12pm to 4pm The Big Jubilee Lunch**

Join us in this wonderful decorative celebration for the Jubilee. Bring your lunches and picnic blankets to the model railway and we will provide a varied programme of entertainment for you and your families to enjoy.

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July Rae Gala**

To continue our most popular event in 2012 we will provide a fun packed programme for the local community by the model railway. Details of guest performers and artists on the day will be released early in 2012.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August Northcliffe Olympics**

We are celebrating the London 2012 Olympics by putting on our very own sports day competitions to raise money in support of Marie Curie cancer research. Pay on the day to enter and take away your very own gold, silver or bronze medals. Various activities will be available to suit all ages. The Northcliffe Olympics will take place at the Northcliffe recreation area (near the tennis courts).

**Cover picture** Winter wonderland in Northcliffe woods, by Keith Scott

## Chair's Chat

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We are grateful to Shipley College for printing this newsletter at a discounted rate.

### Membership

A warm welcome to new members: Morag Booth, John Bromley, Nick & Joe Buck, Bridget Butt, Howard Cleveland, Clare & Pete Cronin, Brian Gresswell, Helen, Joe & Poppy Hands, Jenny Harold, Susie Harold, Barbara & Peter Kelly, Frank & S Masley, Ewen Pearson, James Procter, Alison & Afzal Rashid, Chris Rollings, Bill & Elisabeth Shepherd, Fiona Sorsby, Margaret Southerington, Mrs Charlene Stead, Helen Stevens, Joyce & Ron Taylor, Cynthia Thresh, Val Turner, Albert Waxman and David & Hazel Wilmshurst. We now have well over 200 members!

### Wildside

Recently a small group of us were invited to look round this wildlife allotment, lovingly created and managed by Carl Taylor over the last twenty years. The highlight for many was the bird feeding area. From the luxury of comfy seats a few feet away, heated by a stove, excellent views were had of many different birds, including jays, nuthatches and stunning bullfinches. Carl would be delighted to show other members the birds. If you are passing and see the red van outside, just give Carl a shout and he will invite you in. Wildside is in the lower set of allotments next to the main track.

### Cream Teas



A wonderful afternoon.

Photographs by Margot Rowan.

A big thank you to all who helped making, serving and eating the delicious cakes and scones for our first cream tea afternoon in July. Thanks also those who helped organise and set up / tidy up for the day and to Northcliffe Allotments Society for use of the room. It was a successful day with a good mix of members and passers by enjoying good food, drinks and company.

Hugh Firman, Chair

## Look where you're going!

"A dull day", commented the man we passed on the path in the woods - and so it seemed as we squelched along under bare winter trees in a cold, misty drizzle. Then the sparkle of diamond water drops along the branches of birch saplings wakened our senses, and opened our eyes to see the unpolished copper leaves on colonies of young birch trees and the emerald mosses straddling the trunks of mature trees. Underfoot, last autumn's leaves, muted to shades of darkest brown, and the Christmas pudding mud was lightened by patches of clotted cream clay. Grey-brown, deeply fissured, oak bark was spattered with sage-green lichen and winter-faded chestnut leaves clung determinedly to a row of juvenile oaks. A pinky-silvery trunk of a birch, shot through with stubs of grey, led the eye up to catch silhouettes of crows while, on the wood's edge, floppy yellow hazel catkins contrasted with the rich, deep green of holly leaves, shining with wet light.

Rings of orange lichen decorated a lead-grey rock and the inside of a fallen, rotten tree looked like moist dark gingerbread. In the field mahogany stems of last year's docks stood stiffly amongst the pale washed-out grasses with their frost-bleached tips and pale veins traced in the small ivy leaves tangling over mossy covered remnants of an old stone wall. Bronzed leaves of tripwire brambles overarched the detritus of last year's abundance, decaying to support fresh green spears of bluebell leaves reaching upwards with the confidence of youth towards the coming spring.

Ann Dalton

Thanks Ann. Yes even on a seemingly dull day if we have eyes to see there is beauty all around and even within us! Ed. :)



More photos by our own very talented  
Keith Scott.

## Conservation News

I feel that we had a very successful attempt to reduce the amount of balsam in the woods over the summer. The 3 scheduled Friends of Northcliffe sessions in June and July were well attended, especially the evening sessions, and we worked on the bank above the pond and on either side of the stream up towards the steps. Several people commented that the amount of balsam in areas tackled over the past couple of years was noticeably less - encouraging us to continue with what is undoubtedly a daunting task. Several members have spent many more hours at other times working to further reduce the balsam population and a team from the DWP worked on patches downstream.

Inevitably some plants survived our attention and there were still flowers late in the season - this is a reminder that we have to be in this for the long game and must not be put off at this stage. Perhaps we should schedule a group session in August next year. Another approach to develop is encouraging people to adopt areas so they can work confidently in their own time. This year we were aware that it would be desirable to tackle the balsam spreading up the bank towards the allotments. Unfortunately a lot of these plants are in amongst bramble so are hard to reach. We will need to review how to do this next year.

A number of volunteers have requested official badges so passers by are clear that volunteers are working towards the management aims of the woods, a request that was also raised at the Friends of Group's Forum that is coordinated by the Council. We will have badges ready for next summer's balsam pulling.

It is still unclear how we will manage the pond area in the long run, until we understand better how much the water levels will fluctuate. Low rainfall through the spring had a prolonged effect, however many of the marsh plants are doing well and this autumn we have removed some of the silt to keep the channel open.

We began our winter's management of the woodland, starting the beech thinning in selected areas. We are using the information gathered in our mapping session in May to decide where the removal of beech will have the most impact in encouraging the bluebells and other ground flora, and the oak and rowan.

The Council's woodland team are developing management plans for all Council owned woodlands, including Northcliffe. The Assistant Tree and Woodlands Manager will discuss the plans with us at January Planning meeting. The Council are also developing a new Woodland Strategy for the District and there will be opportunities for groups such as FoN, and interested individuals to comment.

Julia Pearson, Conservation Officer



## Bat Boxes



Some of you will have noticed that several new boxes have appeared in Northcliffe Woods. They were installed by Madeline Holloway with help from Chris Pearson from Friends of Northcliffe and members of the West Yorkshire Bat Group, who also generously provided the funding.

## Cup and Ring Stone found in Northcliffe!



A couple of years ago we attended a Friends of Northcliffe walk led by Veronica Youngson and were intrigued by a drawing she showed us from the Archaeology Group Bulletin (Bradford City Art Gallery and Museums, May 1962). It showed a cup and ring rock, similar to those on Ilkley Moor, in Northcliffe Woods. At the time, she didn't know exactly where it was, despite a map reference accompanying the note. Rising to the challenge, we tried to follow the map reference, which didn't seem to be correct, as we found nothing there. We

investigated further and finally found it, just off the high path between the edge of the golf course and the woods. We were very excited - although it doesn't look much in the photo, it's our own local cup and ring!

Jane Robinson and Tony Woods

## Archaeological Addendum

There is interest amongst some members in researching the archaeology of the Northcliffe area. Readers may know that a survey was done some years ago of Judy Woods, Wyke and of other woodlands and parks in Bradford. We are sure that an archaeological survey of the Northcliffe area would be very worthwhile. The University of Bradford may be able to assist in this work. If readers have any relevant information, please pass this onto John or Hugh.

## Northcliffe Nature Notes and Lynton Garden Ramblings

Much earlier in the year we were delighted to have a 'family' of hedgehogs visiting us regularly...well, they seemed to be a family...the very large one we called Daddy, the medium sized one we called Mummy, and the teeeeeeeny weeeeeeeeeeeeny one we called 'piglet' ! They were soooooooooo cute. They used to pitter-patter about the kitchen and were not put off by us being there at all! And we were certainly not put off by them being there, it was a real privilege to have them visit us! Of course they gobbled up the cat food! Our very tolerant cat used to look somewhat bewildered but was happy to share his food! He's used to sharing with all the waifs and strays that call round! The little one was so tame he used to patter across the kitchen floor and sniff at my toes! (hmmm, not sure what this implies??!!) We saw him a few times during the day too. I did not think this a problem at that time of year, as he had plenty of time to put on weight before the winter. He would lie and sunbath on the lino by our back door! Stretched out with as much of his tummy on the floor as possible! The late afternoon sunshine warming him nicely! Aahhhhhhhhhh. He was soooooooooo cute! I miss him. One evening I heard a racket outside. I thought someone was putting out their wheely bin, then I realised it was coming from our drive. So I then thought someone was skateboarding down the drive! 'Don't be daft!' I said to myself (as I often do!!!). I went outside to investigate and there was mummy hedgie on the drive making such a racket! I wondered if she was distressed but she seemed OK. This must be where they get the name 'hog' from because she sounded for all intents and purposes just like a wild boar! Does anyone know what this noise means? I've never heard it before and we have had a lot of hedgehogs in our garden over the years.

Now the foxes are our regular garden visitors. I can't say we have had one of these in the kitchen yet!!! (There's always time!!!) I know they are regular visitors to the garden though because they leave their scent. A smell that I find rather pleasant, but it is not everybody's favourite. This time of year we are much more aware of our foxy neighbours because they make so much more noise when they are mating or calling for a mate! We often hear them calling to one another from the bottom of our garden. One night I could hear them snuffling and calling just outside the bedroom window...so I thought it was worth dragging myself out of bed to have a look. While they were in our garden I could not see them as we do not have security lights because they can be a nuisance. However, when they went down the street to our neighbour's house they set off their security lights and I saw the most stunning dog fox. He looked superb lit up by the lights with the trees and dark gardens behind him. He was a beautiful colour in his best mating coat and he had the most splendid thick, bushy brush! Maybe we could get outside lights after all...they are good for night wildlife watching!??

Other highlights at this time of year are the flocks of geese flying overhead on their way south. Keep an ear open for them. One night, as we were walking back from church last week, I heard the distinct high pitched whistle of redwings flying over head; beautiful members of the thrush family. We often see mixed flocks of thrushes at this time of year. They are visiting us from Scandinavia and they are hungry! We planted lots of berry producing shrubs and trees in our garden when we first moved in, with the intention of providing winter food for our feathered friends. We hoped to attract waxwings too. These stunning birds are also winter visitors. I once saw them in the trees at the bottom of our garden but, sadly, they did not venture any nearer to the house. It was a real treat to see them though. We often see them in

the park off Westcliffe Road and we followed them once along Springhurst Road, as we were walking back from church one Sunday morning. The blackbirds have been tucking into the berries though. We have a berberis by the garage. It has got very overgrown the last few years as we have been away so much at Scargill House, but the birds are not complaining! Also, splendid visitors to our garden recently have been 2 or more male bullfinches and 1 female. I often see them at this time of year. They too are stunning birds. They were nibbling at the buds on my mum's cherry tree... but I forgave them ....they are so beautiful and I'm sure there will still be plenty of blossom.

Please remember, it is really important to feed the birds at this time of year. And what a pleasure it is to watch them. It beats TV! This is just as well as we no longer have one! Fed up with having to get a black box we decided to give our licence money to charity instead!! Also, try not to be too tidy when gardening. We don't really tidy our borders until the spring. The old decaying matter and hollow stems provide cover and somewhere for hibernating invertebrates and other little critters...these in turn may provide food for the birds in the spring!

Earlier in November I heard rather a lot of raucous magpies calling and when I looked outside there were over 20 gathered on our rooftops. A few days later, I was walking in Northcliffe and I saw 30 or more gathering in the trees along the avenue! They are very attractive birds when they gather like this and intriguing to watch. A tidings of magpies is the collective noun and very apt it seems too. I know they have some naughty habits but I cannot help admiring them when they flock up like this. Another stunning sight at this time of year is provided by their other corvid relatives. If you venture beyond Northcliffe, not too far, to Black Hills Scout Camp, on an evening you will see a spectacular display as the rooks and jackdaws come home to roost.

On one walk in October, as I stood on the hill to watch the sunset, a small flock of swallows flew over my head. Their late departure being indicative of how mild the autumn was! However, the recent, stunning, full moon meant that we had a very clear and frosty night. Winter has arrived! So, I hope you can wrap up warm and get out if you are able to enjoy Northcliffe.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR. GOD BLESS. XXX ED : ) We are so blessed living where we are, so close to our wonderful Northcliffe. Please remember those less fortunate than ourselves at this time of year. Even on our doorsteps, people will be sleeping rough in the freezing temperatures. This year many local churches are opening their doors to help the homeless and the Bradford Soup Run is also a worthy cause to support.

Sorry, dear readers, this is my last newsletter for now. With no computer of our own now, (we also thought we'd give that money to charity too!) it is difficult to meet the deadlines for printing! Although Margot Rowan has been a huge help and let us borrow her computer for hours! I'm also struggling with constant migraines which add to the problems. So with regret I am retiring for now. If we ever get around to getting a new computer I may be able to take this role on again. However, I have complete confidence in John Bromley, our new Editor.

Lisa Chadwick Firman  
Ed.

## Rae Gala 2011

### Mr Aslam of the Aagrah opens our most exciting event of the year

Hundreds of people from the local community celebrated another year of what proved to be our most successful gala. Mr Aslam of the Aagrah, who has sponsored the future development of the children's play area in Northcliffe, opened the Rae Gala followed by Hall Royd Brass Band, who put on a marvellous performance.



Mr Aslam with Mr & Mrs Bruzzese & Hugh Firman



Hall Royd Brass Band



Mark Veevers, Gery Cooper, Paul Wrigley

Many volunteers supported Friends of Northcliffe, creating a wonderful atmosphere for many families to enjoy. La' Fay School of Dance put on a great show in the arena followed by Mark Veevers with his hurdy gurdy. Strid organised a variety of artists performing on stage including Gery Cooper, Bella Gaffney, Rob Watkins and Brian Whiley. Paul Wrigley supported Gery Cooper as well as entertaining many families as the Drum Thumber in his drum circle. Congratulations to all those who won amazing prizes on the day. We



would like to thank Mathew Imison Photography, Millenium Hair Studios, Kerala Café, Bruzzese Photography, Strid, Terez cosmetic and beauty, and many individuals who offered prizes to raise money, enabling the continuation of conservation work and the funding of future events at Northcliffe. We would love to hear from our prize winners about their experiences.



A special thank you to everyone who gave up their time to run stalls on the day and provide railway rides, face painting, music, owls, ferrets, coconut shies, music, dancing, wonderful stories, dens, drumming, games, activities, fitness, information, donkey rides, railway rides, food, cakes and sweets. We would also like to thank all those who volunteered on the day to shake buckets and raise money to put back into the local community. Friends of Northcliffe will continue to provide events, raise awareness and improve the conservation of your woodland and recreation area. Please see the events page for next year's fun packed calendar. We are always looking for volunteers. To find out more about the artists or to get involved with events please contact Melanie Bruzzese.



Bradford Model Engineering Society

Melanie Bruzzese, Events and Promotion Officer

## Contact details

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**Conservation activities:**

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**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  
(Join between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 and your membership will last until  
March 31<sup>st</sup> 2013)