

FRIENDS OF NORTHCLIFFE



# Northcliffe News

January 2011

1990 - 2011 21 Years of Caring for Northcliffe

## Events

For queries about volunteering with these events please contact Melanie. To support our conservation projects please contact Julia. (All contact details on the back page.)

### **Saturday 5th February 10-12 Conservation morning - woodland management**

Meet by the bench at the Golf Club entrance. We will be thinning the beech saplings. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear. Tools and gloves will be provided. For more information please contact Julia.

### **Saturday 19th March 10-12 Conservation morning - woodland management**

Details as for 5th February.

### **Thursday 24th March 7.30pm Planning Meeting**

At the Kirkgate Community Centre, Kirkgate, Shipley.

Members and prospective members are welcome at all the meetings.

### **Friday 25th March 10.15am - 3pm Conservation Day at Northcliffe Pond**

We will be working with BEES volunteers to complete the planting around the pond and put up some bird boxes. Meet at the Railway at about 10.15am or join us at the pond during the day. Tools will be provided, as will hot drinks at lunch time. For further info contact Julia.

### **Sunday 27th March 1.30pm - 4pm Historical Town Walk**

Celebrate the 1st day of Spring with an exclusive guided Historical Town Walk from Roberts Park to Northcliffe Woods with Veronica Youngson. Meet at 1.30pm at the canal bridge in Saltaire (by the Boat House). Starting in Saltaire, we will head through the town of Shipley and learn about the contribution Sir Norman Rae has made to Saltaire, Shipley and Northcliffe. The walk finishes with tea, cakes and biscuits at the community hut in Northcliffe Woods at 4pm. Suitable for all ages. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear.

### **Thursday 14th April 7.30pm Annual General Meeting**

At the Kirkgate Community Centre, Kirkgate, Shipley. Find out what we have been up to in 2010, help plan our next year's activities and elect the new Committee.

### **Saturday 23rd April Northcliffe Easter Festivities 12pm - 3pm**

Picnic with the Easter Bunny, Easter Egg Hunt, orienteering, egg and spoon race, decorate your egg competition, egg throwing competition.

### **May / June (Date to be confirmed) Dawn Chorus walk**

### **Sunday 5th June 1pm The Big Lunch at Northcliffe**

Join us at this wonderful annual National event originating from the Eden project which brings local communities together, encouraging sharing of food, drink and good company. All you need to do is bring some homemade food to share with your local community and we will do the rest.

### **Sunday 3rd July Rae Gala**

Our most popular annual event, celebrating Sir Norman Rae's founding of Northcliffe. Join us at the model railway in Northcliffe Woods for a wide variety of activities, live music and dance to suit every age.

## **Chair's Chat**

A belated Happy New Year to one and all! I do hope you have been able to get out and enjoy the wonders of Northcliffe - the weather has certainly been interesting!

### **Membership**

A warm welcome to the following new members: Bobby & Guy Barford, Graham & Nancy Coates, Anna Green, Liz Kidman, Chris Pearson, Prue Price, Brenda Shields and Paul Wrigley.

In April, we set ourselves the target of increasing membership from 98 to 120 by April 2011. We are nearly there - we just need three new families or individuals to join. Can you help? With this newsletter you will find a membership flyer. Please pass it on to any friends or neighbours who care about Northcliffe. Remember - anyone who joins in January, February or March will get membership until the end of March 2012. Why not give membership as a present to a friend or family member?

### **Events - help needed**

As you can see, Melanie has organised a varied programme of events for this year. The success of the events, particularly the larger ones, depends on the help of volunteers. Our main event is the Rae Gala. If you would like to join the organising committee or would like to help on the day - anything from donating glass jars and raffle prizes to running activities - please contact Melanie.

### **Communications**

Keith and his daughter Sam have been busy revamping the website. Please take a look and let him know what you think.

### **Funding News**

Unfortunately the funding for the new Play Area has been withdrawn. We shall be working with the Council to try to secure funding. On a brighter note we were delighted to receive A substantial grant from Shipley Area Committee towards conservation work. Our grateful thanks to our Green Party Councillors, especially Cllr Kevin Warnes, for facilitating this.

### **Norman Rae Scholarships**

One of our members, Betty Dickinson nee Pearson, was awarded a Norman Rae scholarship when she studied classics at Leeds University just after the Second World War. Are there any more members out there who have stories to tell about the Scholarships awarded from funds left by Sir Norman Rae?

Hugh Firman, Chair

## Conservation News

In October 2010 we began work to reinstate the water levels in the pond. In the past all the silt and leaf debris has been dug out of the pond mechanically, but within 5 years it builds up again. This year we have taken a different approach so as not to disturb the invertebrate life so dramatically. We restricted the work to digging out limited areas of silt to create a channel from the inlet to outlet and some deeper pools. The edges will be planted with marsh plants to limit the amount of open wet mud that can cause problems for loose dogs. So far flag iris, kindly donated from Bracken Hall Countryside Centre, has been planted and in the spring meadowsweet, purple loosestrife and marsh valerian will be added.

The pond work has been made possible by generous funding from Shipley Area Committee which enabled Friends of Northcliffe to work with BEES (Bradford Environmental Education Service) volunteer group. The work will be completed with a planting day at the end of March and construction and installation of some bird boxes in the pond area.

In November we started this winter's programme of woodland management by thinning beech saplings. This will reduce the shade they cast, affecting the bluebell population. We will continue with this work on the conservation mornings in February and March; see the events diary for details. In May we plan to undertake a mapping exercise when the bluebells are flowering so we can ensure we know where to concentrate future efforts.

Julia Pearson, Conservation Officer

Thank you Julia for these great photos, showing people from BEES and our very own dedicated volunteers working very hard and having fun! Mud glorious mud! Ed.





### **Congratulations to Alex Ross & Sarah Shaw**

Two of our new members were married on the last Sunday before Christmas in St Peter's church. The service was accompanied on the organ by Martin, the husband of Joan, our Treasurer. One of the couple's friends played the French horn and another sang Ave Maria by Schubert and Sarah took off her shoes at one stage during the service and played the piano for one of the hymns. We wish them every happiness in their new life together.

## Northcliffe Nature Notes

I hope you like these pictures of some of Northcliffe's rich and varied wildlife! You never quite know what strange wildlife encounters you may have when out and about in our beautiful, local park and woodland! Actually, this particular Pipistrelle bat is becoming quite famous! He has not only appeared in this most prestigious of journals but he has appeared in the Halifax local paper and the Yorkshire Post!

As for the person handling him....well I cannot say!!!

This particular Pipistrelle (now known as Bertie!) was found in a shop in Halifax and was reported to Hugh, who, in his capacity as Conservation Officer for Calderdale and Chair of West Yorkshire Bat Group (a man of many hats!)

then quickly responded to the aid of the bat and the rather shocked shop assistant who had discovered him whilst on her lunch break!!!

Bertie has come out of hibernation early, probably confused by the heating in the shop, and it would not be safe to release him now. There would be very little food for him to find in the middle of Winter. So we will be looking after him until Spring, when it will be warmer and there will be more food flying about for him to eat. In the meantime, Bertie is enjoying a diet of mealworms (Yum Yum!) and, as he is not having to fly around in search of his food, he is nicely growing a little round! He is also enjoying frequent trips upto Scargill house, near Kettlewell, where we work as volunteers. In the Spring, we will release him in Halifax, close to where he was found. Although, perhaps like me, he would rather stay at Scargill! We are not sure whether Bertie is Albert or Beatrice...it is very difficult to tell, and we feel he/she is entitled to some enigma! Bats are much maligned. They actually do us a great service each eating as many as 3000 midges in a night! Thank you Bertie's friends! Working hard to keep down those pesky midges!

On Friday 7<sup>TH</sup> Jan, I was treated to the most spectacular show in our own back garden. There was a flock of over 300 thrushes gathered in the trees at the bottom of our gardens! It was incredible! They stayed around for an hour or so and a large number returned later to roost. They were mostly fieldfares, with some redwings too. What a privilege to see! What an amazing place we live in! It just shows how important it is to look after our green places. It is important to leave spaces for wildlife in our gardens too.



This is a photo of Mr Bertie. Clearly not a bat!!!!....but a very talkative budgie! Mr Bertie is also famous! He belongs to our very own Joan Newman. He briefly became a T.V. celebrity when he appeared on Autumnwatch Unsprung on BBC2 in October! A 3 minute clip is on the Springwatch website. Just put 'Mr Bertie talking budgie' into Google. Wow! It's all happening at Northcliffe!

Perhaps we should let Mr Bertie have the last word!  
'What do you think of Northcliffe Mr Bertie?'  
'It's Fantastic!'

## Northcliffe: Memories to Cherish

We chose to live at Moorhead in 1972, enchanted by views along the Aire Valley - on a clear day we can see the distinctive shape of Sharp Haw near Skipton. We were also entranced by the beauty of Northcliffe, high above the valley as we climb High Bank Lane to the Golf Club House. The stunning views across Saltaire towards Baildon Hill and Ilkley Moor are breathtaking. We'll end our days in this idyllic setting.

We were not to know, as we raised our children and got on with our lives, that there would be a sting in the tail. Five years ago, aged 63, Bronwyn was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Northcliffe is more of a lifeline than ever for us now. Its attraction ensures that Bronwyn gets at least one session of aerobic activity every day - problems with the mind make us even more determined to keep our bodies in shape. Northcliffe also provides us with a constant source of stimulation - the changing seasons, birds and animals, and people watching. I chatter away to her as we have our daily walk, picking out the changes. Her linguistic ability is declining, but she can still indicate things that have caught her attention. I've found that she tunes into background features which provide the wallpaper for my focussed view of the world. She points to cloud shapes (and stars at night) in the huge expanse of sky available from the ridge; patterns in the bark on tree trunks; branches creaking; unusual bird songs; cracks in the tarmac; wind blowing vegetation; and she delights in the seasonal changes in the flowers and blossom, insisting that she smells them all - that is apart from the "stinking nannies" which is what she used to call the wild garlic which grows in almost as much profusion as the wild balsam which excites her with its unpredictable seed scattering. It's the immediacy of these experiences which she enjoys because she can no longer retain information, or process and organise the world for herself.

We discovered Northcliffe together almost 40 years ago and it has provided for our physical and spiritual needs for all this time. It has been a nursery, playground, running circuit, attraction for visitors, and finally such a comfort to us, sharing its familiarity as we lose so much else in our lives.

Roger and Bronwyn Clarke

What a lovely article.

Thank you for sending this to us Roger.

Does anyone else have any special memories of Northcliffe that they would like to share with us? Ed.



## CONTACT DETAILS

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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