

Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group

Special
feature...
How light
triggers
Autumn &
Leaf fall

Plus ... how to
make the most of
your visit to the
nature reserve...



Newsletter

AUTUMN 2017



Letter from the Chair, CBWG

Autumn, for me, is a beautiful time of the year. It's a time when the leaves of many trees are changing colour. As the days get shorter, the nights longer and temperatures begin fall it is a time to put an extra layer of clothing on and respond to nature's invitation to come outdoors and see what it has to offer. Cromwell Bottom Local Nature Reserve is a great place to do that. I like to walk amongst the Silver Birch, Oak and Sycamore trees or take the path to the lagoon so that I can look out over the reed bed. For me, on those cool but sunny autumn days, as colours stand out and shapes become more defined, the reserve becomes a magical place of discovery. Being there helps me to appreciate and value the reserve that I have grown to love. Of course, autumn on the reserve is not just a time for appreciating its beauty it is also a time of activity and endeavour; a busy time both for wildlife and for those of us who help manage the reserve.

It is this time of the year when get on with the work that needs doing on the reserve that we couldn't do in the summer, not wanting to disturb breeding birds. There is much to do. What can be done on the reserve is always dependant on the number of volunteers that are available. It is this time of the year when we enter the lagoon to cut some of the reeds and trees with the aim of creating a healthy reed bed that is both good for wildlife and gives pleasure to people. Cutting the reeds promotes new reed growth and provides feeding pools and edges for our autumn and winter visiting birds. Every autumn and winter we work at managing the reed bed because we recognise it as an important ecosystem. Why not join us on one of our workdays in the autumn?

Allan Wolfenden

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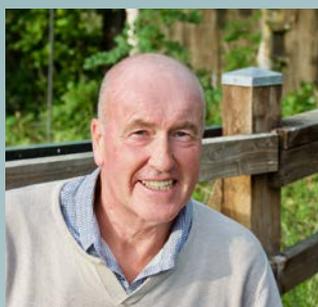
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Front cover image:
KINGFISHER taken at CBNR
credited to Barry Nield



SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS : meet Richard Armitage



Hi everyone!

My name is Richard and I have been asked to write a few words (HELP!!) about how I became a volunteer at Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve.

I was strolling along the canal and was "ambushed" by a party planting some Spring bulbs and asked what they were doing. They explained they were volunteers and I enquired more, thinking "Community Service!" After reassuring me they were not on day release, I stopped to help them.

I have been in love with nature from an early age, having been brought up on a farm. I was lucky that my Mum and Dad took my sisters, Sandy the dog and I for walks in the nearby woods and Dad used to tell me the names of all the wild flowers and identify all the birds, too. (Later in life I have to challenge his knowledge!) After studying

engineering at Kitson College in Leeds, I began my career at Her Majesty's Service - not in prison but building tanks for the British Army. I later moved into Civil Engineering at St Aidan's open cast mine (now a nature reserve).

The following twelve years I didn't see much wild life at all, having joined the National Coal Board inspecting machinery underground - except for the wonderful pit ponies! As the local mines closed and I had to travel further and further, I diversified and started a Landscape Gardening business (don't tell Robin!) Upon selling my business and moving to Brighouse, I started working part-time at William Henry Smith School with retirement in view. I went there to help provide therapy to the boys from very difficult backgrounds but after 10 years I am in need of therapy now.

Having met some lovely, kind, caring, funny and genuine people through this group, I can only say come along and be made most welcome!



SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS : Big Thank you to Nigel

Volunteering is at the heart of Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group, it's how we make a difference on the reserve.

As a committee we would like to give a big thank you to Nigel Reed who has worked hard and diligently to make the reserve a place of welcome and hospitality.

As a member of the committee Nigel has supported us in lots of ways as we have done much needed practical work throughout the reserve. His ability to see solutions to practical problems and a readiness to get things done has been a great asset to us all.

It is in the Cabin Café where he made his mark on so many people. For over

sixteen months Nigel has organised and run the café. He has given an enthusiastic welcome to everyone who comes to the café and enjoys the refreshments that are available. He has ensured that tea and coffee, canned drinks, and ice creams, cakes and biscuits are readily available. In the winter he turned his hand to making and serving soup, which soon became a favourite of many.

Since opening, the Cabin Café has become a great meeting place where people can enjoy a sit down and a chat.

Its success and asset to the reserve is a tribute to Nigel's willingness to be there and the organisational skills he

brought.

After a number of years serving on the CBWG committee and after managing the cabin café Nigel has decided to step down. On behalf of all the committee and all those who have enjoyed the friendly welcome you gave, as well as the refreshments you served, I would like to say a big thank you. We will all miss you.

Allan.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM CBWG TO ARABELLA AND DAN CATLOW ON THEIR WEDDING



Dan and Bella were married in June 2017 and had a fabulous honeymoon in Bali.

Bella, who is a regular volunteer at the Saturday morning work parties, is an Ecologist and Dan is a data analyst.

The Group wish you a very happy life together.

We also take this opportunity to thank you for all that you do for Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve.



Will's Wildlife Quiz

1. Which is the bat that usually feeds close to or over water?
2. Name a beetle whose favourite food is slugs.
3. What was the name of Charles Darwins' ship?
4. Name the commonest native rose you would see at Cromwell Bottom"
5. Which pigeon nests in tree holes and is widely overlooked by people?
6. What are the distinguishing features of the female vapourer moth?

Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group would like to express huge thanks to William Griffin for his regular contribution to the newsletter. We love the quizzes, even though some of us can't answer the questions! (Fortunately, answers are on the back page).



Moth Nights

project leader, images and article - Barry Nield

This year, so far, we have held three moth nights, all at the beginning of each of the summer months. All have been pretty successful with plenty of moths captured.

July moth night was particularly good. It was a perfect evening after rain, slightly cloudy but still warm and humid. Those who turned up were keen to help us in capturing the specimens. All were welcome, both familiar faces and new recruits. Andy C brought in some moths for us to examine should our capture rate be poor.

One of the specimens was a poplar hawk moth, then amazingly we captured one of our own as well as

an elephant hawk moth.

The third moth night in August was similar to the second but this time the moon was out, making it very atmospheric. Alan Pullan was there to help this time, which was great and we got a good showing of many different species.

The identification of species takes place on the Sunday after the moth night. This time it was great to see children helping with this. They seem to have enjoyed each stage of the process and have been especially good at trying with the difficult task of identification.

We have created a list of all the

species identified and below are some photographs of a few examples. I have tried to show different views of the moths in the photographs.

The hawk moths proved to be very popular, especially with the children and one sat on a tree all day for the visitors to admire.

We hope to be able to run more sessions next summer so please keep checking the blog for details.

Any enquiries about Moths please contact me at the Cabin on a Sunday.

Barry.

Elephant Hawk-moth

Deilephila elpenor



Shaded Broad-bar moth

Scotopteryx chenopodiata



Poplar Hawk-moth

Laothoe populi



Brimstone Moth

Opisthagraptis luteolata





Look out for Autumn

Images and article - Allan Wolfenden



Branching Oyster Fungi
Tag Loop



Birch Polymore Fungi



Shaggy Inkcap Fungi

As you walk around the reserve this autumn there will be lots of wild encounters to be enjoyed and appreciated.

I am no expert when it comes to fungi but I do find it interesting. Anything with names like, Destroying Angel, Devil's Bolete and Dead Man's Fingers have got to be interesting. We may or may not have those on the reserve by autumn is a time to when the fungi we do have is at its best. Look out for Shaggy Inkcap fungus. This species is unmistakable and can often be found by the path around Tag Loop. Other fungi that can be found on the reserve include Birch Polymore, Fly Agaric, Branching Oyster and many more. Some fungi are edible, many are not. When it comes to fungi it is best to look, learn and leave so that others can enjoy what has delighted you.

Autumn is a time of migration for many birds. In early autumn those birds that came here in spring to breed are now busy preparing to leave for warmer climates, while those that bred in more northern regions like Scandinavia will be arriving. Look out for departing Swifts, Swallows and Martins flying over the reserve feeding up in preparation for the long journey ahead.

As I walk around the reserve I like to take keep a look out for winter thrushes such as Redwings and Fieldfares.



Fieldfare

Check what birds are busy feeding on the berries in the hawthorn hedgerows. I like to look out for Goosanders and Teal that will make the river their home for autumn and winter, especially the males. They may not be rare but they are stunning to look at.

In late autumn, when most of the trees on the reserve will have shed their leaves the small birds on the reserve can more easily be seen and therefore identified. Look out for Treecreepers inching their ways up the trunks of trees looking for insects or for Goldcrests as they constantly move in deep cover looking for food.

Autumn is a time when the small birds using the reserve will increasingly be seen visiting the bird feeding/viewing areas on the reserve, which provided an opportunity to see them up close and to brush upon your identification skills. Will this be a year when Siskins and Lesser Redpolls are more numerous than on previous autumns? Only time will tell. One thing is for sure, it's only by getting out onto the reserve that I will find out.

Before many of our trees begin to shed their leaves for the winter they will put on a spectacular display, changing their leaves from green to yellow, red and many shades in between. On an autumn day, when the sun is shining, what



Rowan berries, image Jane Uttley

can be better than getting in touch with your wild-side and enjoying what nature has to offer? You don't need to be an expert you just need to be appreciative regarding what you are seeing and have a willingness to want to learn a little more about what is there in autumn to be valued and enjoyed by us all.



How does light trigger Autumn and Leaf Fall?

Special feature by Bel Hale

We all know that sunny, frosty days in early autumn make autumn leaf colour brighter & more vivid. But few of us understand why leaves change colour and how they end up falling off the tree. (Pic1 Autumn colour)

You may be surprised to find out that the first trigger is Midsummer Day!

During the spring, as the sun moves nearer the Tropic of Cancer, light levels increase and so do the levels of the green pigment, chlorophyll, found in leaves. This is why plants look so lush in spring & early summer! Chlorophyll captures the sun's energy during photosynthesis creating sugars, which plants use to grow, and oxygen, which we all breathe. (Pic 1 Cellular structure of leaf)

After Midsummer, as the sun moves back towards the Tropic of Capricorn, light levels begin to reduce, and growth begins to slow, and their energy is put into flower, fruit and seed production.

Plants begin to look less green & less vibrant as summer advances because they do not need as much chlorophyll.

However, chlorophyll is a complex molecule which costs the plants energy to create, so rather than waste it, they re-absorb it back into their systems.

Think of green leafy vegetables going yellow in your fridge! It's because of lack of light (Pic 2 radish leaves).

But why do leaves fall? The changeover from leaf production to flower, fruit and seed production creates a need to channel nutrients away from the leaves and into the flowers. The tree does this by laying down a barrier of cork cells, called the abscission layer) across the bottom of the leaf stalk. By autumn, this cork layer completely seals off the leaf stalk and the leaf falls. (Pic 3 cork abscission layer).

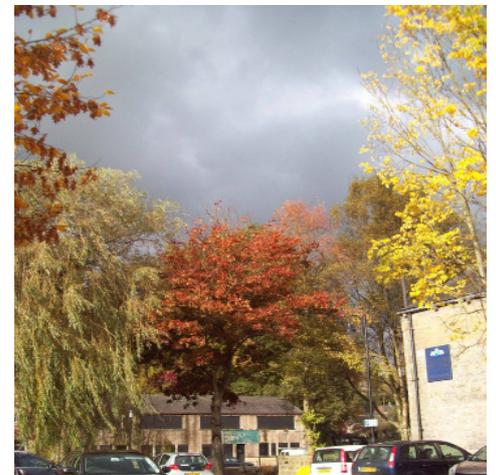
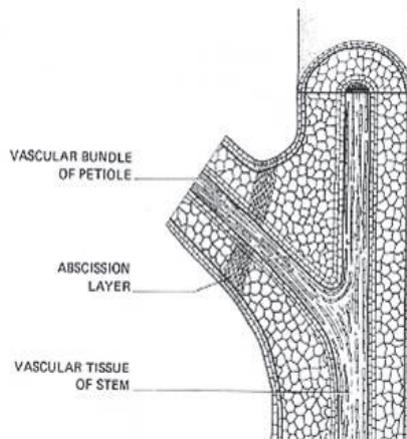
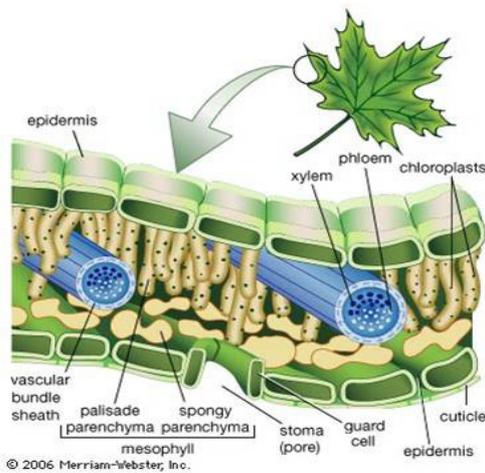
Leaf colour isn't only determined by chlorophyll. There are other pigments underlying the green. It is combinations of all the pigments which create the different shades of green leaf colour.

So, when the chlorophyll is re-absorbed, the other pigments are unmasked and this is what causes our glorious autumn colour each year!

PIGMENT	COLOURS
Chlorophyll	green
Xanthophylls	yellow
Flavone	yellow
Flavonol	yellow
Carotene	yellow, orange, red
Lycopene	red
Anthocyanin	red, blue, purple, magenta



Pic 2
Radish
Leaves
losing
chlorophyll



Pic 1 - cellular structure of a leaf

Pic 3 - cork abscission layer

Glorious Autumn Colour!

NEXT TREE WALK WITH BEL is on Sunday 29 October 1.30 meet in car park: Autumn Glory



Visit Cromwell Bottom nature reserve this Autumn - with or without the kids!

Article: Margaret

Cromwell Bottom is great, but sometimes a visit with a purpose is a good way of keeping the interest going. You don't need an organised activity to make a trip worthwhile - just enjoy what you see and look up what its name is later!

Bug hunting – kids with sharp eyes are great at spotting wrigglers in the grass. Take a small container with you to scoop up



finds for inspection. Smartphone photos will help identify with ID – if it stays still long enough! Look for beetles and crawling things in the grass, lift



a large stone or a dead log and see what lives underneath it. Shake a branch into your upturned umbrella.

Fungus finding – great in Autumn. We have lots of fungus around the reserve. You need to look up as well as down to spot it. Good places are dead logs, leafy ground and mossy patches, and the trunks of silver birch trees for really big Bracket fungus sticking out like shelves.



You might find bright red Elf Cups too – look on dead logs.

Bird watching – need we say more?



Look out for a very tame robin along the path between the canal and the reed bed.



Pond dipping – there are several ponds around the reserve, but its easiest and safest for little ones to use Tag Ponds where there is a platform.

Don't let your dog go into the ponds here, as it will muddy the water up and you won't see a thing. Bring your own net and a small bucket to see what you found, and of course, put everything back into the water.

images & illustrations: Allan, Lyn,Val

The Nursery Web spider

Article - Bruce Hoyle

The nursery-web spider (*Pisaura mirabilis*) is the only member of the genus *Pisaura* in the UK. This spider is common and widespread throughout Britain but is scarcer in Scotland. They are found throughout Europe, southern Russia, China and North Africa also islands such as Madeira and the Canary Islands.

Its abdomen is slender and tapers towards the rear. The male has similar and more pronounced markings. A distinguishing feature is the clear but variable pale stripe running down the carapace. The female can be 15mm long and the male slightly smaller. She is a hunter so does not build a web to trap insects; instead she catches prey in low vegetation or on the ground. During courtship the male will present her with a gift wrapped in silk, the larger the gift the longer he can stay, sometimes feigning death before his hopeful escape. She carries her large egg cocoon around under her body and when the young are due to hatch will build a "Nursery tent" in the top of long grass, around May. This tent looks like a dense sheet web and serves as some protection for the young spiders.

The young will feed from the left over eggs and drink water condensing around the tent. As they grow they will prey on fruit flies.

These distinctive spiders occur in small numbers on long grass at Cromwell Bottom.



Pisaura mirabilis
Image credited to Chris Sutcliffe

Events 1 October 2017- 31 January 2018

Sunday 29 October 1.30 meet in car park: Autumn Glory tree walk with Bel Hale.
3rd Saturday in the month 10.00-12.00 Bird Count led by Mike Henshaw/Jane Uttley.



CBWG CHRISTMAS BASH! Members and guests only
Saturday afternoon 16th December 2.00-5.00pm
at the cabin Please bring food to share. Car parking good!

Will's Wildlife Quiz answers

1. Daubentons or water bat
2. Violet ground beetle
3. The Beagle
4. Rosa canina or dog rose
5. Stock dove
6. Rudimentary wings, flightless and a swollen abdomen.

How you can help

Volunteers are the foundation upon which our wildlife group is built. Our work helps secure the future of many precious habitats and species, enabling them to thrive. We have many jobs to do, so no matter how much time you have there is ALWAYS something for you!

THURSDAY MORNINGS weekly at 9.30am are good times to come and help. Please check our blogsite (link below) for updates about access during the repairs to Crowther Bridge.

On The SECOND SATURDAY of each month at 9.30am our work parties take place, which are arranged with Calderdale Council. Do come along to either, or both

of these sessions - please check our blogsite for up to the minute info.

We can promise good fun, a sense of achievement and a sit down with the group at the end for a well-earned cuppa!



Drop in to the Cabin on a Sunday afternoon for a chat about it
Open 10.30-4.30 for a selection of refreshments - open for members of the public too!



Events and information

How to contact us (click on one of the icons below). We welcome your articles, photos, ideas, comments and would love to hear from you. We do, of course, retain editorial rights. **Your new newsletter team are Val, Jane & Lyn.**



newsletter.cbwg@gmail.com (PLEASE NOTE NEW email)



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