

Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020



Reflections of a
Bullfinch on water
- new feature at bird
viewing area

image credit Graham Haigh

WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF THE WILDLIFE GROUP'S NEWSLETTER

Here it is - the publication you have all been waiting for! Something to cheer you up if you are holed up in your house/flat!

Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group would like to let you know that the Cabin on a Sunday is closed for now - we will be following government advice at all times.

Volunteer days are also on hold and a huge thanks to all who have helped us over the last year. We will open up and get back to normal ASAP. However, the Nature Reserve is open as usual and what a brilliant place to get some fresh air, breathe in oxygen and take exercise walking round. The Reserve walks are just over a mile but you can extend that by taking in a walk down the canal bank too.

The Newsletter in future will be produced twice a year - Autumn and Spring, and we will be mailing it out to you in early November and May each year. We would love it if you could send in your letters, articles and photos or let us know what you would like us to cover in these issues.

You will find a direct email for the Newsletter team (Lyn, Jane and Val) - just click on it to get your regular email page up. Please check out the other contact details for us on the same page.

We wish you all well and hope to see you walking around the reserve this Spring.

Yours, Graham Haigh, Chair CBWG



Female Orange tip butterfly
image Graham Haigh -
it will soon be summer!!

VOLUNTEER SPECIAL!

UNSUNG HEROES by Lynda Orchard

Down at Cromwell Bottom there's a whole army of volunteers who work hard every Thursday to maintain the reserve. They gather each week and embark on anything from building fences and bird boxes, putting up bird boxes, cleaning drains, strimming edges, laying paths, maintaining the edging of the paths, planting trees, balsam bashing, cleaning, tidying, litter picking, and the very glamorous emptying of the dog waste bins and so much more, in fact tackling any job that needs doing. Major projects are often funded by grants, but the less obvious jobs can often go unnoticed.

Another group of volunteers man or woman the cabin. Making tea and coffee and serving cakes and refreshments to the visitors as well as providing an information service to new and old visitors alike.

All of these volunteers do this because they love the reserve and are keen to protect the wildlife. They also enjoy the social interaction with each other and the public. It's enjoyable and rewarding in equal parts.

There is also a thriving link with Old Earth School. Students come down to Cromwell to take part in educational projects and to learn about their environment. Hopefully this will ensure that the future will be safe in their hands.

THE THURSDAY WORK PARTY in pictures...

most images Bruce Hoyle



Alistair, David & Graham build new hide



New Sand Martin wall for monitoring purposes



Precise measurements required for new pathways...



The new Recycling Bin built by Nigel



The bird feeding area outside the cabin



Putting the finishing touches to the pond dipping platform



Some of the Thursday working party & Cabin staff



Widening the pathways around the reserve



in deep discussion building a new hide



The new viewing platform at the side of the lagoon, funded by Brighouse Ladies Circle in 2019



The new path & steps, built by contractors & Thursday working party 2019

A WAKE UP CALL FOR THE PLANET?

by Jennifer Wolfenden

By now, we've all heard about Coronavirus and how it originated in China.

Having visited two Chinese cities in the last few years, it's easy to see how the virus has become so prevalent. There are insanitary toilets, a lack of basic hygiene facilities and a lack of health and safety requirements etc. However, whilst it is easy to "point the finger" at China, one only has to look at other countries to see that they are not too far behind.

Last year, I visited the Mediterranean, where the approach to the beach was accompanied by the dumping of mattresses, broken glass and people's litter. How easy it is to see how viruses and diseases are spread!

So, how are we doing here in the UK?

On a recent visit to Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve, a visitor remarked on how lovely it was. I replied that the good thing about Spring, is that the new grass will soon cover the mounds of litter which have been deposited along the canal.

As stewards of the Earth, we need to ask ourselves two questions;

- *Do we really want to live on a planet which has become a dumping ground for litter?*
- *Do we really want to live on a planet where premature death and disease is becoming more prevalent?*

If your answer is negative, then the next time you see someone illegally dumping litter, report it. When you pass a discarded beer can or an empty crisp packet, don't ignore it. Pick it up and deposit it in the nearest refuse bin.

Together, we can all make a real difference to protect the planet and reduce the threat of viruses and disease.

If you would like to reply to Jennifer's article please email the newsletter editor - address on back page and she will forward to Jennifer.



WILL'S WILDLIFE QUIZ

created by Will Griffin



Teasel plant

1. On what spring day might you see a Y-fronted goose?
2. Why did the seeds on this teasel plant grow from straight from the seed heads in 2019?
3. Which warblers might overwinter at Cromwell Bottom?
4. Which tree leaves, eaten in April, were known as bread and cheese?
5. What type of native mammal fur was used to make a sporran?
6. Name the only edible white mushroom to appear in Spring?

ANSWERS ON BACK PAGE, BUT NO PEEKING!

THE SUNDAY CABIN STAFF by Jane Uttley images Jane & Max Uttley

When the contractors had finished work, back in the day, capping the tip we were left with the workmen's cabin. A number of the volunteers - Graham, Allan, Nigel and others built it up to what you see now, giving us the ability to serve drinks to the public. At first it was only volunteers who were working on the site but then it was decided to open to the public on a Sunday. Nigel, the stalwart, became the manager of the provision and we duly opened between 10am and 4pm. He managed this for over a year, mainly on his own!

It was now built up to be such a good resource that the wildlife group committee decided to keep it going, much to the delight of our many visitors who now enjoy calling in to see us on a Sunday during their walk round the reserve.



Inside the cabin on Sunday



Pat and Mary



Nature reserve walkers enjoying a break!



Project wall inside the cabin



A wealth of information is available ..

I have been fortunate in having a good band of volunteers to help in serving cups of tea and cakes to visitors. Two volunteers come on Sundays 10 till one and one till four, Always cheerful and helpful. Lynda Orchard is one of our mainstays (as well as being Newsletter Editor!) Lynda works most Sundays but there are many others who gladly give up their time to work usually about once a month. I am very grateful for their help. My thanks go to Julie J, Pat, Mary, Sue H, Sue S, Hayley, Brian and Linda. I also extend my thanks to Allan, Barry and David.

Nigel has been able to return and has made a lot of wooden structures around the cabin i.e. picnic benches and tables also a recycling centre (you can see a picture of this earlier on in the newsletter).

I hope we can continue this facility for quite some time. It provides a place for the public to meet and chat, get information and enjoy nature in the reserve. One thing we know is that the natural landscapes provide places for exercise and peace of mind.

HONEY BEES IN CALDERDALE

A REPORT FROM ROGER POOL

The Newsletter Team are very grateful to Roger Pool for sending us a set of brilliant photographs direct from his hives in Calderdale. We went to visit Roger a couple of years ago and learnt much about the subject of bee-keeping. Roger is also chair of the Halifax Bee Keepers Association. It is great to have update Roger, thank you! Come and have coffee down in the cabin one Sunday - post lurgi!



During the active season a colony requires approximately 150mls of water per day. If more water is required, the number of bees recruited to foraging for water is increased.

During the spring, water is needed to dilute stored honey which is too concentrated for the bees to digest. Water is also needed by 'nurse bees' who are producing the brood food needed by growing larvae.

In the summer water is evaporated to cool the nest.

Foragers are informed of the location of a water source by returning bees who perform a waggle dance indicating direction and distance. Foragers are provided with a taste of the water to be collected. As the water source it is marked with a scent from visiting bees.



This picture of brood shows an abnormality may occur in the spring and requires action by the vigilant beekeeper.

Many of the cells have markedly convex cappings replacing the normal flat brood capping. Drones (male bees) are pupating in the lumpy cells rather than workers (female bees). Drones arise from unfertilised eggs and the suspicion here is that the queen has exhausted her supply of sperm and cannot fertilise eggs to produce the female workers required for spring expansion.

The queen mates only once in her life at 1-2 weeks of age with an average of 14 drones. She can store sufficient sperm for her productive lifespan of 3-5 years.

Insufficient sperm storage can result from poor weather at the time of mating or reduced numbers of drones.

The beekeeper will have to find the queen, dispatch her and replace her with a younger queen.

Eggs



During the summer the queen can lay up to 2000 eggs per day. She does not search for food within the hive but is fed by a retinue of young bees who keep close to her at all times.

Her rate of egg laying is regulated by the workers depending on how much forage is coming into the hive. After three days the eggs hatch into larvae which are then fed by nurse bees until the cells are sealed six days later prior to pupation.

Brood food can be seen around the smaller larvae. The yellow cells contain pollen which is consumed by nurse bees in order to produce brood food and is also fed directly to older larvae.



This is a view of the head of a worker bee.

At the very top of the head is a small black button, one of the three ocelli. These simple eyes are used to monitor the position of the horizon both forward and sideways to allow level flying.

The large compound eyes cover most of the side of the head. Despite the size of the eye bees have rather poor vision.

Two antennae are fixed to the front of the face. The antennae are rich in sensory organs that provide information about taste and smell as well as other information such as temperature and CO₂ levels. At the bend of the antenna is a specialised stretch sensor that indicates air speed.

The mandibles (jaws) of the worker are used to chew wax whilst constructing comb. They can also be used to dislodge pollen from flowers. Bees guarding the entrance of the hive can spray an insect repellent from their mandibular glands to repel intruders.



Brace comb!



Honey!



WILL'S WILDLIFE QUIZ - ANSWERS

1. April Fool's Day - a poor joke, I know!
2. Because it rained continually during a very warm Autumn
3. Chiff-chaffs and possibly the occasional blackcap
4. Hawthorn
5. The badger
6. St. George's mushroom

HOW DID YOU DO?

CONTACT DETAILS JUST CLICK ON THE LINKS



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CROMWELL BOTTOM WILDLIFE GROUP

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THE BLOG

<http://cromwellbottom.blogspot.com>

THE WEBSITE

cromwellbottomlnr.co.uk

NOTE: the website is new - it hosts all the newsletters and you can also find species lists, tips on how to photograph nature from CBWG's Trustees, the map and guide for visitors etc. The Group is creating this new provision to complement the Blog.

Which way do you view the negative space image above? A path and tree or two faces?