



GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKERS
IMAGE CREDIT GRAHAM HAIGH

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IMAGE CREDIT
ALLAN WOLFENDEN

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

A warm welcome to all our readers of this spring edition of the CBWG newsletter. We hope you enjoy it.

There are lots of things I love about spring. The lighter evenings. Colour returning to the landscape. Trees coming into leaf and bearing blossom. Early spring flowers adding to the beauty that is to be found at this time of year. Add to this are the insects and amphibians that can be seen on the reserve, along with the increase in bird song and we get a rich picture of some of the flora and fauna within the reserve as Cromwell Bottom comes to life in an amazing way. Spring is the time to look around and admire those overwintering and newly emerging butterflies that are now busy feeding and laying their eggs, creating the next generation.

Spring is the time to enjoy the sight and sounds of frogs, toads and newts returning to spawn. It is also time to set the alarm on the clock, get up early

and enjoy the sight and sounds of birds singing their hearts out in the Dawn Chorus. It is a time to watch them build their nests and feed their young.

Spring is the time when we welcome back those migrant birds that spent the winter in warmer climates and which will now, for a short time, grace the reserve with their presence and activity.

Spring is truly a reminder that those cold dark drab days of winter are truly behind us, therefore **put your boots on and get out onto the reserve and enjoy all that it has to offer!!**

Allan



SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS - MEET JULIE JACKSON



Despite having lived in this area for 25 years I only discovered Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve last summer during a walk from Elland to Brighouse. We enjoyed a cup of tea in the cabin and I read all the information on the noticeboards.

As I was leaving teaching it seemed an ideal opportunity to become a volunteer. I have taught science for the last 33 years covering all ages from 7 to adults so it has been lovely being able to help out when local schools visit the reserve. Thursday work parties are also good fun. So far I have helped clean out nesting boxes, trimmed back growth in some areas, carried out bird surveys, but really it is just a great excuse to spend time in a wonderful location with a great bunch of people I also volunteer in the Cabin on a Sunday about once a month.

It is encouraging to see how generous people are when they give donations for their drinks. Everyone really values being able to access the reserve.

Having studied botany at university many years ago I am hoping to learn more about the plants to be found on the reserve and would like to undertake some plant surveys as my knowledge grows.

We are so fortunate to have such a place on our doorstep and I would recommend becoming more involved if you are able to.

CROMWELL BOTTOM NEWS ROUND -UP

BRIGHOUSE CHARITY GALA

Takes place on the **last Saturday in June** every year, so this year it will be on **Saturday June 29th**. Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group will have a stall.

There will be a procession taking the road route between Garden Road recreation area and the Gala site on Wellholme Park, Brighouse. This year the procession leaves at 12noon. Brighouse Charity Gala is a fun-packed family day out, so come along! Look out for our stall and pay us a visit!

UPDATE ON THE LAGOON

The consultation process continues with all the interested parties and there are proposals to have a wheelchair accessible small viewing area at the top of the Bund.

RASTRICK BIG LOCAL - YOUR CHOICE 2019 <https://rastrickbiglocal.co.uk>

Does your postcode begin with HD6 3? [the 3 is important!]

Yes? Then you could help Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group this summer by voting in this year's Voice Your Choice. The theme is "Environment" so obviously we couldn't resist putting in a bid, could we?

As the name suggests, Rastrick Big Local uses National Lottery money to focus on projects which benefit local residents. Our area has received a lower proportion of lottery funds than many others, and this is a way to re-balance that. Residents within the postcode area are all eligible to vote. You can do it on paper or online and every household should receive information in a few weeks time.

We'd really like to improve the footpath through the woods into the reserve, and also to do some work within the reserve to add more wheelchair-accessible areas and improve the habitat in and around the reedbed.

We're hoping we'll make it through to the final list of candidates. We'll keep you posted on Facebook and the blog.

THE NEW TRACTOR



Trustees are busy looking for the right machine at the right price, including a trailer. Money will also fund driver training and maintenance costs of the tractor. Watch this space!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT THE RESERVE



IMAGE CREDIT
BARRY NIELD

NEWT WALK WITH ROBIN DALTON & CHRIS TINDAL

TUESDAY 16th April - please check the Blog for more information - click the link below to access. Open to everyone. Meet at the Cabin - EVENING.

[HTTP://CROMWELLBOTTOM.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://CROMWELLBOTTOM.BLOGSPOT.COM)

EXPLORE THE RESERVE - WALK with Allan

SATURDAY 27th APRIL 10am and 1pm

Open to everyone. Meet at the Cabin.

BIRD WALK

SATURDAY 4TH MAY 10am

Open to everyone, learn to identify Spring birdsong! Meet at the Cabin.

CROMWELL BOTTOM WILDLIFE GROUP AGM

WEDNESDAY 5TH JUNE 7.30 BRIGHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL 6TH FORM COLLEGE

CALDER GREENING PROJECT funded by ESIF, European Structures, Infrastructure Fund.

Article: Robin Dalton, Area Countryside Officer Lower Valley, Calderdale MBC.

Background

The River Calder flows along the Calder Valley in Calderdale, West Yorkshire. Along the Calder Valley lies the key economic centre of Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd, Sowerby Bridge, Elland and Brighouse. On Boxing Day 2015 over 1000 businesses and 2500 homes suffered from the effects of unprecedented levels of flooding which had a devastating impact on the local economy.

The **Calder Greening Project** covers a range of initiatives designed to establish a resilient green infrastructure along the Calder Valley corridor, by providing an increasingly attractive natural environment with multiple benefits to the local economy, people and wildlife. This project is designed to complement and enhance the Flood Alleviation Schemes which are currently being delivered.

The major projects will be delivered by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (CMBC), the accountable body, in partnership with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) and the Environment Agency (EA). Delivery mechanisms will range from major flood alleviation schemes led by the EA, through to smaller scale natural interventions. Project delivery will take place over 3 years and comprises 6 discrete project elements which together deliver new and enhanced wildlife habitats and improving biodiversity to an area of the Calder Valley totalling some 156 hectares

At our local level one of the 6 project delivery areas is North Loop, at Cromwell Bottom, where the Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group have been working alongside

the Council in identifying specific projects to complement the scheme.

What the project is at Cromwell Bottom

This project identifies a range of works to protect and enhance the biodiversity value of a closed land fill site and former gravel extraction pit locally known as North Loop, located within a meander of the River Calder between Elland and Brighouse. This 20 acre peninsular of land sits adjacent to the regionally important Cromwell Bottom Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site.

This project area has been recently capped with an impermeable layer under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007, regulated by the Environmental Agency. Since this capping work, the site has been put to grassland and demonstrated the potential to become increasingly attractive to many bird species of conservation concern for roosting, feed and nesting (sixty bird species were recorded in 2017 on North Loop and on the adjacent river corridor).

As such, the green infrastructure components of the scheme are designed to provide a diversity of enhanced and protected habitat zones for wildlife (such as the birds listed below), alongside which are access works to enable the visiting public the benefits of the available green space.

A strong theme to the infrastructure delivery concerns directing and controlling public access, to create zones of limited/no disturbance. This will be achieved through elements of the project delivering constructed surfaced pathways for visitors to

follow and fencing to limit off-path movements by visitors. Surfaced pathways will also of course promote usage by ease of access. A more intimate, shorter pathway will also be constructed targeting family use and people with more limited mobility. This will also offer a more interactive investigation of biodiversity with a pond dipping offer.

Away from visitor management, objectives relate to biodiversity improvements to enhance the area's value for birds, insects and amphibians. These are through mire and ephemeral pool creation, shingle bedding, grassland management and winter seed mix for overwintering feed for birds. The project will also be independently supported, delivering elements within the management plan that stand aside from the ESIF funding stream. This includes hedge row planting (hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, hazel, guelder rose species), supplementary wildflower planting (including knapweed, yellow rattle and birds foot trefoil) and seeding of winter feed seed mix.

Who will benefit from the project

Local wildlife including regionally significant bird species with the following species of particular note due to their red and amber conservation status



Skylark, Lapwing
 Common sandpiper
 Meadow pipit
 Little ringed plover (Schedule 1)
 Oystercatcher
 Reed Bunting
 Yellowhammer
 Sparrow
 and Tree Sparrow

- Visitors to Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve will have increased opportunity to observe wildlife
- More people will be encouraged to visit, with benefits to local visitor economy
- This project fulfills key objectives in Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group's Action plan
- Increased opportunity for all abilities to access a new and attractive outdoor green space, promoting health and well being of individuals and communities.
- Accessible family trail to engage all ages and provide a soft and friendly introduction and understanding of the site.

What the benefits will be

- Creation of new and resilient habitats improving biodiversity, including ephemeral wetlands, open water habitats, enhanced shingle nesting areas, over wintering feed areas (providing Triticale, Barley, Kale, Sunflower, Quinoa, Millet, Linseed) and roosting/nesting sites
- Protection of habitats and nesting birds from human disturbance, dogs and predatory mammals.
- Control of invasive knotweed species along the river.
- Enhancements to support large amphibian population on North Loop
- Proposed extension of the adjacent Cromwell Bottom Local Nature Reserve designation to encompass North Loop.
- Signage and interpretation to provide safe, confident access and enhance understanding of natural environment.

Robin

EDUCATION LINKS WITH OLD EARTH PRIMARY SCHOOL, ELLAND

SIMON DAY REPORTS:



We are delighted to have extended our education provision beyond ongoing visits from uniformed

organisations to our first primary school.

Following various productive meetings between David/Simon and staff at Old Earth Primary School, we were able to draft a plan of visits by every year group in the school, accommodating the wishes of the staff and importantly, the educational outcomes for each visit.

David and Simon took a whole school assembly using a powerpoint presentation in late January which was preceded by the school staff visiting the Reserve, to establish walking times and opportunities for developing children's learning. At the time of writing this report, we have had 2 extremely successful ½ day visits: 60 Year 4 children

visited at the end of January for a birdwatching themed activity. Children, with the help of Trustees and volunteers were helped to identify and record a total of over 15 species as they explored different parts of the Reserve, including the 2 bird feeding areas.

This visit was followed 2 weeks later by a visit from 60 Year 1 children whose focus was to follow the site map and develop their understanding of positional and directional terminology in the outdoor environment of the Reserve. Feedback from staff and pupils so far has been fantastic – it is a pleasure to work with such polite and motivated children and staff have been impressed with the quality of the follow up work back at school. The undoubted highlight for the children has been the cup of hot chocolate they've been given before they return to school!

Old Earth have since created a board in the school which displays pictures and information all about their visits. A similar board has been put together in our cabin for visitors to see.

A big thankyou to all volunteers and Trustees from CBWG who have assisted with groups and refreshments, ensuring that the children get the best possible experience from their visits. Further visits have been planned until the end of the school year and the intention is to continue with this outdoor learning beyond this point.

There is a brilliant photographic display in the Cabin if you want to check it out.

SPRING VISITORS TO LOOK OUT FOR AND ENJOY

ALLAN WOLFENDEN

The spring migration of birds onto the reserve and North Loop is one that I look forward to each year. From early March, I will be listening and looking out for these new arrivals. Among the first that I expect to see and hear, is the Chiffchaff. This a bird that looks very similar to a Willow Warbler (also to be found on the reserve but arriving a little later). The moment the male Chiffchaff begins to sing, there is no mistaking its identity. Nonetheless, it is a delight to welcome these Warblers back onto the reserve where they will nest and raise their young.

Other warblers to look out for are Blackcaps, Willow warblers, Garden warblers, Sedge warblers and Reed warblers. For the latter, much patience is required. The best place to see and listen out for them is along the bund path at the edge of the lagoon or at Newt Corner. (Please do not enter the reed bed) The male Reed warbler has a habit of climbing to the top of the reeds in the lagoon, briefly announcing his

presence before quickly dropping out of sight again. Most frustrating for the viewer!

Many of you will have seen the Sand martin wall which we put up on North Loop. Hopefully, this year some of the Sand Martins that have made their way from Southern Africa to feed on the reserve will make it their home. Other long distant migrants that I never tire of seeing are Swallows, House Martins and Swifts. Although they do not breed on the reserve, I love to watch them feeding in flight, mouths agape hoovering up tiny insects in the air.

North Loop, which is presently not open to the public, offers its own unique opportunities. Those involved in monitoring the birds have been able to watch and record the bird life that lives and feeds there. Most years, we have the opportunity to see and record Wheatears. These elegant birds make occasional stopovers on their way to their moorland breeding grounds further north. Another

spring visitor to be found on North Loop is the Skylark. Skylarks are ground nesting birds whose population has halved since 1990. They face many challenges, not least the destruction and degrading of their habitat. Being ground nesters, they require vegetation in which to nest. Ideally this needs to be between 20cm and 50cm in height. They will consequently fail to breed if the vegetation is either too short or too long. One of the tasks in which we are involved in partnership with CMBC is trying to establish the optimum breeding conditions so that Skylarks can thrive on North Loop.

This spring, I will have my binoculars ready and my notebook on hand to enjoy and record these sensational spring visitors.

Allan Wolfenden



BLACKCAP CREDIT MIKE HENSHAW



CHIFFCHAFF CREDIT BARRY NIELD

THE HISTORY OF CROMWELL BOTTOM AND THE PACK HORSE BRIDGE

AUTHOR JANE UTTLEY WITH THANKS TO PAT KEENE, ANDY ECCLES AND MAX UTTLEY

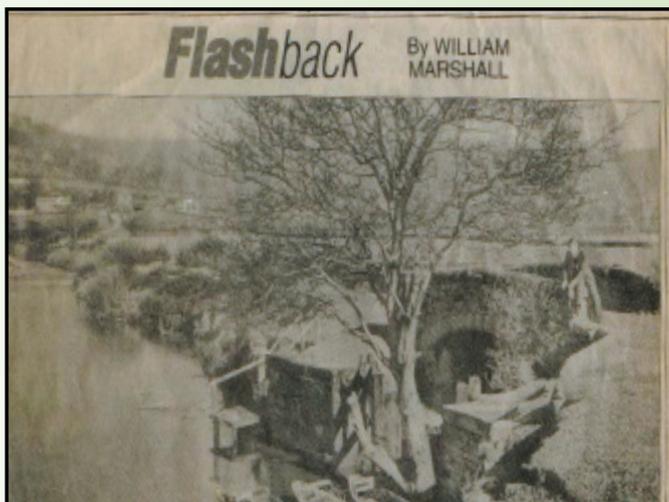
The name Cromwell was nothing to do with Oliver Cromwell but was derived from the old English name Crum meaning crooked /winding stream/river. The area was at the bottom of a crooked stream/river.

Have you ever noticed rows of cobbles as you walk past the weir along the river towards Lower Edge? This is an old packhorse bridge built to allow the barge horses to pass over Tag cut. This water way was cut between 1764 - 1779? to avoid the shallows on the river bends. Wool fibre was brought down the river by boat, from the sheep raised on the moors, to be processed in the valley bottom. Tag cut was not used for long being superseded by the Calder and Hebble Canal. Tag cut left the river at this packhorse bridge, flowing eastwards to Brookfoot, where it re-entered the river. There were, of course, lock gates at either end.

The area between the bridge and the remains of the cut has subsequently been nearly filled with fly ash. In the late 1940s 50s the area was a popular picnic place and the Craddock family hired out rowing boats (so called submarines because they leaked so badly!).

The Craddocks lived on site in the cottage shown in the photograph. Remains of their cellar can be seen a little way upstream.

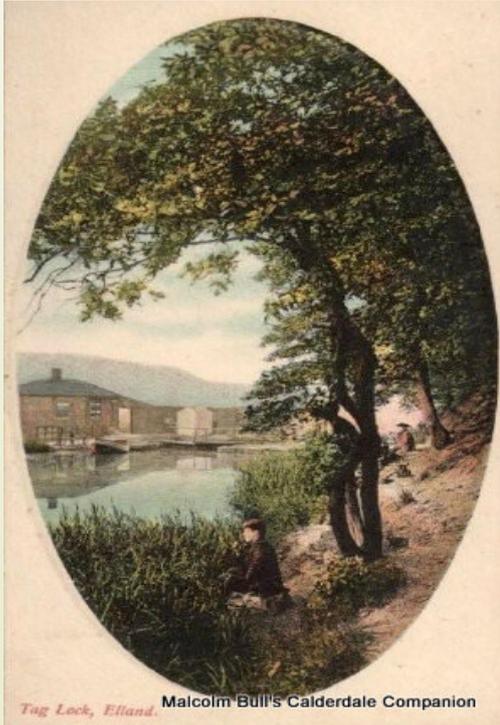
Hopefully in a little while we shall be able to clear away the under growth and see the bridge more clearly. If you do go exploring for remains do be very careful on the slippery river banks.



BOATS AT TAG LOCK



CRADDOCK'S COTTAGE



TAG LOCK 1910



REMAINS OF CRADDOCK'S COTTAGE



COOLING TOWERS AND LAGOON



BRIDGE OVER THE TAG CUT

LATEST NEWS:

The council have now taken an interest in restoring the bridge to its original version. The surveyors are intending to look and decide on a course of action. This must be done before any clearing of the vegetation is done (in case any vegetation is holding up the structure). It might be a good idea to search for funding, ring fenced, which could encourage the work to commence soon.



They say one swallow doesn't make a Summer,
an April shower wouldn't make me glummer,
I saw the gambling lambs and how they thrive,
would they bet on a trade war, to keep themselves alive?

What's that smell? Is it apple blossom?
Who's that singing? She sounds full of joy,
There's a new energy, I feel it today,
the world is in colour, I see no grey!

The reeds are getting greener, the coots are calling out
I'm glad I went walking, to take this all in,
there's drama on the lake, there are midges in the air,
the sun is on my back, yes it feels like Spring!

WILL, BARD OF SALTERHEBBLE

please send
your brilliant
poetry to the
newsletter
team
address
on back page

METAMORPHOSIS

Black ice, snow storms and fog begin to
ease
as days lengthen and warm up from the
freeze.
Now in dark musty soil, life starts to
rise.

Snowdrops signal survival through the
worst
and twigs bear buds that start to swell
and burst
as sap returns to flow after its rest.

Where all was dark new life begins to
glow
with royal blue, purple and bright
yellow
and softer shades where pastel colours
show.

From high aloft we hear the corvine cry
as fledglings flap and flare into the
sky
with some strange instinct teaching
them to fly.

Down in the pond the nymphs are near
full size
ready to moult when come the summer
skies
then metamorphosis makes the
damsel flies.

TONY HARGREAVES

JULIA'S WILDLIFE QUIZ



1. What is a Bulrush Wainscott?
2. What can you do if you see a badger on the side of the road in Calderdale?
3. What is the overall trait which distinguishes an Otter spraint from a Mink dropping?
4. When you hear 'cuckoo' is it the male or the female which makes this call?
5. Why do birds have hollow bones?
6. In Spring we often get to smell *Allium ursinum* as it grows prolifically in woodland in the UK, what is it more commonly known as?

answers on back page but no peeking!!

LETTERS & QUESTIONS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITOR

It comes in all shapes and sizes. It's been here for months, perhaps even years!
To what am I referring, you may ask? I'm referring to the collection of litter and debris which accumulates in the river opposite the cabin at Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve.
It's also one of the first sights which visitors see upon their visit to the reserve. A recent visitor remarked to me that it was "a horrible sight", and the worst she had seen since walking along the canal from Hebden Bridge.
As the removal of the debris is a Health and Safety issue, I contacted the Canal and River Trust, who forwarded my email about the accumulation of debris onto the Environmental Agency. I also alerted the Agency to the dangerous piece of ground near the weir. Although the area affected has been fenced off, the river continues to erode away more and more ground. I enquired if the ground could be shored up in some way. At the moment, I am still waiting for a positive response from the Environmental Agency. Fingers crossed!

DEAR READERS

I agree the litter especially in the river is very unsightly. Unfortunately, being in the middle of an industrial area the Wildlife Group have no control over what puts in an unlovely appearance; anything from 30 footballs to enormous freezers and the inevitable bits of plastic.

It is too dangerous for volunteers to tackle so Jennifer was right to contact the Canal and River Trust and Environment Agency.
The only slightly positive note is that some of our wildlife seem to like bits of it. Grey wagtail and Teal can often be seen picking out insects from the rubbish. Nature is amazing!

Jennifer, please let me know if the authorities contact you.

Lynda

JULIA'S WILDLIFE QUIZ - ANSWERS



1. A moth that likes damp and marshy habitat, and the larvae feeds on reedmace stems found in Cromwell Bottom reedbed. Moth seen flying between July to September.
2. If it is safe to do so, pull over and if badger appears alive phone **07894 497544**. If dead email Calderdale Badger Group on **calderdalebadgers@yahoo.com** and if possible move it on to a grass verge. Try and be clear about location as it may be a female that has youngsters close by.
3. Otter spraints smell of jasmine. Mink droppings are most offensive in smell.
4. The male only.
5. To minimise weight and help them fly.
6. Wild Garlic, Ramson or Buckram.

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 Lyn (Editor), Val and Jane. We can be found on Sundays at the Cabin. We thank you for all your articles, photos, letters and questions for this edition.



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