

CROMWELL BOTTOM

WILDLIFE GROUP

MAGAZINE

Aut/Winter

2025/26

Issue 23



Treecreeper

Credit Richard Tadman

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Printed by solopress.com

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cromwellbottomlnr.co.uk

google [@CBWGmedia2023](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBwgmedia2023) | Our Youtube channel



Registered Charity 1176233



A warm welcome to our Autumn/Winter 2025/26



Simon Day
Chair of CBWG

I would like to start my introduction with a tribute to our friend Graham Haigh who sadly passed away in July. The following paragraph was written by Mike Henshaw, one of our long serving Trustees:



David Langley
Joint Vice Chair

Graham was a founding member of Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group which started some 14 years ago. The reserve and the facilities we all enjoy today are a direct result of Graham's passion for nature, his vision, leadership and hard work.



Hayley Cottrell
Joint Vice Chair

Friends, volunteers and Trustees joined Graham's family at his funeral on 20th August, conducted by fellow Trustee, Allan Wolfenden. An extended tribute to Graham can be found in the cente pages of this edition.

Also, please enjoy reading our special feature called **'Community Groups connecting with nature at Cromwell Bottom'** which shows the growing number of social, community and charitable groups who are using our Visitor Centre to promote well-being and respite. Some of these are groups of people who provide a service for people with additional and/or complex needs. The feature includes a little information about the work of each organisation.

Simon Day, Chair, CBWG



Thank you to everyone who reads our biannual magazine, highlighting activities and events around our wonderful nature reserve.

We would really appreciate your feedback and ideas for how we can improve the magazine and any additional features or subjects you would like us to include.

Please send your thoughts to:
cbwgwildlife@gmail.com

We Look forward to hearing from you. Many thanks.. Trustees, CBWG

FRONT COVER...

This edition's front cover features February's photograph for our 2026 Calendar, a beautiful Treecreeper, printed with permission from the photographer, Richard Tadman.



We have a supply of these stunning calendars at just £8 each, available from our Visitor Centre which make great Christmas gifts and a must have for every household!!
All wildlife photos have been taken on Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve.

Useful Contacts

ANIMALS IN DISTRESS

(any wildlife)
07462 2103554
01706 371731

HIRD & PARTNERS VETS

01422 364999

WILDLIFE RESCUE (MELTHAM)

07846 344894

for treating injured wildlife

YORKSHIRE SWAN RESCUE HOSPITAL

07157 554554

CALDERDALE BADGER PROTECTION GROUP

07894 479544 (24 hrs)]

SHIBDEN VALLEY FALCONRY (Kevin Ryan)

07902 905036

HEDGEHOG RESCUE (Steph)

07787 314590

RSPCA (Hx/Hudds)

01422 365268

SPECIAL FEATURE

Community Groups connecting with Nature at Cromwell Bottom *Simon Day*

Staying Well



Staying Well is an organisation based in Calderdale who 'work with individuals and communities to help people feel less lonely and isolated'. Their objective is to provide links between people and to local services and social groups to promote well-being. Staying Well staff, along with their clients, have been making monthly visits to us for over a year. This enables them to visit and appreciate the reserve on short walks, including feeding the ducks, followed by refreshments in the Visitor Centre. The individuals benefit from the company of the group, sharing their experiences in a relaxing environment. An Access bus enables some less mobile clients to travel to and from the reserve for these visits. A handrail by the far end of the ramp, built by our volunteers, makes access easier. Visits happen mainly in the spring and summer months and we always look forward to meeting them and listening to their stories and humour.

The Staying Well service can be contacted by going online or phoning 01422 392767



Nature and Natter

Funded by Staying Well, Nature and Natter is a social walking group which formed in September 2024, originating from the Greetland Wellness hub. Their idea is to help and support people who enjoy the outdoors to enjoy short walks together to promote mental health and reduce isolation in the local area. Led by qualified walk leaders, the group enjoy local walks at a steady pace for an hour or so, chatting and enjoying the fresh air. The group have recently started fortnightly visits to the reserve, starting off with a guided walk, led by David Langley. They follow each of these walks enjoying refreshments and our hospitality in the Visitor Centre. Feedback following these visits has improved confidence in venturing out, making new friends and feeling the benefits of being out in nature.

'Being out in nature...has made me feel great'

'Finishing off with tea, coffee and cake makes for a perfect couple of hours'

'It's truly done wonders for my physical well-being.....and I feel more like myself again'

CBWG are delighted that we are able to engage community groups such as this and provide a meeting place for social groups to enjoy as part of their visit to the reserve.

Nature and Natter can be contacted on 07815 064796



Wayfinder Wanders

Wayfinder Wanders provide calm, creative sensory friendly walks for families with children who have special needs including those with autism and ADHD. The walks aim to provide families with the time and space to explore and enjoy nature on a walk for an hour or so in a low-pressure environment which is both inclusive and relaxed.

We were approached in

early July by Wayfinder Wanders and were so pleased to be able to accommodate their requests for monthly visits to the reserve, with some special social time for families to unwind and chat afterwards in our Visitor Centre.

On Sunday 21st September, after the torrential rain on the previous day, 12 children and 9 adults enjoyed a walk round

the reserve in beautiful Autumn sunshine.

The walk was led by Simon who supplied binoculars and a nature ID sheet for the children to tick off. He explained some of the history, wildlife and the ongoing work of CBWG volunteers on the reserve.

We started by finding a small newt in the Education Area and finished with refreshments and social time in the Visitor Centre.



Next Steps



Based across 4 fully equipped sites in Calderdale, Next Steps are a bespoke and recognised specialist provider for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities, complex needs and autism. They are a not-for-profit charity who aim to give individuals equal opportunities through working with support organisations to develop people's independence.

On a visit to Cromwell Bottom in August, we were approached by Next Steps staff regarding the setting up of monthly visits, which we happily accommodated. Their specially designed minibuses enable them to be transported safely to the reserve and wheelchair access to our Visitor Centre is made easy via our ramp at the far end of the boardwalk. We always look forward to their visits and are proud to be able to accommodate their individual needs as much as possible.

Next Steps are contactable on 01422 330938

Elland Family Hub



The Elland Family Hub is one of several hubs in Calderdale and managed by the North Halifax Partnership. Family hubs are there to help any family receive appropriate support when required to provide for their children, including those with particular needs, whilst supporting the well being of adult family members. They provide a range of services including activities for all the family, including those in school holidays.

We have, over several years, arranged activities for families including 'Dads and Children' events including pond dipping, guided walks and den building. Each session has ended with a packed lunch in our Visitor Centre. These events happen twice a year and have become a regular booking from the hub.

Elland Family Hub can be contacted on 01422 266197

'Time Out'

Children's Summer Holiday project August 2025

Our Visitor Centre hosted 2 workshops for local children in the HD6 3 postcode area. It was funded initially by the National Lottery and through The Space, Rastrick. As part of a 4 week summer holiday programme week, we hosted 2 creative Art workshops with a nature theme for 20 children. Both workshops were organised by Melissa Davie, an illustrator with a science

background, bringing together art and science as part of her 'Hey Nature' project, heynature-earth.com.

The first workshop was supported by Gillian Wrigley, Calderdale's sphagnum moss officer, where children learnt about the environmental importance of sphagnum for flood alleviation and carbon capture. Children produced pieces of artwork based on the samples or sphagnum they observed.

The second session focussed on identifying trees and imagining the personalities of 'tree beings.' Children took part in a carousel of activities: looking at soil samples through a microscope, creating their own creatures using rubbings from natural resources and inventing characters based on trees and from Melissa's own sketches.



Sunshine, Wild Flowers, and Bumblebees:

A Bee Safari at Cromwell Bottom *Shelagh Brooke*

A Bee Safari was held at the Cromwell Bottom Reserve on Saturday 12th July. And what a wonderful way it was to spend one of the many hot, sunny days of the 2025 summer! It had been organised by staff from Excel Manufacturing Ltd, who make made-to-measure curtains and blinds in Huddersfield. **Excel is making its activities as sustainable as possible. It is a business member of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BCT), and is donating 10% of the net sales from its 'Flowerbomb Pasture' blinds to the BCT. Excel had arranged for the Safari to take place at Cromwell Bottom.**

Clare Alley from the BCT started the day with a fascinating talk about bumblebees. To quote from one of the BCT publications 'Bumblebees are among the most loved and familiar of garden insects. The sight and sound of them buzzing from flower to flower is a quintessential part of British summertime, but sadly these charismatic creatures are struggling to survive.' Clare talked about the roles being played by the BCT in their conservation. (For much more information, including how you can help, please see <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org>) She explained that there are over 250 different species of bees in the UK: 24 of these are bumblebees, 1 is the honeybee, and the others are solitary bees. She talked about the life cycles of bumblebees. 6 of the UK species are known as cuckoo bumblebees because the females lay their eggs in other bumblebees' nests. The remaining 18 species are social, creating colonies of

up to 400 individuals in various locations such as in grass tussocks, disused rodent burrows, or crevices in trees. The lifecycle begins in spring when a fertilised queen emerges from hibernation in the soil. She creates a nest where she stores nectar and pollen that she has collected and lays eggs that all hatch into female workers. Many of these workers forage for nectar and pollen for the growing colony. In the late summer, the queen lays eggs that produce either new queens, or males (drones). Only the new, fertilised queens survive the winter, and so the life cycle begins again.



Buff-tailed bumblebee
from the Wildlife Trusts website.

Bumblebees pollinate many of our food crops and also the flowers on which animals and ecosystems depend. However, their numbers are declining greatly as a result of the loss of wildflower meadows, intensive agriculture, use of pesticides, urbanisation, climate change and the fragmentation of appropriate habitats. (Unlike honey bees, a bumblebee will not travel more than 1 kilometre from its colony.)

After Clare's presentation we put on our sun hats and, armed with bee nets, small glass specimen pots and an identification guide, we set off round the Reserve. Clare explained that when identifying a bumblebee it's a good idea to start by looking at the colour of its 'tail', and after that observing the banding pattern on its body. We found the greatest density of bees on a beautiful swathe of Lesser (Common) Knapweed that was in full flower in the Little Hay Meadow.

Many of the bees that we identified, prior to quickly releasing them, were Buff-tailed Bumblebees.

What was just wonderful was that a number of the children present said that before the Safari, either they hadn't taken much notice of bumblebees, or that they had been frightened of them, but that now they realised how interesting and important they are. A huge thank-you to Excel, and to Clare!!

Roe Deer Rutting and Trail Cameras *Lee Roberts*

Roe deer rutting occurs during July and August. During this period the male Roe deer (Buck) becomes very territorial and aggressive as they compete for access to females (Doe). The peak of rutting activity is usually first week of August.

Buck behaviour:

Bucks establish and defend territories engaging in fights with rival males.

Doe behaviour:

Does in oestrus will call to attract bucks. The bucks will pursue them wafter creating a "rutting ring" around a tree or object.

Delayed implantation:

Unlike other deer species, Roe deer exhibit delayed implantation, where the fertilised egg doesn't implant in the uterus until January.

Birth :

Roe deer typically give birth around May or June. This year we witnessed three Roe deer fawns around the reserve. We also captured footage on one of our many trail cameras around the reserve of the rutt and the male and female "doing their thing".

Please see our Youtube channel to watch the video -

google [@CBWGmedia2023](#) and click videos, or access from our website.



Image of three fawn and mother, from trail camera one misty morning. You can just make them out.

Graham Haigh

Our friend, leader and wildlife champion

Through the death of Graham, Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group and many who have been long term supporters and visitors at Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve have lost someone special. He was our friend and leader, someone who inspired and encouraged us to both manage and improve the reserve for both wildlife and people.

When Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group was founded fifteen years ago Graham was our first Chair. It was his drive, dedication and sense of purpose that not only established CBWG but took it forward through those early years. Graham was always passionate about bringing nature and people together. His drive and sense of purpose was equally matched by his knowledge of the birds, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies that could be found on the reserve. He understood the value of the lagoon and its reed-bed, and would often stress the importance of maintaining the wildflower meadows that are on the reserve. One of Graham's great strengths was that he was not afraid to challenge us or speak out if he thought mistakes were being made that would affect the reserve in a negative way. For all of that, Graham was always approachable and friendly. His wit and banter warmed many a conversation when we met him on the reserve.

Graham had many personal skills that made him suitable for the role of Chair and a trustee of CBWG (On which he served until his death). His talks with David, to a variety of outside groups, were both informative and inspirational. More often

than not, these were usually illustrated by the excellent photos he had taken (which were often in demand at our Open Days). For many people, their abiding memory of Graham will be his photography skills. He was often to be encountered walking around with his camera at the ready. Graham made friends easily and was always ready to chat about and share what he'd seen or photographed. Our friend, leader and wildlife champion.

Allan Wolfenden



Photo by Mike Henshaw

Some of Graham's stunning photographs from the reserve:

Bullfinch (m)
admiring its
reflection!



Nuthatch by name, nuthatch by nature!



Barn Owls (juv)

Common blue butterflies mating!



Male banded demoiselle dragonfly



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING part two | Charlie Streets

One of the things I love about nothing is the various methods you can employ to find moths and butterflies. It may be trapping moths at night, walking through a flowery meadow by day or scrutinising the leaf mines left behind by their larvae. This year we had another trick up our sleeve - pheromone lures. These are synthetic chemicals that replicate the pheromones

given off by the females of certain moth species, most noticeably the clearwings. This year, using the above methods, Andy Cockroft, Anthony Arak and myself have recorded no less than nine species which were not only new to Cromwell Bottom but also new to Calderdale. Here is a brief account of those species.



Blue-shot Dot (*Stigmella plagicolella*) - around a dozen mines were found in the Blackthorn hedge along the river up to the weir on June 26th. Since then mines have been found to be widespread across North Loop as well. They are nicknamed 'tadpole mines' because of the thin gallery which abruptly opens up in to a blotch, somewhat resembling a tadpole.



Bronze Case-bearer (*Coleophora paripennella*) - several tiny blotch mines were found in Black Knapweed at North Loop on Apr. 22nd. There is an awful lot of knapweed on site but, surprisingly, mines were found on just the one plant. The mines have a characteristic, circular puncture hole in the middle where the larva has entered the leaf to feed.



Lead-coloured Daisy Moth (*Dichrorampha plumbana*) - four were found by day on North Loop on May 6th. This is a difficult micro to identify so consequently it is a very scarcely recorded moth. Subsequent sightings show that it is thriving here. Its larval foodplants are Yarrow and Ox-eye Daisy.

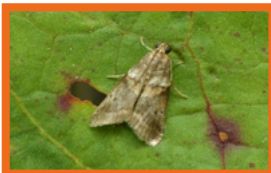


Tufted Tortrix - (*Acleris cristana*) - one came to a Robinson trap on Apr. 13th. An extremely variable moth with over 100 forms recognised but nevertheless it is an easy one to identify due to the small patch of raised scales on the centre of each forewing.



Small Rufous Tortrix (*Acleris aspersana*) - a male to an LED light on Aug. 2nd.

The whole of Yorkshire only records this species on average around ten times a year so it's no surprise that it is a newcomer to the borough.



Grey Oak Knot-horn (*Acrobasis consociella*) - a male to light on Aug. 2nd.

This species has only just begun to reappear in the county these last three years or so, so it was pleasing to add another dot to the map to further cement its resurgence.



Olive Spinner (*Zelleria oleastrella*) - one to light at North Loop on June 29th.

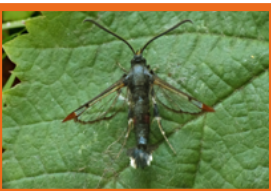
Just about as rare as they come, this represents just the second record for Yorkshire. As the larvae feed on Olive trees it's either a wanderer from a garden centre or, more likely in my view, a rare immigrant from southern Europe.

Its appearance coincided with a lot of immigrant moth activity across the country.



Yellow-legged Clearwing - two to a pheromone lure on North Loop on June 19th.

Andy's lures worked their magic by attracting one of the less expected clearwing species. They really are an exciting addition to the moth recorder's kit. You simply hang the lures up in their respective bags and just wait to see what turns up. Most clearwing species are so difficult to see by other means and are rarely, if ever, encountered despite being widespread.



Red-tipped Clearwing - one to a lure at the Sphagnum Bog on July 3rd.

There was no stopping us now, just two weeks later and another species was in the bag.

Anthony was our clearwing good luck charm,. Unfortunately for him they only turn up when he disappears!

These were just some of the many highlights of 2025 - the moths and their recorders are thriving at Cromwell Bottom!

‘Water is the engine of all nature’

Leonardo da Vinci

Mike Henshaw & Lynda Orchard

North Loop is a capped landfill site on the north of the reserve. The wildlife group has worked hard to develop it into a grassland area to encourage ground nesting birds, butterflies and other insects. Initially swales naturally filled with water creating some wetland areas. Over the years there have been good numbers of newts, frogs, dragonflies and damselflies. The grassland is also an ideal habitat for moles and voles. These in turn provide food for barn owls which have bred there since 2019. Unfortunately, over the last two years, breeding has failed. This is mainly because of the lack of rain. The dry weather has caused a steady decline in the number of insects but 2025 has been a complete disaster. Drought has impacted everything

from the grass itself to the number of insects and birds. It has gone from having the first ever black darter on the reserve, the southern hawker, four spot chaser and the emperor dragonfly to having next to none.

In spite of efforts to improve the grassland by having Exmoor ponies to graze in winter, the lack of rainfall has meant little growth leaving no cover for the wildlife.

What can be done?

Members of the group are discussing ways to collect and store rainwater as it seems likely that extremes of weather will be more common in future. The issue is at the top of the agenda and the group hope for better things in the future.



Those heady days of the Exmoor Ponies!

Butterfly Survey 2025

undertaken by Manchester University

SPECIES	DATE				
	10.4.25	01.5.25	19.6.25	10.7.25	24.7.25
Small White	2	2	5	36	4
Large White	0	1	0	6	3
Red Admiral	0	0	1	0	0
Comma	3	0	0	2	0
Orange Tip	4	23	1	0	0
Tortoiseshell	2	0	2	0	0
Speckled Wood	0	5	2	7	5
Peacock	10	5	0	7	0
Meadow Brown	0	0	58	2	19
Small Skipper	0	0	17	0	0
Small Heath	0	0	13	6	2
Green Veined White	2	0	0	1	11
Small Copper	0	0	3	0	2
Ringlet	0	0	70	19	4
Gate Keeper	0	0	0	71	47
Common Blue	0	0	0	0	3

Data provided by Lesley Lace
Senior Lecturer in Ecology at Manchester University.

White-letter hairstreak butterflies, Elms and Cromwell Bottom *Robin Dalton and Shelagh Brooke*

White-letter hairstreak (WLH) butterflies are totally dependent on Elms for the completion of their life cycle. From the 1960s onwards, an aggressive form of Dutch Elm Disease (DED) has killed tens of millions of Elm trees across the UK. Most of these were English Elms, many of which were majestic trees that were notable within the landscape. WLH butterflies are thought to have survived this loss of habitat by colonizing Elm suckers and the more disease-resistant Wych Elm. However, their continuing decline is causing concern. (The WLH butterfly is endangered. Its abundance has declined by up to 78% in England since 1976, and it is on the Butterfly Red Data List for the UK.) The species spends much of its time high in the tree canopy. When it does fly, it has an erratic, spiralling flight. Individuals will occasionally take nectar from nearby flowers, favouring Creeping Thistles and Brambles.



White-letter hair streak butterfly
credit Richard Wilson

At Cromwell Bottom there are a small number of low-growing Elms. In 2017 Richard Wilson Ecology carried out a terrestrial invertebrate survey on the Reserve. During the survey, a single adult WLH butterfly was seen nectaring on Creeping Thistle flowers. It was photographed and recorded by Richard Wilson on 13th July.

A tree survey has recently been carried out on the Reserve by Woodsage Consultants Ltd, and the resultant report is expected shortly. Discussions arising during the survey have included the possibility of planting some additional Elms on the Reserve with a view to supporting the butterflies. Currently there is debate about whether it would be more appropriate to use Wych Elm or Wingham Elm saplings. (Wingham Elms have been developed as a result of a research and breeding programme that has produced a tree that is much more resistant to DED.)

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust and Nether Edge and Sharrow Sustainable Transformation have already been working in partnership (supported by Sheffield City Council) on the Elms and Hairstreaks Initiative, which aims to make that region a place where both species can thrive again. This has involved the planting of Wingham Elms in a number of locations. It would certainly be interesting to discuss their experiences with them. We look forward to providing an update on developments in the next edition of the Magazine.



<https://www.wildsheffield.com/elm-initiative>

image below The Wingham Elm

taken from the following website:

<https://wingham-pc.gov.uk/news/the-wingham-elm-comes-to-wingham/>



Featured Photographer | Kirsty Collins



The Goldcrest is the smallest bird we have in the UK. It is one of my favourites and one of the most frustrating birds to photograph. The reason for this is because the little things hardly ever stop still. They're so beautiful I'll never tire photographing them. Keep your eye out when you see a flock of long tailed tits as these little birds like to tag along as well.

I was sitting in one of my usual spots trying to catch a glimpse of the Kingfisher when this tiny little wood mouse started scuttling through the undergrowth. To my surprise instead of running in the opposite direction it decided I was no threat and sat in the middle of the path giving me the perfect photo opportunity.





Live Poets Society

Autumn Interlude

Leaves green, gold, yellow and red,
Twisting, tumbling and turning as down,
down they go,
Into the murky waters of the river below.

A shadowy figure, reddish brown, hun-
kers down into the ground,
While others stay close by, out of sight,
For foxes are on the prowl for deer
tonight.

A rustle of leaves, a scraping of ground,
A rolling and tumbling as a badger
crashes around.

Silently, a ghostly figure flits across the
field,
A bird of prey is searching, searching,
searching,
Suddenly, the Barn Owl strikes!

Jennifer Wolfenden 2025.

Back by popular demand Cromwell Bot- tom Wordsearch!

The first person to complete the puzzle and take to the staff at the Visitor Centre one **Sunday**, will win a free drink and cake/ice cream

Y	V	K	R	Y	F	Y	G	R	E	E	D	P	N	K
I	O	Q	B	F	S	P	I	D	E	R	X	C	H	O
P	L	A	N	R	U	T	C	O	N	L	O	H	E	S
B	U	S	W	C	A	C	Y	N	E	S	W	T	S	H
A	N	H	I	S	Q	U	I	R	R	E	L	R	K	T
L	T	N	L	Y	N	L	F	E	D	G	E	B	Y	O
S	E	O	D	F	A	O	G	Y	A	W	B	U	Y	M
A	E	R	L	L	X	D	Q	V	O	P	O	M	X	L
M	R	E	I	O	A	M	A	L	T	O	G	B	P	A
J	S	H	F	B	K	F	F	O	O	O	R	L	W	D
R	L	T	E	L	L	D	D	I	H	L	V	E	J	Y
M	Q	L	V	G	L	Z	P	D	H	G	V	B	F	B
R	E	H	S	I	F	G	N	I	K	A	T	E	E	I
B	F	Q	W	W	A	W	F	T	H	T	K	E	N	R

HERON
WILDLIFE
TAGLOOP
MOTHS
KINGFISHER
WILDFLOWERS
OWL

BADGERS
VOLUNTEERS
NOCTURNAL
OTTER
DEER
FOX
SQUIRREL

BALSAM
BUMBLEBEE
TOAD
LADYBIRD
SPIDER



Illustration – Sue Sedman