

NEWSLETTER

Autumn/Winter 2022/23

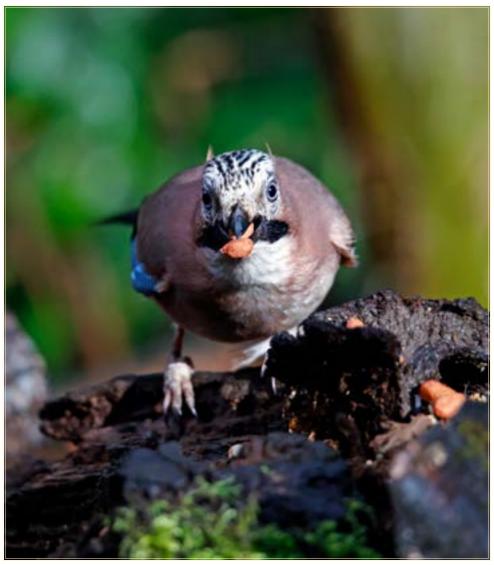


image credit Steve Midgley

Welcome to the Autumn/ Winter 2022-23 Newsletter

The arrival of our new Visitor Centre building has enabled us to 'signifiantly' increase our offer to the community. This would not have been possible without the generous grant of £25,000 from Rastrick Big Local.

We had our successful Open Day on 6 August 2022 and are delighted that Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve is the backdrop to a series of children's books written by M.G. Leonard. "Twitch" and the follow-up book "Spark" are available for sale in the Visitor Centre (see p.22).

We continue to welcome an increasing range of visitors, schools and groups to the reserve to learn about this special place, along with providing guided walks and outdoor educational activities.

As ever, I hope you enjoy reading our latest newsletter, full of interesting arcticles and stunning photos. To request any visits to the reserve, please don't hesitate to contact me.

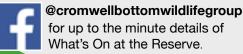


Simon Day, Chair CBWG swday1985@gmail.com

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@cbwgrp



A bumper year for Orchids?

Jen Landells

Late June saw Julie, Vic and meundertake our annual Orchid count. The count is part of our role of monitoring plant species in the reserve. We aim to undertake the survey as close as possible to the same date each year and in a similar way. We look in the same sites, mostly from the viewpoint of paths, so that we limit damage to plants. We normally use sharp eyesight and a pair of binoculars. However, the accuracy of the count can be affected by the height of the vegetation and by human error.

We have two main types in the reserve: Common Spotted Orchids and a smaller number of Southern Marsh Orchids. In addition, we have noted some pale, almost completely white orchids, which are hybrids. Orchids are prone to hybridise.

In 2022, we saw increased numbers of orchids at almost every site, compared to 2018, 2019, and 2021. This year, we had a grand total of 508 orchids compared to 2021's total of 164. This number is very encouraging but volunteers can remember years when over 1,000 appeared. We don't know what affects these numbers but we hope by being careful with the measures we are taking, to return to these totals.

News just in - Broad leaved Helleborine have been spotted around the reserve, about 14 so far. Please everyone keep your eyes peeled and notify Jen at the wildlife group of any findings!







Creating a Hibernaculum in the Education Area

Allan Wolfenden, Tony Spilsbury

A Hibernaculum is a place where but tree roots were not the issue. What soil, turf and other organic material.

amphibians and reptiles can live in made digging our hole so difficult winter, enabling them to survive harsh was the amount of concrete, bricks winter conditions. They are usually built and stone we had to dig through. Not by digging a large hole, about half a wanting to be defeated and with Tony's metre deep, and then filling it with leaf determination and great use with a litter, logs, stones and bricks in order to spade and mattock, we eventually, over create cavities, before covering it with two Thursdays, reached the required depth.

Much work has been done in the It's not just the size of the hole we education area across from the needed to consider, we had to consider compound where the new visitor what we were going to fill it with and centre is situated to provide areas how we could build in two entrances where newts, frogs and toads can and exit pipes for the amphibians to thrive, including the establishing of a use. Having found two flexible pipes new pond. Tony Spilsbury and myself, of suitable diameter and placed them on one of our Thursday work days at ground level with the bottom of thought it would be a good idea to the pipes in the floor of the hole we build a hibernaculum. Great ideas do not always go the way you expect. material and sand. We then proceeded Choosing our spot within travelling to build up the structure so that it was distance of the Wheel Wash (an half a metre above ground, making the established breeding area for Newts, hibernaculum a metre deep from top frogs and toad) and the new pond, we to bottom. At some future date we will started to dig. We were expecting to experience problems with tree roots,

infilled with leaf litter, bricks, logs, plant place turf on the top and plant ferns and shade loving plants.





Calderdale Badger Protection Group

Marguerite Penny

In this CBWG Autumn and Winter evidence based scientific research edition, Calderdale Badger Protection which clearly and unambiguously Group would like to ask people to shows that bTB begins in cattle - over keep an eye open for our badgers 94% of transmission is cow to cow, 6% during these seasons as they present is "other" - and has to be controlled with associated risks for them. Autumn is one cattle measures and that culling badgers of the two peak seasons for road traffic has no impact on reducing disease in badger injuries and death - 50,000 are killed every year on UK roads. If a dead, distressed or injured badger, a lone, small cub or any badger out in daytime is seen please do call us on our Hotline 07894 497544 or privately message us on our Facebook page

https://www.facebook.com/ Calderdalebadgers

We always investigate and rescue them when necessary. During Autumn badgers are very busy foraging to eat enough to see them through the Winter, which can compensation bills which cost us £34m be a challenging time for them. They do not hibernate but sleep deeply and for extinct in some cull areas. longer but do sometimes come out of their setts to find food and to drink, and To help can the cull, please visit this it is important to remember to put out website - click the triangle. fresh water for wildlife when the ground and water sources are frozen.

Fortunately for our badgers, West Yorkshire is not in the 25% of England where the horrific culls still take place every Autumn with some stretching into Winter.

The frenzy of government sanctioned badger killing grows ever more extensively divorced from independent,

cattle. The government is scapegoating badgers as a desperate distraction from their utterly failed management of TB in cattle. Another 33,687 badgers were slaughtered last year, and this year's total will probably be even higher. The Government aims to kill up to 72% (280,000) of English badgers by 2025. So far they have slaughtered 176,928 and it is the British taxpayer who pays for this scientifically and ecologically unjustified badger killing which does not benefit cattle at all - over £60m so far not counting the 100% farmers' in 2019 alone. Badgers are now locally



https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/can-thecull

Did you know that......

Badgers are indigenous to Britain, having lived here from three guarters to half a million years, and are a keystone species, which means that they play a crucial role in our countryside's ecology. Without them ecosystems would collapse.





In the wild - credit Andrew Tilsley

credit Ceinwyn Thomas

Building a New Visitor Centre

Simon Day, Mike Henshaw







After many months of practical and meticulous financial planning, headed up by David Langley, the phrase, 'When we get the new cabin...' became a reality on 28th June. Out with the old, derelict hut, and in with a brand new, multi-purpose modular building, several times bigger, equipped with kitchen and office - and this was just the beginning!

After several weeks of painstaking construction, planning and re-planning of ideas, a team of very capable multi-purpose centre it was intended volunteers erected an accessible ramp to be. However, NONE of this would around the perimeter of the now called have happened without a very generous 'Visitor Centre' with literally hours to grant from the Rastrick Big Local fund spare before our Open Day, on Saturday 6th August. With further spending, furnishings and welcome furniture creating a special community hub for donations from Hills Office Supplies, Cleckheaton, the inside,

equipped with new display boards, now resembles the attractive and welcoming of £25,000 and CBWG are extremely grateful that they shared our vision of all visitors and gave us such a helping hand! Thank you!

Rastrick Big Local

Margaret Conroy, Fundraising Volunteer

It seems a very long time since the ceiving a grant towards a replacement funding from Rastrick Big Local back in its were made to potential suppliers, 2018.

Back then our focus was mainly on the planning permissions, licences etc. need to preserve the reedbed and im- Throughout all this the Wildlife Group, prove the paths around it. So with much and especially the trustees, remained encouragement and advice from RBL's optimistic and determined that we Danny Leech we submitted an application, and after the local voting process And we did! RBL Big Impact Fund was complete we were delighted to receive a grant in 2019 of £22,130 which funded major footpath works around the reserve. We were very grateful for this - among other benefits it vastly improved access for wheelchair users lockdown struck, bringing new problems and reduced the amount of mud on well and challenges. But finally, with further used paths considerably.

sion and Danny had been listening to our further hopes and ambitions for the are now the proud custodians of a fine reserve, especially our dream of replac- new centre which will serve all our visiing our old, well worn cabin, and invited tors well for years to come. Huge thanks us to apply for a grant from their Big Im- to Rastrick Big Local for your support pact Fund. Our ambitions to host larger and trust in us - we couldn't have done groups, especially from local schools, it without you! Overleaf are pictures of were limited by the lack of indoor space. their formal opening of the Visitor Cen-Once again our shared efforts paid off tre 24.9.22. A huge thank you to as we put together a strong case for re-

Wildlife Group first talked about seeking building. Designs were considered, visendless discussions took place about would somehow achieve our goal...... awarded us a grant of £25,000, which really brought the whole project within reach and spurred us on to find the rest of the money needed to make our big dream into a reality. Then, Covid and funds gathered, and a lot of planning We had evidently made a good impres- and hard work, [a phrase which covers more than you can ever imagine!!] we

Rastrick Big Local.

Members of the Rastick Big Local Team are Angela Peaker, Richard Peaker, Rich Richardson, Amanda Caldwell, Amanda Lawson and Danny Leech.





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North Loop

A CELEBRATION OF THE JOURNEY FROM ASPIRATION TO ACHIEVEMENT

Mike Henshaw, Shelagh Brooke

North Loop is an area of land lying immediately adjacent to the western boundary of Cromwell Bottom Local Nature Reserve. It, like the reserve, is owned by Calderdale Council. In the 1990s it was used for the disposal of waste, and the resulting landfill area was re-capped about seven years ago. It remains the subject of an Environment Agency Environmental Permit because of its status as a landfill site that continues to require regular monitoring and maintenance by the council.



accompanied by a small number cattle volunteers to make a couple of of Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group (CBWG) volunteers, walked around Council's proposals for utilising the area for habitat development, biodiversity endorsed by the CBWG Committee.) Valley and Milner Royd Green Corridor). animals over the winter. An update about the work undertaken on North Loop was included in the Autumn/ Winter 2021/2022 CBWG Newsletter. Because of its industrial history, access to the site remains limited: it is carefully regulated by Calderdale Council, and dogs are prohibited. However, some of the habitat development was undertaken by a range of volunteers. Thus large numbers of trees, hedging shrubs, and grassland wild flowers were planted, and an education area, full of activities and interest, was developed in the woodland near to the new Visitor Centre. Other work, undertaken by contractors, included fence building and path improvement. Thus, it became

In late 2017, a group of Council officers, possible for enthusiastic shorthorn visits to enhance the ecology of the new meadow area.

North Loop. They discussed the More has been achieved during the last year. A stunning observation point has been installed near the centre of enhancement, and conservation, and the site which is now used by school for supporting environmental education, groups for exploring and interpreting (These approaches had already been the landscape. (CBWG bought a set of binoculars that can be used to enhance A 'wish list' of ideas was produced, this activity.) Shallow pools and should funding for the project become scrapes have been constructed. One available. Council personnel worked of these has retained water throughout on a bid for a grant from the European the summer, attracting a whole range Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of plants and animals to the location. which proved successful. Thus in 2019 The area devoted to winter feed mix for monies became available for the 'Calder birds has been dramatically improved. Greening' initiative, a collaborative A new dipping pond has been created venture involving Calderdale Council, near to the education area. Strings of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and the toad spawn appeared in it within a few Environment Agency. As well as weeks of it being filled, and it is currently providing funding for developments on fringed by spires of purple loosestrife North Loop, a number of other areas in flowers. A hibernaculum has been built Calderdale benefitted (eg the Copley nearby to offer protection for a range of



Huge thanks are owed to everyone who has contributed to the project, in particular to Calderdale Council and the ERDF. It is not possible to list all of the others here, but as well as CBWG volunteers they include the Fort Foundation (who funded a sand martin wall), the Woodland Trust (who donated tree saplings), and members of local scout groups who regularly attended, and most ably supported volunteer days.

And so to the future.... Clearly, conservation work on the site will be ongoing. Because of the Environmental Permit, access to the area will continue to be regulated, and by request only. (There is evidence from monitoring that the wildlife is benefitting from a lack of disturbance, a phenomenon that has been widely documented elsewhere.) However, the Council and CBWG are committed to supporting local schools and community groups, and numerous visits by school parties (and other community organisations) have already taken place (as described in this, and previous Newsletters).









Any indivuals, schools or community groups wishing to visit please contact >>>





swday1985@gmail.com (Simon) countryside@ calderdale.gov.uk (The Council)

Brookfoot Lagoon, Reedbed & Wet Woodland

Robin Dalton, Shelagh Brooke

development and a collaboration between reserve using gravity. Calderdale Council and Group. It Wildlife because possible funding secured by the to (which involves Agency).

Progress continues to be nearby top of the western made. The conservation wet woodland that lies careful import of water River Calder. The water will onto the site. Following the then find its own diffused completion of a number of route down through the surveys and assessments wet woodland, and will commissioned by the eventually flow into the council, a decision was lagoon and reedbed. A made to apply to the sluice will be constructed relevant authorities for under the bridge in permissions and licences the lagoon's

of Hebble Navigation to outflow of water from project, designed maintain and increase the the reedbed. The two arrest and reverse wetness of the Brookfoot overspills from the canal the natural drying-out of wetlands. The canal was will be set so that the canal these important habitats, chosen as a source of level will be maintained. has been reported upon water, at least in part, in previous because water can be Negotiations Newsletters. It involves brought from it to the the Council and the

additional canal overspill the precise design of the of will be constructed near necessary Council from the European kissing gate that allows structures that will allow Structural and Investment access to the Reserve abstraction of water from Fund for the Brighouse from the canal towpath. the canal is anticipated Flood Alleviation Scheme This location is relatively to occur during a close to that of the current 2022 and early 2023. As partnership between the overspill from the canal to before, Council, Yorkshire Wildlife the river. The new overspill will be reported in future Trust, and the Environment will pick up the water that Newsletters. is currently lost to the river, and re-direct it into the work will involve the between the canal and the to use water overspilling boundary/bund. This can

purposes, nature, from the Calder and be used to control the

between appropriate organisations are ongoing, and may result Cromwell Bottom The current plan is that an in some modifications to the western-most works. Construction of the



https://calderdale.gov. uk/v2/residents/leisure-and-culture/parksand-open-spaces/ nature-reserves/cromwell-bottom-local-nature#brookfoot

The Sphagnum Tunnel

Mike Henshaw, David Langley

Calderdale Countryside Service has This will go some way to reducing the previous edition of a newsletter).

is to plant out the sphagnum on upland the rewilding of our precious uplands. moors in Calderdale.

provided a polytunnel for the propagation carbon footprint and hopefully help of sphagnum moss It is located in the minimise the flooding in the Calder compound behind the new Education Valley. The project will no doubt continue Centre. The project is managed by after four years! This represents one Gill Wrigley (who wrote an article in a small step for man (and woman as we are sure Neil Armstrong meant to say!) The idea behind this four year project and one giant leap for mankind, towards





For acid soil it could not stand. So it withdrew from moorland mire Leaving expanse of rocky ground, A landscape made of gritstone grey. The spongy mat once 'neath our feet Had said goodbye and gone away Leaving this wetland then deplete.

The wetland moss would take no more Now thanks to help from volunteers Fresh sphagnum shoots are being planted And soon that moss it re-appears. Thus species loss is prevented. A bonus is that sphagnum moss Absorbs and locks up see-o-two Helping to reduce mankind's mess By taking that gas from the blue.

© Tony Hargreaves



Featured photographer Graham Haigh











Our Partners in the Community Simon Day

As usual, many Community Groups enjoyed what the Nature Reserve has to offer and the Wildlife Group volunteers loved their visits!



24 May - Cygnet Lodge, Brighouse with the first of planned fortnightly visits from rehabilitation patients, accompanied by staff. They all enjoyed re-filling the bird feeders and a cuppa afterwards!



18 June - Woodland Explorers Event. Lower Valley Dads and Children came to visit from the Elland Childrens Centre. 14 attended a guided walk and loved filling the bird feeders! Children completed a 'Scavenger Hunt' sheet as part of the event. A big thank you from the Wildlife Group at all the wonderful comments received from the children.



21 June - Shellietastic Creativity. Natalie Kaye from the group held a story based Forest School event for young children below school age. They were "Making and splatting little spluggers, having a boogie and little story".



2 August - Calderdale Childrens' Library "Where the Wild Things Are".

- the first group to use our new Indoor Space! A story followed by an art activity using clay to make a 'wild creature'. Everyone loved it! (full permission given for

use of this photograph).



21 August - Calderdale Active Partnership ~ the group enjoyed guided tours and a picnic. They were shown the Education area, the new Observation Post on North Loop and tested out the ramp for access to the new Visitors' Centre.



16 August - Calderdale Childrens' Library visited again, how wonderful to see such a popular Service. They enjoyed the Gruffalo story and making Gruffalo masks, followed by a short walk around part of the reserve and meeting the Gruffalo himself!

Education Links

Simon Day



13 June, 15 June and 17 June saw visits from Ling Bob Primary School Halifax. They had a guided walk and carried out worksheet activity. 90 children came in total and groups were led by Robin Dalton and Simon Day. Children were shown round key features of the reserve, identifying damselflies, herons and various butterflies. The three visits really engaged the children, many of whom had never visited a nature reserve before.



16 June Old Earth Primary School - two reception classes visited North Loop to do some geography based work and learn about how the land is used in the surrounding area. Walks were led by Simon, Martin and Mike. Several volunteers attended a special Assembly at the school all about the trip. There were many written comments from children, all of whom thoroughly enjoyed the event.



5 July - Midgley Primary School children visited for pond dipping, bug hunting and bird watching. They were the first school to use our new Education Area and to visit the newly constructed Observation Post on North Loop. 24 year 4/5 children attended.



12 July - New Road Primary School children visited to complete a guided walk which included filling up the bird feeders and completing a scavenger sheet. They also visited the new Observation Post on North Loop.

Just a few comments from children



I've loved my time here today its really open and my favourite is the birdwatching. I will definitely come here again.

Its been so fun and very enjoyable I've loved the birdwatching and we saw 9 different types of birds and a squirrel! I also enjoyed pond dipping and investigating the diferent animals.

I have enjoyed my time here but my favourite part was going to the Observatory. We found some blackbirds and some pigeons. I also enjoyed the bird watching activity. I would love to come again.

Around the Reserve

Remember the pictures of the pheasants in the last issue? Well, we now have a new feeder for them! and ...7 juveniles have been spotted in the summer! Here is one starting to moult!





People and Nature

Lvnda Orchard

Meet Allan Wolfenden - Trustee

When the newsletter team met up with Those days, in the mid 1950's, wildlife Allan, it was a lovely sunny day. We were sitting outside the cabin surrounded by volunteers and visitors and there was a very happy atmosphere. Much of this was created by Allan and the original members of the wildlife group who were joining in with snippets of information!



EARLY LIFE

Throughout his life, Allan has always been involved with nature. Growing up in the 50s he spent a lot of time playing out. Leaving home in the morning and returning for tea, he was always on the lookout for birds, frogspawn, rabbits and hares. During school holidays he roamed around his home patch in Rossendale, exploring the unspoiled countryside. He has memories of riding on the back of a shire horse which was used by a local farmer for hay making during what was the long summer holidays.

seemed to flourish. The farm which he vividly remembers seemed to use farming practices that allowed wildlife to flourish. Ground nesting birds, hares and wildflowers seemed abundant. The sight of a shire horse pulling a mower around a large hay meadow in preparation for the cut grass to be collected as loose hav and taken to the barn for storage is a memory of a world that no longer exists. In the 1970's and 80's everything changed. Intensive farming became more prominent and nature began to suffer.

When Allan was 16, he joined the local Mountain Rescue team. This, coupled with climbing, potholing and orienteering give him ample opportunity to meet his need for adventure and to observe nature very closely. Whilst climbing Crib-Goch in North Wales at night he remembers seeing the eyes of mountain goats reflected in his torchlight. Rock climbing on warm spring and summer evenings was enriched by the sounds of calling of curlews, lapwings and redshanks. Throughout the 60s and 70s he remembers nature was all around him.

Allan married and had children and family holidays involved nature - birdwatching on Anglesey, and visiting Bempton Cliffs. Passing on knowledge and interest to his children was incredibly important to him.

Alongside all of this Allan worked as a plasterer before entering theological college and gaining a 2:1 first degree followed by a Masters in Theology. In 1996 his work in the church brought him to West Yorkshire.

DISCOVERING CROMWELL BOTTOM

Allan continued with his running and it was whilst he was out one day that he discovered the lagoon. The reserve was not managed at that time and much more overgrown. He was amazed by the reedbeds and the variety of habitats. He came across a sign asking for people who are interested to meet up and help to set up an organization to look after the reserve. These people turned out to be Robin Dalton, Hugh Firman, Bruce Hoyle, Graham Haigh, Mike Henshaw, Sally Henshaw and a lady called Yvonne. After an initial meeting in a local pub the newly formed Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group began to meet monthly in the community room Kings Cross fire station. With the encouragement of Hugh and Robin, it was decided to set up a committee with Graham

chair. His love of nature the great satisfaction it now found expression gave when these were the management occupied and used. and development of the reserve.

One of the first jobs he remembers being on the agenda was planning to plant lots of native trees like Hawthorn to encourage more wildlife. Allan then helped to identify the right place for the bird feeding area, put up the feeders and waited to see what would appear. There are no benches or fences, just a grass banking to sit on!.

They sat and watched the birds come and feed and planned the next stage of what would become the "Bird Viewing Area." There were disappointments of course, people do not always respect nature There was vandalism at times but the dedication and commitment of the group was undimmed by whatever challenges came That along. commitment is still there. Another of the early tasks Allan remembers was the building and placing of nest boxes for birds such as blue tits and great

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as chair and Allan as vice tits on the reserve, and

Allan became chair in 2018 and thoroughly enjoyed working with people and passing on his knowledge and enthusiasm - especially to children. The group held a belief that they could encourage new wildlife to the reserve and were delighted when barn owls decided to nest. The site of them hunting is fantastic. However, it is not just the obviously beautiful things that Allan was interested in he also loves the creatures that some people would deem unlovely. He has become quite an expert on dragonflies, damselflies



Hoverfly Helophilus pendulus





THE OLD CABIN (Allan's story continued)

In the early days of the reserve there was no cabin and no toilets. The only building to shelter in during bad weather for the volunteers was the big dark shed. In 2015 the council decided that North Loop had to be re-capped and the cabin was installed for the workmen. One of the benefits was that when the work was finished the council left behind the cabin and the toilet! The aroup then decided to refurbish the interior. It became a focal point where people could meet up and use the reserve. There were many community benefits people made friends and relationships developed. The facilities at the cabin need to encourage people to visit and improve their physical and mental health. All images credit AW.

More around the Reserve....



The new pond in the Education Area (following on from the article in the last edition) is now complete though it didn't get any water in it until April of this year! It is now visited by a variety of wildlife! Newts, frogs, beetles, pond skaters, dragonflies, damselflies, darters, different bird species and mammals, to name but a few! Isn't it astonishing at just how quickly nature can move in to the places where the conditions are just right!

Your pictures and stories

Kirsty Collins writes ...

I have a Panasonic Lumix FZ82 camera. It doesn't have a detachable lens. I think it's a 20 - 1200mm and it has a 60× optical zoom. I will send you my best pics! It is very hard getting a brilliant picture, think I would need a better camera but this is my first! My son has really got into photography, his name is Coby and he has his own camera. I bought myself one so we could have a little hobby together. We live very close to Cromwell & really enjoy going for long walks & seeing what we can see to photograph. Coby loves going around the reserve, it does him good and the kingfisher is one of our favourite birds.

Thank you for asking us to contribute and we hope to do this for the Spring edition too! We will also join CBWG.







Tim, Hazel and young Seb, visiting the reserve from Lancashire. Seb is fascinated by the newts at the top pond, and the blue alder beetles he found!



Join our wonderful members' today!

Robin Owen-Morley, Membership Secretary, CBWG

Members contribute to the funds which support the incredible work of our volunteers that makes the Cromwell Bottom Local Nature Reserve such a special place.

As a member you will:

- · receive our bi-annual newsletter direct to your Inbox
- be notified of regular events that we hold such a guided walks, bat walks and moth trapping
- gain access (on request) to our member's blog which has news, notification of events and fabulous photos and information from our wildlife experts
- be able to arrange guided tours of our extensive conservation area which is not open to the general public
- · be able to vote at our AGM, normally held in Brighouse in June each year
- be supporting our work with local schools delivering education to children about the importance of their environment

And it's through the support of our members that we've been able to provide our fantastic new Visitor Centre where all our visitors can sit in comfort enjoying the refreshments that we serve on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

We have agreed that Annual Membership prices should not be increased for the next year and are:

· Individual £10 · Joint/Family £15 (can include two email addresses)

To request a membership form and details of how to pay, simply send an email to membershipcbwg@gmail. com or request by post >>>>>>

Membership Secretary Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group Upper Brian Schole Northowram HX3 7ES



