

CROMWELL BOTTOM  
WILDLIFE GROUP  
MAGAZINE

SPRING/  
SUMMER  
2024

Issue 19



# INFO



CBWGwildlife@gmail.com Chair of CBWG, general, questions etc.  
membershipCBWG@gmail.com membership enquiries,  
monthly news briefing to members,  
finance  
[@cromwellbottomwildlifegroup](https://www.facebook.com/cromwellbottomwildlifegroup)  
[@cbwggrp](https://www.x.com/cbwggrp) (formerly known as Twitter!) ~ login details required by X)  
Our website ~ [cromwellbottomlnr.co.uk](http://cromwellbottomlnr.co.uk)  
Our YouTube channel ~ search the name - including the '@'  
[@CBWGmedia2023](https://www.youtube.com/@CBWGmedia2023) ~ when you have clicked on 'channel'  
click 'videos' and/or 'playlists'.

## Donations

If you would like to donate to CBWG using our Just Giving site, please click on the QR code or visit

<https://checkout.justgiving.com/c/3421040>



Registered Charity 1176233



# WELCOME

A warm welcome to the Spring/  
Summer edition of our magazine.



Simon Day  
Chair of CBWG



David Langley  
Joint Vice Chair



Hayley Cottrell  
Joint Vice Chair

Firstly, I'd like to personally thank everyone who has contributed to this edition, in particular the Magazine Production team (new, more appropriate name). All contributors' time and dedication which has gone into such a publication is very much valued and appreciated.

The winter months at Cromwell Bottom are largely taken up with the usual tasks of maintaining and upgrading parts of the reserve and individual habitats and this winter has been no exception, despite the increasingly wet climate!

We are fortunate to have had steady increases in memberships and posts on our social platforms and we thank everyone for the positive feedback and support you give us!

It seems just a short time since I was writing my welcome for the last newsletter in September of 2023! As I look back at all the achievements and accomplishments, in the last 6 months, again, I am compelled to record my sincere thanks to ALL our Trustees and volunteers for their continuing commitment to developing Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve for wildlife and visitors in equal measure. Much of what I have mentioned will become apparent as you read through our latest magazine, which I trust you will find of great interest.

THANK YOU, SIMON DAY

## Editor's note:

If you haven't seen Simon's video of a walk around the reserve you may wish to hover your phone camera over the adjacent QR code, or click if online.

<https://youtu.be/BmyKaVL-bqQ>



## IN THIS ISSUE ...

## FEATURES



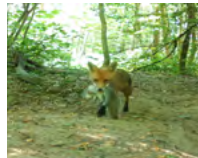
THE PHEASANTS  
OF CROMWELL  
BOTTOM  
P.7



A YEAR OF  
BUTTERFLIES  
P.11, 12



THE CROMWELL  
BOTTOM BEES  
P. 12,13



OUR TRAIL  
CAMERAS  
P. 14,15

- 5 Around the Reserve
- 8 Spotlight on Trustees
- 9,10 Conservation grazing in Calderdale
- 15,16 An interview with Kirsty Collins
- 18,19 Working with Schools
- 20,21 Community Partnerships

Image ~ Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) photographed in the water along Tag Cut, opposite the Dipping Pond. Credit Richard Jackson.

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER  
MICHAEL SHARPE p. 22, 23

FRONT COVER IMAGE  
The release of one of the Painted Ladies, reared at CB and photographed by **Allan Wolfenden**

BACK COVER IMAGE Field of Gold photographed in the large meadow by **Richard Jackson**



## AROUND THE RESERVE



### RECYCLING ALUMINIUM CANS

David Langley

We have collected £100 so far this year - help us reach our target of £500 by dropping off your empty, crushed drinks cans at the entrance to the reserve or outside the Visitor Centre. THANK YOU.



Beautifully carved wooden signs in place at entrances to the reserve.



A bird in the hand - Nuthatch came in close outside VC! credit Martin Staples



Feeding a Robin on the reserve ~ thanks to parents for permission to print.



Yorkshire Honey produced by bees at hives near to the reserve (not the one in the article later on in this newsletter) was for sale in the Visitor Centre earlier in the year at only £7 a jar. All proceeds to CBWG. Sadly mostly sold out at time of publication of this newsletter but do contact the beekeeper ~ 07788 418847.

Mike Henshaw told us of his daughter's visit from Australia to the reserve both in January 2023 and January 2024! In January 2023 Debbie Lamb unveiled the new Henshaw Hide on North Loop and many people at the reserve became very friendly with her. Fast forward to January 2024 when the whole family rocked up from Aus (a sad time for them) and visited the reserve again. Debbie and husband Harvey loved the Visitor Centre and want to be kept informed of all the goings-on down here!

### The Henshaws with Volunteers



## EYES AND EARS



If you see a bird going into any of the 120 bird boxes around the reserve, please note the number and pop into Visitor Centre to tell us. A bird will usually fly in to a box and claim ownership of it!

### DOGGY BUSINESS!

by a Litter Picker

It comes in all shapes and sizes,  
Sometimes in small plastic bags of  
Yellow, violet, blue, green and black.

It's strung up on trees and hanging on  
fences,  
And sometimes it's left on the path.  
What is it, you ask?  
Why, it's doggy business!

It can stick on your shoes and get into your  
cars,  
Do people leave it here, just for a lark?  
It makes us work harder around the reserve,  
For we have customers in the visitor centre  
ready to serve.

So come on, you dog walkers,  
Pick the stuff up!

---

**Please keep your dog on a lead especially  
during the nesting season to minimise  
disruption to birds and wildlife in general.**

**FEATURE**

## THE PHEASANTS OF CROMWELL BOTTOM

– Alistair Sedman

The pheasants arrived at Cromwell Bottom in the Autumn of 2021. The first arrivals consisted of two males [cocks] and four females [hens]. The cocks, identified as Ring necked, have fantastic long tails and necks. They have a copper coloured body with black and white spots with the most notable feature being a white neck ring. The hens are sadly very plain being brown with black markings on the upper body and wings. Perfect camouflage when sitting on their nests in spring and summer. One thing that I noticed is that they are used to human contact and reasonably tame so may have been released or escaped.



I decided to build a proper pheasant feeder which would be more suitable for them and hopefully make them more wild. The feeder is fitted with a Wright feeder attachment, supplied by Collins nets, outer clear and badger attachments. It is positioned on North Loop. The birds are fed wheat with a little added aniseed powder which is like coffee and chocolate to humans! They cannot resist it. This has managed to keep the birds on site and the following spring they were very successful in breeding, with the offspring much wilder.



A year later we had another surprise as we suddenly found we had a partial melanistic cock and two hens arrive. These are dark in colour, have no white neck ring and are smaller. They are much tougher and have better survival results.

I decided to build a second feeder and place it opposite the visitor centre which allows easier viewing and a more sheltered feeding area near their roosting trees.

2023 was a good breeding year but as always ground nesting birds and foxes are not great bed fellows. So Mr or Mrs Fox have taken their fair share of the birds. We have a trail camera shot of our prize cock, head out of one side and tail out of the other side of a fox's mouth, but that's living life on the wild side!





check out our video with a male and female pheasant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgKB345N2oo>



and another from our trail cameras!



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ9mRG4XH\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ9mRG4XH_Q)



## SPOTLIGHT ON TRUSTEES

*Hayley Cottrell - Vice Chair*

I can honestly say that finding Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve changed my life in many ways. I'd always been interested in nature as my grandad Ron introduced me to kingfishers and wildlife in general when I lived down south. I began at Cromwell by taking part in bird walks with Mike, Jane and Dan and volunteering on the 2nd Saturday of the month work sessions. I worked full time so it was great to be able to get involved in coppicing the wet woodlands, handling a bow saw, making piles of logs for birds, bugs and mammals, all, of course, whilst wearing the very fetching fluorescent tabard.



I became chair of the Brighthouse Ladies Circle in 2018 to 2019. As chair I could nominate a charity for fundraising and for me Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group was the obvious choice. Getting together with Allan and David we discussed a project to build a viewing platform on the lagoon. Our target was £3000. Fundraising was done by running stalls at Brighthouse Gala, at the Cromwell Bottom Open Day and Christmas stalls. We made and sold gin bottle lights and roped my mum into holding a felting workshop at her house in Wales. This took us over our target.

I was invited to become a trustee on the strength of my fundraising and now take responsibility for Facebook posts and updates and opening the Facebook Community Photos page. I also organize the rotas for volunteers in the Visitor Centre on Sundays.. We have a WhatsApp group where I post the rotas and make adjustments where needed. Our volunteers are an amazing bunch of people who are very adaptable and patient.

I began to attend moth nights and got to know Dan who is now my lovely partner. We have a daughter, Amber, who can often be seen at the visitor centre welcoming people and 'helping mummy'. I'm very passionate about Cromwell Bottom, the community and volunteers who keep the place going. It really is a pleasure to be part of the team.



# CONSERVATION GRAZING IN CALDERDALE ~ NORTH LOOP PLAYS ITS PART

*Robin Dalton / Shelagh Brooke*

Shorthorn cattle grazing on North Loop



**Introduction:** Conservation grazing, using large herbivores such as cattle and ponies, is being used increasingly across Britain in order to restore a range of impoverished habitats, and thus enhance biodiversity. To be successful, the intervention has to be carefully managed. Conservation grazing is being carried out at various locations in Calderdale and has been trialled on North Loop (adjacent to Cromwell Bottom Local Nature Reserve). There are proposals to continue conservation grazing on this site in the future.

**Background:** The British landscape (that included grasslands, heathlands, and woodlands amongst others) evolved under the influence of large native herbivores. Their numbers were, however, kept in check by natural predators. As a result, an extensive range of plant species thrived, and each ecosystem supported a wide variety of invertebrates and other animals.

The increase in the influence of humans led to the displacement of wild grazers by agricultural herbivores and, for a variety of reasons, this led to an overall loss of habitats and a reduction in species diversity.

**Management:** Successful conservation grazing depends on determining the overall purposes of the intervention for a particular habitat. It requires the careful selection and management of large herbivores such as cattle, ponies, sheep, goats and pigs. (These all bring a range of benefits, including moving nutrients around and creating microhabitats.) Natural regeneration is encouraged in different habitats by different grazing traits. For example, cattle create an uneven sward in terms of length, whereas ponies graze vegetation to a very low level. It is important to use the right species, at the right density, at the right time. Native and rare breed species are often used because of their 'hardiness'.



Pony eating Balsam

**Conservation Grazing in Calderdale:**

Currently there is extensive collaboration between Calderdale Council, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and the National Trust regarding conservation grazing in the valley. It is hoped that these relationships will be further strengthened in the future. Exmoor ponies have already brought major benefits to Broadhead Clough Nature Reserve near Mytholmroyd, and conservation grazing is taking place at, for example, Crimsworth Dean and Pecket Well. Ponies are known to eat Himalayan balsam to some extent, and they prevent it from spreading to new areas!

**Conservation Grazing on North Loop:** Calderdale Council and CBWG

volunteers work together in the management of North Loop. For two recent winters beef shorthorn cattle have been brought in to graze the fenced grassland at this location. They appear to have reduced the prevalence of the vigorous dock plants, thus allowing for the emergence of more fragile species. It has also allowed us to learn about levels of stock management and prevention of over-grazing. There are proposals to continue appropriate forms of conservation grazing on this site in the future. Of course, updates on the progress and results will be reported in future CBWG Newsletters.



Exmoor Ponies in Calderdale

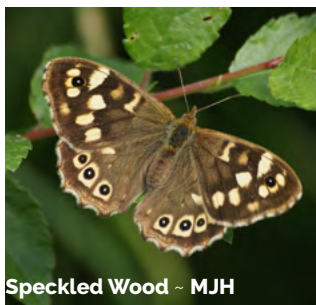
## A YEAR OF BUTTERFLIES

*Alan Pullan*

Many butterflies can be found in Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve from Spring through to Autumn. Each species has characteristic arrival times and locations. The first butterflies to appear in Spring, are the hibernating Red Admiral, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell. They come out as soon as the temperature starts to rise with sunshine in March and April. They can be seen sunning themselves on footpaths or searching for nettle plants to lay their eggs.

Amongst the first to hatch from overwintering pupae, is the Orange Tip. It can be seen searching for a mate, especially in damp areas, where its food plants cuckooflower or garlic mustard can be found.

The female does not have the orange patches on the wings. It is white with a black edge to the wing tips. Much less common are the Brimstone and Holly Blue butterflies. The Brimstone is a large, handsome light-yellow butterfly. The Holly Blue is tiny and is a very pale blue colour. These are a sure signs that warmer weather is on its way.



Speckled Wood ~ MJH



Brimstone ~ MJH



Small Skipper ~ MJH

As the year passes into May and June, we see an increase in the number of species on the wing. Speckled Woods can be seen all over the reserve, preferring the dappled sunshine amongst the trees. In the meadows, can be seen, the dark brown Ringlet with its light ring markings on the forewings. Many other species appear, such as the Meadow Brown, the Small Skipper and the Small Heath. If you are lucky, you may spot a male Common Blue, searching for a brown female.

Summer continues to fill our reserve with butterflies such as the Gatekeeper and the Small Copper. The Gatekeeper is a brown butterfly, with a large patch of orange on each forewing; the Small Copper is a very pretty, copper coloured butterfly. If you are very observant, you may spot a Purple Hairstreak butterfly. It flutters around the tops of oak trees, the foodplant of the caterpillar. They are difficult to spot unless one comes down to feed on the flowers below. By now migrant butterflies can be seen, such as Red Admirals, Peacocks, and Small Tortoiseshells.

## RECORD BREAKING BUTTERFLY

Another migrant butterfly, not mentioned above, is the Painted Lady. It has a remarkable story to tell. It begins in North Africa, particularly Morocco, as well as similar Mediterranean coastal countries. Some butterflies have even been found south of the Sahara in tropical countries.

As the temperature rises in these countries, the butterflies start to fly northwards to find new food plants for their caterpillars, crossing into Southern Europe where they lay their eggs.

The butterflies from these eggs again fly north into Northern Spain and Southern France where they lay eggs to form another generation.

Throughout the summer further generations fly north eventually crossing the English Channel into Southern England from where they spread northwards.

In late summer and early autumn, when most of our butterflies go into hibernation, mainly as pupae, the Painted Lady does not do this. It embarks on one of the most remarkable migrations.

Until recently, it was assumed that they simply died. It has now been discovered however, that they undertake one of the longest migrations of any insect. Initially, the butterflies, were seen by airline pilots. This was well above visible areas from the ground. Subsequent research, by Butterfly Conservation, together with York University, using Radar techniques, made a remarkable discovery. The butterflies were flying at about 500 metres, in a southerly direction, at speeds of up to 30 mph. Further tracking followed the butterflies back to North Africa and sub-Saharan countries, a round trip of up to 7500 miles. No other butterfly has a longer migration cycle. Even the Monarch butterfly, only migrates up to 4500 miles from Canada to Mexico, which is far less than the Painted Lady.

The Painted Lady is, truly, a record-breaking butterfly.



Painted Lady - Graham Haigh





From spring to September there are five colonies up on North Loop – each colony in the peak of the season will have around 60,000 bees but only one queen (normal circumstances).

Not all colonies are strong enough to survive winter with approximately a 60% survival rate last year in the Yorkshire area. The cold doesn't usually kill the bees as they cluster together to keep warm, it is usually Varroa mites and external factors such as damage to hives and starvation.

**The hive consists of a single Queen, worker bees (all females) and drones (males)**

**Males make up around 15%** of the hive during summer but are all kicked out over winter. Male bees are unable to sting.

**Females die once they have stung** except the queen as her stinger isn't barbed so she can sting without dying. The queen will leave the hive within days of being born to mate but then remains in the hive laying eggs unless the bees swarm.

Once a queen bee stops laying eggs, they will look to replace her. To do this they choose around 6-12 eggs and feed them royal jelly which is made by the worker bees. Royal jelly is a milky secretion made by worker honeybees.

It's rich in carbs, protein, amino acids, fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals.

The worker bees may then kill the old queen by creating a tight ball around her and the heat generated kills her. During the next sixteen days whilst the hive is waiting for a new queen to hatch the hive is really angry and making really deep sounds. It's obvious when a hive is queenless.

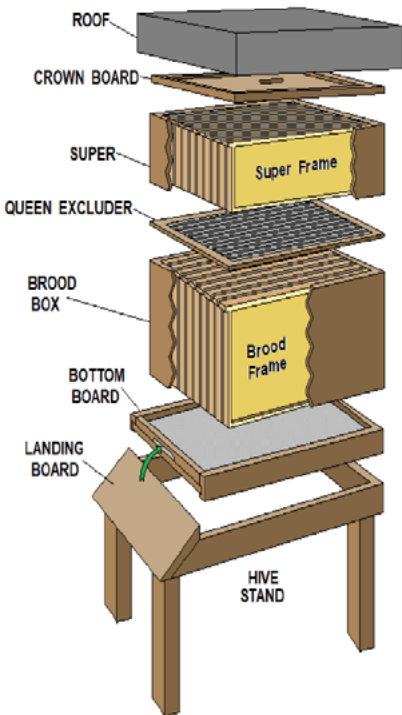
When the first queen hatches she will try to kill and stop the other queens hatching so she becomes the only one.

The beekeeper will be monitoring the queens as this is when they swarm. If there are two queens the old queen may take half of the bees and create a swarm and leave the hive – usually May/June time and leave the beekeeper with only half the bees. They feed before leaving so a lot of honey goes with them. Around September, honey is removed from the hives, usually around 50 jars per hive in a good year, as this is the bees' food to last them over winter. The bees then need feeding a sugary water mix that they can store for the winter.

A worker bee hatches in 21 days and lives for 5-6 weeks in summer, while winter-active workers can live up to 4-6 months.

A Drone bee hatches in 24 days and lives up to 4-8 weeks.

A queen hatches in 16 days and can live up to 1-2 years, occasionally 5 years.





A frame of honey



A frame of eggs

How long does a bee live?

		
<b>WORKER BEE</b>	<b>DRONE BEE</b>	<b>QUEEN BEE</b>
During summer, worker bees live 5 to 6 weeks, while winter-active workers can live up to 4 to 6 months.	Drone bees have a short lifespan, typically lasting 4 to 8 weeks.	Queen bees typically live 1 to 2 years, but some have lived up to 5 years.

The queen and the bees live in the broodbox and the honey is stored in the super box. There is a 'queen excluder' to stop the queen laying eggs where the honey is stored.

**FEATURE**

## IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY ...

*Lynda Orchard - David Langley*



In the education area at Cromwell Bottom something very interesting is happening. It is generally a quiet area, little disturbed, until children from local schools arrive for their outdoor learning sessions. This makes it an ideal area to install trail cameras to photograph wildlife.

There are six cameras in all. Three belong to the wildlife group and three to Lee, a local wildlife enthusiast. Lee puts out the cameras, makes sure that they are fully charged and then downloads the images onto an SD card. These are put onto David's laptop. He then spends most evenings trawling through the footage for interesting clips. Lee also moves the cameras to different locations to capture greater varieties of wildlife. The cameras are triggered by movement to take 20 seconds of a shot and are operating 24/7.



A variety of animals have been captured on film, including a family of foxes with four cubs. The mother fox has been seen proudly carrying squirrels, mice, pheasants, rats, mink and, unfortunately, two roe deer fawns. There have been four female deer and a stag as well as tawny owls, barn owls, sparrow hawk, heron, jays, magpies and the occasional bat.



Throughout the winter the cameras pick up moths fluttering around but they are not easy to identify.

Using the footage enables David and Lee to monitor the health of the animals and to begin to recognize individuals. Supplementary feeding has been

employed to encourage the animals to stay around the area.

David is currently occupied in putting together the images in order to tell the story of the animals. He also uses the images to illustrate talks that he gives to a variety of local groups. A busy man!



Links to our Channel

Find the channel and click Playlists / Foxes, Roe Deer etc. or Videos to see everything that is on there. Don't forget to like and subscribe :)

@cbwgmmedia2023

type the above into your browser and (inc the amperand) and channel pops up.



# MEET KIRSTY COLLINS ~

*an interview with Robin Owen-Morley*

After receiving a donation from one of our regular photographers for sales of her fabulous pictures, our Treasurer wanted to know more so made contact with Kirsty Jane Collins; only to find that she's relatively new to wildlife photography.

**ROM: I'm fascinated. What got you into wildlife photography in the first place?**

**KJC:** I've lived in Elland for 11 years now and have always enjoyed walking and nature. My son and I had often walked along the canal but by the time we reached the Visitor Centre for a refreshment stop we'd just head back. We never really got to explore the reserve properly and during Covid we discovered different walks, one with a shortcut to Cromwell, so during lockdown we ventured further into the reserve.

**ROM: Did you have a particular spark bird that kicked it all off?**

**KJC:** Well, we saw our first kingfisher there and now they're my favourite bird. I've even been tagged on Facebook by the regulars with the little nickname of Kirsty Kingfisher as I always seem to spot them. We spent more and more time down at Cromwell, so excited as to what we could see next. My son really enjoyed sitting in the bird viewing area so my mum gave him an old Fuji film camera to use. At that point I didn't have a camera and was just using my phone. I realised I was enjoying the hobby so much that I wanted

to invest in a camera for myself and that's really where it all started. I bought my first bridge camera in August 2022 and my passion has just grown from there.

**ROM: What do you think makes Cromwell so special?**

**KJC:** It's somewhere I can go for a bit of peace and quiet and if I get to see something good it's a bonus. I can walk round the reserve all day and never get bored and watching all the wonderful wildlife in their natural habitat makes me so happy.

I've really enjoyed all the changing seasons

and getting to see the different birds migrating here. Eighteen months ago I only knew birds that I saw in my garden but during this last year I've seen over 100 different species!

I was lucky enough to spot a bittern on the reserve towards the end of last year which was incredibly exciting as apparently one hasn't been seen in the area since 1991!

**ROM: What other reserves have you been to and is there anywhere you would like to go?**

**KJC:** I enjoy going to St Aidan's in Leeds which

has a large variety of wildlife and we saw our first short eared owl there. Last summer we went to Scarborough and saw plenty of wildlife and we're hoping go back again this year to see the puffins at Bempton Cliffs. Our real dream is to go to Scotland to see eagles as they are my son's favourite bird.

**ROM: Any tips for novices for taking good pictures?**

**KJC:** If I could give any advice to anyone starting up wildlife photography as a hobby, it would be to do your research and really understand your camera, lens and settings.

Choose a dry well-lit day as that's when you'll get the best out of your camera.

Don't be disappointed on days when the light isn't as good - it happens to the best of us!

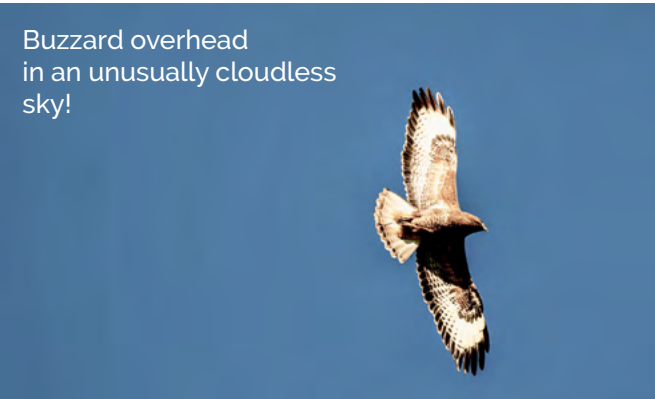
Be patient and take in your surroundings as you'll soon learn an animal's habits and sounds which will help you locate them.

Most importantly, just enjoy it. You will have days when you don't see much and other days when you realise it was well worth the effort.

**ROM: Many thanks for chatting to us Kirsty and many thanks for your donation to our charity funds.**



So this is why Kirsty gets the name ....!



Buzzard overhead in an unusually cloudless sky!

# WORKING WITH SCHOOLS - SIMON DAY

Since September we have worked with 13 classes from 5 primary schools: Old Earth, Carr Green, Lee Mount, Calder Primary and New Road, Sowerby. The activities covered have included river studies, signs of Autumn, den building, birdwatching and wildlife spotting walks. Accommodating these educational visits is an important aspect of what we offer, as it provides the opportunity for children to learn

outside the classroom and directly link back into their curriculum studies. We also hope to share with children some of our passion for wildlife and raise their awareness about the crucial importance of their local nature reserve for wildlife. With the unfortunate closure of Jerusalem Farm, we believe we might be the only provider of nature based outdoor education in the borough, something we are committed to sustaining.

Carr Green School River Study



Lee Mount School River Study



Old Earth School Bird Watching



Calder Primary School Bird Watching





Old Earth School Signs of Autumn



Old Earth School Den Building



New Road School Wildlife Walk





# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ~ SIMON DAY

We are extremely grateful for a number of substantial donations from local groups, including Brighthouse and Fixby WI, Brighthouse Town and District Inner Wheel, Happy Dog House UK and the Rucksack group from St John's Church, Rastrick. These donations have helped to purchase some portable microscopes for children to use and plans to provide an identification board in the main bird viewing area.

Brighthouse & Fixby WI



As a registered charity ourselves, we have long committed to supporting the work of other charities. To this end we were happy to join with some of our regular visitors in donating toys for the Salvation Army Children's Toy Appeal at Christmas. In fact a car boot full of toys was taken to Huddersfield for this worthy cause.

We welcomed visitors via **Elland Children's Centre** for a 'Dads and Children' den building event at the start of December, with a surprise visit by Mrs Claus who gave out gifts to the children.

Another December visit was by children and staff from **Waters Edge Nursery**, Elland, for their annual walk to the reserve to meet Santa. Christmas songs followed by hot chocolate and biscuits went down very well!

Brighthouse & District Inner Wheel



Waters Edge Nursery Visit





We have opened our Visitor Centre to accommodate families who were raising money for **Overgate Hospice**. Guided walks around the reserve with an activity for the children enabled the walkers to learn about the reserve and its wildlife, habitats and history. Future events have been planned for the coming months.

### CALDERDALE COLLEGE MEDIA STUDENTS



Our annual project with Calderdale College Media Studies students came to fruition in January. Members of our Trustees visited students at the college looking at nature based activity sheets which were designed for children to try in the Visitor Centre. We were amazed at the designs of merchandise which the students have produced, including 'Cromwell Bottom' mugs, T shirts and gift bags, all of which are on sale in the Visitor Centre. Most importantly, it has been a pleasure to support the work of the students and staff and, ultimately, enable the students to be awarded the qualification they deserve.

### "RING OF BRIGHT WATER"

In January, Halifax Scientific Society held a 'talk' by local otter expert, Andy Mather. Below is an extract from the HSS website. The event at our Visitor Centre was very well attended and our thanks go to Andy for such an interesting event.



"... discover Calderdale's otters. Yes, they are here but very elusive! We need your help and your eyes wide open. Andy will cover identification difficulties, field signs and survey techniques. We will learn about otter ecology, recent population trends and their status and distribution in Calderdale. We want to create a citizen science project for all to join in and enjoy, training up willing volunteers to help in further research for monitoring Calderdale's rare otter population".

<https://hxscisoc.org.uk>

## FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER - MICHAEL SHARPE

This year things have changed fantastically down at Cromwell Reserve in two ways. The sheer number of photographers we now have coming down is brilliant and the interest level in birding and the scenery has escalated to a great level. On the bird side certain

species have come a long way. I was asked to send four photos that gave a reference to things at Cromwell so I have selected the four Goosander chicks which bred in 2023; one of the large Grey Herons whose population increased greatly in

2022; a Goldcrest from the large numbers that have descended on the reserve and a Goldeneye duck that has taken a fancy to us and is showing very well on the skiing lake. Finally the Goosanders that bred last year and gave everyone some fabulous pictures!



Goldeneye



Goldcrest





Goosander chicks



Grey Heron





**Cromwell  
Bottom  
Wildlife Group**  
Registered Charity no. 1176233