

AN INFORMATION GUIDE TO ACCOMPANY YOUR WALK AROUND CROMWELL BOTTOM NATURE RESERVE

You are encouraged to use the accompanying map which will help to guide you round the reserve. Just follow the numbers marked on your map which will match up to the Information Point photos in this leaflet. Enjoy your time on the reserve!

A brief history of the Nature Reserve

Cromwell Bottom Local Nature Reserve, in the past has been the site of a quarry, a tip for ash from the old Elland power station, and a land fill site. Now it is a mix of woodland, wetlands and grasslands, and is rich in plants, particularly species of orchids, and wildlife due largely to the alkaline nature of the fly ash underneath. Situated next to the Calder and Hebble Navigation, the River Calder runs through the reserve. It became a nature reserve in 2000.

Cromwell Bottom is considered to be one of the most important wildlife sites in Calderdale. The wetlands and meadows provide a variety of habitats for many insects, such as butterflies and moths, dragonflies and damselflies. A bird feeding area helps to attract many birds to the site. These include bullfinch, dunnock, woodpeckers, robins, redpoll and many more. Other birds that can be seen or heard around the site include kingfishers, oystercatchers and curlew. Many mammals and amphibians have also made Cromwell Bottom their home.

Cromwell Bottom Wildlife Group was founded in September 2011 and has since grown to a membership in excess of 150. We have weekly 'Volunteer Days' on Thursdays and monthly Trustees' meetings as we are a registered charity.

Information Point 1 - view from 'Spider Bridge'



Can you spot any Bridge Spiders in their webs amongst the metal bars? In this view of the weir Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Goosander, Kingfisher and Common Sandpiper can often be spotted

Look behind you, the debris on the bridge marks the height of the river during the Boxing Day floods of 2015!

Information Point 2 - view of the perimeter hedgerow



Here, a mixture of native trees such as hawthorn and blackthorn form the hedgerow. They provide a nesting habitat in Spring and a vital food source (berries) in Winter.

Whitethroat, Redwing, Blackcap and Blackbird can be seen here and in the Summer months the Orange Tip butterfly visits here to feed on the dandelion nectar. The Peacock butterfly lays its eggs in nettles in this area.

Information Point 3 - view of the river



Debris from the Boxing Day floods of 2015 remains here. Over 1 ton of objects such as wheelie bins, fridges and an ice cream fridge were all removed and disposed of by CBWG volunteers

Look out for Grey Wagtails on the stones at the edges of the river searching for insects

Information Point 4 - view of the Weir



This is a popular nesting site for a Dipper which previously has nested here, actually flying behind the waterfall to reach its nest! A good spot after sunset to see the 3 species of bats on the reserve (Noctule, Daubentons and Pippetstrelle)

Teal duck can be seen on the far banking in Winter and Goosanders will often bring their young to the water's edge to feed and get used to the currents.

Information point 5 - original canal bridge



The original canal here was built by James Smeaton who also built the Eddystone Lighthouse. Stone from a nearby quarry was transported to barges on the canal.

The River Calder itself was too narrow for barges to navigate so a join or 'Tag' was made to link 2 areas of navigable water. Hence, this part of the reserve is named 'Tag Cut'

Re -trace your footsteps and enter the reserve via the gate to your right

Information point 6 - grass banking on Tag Cut



In the summer months this area is covered in flowers, notably Bird's Foot Trefoil

Common Blue butterflies lay their eggs here can be seen on this part of the reserve in Summer

Information point 7 -site of former canal



This is part of the original Calder and Hebble Canal from Elland to Brighouse

The rust colouring in the water is caused by material from the old ironworks via the horizontal mineshaft getting into the water. An area of reeds further downstream helps to purify the water as it passes through.

Information Point 8 - orchids banking



Different kinds of orchids can be found on this banking during the summer

There are 2 other species of orchids on the reserve - Southern Marsh and Marsh orchids

Information Point 9 - natural pond



This is an excellent place for spotting Common Red Damselflies. Natural ponds like this are very important for frogs, toads, Common Newts and Palmate Newts to breed and inhabit

Deer often pass through here to drink. The reeds filter out the iron content in the water. You can see that the water is clearer further downstream.

Information Point 10 - wildlife ponds with pond dipping platform



The pond dipping platform was constructed in January 2017 to enable groups to study the rich pond life. Flag Iris, Water Plantain and Marsh Marigolds grow in these ponds which sustain a variety of creatures such as Frogs, toads, newts, pond skaters, water beetles, Great Diving Beetle and Water Boatman. Large red/blue damselflies along with the Broad bodied Chaser and Southern Hawker dragonflies can be seen in Summer. A good place for spotting a Kingfisher and Heron

Information Point 11 - Little Hay Meadow



This area is covered with a rich carpet of wild flowers/ plants in the summer providing a habitat for many different species of insects including butterflies and moths eg Skipper and Burnet moth

Extensive sapling planting(3,000+) has taken place over the last few years - native species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Dog Rose, Holly and Rowan create a mixed hedgerow. Calderdale Council cut the grass annually to maintain this area rich in wildlife

Information Point 12 - Tip Pond



This was a popular place for pond dipping before the new ones were constructed.

Newts, water boatmen, water beetles and pond skaters can be seen in the water. This is another popular place for a variety of dragonflies and Damselflies. The encroaching vegetation needs management to maintain an area of open water.

Information Point 13 - signpost



THERE ARE 2 ROUTES POSSIBLE FROM HERE

Option 1 To the bird feeding station then back up over the Large Hay Meadow (14a to 17a on the map) **Or**

Option 2 Turn left and visit/ circle the lagoon (longer route)

(14b to 18b on the map)

OPTION 1

Information Point 14a -bird feeding station



This is a popular bird watching area with photographers. An identification board helps visitors to recognise any visiting birds. A variety of birds can be seen at different times of year. In Winter, siskins and redpoll appear. More common birds such as jays, blue/great/long tailed/coal tits, numerous finches and the occasional sparrowhawk are common visitors. The wood sculpture you see supports bird feeders and has carved hollows which are filled with seed.

Information point 15a - viewing area with wheelchair access



This is a purpose built area to enable wheelchair users to observe wildlife in the bird feeding area.

Re-trace your steps to the signpost and continue right, up the incline to the 'Meadow'

Information Point 16a - glade



This is an excellent place to see Common and Spotted Orchids

It is possible to see Roe Deer in this area in the early morning or evening

Continue up and over the Large Hay Meadow



Along the edge of the path are Field Maple, Rowan, Alder and Willow trees

A number of different butterflies are found here including: Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Heath and the occasional Small Copper.

Information point 17a - line of trees



A variety of trees grow here such as Alder, Hazel, Silver Birch and Willow

A popular place to see Goldfinches, Siskins and Redpoll as these trees provide berries for their winter feeding

Return to cabin via the following route...



Turn left at this signpost towards gate



Go through the gate and turn left along footpath



Cross back over the 'Spider' Bridge, through the next gate and follow the path/fence along the edge of the compound towards the cabin (refreshments available on Sundays!)

OPTION 2 - longer route back via lagoon



***TURN LEFT AT THIS SIGNPOST
'Lagoon'***

14b Viewing point - Bailey Bridge



Wildlife which can be seen here includes: Grey Wagtail, Dipper, the occasional Otter, Goosander and Mink



**TAKE THE RIGHT
FORK AT THIS
JUNCTION**

15b Information Point- bat boxes



We have 3 species on site on the Reserve

- Daubentons
- Noctule
- Pipistrelle

They emerge at certain times after sunset, because different species of moth, their main diet, appear at different intervals during the evening.

16b information Point - Protected Conservation Area



This area has been fenced off to protect a number of rare plant species:

- Round Leaf Wintergreen
- Twayblade Orchid
- Broad Leaved Helleborine

17b Information Point - View of Lagoon (1)



There are no fish in the lagoon, which is subject to annual maintenance to stop vegetation encroaching further in.

The lagoon supports breeding birds such as Moorhen, Canada Geese, Coot and Little Grebe

Follow the pathway and turn left here down towards the top edge of the lagoon

18b Information Point - View of lagoon (2)



You are now between the wet woodland and reed bed lagoon

Birds to be seen here are: Sedge & Willow Warblers, Reed Bunting, Little Grebe and Kingfisher

Continue over wooden bridge and down the steps to edge of river



Turn right when you reach the river path and follow edge of river until you reach the Bailey Bridge



Turn left over the Bailey Bridge and return to the cabin via the Bird Feeding station or the Large Meadow routes.

Further information :

Our cabin is open for refreshments Sundays 10-4pm (and often Tuesdays and Thursdays if the board is outside the cabin entrance!) We serve hot/cold drinks, biscuits, crisps, ice cream/ lollies (DONATIONS ONLY) Toilet facilities (including Disabled) information, literature, photographs & displays about the Reserve. Always a warm welcome! For further information, ask a CBWG member or visit our website/facebook page

We hope you have enjoyed your visit and we hope to see you again soon!