



ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Newsletter for November 2021

Newsletter Title Colour Coding :

Green = Society Information Red = Member Contribution

Message from the Steering Group

We hope that everyone is keeping well. We held our Steering Group meeting on Thursday 7th October 2021 as a face to face meeting for the first time since we met in Jan's garden in July 2020. Much of the discussion was about whether we should have indoor meetings at Cutgate Chapel again. It was decided that the December meeting would be held indoors at Cutgate and would incorporate the AGM and social activities rather than a speaker. If Covid regulations change this could revert to Zoom if necessary. We are hoping that if this is a success we can have the January, February, March and April meetings indoors at Cutgate. Sonia is in the process of booking speakers for these meetings which would follow our usual indoor meeting format.

The Conservation and Education team and the Outdoor excursion team will continue to hold local outdoor events and trips. These will be advertised on the website, newsletter and Facebook page. We have had our first coach trip since Covid restrictions were lifted and we will be looking to hold another one early in 2022. The Zoom team which was set up to organise member evenings on Zoom has been dissolved but we have decided to continue with our Zoom subscription as some team meetings are held online. It also allows us to revert to Zoom if Covid restrictions are tightened again.

The AGM will be held at the meeting on Thursday 9th December. The documents for this will be sent via email or post on the dates listed below.

Friday 5th November – notice of AGM and call for nominations for officers and call for motions.

Friday 19th November – deadline for nominations and motions.

Monday 22nd November – agenda, Chair's report, Treasurer's report and financial statement, voting for officers and motions, last year's minutes.

Tuesday 7th December – deadline for receipt of voting papers

Thursday 9th December – AGM at indoor meeting. Results of votes announced. Results will also be emailed or posted to members.

The short AGM meeting will be followed by Fun and Frolics Christmas activities organised by the Steering group.

Hope to see you soon at one of the events or on Zoom.

Take care

Linda Turner and Jan Kidd (Co-Chairs)

Zoom : Thurs 11th Nov 7.00pm “Earthworm Research at UCLAN” Dr Kevin Butt

We hope you can join us to welcome Dr Butt as he comes to tell us all about the research into earthworms at the University of Central Lancashire where he is Reader in Ecology. Kevin has published widely in the sphere of soil ecology with a focus on the use of earthworms and the services they provide. These ecosystem services can be harnessed e.g. to improve soil quality within the context of soil restoration and in low input agriculture. Kevin’s research also involves organic waste management and ecotoxicology. Make sure the date is in your diary so you can find out more about these fascinating creatures.



Dr Kevin Butt



The largest earthworm in Britain - *Lumbricus terrestris*

Upcoming Outdoor Events Team

We hope that those of you who came along on the coach trip to Longshaw enjoyed your day and felt comfortable with the coach arrangements. It felt good to be out as a group after such a long time.

We are now planning coach trips every two months (but as December is a non-coach month) the date for your diary is January 15th 2022 when we will be visiting Llanfairfechan in Wales. Further details to follow nearer the time.

Meanwhile there’s much more on offer: 13th November we’ll be car sharing to Dove Stones, and at the end of the month we have tentative plans for a car trip either Sat 27th or Sun 28th Nov. Details will be sent out when the date and venue have been confirmed. On Sunday 12th December we’ll be visiting Etherow Country Park and on Thursday 16th December we’re walking around some of the Rochdale parks and green spaces.

You can find further information for all these events in this newsletter, on our web and Facebook pages or for unconfirmed trips, by email.

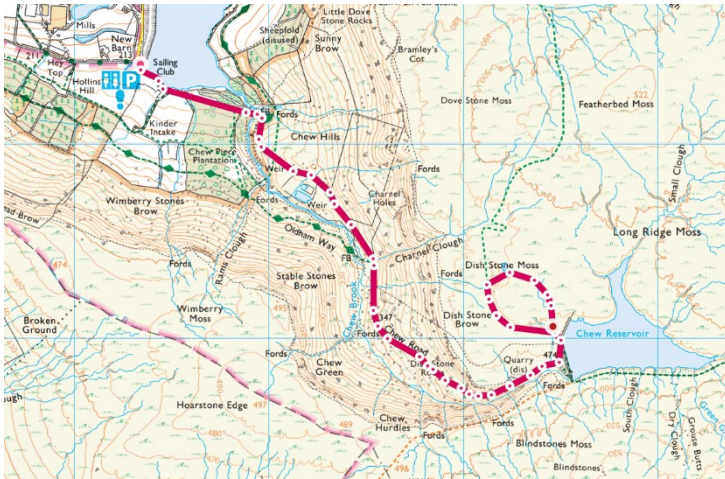
www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/965410946937744/

If you would like to car share please let us know two or three days in advance by emailing rfnspublicity@gmail.com and we’ll try and arrange something. Please don’t just turn up at Manchester Road. If you are planning on joining us on any of these trips and are willing to car share could you also let us know on the same email.

Local Car Trip : Dove Stones : 10.30am Saturday 13th Nov : Jenny & Ian Short

Meet in the main car park by the dam. This is pay and display, but free to RSPB members displaying a membership card. Toilets are available in the car park and there is often a refreshment van there.



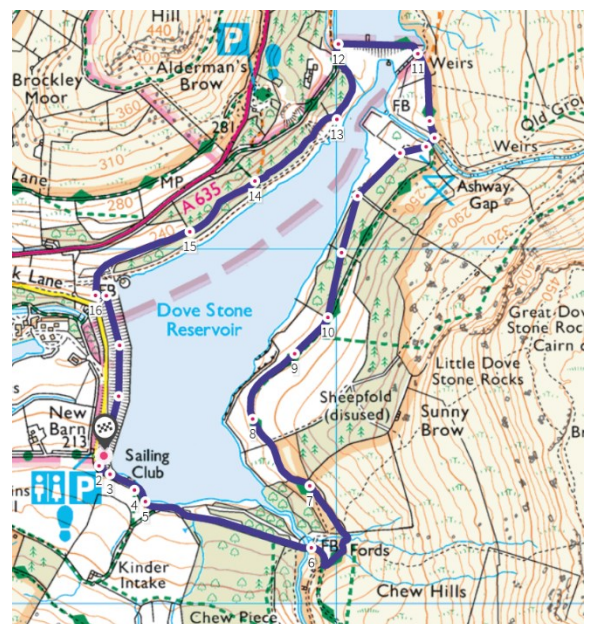
The walk will head up the dramatic Chew valley to Chew Reservoir. There is a good chance of seeing Mountain Hares amongst the rocks as well as moorland birds such as Stonechat, Meadow Pipit, and Red Grouse. Buzzard, Kestrel and Peregrine are frequently seen. On reaching Chew Reservoir there is the option of venturing on to the moor to look at the peat dams and other restoration work done by RSPB volunteers using

heather bales and planting sphagnum moss. There are also interesting fungi, lichen and insects. We've spotted a Short-eared Owl up there recently, too. The track up Chew is firm underfoot but the moorland is rough and wet so wear wellies or boots and gaiters if you plan to go on to the moor. The easiest way to return to the car park is back down the track. Total distance about 5 miles and around 1000ft of climbing.

An alternative route for those who don't want to do as much climbing is to walk round Dove Stone Reservoir. There is the chance to explore Pennyworth Woods where the RSPB has done some work to remove conifers and make ponds to create a more diverse habitat. There are picnic tables available at Ashway Gap halfway round. Total distance 2.75 miles, mostly flat. The track is firm, but the wooded areas can be muddy.

Please bring a packed lunch and wear suitable clothing and footwear.

If you would like a lift from Manchester Road cul-de-sac, please contact rfnspublicity@gmail.com a few days beforehand.



December Newsletter

If you have something you would like included in future newsletters, please send it to rfnsnewsletter@gmail.com.

Please submit items for the November Newsletter by Thursday 26th November

Cons & Ed Event : Thurs 18th Nov : Whitworth Art Gallery : Linda Turner



The visit to the Whitworth Art Gallery, Oxford Road, Manchester has been prompted by the exhibition of the Nancy Rothwell Award winning entries. This event may appeal to those of you who enjoyed the Zoom events earlier in the year where we looked at Art and Nature and Patterns in Nature. The links below give more information about the exhibition. The exhibition is not large so there will be plenty of time to view other exhibitions at the gallery. There is also a café with lovely views over Whitworth Park.

If you would like to join us, then you can meet on platform 3 of Rochdale train station at 9-45 a.m. We will be catching the train to Manchester Victoria then catching the 18 bus to Manchester Royal Infirmary which is across the road from the gallery. Alternatively, you could meet us at the gallery about 10-45 a.m. If you intend to come to this event, please email rfnspublicity@gmail.com with your email details and mobile phone number. This is so we can inform you if there are any alterations to plans.

[Species big and small feature in this year's Nancy Rothwell Award winning entries \(rsb.org.uk\)](https://www.rsb.org.uk)

[The Nancy Rothwell Award | Whitworth Art Gallery \(manchester.ac.uk\)](https://www.manchester.ac.uk)

Car Trip : TBC : Saturday/Sunday 27/28th November

Details of this trip will be sent out nearer the time

Please bring a packed lunch and wear suitable clothing and footwear.

If you would like a lift from Manchester Road cul-de-sac, please contact rfnspublicity@gmail.com a few days beforehand.

A PLEA FROM THE TREASURER FOR OUTSTANDING SUBSCRIPTIONS TO BE PAID

85 members have now paid their subscriptions for 2020/21. Many thanks indeed if you are one of these. However, 22 have not yet paid and if you are one of these members then please may I request that you do re-join RFNS soon. Remember that when you have sent me your subscription you will receive a complimentary RFNS calendar for 2022, by way of thanking you for your loyalty during these difficult times. The subscription is still only £10 per person and there are a number of ways you can pay this.

These are:

- 1) Standing Order - You may wish to take this opportunity to set up a Standing Order. If so then please complete the mandate form which can be found on our website (www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk) and also as an attachment to this email. Please return your completed mandate to me. My address is: The Treasurer, RFNS, 44 Bankfield Lane, Rochdale, OL11 5RS.
- 2) Bank Transfer - Sort Code 05-07-67, Account Number 60931963. Please use your name as a reference.
- 3) Cheque - Payable to "Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society". Please send your cheque to me at the above address or give it to me at any RFNS event.
- 4) Cash - Pay me at an RFNS event.

If you wish to discuss any of the above then please phone me at 01706 344979. I look forward to receiving your subscription soon.

Roger Crofts

2022 RFNS Calendar : Pam Crofts



As most people have now renewed their membership - and received their FREE copy of the 2022 Calendar - we can now offer some calendars for sale at the price of £5.00 each.

I know several members have already asked about buying calendars so if you want to purchase one (or more) please email me ASAP as they will be offered on a first come first served basis. Any spare calendars remaining will be brought to the Members' Evening in December.

Pam Crofts rfnspublicity@gmail.com

COACH TRIP TO LONGSHAW ESTATE, PADLEY GORGE AND RIVER DERWENT, PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK 16 OCTOBER 2021

Leaders: Rick and Karen Cowley

It had been a long, hard 19 months since we last had a Field Nats coach trip (which had been to the Sizergh Castle estate in south Cumbria in March 2020), so those on the coach to Longshaw in the Peak District were very glad to be off on a RFNS trip again. Safety precautions had of course been taken on the coach, such as fumigation of the coach the night before, restricted numbers on board to give plenty of personal space, no passing round of papers or reports, and the wearing of masks.

A delightful drive over the Snake Pass and past the Ladybower Reservoir took us to the National Trust Longshaw Estate, nestling below Burbage Moor to the south west of Sheffield. The estate boasts a new café which, of course, many of the party took immediate advantage of soon after our arrival. Suitably refreshed, the party set off, at different paces, to follow the suggested route down Padley Gorge and along the Derwent valley to Hathersage about 4.5 miles away, where the coach would meet us at the end of the day.



Along the path from the Longshaw Lodge to the lake many and varied fungi were found on the trees and logs. At the lake itself some very grand and colourful Mandarin drake ducks were showing off their spectacular plumage. After crossing Burbage Brook we started to descend Padley Gorge. A National Trust sign at the entrance to the gorge read *"Padley Wood is an important Site of Special Scientific Interest for its rich ancient woodland and associated fragile wildlife"*. Our route duly took us through this ancient oak-birch woodland, rich in its ferns, mosses, lichen and fungi. Few acorns were seen but Spangle Galls were found in profusion below the oak trees. Lunch was taken near the remains of a tree covered in copper coins that had been rammed into the bark – why do people do that?



Our route was easy to follow, not just because of the maps supplied but also because of a constant procession of cross-country runners overtaking us on the same route as us, raising sponsorship money for a local primary school. We were accompanied the whole way down the gorge by the musical tumbling sounds coming up from Burbage Brook below us.

At the bottom of the gorge some of the party couldn't resist the temptation to turn left for a short walk to the famous cafe next to Grindleford station and the start of Totley railway tunnel (the 2nd longest in the UK, no less). The main route, however, turned right and started heading northwards towards Hathersage. We passed *en route* the remains of Padley Hall where, in 1588, two Catholic priests were discovered (which was not a good time to be followers of Rome) who came to a sticky end, known thereafter as the Padley Martyrs.

Soon after, we descended through Coppice Wood and thereafter followed the delightful River Derwent upstream, where several dapper Dippers were seen on rocks in the river and some walking under the clear running water searching for food. Many stops were made along the way to examine the splendid displays of fungi in the riverside fields, including a massive (by fungi standards) Mosaic Puffball. Eventually our route took us to the centre of Hathersage village, and in particular to an excellent café by the outdoor leisure centre. Suitably refreshed yet again, and with full notebooks and camera Sim cards, we boarded our coach for a comfortable and relaxing journey back to Rochdale.

This was a trip that richly rewarded the fungi enthusiasts among the party. In order to reduce adverse human impact, visitors are no longer allowed onto the Longshaw meadow in front of the Lodge, an area noted for its grassland fungi. Nevertheless, we still recorded a total of 28 different species on our walk, including not just that giant Mosaic Puffball but also Amethyst Deceiver, Meadow Waxcaps, False Deathcap, Weeping Widow, various Inkcaps, bright yellow Sulphur Tuft and Liberty Cap (what intriguing names some fungi have!).



The bird list was perhaps not as extensive as on other Nats' trips, but nevertheless included five different species of tits, Nuthatch, Buzzard, Wren, Song Thrush, Chaffinch, Goosander, as well as the aforementioned Dipper and Mandarin Duck. Most of the flora had by now finished flowering but there was still some Tormentil, Herb Robert, Yarrow, Autumn Hawkbit, Bistort and Spear Thistle hanging on, and there were also plenty of berries on the trees and shrubs. Autumn in the Peak District was clearly well into its stride.

So, all in all, the party agreed it has been a varied and rewarding excursion into delightful countryside with a good range of natural history interest. Roll on the next Field Nats coach trip!

Rick Cowley

Members' Evening - Social and AGM **Cutgate Baptist Church; 9th December 7.30pm**

As announced by Linda and Jan in the Chairs' introduction we are planning to re-start our Indoor Meetings in December. This will be very much a social event with plenty of opportunity to catch up and chat with people.

After a short AGM we will be clearing the decks for a light-hearted quiz with informal teams. There will be a slide show of all the wonderful photographs that members sent in for the 2022 Calendar Competition and a look at the first set of entries for the next one.

Refreshments - It is well known that Field Nats operate best when food and drink are available so we holding the meeting as a Jacob's Feast and ask that everyone brings a plate of food to share with others. Tea and coffee will be provided.

We are all hoping that this will be able to go ahead as planned but, as we know only too well, events are prone to having to change according to circumstances therefore details will be confirmed later. In the meantime, get those pencils sharpened, look up some obscure wildlife facts and send in some photos!

Pam Crofts

Gaia Exhibition

Number One Riverside will see the huge work of art depicting the Earth called 'Gaia' exhibited at from Saturday, 20 November until Christmas Eve. It will be open to the public 7 days a week, 9am-5.30pm weekdays (extended until 6.30pm on Mondays) and 10am-6pm on Saturdays, 1pm-6pm on Sundays.

UK artist Luke Jerram's internationally renowned 'Gaia' installation is a huge work of art depicting the Earth. Measuring 7 metres in diameter and created from detailed NASA imagery of the Earth's surface, it will provide



the opportunity to see the planet on a big scale, floating in 3 dimensions. The name 'Gaia' comes from Greek mythology, meaning the personification of the earth.

The exhibition is being staged in partnership with Rochdale Borough Council and Your Trust (formerly Link4Life), supported financially by the Garfield Weston Foundation.

<http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/news/Pages/earth-exhibit-brings-whole-new-world.aspx>

Be a host to a Climate Conversation !

Let's come together and help people engage with the climate !

Climate Conversations is part of the programme organised during the Gaia installation at Rochdale Touchstones Gallery and **they need your help**. These are a simple but clever idea: sitting round a small table with 3- 5 others and having a conversation about the climate and ecological situation.

They will train you. You do not need to be an expert on climate science, or an experienced public speaker. All you need is to be yourself and host the conversation. Just friendly and help others to talk. They'll train you to do this in a way that is right for you and offer support

Come along and find out more: Come along to The Pioneers' Museum, Toad Lane, OL12 0NU on Monday 15th November from 7pm to 9pm.

Info: xrrochdale@gmail.com

From a group in Rochdale ? Please do get in touch we would love you to join us !



Photography competition : Pam Crofts

Throughout the year a lot of RFNS members take photographs of many and varied aspects of nature on RFNS trips, or elsewhere, and as you may remember earlier this year we ran a photo competition for the 2022 calendar. Everyone who was involved enjoyed it and said they would like a repeat. Because it took place via a Zoom Meeting only some members could take part in the voting, and this is the first attempt at making it more inclusive.

With this edition of the Newsletter, you will find an attachment with a selection of photographs that members have taken in September and October which were posted on our Facebook Page - as they were already in the public domain I didn't think people would mind if I shared them this way, but I have just given the subject not people's names. Obviously this doesn't include everyone who may wish to enter in the fun but is a way to get the ball rolling.

I hope that everyone will have a look at the photos and would be delighted if you could then drop me a quick email giving the two that you like best, and think would make a good calendar picture.

I will send out another batch of photos with the December newsletter but this time I would welcome entries being sent to me. Photos don't need to be "of a professional standard" the aim is to showcase the interesting things you have seen during September, October and November.

Please email images to Pam Crofts at rfnspublicity@gmail.com or alternatively bring images to the next RFNS event - actual photographs, CD or pen drives are acceptable and will be returned asap.

Please identify subjects!

Bird food sales at Indoor Meetings



Members will know that for many years Rosalind and Joan Corser have sold bird food at our Indoor meetings. However, Rosalind has decided that now is the time for her and Joan to hand over the baton to someone else. I am sure that we all want to say a huge "THANK YOU" to Joan and Rosalind for providing this service to the Society so faithfully for such a long time. They have done a brilliant job, not just for members, but for all our birds as well.

Is there someone in the group who would be willing to take over that role? If so, please get in touch via rfnspublicity@gmail.com and you can liaise with Rosalind to find out what's involved and pass on the names of her suppliers etc.

Social Media Platforms

www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/965410946937744/



Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society

Public group · 210 members