



ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

July 2022 Newsletter

July Dates

Sat 16th July : Car Trip : Leighton Moss & Myers Allotment : 10.00am

Thurs 21st July : Con & Ed Event : Stoney Hill Survey : 10.00am

Sat 30th July : Car Trip : Rixton Clay Pits : 10.45am

Advanced Notice : Sat 13th Aug : Coach Trip : Pocklington Canal * **Info below***

Keep an eye on your email, our website and Facebook page for any updates to these proposed events.

www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/965410946937744/

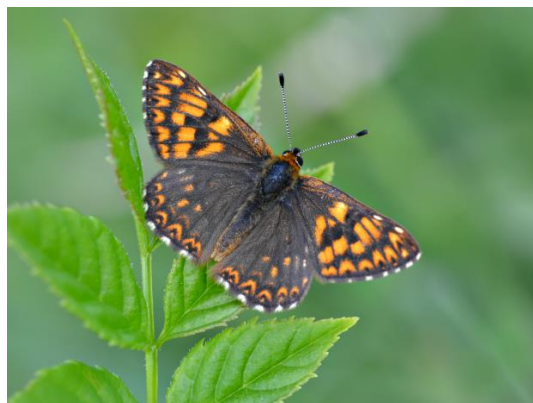
Car Trip : Leighton Moss & Myers Allotment : Sat 16th July 10.00am : Charles & Clare Farrell

On Sat 16th July we will be running a car-trip to RSPB Leighton Moss (Postcode: LA5 0SW; Grid ref SD478750 and What3Words [trespass.orange.crumble](https://www.what3words.com/#!/en/SD478750)). This reserve boasts the largest reed bed in north-west England and is home to a wide range of spectacular wildlife and important breeding populations of Otters, Bearded Tits, Marsh Harriers, Egrets and Red deer.

The reserve's coastal marshes attract flocks of waders including Avocet, Oystercatcher, Curlew, Redshank and Dunlin while the mixed woodland areas host traditional woodland birds such as Long-tailed Tits, Treecreepers and Woodpeckers along with Marsh Tits, Nuthatches, Bullfinches and Tawny Owls.

Currently the breeding Bittern have been very active and visible along with the local pairs of Marsh Harrier and the Ospreys that nest nearby. The reedbeds are alive with breeding warblers and a wide range of Dragon and Damselfly species. Waders such as Avocet are also breeding around the reserve along with Gulls such as the Mediterranean Gull and early June saw several visits from a wandering Spoonbill and a Red-rumped Swallow.

For the second half of the trip, we will move on to the adjoining Myers Allotment. A 7-hectare site, it is a fine example of Morecambe Bay's wildlife-rich limestone habitats and supports many threatened species with conservation work continuing to create habitat that it is hoped will create favourable conditions for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy to colonise.



The site is largely covered with scrub and secondary woodland, with areas of exposed limestone pavement. Clearance work is ongoing to increase flowery grassland and violet-rich bracken - the ideal conditions for these threatened butterflies. It still has excellent limestone pavement, flowery grassland and views over Leighton Moss.

The grassland is the characteristic Blue Moor-grass *Sesleria albicans* community of the Morecambe Bay area, where this alpine grass species is found with a great variety of flowering plants of both calcareous and acidic conditions such as Common Rock-rose and Heather. This wonderful flora looks its best in June and July.

Meet at the RSPB Leighton Moss carpark at 10am. Butterfly Conservation members have permission to use the RSPB carpark to access Myers Allotment, a short 200m walk away. There is a café and toilet facilities at the Leighton Moss visitor centre.

Please bring your RSPB membership cards.

If you require a lift from the Manchester Rd cul-de-sac, please email fnspublicity@gmail.com or contact Jan on 07982417672 several days in advance and we will try to arrange something.

Con & Ed Event : Stoney Hill Survey : Thursday 21st July 10.00am

The next Con and Ed event will be a survey of the flora and fauna at Stoney Hill, Rochdale.

Most of you know that Stoney Hill is now a reclaimed area that was once full of burned-out cars and other rubbish, and is now a thriving wildlife meadow and small woodland. It is managed in partnership with Rochdale Council by the Spotland Estate Clean and Green team headed by Field Nat member Pete Knowles.

We will be checking the area for all things wild:- birds, insects, trees, flowers and trees, but in particular for invertebrates and flowering plants.

You don't need to be an expert to join in as we will also be using the opportunity to improve our ID skills. We are only looking for species present, not abundance, and at the end of the day hope to have a species list that we can submit to GMEU.

You can come for the morning session, afternoon, or all day, whatever suits you. If you are coming all day bring a flask and packed lunch.

Meet at **Bridgefold Road Rochdale, Postcode OL11 5BX, at 10.00 am**, by the information board. (Please note you can come in from Sandy Lane and Pitts Farm Avenue until you reach a yellow barrier, then you'll need to walk about 100 m).

There is plenty of on street parking. If you need a lift from Manchester Road then please contact Jan on fnspublicity@gamil.com or text 07982417672 a few days before the event.

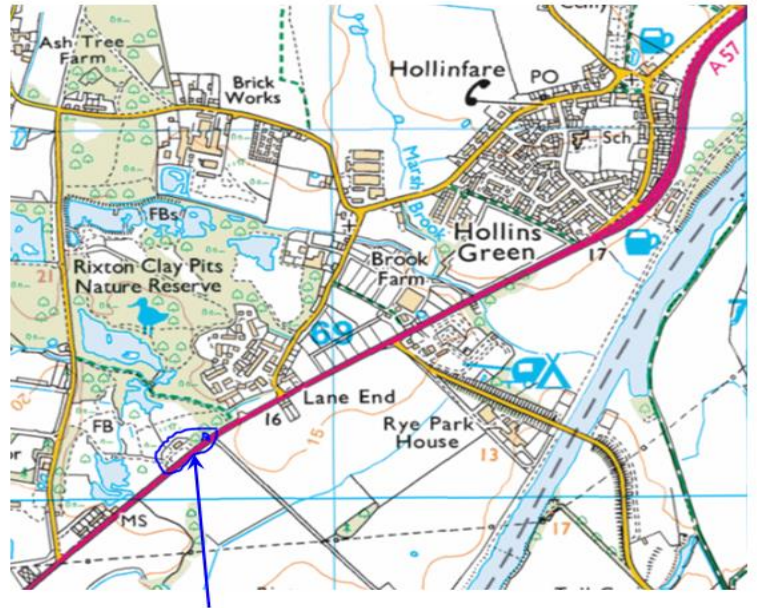
Have Your Say : Jan Kidd (Co-Chair)

The next meeting of the society's Steering Group is on Thursday 28th July when, amongst other things, we will be discussing our forthcoming programme. We would love to have your input. What would you like us to focus on? Do you have ideas for speakers? Are there places you'd love to visit? Would you be willing to help out? If we're not to become moribund we need new ideas, ways of working, and more people to help out. Let us know what you want You can email fnspublicity@gmail.com or chat with any of the steering group before the meeting date.

Car Trip : Rixton Clay Pits : Sat 30th July : Sonia and Gavin (satnav: WA3 6EE)

Setting off from Rochdale, we ought to get there by 10.45am-ish. The Ranger will have opened up the carpark which has its entrance off the A57 (from Jn11 on Motorway - anti-clockwise direction) - and also the toilets in the small Ranger centre.

This SSSI site is a wonderful place, but at the moment looks like most places - a little stunned by our long cold Spring. The site is always having management work done, and recently it appears that part of it has had some severe strimming, though much of this may well have grown out by the time



of our visit. Today, with a touch of sun, butterflies were on the wing with several dragonflies, including an Emperor. The site has different habitats - woodlands surrounding flowery grasslands with series of lakes, pools and ponds which are renowned for holding a large population of Gt Crested Newts. The terrain is somewhat undulating and lumpy with steps and quite a lot of stiles as you pass through different 'compartments'. More info. can be found at :

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rixton_Clay_Pits

Attached to this email are the directions to get there, the map that they provide on-line, and a plant-list made on our first visit.

If you require a lift from the Manchester Rd cul-de-sac at 10am, please email rfnspublicity@gmail.com or contact Jan on 07982417672 several days in advance and we will try to arrange something.

COACH TRIP : POCKLINGTON CANAL : Sat 13th Aug : Pam and Roger Crofts

The Pocklington Canal in East Yorkshire is 9.5 miles in length and runs from Canal Head, near the village of Pocklington (12 miles east of York), to East Cottingwith, where it meets the River Derwent just south of Wheldrake Ings.

The canal fell into disuse in the 1930's and became unnavigable. However, restoration work has taken place on the section between East Cottingwith and the village of Melbourne (approx. 5 miles) and this half of the canal is now navigable.



Pocklington Canal is one of the most important waterways for wildlife in Britain. The section between Canal Head and Melbourne is a designated SSSI and two further sections are included in other SSSI areas.

Unusual aquatic plants such as Fan-leaved Water Crowfoot and Narrow-leaved Water Plantain can be found under the canal's waters. Above water yellow Water-lilies, Water Forget-me-not and Flowering Rush are easily seen, whilst along the towpath plants such as Ox-eye Daisy and Betony are found.

The canal also supports an outstanding range of dragonflies and damselflies including the Red-eyed Damselfly. A wide variety of butterflies and other insects can also be seen along the towpath. Birds which are frequently seen include Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail, Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Whitethroat, Lapwing and Curlew.



Amongst the mammals present, Water Voles and Otters are known to frequent the quiet waters.

When RFNS visited here in May 2017 everyone agreed that the trip was a great success. This year we are going later in the summer and hoping for some of those damsels and dragons! These photos taken on the last trip there. Return at 4.45pm for 5.00pm departure.



***To book a place on the coach please contact rfnspublicity@gmail.com. It helps us if you please pay your £20 beforehand by bank transfer: Sort Code 05-07-67, Account Number 60931963. Please use your name as a reference. Some people have just been sending in their payment to the bank but our systems are not high tech enough for this information to be automatically passed on to bookings!**

If paying on the day we prefer a cheque made payable to "Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society", so the treasurer isn't carrying large sums of cash. Spaces may be available on the day but there is no guarantee, so those who have booked and paid (or indicated they will pay by cheque) will be given priority.*

Report on Bempton Cliffs and Flamborough Head : Linda Turner

On Saturday 11th June 2022 thirty-seven of us set off full of anticipation of a good day out. Even the comfort stop at Skelton Lake service station was of great interest. This new complex has been designed with the environment in mind. The wildflower meadows on the undulating roofs were wonderful to see. Many members wished they could have stayed a bit longer and hope to return to explore further (another trip maybe?).



Next stop was RSPB Bempton Cliffs. A few of the keen walkers set off to Flamborough Head but the rest of us visited the viewing points to look at the birds on the cliffs. Once I had got the mobility scooter, I was able to join them. Four



years ago, I was diagnosed with the neuromuscular condition Myasthenia gravis and my mobility is poor. It was great to be able to borrow the scooter and get around the site easily.

Some of our group were fortunate to see the lonely Black Browed Albatross 'Albie' who has been seen round the cliffs in recent weeks. (Photo courtesy of Rick Cowley)

However, there were plenty of other birds to interest us. The lovely colourful puffins, gannets with their yellow heads, razorbills and guillemots, kittiwakes and herring gulls.



After visiting the cliffs, I had a look around the nature trail where there was less wind but very few butterflies about. Then it was back to the coach.

Next stop was North Landing for the group cliff walk to Flamborough Head. This was a two mile walk along the cliff path passing through Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserve. I was unable to do this walk so stayed on the coach with others who did not feel up to the walk. However, those who did go tell me that they saw orchids, thrift, sea campion and sea mayweed and that the scenery was amazing.



As the sun came out it was warm enough for the Painted Lady and Red Admiral butterflies to fly.

The coach then took us to Flamborough Head where after enjoying an ice cream I used my rollator to walk along the cliff tops to watch the birds and the seals bobbing about in the sea

which was at high tide and very calm. The seals seemed to be saying 'come on in the water is lovely'. Once the walkers reached Flamborough Head there was just time for a cup of tea and cake in the café before boarding the coach for the journey home.

This is a personal record of the trip as I wanted to point out how inclusive it had been. There was something for everyone and that didn't happen by accident. I am sure I speak for all who came on the trip when I say a big thank you to Rick and Karen Cowley for their excellent planning and organisation.

Linda Turner : Co-chair RFNS

Photos courtesy of Paul Wilding, Jim Mellor and Rick Cowley

TWO BEAUTIFUL MOTHS : Sonia Allen

While walking last month with Gavin along the railway line at Syke, we had a BEAUTIFUL GOLDEN Y moth (not to be confused with our 'usual' Silver Y). In all swirling shades of chocolate and purple. And yesterday, I noticed on my iron gate, a PUSS-MOTH. What a gorgeous creature. I might put out my moth-trap.



Indoor Meetings : Linda Turner : Co-chair

We are now in our summer break from indoor meetings, but we hope to see you all in September when we will start our Autumn season of meetings. In the meantime, please can you let us know if you hear of any good speakers who would be of interest to our members. We are always particularly interested in speakers who can talk about local nature. We are still looking for someone to help with finding and booking speakers. If you feel you can help or you want to suggest a speaker then please contact us via rfnspublicity@gmail.com

Bowber Head Hay Meadow Exhibition : 2nd – 10th July : Kath Smycki

Some of you may be interested in this event

<https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/Event/bowber-head-hay-meadows-exhibition>

Bioblitz at Blackleach Country Park : Sat 16th July : Kath Smycki

Stuart Fraser of GMEU and Salford Rangers have arranged a Bioblitz on Saturday 16th July from 9am at Blackleach Country Park. The event will be focused on recording, but anyone is welcome to come along. They will also be running a moth

trap & using bat detectors in the evening, if you want to stay on/attend that. The Ranger Office by the car park is open from 8.30am. Contact Stuart via 0161 342 4007 or 07717 664798 or email: stuart.fraser@tameside.gov.uk for details

And finally.....

BEMPTON CLIFFS 11th June 2022 – A poem by Lucy Doherty

Oh Bempton Cliffs, it is a name
Of RSPB fame.
With coach and pass, I'm here at last
For love of birds I came.
My twitcher's list is here I wist.
My pencil poised to tick.
The first I spot the guillemot
Then Razor Bill and chick.
Gannets with their plumage spruce
Continuously croak.
Music makes the kittiwakes
A backdrop to evoke...
The perfect harmony of sound
To sooth the weary mind.
And now I face with love and grace
My favourite fowl I find.
The scene's complete, the puffin sweet –
My beating heart elate!
Thus no great loss the albatross –
Illusive as his mate.
The wonder of our natural world
For me it never ends.
So now content, my time was spent
With RFNS friends.
With thanks to Karen and Rick Cowley.

NOTE ONE:

*"wist" hence "wit" - archaic - knowledge, learning, understand see "... Ancient Mariner"
"A speck a mist a shape I wist
And still it neared and neared
As if it dodged a water sprite
It plunged and tacked and veered"*

NOTE TWO:

"Then Razor Bill and chick." ^["TICK"]_{SEP}
My humorous name -
"Chick" of course inaccurate
Could substitute if you feel strongly enough (perhaps you won't) "Razorbill I click" (as in "camera" - which I didn't)

August Newsletter If you have something you would like included in future newsletters, please send it to rfnsnewsletter@gmail.com. **Please submit items for the June Newsletter by Monday 25th July.**