



ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

February 2023 Newsletter

February Dates

Thurs 9th Feb: Indoor Meeting : Owl Pellets : Cutgate : 7.30pm

Sat 11th Feb : Coach Trip to Salthome 9.00am ***Booking needed***

Thurs 16th Feb : Zoom Meeting : RFNS150th Anniversary Planning : 7.30pm

Thurs 23rd Feb : Local Walk : Rochdale Canal, Stakehill & Boarshaw : 10.30am

Sat 25th Feb : Owl Pellet Dissection Workshop : 10.30 – 1.00 ***Booking needed***

Advanced warning : Sat 11th March : Car Trip : Woolston Eyes, Warrington

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

www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/965410946937744/

Indoor Meeting : Thurs 9th Feb : “Owl Pellets – what are they and what do they tell us?” : Alan Bedford : Cutgate : 7.30pm

This month we are back at Cutgate Baptist Church, Edenfield Road, Rochdale, OL11 5AQ.

This promises to be a very interesting evening. Alan and Hilary Bedford are well known to RFNS. Alan is going to be talking to us about Owl Pellets. He and Hilary are also going to bring along some samples for us to look at.

We will be following up on this talk with a workshop on Saturday 25th February where we will have the opportunity to dissect some owl pellets to see what the birds have been eating. See later in the newsletter for details of how to book for this workshop.



Members £3 per meeting, Non-Members £4 per meeting. Tea, coffee and cake available - please make a donation towards cost.

For those of you who have not been before there is parking on the Cutgate shopping precinct and the Norden bus stops near the church.

Thank you to all those members who helped with setting up and tidying away previously, and with serving refreshments. We hope you will be able to help again this month.

If you would like to attend the indoor meetings but need a lift then email rfnspublicity@gmail.com or text Linda on 07847622001 a few days before the meeting and we will try to find you a lift.

Equally if you are attending the meeting and would be willing to give a lift to someone in your area please email rfnspublicity@gmail.com or text Linda on 07847622001.

Coach Trip : Saltholme RSPB. Middlesbrough : Sat 11th Feb : Kath Smycki



Meet at Manchester Road Cul-de-Sac, Rochdale OL11 4HY. The coach will leave at **9.00am prompt**, The 1000-acre site of Saltholme RSPB in Stockton on Tees contains areas of wet grasslands that are designated SSSI along with reedbeds, pools and meadows. It is renowned for its nationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl and waders.

At Saltholme there is always the chance of a bittern skulking in the reeds, a marsh harrier quartering the reed beds for a meal, a peregrine

scaring every bird on the site or a water vole swimming along a ditch. Waders and wildfowl such as golden plover, lapwing, curlew, wigeon, teal, shoveler and gadwall gather in their thousands, roosting and feeding across the wet grasslands and pools. One of the most awesome spectacles is seeing massive flocks of roosting birds panic and fly into the air as peregrines hunt over Saltholme. You could also be lucky enough to see the resident water rails or if the tide is in our favour, a visiting seal swimming up Greatham Creek, a tidal creek at the northern end of the reserve, (also viewable with a live 'seal cam' from the visitor centre).

The site has four wildlife viewing hides, along with viewing screens and the viewing gallery in the visitor centre. The centre also has a café, shop and facilities. The trails are good and there are two mobility scooters available for loan from the visitor centre.

If you are intending to join this trip please book before 4th Feb by emailing rfnspublicity@gmail.com This will give time to cancel the coach if insufficient people have booked. 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 you cannot use internet banking then please pay by cheque made payable to "Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society".

RFNS - 150 years of wildlife observation and recording : Pam Crofts

In 2024 RFNS will be marking our 150th anniversary. We want to celebrate this significant milestone in style, not only with our members, but across the Borough, by holding events and exhibitions to publicise the Society to the wider public. All special occasions involve planning well in advance and we need to set the ball rolling.

To do this justice we are going to create a sub-group to plan and coordinate different events. We want to draw on the knowledge and expertise of you all and will start off by holding a Zoom meeting for everyone to make suggestions and discuss ideas. Following on from this we will set up the planning sub-group to produce a programme of events throughout 2024.

The initial Zoom meeting will be on Thursday 16th February. The link will be sent out nearer the date.

Local Walk : Thurs 23rd Feb : Rochdale Canal at Stakehill and Boarshaw SBI
Karen Cowley, Pamela Jackson and Sheila Simpson

A morning walk of 3-4 miles with an extension in the afternoon but we will give out more details at the next Indoor meeting on 9th Feb. Meet at 10.30am on Boarshaw Road, Middleton, beside Boarshaw Cemetery M24 2PN (SD881 068)

Cons & Ed Event : Sat 25th Feb 10.30am - 1.00pm : Owl Pellet Dissection
Workshop : Falinge Park : Gill Wrigley & Jenny Short

Booking is essential as this is classroom based with a finite number of pellets.

To book a place, contact us by email at rfnspublicity@gmail.com

This event aims to complement our learning following on from the February indoor meeting. One of our members has kindly been collecting barn owl pellets for a few weeks from a known roost site which we will be dissecting to see what the owls have been eating. I attended a similar event a number of years ago and I recall my pellet contained all of the bones and fur of three unlucky rodents.

Falinge Park is less than a mile from Rochdale town centre. Vehicular access to the park is through the main entrance at the corner of Falinge Road and Sheriff Street and access to the building is through the green door to the right of the facade. Car parking and toilets are available, tea coffee and biscuits will be provided. If you have hand lenses and dissection equipment, please bring them along. The room is available until 2pm so you are welcome to bring lunch if you wish to hang around at the end.

"So why is Rochdale a 'forgotten corner'?" : Ian Short

January's indoor meeting was a whistle-stop tour (in the comfort of our own homes) of the work of [Lancashire Wildlife Trust](#) by Louise Bentley, one of their volunteers. If you're reading this newsletter as an electronic copy you can [click this link](#) to find a recording of the meeting on the Field Nats website.

If you're reading a paper copy, but can access the internet then the address is www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk - you'll find a link to the report on the front page.

Louise covered a great deal of ground, from projects to help Water Voles and Red Squirrels, to wetland and sand dune restoration work, and much more. Many Field Nats members are LWT members too, and this was a great opportunity to ask a few searching questions of the Trust:

- Why does Rochdale feel like a 'forgotten corner' of Lancashire wildlife? We have loads of excellent habitat but find it very difficult to get support for projects.
- What is the Wildlife Trust's policy on the controversial matter of Mink eradication?
- We are very worried about local planning decisions potentially destroying habitat. How can the Wildlife Trust help?

Lancashire Wildlife Trust have responded to those questions and [their comments can be read in full here](#). If you have trouble accessing the website, or opening the documents, then please contact Ian Short (ian@short.org.uk; 01706 638861) and he

will try and help you.

If you really can't go online then contact either Ian or Laura and we'll send you a printed copy of the LWT's response.

We have received this message from the World Museum in Liverpool

"We are trying to reach as many of the regions naturalists as possible to make them aware of our heavily subsidised invertebrate identification workshops (beginner to advanced level). We would be grateful if you would consider sharing with your members information about this year's programme.

Tanyptera Project/North-West Invertebrates is a regional project aimed at promoting the study and conservation of insects and other invertebrates. You can find out more about the project in this '[What is the Tanyptera Project?](#)' video and on our [website](#). You can also follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), join our [Facebook Group](#) and subscribe to our [YouTube Channel](#).

Leanna Dixon, Assistant Tanyptera Regional Entomologist"

DETAILS OF THE WORKSHOP PROGRAMME CAN BE FOUND AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER

North Cave Yorkshire

Lucy Entwisle

1.This land evolved so long ago And morphed into the shape we know Forever changed in parts by man For ugly yet convenient span.	
2.Where called the curlew, dug the mole? Where was the buzzard hunting vole? The skylark ceased aloft to sing. He lost his nest sites, lost his offspring.	6.Immigrants were welcomed here Without a border, with no fear Giving colour, calls and movement Mute swans and bewick - greylag geese & brent.
3.Quarried gravel left great spaces. Deep water rose to fill the traces. Once peaceful fields were now discarded Left unkempt and disregarded.	7.The sun picks out the shelduck striking Goosander, pochard, grebe - inviting Us to snap a garganey And freeze a perfect memory.
4.Wildlife searching for a zone To set up home to call their own Passed on in search of unspoiled clearing Suffered, starved, disappearing.	8.How can we preserve the haven For the deer, the stoat, the raven Let not our thoughts dwell on our guise Alone as <i>Homo sapiens</i> - The Wise,
5.Until potential for the site To bring back nature from its plight. Judicial planning, finance, care - An oasis for us all to share.	9.But think - our universal flag unfurled Denotes the balance of our World And through compassion the mind adjusts - Give succour to our Wildlife Trusts

March Newsletter If you have something you would like included in future newsletters, please send it to rfnsnewsletter@gmail.com. **Please submit items for the March Newsletter by Wednesday 22nd February.**



Invertebrate Workshops 2023



Promoting the study and conservation of invertebrates in the North West

1 Day Workshops - £7.50

2 Day Workshops - £15

Date	Subject	Location	Tutor
27th January	Money Spiders*	World Museum	Richard Gallon
18th & 19th February	Braconid Wasps	World Museum	Gavin Broad & Mark Shaw
22nd February	Lacewings & Allies	World Museum	James Jepson
18th & 19th March	Millipedes	Marbury Country Park	Paul Richards
22nd & 23rd April	Mining Bees (Andrena)	World Museum	Liam Olds
20th May	Stoneflies	World Museum	Craig Macadam
21st May	Mayflies	World Museum	Craig Macadam
8th & 9th July	Dragonflies & Damselflies	Rixton Clay Pits	Tony Parker
3rd & 4th August	Beetle Families	World Museum	Dan Asaw
25th August	Grasshoppers, crickets and shieldbugs afternoon	Ainsdale Discovery Centre	Phil Smith
8th September	Freshwater Snails	World Museum	Ben Rowson
21st September	Woodlice	Leighton Moss	Paul Richards
22nd September	Harvestmen	Leighton Moss	Paul Richards
Date TBC November	Lacebugs	World Museum	Jim Flanagan
Date TBC November	Flowerbugs	World Museum	Jim Flanagan

*joint workshop with the British Arachnological Society



More info & booking details at...
www.northwestinvertebrates.org.uk/events



**National
Museums
Liverpool**



www.northwestinvertebrates.org.uk

@Tanyptera Project

