



ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

June 2023 Newsletter

Alan Cross

We are very sorry that we have lost one of our long-standing members, Alan Cross. Alan will be known to many of you. He was an active member and was treasurer for many years. He was a great support to Rick Cowley when he took over as Chair. Alan organized several walks per year, all well researched and well organized, including recommended refreshment stops. He and Rick had a few lad's days out doing the recce for some of these trips.



This photograph, supplied by Chris Parkinson, was taken in October 2019 when Alan was still able to join us on the coach trips. An endearing memory of Alan is when we nearly left him behind at a motorway service station on one of our coach trip comfort stops. Luckily the coach stopped on the exit slip road and was able to back up as Alan legged it across the car park!

The last event that Alan attended was the indoor meeting in September 2022 and it was lovely to see him. He will be greatly missed by his many friends in the society.

The funeral details are:

Funeral Service at Rochdale Crematorium

Monday 5th June at 2-00 p.m.

Family flowers only please. Donations to the Alzheimer's Society.

Details from Bridgefold Funeral Services 01706 639941

June Dates

Sat 10th June : Coach Trip : Gronant NR, North Wales : 9.00am * **IMPORTANT** Please note if you are intending to book on the coach trip to Gronant NR in Wales (details below) you **MUST** email rfnspublicity@gmail.com by **Sat 3rd June** at the very latest. Ruth, our treasurer, is away on holiday and so I will not be aware you want to come if you simply send your £20. Without knowing we have viable numbers the trip could be cancelled. Thanks. Jan Kidd

Thurs 22nd June : Local Walk : Blackstone Edge : 10.30am

Sun 25th June : Con & Ed Event : Manchester Festival Of Nature : 10.00am onwards

Advanced warning : Sat 15th July : Coach trip : Wyre Estuary Country Park & Fleetwood Dunes
This is the opportunity to see two coastal ecosystems in one day. We will visit Wyre Estuary CP in the morning which overlooks the saltmarsh of the Wyre Estuary and Fleetwood Dunes SSSI in the afternoon. All paths are very accessible. Don't forget to book a place on rfnspublicity@gmail.com. More details in next month's newsletter.

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/

Coach Trip : Sat 10th June 9.00am : Gronant Dunes & Big Pool Nature Reserves, North Wales : Charlie & Clare Farrell *Booking needed by Sat 3rd June*



This trip will take us to two SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) sites in North Wales. Big Pool Wood is a small North Wales Wildlife Trust reserve consisting of a number of small pools and reedbeds surrounded by a boardwalk and mature woodland. There are a mixture of woodland and waterbirds present along with a variety of woodland flowers including the rare giant bellflower.

Gronant Reserve is also an SSSI and the only surviving largely unmodified dunes along the North Wales Coast. The Dunes are filled

with Sea Holly, Marram grass, Sea Lavender, Sea Purslane and Sea-spurrey. You can also find the rare Dune Fescue and 5 species of orchid along with birds such as Linnet, Meadow Pipit and Skylark. There are usually plenty of butterflies around in the dunes including a colony of Dark Green Fritillary. The reedbeds and pools support a population of amphibians including Natterjack Toads. As we make our way to the observation point to view the Little Tern colony and other seabirds along the beach, we will hopefully encounter some of the lizards which populate the dunes.

Though a short part of the route involves crossing the sand dunes, the vast majority is flat and over paths and boardwalks that are well maintained. Toilets are available en-route.

The trip is open to members, as well as their friends and family. The coach will leave Manchester Road Cul-de-Sac, Rochdale OL11 4HY at 9am prompt and will set off on its return journey at 5 pm. The cost is still only £20. Contact rfnspublicity@gmail.com with any enquiries.

We will need at least 30 members to sign up for this to make it viable. If you are intending to join this trip **please book before Sat 3rd June**. Please pay your £20 beforehand by bank transfer: Sort Code 05-07-67, Account Number 60931963 and use your name as a reference. Some people have just been sending in their payment but our bank systems are not high tech, so **please email rfnspublicity@gmail.com to confirm your booking**. Cheques should be made payable to "Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society".

Local Walk : Thursday 22nd June 10.30am : A high level walk taking in part of the Pennine Way, Blackstone Edge Moor, Rochdale : Pam & Roger Crofts

Please meet at 10.30am at the lay-by on the A58. If you are coming from Rochdale this is on the right-hand side opposite Blackstone Edge Reservoir (Grid Reference SD 974180).

This is a large well surfaced lay-by and there should be plenty of space - and maybe an ice-cream van! If you wish to use public transport, the 587 bus service from Rochdale to Halifax stops near the lay-by.

There are two distinct parts to this walk and the route chosen on the day will be dependent on the weather and conditions underfoot. There is only one, fairly short, uphill section and just one sturdy stile. Both sections start at the lay-by and people can easily opt to just do the first one.

The first section is a circular route on Blackstone Edge Moor, which lies to the south of the A58, and is just under 2.5 miles. We will start at the lay-by and follow a good level path along Broad



Head Drain before walking up hill to the Aiggin Stone. From here we will follow the Old Packhorse Road eastwards over the moor to join another path alongside a drainage channel, which will take us back to the start. There is just one stile, at the start of the walk, and the paths alongside the drainage channels and up to the Aiggin Stone are good. However, the Old Packhorse Road passes over blanket bog and in places is badly eroded making it potentially difficult if the weather has not been good.

The second section is about 4 miles in total and follows the Pennine Way northwards from Blackstone Edge Reservoir to Light Hazzles and White Holme Reservoirs. The route is along an excellent Water Board track and there is the option of taking a good moorland path over Byron Edge to return to the start.

Leaders : Pam and Roger Crofts

Con & Ed Event : Sun 25th June : Manchester Festival of Nature, Heaton Park : Gill Wrigley



This year Rochdale Field Naturalists will be manning a stall at the Manchester Festival of Nature at Heaton Park and leading some short recording walks ½ hour to 1 hour long looking out for wildlife and recording.

We hope that our presence will help local people care about the wildlife on their doorstep, lead to an increased interest and awareness of the society and in turn we may even inspire some folk to join our membership.

If you would like to help with this event whether it's to pal up with someone for a recording walk or to hand out leaflets on the stall for an hour, contact

rfnspublicity@gmail.com The festival runs from 12noon until 4pm. We need to set up at 10am. The more of us

that help out, the less there is for each of us to do. Last year the event attracted 7000 people. We cannot predict how much interest we will receive but it would be great if there is good number of us.

Thanks - Gill Wrigley

Outdoor Team : Jan Kidd : Team Co-ordinator

We are in the process of producing our trip programme for 2024. If you would be willing to lead the group somewhere please get in touch via rfnspublicity@gmail.com

The venue needs to be somewhere of interest to at least 25 people so that we cover coach costs, have somewhere for the coach to park, and be within about 2 hours travelling distance from Rochdale. You would be required to check it out before we go. Leaders do not need to pay on the coach. We would offer help and advice, and a check list, for anyone willing to help.

If you would like to lead somewhere please let me know where, why it is of interest, and the preferred month of going there. Summer months are always more popular than winter months so we may not be able to accept all offers this year.

Look forward to being bombarded with offers 😊

Norfolk Trip

We are considering a short 3-day break to Norfolk in late February or early March 2024. The trip would be with Norfolk Birders led by Chris Mills. It would cost about £420 for 3 nights and 3 days, B&B, use of guide, vehicle etc. Evening meals are £20 extra. We would have to get there ourselves. There are spaces for up to 8 people. If you might be interested in this please let us know via the rfnspublicity@gmail.com email.

Rochdale Field Naturalists' Calendar 2024

I know, I know, I hear you cry - we're not even half way through 2023 yet!

BUT 2024 is a special year for the Field Nats, as we celebrate our 150th Anniversary, and we want to mark it by having a special calendar.

Those of you who were members in the 1970s and onwards may remember the wonderful hand drawn and coloured maps produced by Donald Taylor in the years up to the mid 90s. Unfortunately not many of these were retained but the Society does have a set compiled from those that were. We want to use these as a basis for our Anniversary Calendar together with accompanying photographs of flora and fauna that members have seen at these locations, either in the past, or more recently.



Here is a list of locations for which we have Donald's maps:-

Local walks:

Roch Byways, Springfield Park to Mellor Street;

Spod Byways, Healey Dell to Bury Road;
Central Byways, Mandale and Broadfield Parks, areas around Milkstone Road and the canal;

Clegg Hall Littleborough and Hollingworth Lake circular.

Coach or Car Trips:

Nuttall Park, Ramsbottom;

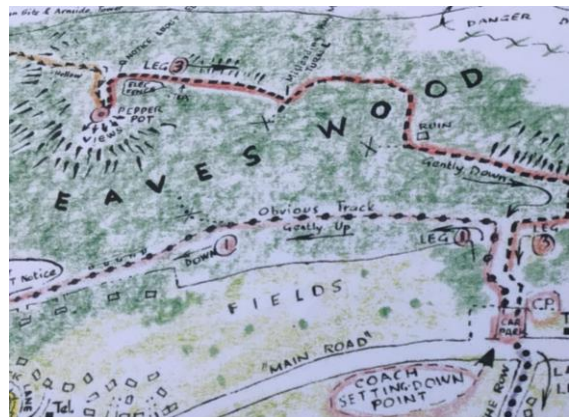
Eaves Wood, Silverdale;

Ribble Way, Gisburn to Sawley;

Settle (Cleatop Woods), North Yorkshire;

Whalley Nab, Great Harwood;

Dane Valley, Allgreave to Rushton Spencer, Cheshire.



We hope to make copies of all the maps available on our website shortly.

So your challenge is to find, or take, photographs of the wildlife you have seen, or recorded, in these areas. We really want close up images to accompany the maps rather than views/scenery if possible. It would also be nice to focus on the more local areas, but not to the exclusion of others.

Finally a plea to our longer serving members. If you have any other hand drawn maps from the early days - I know some were produced by other people after Donald Taylor for example - please can we copy them to add to our archives? Attached with this email is a wonderful example of Donald's work, showing his artistry and his wit !

If you have any questions please email Pam Crofts on rfnspublicity@gmail.com which is where you should send your photographs too as well!

Up with the lark! : Gill Wrigley

17 early birds met at 5am at Watergrove Reservoir on International Dawn Chorus Day, 7th May. Dawn was creeping over the reservoir and a few birds such as Blackbird and Robin were already making some noise. We walked the 20 mins to the Memorial Woodland for sunrise, passing a Moorhen and chicks that were just rousing. In the Memorial Woodlands, unlike most birders we were glued to our phones as we had all uploaded the 'Merlin' bird song App which I highly recommend. It struggled with the complexity of Song Thrush and the Canada Geese were really going for it before it recognised their honking but it



reliably told us we were listening to Treecreeper which I would otherwise have missed as well as the usual suspects of Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Chaffinch etc.

We then wandered down to the hide and got good views and the song of a Blackcap high in a tree next to the sailing club. On the reservoir was a Great Crested Grebe. We spent a little time in the woods just off Ramsden Road where we heard Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler and Little Ringed Plover before going through the gate onto open moorland for Linnet, Skylark and Stonechat. Goldcrest could be heard as we skirted around the outside and then into mixed woodland. The eagle-eyed Ruth spotted Stock Dove and we startled a couple of deer.

In all we totted up over 50 species of birds and everyone enjoyed themselves. We were back home and some of us in bed for 9:30am.

Thanks To Paul and Steve for leading this event and let's hope we can make it an annual affair.

Our recent coach trip to Creswell Crag inspired our resident poet to put pen to paper (or is it fingers to keyboard?)

Creswell Crag Lucy Entwisle

1. The North was covered over by
Devensian glaciation
And as the ice receded leaving
Land for habitation.

3. Another race migrated here.
It came from southern lands
Resourceful, cunning, proliferating
Named Homo sapiens

5. Cave floors bear the evidence of
How their lives progressed
By layer upon layer of bones and tools -
Neanderthals regressed.

2. Sixty thousand years ago
Neanderthals did dwell -
A harsh and simple life of toil
In the limestone caves of Creswell.

4. This Earth was shelter, food and warmth.
A graceful swan for eating
An oak tree was for building, burning
A primrose used as healing.

6. Lucky are we to breath the air
To wander where we please
Loving the sky, the woods, the birds
Which share our present ease.

7. Remember we are here because
Those while in their span
Long enough to give new life
As far back as life began.

9. So from the Cosmos we evolved
To what we are to-day
Able to think and strive and plan
For a better World away.

8. These ancient folk are part of us
Our DNA is proven
By the findings excavated
We trace our evolution.

10. But take care - ye higher beings -
A smile before a tear..
Through careless selfish cravings lest
Ye spoil our perfect sphere.

11. With factories, cities, pleasure gardens
Polluting the air we breathe
Leaving our Earth a dying home -
Our offspring we bequeath

12. Billion has 9 zeroes (American - now universal) or a thousand million
Earth's beginnings 4.5 billion years ago
Chicxulub asteroid 6-miles wide hit Earth 66 million years ago
Pre-historic 2.5 million years ago
Neanderthals - between about 130,000 - 40,000 years ago
Homo sapiens - migrated to Europe 130,000 - 115,000 years ago
Last glacial period - Devensian glaciation 33,000 - 22,000 years ago
Palaeolithic Age - Old-Stone Age 3,000,000 - 12,000 years ago
Mesolithic period - Middle Stone-age 10,000 - 8,000 bc
Neolithic period - New Stone Age 8,000 - 3,000 bc
Bronze Age 3,000 - 1,300 bc
Iron Age 1,300 - 900 bc
Lorna-Lucy Entwistle-Doherty
18th May 2023

July Newsletter

If you have something you would like included in the July newsletter, please send it to rfsnewsletter@gmail.com by Saturday 24th June.

Newsletter Title Colour Coding :

Green = Society Information

Red = Member Contribution

Social Media Platforms

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