



ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

April 2025 Newsletter

April Dates

Tues 1st April : Launch date for SWIFT

Thurs 10th April : Indoor Meeting : 'Improving our understanding of threatened Invertebrates in Lancashire' : Gary Hedges : 7.30pm : Cutgate Baptist Church

Sat 12th April : Coach Trip : Kirkby Stephen, N. Yorks : 9.00am : ***BOOKING NEEDED***

Thurs 17th April : Local Walk : Syke Area : 10.30am

Sun 20th April : Outdoor Team's Deadline Date : See attached document

(Thurs 24th April : Stoney Hill Event : "To Bee or not to Bee" : 10.00am)

ADVANCED NOTICE :

Thurs 1st May : Cons & Ed Event : Bird and Bat Walk : 6.30pm

Sun 4th May : Cons & Ed Event : Dawn Chorus Day : Watergrove : 5am-ish

Sat 10th May : ***CAR TRIP*** : RSPB Coombes Valley, Staffordshire

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/

Launch date for SWIFT : April 1st 2025 : Karen Cowley

This is the launch date **of** our new recording system called **SWIFT** which has been built specially for us by Paul Barrington at GMLRC.

It will replace our old stalwart MapMate which has served us well since 2009.

We hope that over time this will enable more of you to enter your own records into the system, whatever devices you like to use.

Indoor Meeting : Thursday 10th April : 'Improving our understanding of threatened Invertebrates in Lancashire' : Gary Hedges : Cutgate : 7-30 p.m.

This month we are very pleased to welcome Gary Hedges, an Entomologist based in World Museum, Liverpool, to speak to us about those invertebrates which are threatened in our county. Within entomology, Gary specialises in weevils and leaf beetles, and moths, but has a wide



Lathrobium rufipenne

natural history interest and used to be on the council of Carlisle Natural History Society.

He has been the project manager for the Tanyptera Project for the past 8 years, promoting recording and study of invertebrates in North West England. Gary is also the Secretary of Lancashire and Cheshire Entomological Society.

<https://www.northwestinvertebrates.org.uk/>

Members £3 per meeting, Non-Members £4 per meeting. Tea, coffee, and cake available - please make a donation towards cost. There is parking on the Cutgate shopping precinct and the Norden bus stops near the church on Edenfield Road.

We are always needing members to help with setting up the room and tidying up afterwards, so if you can spare a few minutes just come a bit early or stay behind after.

Coach Trip : Sat 12th April : Coach Trip : Kirkby Stephen, N. Yorks : 9.00am

We travel up the M6 and take a break at the services near Tebay. Our walk begins on a quiet lane just short of Kirkby Stephen Railway Station. We pass a number of farms and enjoy good open views to the East overlooking the Nateby area. At the ruined Lammerside Castle we will have lunch. Lammerside Castle is a 12th century building which was rebuilt and strengthened in the 14th century as a Pele tower, to provide protection against Scots raiders. The ruins include the upstanding remains of a C14 tower or wing which originally formed part of the building's central core, together with the earthwork remains of buildings to the north and south of the tower and a barmkin wall which enclosed a yard to the west of the tower. The castle was occupied by a branch of the Wharton family, but is thought to have been abandoned in C17, when the family moved to the fortified manor house, Wharton Hall, near Kirkby Stephen.



From this point on the walk changes to footpaths at the side of the River Eden, passing Mire Close Bridge and onto Wharton Hall. This is an imposing cluster of buildings but unfortunately it is private and we have to divert around the yards. Wharton Hall was founded in the 15th century by the Wharton family, who extended and renovated the property over the centuries. The hall is a Grade I listed building and a farm, with a history of deer park and village relocation. We cross the River Eden and take some open fields which leads us to the hamlet of Nateby. Now follows a delightful path down an old track which crosses the old railway line. We pass a stream entering from the right with a large stone on its left with strange markings. Can you decipher the markings? The path eventually leads to the River Eden again and takes us into Kirkby Stephen where

there are cafes and ale houses and a coach waiting to take us home. The walk is 4.66 miles long. The trip is open to friends and family. But please remind your friends that : **Our trips are run by our Members for Members. Everyone joins our excursions at their own risk.** The full statement on our liability may be read on our website [Disclaimer – Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society](#) and was published in the January 2025 Newsletter.

The coach will leave Manchester Road cul-de-sac at 9.00am promptly and set off on the return journey **at 5.00pm**. The cost is £20. Contact rfnspublicity@gmail.com with any queries. Please pay your £20 beforehand by bank transfer : Sort code 05-07-67 Account number 60931963 and use your name as reference. Then email rfnspublicity@gmail.com to book your place. Please note your place is not reserved until you receive a reply to that email. Cheques should be made payable to **"Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society"**

Leaders: John & Shirley Hall

A composite of photos from the 2019 trip



Local Walk : Thurs 17th April : Syke Area : 10.30am : Steve Atkins

Syke in spring should hold plenty to interest us. Our walk will first take us through Syke Wood SBI which contains three small disused reservoirs, supporting willow car and acid/species-rich neutral grassland. So, there should be a good variety of plants to record including broadleaved helleborine and meadow vetchling.

Brownhouse Wham and Hamer Pasture Reservoirs SBI will be our next stop before heading up onto the moors and returning across farmland. The reservoirs support acid grassland, neutral grassland, bog and mire, including at least three species of Sphagnum moss which form carpets in places.

By mid-April, Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler should all be in full song and we can expect

Brownhouse Wham



to find Reed Buntings singing around the reservoirs. The area is usually good for Green Woodpecker, so we will be listening out for their distinctive “yaffle” calls. In spring 2024, a Snipe was regularly displaying/drumming over the juncus and came close enough to see the outer tail feathers, used by the bird to make its distinctive sound.

We will visit two rookeries and providing the leaves have not opened on the trees, will hopefully be able to watch the adults taking food to their young in the nests. In any case, listening to the hunger calls of the chicks will be quite an experience.

Weather permitting, a few early butterflies may be on the wing, especially Orange-tip, and we will be

searching for Green Hairstreaks in the bilberry along the Fanny Brook Valley.

Unfortunately, there are no public toilets at Syke or along the route.

Meeting Place : Syke Methodist Church, 206 Syke Rd, Rochdale OL12 9TF

April 20th Outdoor Team's Deadline Date

For you all to return your Preferences for Coach trips in 2026. Yes – we really do have to start so early!

Forms on which you can **State your Preferences** – and **Volunteer to lead** are available at all RFNS events and attached here.

Please return them to any member of the Outdoor Team (Sheila Simpson, Paul Whiting, John and Shirley Hall, Charlie Farrell, Roger Crofts, Karen Cowley)

If you are dubious about making a commitment so far in advance - no worries! The plan will be provisional. It has been the practice sometimes to swap months with other leaders e.g. to attend a wedding or to cover for someone's illness. We just pass on all the planning details we have made to that point and someone else takes over.

Thurs 24th April : Stoney Hill Event : “To Bee or not To Bee” : FREE EVENT : Stoney Hill Wildlife Conservation Area : 10.00am until around noon

Join us for an illustrated talk on how to identify the bees you could find in your garden, compare them with some bee mimics, learn about their lifestyle, why they are under threat and what you can do to help. This will be followed by a wander around Stoney Hill looking for the bees identified. Meet at Rochdale Sports Club, Redbrook, Bridgefold Road, Rochdale. OL11 5BX at 10.00 am.

Wear sensible shoes and bring a drink. Biscuits provided.

ALL WELCOME



Please note that if you can't make the date the talk will be repeated at Q Gardens in the Community on Sunday 27th April. Queen's Drive OL112NP but owing to limited space booking is required for the event at Q. Email Kiddjanice@gmail.com to reserve a place.

This is not an RFNS event, but all members are invited. A flyer for this event is attached to this email.

Conservation & Education Event : “Birds and Bats” : Thursday 1st May : 6.30pm



Early evening walk to see what we can spot around Doctor Dam and the lower part of Greenbooth reservoir in Norden. Meet at the car park by the Bridge Chippy (OL11 5TT) and Jubilee Park in Norden, just off the A680 Edenfield Rd. If the car park is full there is parking on Hutchinson Rd. There are a few flights of steep steps and stiles along the route. There should be plenty of Spring migrants by then and we might spot some birds of prey. Please bring a bat detector if you have one and we will see what bats are about as dusk approaches. (Sunset is around 8.40pm)

Optional drinks afterwards at The Bridge Inn.

Report on the Elton Reservoir – Conservation and education event. Saturday 22 February 2025. Leader – Jenny Short.

An early spring day of clear blue skies and mild temperatures provided the backdrop to a morning full of interest. Jenny and others shared guides to animal tracks and signs to assist us in our quest! Expectedly, dog paw prints were evident in all shapes and sizes, but the guides helped us to identify with certainty **Fox** prints in soft mud. The track we followed had very clear **Roe deer** tracks and our skills were rapidly improving as we



Fox



Roe deer

identified there were at least two, the direction of travel, and where they had sped up! Along the edge of Elton reservoir clear evidence of **Heron** and **Coot** standing and walking in the muddier areas were clear, along with duck prints. These were not readily identifiable as any one species.



Otter spraint

Onto the track along the banks of the River Irwell. The river luckily wasn't running too high and fluvial deposits along the banks were clearly exposed and some accessible. Excitement heightened when Gill spotted a spraint, on a rock, just before the tram bridge. Safely contained in a plastic pot and following mixed thoughts on its identification, we await the final verdict. The sandy deposits were rich in prints not hindered by dog prints. Positive identification of **Brown Rat**, **Otter**, **Shrew/Mouse** and **Squirrel** added more success to the walk. Along the path retuning to the cars, Pete and Gill



Otter and rat

identified **Badger** fur rescued from a piece of barbed wire close to the ground. A fitting end to an educational morning, many of us agreeing we had never walked along looking at the ground so much!

Mark Higginbottom

And finally a metrological piece from our own resident poet -

The Northern Jet Stream
Lucy Entwisle

1. High up there, The Jet Stream circles -
A halo above this planet.
Turning in whorls, it twists and swirles
Whichever way around it.

2. Warmth from the South, cold from the North
Airs obey the command
To form The Stream and thus bring forth
This fast-moving band.

3. Aircraft join +five miles height
Carried along at speed
By massive force - arrive early in spite
Of prevailing winds to heed.

4. Jet Streaks and Rossby Waves
Influence our weather
Blame these upon long wet days
For coming together.

Addendum

References:

The Met Office, Google, NOAA (US), Wiki,
Fast moving band of strong wind.

Responsible for much of weather on Earth due to:

1. temperature difference - cold polar air and warmer southern air
2. earth's rotation - "Coriolis effect"
3. seasonal changes greater in winter

Altitude: 9,100-12,200 meters (30-40,000 feet or 5-8 miles) above Earth level

Speed: 177-402meters (110-250 miles) per hour

Depends on temperature difference between cold and warm air masse.

Duration: to circle Earth about 6 days

Direction: Neither clockwise nor counter-clockwise, meanders from West to East.

In North: Counter clockwise around low pressure systems

Clockwise around high pressure systems

Size: Width of stream itself - 100s of kilometres (miles)

Thickness - approximately 5k (3 miles)

Circumference - approx. that of the Globe - 40,000K (25,000miles)

Jet Streak: Strongest part, about 160ks (99 miles) wide.

Rossby Waves: Slower moving patterns circling the Earth which are the driving
force of the Jet Stream.

Researched by: Lorna Lucy Doherty née Entwisle, Bacup 24th March 2025

May Newsletter : If you have something you would like included in the May 2025 newsletter, please send it to rfnsnewsletter@gmail.com by **Tuesday 17th April** as your Editor is on holiday at the end of April.

Keep an eye on your emails as well as our information sources :

www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/965410946937744/

and our WhatsApp pages (Info as well as Chat)



