



Registered Charity No. 1070744

FRIENDS OF RODLEY NATURE RESERVE NEWSLETTER

Summer 2018



3rd Leeds Birdfair - Saturday June 23rd



It is hard to believe we have just had the 3rd Leeds Birdfair. How time flies. It seems no time at all since we were planning the first one. This is now an annual event in our calendar and it is a great opportunity for like-minded people to get together to talk about birds and other wildlife and meet old friends. There was plenty for our younger visitors to enjoy including the ever popular pond dipping, a small mammal survey, moth trap opening, owl pellet dissection and a bug hunt. For once there were no worries about the weather in what was to prove one of the driest Junes on record although there was a good deal of cloud and a cool breeze at times which unfortunately restricted activity somewhat for the dragonfly and butterfly enthusiasts.



There was certainly plenty of tasty food to be had with lots of delicious home baking in the visitor centre, our own excellent BBQ and, for the first time, a vegan and vegetarian food stall.



A big thank you to all our volunteers who worked so hard in the run up to the day and on the day, to everyone who came to the event and to Linda Jenkinson of Start Birding who had the vision to stage such an event here and encouraged so many high profile organisations to support it



The Weather

We talk and complain about the weather an awful lot in this country. Usually it is too wet, too windy or too cold but this year it is the lack of rain and heat that has been the main topic of conversation. Thanks to a long, cold wet winter and early spring, sowing of the bird-friendly seed crop on Tim's Field on 6th June was several weeks later than we would have liked. Unfortunately, there has been no rain for more than a



month and the crop is now likely to have a high fail rate. Some of the seed will still germinate but without the volume required. We were advised to sow again using a winter cover crop consisting of various brassicas and this was done on 16th July. This includes among other things some Fodder Radish, the flowers of which have proved so popular with our Honey Bees in previous years and the resultant seed a magnet for Linnets. Our Honey



Bees will certainly be missing the Fodder Radish at the moment. You only need to look at the photo of Tim's Field in our 2018 calendar to see what the field should normally look like now.

Other parts of the Reserve are suffering too. The Wet Grassland dried out for a time as the water evaporated more quickly than we were able to replace it via the Reedbed. We do have an Abstraction Licence to take water from the River Aire but this needs careful monitoring so as not to exceed the amount we are allowed. Fortunately, we have now been able to get some water back on the area. As early as the end of June the two wildflower meadows were looking prematurely brown and far from their best due to lack of water and many of the trees we planted on Poplar Field were showing signs of stress with leaves going brown and dropping off.

To what extent this has affected the wildlife remains to be seen but on the positive side May and June have been excellent months for butterflies and numbers of freshly emerged Small Tortoiseshells in the early part of July have been encouraging after a very poor year of summer emergence in 2017. Emerging in July, Gatekeepers too appear to be having their best year ever on the Reserve.



Avocets at Rodley

As the climate changes many bird and other species are extending their range northwards. Little Egret and Cetti's Warbler are obvious examples and they reached Rodley some time ago. It was just a question of who would arrive next....

Great White Egret Spoonbill Avocet?

We knew all these species were already on the outskirts of Leeds and surely it was just a matter of time before one of them would reach here. It was nevertheless something of a surprise when volunteer Edna Cowan went into the Willow Path Hide on Wednesday 27th June and saw two Avocets on the Back Duck Marsh. Fortunately, being a Wednesday, many regular birdwatchers were able to see the birds which remained on site all day.



Interestingly, one of the birds was colour-ringed and subsequent investigation showed that it was ringed on Seal Sands, Cleveland on 10th June 2015. On 22nd October 2015 it turned up in the Blackwater Estuary in Essex and on 13th March 2016 it was reported at Snettisham in Norfolk.



Spoonbills have bred at Fairburn Ings this year so perhaps a young bird starting to explore the area might be next.

Toilet Development

It had been planned to start long-awaited improvements to our toilet facilities in October last year but due to the unexpected discovery of a series of pipes and mains cabling during initial excavation work the project had to be put on hold. New plans have now been finalised which do not require external building work. Instead, this will involve the conversion of the back workshop into additional toilet facilities. We are hoping that work will start in September but no later than October this year. Portaloos will be available during the period of the work.

August Events For Your Diary

 <p><u>MOTH TRAP OPENING</u> Join us every Wednesday throughout August for our Moth Trap opening starting at 10am near the visitor centre Starts on 1st August</p> 	 <p>JOIN US FOR A WALK AROUND THE RESERVE ON SATURDAY 4th AUGUST TO FIND AND IDENTIFY SMALL MAMMALS MEET AT THE VISITOR CENTRE AT 9am</p> 	 <p>RODLEY NATURE RESERVE SUMMER FAIR</p>  <p>Join us for our annual SUMMER FAIR Saturday August 18th 2018 11am to 3pm</p> <p>Free entry Many varied stalls including arts & crafts, tombola, BBQ and mini steam engine rides Hot & cold drinks + home baking in the visitor centre</p> 
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And finally don't forget the very popular PIE & PEA EVENT on OCTOBER 27th from 11am followed by a FUNGUS FORAY at 2pm. Book your pies in advance to avoid disappointment.

Reserve Opening Times
Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday 9am - 5pm (4pm Nov- end Feb)
Visitor Centre Opening Times - 10am - 4pm

For Rodley Nature Reserve Trust Matters:

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