

UpBEAT

Newsletter for Blackshaw Environmental Action Team (BEAT)
www.blackshaw.net/b-e-a-t



Mar - Apr 2013

Issue 24

From the editor

BEAT has once again been successful with fundraising: thanks to the Co-operative Bank for the £251.86 donation to BEAT. This was the result of Co-op members voting for BEAT at the Co-op supermarket in Hebden Bridge.

And thanks to Community Foundation For Manchester for a grant of £900 towards BEAT's general activities.



Thanks to Heptonstall Forward for their £15 contribution towards our January public meeting in Heptonstall.

Finally, thanks for all your donations to BEAT via LocalGiving.com. In the last round of doubling up we received £465

which – apart from £10 from a retired person – is likely to be doubled up and Gift Aided. So far BEAT has received £3,714.94 in 71 donations via LocalGiving.com.

On 8 February BEAT was interviewed by Kersty Hobson, a Senior Research Fellow at the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford. Kersty travelled to Blackshaw Head and paid BEAT £50 for participating in the research project. A report on the results of the research will be made public when finalised.

BEAT has contributed a USB to the village time capsule that will be opened in fifty years' time. We have included issues 8 to 23 of our newsletters, our vision for a sustainable parish, our sustainability plan, our constitution and an account of the 'Visit your Neighbour' event.

Don't forget the events we have coming up in the next few months: the tree planting on **9 March**, the

Contents

Tree planting
Nature conservation
Colden Clough
Birds in the spring
Air quality
Village clean-up
Visit your neighbour
Great Rock Co-op
Heat pumps
Charlestown allotments
BEAT events

village clean-up on **Saturday 20 April**, the birdwatching walk on **Saturday 27 April**, 'Visit your neighbour' event on **28 April** and some interesting public meetings on **13 March**, **10 April** and **8 May**. See full details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Tree planting

At 11am on Saturday 9 March about 80 already grafted fruit trees will be planted in the nursery at Frank and Maggs on Long Causeway, to get established before being moved to their permanent site in a couple of years' time.

We hope you can help for an hour with the tree planting. It will not take more than an hour. Tools and refreshments will be available.

Please wear wellies and warm clothes.

Some of the 100 apple trees that were grafted in 2012 need to be re-grafted. This will be done by Calderdale Local Orchard Group (CLOG) on Sunday 24 March. Many thanks for their help.

Once the trees have been re-grafted they

need planting into the nursery.

If you want to give a hand with this please contact Finn.



Photo: Ready for planting

Nature conservation

The five bird boxes were put up at Colden Clough on 9 January. Thanks to Phil, Steve, Matt, Finn and Bryony for helping.

Matt Bell will be giving a talk on birds at the BEAT public meeting on Wednesday 10 April. He will also be leading a birdwatching walk for adults on Saturday 27 April starting at 7.30am at the New Delight Inn and finishing there, with breakfast for those who want it.

The walk is expected to take two and a half hours. If the weather is awful on 27 April we will do the walk on Saturday 4 May instead.

Bring binoculars if possible and a camera if you want to take pictures.

Please inform finn.jensen@rocketmail.com if you would like to come on the birdwatching walk, and whether you want a full English breakfast (vegetarian or meat) for £7.50 pp.



Photo: Putting up bird boxes

Matt has also offered to organise a birdwatching walk for children.

Please email finn.jensen@rocketmail.com if your child/children are interested, including their ages and which weekends they are **not** available. A parent/guardian/friend must join the walk to be responsible for the child/children. We need a ratio of at least one adult to five children.

Portia from Upper Calderdale Wildlife Network would be interested in talking to people

individually about hay meadows in your area. If you would like to talk to Portia please let Finn know.

BEAT has applied for grants to do environmental improvements with a variety of local organisations: Friends of Colden Clough, Charlestown Allotment Group, Hebden Royd School and Colden J&I School. BEAT has also applied for funding to pay Charles Flynn to do wild life surveys of Stansfield Moor, Colden Clough, Jumble Hole Clough and Staups Goyt on Staups Moor.

Friends of Colden Clough

Colden Clough is a large area of attractive semi-natural woodland right here on our doorstep; criss-crossed by footpaths it's a nature lover's paradise, rich in flora and fauna. But also, any lover of industrial history will be rewarded by the evidence of the early years of the industrial revolution - a kiln, old chimneys, weirs and millponds.

In 2007 the Clough was designated a Local Nature Reserve and in April of that year the Friends of Colden Clough was formed. A small group of

volunteers from Blackshaw, Heptonstall and Hebden Royd parishes came together.

Under the guidance of a Calderdale Countryside officer we've learnt about nature reserve management. Meeting on the first Tuesday of the month a small but 'very select' group of us meet and carry out a range of tasks, quite often as the weather determines. One month we might be clearing footpaths, steps and turn-byes, another month working on one of the millponds.

The tasks are very varied and rarely need much technical knowledge (hence my

involvement!!), and they are suitable for young or old, male or female.

It always feel good to be out in the Clough watching what changes the seasons bring and also knowing that your bit of work is helping walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers alike. Hopefully over the next few years we'll be working on larger projects, but in the meantime the small jobs we do help keep the Clough a wonderful place to visit.

If you want to volunteer and give a few hours of help in the Clough contact me on 01422 844871 or at knowles.phil@gmail.com. - Phil

Birds in the spring

The following article by Matt Bell will also appear on BEAT's website and can be emailed to you if you want to follow the web links in the article.

Spring is arguably the most exciting period for birdwatchers. There is always a sense of anticipation about when each of the summer migrants will return, and indeed with some of the rarer breeders in our area - whether they will make it back at all. The journey they make is one of the most testing in nature, considering that many of these birds are the size of a sparrow, and navigate their way some 6,000 miles all the way back to Blackshaw from their wintering grounds in Sub Saharan Africa. On the way, they are bombarded by birds of prey, have to cross oceans, are shot at by hunters, and in some respect the biggest challenge of all - the epic crossing of the Sahara desert.

The first migrant to arrive is generally the striking wheatear. Although they do tenuously cling on as a breeding bird on the treeless boggy moorland in our area, some of the first wheatear we see in Mid March in the fields and on the tops of walls around Blackshaw Head are in fact the sub-species 'Greenland wheater', so as the name suggests still have a long journey ahead on to the arctic region. Another early arriver we are hugely privileged to have in our area is the ring ouzel - an increasingly rare moorland relative of the blackbird. Again, mid-March is around the time they start to arrive back to their breeding grounds.

From then next few weeks are a flurry of activity as the rest of the

migrants arrive back to where they were born. The dates are of course very approximate, depending on weather conditions through North Africa and Europe as they head home, but look out for swallows (from the last week of March) chiffchaff (around the same time) house martins (from the first week of April), willow warbler (also around the first week of April) with later arrivals being redstart, swifts, whitethroat, garden warbler, cuckoos, whinchat and spotted & pied flycatchers (all from last week of April)



Of course, not all of 'our' birds in Blackshaw are long distance commuters. Curlews, though they vanish for the winter, only go as far as the coastal mud flats on the east and west coast of England where they can feed more easily than on the frozen moors. The same goes for our lapwings, redshank and twite. Twite (probably the most endangered bird to live in this area) have been ringed in Calderdale and found to spend the winter on the Lincolnshire coast then return here for the breeding season.

Other birds can occasionally be seen just passing through on their way further north. The most exciting of these is the osprey. Every spring, up to half a dozen of these spectacular birds of prey are recorded as they pass overhead heading for breeding grounds in Scotland and northern England. However, it is suspected that many

more than that fly through unnoticed (despite a wingspan of over 1.5m!). So keep your eyes to the skies from late March and always take binoculars if you are going for a walk! Once hunted to extinction, one pair started to breed at Loch Garten in Speyside in the 1950's. From that most tenuous of footholds the population has slowly grown to over 300 pairs, so a relatively high number will use the Pennines as a route marker on the journey north, and south again in late summer. Other birds of prey to grace our area include the short eared owl and the merlin. Both are relatively uncommon birds from a national perspective.

Lastly, if you spot anything you think may be of interest, you might want to let the local bird group know. We are particularly keen to hear about where and when cuckoos are calling this spring as their numbers have plummeted in recent years. The bird group's blog can be found at www.calderbirds.blogspot.com. It shows up to date local sightings and photos, so is well worth a look.

So on the first spring day that you look up and see the returning swallows quartering the fields of cows and sheep, just think - a few short weeks ago they will almost certainly have been on the plains of Africa swooping over the heads of elephants, giraffes and lions.



Air quality

Our local Blackshaw Head resident Sally Jones is a Pollution Control Officer at Bradford Council, working on improving the air quality in West Yorkshire. She will be speaking at a BEAT public meeting on 13 March and has given us this preview:

"My role at the Council involves reviewing and assessing air quality to meet statutory responsibility under the Environment Act 1995.

I assess whether or not we are meeting the objectives for air quality pollutants set in the Air Quality England Regulations, and report findings to DEFRA. The objectives are passed down from European legislation and are based on evidence provided by

the World Health Organisation. Along with other European countries the UK has failed to meet the objectives for nitrogen dioxide and we are currently facing infraction fines (estimated at £1 million/day).

There are also issues with high levels of particulate matter in many parts of the UK. There is no safe level for these pollutants and the latest estimate is that they are responsible for 5% of all deaths brought forward, responsible for the deaths of 29,000 people annually and represent a UK health cost of around £20 billion.

The West Yorkshire Zone has the fourth-worst air quality in the UK and has widespread exceedances of the objectives due to pollution from traffic.

We have Air Quality Management Areas (exceedance areas) in all five local authorities: the most relevant to us is in Hebden Bridge along the A646 from Bankfoot Terrace to Station Road, covering a significant portion of the town centre and several residential areas.

I will be speaking about some DEFRA funded work that Bradford Council has developed to reduce emissions from vehicles through the development of a Low Emission Strategy.

This work has recently been supported further by DEFRA to fund its extension across the five local authorities of West Yorkshire."

Village clean-up

For over a decade BEAT has organised six-monthly village clean-ups in April and October. We are continuing this tradition on Saturday 20 April at 10.30am. Children are welcome if supervised by an adult.



Like any other town or village today Blackshaw Head attracts all kinds of litter. The debris of daily life finds its way to our hedgerows and verges, some of it from residents and some from drivers passing through. Over time the accumulation makes the place

look shabby and poses a threat to wildlife.

For an hour or two on a Saturday morning, residents of Blackshaw come out in force armed with gloves, litter pickers, bin bags and high visibility vests to gather what they can for proper disposal.

It's a real family affair with locals of all ages mucking in together, and the array of items found seems to get more and more bizarre each time – everything from cans and plastic bottles to car tyres have been found recently.

The event starts at the Chapel where you will be given a route and equipment and ends there with free refreshments for everyone involved.

Many thanks to Phil Knowles for organising the clean-up and to Dorothy Sutcliffe for providing the refreshments.

Visit your neighbour

Of the various community groups in Blackshaw parish, only BEAT showed an interest in another 'Visit your neighbour' event.

BEAT has decided to hold a monthly event at which local people will be able to visit one house to find out about that household's renewable energy system (heat pump, PV and thermal solar panels, biomass heating or wind turbine).

If your house has a renewable energy system and you would like to participate please contact finn.jensen@rocketmail.com.

Our first 'Visit your neighbour' event will be on Sunday 28th April from 1 to 4 PM, biomass log heating system and thermal solar panels at Dale and Susan Blundell, Davy Hall Blackshaw Head, HX7 7JF.

Great Rock Co-op

Great Rock Co-op's first day of trading on 23 December was a runaway success.

The shop, based at Staups Lea Farm, Higher Eastwood, attracted 22 producers, 15 bringing food and drink and 7 arts and crafts. There was a wide range of meat products from sausages and bacon to Muscovy duck, not to mention the Staups Lea turkeys, wonderful Pextenment cheeses, Bridestones Beers, homemade

'We were blown away by the fantastic produce we had and the amount of customers who came to buy it all, not just locals but many from Hebden Bridge, Todmorden, Mytholmroyd and even further afield. At one point we actually had a bit of a parking problem! By 2pm, we were pretty much sold out, which was great for us but even better for our producers.' As a not-for-profit organisation, Great Rock Co-op takes a small percentage to cover overheads, but the bulk of the takings go directly back to producers. 'Our

community. They want a consistent outlet for their goods and many consumers are eager to source local produce. We will provide that regular link between the two.'

The Co-op has secured a £2,000 grant from the Community Foundation for Calderdale to fit out the shop and is finalising the details of its structure and administration. The shop will open every Saturday from its launch day on **Saturday 23 March**.

'There's a real interest in local food,' says Sally Jones of Staups Lea Farm. 'People are increasingly concerned about our reliance on food flown in from the other side of the world. They love local food and are proud of local producers. We're hugely encouraged by the overwhelming support and encouragement we got from everyone at the Pop Up event and are really looking forward to taking this forward in March.'

Great Rock Co-op is keen to hear from anyone who has produce they would like to sell through the shop, or would like to get involved in the running of the shop. You can contact them at info@greatrockcoop.co.uk, or keep up to date through the website www.greatrockcoop.co.uk, or follow us on Facebook. And we'll keep you posted via Google groups, of course.



Photo: Great Rock Co-Op

preserves, patés, hummus, breads, biscuits, cakes and chocolates.

Exceeding all expectations, the food section took just over £1,000 and the Arts and Crafts section took about £470.

Group member Angie Guy says,

aim is to promote and support small independent enterprises in our area,' says Jan Melloy. 'The more money going back to the producers, the better able they are to expand and develop their businesses and money is kept in the local economy. We know we have many fantastic food producers and makers in our

Heat pumps

Over 50 households requested a survey by British Gas to see if their home could qualify for an air source heat pump. Unfortunately, most homes were found unsuitable, due to high heat loss and lack of sufficient insulation.

Those houses that do get a heat pump installed will have their usage monitored via broadband by Durham University, which is doing the research on behalf of the government. At the end of the monitoring period Durham will issue a public report setting out their findings.

Charlestown allotments

Congratulations to Charlestown Allotments for getting a grant of £5k from Community Foundation for Calderdale.

For further information see www.charlestownallotments.co.uk

BEAT events

On 9 January 2013 BEAT held its first ever public meeting in Heptonstall at the Social and Bowling Club. The topic was 'Our food future – global vs local?' a talk and discussion led by Geoff Tansey. Fifty-six people attended the meeting and several of them said they would like more BEAT meetings in Heptonstall and Hebden Bridge.

On 13 February 2013 the meeting with Jonathan Atkinson from the Carbon Co-op in Manchester, Phil Knowles and Finn Jensen was cancelled due snow and ice. We plan to reorganise it for a future meeting.

On **9 March** at 11am we will be planting around 80 grafted fruit trees in our nursery at Frank and Maggs. Bring wellies and warm clothes. It will take about an hour to plant the trees.

On **13 March** we have a public meeting with Hugh Firman BSc (Hons) MSc MIEEM CEnv



speaking about bats. Hugh is part of the West Yorkshire Bat Group and a conservation officer at Calderdale

Council. We also have Sally Jones speaking about her work at Bradford Council to improve our air quality – see article elsewhere in this newsletter. This meeting will be held at 7.45pm at Blackshaw Head Methodist Church/the Chapel.

On **Sunday 24 March** at 11am we will be grafting fruit trees in Slack with Calderdale Local Orchard

Group (CLOG) for our community orchard. It will take place outdoor and is only for people who know how to graft.

On **Wednesday 10 April** Matt Bell will give a talk on local birds, Ashley Sharp will speak about BEAT and Mark Simmonds about Pennine Community Power. This meeting is at 7.45pm at Heptonstall Social & Bowling Club.

Saturday 20 April is our six-monthly village clean-up. Meet at the Chapel at 10.30am where you will be given a route and equipment. Refreshments will be served at the Chapel afterwards. Children are welcome at the village clean-up if supervised by an adult.

On **Saturday 27 April** Matt Bell will be leading a two and a half hour birdwatching walk for any interested adults, starting at 7.30am from the Newdy car park and finishing with breakfast at the Newdy for those who want it (breakfast £7.50pp - meat or vegetarian). If you would like to go on the walk please inform finn.jensen@rocketmail.com, saying whether you want breakfast, and which one.

On **Sunday 28 April** we have our first 'Visit your neighbour' event



where Susan and Dale Blundell let you visit

their log biomass heating system and thermal solar panels at their house, Davy Hall on Long Causeway, Blackshaw Head.



Chas Ball will be speaking at the meeting on **8 May**. Chas is Chief Executive of the Leeds based NGO Carplus, which promotes shared mobility, represents the interest of car clubs, and works with devolved governments, transport authorities and communities to promote the growth of the sector. He was the founder of Britain's first commercial car club, now called City Car Club, which he left five years ago. He was the Green Party parliamentary candidate for Colne Valley in the last general election and lives in Huddersfield.

The topic of Chas's talk is: 'Car clubs in Britain – a progress report'. How well have car clubs developed in British cities? Where are they working well in small towns? What is their role in reducing dependency on cars? How important will new developments like one-way car-sharing (car2go) and peer-to-peer car sharing (Whipcar) are in the next decade?

Kevin Hogan from Hour Car in Hebden Bridge (www.hourcar.org.uk) will also be speaking at this meeting. Hour Car has existed for eight years and now also has an electrical car.

This meeting will be held at the Chapel in Blackshaw Head.



Contact BEAT; Ashley Sharp (secretary)
Finn Jensen (treasurer)
Peter Bradley (chair)

tel: 07855 746295
tel: 01422 846863
tel: 07910 221098

email: secretary@blackshawbeat.info
email: treasurer@blackshawbeat.info
email: chair@blackshawbeat.com