



Registered Charity No. 1070744

FRIENDS OF RODLEY NATURE RESERVE NEWSLETTER

Summer/Autumn 2025



Norfolk Hawker

Photographed by John W Cooper

Rodley Nature Reserve Celebrates 25 Years

With Storm Floris forecast for the following day fingers were firmly crossed for the event planned for Sunday 3rd August to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the official opening of the Reserve by the then Minister of State for the Environment, the Rt. Hon. Michael Meacher MP. Marquees and strong winds don't go well together so it was a relief to get a pleasant sunny afternoon, albeit becoming increasingly breezy later in the day.



It was nice to see so many of our Friends Group members, volunteers and supporters there and a lot of memories were shared. A timeline with photographs going back to when work first started on the Reserve was on display in the marquee and this will be available for viewing in the Visitor Centre for the next few weeks. We must also say a big thank you to our volunteers for doing all the catering for this event.

As we said in the last Newsletter, we have been able to create something very special here and none of it would have been possible without the commitment and support of Yorkshire Water and of course the support of our volunteers, the Friends group and many individuals and organisations over the years.

Other Events

While the weather was kind for the 25th Anniversary event it was not so obliging for the Nature Quest day planned for Saturday 19th July and this had to be cancelled due to a weather warning for heavy rain. Our Bat Nights are always very popular and need to be booked in advance. The first two of these held on Saturday 26th July and 23rd August both enjoyed fine evenings with plenty of bats and other wildlife to hear and see. The final Bat Night scheduled for Saturday 20th September is already fully booked.

That leaves just two events still to come this year and both in October - the Fungus Foray on Sunday 19th and the Halloween Event on Sunday 26th, both of which require pre-booking. You can find more details on our website.

A New Dragonfly

A new record for the reserve is the Norfolk Hawker (*Aeshna isoceles*), probably better referred to as the Green-eyed Hawker. It has a brown body and green eyes, the latter distinguishing it from any other hawker found in Britain. A male was seen on 21st and 22nd June in the dragonfly pond area and, a week later, a female was observed ovipositing in the Bruce and Woodhead ponds in the vicinity of Water Soldier. The final record was on 7th July when a female was seen ovipositing in the Co-op pond. The larval stage lasts about two years so, in a couple of years, we should know if breeding has been successful.



Photograph by Andrew Thompson

The species is fairly common on the continent but, for many years, it was confined in England to a small region in Norfolk (hence the English name) where, interestingly, it is associated with the presence of Water Soldier. In recent years it has been expanding its range and has recently been observed as far west as Devon, and as far north as Blackpool in Lancashire and Thorn Moors and Spurn in Yorkshire. Although many of the records are almost certainly due to range expansion, others could be the result of migrants from the continent.

Peter Mill

Dragonfly Recorder

A Visitor from the Continent

On 17th August a group of 20+ Cormorants assembled on a tree on one of the islands on the Lagoon. A keen-eyed observer spotted that one of them had a coloured leg ring. The ring was red and had the number 9T on it. On further investigation the bird was found to have been ringed as a nestling along with two other young birds 9P and 9R in the Netherlands just two months earlier on 16th June.



Photograph taken on 28th July by
Sjek Venhuis

Towards the end of August a message was received from the observer monitoring the bird in the Netherlands to say there had been another sighting of this same bird on 28th July. This was at its nest coordination which means that it arrived here at Rodley no more than 20 days later.

Perhaps 9P and 9R have also headed this way? Please do report any ringed birds that you see on the Reserve if you can manage to read the ring number.

A photograph of some of the birds on the island on the Lagoon appears on the back cover. See if you can spot Red 9T on it.

Uniformed Group Visits in 2025



Gathering round the finds table

From May until Mid-July our beloved reserve shared its magic to seventeen visiting uniformed groups. Over 300 young people of varying rainbows, beavers, girl guides, cubs and scout troops enjoyed an evening at the reserve. The visiting groups came from across the city to learn more about the reserve and work towards their badges. With the help of a close team of volunteers the visitors were treated to pond dipping sessions, bird watching, and learnt how to build bug hotels and hibernacula.



A complete bug hotel



David explaining a hibernaculum

Uniformed groups this year were offered a range of activities to meet with the badges they were working towards; whether this was looking for froglets or understanding the range of feathered visitors to our wetlands. The magic of the reserve was shared with our young visitors through glimpses of the vixen and her cubs, the beautiful bright blue of a young kingfisher from the reedbed hide and the emergence of a female ghost moth spotted by one of the visitor's parents.



Finding froglets round the large dragonfly pond

Throughout sixteen glorious sunlit evenings and one monsoon-esque torrent-filled late afternoon, the visitors enjoyed all the activities that were on offer so much that some have already been back to visit on a weekend. The

pond dipping created the considerably memorable parts of most visits and students have been back over the following weekends for more.



Beth helping to identify pond life

On one of the evenings the young people were lucky to have Peter Mill on hand to show them the dragonfly ponds and offer a close-up of some of the damselflies, learning how to tell the difference between the dragonflies and damselflies and the markings of different species.

Another visiting group were able to take advantage of the visitor centre being open to see a heavily pregnant harvest mouse, itching to release her young, although the birth was not witnessed that evening. We had pond dipping to get on with!

Great thanks to the volunteers who gave up their time to make these opportunities possible for our visiting uniformed groups. Each visit has received fabulous feedback from the uniformed group leaders along with follow up emails and even a beautiful hand-crafted card.

If you would like to volunteer to help on the spring evening visits, please either ask at the Visitor Centre or email the below address.

events@rodleynaturereserve.org

Thom Lyne

Uniformed Visits Leader 2025

Discover More on Your Visit – with Our New QR Codes!

We're always looking for ways to make your visit to Rodley Nature Reserve even more enjoyable and we're excited to introduce something new – QR codes around the reserve!

Very soon you'll notice small QR code signs on posts at various locations, including the Dragonfly Ponds, the Manager's Garden, Sand Martin Bank and more. Simply scan the code with your smartphone's camera and you'll be taken to a page with interesting facts about the area you're standing in – whether it's the wildlife you might spot, the history of the site, or how we look after these special places.

There's even a handy link you can download straight to your phone with a map of the entire reserve, helping you plan your route and make sure you don't miss a thing.

How does it work? It's easy:

1. Open your phone's camera or QR scanning app.
2. Point it at the QR code.
3. Tap the link that appears – and enjoy!

We hope this new feature helps you get even closer to nature and learn more about the wonderful habitats and species we look after.

Happy exploring!

David Booth

RNR Education Volunteer

Dominic Writes to Sir David Attenborough



Sir David Frederick Attenborough was born on 8th May 1926 and this year turned 99. Dominic, one of our Rodley Robins, decided to write to Sir David to wish him a Happy Birthday. Here is what he wrote: -

Happy birthday, Sir David!

My name is Dominic, and I am 10 years old. I am writing to say that you are such an inspiration to me. So, I want to ask you two things:

- How can I help nature where I live?*
- Do you like my painting of a fox just like I saw this morning? This is my birthday gift to you.*

I have also sent you copies of some other paintings I have recently done for you to see. My sister and I are in a group at Rodley Nature Reserve, where we keep bees, pond dip and learn about nature. I think you would LOVE it there!

*Hope you have a happy birthday.
Dominic*

Dominic was super excited to receive this reply from Sir David!

*Dear Dominic Bean, Thank you very much indeed for your letter. I am so glad you enjoy my programmes.
Congratulations on your painting of a fox and birds.*

With best wishes

David Attenborough



Dominic's painting of a Fox

Denese Swann

Rodley Robins Leader

Work at the Gazebo



Seeing all the scaffolding around the gazebo recently visitors might have been wondering what was going on. The new roof will certainly look very different to the previous thatched roof. There will be more news about this in the next Newsletter.

Rodley Nature Reserve Contributes to The Summer Reading Challenge



The Summer Reading Challenge is an initiative developed by The Reading Agency in partnership with public libraries and funded by Arts Council England. Its purpose is to encourage children aged 4-12 years to read 6 books over the summer holidays. They are awarded stickers for reading books and taking part in activities at local libraries. Each year there is a theme and this year's theme is 'Story Garden', all about nature, gardens and wildlife.



Rodley Nature Reserve was approached by Bradford Libraries to contribute. Two of our Education Team volunteers, Sue Jackson and Julia Tanner, ran sessions at Eccleshill and Idle libraries. During these sessions children and their parents/carers learnt about the reserve, enjoyed the story 'A

Tiny Seed' by Eric Carle, and planted their own seeds in pots to take home and nurture. Both children and adults enjoyed the activities, and many said they planned to visit Rodley Nature Reserve over the summer.



2026 Calendar



Calendars are now available in the Visitor Centre. You can also order them by post. Prices start from £8.80 depending on the number of copies ordered. You can email us at the following address to arrange payment and delivery.

info@rodleynaturereserve.org



Cormorants including a ringed bird from the Netherlands on one of the islands on the Lagoon.

Photographed on August 17th by John W Cooper

Reserve Opening Times
Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday 9am - 5pm (4pm Nov – end Feb)
Visitor Centre Opening Times
Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday 10am - 4pm (3.30pm Nov- end Feb)

Telephone No. on open days 0113 2040441

For Rodley Nature Reserve Trust Matters:

Trust Secretary:

Peter Murphy
 Email: info@rodleynaturereserve.org

Visitor Centre Volunteers Coordinator:

Louise Staniland Email: Istaniland17@outlook.com

Friends Membership:

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Education Bookings:

Denese Swann
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Website: www.rodleynaturereserve.org