

Saw Mill Dam

The Saw Mill Dam (or Pond) is the largest body of standing water in the village. It was built in the early part of the nineteenth century to provide water power for Fentiman's textile mill. After the textile mill closed it became the village saw mill, owned by the Brears family. A blue plaque on the wall of a house on Saw Mill Lane marks the Brears connection. When the saw mill closed in the late 1990s the mill buildings were converted into private homes and the mill pond came into the common ownership of the residents.



At this time the pond was completely dry and has become overgrown by trees. One of the planning conditions for the conversion of the former mill buildings into homes was the restoration of the pond. Addingham Civic Society volunteers helped to clear the trees in 2004 to create the pond as it is today.

Whilst it is a popular place in the village and the surrounding trees provide a good wildlife habitat, the pond itself is in poor ecological condition. Water flow into the pond is unreliable as the culvert under the road becomes frequently blocked by shingle after high flow events in Town Beck. The trees around the pond are now too tall and prevent light reaching the pond surface and leaves from the trees are slow to decay causing poor oxygen conditions and the development of shoreline habitats. Most problematically the large number of ducks on the pond keep the water turbid disturbing the sediment as they feed further restricting light penetration into the water column and preventing the growth of submerged aquatic plants.



As it is likely that any attempt to control the duck population would be met by stiff opposition within the village there is little prospect of restoring the pond to good ecological status. However, it should be possible to improve water flow into and through the pond both to keep it well oxygenated and to stop it drying out. Without water inflow the pond will lose water quite rapidly, partly through evaporation but mainly by seepage through its bed.

The footpath follows the edge of the pond and along the goit towards Bolton Road. The goit is partly filled with silt brought down by water from Town Beck. Removing the silt from time to time is important to maintain water flow but the shingle in the culvert under Bolton Road causes the main blockage and is not easy for volunteers to remove. We are hoping Bradford Council will come to the rescue.