



Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke Newsletter Number Seventeen May 2005

Our Fourth Annual General Meeting held at the Six Bells Public House, Fulbourn, 7th April 2005

Present Committee: Sam Agnew, Chairman; Mike Albutt, Treasurer; Naomi Brookes, Green Belt Project Manager; Nigel Copeman; James Fisher, Devil's Dyke Project Manager; Julia Napier, Secretary; David Seilly, and 51 members of the society.

Apologies were received from Iain Webb, Green Belt Project Officer and Rob Mungovan, Ecology Officer, South Cambridgeshire Council.

Proceedings

Sam Agnew welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly summarised the achievements of the Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke. As members of the Roman Road Project Group and the Fleam Dyke Project Group, which is a round table meeting of all interested parties, we have contributed to Management Plans for both sites. The Friends have taken part in three work parties with an average of ten volunteers each time. Iain Webb has led walks on both sites. Several members have contributed records and observations of flora and fauna. In particular, Roger Lemon contributed a systematic survey of butterflies on Fleam Dyke and Jo Darlington has undertaken an extensive survey of insects on the Fleam Dyke. (See below)

In addition, the Committee were invited to a meeting with over 20 of the Roman Road land managers, and officers of a number of organisations including English Heritage, the County Council and English Nature. The meeting was organised by Donna Radley, Conservation Officer for English Nature, in this area. Miss Arabella Binney very kindly offered to hold the meeting in Pampisford Hall. The meeting was generally agreed to have been a very helpful way to discuss problems and agree on solutions, in particular the control of rabbits and the disposal of brash and grass mowings. The damage caused by off-road drivers, and the rubbish left by travellers were of particular concern to the landowners at the southern end of the Roman Road, as it has been to walkers and botanists who visit the site. It is hoped that we can work together with the County Council to find a remedy. All the landowners and land managers along the Roman Road have become Honorary Members of the Friends for a year, and this seems good moment to welcome them to the Society.

Through another initiative being led by Naomi Brookes, the Cambridge Green Belt Project Officer, and James Fisher, the Devil's Dyke Restoration Project Officer, an application is being prepared for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for funding to continue the work on our two sites and on the Devil's Dyke, and for the many other fragments of chalk grassland in this area. It is hoped that the money will go towards practical management of these precious grassland fragments, meeting the needs of wildlife, archaeology and informed public access.

Finally, Sam Agnew was able to produce a proof copy of the leaflet about the Roman Road, which is included with this newsletter. He thanked John Ady for all his initial work on the leaflet and hoped that everyone would be pleased with the range of information included and the beautiful artwork by Sarah Wroot. Our Lottery Heritage Initiative grant includes the cost of producing and printing 5,000 leaflets. They will be available from Tourist Offices, The Countryside Preservation Society at Wandlebury and other places where walkers can pick up a leaflet. A leaflet on the Fleam Dyke will follow next year, and information boards for both sites are in preparation.

Practical Work on the Sites

Naomi Brookes commented on the steady improvement in the quantity of flowers on both sides of the Roman Road from Copley Hill, near Wandlebury to Worsted Lodge as a result of regular mowing and raking. We have continued to use our Lottery Heritage Initiative grant to push back the scrub on the east side of the Roman Road, and to widen the path and verges through to the junction with the footpath from Hildersham to Gunner's Hall. Naomi thanked the Mid-Week Conservation Volunteers and the Friends' work parties for the contribution they have made during the last year. Large areas of the Fleam Dyke have been transformed by scrub clearance and continued mowing and raking. Much of the top of the bank is now clear, but there are also cleared areas all along the west facing side of the dyke which we hope will be gradually colonised by the chalk loving flowers which have survived on the top of the bank. The clearance of the ditch from the disused railway through to the Fulbourn end of the dyke completes the transformation.

The new Roman Road leaflet

Naomi thanked all the people who had helped with the production of this leaflet, in particular John Ady, Rob Mungovan, Stephen Macaulay, Julia Napier and most of all the artist and designer, Sarah Wroot, whose skill in editing this sort of material has been invaluable. (May I add the Committee's thanks to Naomi for all the work she has done producing this leaflet. Julia)

Accounts

In the briefest report on the accounts by any treasurer in recorded history, Mike Albutt summarised our funds as being The Big Money and the Small Money. The Big Money came from the Lottery Heritage Initiative grant, and had been spent as intended on practical conservation work and an insurance policy. The Small Money covered the office expenses of the Friends and a bill for some extra contract work, leaving a small deficit. The meeting voted that the accounts should be accepted. On behalf of the Friends, Mike thanked Roger Clarke for very kindly auditing our accounts again this year. It has subsequently turned out that the Wildlife Trust Office was holding £300 from English Nature to cover this extra contract. The Small Money balance at 31st December 2004 should therefore have been £205. The Chairman thanked the audience for coming to the AGM in such good numbers and Sheila Roberts proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for their work.

Re-election of Officers

It will be no surprise to anyone that all the officers were re-elected unanimously, but we do wish to stress that the committee is not a closed circle. It was agreed that our subscription should remain at £5 per household per year, with £10 for Corporate Membership. We want to make it possible for anyone to join, because our long list of members proves to the officers of the Lottery, and other grant giving bodies, that there are many people in this area who love these green ways and want to see them maintained and improved. Julia's appeal for a Membership Secretary was answered by Jane Robson, and also by John Moore, who offered to write a programme for us. The idea of pressing a button and seeing at a glance who has not yet paid their subscription is very appealing, and we could not have dreamed of paying an IT expert for such a package.

Membership Secretary

In future, therefore, subscriptions should be sent to

Dr Jane Robson, Herring's House, Wilbraham Road, Fulbourn, CB1 5ED
Telephone: 01223 213152 email: jane@herringshouse.co.uk

Please make cheques payable to The Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke. We are always pleased to see your money in coin of the realm, but it is a bit easier to process if it is in the form of a cheque



*The first offer, from Jane Robson, had just been gratefully accepted, when Primrose Weyman offered her help. This was particularly noble as she had been up all night looking for her dog, which had run away while on the Roman Road. We were sorry to hear that it was later found dead on the A11.

**FRIENDS OF THE ROMAN ROAD AND FLEAM DYKE
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2004**

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2004					2003
	General fund £	Restricted funds			Total £	Total £
		Awards for All £	LHI £	Total £		
Income						
Subscriptions received	1110			1110		860
Donations	37			37		77
Local heritage Initiative grant						12,250
Awards for All grant						
	<u>1,147</u>	<u>-</u>		<u>1,147</u>		<u>13,187</u>
Expenditure						
Contractors	300		4,000	4,300		5,353
Insurance			231	231		238
Photocopying	424			424		222
Postage and stationery	395			395		309
Photography	76			76		44
Room Hire						50
Miscellaneous	47			47		50
	<u>1,242</u>		<u>4,231</u>	<u>5,473</u>		<u>6,266</u>
Surplus of expenditure over Income for the year	95		<u>4,231</u>	4326		
Surplus of income over expenditure for the year	<u><u> </u></u>					<u><u>6,921</u></u>

BALANCE SHEET

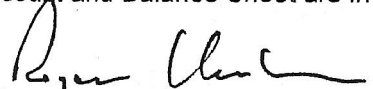
	31.12.04				31.12.03
	General fund £	Restricted funds			Total £
		Awards for All £	LHI £	Total £	
Current assets					
Cash at bank	301	-	7,781	8,082	12,408
Funds					
Balance at beginning of year	396		12,012	12,408	5,487
Surplus of expenditure over income (in 2003 income over expenditure) for the year	-95		-4,231	-4,326	6,921
Balance at end of year	<u>301</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,781</u>	<u>8,082</u>	<u>12,408</u>

Notes:

1. The Local heritage Initiative (LHI) grant is held in separate funds for expenditure on specialist contractor and volunteer expenses in respect of conservation work on the Fleam Dyke and Roman Road respectively.
2. The above balances of funds are held in an account in the name of the Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke at the National Westminster Bank Plc, King's Parade Branch, Cambridge, which moved in April 2005 to 12 Market Hill, Cambridge.


Michael Albutt, Treasurer

I have had access to the Friend's accounting records and confirm that the above Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet are in accordance therewith


Roger Clarke, Chartered Accountant

Date: 7.4.05

The Cambridge Preservation Society – A Brief Overview in 2005 by Carolyn Göhler, Chief Executive Officer

The Cambridge Preservation Society (CPS) was established in 1928 by 'town and gown' as a not-for-profit charity "to foster public opinion towards the preservation of the beauties of Cambridge and its neighbourhood, and to co-operate with the local authorities and others for this purpose", to prevent ribbon development and to promote a "properly thought out and co-ordinated regional planning scheme". Early successes included the acquisition of farmland to the west of Cambridge at Coton in the 1930's, the purchase of restrictive covenants to 'sterilise' Madingley Hill and to protect Grantchester Meadows from development and the involvement in the statutory planning process (e.g. 1934 Cambridgeshire Regional Planning Report, 1950 Holford Report of Cambridge). This helped the City Council to establish a Green Belt designation around the City and early on ensured some regular income through property management.

In 1954, Wandlebury was acquired by the Society and eventually became the City's first country park. Today the park is managed for wildlife and recreation and the park land is a much loved local resource. Many schools arrange educational visits guided by the CPS field teachers and use Wandlebury's education centre. Other CPS properties regularly open to the public are the post-mill in Bourn, one of the oldest surviving mills in the country, and the water mill in Hinxton, both of which still have very complete mill machinery and are also gems in the Cambridgeshire countryside. In the City, the Society together with its Friends Group, manages the Leper Chapel. This austere Romanesque (Norman) building is well suited for story telling, arts exhibitions and theatre plays. It remains a consecrated church, where services are held regularly, and since last year it has hosted the famous Stourbridge Fair – albeit on a much smaller scale than in the middle ages.

Where the Society can, it comments on larger development proposals and plans.

The Society's planning campaign, "Vision of Cambridge", includes

- the protection and enhancement of the special character and amenities of Cambridge,
- the support of the Cambridge Green Belt, while recognising that the sub-region must grow to accommodate the need for housing by creating new settlements and by securing agreement that if development is to take in greenfield sites it should be on condition of a more than compensating environmental gain.
- a more sustainable pattern of development (e.g. less reliance on the private car, improved public transport, higher development densities and use of brownfield sites – without harming existing residential amenities),
- recognition that investment is needed to meet the 'infrastructure deficit' (e.g. transport, open space)
- the need for more energy efficient buildings, more green corridors and spaces,
- the protection of the green corridors (Cam Valley, Hobson's Conduit, Coton Corridor etc) and existing green areas (parks, nature reserves, allotments etc) and securing good green space provisions for the new urban extensions.

Where possible the Society also endeavours to provide new open green space. The Coton Countryside Reserve is a good example of this.

The Coton Countryside Reserve

The 120 hectare Reserve (420 acres) is being created at St Catherine's Hall farm, south of the village. While it will continue to be a working farm, the site will also become a public amenity and a reserve for nature. The land is owned by the CPS, who have recently been awarded funds for developing the reserve from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, under the programme called 'Creating Sustainable Communities' programme. The farm has also entered into DEFRA's Countryside Stewardship Agreement, which supports farming practices that benefit wildlife. South Cambridgeshire District Council has given a grant for the filling of gaps in hedges and tree planting. In addition the volunteer programme has been funded by the University of Cambridge 'Active Community Fund', employing Naomi Brookes as a part-time volunteer manager. If you are interested in participating in the various survey and practical events or walks, please check the contacts below for more details – look out for the big Woodland Planting volunteer event in late November 2005!

Within less than one year, over 750 metres of hedge has been planted, with gaps in existing hedges being filled. 3,300 woodland trees have been planted by volunteers, CPS rangers and contractors. In total, over

650 valuable volunteer hours have been donated. Many fences and gates have been installed and the rangers together with volunteers have built the first 4.5 metre-span timber bridge. At present we are seeding the new permissive footpath network and the new bridleway. By next spring we plan to complete more essential boundary work, to make infrastructure improvements (including new cycle route and signage) and to create more habitats.

In addition, we have recently submitted a project bid to improve off road public access to the Magog Hills – in particular we hope to provide the missing footpath links from the southern side of the City (i.e. west of Haverhill Road to Magog Down and from Beechwood LNR to the Roman Road) and although there may be some difficult negotiations ahead, we are hoping for success.

Perhaps we will see you soon – in June during the City's Environment Week at the Coton Countryside Reserve or at Wandlebury Country Park or in autumn the Stourbridge Fair at the Leper Chapel, or at any of the other varied CPS activities and events being organised throughout the year!

For general CPS events and opening times please refer to: www.cpswandlebury.org/page9.html

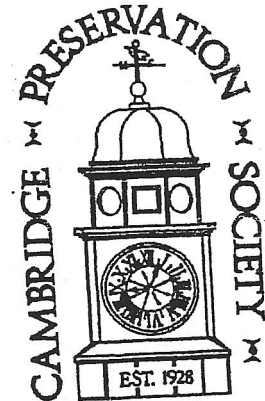
For background on the Coton Countryside Reserve please check: www.cpswandlebury.org/page13.html

and for volunteering information <http://www.greenbeltproject.org.uk/coton.html>.

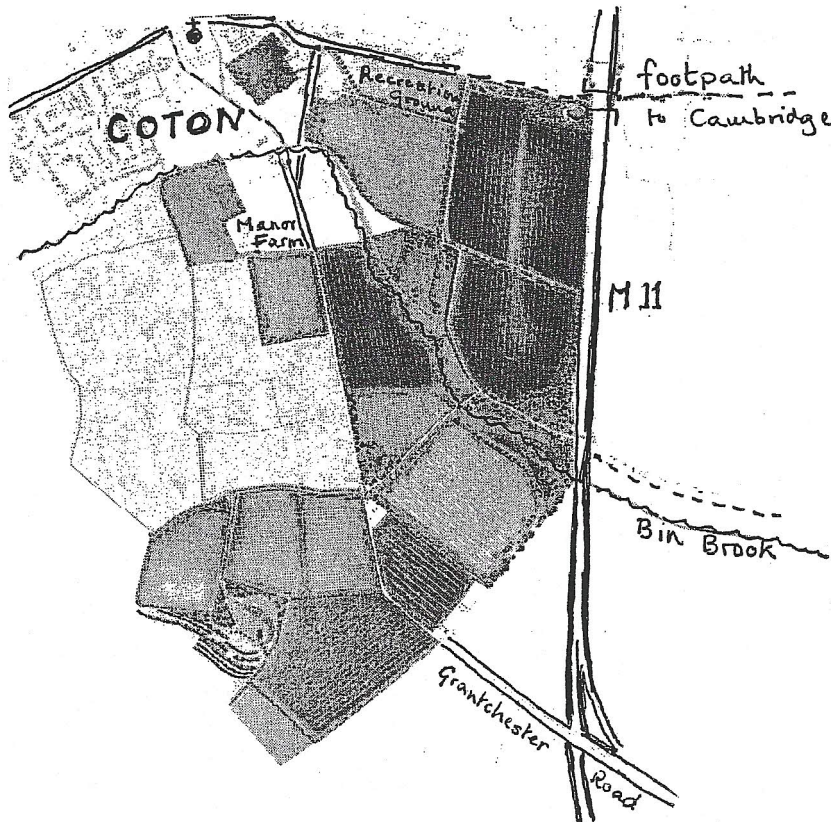
NB. If you have no access to a computer terminal – we have information and leaflets available at Wandlebury (i.e. in the office foyer at the stable block).

25 May 2005

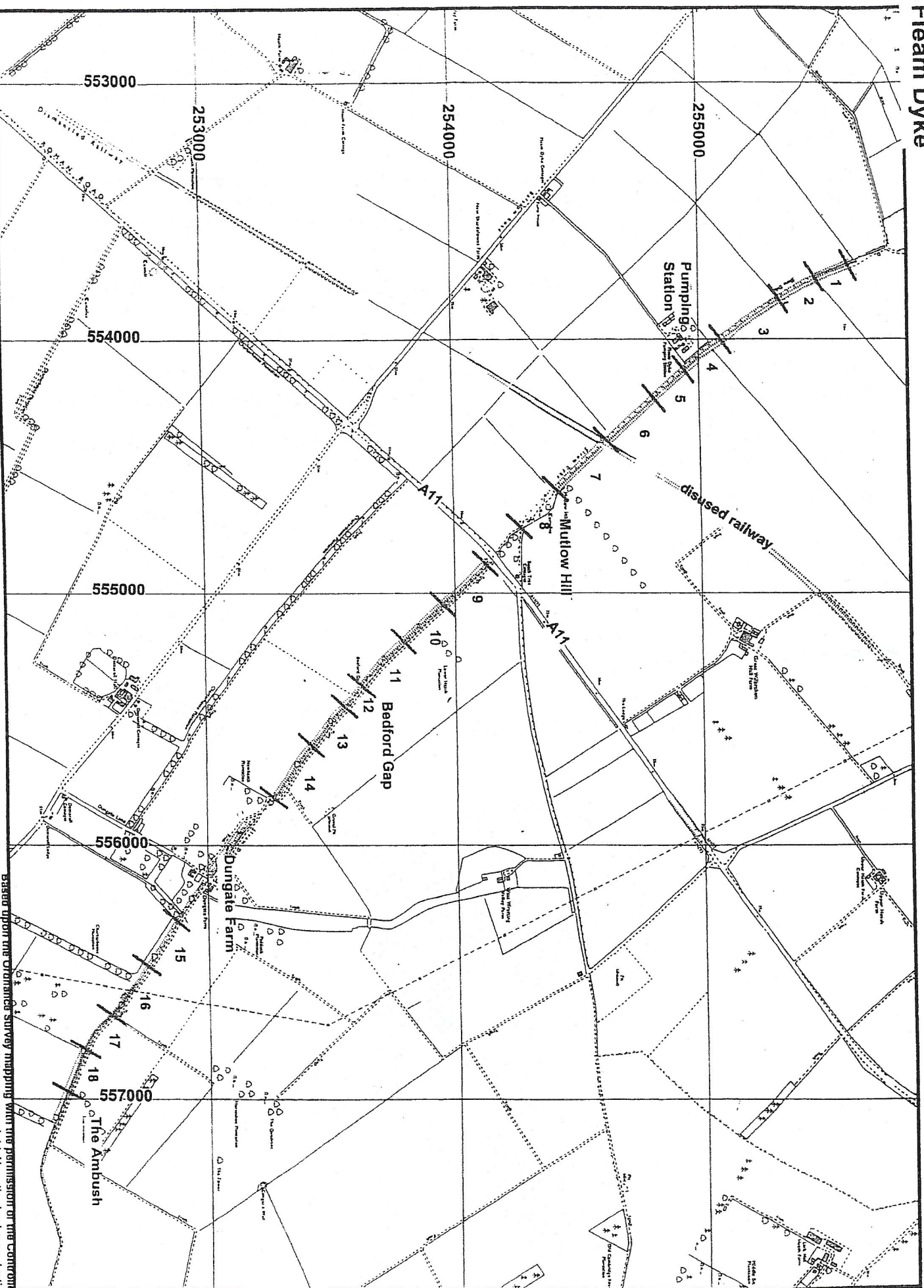
Cambridge Preservation Society
Wandlebury Ring, Gog Magog Hills, Babraham Cambridge CB2 4AE
Tel: 01223-243830 Fax: 01223-413344 (new number)
e-mail - Coton Reserve related: coton@cpswandlebury.org
e-mail - Society related: ceo@cpswandlebury.org
web page: www.cpswandlebury.org



The Coton Countryside Reserve



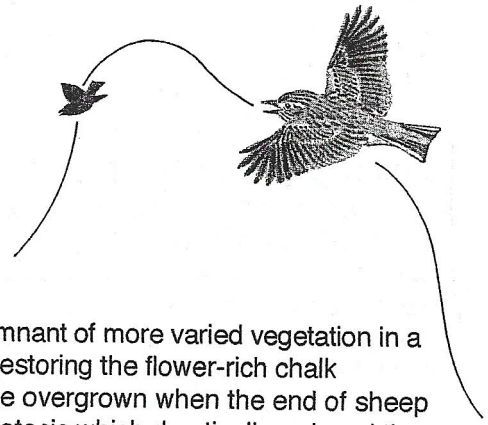
Fleam Dyke



Scale: 1:20000
Plot Date: 20/2/2002
Plot: Middle Trent

Based upon the Ordnance Survey map showing the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

Serenaded by Skylarks by Dr Jo Darlington, Entomologist



Fleam Dyke is of interest as an ancient monument, and also as a tiny remnant of more varied vegetation in a landscape of arable farming. Current management is directed towards restoring the flower-rich chalk grassland that formerly dominated the earthwork. The structure became overgrown when the end of sheep grazing in the 1940's was followed by the notorious epidemic of myxomatosis which drastically reduced the rabbit population in the 1950s. Rabbit numbers subsequently recovered, but by then the bushes were too well established to be controlled by rabbit grazing. Recent management has involved clearance of bushes followed by repeated mowing and raking of the regrowth. In 2003 for the first time sheep grazing was tried as a management technique, but it is not easy to get sheep onto the site just when they are needed, and off the site when they have grazed it enough.

Plants are important features in the environment of animals, providing them with food and shelter. Large mammals, birds and reptiles are commonly surveyed, but the much more numerous, diverse and ecologically important invertebrates tend to be ignored. So it seemed a good idea to survey the insects and other invertebrates, to see how they are being affected by management already carried out, and in progress. With this aim, I embarked upon a simple survey of the central part of the dyke, from the old railway to just south of Bedford Gap (see map), over the course of one year, from March of 2003 through to the spring of 2004. This would then provide a baseline for more focussed observations on topics of particular interest in later years. The full data will not be available for some time, but meanwhile here are some general observations made during my year of regular visits to the dyke.

Rabbits are fairly active along the whole length of the dyke. Hares were seen occasionally in the fields on both sides of the dyke. Mole-hills are locally common. My fondest memories are of skylarks singing enthusiastically all day long. The wide headlands and set-aside in the fields alongside the dyke near Mutlow Hill seemed particularly favoured. Even in winter the larks often gave a few little twitters to show they were still present. Small groups of partridges were seen on the dyke and in the fields alongside. Pheasants were often about and several nests were seen. (There is a pheasant rearing pen to the south of Bedford Gap.) A pair of sparrow hawks reared at least two young, apparently in the row of tall trees to the north of Mutlow Hill. This is probably why rather few small birds were seen in that area. A yellowhammer sang in the hedge on the south west side of Section 7 all through the spring and summer. On the south side of the A 11 a corn bunting sang right through the season in the tall ash tree in Section 10. It reappeared in the spring of 2004; but soon vanished. In winter, flocks of goldfinches were seen flying in this area, following the line of the dyke.

The Invertebrate Survey

The main survey consisted of a series of water traps set at fixed points along the top of the bank. The catching period was a minimum of four hours, two before noon and two after (i.e. 10 am to 2 pm in winter, and 11 am to 3 pm during British Summer Time). On sampling days I was usually on the Dyke from 8 am to 6 pm. The traps consisted of small polystyrene dishes containing water with a dash of detergent. These simple traps mainly catch flying insects that touch the water surface and drown, although some running and climbing forms are also caught. The water was only a few millimeters deep, so most large insects, such as bumblebees and grasshoppers, could easily escape. Insects are most active when it is sunny, warm and not too windy. The actual sampling date was chosen by reference to the BBC five-day weather forecast. Dates were approximately three weeks apart in summer, five weeks in winter. In high summer the catches were large and took so long to process that the dyke had to be sampled on two successive days, first the section to the North of the A 11 and then the section to the south. On these occasions some pitfall traps were put out on the first day and emptied on the second, collecting mainly nocturnal animals including ground beetles and woodlice. The four hours while the traps were catching were spent making observations of plants, and general collecting using a butterfly net for flying insects and a sweep-net for insects on vegetation. Between 28th March 2003 and 17th April 2004, I made 14 complete samples involving 21 days in the field. Two further samples on 22nd May and 16th June 2004 were of the north section only.

Description of the North Part

I have adopted the numbering system used on the map above. In Section 7 there is a short grass turf along the top of the bank, with taller grass on the slopes and more herbs in the bottom of the ditch. The grassland fauna included many grass-mimics among the bugs and spiders. A distinctive little bug with a flanged head *Eupelix cuspidata* (Cicadellidae) was active right through the summer. A population of grasshoppers built up through the summer, and also the decorative little jumping spider *Heliophanus flavipes*. There were many minor habitats such as the rather neglected hedges, and patches of bramble, elder and wild rose, each with a variety of associated insects. Small scrapes of compacted chalky soil along the path, and especially on steep slopes beside the steps, were found to be associated with halictine bees, tiny solitary bees that build tunnels and provision them with pollen and nectar.

The southern end was subdivided into 7a and 7b. In 7a the south west facing slope had been cleared of bushes during the previous winter and was initially mostly bare soil. It was colonised by ground ivy that flowered prolifically in March 2003 and provided a popular early nectar source for queen bumblebees and butterflies that overwinter as adults. The area was then taken over by a lush stand of garlic mustard that was in full flower in April, and supported a positive explosion of insect life, notably several species of bionid flies. Later in the season nettles, thistles and burdock grew up, with a rather less exuberant fauna. By the following year the perennial ground cover had increased, and neither ground ivy nor garlic mustard was particularly common. The NE face of 7a has not been cleared of the dense stand of bushes, including hawthorn, blackthorn, buckthorn and privet, which provide welcome shelter from the wind and also harbour their own fauna, including numerous green hairstreak butterflies and a little moth with enormously long antennae called *Adela croesella* (Incurvaridae) seen on 25th May 2004.

Section 7b was a short shady stretch of uncleared bushes where the bank slopes down to the levelled Section 8. There is a large bramble patch that is particularly popular with bees and flies when in flower. Section 8, Mutlow Hill, is an open area, mostly covered with tussocky grass and creeping bryony, rising to a large neolithic barrow. Heroic efforts by the Green Belt Project officers with the Mid-week Conservation Volunteers have reduced the invasive bryony, and there has been a return of the former chalk grassland flora. There are no sheltering hedges and the wind often feels cold, but the view is impressive. The insect fauna is different from that of the grassland of Section 7. There is a huge old beech tree at the foot of the barrow, which attracts shade-loving species when it is in leaf. Beyond the fence is a section which I have called the Woodland Triangle, or just Triangle for short. The dyke has been more or less levelled and is overgrown with bushes and some quite tall trees. A lot of birds live here including chiffchaffs that overwinter, and redwing as winter visitors. The ground cover is mostly ivy and rather dull. The path is hemmed in on both sides by bushes, and so is favoured by species that like shelter and shade, particularly hoverflies and muscid flies that can be seen in large numbers almost all year round, and must provide a useful food resource for birds, bats and carnivorous invertebrates.

Description of the South Part

After crossing the A 11 the first short section of Dyke is densely bushed and is continuous with the well-maintained hedges set back from the road and running alongside it in both directions. This may be why this area is faunistically very rich, as the hedge line probably acts as a corridor for migrating insects. On each side of it there is a small hedged triangle in which small junipers have been planted, of which more anon. It is also the only area where I have seen whitethroats. Beyond the new sheep fence the three sections 9, 10 and 11 are almost cleared of woody plants and have no hedges. This is my least favourite area, as in anything less than a heat wave it feels like crossing the Arctic tundra in a gale. Apart from the bitter wind, this naked section of the dyke is exposed to spray drift from the arable fields on both sides. The south west side is particularly at risk because even in windless weather the spray will flow down into the ditch. A hedge or scrub bank on this side would be especially welcome, and would help to diversify the impoverished insect fauna. The grassy vegetation is broadly similar to Section 7, but the fauna is substantially different. There is heavy deposition of worm casts after rain in this area but not in Section 7, and many of the "grassland" insects of Section 7 were not found here. The first part of Section 9 was the most recently cleared and had many tall flowering herbs among the grass, notably wild parsnip and hawkweeds. The middle part has well-established grass. The badger set on the west face of the bank in Section 11 expanded rapidly during the summer and broke through onto the east face. The soil thrown out by the badgers has been colonised by many weed species. The nine remaining junipers in Section 11 are the last remnants of what used to be a considerable stand.

These are the only examples left in East Anglia of the Northern Juniper, *Juniperus communis*, and one of the main aims of the clearance work in this section has been to ensure their survival. Scrub clearance organised by English Nature and the Green Belt Project was rewarded in 2001 and 2002 by the first seedlings seen on the Dyke in fifty years. The introduction of sheep grazing made it necessary to protect the bushes with individual rabbit-proof fences. In 1977 a survey of insects found many interesting species associated with the juniper bushes. I had hoped that some of them might still be around, but if so they seem to have eluded me. Perhaps the two little triangles of juniper cuttings, now growing strongly, will attract these insects back as they grow bigger.

The south east end of Section 11 (beyond the badger den) is more diverse because some wild crab-apple trees have been left standing on the north east face of the dyke, and elder and privet also grow there. There is a large rabbit warren under the bushes. The steep slope down to the Bedford Gap has bare soil scrapes, which attract the little halictine bees seen in Section 7. (The Bedford Gap was cut to enable the Duke of Bedford's best horse, Excel, to gallop flat out across the heath.) Section 12 includes Bedford Gap and the slopes leading down to it from the dyke on both sides, and also the slope into the ditch on the north side. This is quite a useful division, as it is a particularly diverse area for plants and for insects. The presence of minor habitats in the form of trees, bushes, herbs, nettle beds and soil scrapes no doubt accounts for much of it, but it may also be that the break in the dyke tends to concentrate insect movements. Section 13 has not been cleared of bushes, except in a narrow belt along the footpath. This section can act as a control, showing what the flora and fauna was like on other parts of the dyke before clearance. Only a few invertebrate groups have as yet been identified. The following notes are only a very preliminary interpretation.

Bumblebees

Overwintering queens emerge in early spring. In March 2003 many queens of *Bombus terrestris*, *B. lapidarius* and the smaller *B. pascuorum* were seen taking nectar from early flowers. By the end of May, the tiny workers of the first brood were nectaring alongside their huge queens. From June onwards the work was increasingly delegated to the larger late-brood workers, although the queens occasionally foraged right through the summer. The hover-fly, *Volucella bombylans* (Syrphidae), mimics the workers of both the large species (presumably for defence) having two distinct colour patterns. The brown, furry bee-fly, *Bombylius major* (Bombyliidae), was common in spring, but is too small to be mistaken for a bumblebee. Their larvae attack the grubs of solitary bees and wasps that live underground.

Ants

The commonest ant is probably the yellow meadow ant, *Lasius flavus*, which builds small grass-covered mounds on all the grassy parts of the dyke. This species was never caught in water traps. All along the dyke, but especially in the northern part, the red spiny ant, *Myrmica ruginodis*, was caught regularly through the summer. *Lasius spp.* were frequent in all areas of permanent grass. A very small species, *Leptothorax acervorum*, was caught only once on 28th May in Section 8.

Beetles

I am working my way through the beetles at the moment. So far we have identified twelve species of ground beetles (Carabidae) and eight species of ladybirds (Coccinellidae) but none of them were common. (Notice the royal "we" - I take any help offered!) My samples revealed the striking winter migrations of the tiny black and white striped flea beetle, *Longitarsus dorsalis* (Chrysomellidae). Most other beetles were active in the summer. Common species include the bright orange soldier beetles, *Cantharis rustica* (Cantharidae), also known as bonking beetles, for obvious reasons, and a slim, dapper little black beetle, *Oedemera lurida* (Oedemeridae). Occasionally I found its spectacular relative, *Oedemera nobilis*, which looks as if it had been made by a master jeweller from some precious silvery metal with a subtle green caste. Another occasional capture was the wasp-mimic, *Clytus arietis* (Cerambycidae). An unexpected find was a tiny brown beetle, *Aridius bifasciatus* (Lathrydiidae) of which a few were caught in each survey in the early part of the year. It is a recent, accidental introduction from New Zealand that has spread widely in the UK. It feeds on fungal spores, and seems to be quite inoffensive.

Spiders

Water traps are not intended to catch spiders, but it soon became apparent that some spiders have suicidal tendencies. By good fortune we have a spider enthusiast in the Zoology Museum, Ray Symonds, who has most kindly taken on the task of identifying them. The provisional species list consists of 39 species in 13 families. One species, *Sydera gracilis* (Linyphiidae) is nationally scarce, known from only about 20 localities in the UK. Another species, the purse-web spider, *Atypus affinis* (Atypidae), is only the second record for the county, the previous one being from Devil's Dyke (Bristowe 1928). This spider prefers south-facing slopes with unshaded low vegetation, so the grassy banks are ideal for them. The mass migration of adult wolf spiders seen in the spring included five species of *Pardosa* (Lycosidae). In the summer many other species of spiders appeared, notably a beautiful little jumping spider, black all over but with white legs, called *Heliophanus flavipes* (Salticidae) which was abundant in the grassland of Sector 7 in August and September, but was absent from grassland south of the A 11. The only comparable list of spiders from the Fleam Dyke is in Bristowe (1928). The list has 27 species, but only 9 of them are common to the two lists. So there may yet be many other species to find.



Good News of Green Hairstreak Butterflies by Julia Napier and Roger Lemon

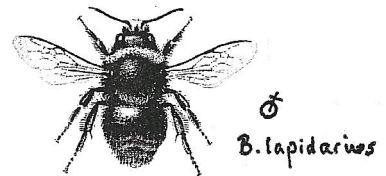
Now is the time to see these pretty insects, and I am very glad to say that they are present in slightly larger numbers than usual on the Fleam Dyke, and have been seen on the Roman Road for the first time this year. Last year, Iain Webb saw one on the Gog Magog Golf Course and this spring one was seen on bushes at about shoulder height near the junction of the Roman Road and the path to Lodge Farm and Babraham Road. This is the only record we have of the green hairstreak on the Roman Road. If any reader knows of earlier records, please let me know.

On the Fleam Dyke, green hairstreaks were usually to be seen on or around the buckthorn trees in Section 7, just after Mutlow Hill, opposite the big yew tree in the ditch; flying and egg laying on the rock roses along the bank in that Section; or basking and nectaring on the hawthorn and privet bushes near the steps north of the disused railway where there is a bank partly covered by rock roses. Last year, however, I saw one flying from the Pumping Station towards the disused railway, and other observers reported seeing them near the Pumping Station. There is only one rock rose plant in that area, and it has not yet had one stem of flowers, so the green hairstreak caterpillars there must have been using one of their many other food plants such as purging buckthorn and bramble. I asked Roger Lemon if he would have a good look this year, and this is what he found.

Yesterday morning (Wed. 18th May) I walked along Fleam Dyke from the Fulbourn end. Despite the rather low temperature and some cloud cover there were plenty of butterflies to be seen when the sun appeared. Having reached Mutlow Hill without seeing any green hairstreaks, however, I wandered around for about half an hour and finally saw one flying from the buckthorn bushes in Section 7 quite near the large yew tree.

Walking back towards Fulbourn, there were none to be seen between the old railway and the pumping station, where I saw them last year but several sections of scrub have been cleared in that area. However, several hundred metres further along at National Grid Reference TL 538 554 in Section 2, I spotted one feeding on hawthorn blossom. I searched in more detail in the immediate area and spotted one resting on grass near ground level, then 2 more in flight. Over a period of about 15 minutes I made 6 sightings but can only guarantee having seen 4 separate individuals. I didn't see any egg laying. There are no rock roses in that area and quite dense scrub on both sides of the bank so they might well be feeding on buckthorn or another shrub species. To sum up, they do seem to be hanging on in small numbers, and like the scrubby areas. In my view it would be a great shame if the whole bank was cleared. Surely there has to be a compromise here. Other butterflies seen were brimstones, orange tips, green-veined whites, holly blues, a single comma and peacock and one small heath, again in Section 7.

So, the message is: Do go and have a look for yourselves. With their brown upper wings, and bright green underwings, they are unmistakable. Look for a little butterfly, flying quite fast, with a brownish green appearance. Try to see where it settles. It will fold its wings, turn sideways and vanish! The camouflage is perfect.



Events and Activities June - August 2005

Saturday 4th June, 9.0am - 10.0am

Lots of Beautiful Moths on the Devil's Dyke

John Dawson, the Cambridge Vice-County Moth Recorder will be there to display and talk about the moths which came to his moth traps during the night. (They are then released.) Last year he identified 104 species, including the rare Lunar Yellow Underwing.

Meet at the July Racecourse Car Park, Newmarket. TL 619 614

Sunday 5th June, 2.30 pm

Guided walk round Lime Kiln Close and West Pit Nature Reserves on Lime Kiln Hill, Cambridge. Lead by David Seilly, the Voluntary Warden and Charles Turner, an expert botanist. Meet at the junction of Queen Edith's Road and Fulbourn Road, opposite the Robin Hood.

Saturday and Sunday 18th and 19th June, 11.0am - 4.0 pm

The Natural History Society of Cambridge Annual Public Exhibition will be held in the **Elementary Laboratory of CU Zoology Department, Downing Street, Cambridge**

There will be displays about research done in the Zoology Department and representatives of many wildlife groups. Local enthusiasts will be there to arouse your interest in bats, bees, dragonflies, newts and toads, mushrooms, etc. St Ivo's School from St Ives bring a remarkable menagerie of snakes, skinks, hamsters and assorted outsize tropical insects. Entrance is free. Tea and home-made biscuits are a speciality.

Thursday 23rd June, 6.30 pm

Guided Walk at Paradise Local Nature Reserve, lead by Christine Newell, the Voluntary Warden of this riverside site. Meet at the Lammas Land Car Park, near the paddling pool.

Sunday 26th June

Visit to the Great Fen Project which will link and greatly extend Holm Fen and Wood Walton Fen. Led by Chris Gerrard, the Project Manager. Contact Glynis & Peter Pilbeam 01954 251544

Sunday 10th July, 2.0pm

Butterfly Afternoon at Over County Wildlife Site

One of the best butterfly sites in Cambridgeshire will be destroyed if the Guided Bus is built. Make sure you see this site in July or August. On a sunny day, there will be at least 15 species of butterfly on the wing, including in early July, the beautiful Marbled White. Trevor Grange and Peter Moule, the Voluntary Wardens, will be at Over Windmill Bridge on the Over -Long Stanton Road to meet you and help you identify species. Park on the verge before you reach the windmill, and **watch out for traffic**.

Sat 23rd July 10.30 - 5.0 and Sun 24th July 10.30 - 4.30

Garden Show at Notcutts Garden Centre, Horningsea

There will be a marquee devoted to wildlife conservation and specialist plant societies, with displays about bees, butterflies and moths, bugs, falcons, newts and toads, and reptiles. Entrance free. Cafeteria etc.

Last but not Least

Do go and see the flowers. Go soon and see the new abundance of bright yellow horseshoe vetch and blue and purple milkwort on Section 7, near Mutlow Hill. The rock roses are coming into flower both there and on the Roman Road, especially from Copley Hill to Worsted Lodge. In a week or two the wild thyme will be in flower in Sections 7, 9, 10 and 11. If you have never seen dropwort, look for it in June and July in Sections 9, 10 and 11 and along the Roman Road, especially a few hundred yards south of Worsted Lodge. Later, the feathery yellow lady's bedstraw will give a golden sheen to all the areas mown and raked by the Green Belt Project since the early 1990's, but watch how it is spreading back on the newly cleared areas of the Roman Road and the Fleam Dyke, along with the purple knapweeds. And after that go and see for yourselves!

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