



Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke Newsletter Number Eighteen and Nineteen August and November 2005

A Note of Explanation,

These two newsletters are dedicated to anyone who feels the usual issue is too long. You have read Bill Bryson's 'A Short History of Nearly Everything'? You remember the Radio 4 mini-sagas? You have been to see the Reduced Shakespeare Company? Of course. So here are your two quarterly newsletters combined on one sheet of A4, because

At the AGM in April, several kind members told me that I was working too hard. Did we really need four newsletters? Dangerous advice. In late July and August, the sun shone and the butterflies beckoned. I avoided my desk. It had been suggested that I should assemble previous articles about the Roman Road into a booklet. Good idea. Not hard to do once the clouds blew up. But the clouds did not blow up, much, and then when I looked at my back-up disc for all the past copies of the newsletter, I found that my back-up system did not do what I had thought it did, and I only had the three most recent newsletters in electronic form. So after the usual wailing and gnashing of teeth, I realised that There Was No Alternative to photocopying the originals, reassembling them with scissors and paste, retyping here, whitepake-ing there, and I was nearly finished when

Mike Albutt, our Treasurer, Founder and Managing Director of Cambridge Electronic Design, suggested gently that it might look much nicer if it was all done electronically, perhaps with some coloured pages. He could 'capture' text, and improve the pictures.... Unfortunately, I work on a Mac and my rough-and-ready production methods were not appreciated by the sort of equipment which can read and reproduce text. So it has taken far too much of his time, but finally here at last, as in Not-the-Nine-o'clock-News, is your very own copy of Not-So-Much-a-Newsletter, More-a-whole-Booklet. (For younger readers, that is a reference to a very successful TV satire show made in the days when all the world was young and David Frost was nobbut a lad.) If you would like to buy another copy, please send an **A4 envelope, addressed and stamped with a 47p stamp, and a cheque for £1 75p or five x 35p stamps.**

Our membership has grown steadily every year, and has just reached 300! The Committee join me in thanking you for your support, and sending you our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Julia Napier

Conservation Work on the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke, 2005

by Naomi Brookes, Green Belt Project Manager

This has been a busy year with some exciting developments for both the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke. I summarise these below but would just like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have helped with our work this year.

The Roman Road

Last winter we concentrated on clearing scrub from Worsted Lodge to the Balsham – Hildersham Road section of the Roman Road. This continued the Local Heritage Initiative work started in 2002. During the summer, we cut stretches of the better grassland along this section to use as green hay on these recently cleared areas. This method of seeding has worked well on other sites, so we hope that this will encourage some of the more interesting grasses and plants to become established in these places. Other work has inevitably focused on maintaining the existing grassland through some small scale scrub removal, grass cutting and raking, primarily by the Mid-week Conservation Volunteers of the Cambridge Green Belt Project. This year has also seen us working hard to develop a better and closer working relationship with the



landowners and occupiers along the length of the Roman Road. In 2002, English Nature set up a series of round table meetings involving all the different groups which had an interest in the Roman Road in order to devise a Management Plan for the site. This year, together with English Nature and other members of the Management Plan Steering Group, we have been working with the owners and occupiers of the land all along the Roman Road to develop management aims for the site, which they can then work with us to achieve.

Fleam Dyke

During last winter, as you may have noticed, we arranged for quite large areas of scrub to be removed from the slopes of the Dyke between Fulbourn and the dismantled railway last winter. These have really opened up the Dyke and allowed its profile to be seen at last. This autumn, the grass and new growth along this section will be cut in order to control the more vigorous weeds. We have been pleased with the development of the vegetation after all the scrub clearance work in this area, with species such as Clustered Bellflower, Lady's Bedstraw and Harebell spreading steadily, and patches of Horseshoe Vetch emerging after the clearance of the east-facing bank.

Elsewhere on the Dyke we have been concentrating on giving the Dyke a really good haircut! The section from Mutlow Hill to the dismantled railway was cut in early spring. In August, Chalkhill Blue butterflies were seen in the area between the A11 and the Bedford Gap, nectaring on the Carline Thistles. (See page 21 of the Roman Road booklet.) This wonderful news needs to be treated with caution. Therefore, we have modified our management slightly in this section in an effort to encourage a breeding colony to establish. We cut the grassland after October and have left some sections uncut for over-wintering invertebrates. We left this cut later than normal because Chalkhill Blue larvae are laid on Horseshoe Vetch. In the late autumn, these larvae are taken into ant hills for 'milking'. There is then less risk of damaging the larvae by trampling, or by removing their food plant. We will be returning to both sites in the spring to undertake some further management work with the Mid-week Conservation Volunteers. If you would like details about joining us on Wednesdays, please do not hesitate to contact me on the telephone number given below.

Work Parties for Friends, and/or Friends of Friends

Sunday 29th January Fleam Dyke

Meet at Stonebridge Lane, Fulbourn Nature Reserve. 10.00am for transport to the site. Come for an hour or two, or bring lunch and stay a bit longer. Tools provided.

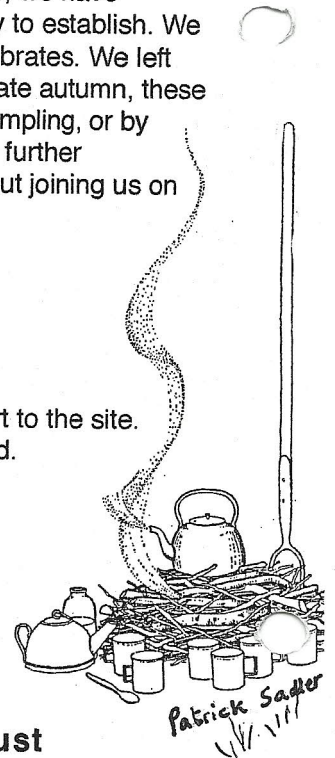
Sunday 19th February The Roman Road

Meet at Worsted Lodge on the A11 at 10.0 am onwards.

Sunday 26th March Fleam Dyke.

Meet at Stonebridge Lane, as above.

Ring Julia Napier, 01223 213152 for more details, or alternative transport arrangements.



Talks Organised by the Cambridge City Group of the Wildlife Trust

These talks are held in the Gilmour Building of Cambridge University Botanic Garden. Please note that the entrance is via the drive beside 47 Bateman Street, **NOT** at the Bateman Street gate of the Botanic Garden. All talks are at 7.30pm. Entry: £1.50 for members of the Wildlife Trust, £2.50 for non-members

Thurs, Jan 26th, 7.30pm Protecting the Flora of Roadside Verges,

An illustrated talk by Yvonne Leonard, formerly Voluntary Warden of the Rex Graham Reserve in Suffolk and Suffolk WLT member

Thurs, Feb 23rd, 7.30pm The Natural History of Volcanoes,

An illustrated talk by Dr Clive Oppenheimer, Reader in Volcanology and Remote Sensing at the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

Contacts

Naomi Brookes,
Cambridge Green Belt Project
The Manor House, Broad Street,
Great Cambourne, Cambridge, CB3 6DH

Tel: 01954 713500

e-mail: nbrookes@cambswt.cix.co.uk

Julia Napier
Secretary, Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke
30a Hinton Avenue,
Cambridge, CB1 7AS

tel: 01223 213152

JN1@napierj.freeseve.co.uk