

## Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke Newsletter Number Eight February 2003



### £24,500 FOR ROMAN ROAD ENHANCEMENT

The Countryside Agency, on behalf of the Heritage Lottery Fund, has offered us £24,500 to carry out scrub clearance, habitat management and enhancement work on the Roman Road. The grant is also to promote access and raise awareness of the natural and archaeological heritage of the site by various means, which include installing interpretation boards, publishing leaflets and maps

This is a magnificent achievement for the Friends of Roman Road and Fleam Dyke and great credit must go to Jane Fenton, our Fund Raiser, and to Iain Webb and Rob Mungovan, who worked with me in putting our application together.

The winning of this excellent Grant would not have been possible without demonstrating that we have a rapidly growing and very active local membership.

We have also had a wonderful range of supporting letters from a wide cross-section of key organizations.

It will be the responsibility of our management committee to ensure that we meet in full our promises to the Heritage Lottery Fund. We hope the grant will substantially improve the Roman Road for the enjoyment of all who visit this ancient route

**Sam Agnew, Chairman**

### Beginning to spend the Grant

A substantial amount of the money awarded will be used over three years to clear scrub and scrub regrowth, and to improve the mowing regime of the existing grassland on the section of the Roman Road which runs from the A11 to the Balsham to Linton road. Iain Webb has adapted an existing management plan and will be engaging a contractor to make a start on spring mowing in April. This reduces the strength of the hardier grasses and enables more delicate plants to flourish. The work will be done in places where some of the chalk grassland flowers have survived, from where it is hoped that they can spread back over the newly cleared ground. Further scrub clearing will begin next autumn.

The Mid-Week Conservation Volunteers and work parties organised by The Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke will continue to be important. The Bank Commander, a type of Allan scythe, cuts the long grass and scrub regrowth very swiftly and well, but the other half of the job is the raking up, which needs quite a few pairs of hands. The work will also reveal and protect the structure of the road. At the moment the scrub often conceals, and will progressively endanger, the classic Roman bank and ditch formation, the Agger, along which the imperial legions marched.

Left to right: Stephan Muller, Kyi Bean and James Nutter raking up, or down. January 12th 2003



## Conservation News from the Fleam Dyke

### Assistant Shepherds Needed

Ted Clover, who owns the flock of Norfolk Horn sheep, is planning to bring them to the Fleam Dyke in April for about two months. (Flower lovers will be glad to know that his sheep do not appear to like cowslips.) He will check on them every day, but it would be a help if Friends would keep an eye as well. So, if you have not taken a walk along the Fleam Dyke in the last few years, would you like to pay it a visit in April or May? If anyone could undertake to go and say Hello to the sheep once a week, that would be even better. **If an animal appears to be in distress, please phone Ted Clover at his home: 01954 261949, or on his mobile: 07941 871530.** Norfolk Horn sheep were on the edge of extinction in the early 1970's. Ted Clover has agreed to write an article for the next newsletter about the rescue of this rare breed.

Donna Radley, Conservation Officer at English Nature, has secured some more money with which to instal sheep fencing round Mutlow Hill. It is hoped that regular grazing, either by Ted Clover's sheep or another flock, will keep down the scrub and lead to the re-establishment of a good grassy turf, without consuming plural hours of manpower in mowing and raking.



The new sheep fencing, and stile near the A11. Mutlow Hill is in the background.

### A Warm Welcome!

During the summer a refreshment stall was opened on the A11 layby, near the footbridge. The owner, Gordon, lives in Newmarket. He quickly moved to a permanent position on the hard standing next to the layby, with a picnic table and chairs for sunny days. He is open from 6.0am to 3.0pm and though he has no responsibility for looking after our cars, it seems unlikely that a vehicle will be broken into while he is there.

### Using the 'Awards for All' Money

This time last year we celebrated the receipt of our first grant: £5,000, to be used for scrub clearing on the uncleared sections of the Fleam Dyke. Such work could not be undertaken at once because the birds had almost begun nesting, and for various other reasons has been delayed until now. At a meeting of interested parties, on a very cold, wet and windy morning, it was agreed that the best course of action was to clear the path along the top of the dyke with a couple of metres on either side, in order to bring light to the remaining fragments of chalk grassland flora. At the moment, even grass is in short supply, but here and there the clustered bell flower, St John's wort, and salad burnet have been clinging on, and there are a few patches of cowslips under the bushes.



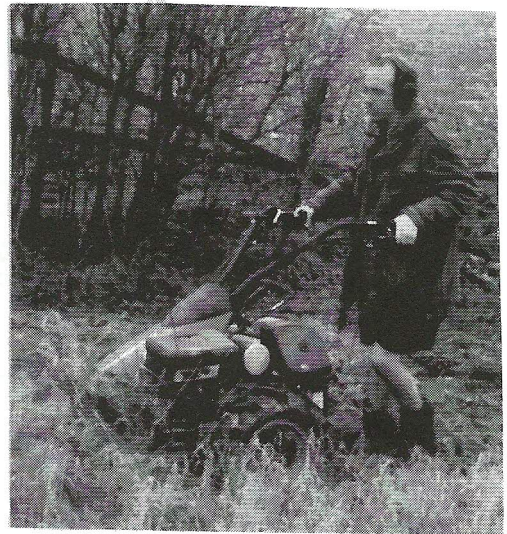
### Problems and Solutions

The problem with clearing the top of the bank is: what do you do with the cut material? In addition, a contractor has to carry his equipment an increasingly long way as the work progresses. However, the local farmer has very kindly given his permission for the contractors to use his farm track along the side of the dyke, and the Mid-Week Conservation Volunteers have done a marvellous job, clearing a dozen gangways down the western side of the dyke to points where the brash can be piled or burned in the ditch. If you walk along the dyke this spring, you will be able to see what a difference £5,000 can make.

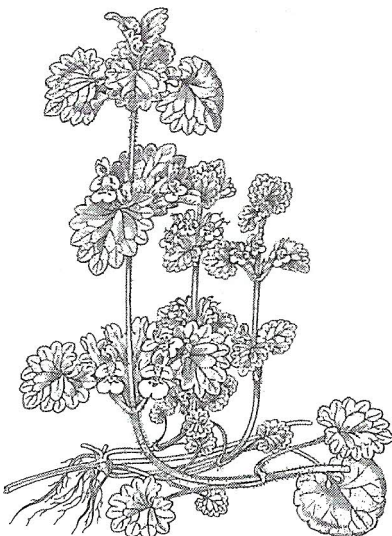
### Mad Dogs and Englishmen (and others) go out on Winter Work Parties

The work party planned for the Roman Road on **27th October** had to be cancelled because high winds were forecast. A few of us turned up anyway, in case others did, and after some consultation we set off to see what we could do in a sheltered spot. However, a break in the western hedge revealed the full force of the wind. It was hard to stand, and would clearly have been too dangerous to work. We turned back and had a small social event - my flask of Nescafe Gold Blend, and David's ever ready Kit-Kat supply - sheltering in the lee of the shrubs planted on the Worsted Lodge intersection. Not quite the sort of thing coffee ads are made of. More the sort of thing that would have attracted PC 49 saying, "Hello, hello, hello. What have we here?" Thanks to John Ady, Mike Albutt, James Nutter, David Seilly and Liz Tym.

The replacement work party date on **12th January** was bitterly cold, only rising above freezing point when the wind shifted to the west in the afternoon. Nothing daunted, twelve stalwarts arrived and worked steadily all morning, broke for lunch and then did another hour. Our thanks to Peter Pilbeam, who brought his chain-saw, John Dawson and Paul Stebbings who brought brush cutters, plus John Ady, Kyi Bean, Stephan Muller from Germany, James Nutter, David Seilly, Liz Tym, Ann Waldock and Iain Webb, shown here with the famous Bank Commander. My role is to follow behind the team with a pot of red gunge, painting cut stumps while murmuring, "Die, Die, Die".



The **9th February** was scheduled to be a Friend's work party on the Fleam Dyke. The forecast was not good and most people sensibly stayed at home. (This phrase feels familiar.) However, David Seilly had cancelled other engagements in order to be there; John Ady, despite years of living in Saudi Arabia, is undaunted by the prospect of frost, wind or rain; and Stella and Roger Wolfe, seasoned conservation volunteers on butterfly sites in Suffolk, came over from Ipswich to help see off the invading scrub, or some of it. We hacked and hewed in the drizzle, marvelling at the ropes of Old Man's Beard, often thicker than a wrist at their base, intertwining with briars as they scramble over trees and shrubs, like a picture from an Arthur Rackham illustration to the Sleeping Beauty. David and John cleared a little knoll to the north of the disused railway, and we paused in the increasing drizzle to imagine the thyme, rock roses and horseshoe vetch which might flower there, one day, one day. However, coffee and sandwiches inside a car seemed to grip the imagination more vividly. They also sapped our enthusiasm for going out again and getting wetter. Thus, after the Hottest Friends Work Party, raking up grass cuttings on the Roman Road on July 14th; and the Windiest on 27th October, which was cancelled because of the severe gales; and the Coldest, on January 12th, we now had the Wettest, and Shortest. See back page for the next **Work Party for Masochists**.



There are a few plants of Ground Ivy in the cleared soil. This little purple labiate, with its coppery green leaves and whorls of purple flowers, does well at the edge of a damp hedgerow or wood.  
Drawing by Stella Ross Craig

## Private Enterprise on the Fleam Dyke by Shaun Wylie

It was a real pleasure to read Dr Clark's account in the November Newsletter of working to clear the scrub along Fleam Dyke. Like him, I enjoyed walking on the Dyke, and I too was dismayed at the difficulty of doing so. During the 80's, when I was finally retired from teaching Mathematics in the Sixth Form Colleges, I took to spending days clearing the path on the Dyke. The section between Dungate Farm and Balsham was particularly bad: many trees and shrubs had fallen across the path, and people had made detours down off the crest and up again.

Sometimes with friends or relatives, and sometimes on my own, we sawed and clipped to restore the passage. The criterion was that two people could walk abreast in comfortable conversation along the crest. We probably did little more than one or two hundred yards a day, but it was very rewarding. One friend, looking back at a day's work, once said what I had often thought myself, "It's like fairyland".

There was one adventure. Just after a gale, I went to the path just north of the farm, where a lot of small trees had been half blown down across the path. The first few went comfortably: after I had sawed through the boles, they sank sighing onto trees and shrubs below. Then I thoughtlessly attacked a rather taller one. When that was ready to go, its top fell onto some power lines and crashed them. I was treated to a display of sparks, and the poor farmer was left without power. I rang the Electricity Board, and a vehicle came amazingly quickly and restored the current. The Board soon sent me a letter asking what organisation I belonged to. When I told them I was just clearing a right of way, they may have been taken aback; anyway, they never sent me the bill. The farmer got a bottle of whisky.

There was one very bad place where the path crossed the old railway. Nothing that I could do came any way near to my criterion. So I was delighted when some excellent steps appeared. In fact, it soon became clear that the proper authorities were applying themselves to their responsibilities, and buccaneers like me were no longer needed. But it was fun while it lasted.

## Memories of the Fleam Dyke by Margaret Rishbeth

When I read David Clark's article about Fleam Dyke in the fifties, it reminded me that my family also used the tufted knoll by the Scots Firs for picnics during the war. On other days, we used to catch a bus to the disused railway, just past the pumping station, walk up to the Dyke (you could then!) turn left, and wend our way to friends in Herring's House on the Wilbraham Road. This house had been built by an artist who loved painting horses. He had a studio attached to a stable, and a horse could be brought right up to his front door via a ramp. The kitchen was on the ground floor, and food came up to the dining room by a Service Lift worked by ropes. Great fun!

Herring's House,  
by Richard Sell



## A MAP OF FULBOURN IN 1800 by John Ady

Fulbourn village lies at the north end of Fleam Dyke where from 1954 the fen has been an SSSI and from 1967 a nature reserve which preserves some of the densely hedged landscape of enclosure. This map of the parish is from the *Victoria County History* on northeastern Cambridgeshire. Read with Alison Taylor's *Archaeology of South-East Cambridgeshire and the Fen Edge*, it gives a good picture of the village when the population was only 700 (it is now some 4,950) but, except for erased and straightened tracks, the outlines are similar.

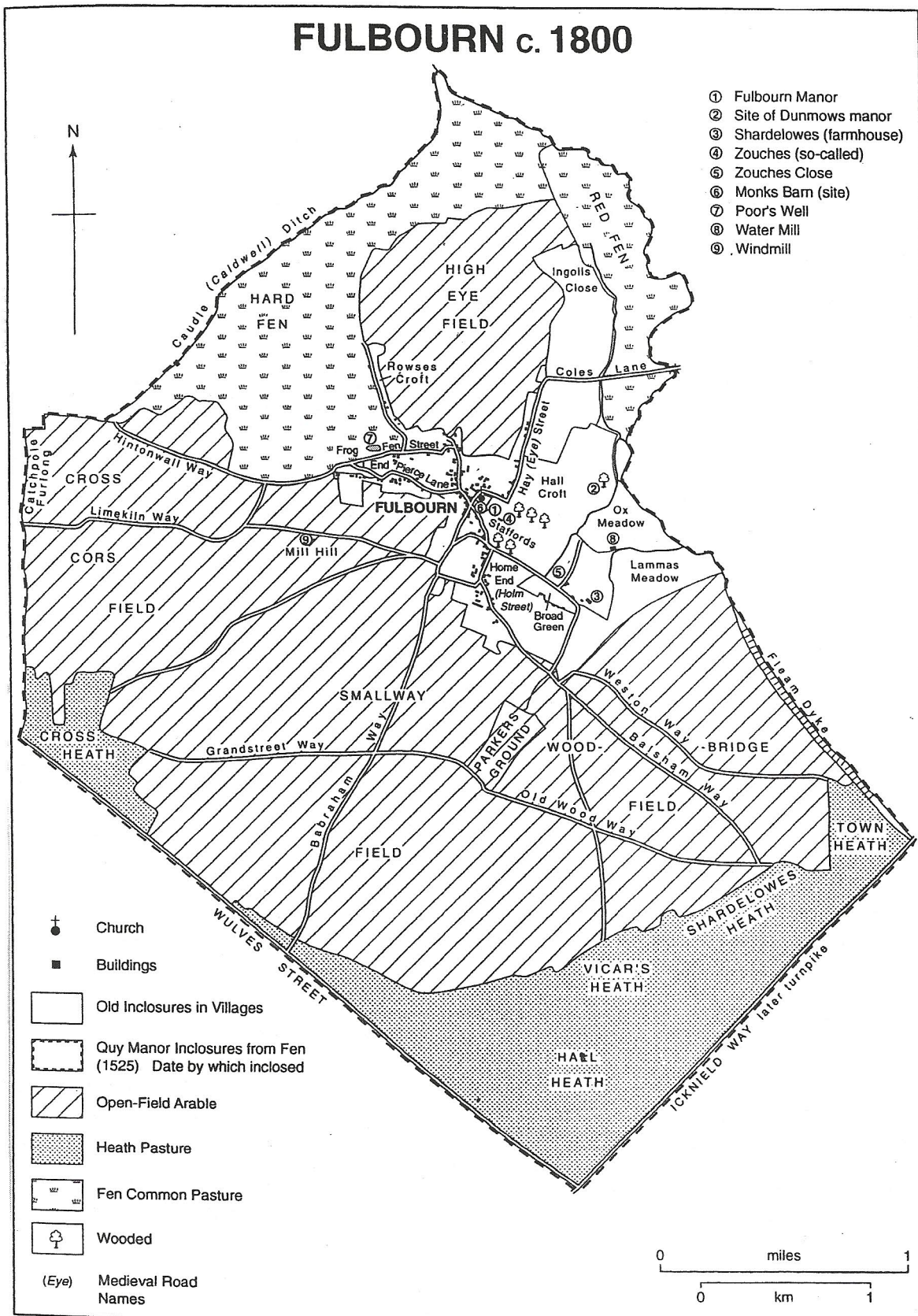
Fulbourn was a fen edge settlement from Roman times at least, when fen waterways were commercial highways as they continued to be till the railways came, and many ancient relics have been found along the line of the fenland quays. The name comes from *fugelburn* (waterfowl brook) which with Caldwell (cold stream) ditch and the Wilbraham River run through Quy Water and Bottisham Lode to the Cam. Quy (cow island), Hard (dry) Fen, Frog End, Fen Street, Holm (land above water) and High Eye (island) all describe a wetland edge. In fact Fulbourn had at least ten springs and the fen still limits the village on the north and east. This explains why the main defensive Dyke across the chalk ends there (just as Heydon Ditch ended at Fowlmere), at the springs of Shardelowe's Well where the Totternhoe stone aquifer underlying the chalk hits an impermeable layer. It might also explain why it continues on the other side, on the dry ground between Quy and Fen Ditton (ditch-ton).

Names on the map give other clues. Zouche's refers approximately to the site of the original principal manor held by the de la Zouche, who were one of the Norman successors to the rights of the Saxon manor. This has absorbed four other manors and is now held by the Townleys, who came from Lancashire in 1787. The present manor house was remodelled in 1909 and has a statue of William III in the front court. The site of Dunmow's manor, possibly named after its 13th century owners, is the moated mound in the nature reserve shown on the O.S. map. The house itself was probably moved in the 16th century by the Dockwra family to become the present Old Manor. Stafford (Stafford's Close) was a mediaeval absentee landowner, Ingolfs were leading freeholders, Coles, Rowse and Parker were local families. Pierce is from pear tree and the Monks Barn was the rectory and perhaps the tithe barn of a demolished second church. Shardelowe's manor was named after a family descended from a 14th century judge. It too was moated, but was demolished in 1825, the stone being reused in the New Shardelowe's farm on the Balsham road. Moats seem to have been *de rigeur* for manor houses locally, though from the 13th century onwards, as much as status symbols as for use. The water mill closed in 1808, the year the restored smock mill on the Cambridge road was built, but local water long supplied Cambridge from Poor's well. Tim Malim conjectures from the cluster of three manor house sites near the mill (the third, Colville's, was beside Zouche's Close) that the whole village originated nearer Shardelowe's Well and gradually moved west.

The arable open field - the map just predates Fulbourn's main enclosures - extends from the fen to the grazed upland which is 40m higher than the fen, on thin chalk, hence the heaths, sequestered from the commoners for the Vicar, the Hall and Shardelowe's. There the parish boundaries clearly follow ancient routes. The name of the Icknield Way is traditionally derived from the pre-Roman tribe of the *Iceni* but before the early 18th century turnpiking the way had always been a wide swath of tracks through and across the scrub of the chalkland connecting East Anglia with the midlands. As for Fleam Dyke: this was *Flemmindic* in 1086. It has been suggested that the name comes from Old English *flieman*, flee-ers, from *fléam*, to flee or cause to flee. But why the Roman Road is called Wolves Street, readers must volunteer. It was also labelled Wool Street which became Worsted Street perhaps by corruption. Exporting wool to Flanders was a source of East Anglia's mediaeval wealth when Cambridge was still an inland port.

Later changes make place-names difficult to interpret without knowing the earliest spellings. On the map Grandstreet, now erased, and a continuation of Street Way, was originally *Grentestrate*, an ancient way along the spring line, perhaps to the river Granta or to Grantchester. Limekiln Way goes straight to the chalkpits near Cherry Hinton. Lammas would have been a private pasture which became common land on August 1st, Lammas Day, until the next spring. Cross Field may come from *cors*, an old British word for reeds, Smallway from a narrow track, Hintonwall Way from the track over Cherry Hinton moor (*wald*). But what are the origins of Red Fen and Woodbridge? And Catchpole Furlong? Well, a catchpole (catch-fowl) was a tax collector or sheriffs officer and this might have been his portion of the open field. Even a simplified map like this is a palimpsest of historical records, the persistence of place names peppering it with intriguing clues.

# FULBOURN c. 1800



Useful references for this article were:

Malim, T. (2001). *Fulbourn Manor Estate. An Archaeological Survey*. County Council, Cambridge.

Reaney, P. (1943). *Placenames of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*. Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, A. (1998). *Archaeology of Cambridgeshire Vol.2. South-East Cambridgeshire and the Fen Edge*. County Council, Cambridge.

Taylor, C. (1973). *The Cambridgeshire Landscape*. Hodder & Stoughton, London.

Wareham, A. and Wright, A. (2002). *A History of the County of Cambridgeshire. North-East Cambridgeshire. Victoria History of the Counties of England, Vol. X.*

## THE STOAT IS STOATALLY DIFFERENT!

by Henry Arnold.

Manager of the Database at the Biological Records Centre,  
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology at Monks Wood

Stoats can sometimes be seen on the Fleam Dyke, hunting, or chasing after Rabbits. Stoats, though generally larger and often with more reddish fur on the back, can best be distinguished from Weasels by the Stoat's black-tipped tail. Some Stoats turn white in winter, apart from the black tail tip. In this state they are known as Ermine, and Ermine fur is the familiar trimming to robes of state. Until I began writing this note I was unsure as to how the white-with-black-flecks pattern was created. Did early furriers and robe-makers skin the tails and incorporate them into garment with the rest of the fur, I wondered? Surely this would have been far too time-consuming and intricate – though that would be a further reason for ermine trimming being reserved for royalty and dukes. It seems that the tails were used whole, like tassels, at least in the distant past. In more recent times the black flecks have been produced by cutting small holes and inserting pieces of dark fur (sometimes sealskin, apparently). Perhaps now they just dye small patches of fur.

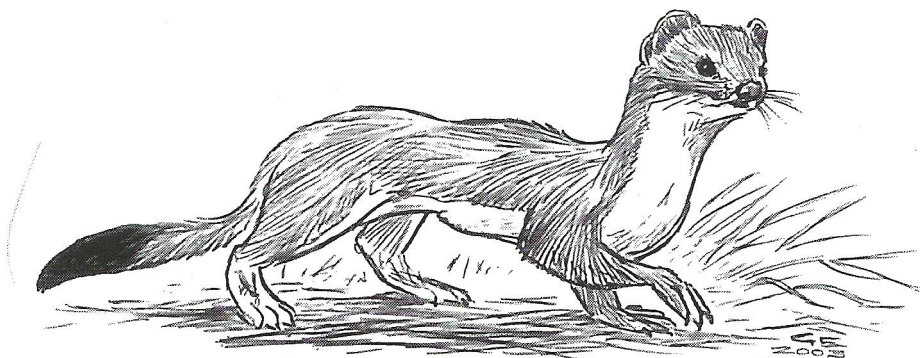


Not all Stoats turn white in winter; the further north one travels, the greater the proportion of those that do. In Cambridgeshire, few change colour. In adjacent Huntingdonshire, Ermine have been reported between December and April twenty four times since 1976. In the same months, 'normal' Stoats have been reported eighty nine times. That shouldn't be taken to mean that about twenty percent of Stoats turn white in winter in this region, as some of the records of Ermine undoubtedly refer to the same animal. It does show that the colour change is far from frequent in our area.

Stoats are reputedly blood-thirsty (but most carnivores are given that reputation!). In the Victorian literature, there are reports of Stoats hunting in packs. Sometimes these packs are said to have attacked dogs and even people. The largest pack one would be likely to see would be a mother with her young (about six), so what one is to make of reports of packs of up to thirty, I don't know. They usually feed on rabbits, voles, mice and small birds. They are said to perform an intricate dance to attract and bemuse birds, which can be pounced upon when they get too close. Some researchers have suggested, more prosaically, that this dance is in fact a response to a parasite which infests the nasal passages, and causes irritation.

Stoats swim well. The one I saw swimming in the river near my home in Norfolk, when I was still at school, presented a most odd appearance at first glance. The middle of the back was submerged; only the head and tail ends broke the surface. I thought, at first, that I was watching two animals swimming one after the other, until I focused my binoculars.

Keep an eye open for these little animals; they are fascinating to watch when they are hunting. And I remember clearly one spring morning a few years ago as I was cycling to work. I heard a commotion at the roadside, and saw one Stoat chasing another. They dashed across the road in front of me, the early morning sunshine enhancing the red in their coats, making them look like two twisting, dancing pieces of flame.



Drawings by Graham Easy

# Survey of Butterflies on the Roman Road from Worsted Lodge to Horseheath, 2002

by Roger Lemon

## Methods

The Roman road was walked four times during the spring and summer of 2002, in about the middle of each month from May to August. As far as possible warm, sunny days were chosen with temperatures in the low to mid 20's. The 10km length of road surveyed was walked in approximately three hours on each occasion and numbers of each butterfly species sighted were recorded in each NGR 1km square. This method had the disadvantage of recording unequal lengths of the Roman Road, ranging from approximately 0.1km to 1.15km, but was used because the data obtained were then compatible with the Butterfly Conservation method of recording by tetrad.

In May and June, divisions between 1km squares were determined on the basis of geographical features such as field margins and contours but for the July and August counts, I used a GPS device which gave extremely accurate grid references and enabled me to include more precisely the short stretches of road of 0.1km or so. Inevitably, when using a simple counting method, an individual butterfly may be recorded more than once. Although efforts were made to avoid this, numbers cannot be regarded as absolute and are therefore recorded as sightings.

## Results

In total, 19 species were recorded, the most abundant with 295 sightings being the Meadow Brown, followed by the Green-Veined White with 251 sightings. Only two other species exceeded 100 sightings and these were the Gatekeeper and Speckled Wood. The Large White, Small White, Essex Skipper and Ringlet exceeded 50 sightings. For 6 species including four of the five Vanessaids, (Comma, Painted Lady, Peacock, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell) total sightings were in single figures.

## Discussion

All species recorded can be regarded as generally common butterflies in this area. Although some are characteristic of chalk grassland, they are not confined to that habitat and can be found in a range of grassland types. Certain species, which I expected to see, were not recorded. These were the Small Heath, the Brown Argus and the Small Copper. All are found in this area and I would expect them to be present on the Roman Road. Others were recorded in surprisingly low numbers and the very few Small Tortoiseshell, is probably a reflection of the general and unexplained decline in this species in recent years.

Date	16/5	19/6	17/7	13/8	Total sightings
Small skipper				3	3
Essex skipper			48	13	61
Large skipper		10	8		18
Brimstone	22	8	2	14	46
Large white	9	3	14	41	67
Small white	1	11	31	55	98
Green-veined white	69	11	106	65	251
Orange tip	44				44
Common blue				8	8
Holly blue	10			1	11
Red admiral		2	1	1	4
Painted lady		10		6	16
Small tortoiseshell	1	3	4		8
Peacock	3			4	7
Comma			8	1	9
Speckled wood	2	56	10	44	112
Gatekeeper			92	61	153
Meadow brown		7	214	74	295
Ringlet		2	60		62

Generally the western end of the length of Roman Road surveyed was richer in butterfly numbers than the eastern part. Beyond the Hildersham to Balsham road, the Roman Road is more influenced by agriculture, either because of damage caused by machinery, exposure to arable fields or excessive management of verges and hedges. The one exception to this is the verge on the north side of the Roman Road to the west of Mark's Grave, which is rich in summer flowers, resulting in relatively high counts of some species, particularly in July.



Conservation work on the Roman Road is aimed primarily at enhancing the chalk grassland flora. To some extent this may have a detrimental effect on the numbers of the more generalist species of butterfly by reducing food plants, such as the coarser grasses and nettles, and flowers used as nectar sources, such as thistles, knapweeds and scabious but may be beneficial to other species such as the Common Blue, which was seen in only small numbers. Because of the relative geographical isolation of this part of the Roman Road, it seems unlikely that any specialist chalk grassland species will colonise it unless artificially introduced.

The 2002 count can be regarded as a baseline for the future so that the influence of any conservation measures can be assessed. However, it should be borne in mind that the weather conditions in 2002 were generally poor and probably had an effect on the numbers, and this may affect numbers in the coming summer. I would suggest that in future, it is not necessary to survey the whole of the length of the road recorded in 2002. I would recommend that the survey should extend only to Mark's Grave on the Bartlow to West Wrating road. Beyond that point the Roman Road is little more than a farm track.

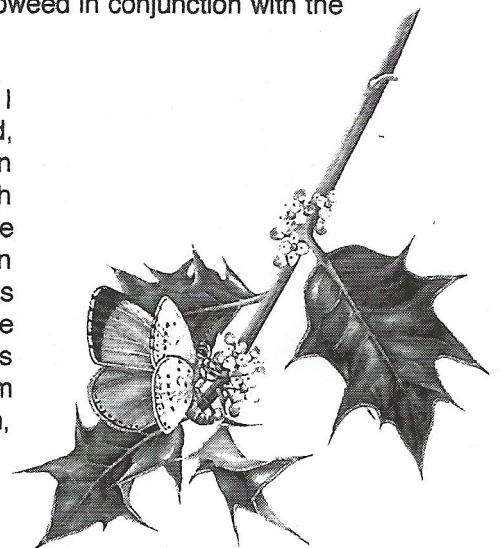
## **Butterflies on the Roman Road, Lodge Farm to Worsted Lodge, 2001 and 2002**

**by Julia Napier**

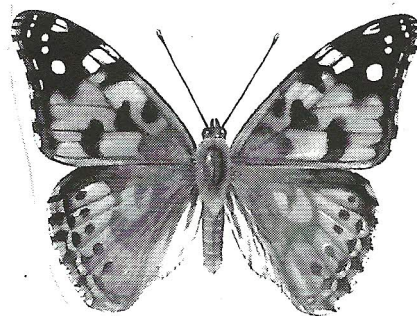
At the first meeting of the Friends of the Roman Road and the Fleam Dyke, I offered to do some butterfly recording on the two sites. (Before you could say Peacock, I found that I was secretary as well, but that is another story.) I help with the Transect Recording for the Countryside Restoration Trust, and have several other sites for which I am keeping simple records, so I have not been able to be as systematic as is required for Transect Recording for the national Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. In addition, I tend to wander along noting the flowers and stopping to chat to other walkers who look as if they might join the Friends, so I do not cover a great deal of ground, and can offer nothing like Roger Lemon's precise figures. I also fear that I miss things that he spots, in particular Ringlets sitting down among the grasses, and Small Skippers which are hard to distinguish from Essex Skippers. As a result, I can only get my total up to 17 species, which surprised me because I thought I had the more interesting end of the Road!

When I first went on a very hot day at the end of May 2001, the striking feature of the stretch of Road from Lodge Farm to the A11, was the quantity of Orange Tips: either males, with their handsome orange wing tips, flying hopefully along the hedgerow, or females, which are rather similar to Small Whites and Green Veined Whites, flitting from one plant of Garlic Mustard to the next, selecting the perfect leaf on which to lay an egg. The abundance of their food plant in a sunny and relatively sheltered site accounts for the numbers of Orange Tips, as well as for the equal numbers of Small Whites and Green Veined Whites who share their taste for cruciferous plants. These are not the sorts of butterflies for which Species Recovery Plans are made, but it is still a pleasure to see a good number of any type of butterfly. In July, the most abundant butterflies are, of course, the Meadow Brown and the Gatekeeper, especially in the areas between Copley Hill and the A11, where there are lots of nectar rich flowers such as Black Knapweed in conjunction with the sort of grasses eaten by the caterpillars of grassland butterflies.

My notes for a lovely hot day in late July 2001 give a total of over 30 Holly Blues. I looked at it in disbelief. So many Holly Blues on this part of the Roman Road, impossible! However, my battered notebook shows them marked one by one in the gate-leg counting method, and a note says 'in the beeches on the north side'. But where is the Holly? Fortunately, despite its name, the Holly Blue caterpillar also feeds on brambles, spindle and other hedgerow plants in the spring. This second brood would have lived inside and eaten the flower buds of the ivy, of which there is no shortage in that area. Lack of time and suitable weather prevented me from checking on their numbers in 2002. The other less common species which passed the 30 mark in 2002 was the Painted Lady. Pam Nicholes had spotted one rather worn specimen near Mark's Grave, on June 5th,



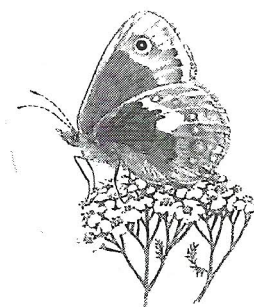
when we went to gather evidence for the application for the Traffic Restriction Order. On 19th August, there were Painted Ladies everywhere along 'my' section of the Roman Road, nectaring on the knapweed and basking on the path. There was a similar abundance on the Dungate Farm section of the Fleam Dyke on the same afternoon. Newly emerged, with gleaming wings, they were probably the offspring of the individuals which had flown here from the coast of North Africa or Syria earlier in the year. In 1996, which was the summer in which everyone's buddleia had a dozen Painted Ladies on it, it was possible to chart the speed of the migration, providing evidence that some individuals had flown directly from Africa to northern Europe at speeds of about 150km per day.



However, none of these butterflies is specific to chalk grassland. Those that were here: the Chalkhill Blue, the Small Blue, the Dingy Skipper, and the Grizzled Skipper are not likely to be seen here again unless, as Roger Lemon says, the habitat is substantially improved, and English Nature decides that a reintroduction would be worth trying. Even the more likely species, the Common Blue, the Brown Argus, the Small Heath, the Large Skipper and the Essex/Small Skipper are only present in small numbers. Roger Lemon and I have discussed the possibility of surveying the Road specifically for these butterflies, and, with the help of Sharon Hearle, who is now the Regional Development Officer for Butterfly Conservation in East Anglia, considering if there is any way to improve the management of the few areas where these butterflies are to be seen.

### Why worry?

The Latin name of the Small Heath is *Coenonympha pamphilus*, the Common Nymph of Grassland. I only saw one in July 2002, and one in August 2002, both on the section of the road near Copley Hill. Numbers fell sharply all over Britain between 1990 and 1994 and a slight recovery in 1996 was not maintained. "Like that of the House Sparrow and the Song Thrush, the decline of such a once common species is a cause for serious concern." (The Millennium Atlas of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland. Oxford University Press)



### Footnote for bird lovers, from Margaret Rishbeth

Sunday, 2nd February. I went for a very short walk along the Roman Road this lunch time; from the end of Babraham Road, which leads from Fulbourn to Lodge Farm. I saw flocks of blue and great tits, robins and a few blackbirds, and as a bonus, a lovely big flock of mixed **Bramblings and Chaffinches**. Also **one Siskin**. Must have lost its group.

### FOCUS ON BIRDS



As City Greenways Officer, Iain Webb is encouraging people to put bird boxes in city gardens. Our thanks to the Cambridge Evening News for permission to reproduce this very nice picture of a key member of our committee.

# Moths Recorded by John Dawson on the Roman Road, 12th July 2002

Ghost Moth

Orange Swift

*Carcina quercana* Fabr.

an oecophorine

*Agapeta hamana* Linn.

a tortrix

*Agapeta zoegana* Linn.

a tortrix

*Archips xylosteana* Linn.

Variiegated Golden Tortrix

*Lozotaeniodes formosanus* Geyer

a tortrix

*Cnephasia stephensiana* Doubl.

Grey Tortrix

*Celypha striana* D. & S.

a tortrix

*Cydia fagiglandana* Zeller

a tortrix

*Crambus pascuella* Linn.

a pyralid

*Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* Hb.

a pyralid

Small Magpie

Gold Triangle

Thistle Ermine

Peach Blossom

Buff Arches

Common Emerald

Small Emerald

Small Fan-footed Wave

Riband Wave

Large Twin-spot Carpet

Barred Yellow

Dark Umber

Green Pug

Double-striped Pug

Small Yellow Wave

Clouded Border

Brimstone Moth

Early Thorn

Scalloped Oak

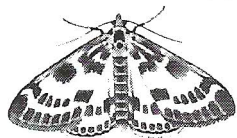
Swallow-tailed Moth

Peppered Moth

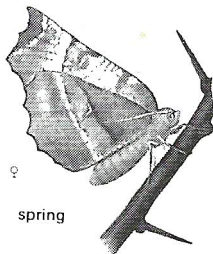
Willow Beauty

Small Engrailed

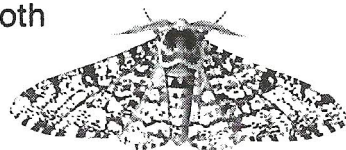
Light Emerald



Small Magpie x 1.25



Early Thorn



Privet Hawk-moth

Poplar Hawk-moth

Elephant Hawk-moth

Swallow Prominent

Yellow-tail

Dingy Footman

Scarce Footman

Common Footman

Turnip Moth

Heart & Dart

Flame

Flame Shoulder

Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing

Pearly Underwing

Double Square-spot

Dot Moth

Bright-line Brown-eye

Brown-line Bright-eye

Clay

Smoky Wainscot

Common Wainscot

Sycamore

Dun-bar

Dark Arches

Light Arches

Marbled Minor *spp.*

Common Rustic *spp.*

Rustic

Mottled Rustic

Burnished Brass

Silver Y

Spectacle

Snout

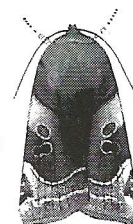
Small Fan-foot



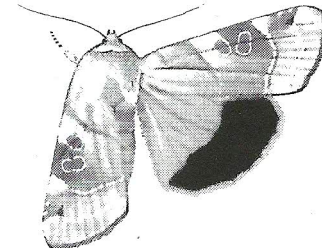
Swallow Prominent



Common Footman



Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing



Burnished Brass

All the macro and micromoths have English names, but if you are expert enough to identify the small tortrix and pyralid moths you will probably use the Latin names. In the days when any educated man could read Latin and Greek, the names given to flora and fauna were aids to identification and memory. Similarly, the English names are packed with clues to help the beginner, even if they are the tongue twisting Bright-line Brown-eye or Brown-line Bright-eye. Recently, moth names arrived in Brain of Britain on Radio 4. Quiz contestants should stand by for questions involving Smoky Wainscots and Small Fan-footed Waves. If you would like to know more about moths, the Collins Pocket Guide to Insects of Britain and Western Europe is a good place to start. The author, Michael Chinery, has picked out the most common moths, which makes things a bit easier, and the pictures show them in their natural resting position, not as if pinned out for full identification. For a complete book of British Moths, Moths of the British Isles by Bernard Skinner, with good colour photographs of all the macromoths is one of the best, if rather expensive at £45. Look in the May newsletter for the date of the next **Friends Moth Trapping Evening**, which will be held on the Fleam Dyke. We shall be hoping to record the presence of a now scarce moth, the Chalk Carpet.

Julia Napier

## Dates for Your Diary

### The Mid-Week Conservation Volunteers

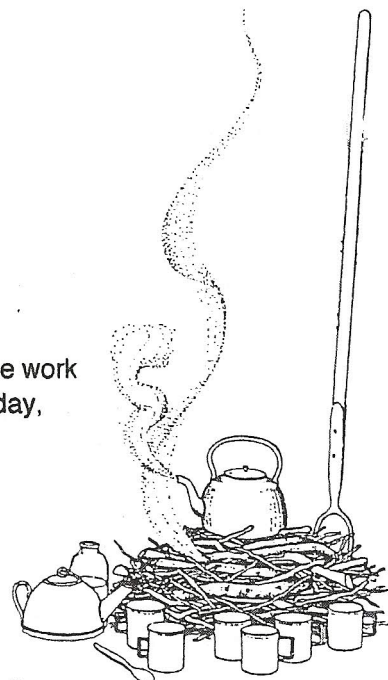
**Wed 5th March** Conservation work on the Fleam Dyke  
**Wed 12th March** Mowing and raking in order to help rare flowers

There is also a **Tuesday Conservation Group**, which is doing invaluable work on Cambridge City sites. **Please ring 01223 712410** before coming on either day, in order to check the meeting place.

#### First Sunday in every month

Work on Fulbourn Nature Reserve. This beautiful reserve also needs your help. 10.0am to 12.30 or so. Meet at Stonebridge Lane, just past the church and Fulbourn Manor. Contact: Julia 01223 213152

**Sun 13th April Friends Work Party 10.00am**  
Mowing and raking on the Fleam Dyke. Ring 01223 213152 for details



---

### Thursday 3rd April Annual General Meeting

7.30 pm at the Six Bells Public House, High Street, Fulbourn. All welcome

Presentation of the Local Heritage Initiative Grant

Brief business meeting

Illustrated talk by **James Fisher**, who is in charge of **The Devil's Dyke Restoration Project**

Illustrated talk by **John Ady**, on **The Planning of Nature Reserves in Saudi Arabia**

John Ady, our Treasurer, works at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Coffee or Tea in the Interval.

---

### Talks Organised by the Cambridge 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

**Snowed Under.** Thursday January 26th. The talk listed as "Flies, Midges and Gnats" was cancelled because of the blizzard. We hope that Dr Disney will give his talk next season.

#### Thursday March 27th "The Lune Valley"

Illustrated talk by Dr Kevin Briggs. The Lune Valley in Lancashire is rich in wildlife and limestone pavement habitat. Dr Briggs will talk about his work on birds there, and will outline some of the problems facing farming, and the effect on water courses in the region.

#### Thursday April 24th "A Look at Farmland Birds"

An illustrated talk by Nigel Housden, photographer at The Countryside Restoration Trust.

---

### Contacts

Iain Webb  
Cambridge Green Belt Project  
3b Langford Arch  
London Road  
Sawston, Cambridge, CB2 4EE  
tel: 01223 712410,  
e-mail: iwebb@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