



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 35

February 1997

A Happy New Year to all members of the Yare Valley Society.

The new year means that annual subscriptions for 1997 are due! The subscription remains at £1 per family and should be paid as soon as possible either to the membership secretary or to any committee member.

Date for diary

The annual general meeting of the YVS will take place on Monday evening 12 May 1997 in the Pavilion on Cringleford recreation ground. The speaker will be William Buhler from the School of Development Studies at UEA who will talk about the School's plans for the 'strawberry field' and adjoining marsh.

Cross-valley bus route

A new bus route across the Yare Valley between UEA and Colney Lane to serve the new hospital remains a possibility. The Yare Valley Society, and many others, are vigorously opposed to it.

At the South Norfolk planning meeting last October, amendments to the proposed new hospital were passed. These included changes suggested by the Royal Fine Arts Commission, an additional floor to the central part of the building, and some amendments to the local highways - some of which involve the loss of even more existing trees. The issue of any new cross-valley bus link was not directly involved and when the chairman of your Society spoke against its possibility, she was ruled out of order! However, the point had been made and subsequently there were others who also verbally opposed it at this meeting.

Also in October, County Councillor Jonathan Peel, a member of Norfolk Planning and Transportation Committee, accepted an invitation from our committee for a walk along the Yare Valley to see for himself how integral the line of the possible bus route is to the amenity of the valley. Some members of our Society were able to accompany him, including our local County Councillor Alison King and the chairman of Cringleford Parish Council. It is important that members of the Planning and Transportation committee see the situation and possibly change their minds about backing this cross-valley route.

Again in October, your Chairman and a few other members were able to support a protest by students from UEA about this same issue. The protest involved raising a banner on the little bridge over the Yare and having a press photograph taken by the EEN.

We are told by the Highway Authority that this bus route possibility may not become a formal proposal until a year before the opening of the hospital, if ever, but **we need to be continually aware of any developments and act on them.** If you hear of anything, please let your committee know. Some of us for example have recently been concerned about some widening of part of the existing cross-valley track by Anglian Water in connection with the laying of new water pipes. However, this is in line with a legal obligation to keep any route open while engineering works are carried out, so is meant to be temporary. We will nevertheless keep an eye on the situation.

Elaine Tucker

Book Review

Nature in Norwich, published by Norwich City Council, price £3.50, available from 2nd Floor, City Hall. A4 size containing 48 pages with many illustrations.

Norwich City Council has produced this very attractive booklet with the aid of a generous grant from English Nature under the Community Action for Wildlife Initiative. For anyone interested in the wildlife and the open spaces of our city, the book is a valuable addition to our books on Norwich. Of particular interest to us in the Yare Valley Society area are the Bowthorpe Marsh, Eaton Common, Marston Marsh, University Campus, Earlham Park Woods and Danby Wood.

All the open spaces are summarised and the wildlife present is detailed. Every page has its illustrations, which are maps, drawings or photographs. The book is most pleasing either to read carefully or to browse through. The five watercolours by Betty Woodley for the chapter dividers and the front cover are of particular merit. It could be said that the book is worth the money for these alone. It would make an acceptable gift (despite a misprint in the foreword) and YVS members are encouraged to buy one, as ventures such as this deserve our support.

Andrew Salisbury

(In the last newsletter this book was referred to as 'Nature in Norfolk', price £3. Apologies for the error - Sec)

Projects for the Millennium

At a well attended public meeting about the Earlham Millennium Green on 25 November, it was agreed that it 'was an exciting project and something to be involved in'. As we said in our last newsletter, we too support this project as it benefits the Earlham Marsh area without changing its character. Currently paths are being improved and soon the copse should be cleared of dead wood and have additional planting. The next stage will be provision of a limited amount of seating and some signposting.

Your committee believes that the Yare Valley Society should also seek to mark the Millennium in some useful way. We have already asked for suggestions in earlier newsletters and would be very pleased to receive some from you. The year 2000AD looms nearer all the time!

One idea is to help improve the Yare Valley Walk in some way, notably by contributing to better signposting which, we have been told, could incorporate our logo. We are in touch with George Ishmael of Norwich City landscaping department about this possibility, and about other ideas such as planting mature trees in acceptable areas. Please let us know if you approve, or have other ideas.

Elaine Tucker

Norwich Fringe Countryside Management Project

The Norwich Fringe Project was established in 1990 as a partnership of local authorities, the Broads Authority and the Countryside Commission. Norwich is situated at the confluence of the rivers Yare, Wensum and Tas, thus providing a natural area rich in landscape and wildlife. The ever increasing activities of the City, however, and pressure for continued development outwards, put the surrounding rural fringe, with its river valleys, woodland and commons at risk. The Fringe Project has now published a Management Strategy to guide its work of conservation and education over the next three years. A Business Plan will provide a programme of works and the means for the Project to seek funding and support to achieve its policies.

The document sets out the aims and purposes of the Fringe Project together with its policies in relation to the many authorities and organisations involved. These include the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, District and City Councils, County Council, Parish Councils, Public Utilities, Environment Agency, Norfolk Wildlife Advisory Group, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and local landowners and farmers. There are detailed sections on the physical and landscape features of the fringe countryside, the many species of wildlife, local archaeology, opportunities for recreation, public education and community involvement. There are a number of clearly set out and informative maps. With regard to our section of the Yare Valley there is not much detail beyond the obvious desirability of managing the river valley in relation to wildlife and landscape. The water levels and condition of adjacent dykes is to be maintained in consultation with the Environment Agency and the Internal Drainage Board. The wildlife of the valley pasture should be enhanced with appropriate management. The Society has a responsibility to liaise with the Project to see that these aims are realised.

The ambitions of the Project are considerable, and with minimal staff and limited resources it is going to be an uphill task to have a real impact in counteracting the inexorable march of urbanisation around the City. The Project deserves the support of all those who value the green areas remaining.

The Society's copy of the Document (pp128) may be borrowed on request. Copies are available from the Project Officer, Ber Street, Norwich NR1 3EP, price £10.

Graham Hussey