



# Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 38

January 1998

*Happy New Year to everyone*

## Bird watching walk

In the spring of last year, nine Society members enjoyed a two-hour bird watching walk across Marston Marshes led by Mike Freer. Mike is willing to repeat the walk this year. To help us plan the walk, we wish to hear from those who would like to take part. Please phone Norwich 452996 if you are interested and we will advise you in due course of the date and time.

*Graham Hussey*

## Advance notice

The 1998 annual general meeting of the Society will take place on Monday 11 May in Cringleford Playing Field Pavilion in the evening. The guest speaker will be Peter Bush, Countryside Warden of the Norwich Fringe Project. He will give a short slide show on the recent work of the Project and then provide an opportunity for questions. Please note this date in your diary now and come and express your views about the Yare Valley. The committee always welcomes ideas and comments from members on any matter relating to the Society, not only at this meeting but at any time during the year.

*Alison Ward*

## New member

Charles Clarke, MP for Norwich South and his family are amongst those who have recently become members of our Society. In September, Mr Clarke joined our chairman and another member in a most pleasant and useful walk along the valley between Cringleford and the UEA link road. Many issues and concerns were raised and views exchanged concerning the Yare Valley. In particular, though an ardent supporter of public transport, he understood the Society's concern about the possibility of a new bus route across the valley between UEA and the proposed new hospital.

*Elaine Tucker*

## Link road across the valley

Some of you will have read in the Eastern Daily Press (28 November 1997) the good news that UEA has been given six months by Norwich City Council planners in which to remove the road widening which extends from the end of Chancellors Drive to the bridge over the river. UEA did

not reinstate the road following work carried out by Anglian Water. According to the press article, Mr M Loveday, acting head of planning, said that the widened road, "detracts from the appearance and character of this part of the river valley".

*Alison Ward*

## UEA farm

Inquiries have been made as to whether planning permission has been received for greenhouses that have now appeared on the site and also whether there are likely to be more.

*Elaine Tucker*

## Development at Bartram Mowers

The owners of Bartram Mowers have announced a proposal for residential development on the site off Bluebell Road and gave a presentation to local residents on 6 November. The scheme described by the architect (Michael Innes) comprised three blocks, each a semi-circle containing twenty residential units, mainly two-bedrooms, and set into the slope of the valley. One of the blocks would extend into the "strawberry field". The development would share the access to Bluebell Road with the existing business, which would remain. A previous proposal for residential development was refused permission by the City Council in 1989 and the subsequent appeal was dismissed. The Inspector stated that the future use of the site and appearance of the valley "will be best achieved by resisting further residential development". The new proposal is in conflict with the recently adopted Local Plan but the architect says that the alternative would be to develop the site as a garden centre under a permission granted in 1980. It is understood that a planning application for the new scheme will be made to the City Council, perhaps at the end of January, but the architect has offered the Society an opportunity to discuss the scheme early in the new year.

*YVS Member*

## A River Corridor Enhancement Strategy for Norwich

We have been able to comment on the draft of this useful document produced by the City and also on that of a related one on *Wildlife between Bawburgh and Cringle-*



ford produced by students at UEA under the City's sponsorship.

There are several issues in the latter document about which we have expressed concern, not least a query about its status. Also, it appears from it that UEA wishes to drain and declassify the University Marshes as a County Wildlife Site to make way for development, a statement simply accepted in the report.

In addition, whilst the wildlife of Cringleford Marsh is rated as of nationally important potential, only medium priority is given to its conservation, as to that of the reed-

beds and a nationally rare plant in Bluebell Marsh.

The report however also makes reference to the need for green corridors to allow migration of species along them. This we thoroughly back and see it as one of the important reasons for maintaining and improving existing wildlife habitats along the valley as a matter of top priority.

The valley is of course a unique area in the midst of urban life that deserves conservation, not only for the benefit of the wildlife itself but also for the refreshment of an urban population.



*Elaine Tucker*

### **Road widening scheme, A140 Ipswich Road, Harford**

The County and City councils have been considering schemes for the replacement of the railway bridge on the Ipswich Road at Harford, which have involved road widening between Hall Road and the river bridge. Representations were made on behalf of the Society to express concern at the scale of scheme D and the effect of the widening on the landscape because it would involve the loss of trees and hedge on the north side of the road. The more modest scheme C was preferred because it would be less damaging. The County Council has however adopted Scheme D on the basis that it would provide the space for a future bus lane and would allow traffic to continue to use the Ipswich Road while the scheme is implemented. The scheme includes substantial new tree planting and landscaping, and the County Council has stated that the site will not be visible from the valley, nor from Marston Lane footpath because it is heavily screened by existing tree belts.

*John Ayton*

### **Colney Woods burial ground**

South Norfolk planning committee is still considering a proposal for a "woodland cemetery/burial site" on land overlooking Bowthorpe and the Southern Bypass. The Society has said that if the proposal is truly what its title suggests, it would not object to it, provided any buildings it contained were also hidden by tree planting and that there would be no crematorium.

*Elaine Tucker*

**YVS subscriptions are due now**

### **Yare Valley - north of Earlham Road Bridge**

During recent years this part of the valley has become increasingly accessible to walkers. Exciting developments are in hand and others are being planned, but members are often not aware of these because the B1108 (Norwich-Watton road) has created a barrier between this area and that to the south. Plans are in hand to enable the Yare Valley Walk to cross this obstacle in safety and so extend to Bowthorpe and possibly beyond. Already there is a path from the side of Earlham Church alongside the river to the bottom of St Mildred's Road whence there is another path to the Bowthorpe Marshes.

Following this path from the B1108 one enters the triangle bounded by the river, the back of the UEA residences, the end of Bridge Farm Lane and reaching to Bevan Close. This has been designated as a Millennium Green, one of the first in the country. The grass is regularly cut, the copse and the marsh gradually landscaped. Picnic facilities will follow. The path through the Green leads to Bevan Close at the other end of which it is continued through bushes to Bland Road and thence to Bowthorpe. For when the river is in flood, as at the time of writing, the start of the path by the river (a boarded broadwalk) is under water and Earlham Marsh is a large lake beloved of gulls and geese.

Earlham and Bowthorpe Marshes are part of the Norwich Fringe Project. Recently Anglian Water has offered a substantial contribution to the upgrading of both marshes as nature reserves and plans are currently being worked out after a useful local public consultation. Further consultations will follow and your Society kept informed of developments. One proposal is to restore an old path by the river linking the two marshes and so enhancing the riverside walk.

*Ronald Bocking*

### **Objections to South Norfolk Local Plan**

The Yare Valley is protected to the north of the river by the City Local Plan and to the south by the South Norfolk Local Plan. The Deposit version of the new South Norfolk Local Plan to 2006 was published in May of last year. The valley on the south west side of the river up to Colney Lane is protected from development under Policy RUR 2a. Among the many objections received that will be considered at the Public Inquiry later this year, are several from the University of East Anglia and nearby Research Institutes. These objections concern quite large areas of land that surround the site of the new hospital in Colney and request that these are reserved for future Science Park use rather than have long-term protection. Most of the areas fall within the protected landscape setting of the Southern Bypass to the south west of Colney Lane but one large area opposite the John Innes Institute (cricket field) is actually part of the inner river valley. The Society is vigorously opposing this objection and supporting the South Norfolk Plan to continue to protect this area.

*Graham Hussey*