

Yare Valley Society Newsletter

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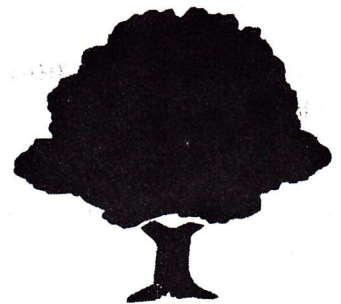
Into the 21st century

As we have had a lot of new members in recent years, we thought it would be of interest to include a brief history of the Society. As a founding member, Andrew Salisbury writes. . . The original impetus came from a proposal to build on the present Bartram site. The Morse family who were famous for their roses owned the land here. The site was a nursery for most of this last century and earlier it extended over the other side of Bluebell Road. In the mid 1960s the business became too much for the owners and they eventually gave up the nursery. It was about this time that a proposal was made to the City Council to develop three storey town houses on the site facing towards the river and backing onto Bluebell Road. The paid officials in the City Planning Office were minded to allow this development and local residents were firmly against any such building. It was then that Donald Law who lived at 48 Bluebell formed the society which was known as the Yare Valley Protection Society. There was a small committee and we made our views known to Norwich City Council. In fact the elected councillors were very much against the proposal and it was turned down. The society could have folded then and ceased to exist but Donald Law and his committee saw that there was a pressing need for the society as there were many sites in Eaton and a few in Cringleford on which unsuitable building could take place. It was soon after this that we were fortunate to have Neville Pearson as our secretary. He was determined to put the society on a firm footing and soon the society had a constitution and lists of members and regular committee meetings and above all annual general meetings. This proved to be of vital importance in later appeals as they give the society the right sort of credentials. This gave us a good foundation and ensured that we were a force to be reckoned with. Other planning proposals were put forward for the area and it became evident that the Yare Valley Protection Society should be renamed. The word "protection" was dropped as it was considered that we should support those few proposals which enhanced the valley. This has been enshrined in our constitution since those days.

The Bartram Mowers site remained idle for a while and

then started up again as a smallholding with vegetable growing right up to the university land. Eventually this was also given up and the land fell into disuse. The present building near the entrance was the water tower and there were extensive greenhouses right down the slope. These became mostly derelict quite quickly and the site was a series of mounds and frameworks of greenhouses with broken glass everywhere. I will not go into the history of applications for building on the Bartram site but merely say that it was by the casting vote of the chairman of the Norwich City Planning Committee that the original Bartram building was allowed.

There was a positive side to this as conditions were put on the new owners to improve the look of the site and to remove the mounds and the broken glass and to include extensive tree planting. The Norwich City "Tree Man" John Palmer produced a pleasing plan which has been carried out and the site is much more pleasant than it would have been otherwise, though there have been plantings which were contrary to his ideas. It is difficult to imagine what the site would have looked like without these constraints.



Initially the society was against the building of the Cringleford bypass as it was thought that this would split the area in two but we began to realise the reverse was true and the society supported the building of the bypass. I think it has joined separate parts of Eaton together again and made it more of a complete village.

Attempts were made to obtain more members from Cringleford but this proved difficult even though many of the planning applications put forward were for building in the valley on the Cringleford side. This was a matter of some regret to the committee members. With the present members of the committee, however this has now been put right and both Eaton and Cringleford are now repre-

sented by dedicated members on the committee.

In the mid 80s the society became dormant because there were few planning applications but the society always remained as a focus of interest and concern if another application were to be put forward. Then we come to the last ten years or so, when we have had very regular committee meetings as there are continual pressures on the valley and continual updating of statutory plans both in the county and city. We are fortunate that we have members who are aware of both the feelings of local inhabitants and of some of the complexities of the present rules governing applications. The society is well established and it is recognised as being of great value to councillors and planning officials. The membership continues to increase which can only show the need for the society in the future.

Guidebook to the Yare Valley Walk

Work is progressing well on the Society's Millennium project and it is hoped to have copies of the completed Guide available at the AGM in May at a nominal price. The booklet will be 16 pages, illustrated with original drawings and photographs and includes both a detailed guide for walkers and short articles on landscape history and wildlife. Advertising sponsorship has been secured to cover most of the costs of production, apart (of course) from the time and expertise given so generously by our contributors.

Planning Applications and New Developments

Virtually all new development of any significance must be the subject of an application for planning permission to the local district council, and can only be carried out if permission is granted.

The Council may advertise the application and notify neighbours and will carry out consultations with statutory bodies and other interested organisations (including the Yare Valley Society). Even if they are not consulted any member of the public and any group may submit representations to the Council and the Council must take them into account before reaching a decision on the application.

Such representations are normally addressed to the Council's Planning Officer (or possibly to the chairman of the Planning Committee) and must be reported to the committee when they consider the application.

If the Council refuses permission the applicant/developer can appeal to the Department of the Environment who will appoint an Inspector to consider the proposal. He may hold a public inquiry or deal with the appeal by considering written representations by interested parties. At this stage any individual or group may make submissions

to the Inspector and he must take them into account. The Inspector can override the decision of the council and grant permission.

It is important to appreciate that any comments or objections should relate to planning considerations (eg. the applicant's personal habits, or the colour of his/her hair are not normally relevant). The current Structure Plan (the countywide policies prepared by the County Council) and the Local Plan (prepared by the City/District Council) are particularly important. The District Council and an Inspector must have regard to their policies. Development which is not in accord with the Structure or Local Plans must have some special justification if it is to be considered favourably. (This is why it is important to look carefully at the Plans when they are being reviewed to make sure that environmental issues are fully covered and the features of importance properly protected). Again any group or individual may comment on the Plans at the consultation stage, and formally object at the inquiry stage.

The YVS committee tries to keep an eye on all applications which affect the Yare valley and makes representations as appropriate, to the local councils (County, City and South Norfolk) which have responsibility for the valley. The committee also watches the progress of the Structure and Local Plans and comments and makes representations on relevant planning appeals. It is still important that individual members of the Society express their concerns to the councils and the DOE when necessary, to add weight to the views expressed on behalf of the Society by the committee.

Possible bus route across the Yare Valley between UEA and the new hospital

Shortly we are to be given an official opportunity to make our views known about such a possibility. This will be in connection with a major South-west Sector Transport and Traffic Study by Norfolk County Council in relation to the obvious highway problems resulting from the large amount of development being allowed in the area.

We know this is a subject of *very great concern* to members of our Society as well as to very many others. You may have seen the picture in the EEN early in December of the University ward councillors chained across the possible route! When the time is right, we will give you more details so that you can make your views known about this very important issue which is particularly vital as far as the protection of the Yare Valley into the 21st century is concerned.

Bartram Mowers extension to building

An application was submitted to extend the already large bulk of the existing industrial-type building by another 29%, greatly adding to its impact on the valley environment. You will be pleased to know that the City planning

committee decisively refused permission. There will no doubt be an appeal when there will be another opportunity for your comments to be taken into account. We will keep you informed.

Work on the Yare Valley Walk

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers plans to construct the new link between Marston Marshes and Eaton Common in February or March. At the end of February, they also intend extending the boardwalk from the UEA direction by about 100 metres.

Social evening last October

Elaine Tucker writes that over 30 members attended. Our thanks go to Alison Ward for the well organised event and also to Andrew Salisbury for chairing our discussion so that there was lots of it! As those who were present will observe, we have responded in this newsletter to many of the requests made and topics mentioned and you can be assured that we are investigating others. All this resulted in a call for a repeat event, so watch this space. In the meantime. . .

Advance notice of AGM

The annual general meeting of the society will take place on Monday 8 May 2000 at Cringleford Playing Field pavilion (at end of Oakfields Road). After the short business part of the meeting, Mike Loveday (acting City Planning Officer) has very kindly agreed to give his illustrated presentation on *Norwich in the New Millennium*. This talk has been highly recommended and it is very relevant to us all. Do make a note in your diary now and come and make your views known.

Work on Bartram Mower marshes

We are continuing to register concern about this work which has been carried out under an Environmentally Sensitive Areas grant. Amongst our concerns is the steepness of the sides of the dykes which means that they will not provide as suitable a habitat for wildlife as would shallow ones.

Waitrose petrol filling station

The application was refused planning permission by the City for seven reasons, including detriment to the environment, traffic safety, and loss of car parking.

Colney Borrow Pit

This has been approved by Norfolk County Council.

Bowthorpe Link Road lighting

It has been decided that eight metre columns with high pressure sodium lamps in flat glass full cut off lanterns will be used throughout, reducing the amount of "spill" light to the minimum.

Danby Wood

Pam Ford writes that funding for small projects has become available for six months through the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers with support from Norwich City Council and English Nature. One such project is to improve the facilities in Danby Wood.

A walk through the wood was arranged by members of the City Council one Sunday last December for local residents and other interested parties. About 25 people arrived and after a pleasant walk through the wood, we adjourned to the Tuckswood Community Centre to make our comments.

The following were amongst the suggestions put forward:

- use of way marks;
- thinning of some foliage to improve light for flora in the glades;
- planting of appropriate new trees - most of the existing ones are of similar age;
- placing of nest boxes;
- siting of rustic seating on areas of higher ground - shallow steps to approach where steep;
- surfacing main through path to enable passage of wheelchairs and bicycles;
- involvement of local young people in consultation and community work days.

Adverse comments concerned the lack of bins for dog refuse and the sporadic emptying of existing rubbish bins.

An activity day is being arranged for the end of February (during half term). Further details will be on the Waitrose notice board.

Articles, comments and letters for possible publication in future newsletters can be sent to: Alison Ward, 20 Brettingham Avenue, Cringleford, Norwich NR4 6XG

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2000 REMAIN AT £1 MINIMUM PER HOUSEHOLD

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or to a committee member
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