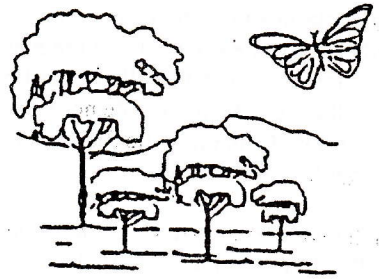


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UP



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

Issue 53

October 2001

Summer Walk

A group of about 14 members and friends enjoyed a walk on the Earlham and Bowthorpe Marshes on a warm Sunday afternoon back in July, led by Matt Davies, Project Officer with Norwich Fringe Project. We went from St Mary's Church, Earlham as far as the ancient bridleway from Bowthorpe to Colney and looked at the river where the ford used to be, passing en route the pond which has been created near Millennium green and the two much larger ponds beyond the new bridge near Colney.

One of our members, Glen Collier, has written about what we saw and heard in terms of wildlife. Just minutes into our walk, banded demoiselles were visible and a blackcap was heard singing. The marshes held several heron and moorhen with young. The weather being good, we saw a reed bunting, a whitethroat was singing and seen by most, a kestrel hovered. There were sedge and reed warblers among the reeds, linnets on the wires and a skylark feeding young. The marshes held a few species of dragonfly. We saw an emperor (largest native dragonfly), a brown hawker, a common darter. A broad bodied chaser was glimpsed, as well as azure and common damselfly, with many banded demoiselles. Butterflies were also in evidence including meadow browns, tortoiseshell, red admiral, small white, large white, and green veined white, and a comma.

We are most grateful to both Matt and Glen for sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm with us.

Benches

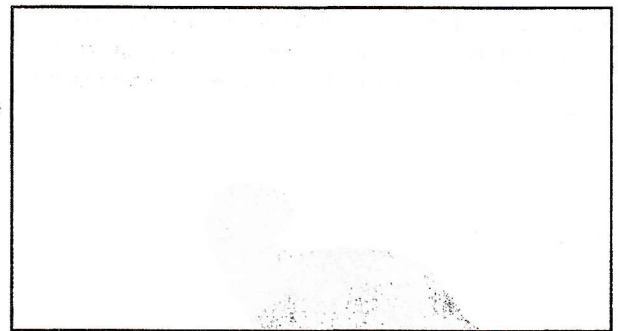
Those of you who attended the AGM in May will know that the committee's recommendation to purchase two benches from the Norwich Fringe Project was approved. After consultation with us, these will probably be placed on the Cringleford to UEA stretch of the valley at the bend in the river opposite Harmer Lane and somewhere near the new boardwalk.

Second mast in The Loke, Cringleford

The second mast did not need planning permission under current rules, and therefore is permitted.

Subscriptions

These are due at the beginning of each year and can be given to the person who delivers your newsletter, or to a committee member or sent direct to the Membership Secretary, 42 Bluebell Road, Norwich, NR4 7LG.



One way of reducing costs is for members who have access to e mail to receive the newsletter in this form. If you are interested, please contact Alison Ward.

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During the summer our chairman in particular has been very busy in connection with a number of issues.

South Norfolk Local Plan In the July newsletter we gave details of the proposed extension to the Norwich Research Park in the form of 15 ha of land at Colney Hall. We strongly objected to this proposal and we await the decision of South Norfolk as to whether there will be another public inquiry. If not, the proposal will be adopted in the Council's approved local plan.

With regard to the planning application for the **conversion and extension of outbuildings at Colney Hall**, after amendments, we approved the actual buildings but questioned whether the proposed car parking and the existing access drive would be sufficient. We stated that any further changes to either would be opposed.

We were represented at three meetings in connection with the **South West Sector Transport Study**. We

made our position abundantly clear about any cross-valley bus route especially at the meeting at the university which was well attended by YVS members and others of like mind. We now await the decision of the County Council on the Study's findings in the light of the public consultation.

On the issue of transport in the Colney area, we have also written to the Department of Transport about the dire need of a direct access to the new hospital and Research Park from the A47 bypass. Norfolk County Council is currently submitting detailed plans to the Department showing how this could be achieved. If you wish to support a direct access, please write to Rt. Hon. John Spellar, Minister of Transport, Local Government and Regions, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU.

Norwich Replacement Local Plan Whilst strongly supporting policies protecting the Yare valley, we have also objected to five separate proposals. These include what appears to be a further extension of housing into the valley at Bowthorpe; the use of a section of the Yare valley walk as a cycleway also at Bowthorpe; and the development of high-tech buildings on Earlham park. The City will now consider all the representations and decide in the new year whether there needs to be a public inquiry.



The Anglian Otters and River Project

The Anglian Otters and Rivers Project is one of a network of similar projects throughout England and Wales working to restore habitats and species associated with river valleys. The project receives generous support from the water industry and is a partnership of The Wildlife Trusts, Anglian Water, Essex & Suffolk Water and the Environment Agency.

The charismatic otter, a good indicator of a healthy river and wetland environment is the project's 'flagship' species but successful conservation measures for otters will be good news for other species too. Whilst the future for the otter looks promising, that of the water vole is in doubt; it has the dubious honour of being the UK's fastest declining mammal. Whilst in parts of England this charming mammal is disappearing, Norfolk remains a stronghold.

However, there is no room for complacency. Both species are vulnerable; the return of the otter has been only partial and more remains to be done to bring the otter back to all its old haunts. Threats such as a poor water

quality and food supply, a lack of suitable habitat and deaths on roads still remain. There are different concerns for the water vole, but high on the agenda are the appropriate management of watercourses and the control of feral American mink. It is also important to know where these species are distributed so that the project can target river valleys for proactive habitat management and enhancement.

The success of the project depends upon the active involvement of local people, landowners and organisations working together. Would you like to help?

The Anglian Otters and Rivers Project monitors the otter population in Norfolk. Monitoring helps to identify gaps in otter distribution and highlights where to work closely with conservation partners and landowners to enhance the river valley environment.

The project needs more volunteers to take part in surveys along the rivers and streams of Norfolk, including the river Yare and its tributaries.

Thorough training will arm you with the skills needed to make a valuable contribution to wetland conservation in the region. If you are interested, please contact Steve Henson, Anglian Otters and River Project Officer, at the Norfolk Wildlife Trust Office, (telephone 01603 625540/mobile 07776 142717/email steveh@nwt.cix.co.uk).

We are grateful to Steve Henson for the above article.

*Articles, comments and letters for possible publication in future newsletters can be sent to: Alison Ward, 20 Brettingham Avenue, Cringleford, Norwich NR4 6XG
E mail davidcward@nthworld.com*