



Yare Valley Society Newsletter

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Visit to Keswick Mill

As was mentioned at the AGM, members of the Society have very kindly been invited to visit Keswick Mill on Tuesday 10 August at 2.30 pm. Numbers are obviously limited but there are still a few places. If you would like to go, please telephone Alison Ward (01603 452330).

New guide to The Yare Valley Walk Harford to Bowthorpe

The very successful guide to The Yare Valley Walk was first published in May 2000 as the YVS millennium project. This year a new edition with revisions has been produced. The guide is on sale at Cringleford Post Office, Intwood Road, price £1. Alternatively it can be purchased from Yare Valley Publishers, 20 Bluebell Road, Norwich NR4 7LF. Please send a cheque for £1 payable to the Yare Valley Society, together with a self-addressed envelope (16 cm by 23 cm minimum) with standard first or second class postage stamp affixed.

Importance of subscriptions

Our membership secretary has drawn the committee's attention to the fact that a number of subscriptions remain outstanding. If you have not paid your subscription for the year, or are in doubt about the situation, please contact our membership secretary, Andrew Salisbury on 01603 455237. **It is important because we can be asked at planning inquiries and in other instances about the number of paid up members.** At our next committee meeting, we shall be discussing the question of subscriptions and the possibility of having a life membership category. If you have any views on this, do let a member of the committee know.

Annual general meeting

Over 40 members attended the annual general meeting and then heard an excellent talk by Professor Trevor Davies, Dean of the School of Environmental Sciences at UEA entitled '*Community involvement in rising to the challenge of environmental change*'.

In her annual report Elaine Tucker, our chairman, highlighted various issues including the lighting between UEA and the hospital which was eventually accepted by the City on the grounds of safety and the likelihood of vandalism on more discreet lighting columns. However there was better news when the City decided not to accept the Inquiry Inspector's recommendation to remove the important 'river valley policy' protection from the Bartram Mowers site. The Society was also pleased that the government has relented a little in its opposition to county councils having any statutory role at all in future regional structure planning. It means that local environmental interests like the YVS now stand a better chance of being heard.

At the meeting John Elbro was elected and welcomed onto the committee. A former chairman of the Eaton and University Ward Community Power Forum, John has for a long time supported the aims of the YVS.

Construction of cycleway and associated lighting between Bluebell Road and the UEA Street

Whilst accepting that better cycle tracks are desirable, the Society has objected to the high level street lighting which we consider is insensitive to the area, and would have the effect of urbanising this green space. We recognise the safety needs of users but we consider the proposed track could be adequately lit by low level bollard lights; we understand that vandal proof ones are available.

Temporary pre-fab adjoining the Sainsbury Centre at UEA

The University has applied to erect a temporary two storey pre-fabricated building adjoining the west (restaurant) end of the Sainsbury Centre to house the School of World Art and Museology whilst the SCVA is closed for building work. The Society is ascertaining how long is 'temporary' and will do its best to obtain a guarantee from the Council that the land will be restored to its existing state when the building is removed.

Colney Wood Burial Park Walk

About twenty members had an interesting and enjoyable evening towards the end of May, visiting the Colney Wood Burial Ground near the Norwich southern bypass. We were given a very good tour of the site and had the philosophy of the site management explained to us. There is a deliberate intent to think in terms of a limited period for the graves and to surround them with a well managed woodland area which attracts much wildlife. Many types of bird already have been attracted into the area.

Usually the Society spends most of its time opposing so-called developments in the river valley. It is pleasing to be able to say that here is a development which is in tune with our aims and does a lot to enhance the Yare valley in this area. There has been an extensive tree restoration which is still in process with the effect of thinning out some trees to allow the others to prosper. This has been effected most sympathetically. The few essential buildings are well designed, are made mostly of wood and fit exceptionally well into the site. The architecture of the buildings is impressive and quite intriguing. Not many buildings in Cringleford and Eaton are mainly hexagonal! The burial places if they are marked at all are of wood. They may be wooden logs or rather more specific 'in remembrance' wooden epitaphs. The whole effect is one of considerable charm with the feeling of being on a wooded hillside.

Our hosts kindly provided refreshments after the tour.

Walk in Whitlingham Country Park

The guided walk at Whitlingham Country Park on 11 July was a most interesting experience, as we saw what has been achieved by making former gravel workings into an increasingly beautiful area for walking, water sports and wildlife. The only disappointment was that there were just three members to enjoy it—perhaps because of the threat of rain—which in fact did not materialise. We are sorry that there were not more members on this worthwhile walk but we certainly recommend a visit there at any time. Our thanks go to Matt Davies from the Norwich Fringe Project and Paul Bolton the park ranger.

Thanks

Many thanks must also be expressed to Glen Collier, one of our butterfly and bird experts in the Society, who kindly led a walk in the valley at the end of April.

Life in the valley

Colin and Maureen Forbes have written as follows:

'After the doom and gloom concerning climatic change forecasting, here is a resume of seasonal happenings in part of the beautiful Yare valley. Just over a year ago, we came to live on the side of the river behind the 12th century thatched church of St Andrew at Eaton, where the Yare divides to flow either side of the long island to join up again before Keswick Mill.

'On 3 January when the snows melted and the water level came up over half of our quay, I was standing in wellies watching the flowing waters when three otters came swimming round the island rolling over in the turbulence as they headed upstream. A call to the Otter Centre confirmed the group to be most likely a mother with almost fully grown male and female pups.

'Come late February, an Environment Agency team arrived to spend some weeks clearing the river and sides of the island and then the outer sides along the water meadow. This involved driving a great yellow tracked digger across the shallows and on to the island. On returning a week or so later across the shallows it got stuck half out since rains had softened the ground and began to settle in the water. The next day an equally large red monster digger came to the rescue and after much digging of a ramp and then much pulling by one and self pushing by the yellow one it eventually came up onto the safety of the water meadow again. Great excitement!

'We have had a two-day visit from a sandpiper on the quay and the same from a lovely male goosander on the river. Our swan pair are a constant delight and have been joined on day visits by greylags and a pair of Egyptian geese. Our regulars include Henry the heron; Phil the pheasant with his dark and light ladies; green and spotted woodpeckers, while a kingfisher darts to and fro like a blue light bulb. The long-tailed tits join their cousins on the feeders and one knocks at bedroom windows. Recently male and female black caps have returned after the winter to make their clicking noise in the bushes.

'With the water meadow growth right down in winter Mr Fox can be seen frequently and occasionally a roe deer. On a recent evening eight horses of varying sizes and colours appeared and then returned in the direction of the fields over by the rail crossing on Low Road.

'Never a dull moment.'