

# Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook: Occasional Titbits, No. 2, September 2009

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If you have items suitable for inclusion please let me have them as they arise.

1. **The swans.** During the summer of 2009 many people were disappointed that only one of the six eggs, in the swans' nest in the middle of the narrow Brook, hatched. Herbie Ketch (a resident of Cherry Hinton and formerly of Cambs Swan Rescue) had taken an interest in the nest and eventually took one of the dead eggs to the Centre for Specialist Investigation at the University of Cambridge Veterinary School. They found that the embryo had simply stopped developing at a certain point. Herbie speculates that this was due to the nest being made from sedge alone (and therefore unstable), resulting in the eggs being pushed down too far, into or near the running water; the end result being that the eggs were too cold to hatch.

In recent weeks the swans have made forays back to the Brook for a day or so at a time. There have been no reports of viewings of take-offs and 'landings'.

2. **The lakes.** Interest (both legal and illegal) in the lakes continues to simmer. The City Council have some money for 'habitat improvement' inside the lakes area as a result of planning gains from the construction of the Sports Centre and the Hotel which resulted in some loss of habitat. Any current investigations do not extend to increasing public access. A map showing the pattern of land/water ownership by different bodies looks extraordinarily complicated and improbable. The pattern of boundaries over the water incorporates the route of the railway which used to cross the land which was subsequently excavated, to form the quarry/lake.

3. **St. Bede's swings.** The two swings and a slide in the 'green space' beside Snakey Path have been removed. The mound, with its steps, and the litter bin remain. What is more, the bin is still routinely emptied. Technically it is feasible that houses could be built there.

4. **Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall** <http://www.cherryhintonhall.com> held their second public meeting on 9 September, in St. Phillip Howard Church Hall, Walpole Road. Previously they had dropped leaflets to 4,500 homes. They have strong practical support from Labour City Councillors Newbold and Dryden, and Michelle Bullivant, Chairperson of the Cherry Hinton Local History Society, not to mention the police. The Friends in general were not keen for their Constitution to pick out wildlife for special mention.

It was not realised at the Meeting that the following three areas have been designated by the City Council as City Wildlife Sites: Cherry Hinton Brook, Cherry Hinton Hall Brook, and **Cherry Hinton Hall Bird Sanctuary**. This supposedly provides some degree of protection. There was some discussion at the Meeting of the serious decline in numbers of water fowl over several years but the idea of status as a 'bird sanctuary' passed unobserved. There is a clear geographical overlap between the interests of the Friends of the Brook and the Friends of the Hall.

5. Meanwhile, downstream, **Friends of Stourbridge Common** held their first public meeting on 11 September, in St. Andrew's Hall. <http://www.spanglefish.com/FriendsofStourbridgeCommon/> They gathered together wide-ranging expertise and experience, and generated notable enthusiasm. Vent was given to universal moans about antisocial cycling and motorcycling, and the inadequacy of signs. The long-term objective is to raise the Common's status from that of a City Wildlife Site to **Local Nature Reserve**.

6. A **mini litter pick** is planned for **Dawes Lane** on Tuesday afternoon, 15 September.