

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

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www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Cherry Hinton Festival Day 16th September 2017

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook will have a stall at this event on the Recreation Ground, Cherry Hinton High Street. The event runs from 12 noon to 6pm and admission is free. Please come along and say 'hello' and perhaps lend a hand on our stall. Last year we had a kingfisher made from old shopping trolleys, kids' games and guess the weight of the bag of rubbish, as well as displays about our activities. Photo of our stall in 2016 © Emmy Smart



World Rivers Day Litterpick 24th September 2017



To mark World Rivers Day, Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook (and other Rivercare groups) are organising a litterpick to clean up the brook. Please come and help. We will provide litterpicks, rubbish bags, rubber gloves. Meet outside the dentist at 97 Burnside at 10.30 am.

AGM report

The 2017 AGM was held on 26th June at St Thomas's Hall, Ancaster Way and was well attended. The Chair reported on the activities over the last year – once again, a very busy time. Raising public awareness of the stream and our activities had been a particular focus: the newsletter reached its 50th edition; nature walks had been initiated; we now have an active website and social media updates; we exhibited again at the Cambridge Natural History Society Conversazione; produced a new leaflet about the brook with support from the PEBBLE Fund. We had three litterpicks, including one as part of the Great British Spring Clean and one with the scouts. We also completed the restoration work undertaken through funding from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership, and had raised further funds for this from the Cam Water PEBBLE fund.

We were very lucky to have Peter Pilbeam as our guest speaker who provided an excellent broad-ranging talk on water voles, covering their ecology, and decline in the UK. He described the survey undertaken in May which was combined with training for FCHB committee members. The general conclusion was that there is a healthy population of voles in Cherry Hinton Brook and that numbers appear similar to the last survey (two years ago).

Rob Mungovan, Conservation Officer, East Anglia and Central, of the Wild Trout Trust (WTT), also very kindly attended and explained the work of the WTT. He has offered to help with project ideas, funding advice, and he brings experience from elsewhere, including stream improvements and recovering trout numbers at Fowlmere nature reserve.

The evening ended with a lively discussion and refreshments – thanks to all who attended.

Rivercare and Beachcare Volunteer Conference 2017

New committee member, Anne Rout, attended the Rivercare and Beachcare Volunteer Conference on behalf of Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook and has written this report.

It took place, on a sunny day at the end of July, at the beautiful waterside location of Rutland Water – well worth a visit for the 25 miles of walking/cycling paths – at the Rutland Water Nature Reserve and the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre.

There were about 20 river and beach groups at the Conference and it was a fantastic opportunity to network with fellow volunteers and to find out what conservation and monitoring projects they have been working on. We heard presentations from each of the Rivercare regional officers and from two river improvement projects: (i) a 5+ year scheme at Werrington Brook in Peterborough (www.pect.org.uk/WerringtonBrook) which has recently won an Environmental award and (ii) River Withan (Grantham Rivercare), where the water course has been narrowed using natural berms, thus allowing the current to speed up.

We were then split into groups for a fun, but 'educational' competition. This included the 'Keep Britain Tidy' litter recycling quiz, throw the towline (note to self - must get more practice at this!!) One of the most valuable quizzes involved identifying the non-native invasive species from groups of similar looking aquatic plants and animals.

During lunch, there was the opportunity to don VR glasses and be transformed to the world of the underground sewer – where you had to choose the right gadgets/chemicals to clean the water of unsavoury blockages. Perhaps not the most obvious activity to pair with lunch, but very fun to watch all the same.

Lunch was followed by a talk on the successful Osprey Reintroduction Project (the first wild Osprey in England for 150 years hatched at Rutland Water in 2001 and now regularly breed here) and a boat-trip to see these magnificent birds.

All in all a fun day in a fantastic aquatic location!

Where are the birds???

Late summer is a quiet time along the brook. After the mating season there is no need to sing so that, and the density of the foliage, means that the birds are less likely to be spotted. Indeed, having expended so much energy on finding territories and mates, the birds are now resting up before the weather turns. Food is currently plentiful so there is no need to group together yet in flocks to find enough food for the winter ahead.

All birds have to grow new feathers at least once a year, so many of our hedgerow and garden birds use the time after breeding and rearing chicks to moult and grow new feathers, as well as to conserve energy. Even the mallards, like all ducks, go into what is called "eclipse" where the bright breeding plumage of the male birds is shed and regrown. It appears as if there are only female mallard here; in fact it's because both males and juveniles have only brown plumage similar to the females until they get their breeding plumage in the autumn.

Another eel

In Titbits #52 we published a photo of Guy Belcher with a big – but dead – eel. Then this August we had a report from Katherin Pertsinidis of a live eel in the brook along the stretch behind Perne Road approaching Sainsbury's. With the report was a link to some video footage she had taken which can be seen at <https://youtu.be/ND7DzIf27qs>.

Please continue to send your sightings of water voles and other interesting wildlife, to wildlife@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk Remember to include date, time and location, using the numbered lampposts on Snakey Path.



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