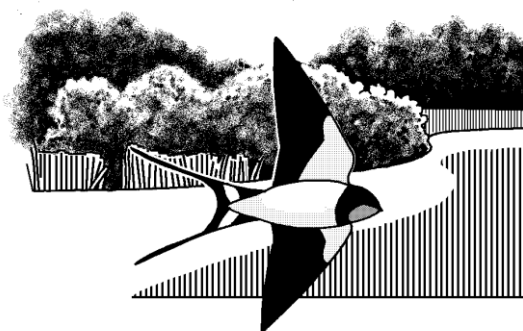


# Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP)

## Members' Newsletter January 2005



Happy New Year to all our members. This is the fifth LOHP newsletter, and activity on the project has continued apace since our last news update back in June. All the information in this newsletter, and much more, can also be found on our website at [www.lohp.org.uk](http://www.lohp.org.uk).

### Open Day

In July we held a successful Open day on the Frith - despite the typical summer weather (i.e. it was very wet!) we estimate that at least 500 people visited the Frith and enjoyed guided walks, a falconry display, working sheep dog demonstrations, fint knapping and many stalls with local crafts and produce for sale. The Open day was part of the programme of events linked to our Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Organising the day took a huge amount of work (so we can't hold one every year, despite popular demand), and we are particularly grateful to the volunteers who came to help out on the day itself.

### AGM

Our AGM was held on 9<sup>th</sup> November at the Lophams Village Hall, attended by over 70 members and friends. After the formal business, we were treated to a fascinating talk by Richard Mabey, renowned writer on natural history, and now a local resident. Richard's talk, entitled "The Wood and the Wet", described aspects of his personal journey from the woodlands of the Chilterns to the wetlands of Norfolk and Suffolk, with readings from his forthcoming book "Nature Cure", which will be published in February. Our thanks go to Richard, and also to the many members who generously donated prizes for a top class raffle.

As all our trustees and officers were willing to continue in their roles, there have been no changes to the Charity's management committee.

Members who were unable to come to the AGM, and normally receive their mailings by email, can view the Trustees report and financial summary for the 2003-2004 financial year on our website. Copies are enclosed for those of you who receive postal mailings.

### Walks

We've continued our programme of guided walks through the later half of the year, with a successful Fungus Foray led by Judy and John Geeson in September, and a bracing New Year's walk on 2<sup>nd</sup> January through Blo' Norton and Hinderclay Fens. The new year's sunshine attracted a fine turn out, with 50 people and six assorted dogs in attendance.

Our next event will be a **May Day Walk on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May** - the exact route is yet to be decided, but keep an eye on the website, or contact us nearer the time for details. We also plan to repeat last year's very enjoyable cycle round around the Little Ouse headwaters. The June date is still to be finalised - details will be posted on the web site in the near future and sent out with our next mailing.

The Suffolk Moth Group will be visiting Hinderclay Fen to record moths on the evening of Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August. If anyone would like to join them to see some of the beautiful moths that inhabit the fen, please get in touch nearer the time for further details.

### **Work parties**

Thanks are due to all those volunteers who've attended work parties in the last few months - your efforts are much appreciated, and the hours put in continue to count towards match funding for some of our grants. We trained a number of volunteers in the use of brush cutters during the summer (on possibly the hottest weekend of the year), and have continued to use a combination of volunteer and contract labour to keep paths clear and mow the wet fen areas on Hinderclay and Blo' Norton.

Through the winter months we've been continuing our programme of hedge planting on the Frith and the Lows. The hedging planted last winter on the Frith did very well, with a high survival rate. In addition to our regular volunteers, we also had help from the Environment Agency, in the form of a "team day" held on Blo' Norton Fen, when Agency employees spent the day clearing and burning some of the roadside scrub.

The list of work parties for the next few months is at the end of this newsletter - you'll see that in addition to the usual activities, we're planning to take part in the Suffolk Hedgerow Survey in our project area in late spring/early summer.

### **First aid training available - book your place now!**

The LOHP has organised a one-day Basic First Aid course, to be held on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February at Redgrave Activities Centre. There are 12 places available on the course - priority will be given to regular work party volunteers, but anyone interested in attending should contact Helen Smith at the LOHP (contact details below) as soon as possible.

### **Fundraising appeal**

Although we have so far been extremely successful in raising money to support our work over the next few years, we now need to look to the future, and start to secure funds for the longer term. We have engaged the services of a professional fundraising organization - Spectrum Capital Services, and Sarah Grieveson is acting as our appeal manager. We have launched a major appeal - the RiverlinkAppeal - aimed primarily at grant-giving bodies, trusts and other charities that fund the type of project we are undertaking. If you would like to know more about the appeal, please contact Sarah by email at [appeal@lohp.org.uk](mailto:appeal@lohp.org.uk) or post at 2 Backhills Cottages, Botesdale, Diss, Norfolk IP22 1DW.

### **Land management**

Grazing by sheep on the Frith and the Lows continued well into the winter, because of the mild weather and the late growth of the vegetation. This grazing has had a remarkably good effect on the vegetation over the last couple of years. Grassland plants, such as cowslips, ladies smocks, are starting to re-appear and the stinging nettles are starting to disappear. The sheep have been taken off for the rest of the winter, but we hope they'll be back in spring.

While most of our sites have at least some wet ground, there's not very much year-round, open water available. To remedy this we've cleared out two of the overgrown ditches on The Lows, creating open water, which should be good habitat for amphibians and insects such as dragonflies. We'll be keeping a close eye on the ditches to see what appears next year. We've also dug a small pond on Blo'Norton Fen, with the help of the older children from the Watch II club. Dragonflies started to lay their eggs in it as the children were digging and now stoneworts and pondweeds are growing in it.

In the last two months work has begun on Betty's Fen, the land the LOHP has bought at the western end of Blo' Norton Fen. In consultation with English Nature we've created a management plan for this site and we will be opening up and restoring the central area of degraded fen by removing some of the tree growth and creating a raised bund to improve access. Material for the bund will come from the scraping off of surface layers of dried-out peat, creating a shallow wet area to encourage re-colonisation by typical fen vegetation. Eventually, we will link the access route here to the riverside path on Blo' Norton Fen.

Work on Betty's Fen is partly funded by the European TEN project, as is the scrub clearance currently being carried out on Hinderclay Fen - here we are opening up a larger area of wet fen at the western end of the site, although much of the existing woodland will remain.

### **Help needed**

We are always looking for more people to help with the project. Everyone involved in running the project is a volunteer and there are many tasks, both large and small, practical and administrative, where more hands would make lighter work. Whether your flair is for building nest boxes, advertising events or running companies, if you can spare a little time, please do get in touch.

### **Subscriptions**

Annual subscriptions are due in April, and we'll be sending out a reminder nearer the time - however there are a few members who have yet to renew their subs for the current year - we're sure this is something that's just slipped your minds, but we'd be grateful for your money, please.

### **Lost property!**

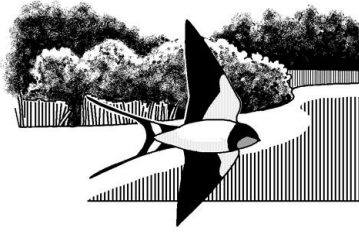
Some expensive camera equipment was found on Blo'Norton Lows in early September. If you are the owner, please contact us as soon as possible.

A member who kindly contributed mince pies for the AGM left their Pyrex glass plate behind. Please get in touch so that we can return it!

How to contact us:

Phone: 01379 687680 , e-mail: [enquiries@lohp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lohp.org.uk),

Post: Little Ouse Headwaters Project, c/o Waveney Cottage, Redgrave Road, South Lopham, Diss, Norfolk, IP22 2JN



## Little Ouse Headwaters Project

# SPRING/SUMMER 2005 WORK PARTY PROGRAMME

Our work parties are held on **the second Sunday** in the month:

Date	Venue	Task
13 February	Betty's Fen	Scrub/brash clearance on wet fen
13 March	Betty's Fen	Scrub/brash clearance on wet fen
10 April	The Frith	Thistle control (!)
8 May	To be announced	Hedgerow survey
12 June	To be announced	Hedgerow survey
14 August	Sedge cutting/raking	Hinderclay Fen
11 September	Sedge cutting/raking	Blo' Norton Fen

All work parties start at 10-30am. Please come for as little or as much time as you like and bring your friends along - all contributions are valuable. You will need wellies or strong boots, old clothes and a drink. We will provide tools and gloves. **Please don't be put off by bad weather! If it is too wet for the planned task we will meet at an indoor venue for nest-box-building and tool maintenance**

For up-to-date information nearer the time, e-mail [info@lohp.org.uk](mailto:info@lohp.org.uk), look at our web site [www.lohp.org.uk](http://www.lohp.org.uk) or phone:

for Hinderclay Fen, Reg and Rowena Langston on 01379-898009

for Blo'Norton & Betty's Fen, Jo-Anne Pitt on 01379-898684

for the Frith and the Lows, Helen Smith on 01379-687680