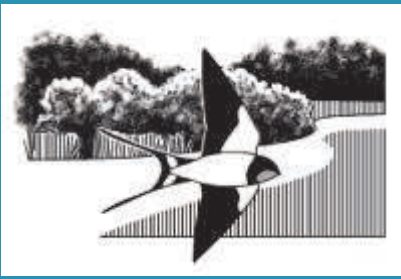


News from the Ouse

ISSUE NUMBER 11

August 2014



WELCOME

to the newsletter of the Little Ouse Headwaters Project.

We thought we'd be taking it a bit easier this summer, having completed a major Heritage Lottery Fund project in the Spring, but as you'll see in this edition, there's no rest for the LOHP!

With new land and a restoration project under way we are as busy as ever. I hope you enjoy reading about our activities. Jo Pitt, Chair

Suffolk Walking Festival visited Hinderclay Fen

LOHP volunteer, Helen Smith, guided 40 fit people on a walk through Redgrave and Lopham Fen and Hinderclay Fen in May. Taking part in Suffolk Walking Festival's Challenge Walk, the participants had set off from Fritton Lake four days earlier and would finish at Elveden on day six. At Hinderclay they took time to admire the lichen heath and the river, the restored reed bed and the wet woodland. Then, off they strode into the distance. See pictures at <http://suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk/>



David Falk

Ash dieback

Anne Edwards from the John Innes Centre kindly ran a training course for the LOHP on ash dieback infection (*Chalara fraxinea*). This fungus which breaks down the leaves and leaf stems tends to kill small trees in a year or two. Large trees may take ten years.

In October 2012 it was identified at Ashwellthorpe woods in Norfolk.

Since then it's been found widely, with East Anglia and Kent currently the worst affected areas.

After an introduction to *Chalara* the 11 volunteers set off to look for signs. The first ash they came to had been infected last year, with several dead-ended twigs, and a pinkish colouration on the infected parts.

Anne stressed the importance of monitoring trees that show signs of infection but a slow progression of the illness. This may point to natural resistance in some trees.

We are going to start monitoring all our sites for the disease this summer. For more information contact Pete Fox or Helen Smith.

See also: www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara

There's something about orchids...



Arthur Rivett

Arthur Rivett found this early marsh orchid in May at Bleyswycks Bank - even before the sheep did!

The Puzzle picture

in the last newsletter was Bleyswyck's Bank, seen from Betty's Fen - before the trees were taken down.

See below the same view this summer - take a walk and admire!



Chris Gay



New land

The LOHP has secured another piece of the wetland restoration jigsaw by buying land next to Parker's Piece. Read all about it on page 5

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Garboldisham Primary School take art seriously



We gave the older group a restricted choice of paint based on the colours of the site. They enjoyed seeing how well these made paintings of the site. One boy observed how the pond was NOT blue, as water is so often painted, but BROWNY colours!

Another said he 'really needed a red' as he had drawn a ladybird.

I suggested he had the chance to design his own ladybird out of the fen colours - his own 'undiscovered' species! He was pleased and out came a blue and green one!

When I gave them my complete range of watercolour pencils to use (by dipping in water) - it was lovely to see how they all only chose the restricted colours of the paint and the fen!

What the children said ...

We went to the Common and found some rabbit bones. We took them back to school and drew pictures of them with charcoal and then painted them. (Lydia)

We collected some sticks, stones and bones to take back to school. (Jonny)
The pictures are going to be displayed in the hall. They are in a sort of map showing where the wet, damp and dry parts of Broomscot Common are. (George)



At the pond we saw reflections of houses and trees in the water. (Cerys)



What the staff said ...

The children have found it inspiring to work with Rosemary, see her original work and to learn from her. Several children, who previously did not rate their artistic efforts highly, now see themselves as 'artists' and have been amazed at what they can achieve. We have a wonderful collaborative map and some exciting creatures to display. We would like to thank Rosemary very much – it has been lovely to work with her.

(Suzanne Halliwell, teacher)

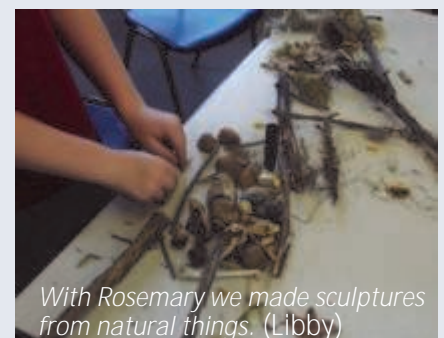
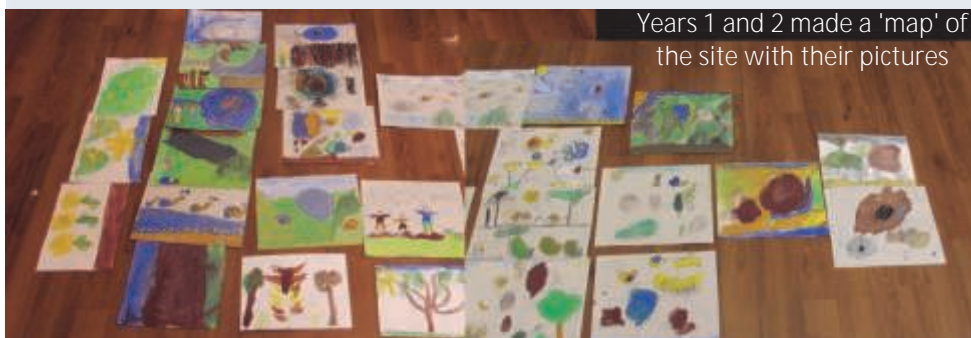
Artist and LOHP volunteer Rosemary Humphries describes the art project she led for the LOHP this spring, introducing the school's younger children to the delights of Broomscot Common.

We visited Broomscot Common with two groups, gathering 'stuff', and looking closely at patterns: mosses, thistle rosettes, snail shells and all sorts of found objects.

Years 1 and 2 looked at the pond and saw how the willow tree is being managed. At school, they worked with charcoal first, and then enjoyed producing 'sculptures' and designs out of the contents of their bags.

Reception worked with coloured crayons, seeing how using just a few colours, and scribbling with them produces rewarding results.

Years 1 and 2 made a 'map' of the site with their pictures



With Rosemary we made sculptures from natural things. (Libby)

John Webb moving away, but always with us

Farmer John Webb, who sold his water meadows to LOHP about three years ago, is to leave the area - after about 80 years.

For nearly 60 of those years he faithfully served on the parish council, and councillors said goodbye to him at their annual meeting. He has decided to go and live with his sister Barbara in Felixstowe, but he will never be entirely absent: the LOHP has his voice recorded for posterity – done as one of the oral history recordings that volunteers undertook for the Heritage Lottery Fund project.

His working life was spent at first as a **delivery boy for his father's grocery** emporium at the White Horse pub, ensuring that the platters of Thelnetham were never bare. The quite groundless rumour persists that they continued their high level of service in the dark and hungry days of World War Two - as purveyors of provisions to the people, when many of these delicacies were quite unobtainable elsewhere.

Later he made his living at Fen Farm, chiefly in stock- raising. Always public-spirited John made the

occasional sortie on his sturdy tractor to haul some motorist - who thought Fen Lane a fit place for a three-point turn - from the mire that is Middle Fen.

In recent years he has also again been doing the rounds, this time as a delivery man – not distributing **satisfaction for the villagers'** stomachs but salvation for their souls – in the form of the Four Gazette, the parish magazine graced by the holy pen of Reverend John Fulton, rector of the parish.

Present parish chairman Martin Ward spoke for all in paying tribute to John and thanking him for all those years of thankless effort, his sentiments endorsed by Joanna Spicer, county **councillor. He added 'Along with many others, I shall be very sad to see him leave. I flatter myself that I may not be at the very top of his list of people he'll probably be glad to get away from.'**



Webbs Fen looking glorious in May

Reg Langston

John says he is looking forward to his new life - and LOHP members, forever grateful that he has left everyone such a wonderful landscape legacy, will no doubt join in the best wishes and rejoice that his voice and name will be remembered for all time as the public continues to enjoy **Webb's Fen.**



Mike Harding

It has been a joy to work with these children (Rosemary Humphries)



Remember what this feels like?

LOHP volunteer photographer Di McDonald tells us about one of her favourite pictures

I am an enthusiastic amateur photographer and have been a member of the LOHP photography group since it was formed two years ago.

For me, one of the great things that the LOHP does is to enthuse children and young people about practical conservation. We hear so much these days about youngsters spending all their time indoors, not getting enough exercise, so it is a delight to see children having fun outdoors and at the same time learning about the environment they live in and how to protect it. I always enjoy photographing the various activities that the children are involved in,



from pollarding an old willow tree to designing and making apparatus to protect new gorse growth from nibbling by rabbits!

This picture was taken on a cold February morning on Scarfe Meadows, and the children were letting off steam after working hard planting new saplings and learning about trees. *Di McDonald*

Quatrefoil -

bringing local history out of the shadows

Quatrefoil local history group was formed to research the history of Botesdale, Redgrave and The Rickinghalls and to make the results accessible, mostly by publishing books. Quatrefoil was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant under the 'All Our Stories Programme' presented by Michael Wood and the BBC. The University of East Anglia's Ideas Bank Initiative gave helpful support.

Eight books

Having reached the end of the grant period, Quatrefoil has published eight books. These include: *A Suffolk Boy in East Africa*, an inspiring story about the life of Samuel Speare, a 15 year old boy who left Rickinghall to become a missionary in Zanzibar in 1868. *A Walk Through Botesdale* and *A Walk Through Rickinghall* take us from the medieval period to the present.

The guide to *St. Mary's Church Rickinghall Inferior* mentions local craftsmen where possible. The two-part *Reflections on Redgrave* is a miscellany of history-related parish magazine articles. *Victorian and Edwardian Rectors of Rickinghall* tells interesting stories of Rectors and their families. *Botesdale Medieval Market* is the result of years of research into the Latin Manorial Court Rolls.

Get your copies ...

The church guide is £3, the others £5 each. (All available from Diana Maywhort, 01379 898785).

The church guide is available from the church and the other books from Hill Top Hardware Stores and Pet Food Store, Botesdale.



The Redgrave books are also available from Redgrave Community Shop. Profits will fund further publications and donations will go to Rickinghall Inferior Church, Round Tower Churches Society and Churches Conservation Trust. The next three books will cover World War I, World War 2, and Basil Brown, the Rickinghall archaeologist who discovered the Sutton Hoo ship burial.

Exhibition

Quatrefoil is having an exhibition in Rickinghall Inferior Church on Aug 9th, 10 am - 4pm with displays on the subjects of the next three books.

We hope to launch our latest book at this event which will be about the men on the war memorial from World War I.

More info: www.quatrefoil.org.uk
Jean Sheehan

Rowena Langston



Those *are* nettles and that *is* Reg

New Fen: not new and not (currently) a fen

Twelve years after the LOHP started up, we are very pleased to announce our twelfth land acquisition.

With the generous help of the Heritage Lottery Fund and donors to our Riverlink Appeal, we have purchased 2.23 hectares (5.5 acres) of land in Thelnetham. Adjoining **both the LOHP's Parkers Piece and Thelnetham Middle Fen** nature reserve, this new fen is anything but new! The 1885 Ordnance Survey map shows that the site included a fragment of the historic Thelnetham Fen – now the only part still awaiting restoration of its rich fen wildlife.

Not much like its neighbour

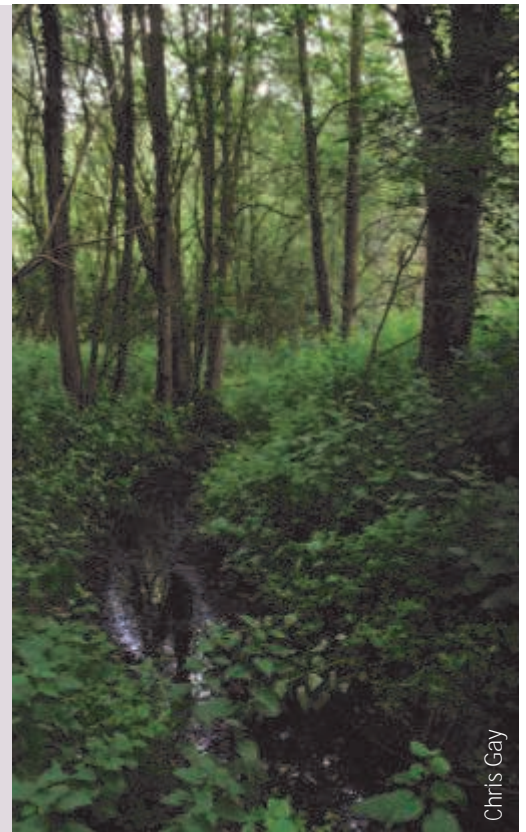
Not only is New Fen not new, it's also barely recognisable as a fen! The whole site is woodland, much of it consisting of species not native to Britain. Although Thelnetham Fen next door is very rich in uncommon and beautiful fen flowers, including carpets of marsh orchids in early summer, all of the special fen species appear to have been lost from New Fen. Over much of the site, stinging nettles predominate under the trees.

What hope of recovery?

So how has this happened, and can the site be restored to its former glory as part of the internationally important valley fens in the headwaters of the Little Ouse and Waveney rivers? Aerial photographs show the progressive loss of fen habitat, first to arable agriculture and later to woodland.

Overshadowed by trees

Much of the woodland is the remains of an 1980s plantation, planted in dense rows very much like the one that covered Bleyswycks Bank seven years ago. Only a small part of the site next to Thelnetham Middle Fen was too wet to be cultivated, and this remained as open fen until the peaty soils dried, allowing trees to colonise in the 1980s.



Chris Gay

Not rushing in

Over the next two years our HLF grant will fund surveys to help us assess how best to restore the site. Next door, on Thelnetham Middle Fen, woodland was removed along the boundary with New Fen, and the peat surface lowered, in 2008. This area is already covered with fen flowers reappearing from seed buried in the soil and seeding in from adjacent areas. We are optimistic that, with carefully planned management, the same can eventually be achieved on the wetter parts of New Fen. On the

higher western side of the site, areas of drier grassland, with patches of scrub to attract birds such as whitethroat, are likely to be restored. New Fen will eventually live up to its name - and also perpetuate the infamous British tradition of calling anything New! Once initial restoration work is done, visitors will be able to enjoy the site from a circular path off Fen Lane, **which borders the site's south side.**

Helen Smith and Jo Pitt



Arthur Rivett

Addictively interesting

The HLF grant which funded so much land purchase and practical conservation also paid for the LOHP website to be redesigned and enlarged. Work on this continues, but over last winter and spring a mass of new material was added.

The archive

The archive section is now extraordinarily rich in records, reports and links ranging from archaeology to beetles, and from a history of sheep breeds to personal memories of playing football on Broomscot Common. The site and species reports are a delight. They make an outstanding record of the natural history of this corner of England, and taken together represent months of paid and volunteer work by scores of enthusiasts and experts. It is a model which other conservation projects will find hard to equal.

The best way to discover the new, improved LOHP website is to go **and explore. But be warned, it's easy to lose yourself there for hours.** Visit www.lohp.org.uk

New and old

Modern-day reports are complemented by links to historic documents like the 1960 report on Hinderclay Fen by David Bellamy and Francis Rose. The depth and breadth of the archive is hugely impressive, but be reassured - **it's all so well organised** that if you want to find something - you will!

Thanks for the hard work

Thanks and congratulations are due to Helen Smith who **did the lion's share of sifting** and uploading the archive material, to Stephen Baillie who chose the software and made it all work and to Laura Smith for designing it. Reg Langston and Nicky Rowbottom devised the **'Learn more' pages and we're grateful to** Garboldisham Primary and Hopton Primary who kindly allowed us to share their ideas and material.

Learn more

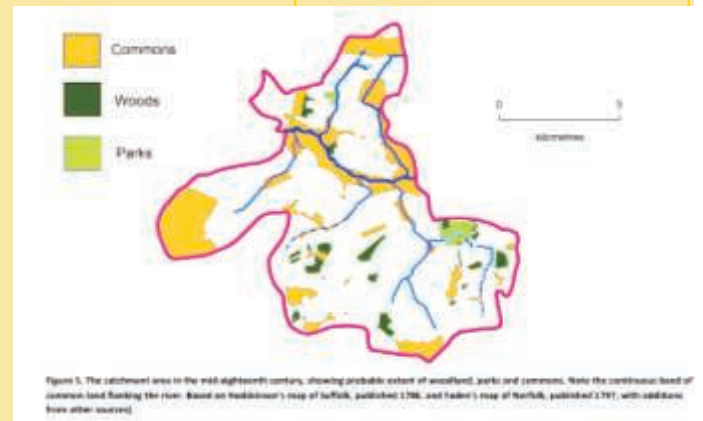
Particularly aimed at helping teachers, parents and young people get to grips with the area, the **'Learn more' pages**

consist of activities and slide shows, quizzes and puzzles all based round LOHP sites and species.

The several HLF-funded **schools' projects** are described in an easily-read form - with lots of pictures.

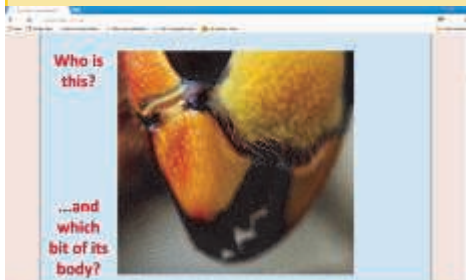
Aspects of River History

A fascinating UEA report is available in the archive, **outlining the history of 'our' 7.5 km of the Little Ouse.** Professor Tom Williamson whisks us back to the days **when 'Courts of sewers' were** charged with maintaining drainage channels and unravels for us the changes in the watercourses and in the surrounding land uses. Illustrated with excellent maps, the report makes really enjoyable reading.



Wildlife in Close Up

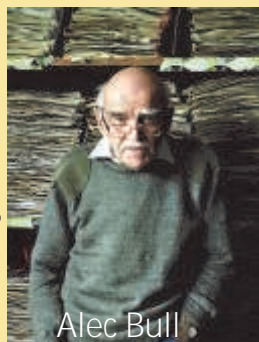
Anyone who enjoys photography will love Sheila Tilmouth's stunning pictures in Wildlife In Close Up (2). Taking macro-photos is great fun and Sheila gives some really useful tips on how to do it well. Wildlife In Close Up (1) turns macro shots into an enjoyable quiz for children, asking them to identify things from just a close-up detail - and then adds information and spelling challenges. **(It's deceptively easy to get some wrong - water voles were not eaten by American MONKS released from fur farms!)**



In their own words

Individual stories come vibrantly alive **on the 'Personal Histories' page**, where you can now listen to some local voices. The recordings add a compelling dimension to the stories such as Roly Farr's beautifully described recollections of schooldays in Garboldisham and his wartime experiences in the Home Guard.

In another interview Alec Bull describes a lifetime of identifying and meticulously recording wildlife and plants, and recalls amusing anecdotes such as his encounter with a **'disreputable old gentleman'** who turns out to be a very respectable expert on digger wasps. Unmissable listening!



Mike Harding

A Special Landscape

This gives a beautifully illustrated overview of the Little Ouse Valley, with bite-sized pieces of information that make a good introduction for anyone exploring the area. Full of photographs and interesting facts (sprinkled with thought-provoking quiz-like questions) it could be a fun guide to look at before or after a family visit. It presents the story of the wetlands in a fun, engaging way. Photos, maps and aerial views highlight the variety of landscape and habitat, and describe how the valley has changed over the years.



Survey results 'beyond our wildest dreams'

After the radical works on the river last autumn it was very important to find out whether the water vole population had suffered.

Penny Hemphill (Suffolk Wildlife Trust) and Julia Massey (Environment Agency) revisited 'our' bit of the Little Ouse in April and found that their intensive method of vole protection seems to have worked. In October they had groped and waded their way along the river ahead of the digger, searching out voles' burrows and latrines. When they found them they

Voles obviously love it here



Penny Hemphill

directed the digger driver and project manager as to which stretches of bank to avoid. For the spring survey they took opposite sides of the river and crawled along the banks (before the nettles got going) repeating the search.

Their discoveries delighted them. We now

know for sure that there are water voles breeding along this stretch of the river and saw that they are making burrows in the newly formed banks and bunds.

Julia and Penny found more than 20 burrows, and several 'breeding latrines' – not just normal sized piles of poo but mega-piles

'It proves that restoration - if it's done carefully - can enhance the habitat for an already-thriving population of water voles.'

Penny Hemphill Water for Wildlife Officer, Suffolk Wildlife Trust

– where a female will stamp on the existing pile and add more on top. Penny saw two voles while she was actually doing the survey.

It's clear that the existing vole population was unaffected by the works. The site should now have an increasing population

which will spread up and downstream wherever the habitat is right.

David Whiteley from BBC 1's programme *Inside Out* came and saw the survey in progress. (Look out for it on your screens in the Autumn).

Voles' number one predator

The mink story is relentless, and their threat to vole populations is constant. On stretches of river which have assiduous volunteer effort to control mink, their numbers are kept down and voles thrive.

See the map of their findings at: www.lohp.org.uk/sites/default/files/archive/report_pdfs/Hemphill_map_2014.jpg

LOHP/CPRE* Walk and heritage mill demonstration

A number of enthusiastic attendees assembled at Thelnetham windmill on a sunny Bank Holiday Sunday afternoon in early May, people travelling from as far as Norwich and Thetford to attend. On arrival, a very nice distraction was the nearby Thelnetham Windmill. This is a Grade II listed Tower Mill, circa 1819, which was operating and looking resplendent in the early afternoon sunshine, thanks to Martin Forge & Chris Mills. Margaret Malley was on the scene to manage early arrivals and car parking, chat to folk and also hand out newsletters to the thirty or so attendees.

As a CPRE* Norfolk Award winner, the LOHP helped celebrate the CPRE's 80th anniversary with this Spring walk led by Jo Pitt and Pete Fox. The party ambled through Parkers Piece, over the Little Ouse to Betty's Fen, Blo' Norton Fen and then back over the river to Hinderclay Fen and back via Bleyswycks Bank. The weather was so good one could hardly imagine a better day or time of year for such an outing, it was truly wonderful.

The border collie count this time was on the low side, but the Blackburn's collie Jasmine attended and made sure there were no stragglers or hangers on. Jasmine's low-key attitude to people management is one that other breeds of dog should surely follow!

Jo and Pete kept us absorbed with their recollections of all things LOHP during the walk, through wonderful, surreal surroundings. A good time was had by all, and if the weather is that good next time, I will surely be there.

Chris Blackburn

*Campaign to Protect Rural England.
www.cprenorfolk.org.uk/



Chris Blackburn

Membership application (not renewals)

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

E-mail:

I wish to support the LOHP as a

Ordinary member:	£2 a year	
Friend of the Fens:	£10 min a year	
Junior member:	25p. a year	

Please tick one category and write the amount paid for Friend of the Fens. Cheques payable to 'Little Ouse Headwaters Project'.

I wish to donate £..... to the Little Ouse Headwaters Project

I want all my subscriptions and donations to the LOHP to be Gift Aided until I notify you otherwise. I pay Income Tax/Capital Gains Tax at least equivalent to the value of my contribution.



Signed:.....

Dated:.....

Registered Charity No: 1098232

Note on renewals: All renewals are due in April. We send a letter to all members. Please **don't use this form to renew your membership.**

A big thank you to all those members who have sent donations along with their renewal. We greatly appreciate this extra support for **the work we're doing to enhance the valley and its wildlife.**

The LOHP needs you!

The LOHP relies on volunteers to run the charity and help with conservation (and other) work. Might you have some **energy and some time? If so we'd love to hear from you.**

To get involved, and for more info, send an email to enquiries@lohp.org.uk or ring: Bev Blackburn, Volunteer Coordinator and Event Manager on 07747 691285 or Pete Fox, Hon. Secretary on 07500 044587.

Work parties

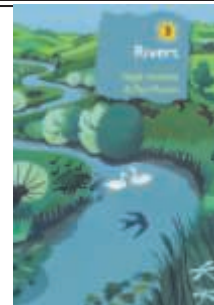
Get out and enjoy yourself whatever the weather at an LOHP work party or event. Work parties monthly on Sundays (dates below) and weekly on Wednesdays.

Check details on the website or ring for information:

10 Aug	Blo'Norton Fen	Sedge mowing/raking	JP
14 Sept	Hinderclay Fen	Fen mowing/raking	RL
12 Oct	Hinderclay Fen	Turf pond digging	NC
9 Nov	New Fen	Scrub clearance	RL
14 Dec	New Fen	Scrub clearance	PF

Reg & Rowena Langston 01379 898009 (Hinderclay)
 Jo-Anne Pitt **01379 898684 (Blo' Norton)**
 Nigel Clark 01379 890460 (Hinderclay)
 Pete Fox 07500 044587 (New Fen)

Rivers by Nigel Holmes and Paul Raven, British Wildlife Publishing. A new, definitive study of a topical subject very close to LOHP **supporters' hearts.** Co-authored by the river expert who project-managed 'our' river restoration in 2013. Unmissable! Hardback, 432 pages, colour illustrated throughout, RRP £35.



Wanted: Membership Secretary

Due to the membership secretary's frequent absences we're looking for a volunteer to take over this essential role. It's not particularly time-consuming. It involves using spreadsheets and mail-merge to carry out the main tasks. These are:

- Maintaining membership records.
- Banking subs and donations received (mainly April-May)
- Sending out membership renewal notices annually (in April)
- Sending out AGM documents annually (in November)
- Mailing Newsletters to members three times a year

There is a trickle of new members joining and existing members renewing throughout the year and it takes very little time to keep the records up to date once the main renewal period is over. Anyone interested in taking this on should contact me on enquiries@lohp.org.uk marked for the attention of Lindsay, but be aware – I may be away again!

Contact the LOHP

Email: enquiries@lohp.org.uk

Write: LOHP, Waveney Cottage, Redgrave Road, South Lopham, Diss, IP22 2JN

Phone: 07500 044587 Website: www.lohp.org.uk

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