



Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke

March 2018
Newsletter 53



Skylark by Graham Easy

Roman Road Leaflet – new edition.

This newsletter is more or less a covering letter for several other things. First and foremost it introduces the new edition of our Roman Road leaflet. The previous edition was reprinted in 2012, but by 2016 we were beginning to run out of leaflets and the text needed updating. Fortunately, in 2016 Tesco launched a scheme called 'Bags of Help', using receipts from the plastic bag charge. We were awarded £5,000 with which to replace some information boards, clear the footpath along the Fleam Dyke and reprint the Roman Road leaflet.

The wildlife artist Michael Wood redid the map and redesigned the leaflet, fitting wildlife illustrations round the updated text. Two historical errors were corrected by Bill Clark, the former Warden of Wandlebury: Signal Hill and Telegraph Hill are just sites of unconnected beacons marked on old maps as 'pole' or 'post'. The total cost was £1,500, which represents £1,000 from Tesco, and several donations including £50 from the Parish Councils of **Balsham** and **Horseheath**.

Introducing, Deadman Hill

The Roman Road between Worsted Lodge and the Hildersham Road lacks obvious landmarks. There are pine trees to the north-east as you go up the first hill and a sycamore on the right at the top. The track downhill was narrowed by a bank of spoil from the A11 road works. Existing maps show a footpath crossing from the Hildersham Road to the site of Gunner's Hall. The track then rises to the 90m contour before descending to the road. Some years ago I was told that this hill was called Deadman Hill or Deadman's Hill. Since there is an actual grave further along the ridge, I settled for Deadman Hill.

Relocating Rat Hall

By contrast, Rat Hall was on the previous Roman Road leaflet but, in the absence of contour lines, was misplaced. As you can see, Gunner's Hall is a few hundred yards north east of the Roman Road, and Rat Hall is due north-east from there, on a cart track off the A11. Both these 'halls' were small manor houses whose land has been absorbed by neighbouring farms. Gunner's Hall probably disappeared during the nineteenth century. There remained two pairs of cottages occupied by the families of the farm labourers until the late 1950s, when the cottages were pulled down. The site is now occupied by a couple of modern barns. There is also a pond nearby where huge black carp cruise round and round, like small sharks, contrasting with a garden bench and rose bushes, planted by the late Mrs Tucker who liked to sit there in summer evenings. Her son, Michael Tucker still farms the land, but no longer lives in Worsted Lodge, which was sold in 2017. All that remains of Rat Hall, formerly Parsonage Farm, is a substantial barn, which from a photograph on the web, appears to be stone. Further information on both halls and their curious names would be welcome.

AGM 7.15 for 7.30 Wednesday 2nd May 2018

Fulbourn Centre, 31 Home End, CB21 5BS.

Following an illustrated report on the year's work and a brief interval, our Guest Speaker will be **Bill Sutherland, the Miriam Rothschild Professor of Conservation Biology** at the University of Cambridge and President of the British Ecological Society.

Conservation in a post truth world?

Prof Sutherland's research is directed at predicting the consequences of environmental change. He is known for his research on integrating science and policy, particularly in the field of evidence-based conservation.

Please bring your friends to this important talk.

Members free. Non members £3. Open to all.

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A subscription of £15 is due on 5th April. Many members have already sent a cheque or made a digital transfer. (Don't forget to include your name.) Many others have a standing order. Could you please check that you have paid the full amount of £15. Five pounds is not a lot these days, but it is remarkable how much we can do with 170 of them.

Cheques should be sent to: **Christine Newell, 82 The Lane, Hauxton, Cambridge CB22 5HP Tel:01223 872681**

Please address the cheque to The Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke, and put our account number and sort code on the back of the cheque.

Account number 24144479

Sort Code 600423

We are most grateful for your continuing support.

Any Other Business?

On 11 March, the East Cambridge Lakes were open to the public for the first time, and over 1,000 people took the opportunity to walk round one or both of the lakes. Guy Belcher, the City Biodiversity Officer, is planning another such open day fairly soon as part of the plan to open the area to the public, something many people have tried to achieve over thirty years.

There are other river and stream improvement projects all round Cambridge: Friends of the River Shep, Friends of the River Mel, Friends of the Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook and, of course, **Cam Valley Forum**. For more information see www.camvalleyforum.uk David Brooks, the Membership Secretary, writes regular reports on work done on these waterways. See CVF43.pdf and CVF44.pdf on their website with beautiful photographs of watery scenes and exciting opportunities for messing about in wellies or scrub clearing by punt.

With apologies for a very short newsletter. Too much to do!

With best wishes,

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