



Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke

March 2021 Newsletter 58



On 5th April 2021, it will be the Twentieth Anniversary of the foundation of the Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke, and so it is time for an AGM and a Celebration, but of course, we cannot plan to gather together under one roof for some time to come. AGMs on Zoom are rather tricky to handle and are limited in their reach so the committee hope that a newsletter will suffice.

Who is on the Committee?

I thought you might like to know something about them, us, rather than looking at us at the AGM and thinking how much older we are all getting!

Patron, Professor Peter Grubb, Emeritus Professor of investigative plant ecology over a wide variety of habitats, and intensive study of chalk grassland and scrub.

Chairman, Dr Edmund Tanner, Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, biologist, specializing in research into tropical tree nutrition and regeneration

Membership Secretary, Dr Christine Newell, retired Plant Research Biologist, involved in recording of small mammals, toad rescue, ground beetle surveys, website manager and photographer.

Roger Lemon, formerly worked as a biologist in various R and D roles in the chemical industry. Roger runs our annual Butterfly Monitoring Survey; devised the Fleam Dyke Roman Road walk and wrote the Walk booklet, see below.

Treasurer, Diane Potter, Chartered Account, see below

Iain Webb, Green Belt Officer for the Wildlife Trust BCN, expert knowledge of flora and fauna and the management of chalk grassland.

Secretary and Project Manager, Julia Napier, who learned the names of the flowers and butterflies of meadows, marshes and Breckland before the arrival of pesticides and herbicides many years ago.

We are very pleased to tell you that we have two new Committee Members.

Councillor Geoff Harvey. Geoff is the Liberal Democrat Councillor for Balsham, Carlton, Horseheath, West Wickham, West Wrating, and Weston Colville. Dr Geoff Harvey is recently retired from, Adiabatic Logic, the high-tech company which he helped to found,

Dr Mike Foley studied micoparasites and soil microbiology. He worked as a Plant Pathologist with the Ministry of Agriculture and later as a Consultant. Since retirement he has become an active member of the Cam Valley Forum Committee, combating Himalayan Balsam and Floating Pennywort. He is also recording birds for the BTO. In 2019 he surveyed the Roman Road for breeding birds and in 2020, the Fleam Dyke. We will be publishing a summary of these detailed results quite shortly.

Unfortunately, we have to say **Goodbye to our Treasurer, Diane Potter**, because, due to Covid 19, she is now looking after her bed-bound father in law, on top of her main job as Accountant for Cambridge R F Ltd. and Aphena Ltd. The committee is extremely grateful to her for providing us with such high quality service, and also spreading news about the Friends to all the members of her running group!

However, I am extremely relieved to tell you that we have a replacement.

Adrian Burns worked for South Cambridgeshire District Council as Chief Accountant for 25 years. Now retired, he is technically no longer a Chartered Accountant, but I think we can be sure that our money is in safe hands

Fleam Dyke and Roman Road Walk Booklet

Since its publication in 2009, we have sold nearly 2000 copies of the Fleam Dyke and Roman Road Walk booklet and last autumn, we had to decide whether to publish a new edition or arrange for a reprint. The maps were still accurate and the photographs were still valid so all that was needed were minor amendments to the text to bring it up to date. These included changes to details of public transport, minor changes to the route directions for the walk and an update on the status of some of the wildlife, particularly the butterflies, certain species of which have shown a marked improvement in abundance. The places to eat and drink and accommodation lists have also been updated.

If you would like a copy of this revised 2021 reprint, they are available from Roger Lemon. The price is £3 plus £1.50 p&p if you would like it posted. Please contact roger_lemon@hotmail.com

Conservation Work done and Work Planned for this Spring

As you may have seen in walks along the Roman Road, Bernard Hunt and his assistant dug out the stumps of scrubby bushes along the south west verge north of Mount Farm. This cost £750, but next year brush cutting and raking off will go faster. In addition, Hunt's Wildlife will be doing the usual work at Copley Hill and the Golf Course bank at a cost of about £1,500.

The large area between the disused railway and Mutlow Hill has been one of the best parts of the Fleam Dyke, but in the absence of the regular management by Iain Webb and the Mid-week Volunteers, the turf is now full of brambles and developing scrub. We have £1,500 for a rescue job here. Meanwhile, in the absence of sheep grazing, Mutlow Hill on which we have spent so much time and money, needs brush cutting with treatment of the invasive clematis and brambles. £400 approx.

We have £3,000, thanks to the Binks Trust, for work to clear the banks of the Fleam Dyke near the A11. However, the endless rain of this winter has delayed our programme of work, and Lockdown continues to make it difficult to get work parties restarted once again.



Clematis vitalba,
Old Man's beard

Photographs by
Jack Harrison

Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke

Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020 Income and Expenditure account

	2020		2019
Income	£		£
Subscriptions and gifts	3,577.00		3,051.10
Match funding	0.00		2,205.00
Binks Trust	2,500.00		0.00
South Cambs grant	1,000.00		1,000.00
Walk booklet sales	211.00		106.50
Total income	7,288.00		6,362.60
Expenditure			
Contractors	2,500.00		4,990.00
Printing	951.00		80.00
Domain renewal	0.00		23.98
Stamps	0.00		41.54
Hall hire for AGM	0.00		117.00
Photocopying & stationery	0.00		114.56
Total expenditure	3,451.00		5,367.08
Balance sheet			
Current assets			
Cash at bank 01/01/2020	2,598.34		1,602.82
Funds			
Balance, beginning of year	2,598.34		1,602.82
Income less expenditure	3,837.00		995.52
Balance at end of year	6,435.34		2,598.34

In a very difficult year FRRFD has been very fortunate to receive so many generous subscriptions and gifts. The total was £525 higher than in 2019 and included a large anonymous donation from a member of the committee with a further similar gift from another committee member in early 2021. We were also very fortunate to receive a £1,000 legacy from the late Elfrida Heath to be spent on information boards.

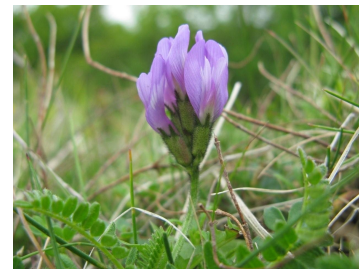
We are very grateful to the Binks Trust who very kindly donated £2,500 in January towards our clearance work with a further £2,500 promised in January 2021. There was also another £1,000 grant from South Cambridgeshire and income from walk booklet sales totalled £211, almost double the previous year's total.

Contractor payments to Hunts Wildlife for conservation work were reduced by £2,490 in 2020 compared with 2019 but this is purely because work is being carried over to 2021. The walk booklet was also reprinted during the year for a cost of £951 with a further £75 for artwork being paid in early 2021. These printing costs will be recovered through sales over the next few years.

As a result of the above, our annual income less expenditure was £3,837 and our year end bank balance was £6,435 compared with £2,598 in 2019.

The Subscription of £15 is payable from 1st April. An additional donation of £10 or more would help us to do more of the work I have described.

Thank you for all your previous payments, which have helped us to look after the flora and fauna of these linear SSSIs beginning with our first work party in October 2001.



Some of the flowers you can see on the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke in the coming months. Left to right: Clustered Bellflower, Horseshoe Vetch, photos by Jack Harrison; Purple Milk Vetch, photo by David Barden; Chalkhill Blue on Knapweed, Lady's Bedstraw and Wild Thyme, photos by Jack Harrison

Best wishes for a Happy Easter and sunny days to come,

Julia Napier,
30a Hinton Avenue, Cambridge, CB17AS 01223 213152 www.frrfd.org.uk