

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook: Occasional Titbits, No. 9, March 2010

Chairman: John Collins Secretary: Holly Anderson

Please forward or print out and pass on to anyone else who may be interested. If you have items suitable for inclusion please let me have them as they arise. If you wish to be taken off this group email list please let me know.

1. The swans are back. During the last week two swans have been engaged in (presumably) romantic reconnaissance and nostalgic reminiscence, though things did not turn out too happily last year.

2. The Planning Application by Sainsbury, September 2009, 09/0843/FUL, for extension of store, new entrance lobby, new access, and improvements to parking, was approved on Wednesday 10 March. The impact on the Brook will be very considerable. The relevant maps and documents supporting this application form a pile 2½ inches high. Of particular interest, even independently of the application, are the (a) 24-page detailed tree survey (b) 34-page ecological assessment including very detailed descriptions of channel and banks, and the (c) 50-page flood risk assessment (and description of the Brook downstream from its source at Giant's Grave), which for example calculated that the flooding of the car park is a one in a hundred years occurrence. It is said that these documents will be online after 1 April. A glance through the documents suggests that the idea of a public right of way along the bank of the Cherry Hinton Brook does not appear to be a concept integral to the plans. Watch this space.

3. Litter along the Cherry Hinton Brook is remarkable for both its extraordinary variety and its prodigious quantities. Apart from being used by local residents as a convenient dumping ground for garden refuse, Christmas trees, household

furniture, old fencing panels, and stolen property, Dawes Lane and Snakey Path are a weekly repository for underwear, shoes, dirty nappies, sausages, dog-produce, dog-produce wrapped in plastic bags, fast-food packaging and so on, as well as the usual cans, plastic bags, bottles, bicycles and supermarket trolleys. Small objects are tossed thoughtlessly, or carefully, so as to be just out of reach in brambles or to dangle in prickly bushes. Soon after the doors shown in the photograph near St. Bede's Crescent were removed they were replaced by a wheelie bin and an adult tricycle. And so it goes on. Relentlessly. Never-ending. Underlying all this there appear to be individual acts of spite or contempt. Before the bin and tricycle arrived, some household goods were thrown accurately, out of reach, onto the bicycle wheel seen on the right side of the photograph; like a reversed, macabre game of hoopla.

One of the most disgusting few square metres of litter used to be located until recently in the extreme north corner of the St. Bede's School playing field, adjacent to the Burnside allotments, by lamp post 4F on Snakey Path. This rotting debris had accumulated over many years. A Friend and Burnside allotment holder, **John McGill**, took the bit between his teeth and removed the lot. He **deserves an MBE**.



The committee of the **Cherry Hinton and District Angling Club** who rent 'the lakes' engage in a never-ending battle with large quantities of large items of 'litter' thrown great heights and distances into their domain. On the other hand **Blacklands (Dawes Lane) allotments** are an actual source of unsightly litter and rubbish, some of which eventually finds its way into the Brook. The entrance area is also a convenient place for local resident to fly-tip. Again, this is a never-ending uphill struggle for their committee. **The committees of both groups take a positive and helpful view of the objectives of the Friends of the Brook.**

Four **Friends** did their best to clear up **Dawes Lane** on Saturday 20 February. The **10.30am Sunday morning pickings** at **St. Bede's School**, inside the fence along Snakey Path continue, making steady progress: two steps forward, and one step backward as new litter is deposited. **Voluntary labour** has also improved **verges at the upstream end of Snakey**.

As reported in Occasional Titbits No.7, in January contractors were employed by the **City Council Drainage Engineer** to **clear vegetation and litter from the channel of the Brook**. This exposed generations of litter which had been thrown up from the channel onto the opposite bank during earlier clearances. In this modern era of greater awareness we are particularly grateful to the **Drainage Engineer, Simon Bunn**, who acted beyond the call of duty by bringing in more contractors to **remove this evidence of earlier malpractice**, working upstream as far as St. Bede's Crescent, at which point money ran out. Plenty remains to be done. For litter-picking on a grander scale, see <http://www.wandletrust.org/>