

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook: Occasional Titbits, No. 36, February 2014

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Please forward or print out and pass on to anyone else who may be interested.

Litter pick: 23rd March: meet 10:30 outside the dentist at 97 Burnside. Equipment provided. All welcome, refreshments for those who stay to the end!

Monkeys on Burnside?

No, it is the contractors who were working on the willow trees, taking out branches without spoiling the shape of the trees or changing the view along Burnside dramatically. Indeed, some houses along Burnside now have a good view of the lake.

Photo (below) by Sue Wells; photo (right) by John McGill



Significant work has been undertaken on the brook in recent weeks by the City Council and it is now looking very different, the vegetation clearance allowing much more light to reach the stream itself. The tree and scrub works undertaken by the City Council are now complete, apart from stump treatment using 'eco plugs' (right), a safe treatment next to water courses. This will prevent regrowth where not desirable. The willows along Burnside have been pollarded, their tops cut back as shown in the photos. The reeds in the brook have had their annual cut and clear-out. And an additional litter collection or "deep clean" was carried out by contractors along the Sainsbury's part of the stream, removing 40 bags of rubbish. *(Sue Wells)*



Photo (above) by Jón Fairbairn

Working with Sainsbury's

We had a very productive meeting with Scott, the manager of Coldham's Lane Sainsbury's, just before Christmas. Sainsbury's will erect an interpretation board by the brook at the entrance to the store so that people are aware of its importance as a wildlife habitat. Regular litter clearance along the path, including use of long-handled litter picks over the fence on the bank, and the installation of a litter bin where rubbish is regularly thrown should help improve the rubbish "hot spot". We are delighted that Sainsbury's is keen to work with us for the benefit of the local environment. *(Holly Anderson)*

In January, Sainsbury's put up a photo of the November clean-up which involved some of their staff with the caption: "Sainsbury's colleagues and 'Friends of the Brook', which is a volunteer group based in Cambridge, spent an afternoon cleaning out the Brook which runs past the store to help keep the environment around us clean and clear." We are grateful to the store for publicising both Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook and its work. *(Sue Wells)*

Mill Road Winter Fair

The Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook stall at the Mill Road Winter Fair in December 2013 (right, with committee member Shona Douglas) attracted a lot of interest. The Mayor talked to us and we recruited several new members. *Photo (right) by Sue Wells*

Our vole

If I feel I need a breath of fresh air I often walk along Cherry Hinton Brook as there's plenty to enjoy. It is always a treat to see our vole. On 5th January I was near the Dawes Lane allotments just before 3 p.m. I saw a crisp packet moving in the water and realised a water vole was investigating it. The vole disappeared into a hole in the bank, re-emerged from another hole slightly nearer the bridge, crept along the bank and around the roots of the big ivy, plopped into the water, swam around for a brief period before finally disappearing into the bank just south of the big ivy. *(Monica Frisch)*

What was the digger doing?

The Anderson Group, owners of the lake, have been carrying out routine repair and maintenance work on the pipe which connects the lake with the Cherry Hinton Brook. *(David Brooks)*

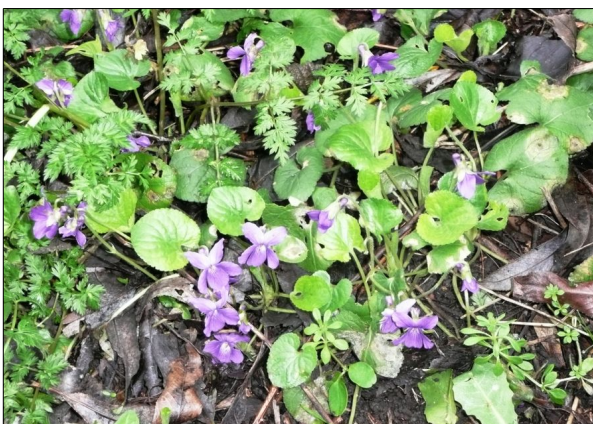
This trench has since been filled in. *Photo (right) by David Brooks*

Bird notes January 2014

The pair of Little Egrets has again decided to visit us during the winter months. It may be that they decide to stay on and breed here in the lakes, or it may be this is a "stop over" for them that they have become familiar with in the last three years. As Little Egrets are now a regular breeding bird in the UK (especially in the east of the country) they may well stay with us. Watch out for them roosting in the tall trees along the brook or fishing on the bank by the children's playground on Brooks Road. Good views of Tufted Ducks and Great Crested Grebes on the lake can be seen from along Burnside. *(Holly Anderson)*

Signs of spring

The mild winter, with very few frosty days so far, means that the plants have not been knocked back and are already springing into life, with new shoots and catkins forming on the willows.



Sweet violets (*Viola odorata*) are the earliest violets to flower – the ones in my garden started before Christmas this year. There is a good patch of sweet violets in flower near St Bede's Gardens, between lampposts 22 and 23. These probably originated from someone's garden but seem well-established.

Please report wildlife sightings to us, with details of what you saw, when (date and time) and where. As the lampposts along the path are numbered they can be used to help locate sightings. *(Monica Frisch)*

Photo (left) by Sue Wells



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