

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook: Occasional Titbits, No. 1, August 2009

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1. We have arranged to walk along the Brook on **Friday 14 August** with **Guy Belcher, Cambridge City Nature Conservation Projects Officer**, in order to discuss interpretation boards, the St.Bede's children's playground, Sainsbury, and any other closely related matters.
2. We hope to have a similar walk in September with **Andrew Walters of Keep Britain Tidy**, based in Norwich, to discuss all aspects of litter. It is intended that this should be followed by an autumnal group litter pick.
3. The City Recreation Services department has shown signs of being very keen to keep us informed about future plans for the **St. Bede's Children's Playground (adjacent to the Brook)** which is going to be grubbed out within the next 2 or 3 months, following consultations with local residents who apparently do not wish the slide and two swings to be maintained. The Council department's enthusiasm may be connected with their failure to consult (anybody?) about the playground they have created in the midst of the sensitive wildlife area in the grounds of Cherry Hinton Hall. At present the St. Bede's playground attracts a small number of youths and alcoholics who deposit disproportionately large quantities of litter within sight and throwing distance of the litter bin.
4. Wet cool weather has dampened the widespread **interest of trespassers in the lakes (adjacent to the Brook)**; but interest certainly still simmers. We have been promised information on future discussions about the future of the lakes. In the meantime two large, ugly, ineffective 'warning' notice boards have recently been placed along Snakey Path where they will not be seen by potential trespassers who, at peak times, are a serious nuisance to the residents of Doggett and Harcombe Roads and to the Spiney School.
5. The clump of **Japanese knotweed** on the bank of the Brook near Sainsbury has survived chemical attack. It must be one of the most difficult of the invasive plants to eradicate. Its rhizomes can survive temperatures of -35°C and can extend 7 metres horizontally and to depths of 3 metres. It was said in the House of Commons that removing the weed from the UK would cost £1.56 billion.
6. Early in August **a group of teenagers**, with the help of City Rangers, **cleared a great deal of rubbish from the Brook near lamp post 26 on Snakey Path**, and from neighbouring Daws Lane. They were organised by a group called 'Cambridge Youth for Christ', based at Barnwell Baptist Church. Their activities are wide-ranging so they are unlikely to return to the Brook, soon.
7. **Fisherfolk** have been observed practising their craft along **Snakey Path**. Is this in order?
8. Two new sister organisations have been formed. **Friends of Stourbridge Common** will hold their first public meeting in St. Andrew's Hall, at 7.30pm on 11 September. **Friends of Cherry Hinton Hall** recently held a public meeting in the Red Lion Pub which was so popular that people had to be turned away. Their next meeting is on 9 September, at 7.30pm, in St. Philip Howard Church Hall, Walpole Road.

David Brooks