

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook: Occasional Titbits, No. 8, February 2010

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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. Public Right of Way 110, through Sainsbury car park. As reported in Occasional Titbits No.3, this very overgrown right of way had been blocked, with three nailed planks of wood at one point and a padlock at another, by persons unknown to Sainsbury, the Rights of Way and Access Team at Shire Hall and the County Highways Division at Whittlesford. As the result of our enquiries the Highways Division cleared the obstructing undergrowth, but this revealed that at one or two points the footpath on the bank of the Brook is not safe. The Highways Division then asked Sainsbury to repair some of their fencing between the car park and the right of way, and the Access Team to make the pathway safe. The fencing has not been repaired. The Access Team has a legal responsibility to make the pathway safe but no money is available in the current financial year, and in the present economic climate a date for this work cannot be set, yet. In the meantime the obstructions will remain in place; pedestrians being able, of course, to walk through the car park.

2. Cherry Hinton Hall Bird Sanctuary City Wildlife Site Survey carried out on 25 August 2005 by Martin Baker. See http://www.cherryhintonhall.com/docs/wildlife_survey_2005_chh_birdsanc.pdf for full report with map. There follows an edited extract. The 2.36ha site qualifies as a City Wildlife Site for woodland.



Waterfowl being harmfully fed with bread at the Pond, January 2010. Pedestrians are using the new, less muddy pathway. Wildlife Site trees in background.

This site is largely occupied by planted and naturally regenerating woodland around an artificial lake supplied by Cherry Hinton Brook. The woodland canopy density varies considerably in different parts of the site. There are areas of dense woodland in the north-west, north-east and south-eastern areas of the site whereas open woodland and clearings with a grassy flora are frequent in the western part of the site and around the northern arm of the lake. The woodland species composition contains a large complement of planted native and exotic broadleaved trees and shrubs. Although significant planting has occurred, the woodland is mostly semi-natural and there is a good regeneration of many species. The canopy of the denser woodland areas is dominated by Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The shrub

layer has frequent Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Elder *Sambucus nigra*. Elsewhere in the site the woodland generally has a low canopy composed of tall mature Hawthorn and frequent Ash and Sycamore. Occasional mature English Oak *Quercus robur* and Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* occur in the more open areas.

Other trees and shrubs are present and while the species composition is predominantly of native broadleaved trees and shrubs there are several exotic species. The ground flora includes frequent ivy *Hederá helix* and Nettle *Urtica dioica* with locally frequent Traveller's Joy *Clematis vitalba*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*. Other species recorded include the Ancient woodland Indicator Wood Sedge *Carex sylvatica*, Herb Bennett *Geum urbanum*, Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Hedge Woundwort *Stachys sylvatica* and Lords and Ladies *Arum maculatum*. The woodland clearings contain poor semi-improved grassland some parts of which are mown. A grassy flora also forms the ground layer under some of the areas of open woodland, particularly to the north of the lake.

The lake supports a large population of waterfowl and is stocked with carp; aquatic vegetation is sparse and the water is turbid. The lake margin is reinforced with piling and the lake supports little marginal or emergent vegetation. Cherry Hinton Brook not only supplies the lake but a separate channel forms the eastern boundary of the site. The extreme northern part of this site comprises a short section of the Brook on the north-western side of Daws Lane. This section is 3-4m wide, 40cm deep and fast-flowing, though the section beyond the trees is silted. A short stretch of the brook is shaded by bankside trees and shrubs and in other areas the banks are vegetated mainly by Bramble. Aquatic vegetation includes Water-cress *Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum*, Fool's Water-cress *Apium nodiflorum*, Water Mint *Mentha aquatica* and Blue Water-speedwell *Veronica anagallis-aquatica*.

3. Cambridge Natural History Society surveyed the grounds of Cherry Hinton Hall in 2009, along with Cherry Hinton Brook, Giant's Grave and the Chalk Pits. A report has been submitted to *Nature in Cambridgeshire* for publication, and reports of the surveys and of plants found are on their website: www.cnhs.org.uk