

News from the Ouse



Little Ouse
Headwaters
Project

Well. What a summer it has been! As I started writing this, news came in that the Met Office reckoned this was the joint warmest summer ever in England, and their records go back to the 1800s! The other joint warmest was in... 2018. In fact, four of the five warmest summers have been since 2003, so clearly this is part of a continuing pattern. Perhaps remarkably, it was "only" the sixth driest, although you do have to go back to 1995 to find a drier one.

It is at these times that our rivers are more important than ever. It is striking how much greener the areas immediately adjacent to the river are compared to the remaining landscape. The water that flows along the Little Ouse supports an intricate web of life. The work that we and others do to protect and enhance the river is vital in that and really seeing the difference we make should give us renewed purpose to continue.

And what a journey it has been – this year we celebrated our 20th anniversary! Those of you who enjoyed our fabulous Festival on the Fens back in July might have heard the wonderful Simon Barnes talk about "little" things. Although we are facing a global climate emergency, it is the things we choose to do locally that make the difference. And what a difference we have made in the last 20 years. There's still a lot to do, but gradually we are getting there – piecing together a corridor of habitat that supports an increasing diversity of



What a Summer!

by Rob Robinson
LOHP Chairman

Broomscot Common August 2022

© John Lord

wildlife and which connects the different habitat patches along the river.

But "little" does not necessarily mean small, or alone. The river is but one part of a larger system, the watershed, and it is influenced by the land around it, and how that is managed. While we will continue with our work on the banks of the river, we are also talking with our neighbours about the wider picture. Are there things we can do together that will improve the quality of both the water in the Little Ouse and the habitats that border it? Even as we look back on the amazing things, we have achieved over the last 20 years, I am even more excited about what we could achieve in the next 20.

British Wildlife Article

An article *The valley headwater fens of the Norfolk-Suffolk border* by Rowena Langston was published in *British Wildlife Magazine* – Volume 33, Number 4, February 2022.



It outlines the origins and special features of the valley fens and explores some of the challenges for restoration and management of the mosaic of remaining small patches of habitat.



It's never too early to think about starting your Christmas shopping!!! We are registered with easyfundraising, which means you can help us for FREE. Over 6,000 shops and sites will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! All you need to do is sign up and remember to use easyfundraising whenever you shop online.



It's easy and completely FREE! These donations really mount up, so please sign up to support us at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/littleouseheadwatersproject/>

LOHP AGM 2022

This year our AGM will be held in person, on Friday 28th October 2022, from 7.30pm at Garboldisham Village Hall. Our main speaker will be Charles Rangeley-Wilson, speaking about the restoration works that have been going on along the Nar Valley, Norfolk.



We are very grateful to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for their generous support.

They funded our Conservation Manager post over its first 18 months and have continued their support until 2022.

Conservation Manager Update: Down on the Fens



I saw quite a few of you at Festival on the Fens back in July helping us celebrate our 20th Anniversary. The event took a lot of preparation and organising, but I

hope you all agree it was well worth it and a really enjoyable day. We had a great speech from Simon Barnes which you can read on pages 3 and 6. Thank you to everyone who helped out with the event and to everyone who came along and made the day a great success – we had over 500 visitors.

Apart from the festival, things have been pretty hectic across our sites. Our four legged grazers (cattle and sheep) have been doing an amazing job but have also been struggling for grazing due to the extremely dry conditions. Our two legged volunteers have also been working equally hard to maintain our sites both for wildlife and people – see more on Volunteer Update page 6.

Our Mad about Moths event at the end of August was fully booked with a waiting list. We chose the only rainy day



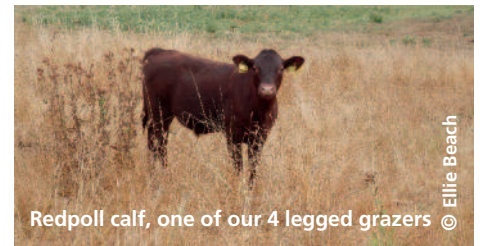
Festival on the Fens

© Martin Phillips

for months, but luckily the rain had stopped in time for the event and the moths came out – along with 3 rather large and annoying hornets – see back page for more. We hope to repeat this event next year.

Ellie Beach

LOHP Conservation Manager



Redpoll calf, one of our 4 legged grazers

© Ellie Beach

Festival on the Fens

Thanks to all who helped organise and to the sponsors: Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council

Hinderclay Fen: Heather Beetle

Heather Beetle *Lochmaea suturalis* is a native species, common and widespread across Britain. As its name indicates, it is closely associated with heather. The larvae and adult beetles feed on heather leaves, stripping heather shoots bare. Some damage occurs in most years, but recovery occurs in just a few months. However, in some years, population explosions of heather beetles can cause die-back of heather which takes several years to



Heather Beetle, *Lochmaea suturalis*

© Andy Brown

recover. This has happened on Hinderclay Fen in the past, but in 2021 there was a particularly heavy infestation. A single sweep with a net swarmed with adult beetles. Fortunately, for other creatures dependent on heather, the damage is largely restricted to the area of heath just west of the main track on to Hinderclay Fen, where all the heather plants are affected. The dry summer of 2022 has compounded the effects of the beetles.



Heather Calluna on Hinderclay Fen

© Rowena Langston

The heathland to the east of the track is largely unaffected, possibly because most of the plants are young. Attacks by heather beetle may increase with predicted changes to the climate. It remains to be seen whether the heather recovers this time, and how long it will take. Hopefully, the seedbank will generate new heather plants.



Heather dieback on Hinderclay Fen

© Rowena Langston

For further information see:

GILLINGHAM, P., DIAZ, A., STILLMAN, R. & PINDER, A.C. 2015. A desk review of the ecology of heather beetle. Natural England Evidence Review, Number 008. Second edition 2016. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6386866406293504>

It's the Little things that Matter...

Speech made by *Simon Barnes* at the Festival on the Fen, 3 July 2022



Simon Barnes and John McCormack at the Festival on the Fen

"I was asked by John and Laura to join you all here today, and one word was enough to make me accept. Those who know Laura will be surprised to learn that the word in question was not cake. It was Little. This is the 20th birthday of the Little Ouse Headwaters Project and the Littleness of its aims is not only the most obvious thing about it but the most important.

This is the Little Ouse and as rivers go, it's pretty little. It's not even the Thames or the Severn, still less the Mississippi or the Amazon. It's short on hippos and crocodiles, and alas, no Little Ouse River Dolphin has evolved to swim these waters. The Little Ouse is only 37 miles long, from right here up to Brandon Creek, where it joins the Great Ouse – but we're not worried about the Great Ouse, any more than we're worried about the Yorkshire Ouse or the Sussex Ouse, still less the Ouseburn that flows through Newcastle.

And we're not all that worried about the rest of the Little Ouse either. Most of its floodplains, its tributaries, its middle course and its lower course are not our concern: certainly not where the Great Ouse joins the North Sea at the Wash. The world's oceans that it links up with by doing so are not with the remit of this organisation.

Well, I suppose we *can* worry about them. Doing something is harder and more complex. So we think small: and almost at once we realise that thinking small contains the elements of greatness. Think small: that was the slogan behind what is still considered one of the

greatest of all advertising campaigns. It began in 1959 and was for the VW Beetle.

It encouraged the most immense brand loyalty by allowing people to accept that small was a very great concept, one that came with important freedoms and possibilities. We are who we are: small and unashamed. The only thing that we know how to do is to keep on keepin' on, doing the best we can. That's true for almost all of us.

One of the most influential books of recent times was the 1973 title *Small is Beautiful*. Many who remember it will perhaps have forgotten the subtitle: "A Study of Economics as if People Mattered". Big projects forget that. It happens all the time in every area of activity, charities as much if not more than most: big projects that run roughshod over actual people. The founders and the leaders forget the reasons they got involved in the first place. It began so well: but now it seeks only to become bigger because bigger makes them look – well, bigger. Never mind the good they set out to do when it all began: soon all that matters is the power and prestige and income of the organisation and the people who run it.

And that is the beauty of the Little Ouse Headwaters Project: it allows the people who care to get on with the job of caring: to do something rather than fret about the terrible state of the world. So let's talk

about Nimbyism: nimby being an acronym for Not in My Back Yard.

Nimbyism is supposed to be a reprehensible thing: standing in the way of the interests of Big Business and Big Government – insofar as they can be separated – out of a selfish desire to protect your own. But I have a lot of time for Nimbyism: at its heart it's about people trying to protect something they love.

The point of Nimbyism is not that it's fine to trash someone else's favourite place so long as you leave mine alone: it's that trashing the natural world is a bad idea wherever it's taking place: and the people on the spot are best placed to protect it.

The more we can build up a network of Nimbys, the stronger we will be when it comes to protecting what matters.

This sounds as if I am advocating a series of small

islands of wilderness, but it's anything but. Any such island is doomed: biodiversity and genetic diversity dwindles fast and the place eventually becomes almost as lifeless as those that surround it.

It's about connectivity. About joining things up. "Only connect," said EM Forster, talking about our human relationships: but in recent times it has become a rallying cry for wildlife conservation. And that is another thing that delights me about the Little Ouse Headwaters Project: it's about joining up.

Continued on page 6

"This is the Little Ouse and as rivers go, it's pretty little."



Webbs Fen and Reeves Meadows from the air

20 Years of LOHP

Pre-2002

Volunteers working on Blo' Norton and Hinderclay Fens in the mid-1990s



2002

LOHP charity established this year

Leased land: Blo' Norton Fen, Hinderclay Fen, Little Fen, The Frith and The Lows



2003

First land purchase: Bettys Fen in Blo' Norton

Funding from the EU Transnational Ecological Network (TEN) Project



2007

Purchased Bleyswycks Bank and Parkers Piece in Thelnetham



2008

Second big event on The Frith, 29th June, as part of our second Heritage Lottery Fund Award



2009

Bob's Bridge built by volunteers



2013

In-channel restoration of river section east from ford



2014

Purchased New Fen in Thelnetham



2015

Purchased Carr Meadow in Hinderclay and Oak Tree Fen in Thelnetham, helped by another HLF Award



Rowena Langston summarises some of the major achievements, progress and events of LOHP in this timeline over our first 20 years.

2004

First big event on The Frith, 25th July, as part of our first Heritage Lottery Fund Award



© Rowena Langston

2005

Swallow Bridge built between Blo' Norton Fen and Thelnetham Old Fen (Suffolk Wildlife Trust – SWT)



© Rowena Langston

2006

First tree sculptures installed
Winner of the RSPB/CIWEM Living Wetlands Award



© Reg Langston

2010

Purchased Scarfe Meadows and leased Broomscot Common, Garboldisham



© Peter Hughes

2011

Purchased Webbs Fen in Thelnetham, helped by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which also enabled us to produce our newsletter, *News from the Ouse*



2012

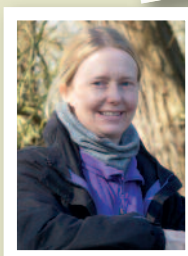
Food and Folk on The Frith, 1st September: a celebration of LOHP's 10th birthday



© Peter Hughes

2018

PeatFest event in May



Appointed our first Conservation Manager, thanks to funding from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Ellie Beach (from February 2019) is now our Conservation Manager

2019

Purchased Reeves Meadows in Thelnetham, helped by H B Allen Charitable Trust



© Rowena Langston

2022

LOHP is 20 years old! We manage nearly 80 hectares of land
Festival on the Fen event in July



Little Ouse Headwaters Project

Continued from page 3

Small parcels of land have been joined up to the land at the heart of the project: land that would be of little significance by itself but increases in value tenfold when linked up with the rest.

This has involved cooperation with other wildlife organisations, notably Suffolk Wildlife Trust: and this is another kind of joining-up that helps wildlife conservation to be more effective. Wildlife organisations are not rivals but colleagues: and besides, it's always good to work together.

The project also connects with bigger projects, notably Redgrave and Lopham Fen. The more joining up the better. I have worked on dormouse corridors in Suffolk and elephant corridors in India: small bits of land that allow bigger bits to connect. Where there is connectivity there is hope: and that is another great reason for cheering for this project.

The big things that happen in the world seem sometimes to be dictated by the people who want to conquer it: who want to make huge statements and leave a mark. Those that succeed usually leave their mark in the form of war, horror, deprivation, inequality, damage, pollution, destruction and disaster.

And while this goes on the great majority of us are trying to live decent lives in peace while looking after what we love. That is why little things work better than big ones: and the more the small things can link up the louder our small voices become.

We can fret all we like about the state of the world and wonder if there's any point in carrying on with trying to save it. But I have been working in conservation most of my life and I have come to understand that there's no point in worrying about whether we are fighting for the winning side or the losing side – what matters is fighting on the *right* side. And that – in its gloriously Little way – is what the Little Ouse Headwaters Project is all about: and so I wish the organisation a happy birthday – and I hope that there are many more of them to come."

Simon Barnes is a journalist, author & columnist.

Christmas Gift Ideas

Looking for something a bit different this year then why not buy them an LOHP Membership or Sponsor an Acre, see the forms over the next 2 pages or visit www.lohp.org.uk/support-us

Volunteer Update



Above: Riverfly Monitoring
Inset: New Rights of Way footpath disc and site QR code

Throughout the spring LOHP Practical Conservation Volunteers installed new waymarker posts and discs to mark the 'Little Ouse Walks'. There are also QR codes at entrances to our sites which you can scan to find out more about the site you are visiting. And armed with the new LOHP leaflet including a map there is no excuse not to get out and start exploring.

The two new Rights of Way footpaths created by our volunteers on Hinderclay Fen earlier in the year are proving really popular with visitors. The County Councils are still working on plans to install a new bridge across the river joining Norfolk to Suffolk, but it may take a while, as funding and permissions need to be sought first.

Our practical volunteers have also been busy managing the fens by cutting and clearing vegetation, repairing fences, keeping paths open for visitors and lots more.

Our survey teams have noticed what a

difference the hot and dry weather has made to the species we record. The reptile surveyors found they have more chance of seeing a reptile while walking between reptile sheets than basking on the sheets themselves, as they are already super charged up due to the warm weather and don't need to bask for long periods of time. Our monthly Riverfly surveyors have started to see a decline in species, due to low water levels and lack of oxygen.

In September our annual volunteer thank-you BBQ was changed to a picnic this year, due to the increased fire risk in the surrounding area. Everyone enjoyed the chance to get together and catch up with friends old and new and no one had to do any cooking!

A huge Thank You to all our volunteers.

If you want to get involved and volunteer, get in touch – see back page for details.

A Creative way to Give

LOHP manages about 200 acres of fens, heaths, meadows and woodland. Each acre costs more than £120 a year to look after and we need a regular income for this, in addition to project grants and membership subscriptions.

Could you give regular help? Existing members and non-members, businesses and individuals are all equally welcome to become sponsors. Sponsorship costs £120 a year or £10 a month per acre, by standing order. You can, of course, sponsor more than one acre.

If you wish, your name can appear in future newsletters, as a thank you for your commitment to the LOHP and to our environment. LOHP is dedicated to restoring and conserving land neighbouring the Little Ouse for the local community – both now and for future generations.

Our many dedicated volunteers give essential time, energy and labour to help maintain the land, but it does need dedicated money as well. Sponsorship for yourself – or as a gift – will give you the satisfaction of continually helping to care for a very special area of our countryside.

How to become a sponsor: please complete the form on the right and send it to Angie Robinson at the address on the form.

Grateful thanks to all our sponsors, including those willing to be listed below:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr Desmond Wenn | Ms Helen Squire |
| Mrs Paddy Richards | Dr Ian Hume |
| Mr John Wallace | Mr Roger Greenacre |
| Mr Andrew Dickson | Mr Glyn Pugh |
| Dr Mark Duxon | Mrs Angela Robinson |
| Dr Tim Cooke | Mr John Davie-Thornhill |
| Mr Alec Sharp | Mr Matthew Ward |
| Mr John & Mrs Belinda Sears | Dr Paul Williams |
| Dr Dianne Creasy | Mr Robert Warnes |
| Dr Adam & Mrs Olivia Stone | Mr Ray Chaplin |
| Mr Euan Sutherland | Mrs Valerie Chaplin |
| Mr Greg & Mrs Sue West | |

LOHP Work Parties



Get out and enjoy yourself – at an LOHP work party. We run work parties every Wednesday, Thursday mornings and the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. We work across a range of sites with varied habitats and carry out a variety of

tasks, including cutting and removing fen vegetation, hedge planting, pond work, scrub clearance, access improvements and much more.

Please contact us if you would like to come along.
Contact: Ellie Beach 07919 912045
Email: enquiries@lohp.org.uk

Sponsor-an-Acre Application

I/We wish to apply to become a sponsor and member of the Little Ouse Headwaters Project.

Title Full Name

Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel:

Email:

I will sponsor acre/s per year at £120 per acre

I will pay £ per month (£10 minimum)

OR £ per year (£120 min) **(delete as required)**

We will print your name as a new sponsor in the newsletter.

Please tick the box if you would prefer to remain anonymous.

Charity Gift Aid

I want to Gift Aid the above donation to the LOHP

Signature Date

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today and in the future. I am a UK Taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations to charities, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand the LOHP will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Please notify the LOHP if you: 1) wish to cancel this declaration, 2) change your name or home address, or 3) no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and you want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue & Customs to adjust your code.

Standing Order

To Bank

Branch Address

..... Postcode

BA/C Name

Acc. No Sort code

Please pay to: **LOHP**, Barclays PLC, 14 Market Hill, Diss

Sort Code: 20 26 34

Acc No: 50553417

On the day of 20

the sum of (words)

and **monthly/annually** thereafter until cancelled in writing by me **(delete as required)**.

This cancels any existing order in favour of the LOHP.

Full Name

Address:

..... Postcode:

Signature Date

The basis in law of the LOHP holding your personal data is Legitimate Interest.

Please return the WHOLE of this form to:

Angie Robinson, LOHP Treasurer, Jade House, The Street, Redgrave, Diss IP22 1RY

Tel: 07388 332997 Email: treasurer@lohp.org.uk



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(not renewals)

Full name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

E-mail:

Extra names

I wish to support the LOHP as a:

Friend of the Fens: £10 min a year

Supporter of the Fens: £42 min a year (up to 6 people per household)

Please tick one category and write the amount donated below.

I wish to donate £ to the LOHP.

Please make cheques payable to:

Little Ouse Headwaters Project

We can reclaim the basic rate of tax that you have paid on the gross equivalent of your donation so, for example, a membership payment of £10 is worth £12.50 to us. Therefore, if you are a UK taxpayer, we would be very grateful if you would Gift Aid your subscription by simply completing the Gift Aid section, and date and sign this form.

I want to Gift Aid the above donation to the LOHP

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today and in the future. I am a UK Taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations to charities, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand the Little Ouse Headwaters Project will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signature: Date:

Please notify the LOHP if you: 1) wish to cancel this declaration, 2) change your name or home address, or 3) no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and you want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code. *The basis in law for the LOHP holding your personal data is Legitimate Interest.*

Note on renewals: All renewals are due in April. We send a letter to all members. *Please don't use this form to renew membership.*

A big thank you to all those members who send donations along with their Membership. We greatly appreciate this extra support for the work we're doing to enhance the valley and its wildlife.

Please return the **WHOLE** of this form to:

Sue Lawrence, Membership Secretary,
22 Back Hills, Botesdale, IP22 1DW



Events

Visit www.lohp.org.uk for up-to-date details.

LOHP AGM 2022

Friday 28 October 2022, All welcome from 7.30pm

Garboldisham Village Hall IP22 2SE

The River Nar Catchment Restoration Project

Talk by Charles Rangeley-Wilson

Fungi walk – TBA

See website for more info

New Year Walk

Monday 3rd January 2023, 10.00am to 12.30pm

Suggested donation £4 non-members, £3 members.

Contact: Ellie Beach 07919 912045

Email: enquiries@lohp.org.uk



Around the moth trap

© Ellie Beach

Mad about Moths

By Frances Beasley

On the evening of 25th August a group met at New Fen to watch for moths.

We met at 7.30pm, which gave us time for Rowena to explain the intricacies of her moth trapping equipment before darkness descended and then walked around the flowers which have blossomed in the area following the clearing of trees. It is truly remarkable that so many species established themselves without humans planting seeds.

Once back at the moth box the light was on – we waited for moths to be attracted to the source. I have to admit to knowing little about moths but found the whole two hours fascinating. Apart from the excitement of enticing them into the box to be examined, once there to learn of the myriad of names was wonderful – Dingy Footman, Flounced Rustic, Dusky Thorn and Straw Dot – to name but a few. I have to say that not only moths were attracted to the light but also hornets. Luckily we all escaped them!

Thank you Ellie and Rowena for organising such an interesting event.



Little Ouse
Headwaters
Project



Contact us

Email: enquiries@lohp.org.uk

Write to: LOHP, Thelnetham Windmill,
Mill Road, Thelnetham, Diss IP22 1JS

Tel: Ellie Beach,
Conservation Manager: 07919 912045

Website: www.lohp.org.uk

LOHP Registered charity no: 1098232

