

# News from the Ouse



## Flowering of the Fens

Two very experienced LOHP volunteers explain the rapid and dramatic increase in plant and animal diversity after the initial habitat works.

Now that the main phase of restoration work on New Fen is completed, we are keen to record the changes which unfold in response to the restoration and continuing management.

### Surveys show improvement

We commissioned botanical surveys on several LOHP sites in 2017, including the establishment of monitoring plots on New Fen. Subsequently, skilled volunteers have added several plants to the list as they appear - either in response to increased light

availability, or colonising (or re-colonising) from nearby sites. Plants such as marsh lousewort and wild angelica are now well-established among what has been a wonderfully colourful display of flowers. We are grateful to Arthur Copping, who has helped us with sedge identification, so we have added long-stalked yellow sedge and hairy sedge to the list of plants.

### Orchid extravaganza on Reeves Meadow

We recorded over 100 pyramidal orchids - quite a spectacle - and several specimens of bee orchid and southern marsh orchids on our newly acquired Reeves Meadow, highlighting the very varied growing conditions across the site.

*Rowena Langston & Becky Whatley*



Little Ouse  
Headwaters  
Project

Conservation & Community



Where were these exuberant swirly snails?  
(see page 2)



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## School News

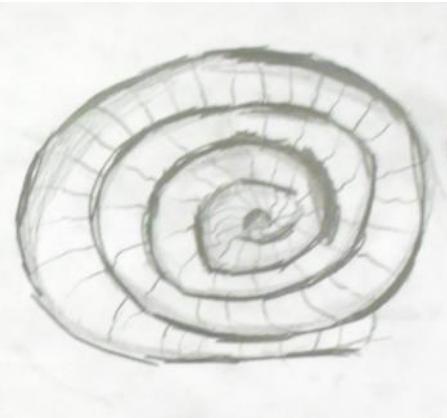
**Garboldisham Primary School** welcomed Dr Helen Smith and Sue Lawrence, to view a display showing off the impressive art produced by the children of Oak & Cherry Tree classes, working with the LOHP's Rosemary Humphries.



With Rosemary's help, children learn about local wildlife at the same time as discovering the joy of making good art

### Seeing snails

Oak Tree Class (aged 5-6) had been looking at photographs of local snails, thinking about their spiral shape. Rosemary said, 'We learned that there are left as well as right spiral snails'. The result was a giant colourful creature made up of individual snails, which each child painted using their fingers and just three colours.



### Focussing on fossils



Cherry Tree Class (aged 6-7) worked with fossils. The children were fascinated. In these drawings you can see how the children were encouraged to look really closely at the fossils, seeing how the lines curved across as well as round the

shells. They represented these curves in their drawings, and used shading to create an amazing 3D effect.

Thank you to everyone at the LOHP for your continued support and encouragement.

Carol McGahan



## Twig bundles, signs and a new dipping platform

LOHP would like to thank Anglian Water Flourishing Environment Fund for their funding and support. From improving, restoring and enhancing wetland habitats, to training volunteers in identification and survey techniques, the grant has been invaluable in helping us continue to manage our wonderful mosaic of habitats along the Norfolk/Suffolk border.

### Helping people and habitats

If you visit Broomscot Common, you will find a new pond dipping platform and interpretation panel explaining some of the creatures that lurk below the surface. When the weather warms up, why not pop along and see what you can find? Along the Little



Ellie Beach

Volunteers Harry Paul, Nigel Clark, Richard Minter and Nick Lingwood take a well-earned rest alongside one of the new signs

Ouse at Thelnetham you may spot some strange piles of woody material in the channel; these are a type of flow deflector called a 'brash build-out'. They help to naturalise the channel and improve flow and wildlife habitats.



The best time to see them is now, when the vegetation has died back. You will find another interpretation panel along the river explaining how flow deflectors work.

Ellie Beach - LOHP Conservation Manager

## What a collection!

'What do you think this is for?' Local collector Brian Davey has LOHP conservation manager, Ellie Beach, and me scratching our heads several times, trying to work out the use of just a few of the hundreds of implements he has restored.

Whether it's a didle (used for ditching), a hummeler (for knocking the 'horns' off barley) or a hog oiler (to relieve itching), Brian's vast knowledge of these implements is a window on rural history, on how the land was looked after when many more pairs of hands were needed than today.

'I've always had a passion for old tools,' he says. 'I started collecting them about 10 years ago. The Diss auction is very good: you'll find things there that you won't see at other sales.'



**Brian's beautiful, antique hog oiler**

He shows us his latest acquisition, a Norfolk reed-gathering fork, then an eel gleave, and then an implement that even he can't name, but knows what it's for. It's a thin metal hoop attached at right angles to a straight handle.

'It's to do with Christmas,' he says, trying to help us.



**Peat digging tools from around the UK: same task - different designs**

'Erm ... is it for catching turkeys?' (I'm desperate.) 'You're close,' he says, generously. 'It's for stripping the leaves off the Brussels sprout plants, before the sprouts are picked by hand.'

There's a hollow clay spade, a reed bundler, and the first precision drill: a hand tool with a seed box attached to one side and a mechanism to push out seeds one at a time into the soil. A range of tools for cutting peat forms part of his collection. There are peat

spades and sleeves which were used to cut through really tough roots. They are all slightly different, depending on where they were made: some are from Shetland and Orkney, others from Ireland. One peat barrow is from the Isle of

Lewis, another from Ireland. He hasn't yet found any made more locally.

'I don't have any favourites, I like them all – though I have shifted a lot of gardening tools recently, and I don't like saws and would never collect traps.'

Brian has gained a lot of his knowledge of tools and tractors from books, including those written by the late Reverend Philip Wright. Titles such as *Old Farm Implements* and *Traction Engines* explain every detail of how they work and how they were used.

Brian's first tractor was a Fordson, bought when he was 16, to drive a sawbench, so that he could cut and sell firewood. Today his collection runs to 80 tractors, the oldest of which is a 1915 Case. Once a year he drives them all on to his field in Thelnetham for the public to come and enjoy.

'I'm not interested in what they are worth,' he says, 'I just like talking to people who are interested in them.'



**An Irish peat barrow**

And I enjoy the tools as much as anything, as they have all been made individually.'

*Judith Tooth*

## Richard Woolnough

It is with great sadness that we have to report that Richard Woolnough has died, after a long illness.

Richard was the first paid staff member (Conservation Officer) of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, a committed conservationist with great drive, even during his final months. In retirement, he spent a lot of time studying otters, and encouraging others to do so. He was mentor to several study groups in Suffolk, including the LOHP's otter study group, stimulating lively discussion and entertaining us with his sharp wit. Members may remember his presentation to the LOHP AGM. Richard will be sorely missed, and we offer our sincere condolences to his wife Judith and their family. *Rowena Langston*



**Richard demonstrates spraint-washing**

## Water voles galore

LOHP manages sites along the Little Ouse on the Norfolk/Suffolk border between Garboldisham and Redgrave and Lopham Fen. Our sites show a good diversity of habitats with their associated wildlife. One species which seems to thrive on our wetland sites is the water vole. In the past we have carried out thorough surveys along all our waterbodies looking for burrows, droppings, feeding signs and latrines, which provided us with really useful data, but it required a lot of dedication and time from our volunteers. It had been a few years since we undertook these surveys and we wanted to find out if we still had water voles present on some of our sites - but quickly.

### Quick and effective survey method ...

We made up some very simple water vole monitoring rafts as seen in use on nearby Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserves. The rafts were made of old pieces of wood anchored to the bank with a piece of wire attached to a post, which can slide up and down with any changes in water levels but not allow the raft to float off; they were also numbered so that we knew where they all were.

### ...showed great vole success

With a crack team of volunteers, we installed 13 rafts on two sites - Scarfe Meadows near Garboldisham and The Lows near Redgrave and Lopham Fen. After a week the rafts were checked - on Scarfe Meadows, four out of seven rafts had droppings and some feeding remains; on The Lows all six rafts had



Water vole monitoring raft

droppings on, which is fantastic news, since we weren't sure voles were still living there. The rafts will continue to be monitored over the coming weeks and can then be relocated to other sites to find out how our water voles are doing elsewhere.

*Ellie Beach - LOHP Conservation Manager*

## Wildlife snippets

### LOHP Mammal Study Group update

We continue to monitor otter activity along the river, mainly by means of trail cameras. The cub from 2018 has now gained independence from its mother. We now hope for the patter of tiny paws in early 2020, following video footage of otters in August apparently courting and mating - watch this space! Our water voles have been quick to use the wooden monitoring rafts (see photo above) as latrines or feeding platforms. We also regularly capture them on the trail cameras.

### Small things matter

We have commissioned specialist surveys of invertebrates on several LOHP sites for which we have few or no records. We will feed back some results next year. Meanwhile, volunteers have continued with the butterfly transects and moth-trapping. One highlight from butterfly monitoring, was the regular sightings of painted lady butterflies during the year, as part of the huge influx registered across the UK. A female Norfolk Hawker dragonfly was observed ovipositing (egg-laying) on aquatic plants in the river by the Thelnetham/Blo' Norton ford. Formerly rare and with its stronghold

in the Broads, this species is expanding its range, so it's one to look out for in 2020. Another record of note this year, was a male scarce emerald dragonfly on the new pond at Broomscot Common. Moth-trapping on New Fen has yielded an interesting variety of moths, including a splendid garden tiger (see photo on front page).

*Rowena Langston*



Scarce emerald damselfly - male

*Rowena Langston*

*The UK had a huge influx of painted ladies this year. LOHP sites had their share*



*Rowena Langston*

## Volunteers' action

As the seasons start to change, so does the type of work we do. Autumn and winter are usually our busiest months out on site, since the birds have stopped breeding and flowers have seeded. Our volunteers have been to The Frith clearing cut vegetation from the wet part of the site, stopping the build-up of a 'thatch' which can smother the delicate wetland plants and dry out the site. We have also cut 'rides' on Oak Tree Fen (large and small meadows), Webbs Fen and Reeves Meadows, for Denis Jenkins, our grazier, to install electric fences to graze the areas with sheep - again to help reduce the thatch build-up.

### Helping our (SWT) neighbours

New Fen has proved to be a popular site again this summer, with many weeks spent cutting and clearing vegetation to remove the nutrients, helping it to return to species-rich fen habitat. LOHP volunteers joined forces with Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) volunteers to help them cut and rake next door Thelnetham Middle Fen; a few weeks later SWT volunteers returned the favour and came and helped us on New Fen.



*Our monthly volunteer riverfly surveys give solid data on habitat health and water quality*

Ellie Beach

### Keeping tabs on changes

We have also been involved in lots of monitoring and surveying over the last few months. Our volunteers continue to carry out regular dip-well surveys to measure water levels in the ground and monthly Riverfly surveys. These give an indication of water quality through identifying and counting eight target groups of invertebrates.

### Celebrating achievements - with a summer party

The annual LOHP volunteer barbecue in August - to thank the volunteers for all their hard work -

was well attended. The weather stayed kind to us. There was plenty of tasty food - and everyone enjoyed the evening.

*Ellie Beach - LOHP Conservation Manager*

### Could you help?

If you can spare a few hours and want to support us, we are always looking for more volunteers to help with practical conservation work parties, monitoring/surveying, stock checking, wardening, admin, fundraising, events and much more. Or do you have a specialist skill which you feel might be of use to us? Do get in touch.

Contact Ellie Beach Conservation Manager at [\(07919 912045\)](mailto:ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk) or Reg Langston at [reg.langston@lohp.org.uk](mailto:reg.langston@lohp.org.uk)

## Down on the Fens

### Conservation Manager's Update

How time flies! It doesn't seem very long ago that we were enjoying long sunny evenings. Now the leaves have all changed colour, and most have fallen from the trees; seeds and berries are ripe and perfect for wildlife and children (conkers). With

the changes in seasons, we see a change in some of our wildlife - our summer migrants swifts and swallows have now left us and the call of the cuckoo seems a distant memory. But now we see the return of our winter visitors. Redwing and fieldfare can be seen in the top of berry bushes or in grassy fields looking for something to eat.

### Seasonal changes to grazing

With the change in seasons also comes a change in the way we manage our sites. During the winter, we remove grazing animals from most sites to protect the sensitive habitats from 'poaching' (damage to the wet ground made by hooves). A few sites are extensively grazed during the winter months by cattle - this is where

animals stay on site all year - but their numbers are reduced, which lessens the poaching. This is mainly done across several adjoining sites. The animals are checked regularly by the grazier and if weather conditions deteriorate, they will be removed from site for both the welfare of the animals and to protect the important habitats.

### Get out and see for yourselves

Why not wrap up warm this winter and get out for a nice walk around LOHP sites and see what you can find - you will probably need your wellies as our paths aren't surfaced, and tend to get rather wet and muddy at this time of year.

*Ellie Beach - LOHP Conservation Manager*



*Redpoll cattle on Parkers Piece*

## Bat evening

The evening of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August was warm and dry, the perfect weather for an LOHP event introducing local people to local bats.



*The expectant bat-watchers*

Starting at Thelnetham Church with refreshments, kindly served by church wardens Jane and Karen, Mark Smith, from the Suffolk Bat Group, our expert guide for the evening, gave us an overview of the life of bats and species we might encounter. He gave us bat detectors and explained that the echo-location sounds that bats use to find their prey are ultrasonic and too high-pitched for our human ears, so the detectors convert them to sounds that we can hear. Each species has a different sequence of calls which means that they can be identified.

Outside the church we saw bats emerging and heard strange bleeps on our detectors. As dusk fell and we ventured further afield we heard others. David Hodkinson accompanied us, using his computer programme to show the echo-locating sounds visually. The highlight for me (and for others with a childish sense of humour) was hearing the change when the pipistrelle speeds up its echo-location as it homes in on its prey. It sounds just as if it's blowing a loud raspberry!

Our final tally of species was soprano and common pipistrelle, Barbastelle, brown long-eared, serotine and possibly a natterer's. It was a very enjoyable and educational evening.

*Sue Lawrence*

## Rewilding The Lows

We had always hoped that the upper section of The Lows, left alone, would develop into a wildflower meadow. Alas, because of what had happened to it in the past, this didn't materialise. We needed to do something about it. In early spring of this year, Helen Baczkowska, of Norfolk Wildlife Trust, gave a talk to the wildflower group on how to restore meadows. This involves rotavating the ground and then cutting and spreading 'green hay', fresh-cut from a wildflower meadow in seed.



*Green hay on the move*

### Local source of extra seed

Wortham Common, Long Green was identified as being an ideal site to collect green hay, as it is an explosion

of colour in the summer. Pesticides and fertilizers are never used there. Sarah Bradley, who grazes the common, kindly gave us her blessing to cut there. Two sessions (July and August) were held and a large group of volunteers gathered, some cutting and transporting from Wortham Common, some spreading the hay on The Lows. However, as the strips had been rotavated in the Spring, they were invaded by creeping thistles which had to be cut and spot-treated first (painstaking but effective, take a bow Nick Lingwood!).

### Home-grown, local-seed plug-plants

Alongside this, the wildflower group had been growing plug-plants at home, from seed collected locally in 2018. These were planted at the same time. Some people had gone above and beyond the call of duty and produced hundreds of plants (you know who you are!). More seed was collected from Wortham Common to grow on for next year. Now, of course, we have to wait until next Spring to see if the project has been successful. If so, we will repeat the process over the next couple of years and look to roll it out to other sites. A huge thanks to everyone who helped. We couldn't have done it without you!

*John McCormack*

## Eye-catching new poster

Frances Beasley of the Creative Fen Group describes the collaborative genesis of this atmospheric poster.

This poster's basic lettering was produced by two of our members, Martin and Mary Anne, at Cupiss Letterpress in Diss. It was shown at the exhibition we held at The Fox, Garboldisham in November.

When we have our monthly meetings, we walk around the Fen and sketch or take photographs. I sketched the ragged robin plus ladybird off Fen Lane when the orchids were out in June. I used the snails because I have picked up empty shells on my walks. The brimstones are artistic licence because I felt I needed yellow to contrast with the white of the convolvulus.

*Frances Beasley*



*Frances Beasley*

## A creative way to give

Formed in 2002, the 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, 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. The 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 Edward Coales (Treasurer) at the address on the form.

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

Andrew Aves	Tim Cooke
Dianne Creasy	Cyprium Motorsport Systems Ltd
Andrew Dickson Ltd	English Electric Motor Co
Roger Greenacre	Ian Hume
Paddy Richards	John and Belinda Sears
Helen Squire	Starwing Brewery
Adam and Olivia Stone	Euan Sutherland
John Wallace	Greg and Sue West

### Signing off - from Nicky

This is my last issue of *News from the Ouse* as editor. It's been a real joy and a privilege to work closely with you, over the last nine years, and see the project's impressive achievements. I've always admired your steady pursuit of your vision of connected conservation in the valley and your commitment to arts and education as well as science and practical work. The dedication of your volunteers is truly outstanding. Thank you for giving me the chance to share in the work and the fun.

Nicky Rowbottom

### Nicky's contribution

Nicky has been part of LOHP life for nearly a decade and we'd like to say a very big 'thank you' to her for the excellent work and support she's given us, all done with amazing patience and good humour. She helped conceive, design and launch *News from the Ouse* and has continued to make it a much-loved success, finding 'volunteers' to write articles, then editing and laying it out and overseeing production; she's also worked on our leaflet and interpretation signs, contributed to the website and volunteered at many events.

She'll be hugely missed but we wish her all the best for her retirement and hope it will still include visits to the LOHP.  
Helen Smith and Jo Pitt

## Sponsor-an-acre application

I/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 .....

..... Post Code.....

A/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:** The Honorary Treasurer (Edward Coales), LOHP, The Farthings, Long Green, Wortham, Suffolk. IP22 1PU.

(Tel. 01379 898479) Email: edwardcoales@live.co.uk

# Membership application

(not renewals)

**Full name:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

I wish to support the LOHP as a:

- |                                      |                |                          |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Friend of the Fens:</b>           | £10 min a year | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Ordinary member:</b>              | £5 a year      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Junior member: (&lt;18 years)</b> | £1 a year      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please tick one category and write the amount donated below.

**I wish to donate £..... to the LOHP.**

Please make cheques payable to the *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.*



The mark of  
responsible forestry

**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 renewals. We greatly appreciate this extra support for the work we're doing to enhance the valley and its wildlife.

Newsletter printed by [www.reflex-litho.co.uk](http://www.reflex-litho.co.uk)

## The LOHP needs you!

The LOHP relies on volunteers to run the charity and help with conservation (and other) work. Might you have some energy and time? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

To get involved, and for more information, contact **Bev Blackburn**, Volunteer Coordinator and Event Manager at: [beverly.blackburn@lohp.org.uk](mailto:beverly.blackburn@lohp.org.uk) or 07747 691285, or **Nick Lingwood**, Hon. Secretary on: 07772 769025.

## Work parties

Get out and enjoy yourself - whatever the weather - at an LOHP work party or event. Work parties are monthly on Sundays (dates below) and weekly on Wednesdays.

*Please check website/email circulation nearer the time for details of activity and location - which may change, depending on the weather.*

<b>Sun Dec 8</b>	Clearing vegetation	New Fen
<b>Sun Jan 12</b>	Scrub clearance	To be confirmed
<b>Sun Feb 9</b>	Clearing vegetation	To be confirmed
<b>Sun Mar 8</b>	Scrub clearance	To be confirmed

Sunday work parties start at 10.30.

Sunday work party contact: Bev Blackburn 07747 691285  
Wednesday contact: Reg Langston 01379 898009



LOHP on Facebook & Twitter  
for news and great photos go to  
[www.lohp.org.uk](http://www.lohp.org.uk) and click on the icons



## Events

### Dec 29th Winter walk

Meet at 10.30 am at Thelnetham village hall - look out for overflow car parking signs. The route will take in a visit to Reeves Meadows.

Soup available by booking with Bev Blackburn - text to 07747 691285 or email: [beverly.blackburn@lohp.org.uk](mailto:beverly.blackburn@lohp.org.uk)

Suggested donations £3.50 walk and £3.50 soup.

Dogs welcome on a short lead.



**To contact the LOHP (Reg. charity no: 1098232)**

**Email:** [enquiries@lohp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lohp.org.uk)

**Write:** LOHP, Waveney Cottage, Redgrave Rd,  
South Lopham, Diss, IP22 2JN

**Phone:** Ellie Beach on: 07919 912045

**Website:** [www.lohp.org.uk](http://www.lohp.org.uk)