

# Rural Heritage Society

LITTLE GADDESSEN, RINGSHALL, HUDNALL & ASHRIDGE

## NEWSLETTER

Spring 2010

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## **1. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday 30th June 2010 at 8.00pm**

Special speaker - Peter Clayton - Talk with slides

'Medieval Pilgrim Badges - their Saints and Shrines'

Formalities will be over in a trice! Peter Clayton, Chairman of the Berkhamsted and District Archeological Society (whom some of you may have seen digging and investigating the land in Church Road - work will start in Ashridge soon), will present a talk with slides about Pilgrimage and Faith - with reference to medieval pilgrim badges, their Saints and Shrines and particular mention of local shrines at Ashridge, St Albans and Marsworth. Peter is renowned for his work with the British Museum.

Wine and nibbles will be available and everyone is welcome whether you are a member or not.

## **2. What the Romans did for us**

Current thinking indicates that they did precious little in Little Gaddesden.

Viatores, a learned group of archeological scholars who were active locally in the last century, expounded the theory that the village lay on a Roman road which, presumably, linked St Albans with Ivinghoe Beacon. They were precise about its whereabouts and drew a line on the map across the fields behind Bede Court and the houses alongside in Church Road, implying that it straightened the line of the village road from the bend by Beaney, vanishing over the hill towards Hudnall Common.

This intelligence can now be questioned because Berkhamsted and District Archeological Society (BADAS) has a new toy.

We, and by that I mean all of us, invested in a resistivity meter last year and chose this site to put it through its paces and give members the opportunity to be trained in its use.

The meter would be a credit to Heath Robinson being composed of various pieces of tube, a couple of lumps of wood, handle bars and two serious spikes all linked to an impressive electronic gadget with lots of wires. If you watch Time Team you will have noticed people marching across fields stopping every meter to ram a piece of equipment into the ground and record findings. That's a resistivity meter. It is linked to another device which is planted some distance away to provide a uniform control reading. The meter sends a signal down into the ground to measure the reflected, returning signal and compare it to the control. Thus, after hours fighting the computer programme we can create a visual picture of the density underneath the ground.

The Romans were quite good at building roads and the compacted earth along with solid foundation material even on pathways and tracks leaves a distinctive pattern on resistivity graphics.

Brendan Sparks, the BADAS answer to Baldrick, can now say that these results combined with the concurrent activity of our tame metal detectorist lady make it very doubtful that the Romans were active in the area proposed by Viatores.

In order to explore the likelihood of Roman activity elsewhere in the village, Brendan sourced the earliest published map at the Hertfordshire County Council archive. Published in 1760 it shows a distinctly different layout of Little Gaddesden.

Church Road doesn't exist and the church is accessed via a substantial path running north to south and passing directly in front of it. This makes sense because the original medieval village lay in the fields west of the church and many prehistoric and Roman objects have been found here. Little Gaddesden (the actual road) is in a different position and there is evidence of a significant cluster of buildings in the fields east of Beaney, which no longer exists.

The bulk of the village developed in response to the growth of Ashridge.

I hasten to point out at this stage that these ramblings are merely intended to report on recent archeological activity in our village and in some instances are purely conjecture. They are not to be taken as a learned treatise. If anyone wishes to question my wisdom I welcome it because the investigation will continue and contributions will

help. In the near future the resistivity meter will be seen at work in the gardens at Ashridge as a prelude to a possible dig to identify historic garden designs there. If you want to be involved you will need to join BADAS.

*Peter Grainger*

### **3. WALKS**

Early in May 2009, we walked down to the Gade valley, enjoying the views, especially the fine sighting of the Whipsnade Lion and, after trekking through Dagnall, walked back up to Little Gaddesden via Hoo Wood, enjoying the sight and scent of a wonderful display of bluebells.

Another fine day saw us on a 'sloe walk' on which we gathered late blackberries, (it being 4<sup>th</sup> October) and many bags full of sloes for the ever popular sloe gin. After the harsh winter, everything has blossomed later than usual, but yet another fine day dawned for the 'Primrose Walk' on 11<sup>th</sup> April this year and we were rewarded by a display of the pale yellow flowers when we arrived at Alpine Meadow.

*Josie Jeffrey*

#### **We did it!!**

Early in December, the hedge planters gathered at West Pulridge, armed with spades & forks and set to: by 1pm-ish, a one hundred metre length of native hedgerow was in place: Hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, dog rose, guelder rose, field maple, spindle and beech whips were planted, staked and protected from animals with rabbit guards.

I have planted many metres of hedgerow, but I have never seen people work so hard: we were lucky with the weather, which was windy but sunny and Tina Shaw supplied us with excellent fuel in the form of delicious home made cakes, tea & coffee.

So, a huge thank-you to Marika Woods, Pippa Maclean, Nigel Shaw and Amy (who are both actually turbo charged) Tim Cooper, John & Peter Leonhardt, Paul Sherry (who was brought along by son Daniel, plus the other 'Super' Cubs, Angus Watson, Jack Charter and Harry & Ewan Molloy. The adults dug & planted (the clay, having previously been turned by Amy & Nigel, using a rotovator) and the Cubs staked and wound the guards around. I have recently been to check progress and I am so happy (& relieved!) to be able to say that in spite of the awful winter & thanks also to Nigel & Amy, who later mulched with newspaper, most of the whips have survived and the hedge is on it's way! It is hoped that it can be continued over the next two years and will form a perfect corridor, providing a haven for flowers, bees, butterflies, insects, invertebrates, small mammals and birds. So I will probably be press ganging volunteers before much longer.

*Josie Jeffrey*

#### **Another Walk**

On 5<sup>th</sup> July Josie Jeffrey led a circular walk in the Aldbury area. There were 5 or 6 walkers and 4 or 5 dogs, as I recall. We started at the car park at the high point in Stocks Road, where it crosses the ridge of Pitstone Hill. In dry sunny weather we walked along the Ridgeway path to the south-west over Pitstone Hill past Grim's Ditch and the old flint diggings, then more southerly into the nature reserve on Aldbury Nowers which is variously known as Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's Nature Reserve or Duchie's piece. This is a good site for chalk downland flowers and butterflies. At the southern end we turned east into the golf course adjoining Stocks, where a footpath leads you to the Aldbury village playing fields and back on to Stocks Road. This completed the first half of our circle.

We turned north along the road for a short space and then branched off to the right along footpaths through the fields at the foot of the Aldbury escarpment to Duncombe Farm. At this point I left the others, who were eager for a hill climb. While I took the lane back to Stocks Road, they climbed up to the plateau at Duncombe Terrace. Turning left, (west) they followed the terrace past Fredwell Kennels, after which they shortly started the descent which took them not quite to Incombe Hole. They joined the path to the south-east back to the car park on Pitstone Hill, where I had been able to lie down in the shade of a tree.

*John Leonhardt*

#### **4. The High Speed Rail Link - Too Close for Comfort**

On 11 March 2010, the Department for Transport published a report on the high speed rail link (HS2) between London and Birmingham. The line is to be extended to the North (Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield) in due course. The ambition is to reduce rail journey times from London to Birmingham to between 30 and 50 minutes (currently 84 minutes) and to the North to around 75 minutes (currently 130 - 140 minutes). The likely cost of the line from London to the West Midlands is between £15.8 billion and £17.4 billion.

A number of routes were considered by consultants retained by HS2 Limited, the Government established company required to undertake the studies, and they came up with three routes (a preferred route and two others), as well as a further two routes which had been considered at an earlier stage but discarded without detailed costing. Each of the 5 routes substantially affects the Chiltern area. Two out of the 5 routes come uncomfortably close to home - Route 4 and the M1 Corridor Route.

##### **London Terminal**

All HS routes start at London Euston station (which may have to be closed for reconstruction for a number of years), swiftly descending into tunnels to a new station, Old Oak Common, between Paddington and Willesden Junction with a likely connection from there to Heathrow and to Crossrail. The routes considered then diverge as described below.

##### **The Preferred Route (Route 3)**

From Old Oak Common, the lines emerge out of tunnels near Park Royal/Hanger Lane, towards Ruislip where the HS2 route will run pretty much parallel to the existing Chiltern line route out of Marylebone, crossing the M25 near to the south of Maple Cross. At the M25, the route will descend into a tunnel to a point west of Amersham Old Town. The tunnel will be about 30 metres below ground level and past the north of Chalfont St. Peter and under Chalfont St. Giles. For those who know Amersham, the tunnel will pass below Station Road and the Tesco store between Amersham on the Hill and Amersham Old Town.

From Amersham the route emerges into a cutting to pass to the north of Little Missenden, into a short tunnel close to Hyde Heath, then above ground to the north west of Great Missenden and then mainly above ground towards Wendover, running pretty much along the line of the A413 Wendover Bypass and then on the towards Stoke Mandeville, Stone (to the west of Aylesbury) and Quainton.

This route has the longest surface section of all the three preferred routes through the Chilterns and will give an estimated journey time of 44 minutes 9 seconds to Birmingham (including stopping time at Old Oak Common station).

##### **The Preferred Alternative Route (Route 2.5)**

The preferred alternative route (i.e. the second favourite) diverges from Route 3 at West Ruislip, goes towards Denham (following the existing Chiltern Line) where it enters into a long tunnel beneath Gerrards Cross, back into cuttings to Hazlemere where it enters another tunnel emerging at Hughenden (north of High Wycombe), over a viaduct crossing Hughenden Valley before continuing into a further long tunnel which emerges about 1 kilometre west of Princes Risborough. The route then continues on the surface to the west of Haddenham and up to Dorton and Brill before meeting Route 3 to the north east of Bicester.

The estimated journey time to Birmingham would be 45 minutes and 47 seconds.

##### **The Third Favourite Route - Route 4 - Too Close to Home**

This route would again divert from Old Oak Common station, into tunnels as far as Kings Langley, emerging between Chipperfield/Bovingdon and the A41, on past Haresfoot School and through Berkhamsted along the line of the A41, between the dual carriageway and Shootersway. It then continues north west, away from the line of the A41 where the A41 turns west to avoid Tring, to pass between Tring and Tring Station to the east of Pendley Manor. It then crosses the West Coast line at Pitstone and follow the existing rail route, slightly to the east, as far as Cheddington.

The argument in favour of this route is it would have a lower environmental impact through the Chilterns, following the West Coast line and the A41 corridor between Kings Langley and Cheddington.

The estimated journey time to Birmingham would be between 43 minutes 33 seconds and 45 minutes 33 seconds, depending on the speed rating of the Kings Langley tunnel.

### **The M1 Corridor Route - Very Close to Home**

This is the route of most interest to our locality. The route (apparently rejected at an intermediate stage) again diverges from the other routes at Old Oak Common station. It drives in tunnels towards Elstree and emerges to the north of Junction 5 of the M1 at Aldenham. The route runs on open ground parallel and to the east of the M1 to a new tunnel to the south of Bricket Wood, running under Garston and emerging near Junction 6 of the M1. It then follows the line of the M1 to the west, and continues on a straight alignment to the east of Hemel Hempstead (probably coming very close to or demolishing Buncefield Depot in the process). It then turns east close to the Ramada Hotel just outside Redbourn, probably demolishing Stags End Equestrian Centre and Bushwood Antiques, and crosses Gaddesden Row between The Chequers and Jockey End, crosses Pedley Hill (between Four Ways and Studham, quite close to Four Ways), crosses the Leighton Buzzard road between Four Ways and Dagnall, on through Well Farm and Ivinghoe Aston before finally veering off around and to the west of Leighton Buzzard, near Wing.

While this route is not one of the three most recommended routes, it might be anticipated that a sufficient groundswell of resistance to a route through the middle of the Chilterns could result in this route coming back into favour, as it pretty much follows the M1 as far as the Ramada Hotel and then runs predominantly on agricultural land with few significant environmental constraints, as well as following the Gade Valley to avoid tunnels and large gradients.

### **What Happens Next - Consultation**

The Government intends to enter into a process of "engaging stakeholders" at an early stage ahead of the launch of the formal public consultation. The formal public consultation will start in the Autumn 2010, but the consultation questions have not yet been published. The Government has said that it will not make a final decision on the detailed recommendations made by HS2 Limited (including the route to be chosen) until it has received responses to the public consultation exercise. If it decides in the light of those responses that the routes recommended are viable and that any or all of them should be taken forward, the Government will commission HS2 Limited to begin the work needed to prepare for seeking the necessary powers to construct the HS2 lines via Parliamentary authority. The Parliamentary authority will be by means of what is called a single Hybrid Bill which will give HS2 Limited all necessary planning and legal powers for the new railway lines, thus avoiding the need of any formal planning inquiry. So any objections need to be lodged via a Parliamentary procedure. Similar procedures were used for securing planning powers for Crossrail, HS1 (the Channel Tunnel Link) and the Dartford Crossing. The Government's preliminary assessment is that construction might begin in 2017 (when Crossrail has been completed) with the opening of the London to Birmingham leg of HS2 to open by the end of 2026.

*George Godar*

## **5. Hedgehog v Badger - an uneven Fight**

When did you last see a squashed hedgehog alongside a country road? Within the last year I've spotted no more than two or three. A good thing, you might think. No normal person wants to see such endearing and environmentally friendly little creatures slaughtered in such a careless and even selfish way.

The simple, gruesome fact is: there are far fewer hedgehogs available to be mangled by passing traffic. By using this rather macabre monitor as a mammal population census we find that going up are rats, grey squirrels foxes and badgers. (I am discounting deer for the purposes of this exercise.) Bearing in mind that the badger is the largest and most likely to be avoided if possible by the motorist.

So what are we to deduce from these sad and abandoned bodies? Apart, of course, from the obvious: there will always be drivers who drive too fast and with no sense of responsibility. It is this. Hedgehogs are in serious decline and rat, grey squirrel, fox and badger populations have exploded.

Why? Well, here are some theories. As for rats, that is pretty well documented; they are being too well fed. This probably includes the provision of bird food. (Gulp.) Grey squirrels, same reason; they are opportunistic rodents who also attack saplings and new growth in woodland and hedgerow, causing untold commercial and environmental damage as well as feeding on birds' eggs and nestlings, and just to add insult to injury, scoffing the bird-food that we thoughtfully provide. Difficult to control; the only local options are shooting or trapping

individuals. Devastating to bird population but at least it doesn't harm the hedgehog as far as I am aware. As to foxes, we all know what happened with the passing of the Hunting With Dogs Act.

Which brings me to the badger. Lovable old Mr. Brock. In 1992 much needed Government Legislation was introduced which outlawed the odious digging up of badger setts in order to use the animal in dog fights with pit bull type animals. Unfortunately, as so often happens with well meaning new law, it had unintended consequences. (Legislate in haste and however well intentioned, you end up with something like the useless Dangerous Dogs Act.)

Prior to that date, and for centuries past, many farmers would control the populations, ensuring a healthy balance of a creature which is a native and has a part to play in the countryside. The debate rages as to whether badgers spread bovine TB to cattle. I am certainly not qualified to give an expert opinion; suffice it to say that anecdotal evidence does suggest that other creatures have been so infected, including people, dogs and sheep. Who is to say that other, wild mammals are not affected? The anti-farming lobby accuse farmers of bad practice and spreading it into the wild and I believe that there have been recent cases of animals imported from Europe that proved positive to TB testing. However, believing that our farmers overwhelmingly care properly for their stock, as it is to their advantage to do so, my heart goes out to them in their dilemma.

Mass culling of a complete area seems not to have eradicated the problem as the survivors move into another area, thus spreading the disease which apparently can be spread via urine on grasslands. Nothing appears to be said about any suffering the creatures endure, due to the disease. What is the answer? Given that they are becoming out of control anyway, would it be possible to use birth control? It surely can't be more hit or miss than shooting, etc.

## **Badger v Hedgehog - 2**

Something must be done to halt the rapidly burgeoning population. Of course they have a place in nature, but nature would never have intended the current unhealthy over-population. They do a tremendous amount of damage as a result. The fact that they ruin sweetcorn crops, dig up carrots and damage much else which is cultivated for food is possibly of no less importance than damage they do to coops, fences etc. in order to get in and slaughter chickens, ducks and game birds - like foxes - leaving behind the uneaten bodies.

I have also seen a recent report stating that badgers, who love honey, are digging up burrowing wild bees in order to get to the honey; this will be another reason why we are seeing fewer bees going about their pollinating business. One more problem for the already devastated population to overcome. Look around road verges, footpaths and fields and you will see very many scooped out holes, some used as latrines by the badgers. I don't dare mention lawns similarly adorned.

NEWSFLASH: As I write, I have just heard a feature on Radio 2 News regarding a terrier stuck down a badger sett for two days whilst a licence was obtained from DEFRA in order that it might be dug out. Two days to get a licence!!! What if it had been a child? Apparently, the dog freed itself and made its way home after six days.

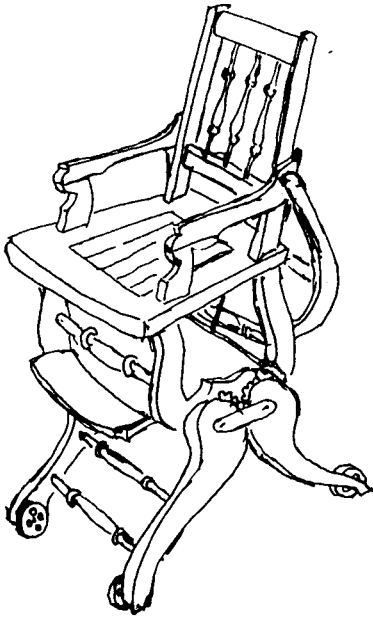
Where you have a large badger population the fact is, you will have few hedgehogs. Badgers dig out the hedgehog, unroll it and feast upon it. Add this to death by motor vehicle, acres of concreted-over gardens and slugs poisoned by pellets it's easy to see that they are on a hiding to nothing. I know which I would sooner have more of.

What, as responsible country-folk, can we do to try to redress the balance in favour of the Gardeners' Friend? Firstly, accept that centuries of farming practice formed the countryside that we know and love, it didn't just happen; our forests, woods, coppices and hedgerows and our flower meadows along with their chain of life from plants, invertebrates, insects, birds and mammals happened as a result of the old farming practices. Also of course, hunting and shooting created much of our countryside habitat. Most of the conservation work these days is down to volunteers and Wildlife Trusts.

Let us be pragmatic to the reality of over population by predators and accept that culling of some sort is necessary in order to redress the balance. How to instigate this? Write to the press. Lobby your M.P. Particularly in the case of badly drafted legislation such as The Badger Act 1992. Surely, in the event of a more Countryside Friendly Government, that, and other misguided legislation would be looked at in a new light if enough noise is made. Vote for contraceptives for badgers! Let's save our helpful hedgehogs!

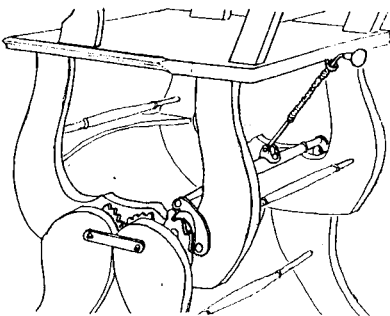
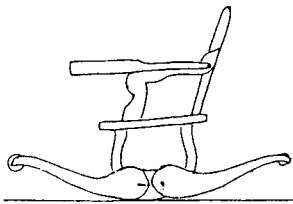
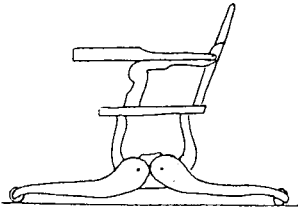
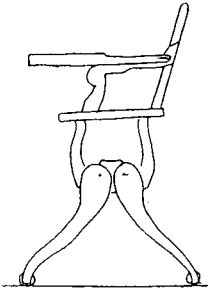
*Jose Jeffrey*

## 6. My Father's Chair



It is Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010 and my granddaughter Matilda and I are sitting down to breakfast at the kitchen table. It's a bit too early yet for the others, but when you are 2 years old the light is apt to wake you early, and it's nice to share some time before the rest of the family appears. Matty is sitting in the family highchair and it occurs to me that today my father, for whom the chair was bought, would have been 100 years old.

The highchair was purchased, second hand, in Dunstable and delivered to the village by pony and cart. It is a real wonder of Victorian engineering and hugely versatile. The curved legs have four positions dropping from regular high-chair height with tray in position; the tray can be swung back over the seat to allow the child to be sat up to the table; dropped a further level to make a chair a child can use independently and for the 'tour de force' at the lowest level the legs curve upwards to make a rocking chair. Originally there was a wooden seat which opened to reveal a potty, which slotted in below – appealing before the invention of the washing machine and dryer! My mother was having none of that and made my father put in a permanent seat. It has suffered many knocks and bangs over the years, even some periods of neglect in the loft but I am happy to say it is back in service now and shows every sign of going on for another 100 years.



My father, John James Oakins was born at 25 Ringshall in 1910, the eldest son of Stephen J. and Frances. Stephen was the village postman; there is a dashing photograph of him on page 36 of 'a century remembered' in full 'Lark Rise to Candleford' postal uniform. He and Frances met when she came from Norfolk with the household of a visiting Rector to Beaney (then the Rectory) for the summer whilst our Rector was on holiday. Stephen's father, John T. was coachman and gardener for the Rector and Sexton for the Church and the family lived opposite Beaney at No.1 LG. The 'below stairs' romance flourished with regular summer visits to the locum Rector, many postcards and letters until, on September 10<sup>th</sup> 1907, Stephen and Frances were married and went to live in one of the estate cottages at Ringshall. Rose was born in 1913 and so the highchair passed to her. (Rose and John are pictured on page 34). In 1915 the family moved to 11 LG and, lastly, Stephen was born in 1920. Whether the chair was stored or passed to the other cousins I'm not sure. Stephen J.'s younger brother Samuel also had a young family living in the village; Pelham born 1912, Violet 1915 and baby Sam born in 1917 eleven days after his father was killed at Ypres.

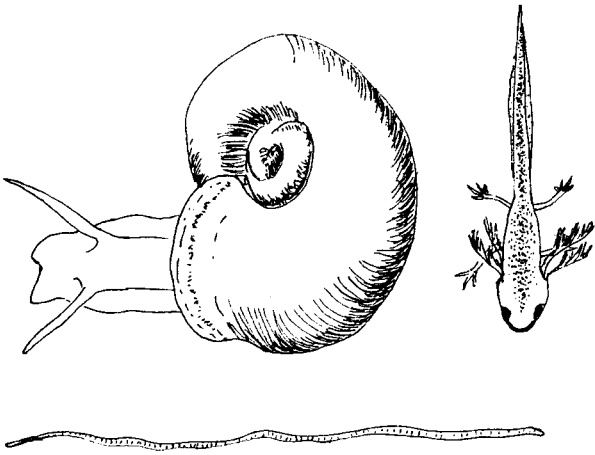
Stephen, Frances and their children John, Rose and Stephen continued to live at No.11 and, in 1928, when the estate was sold tenants were given first option to buy their houses. My Grandfather purchased Nos. 10 and 11 for the princely sum of £240 for the pair. When my parents married in 1935 they were given No.10 as their wedding present. My next positive knowledge of the chair is it being dusted off for the arrival of my sister Pamela in 1936, and kept in good use for Jennifer in 1941 and John A. in 1943. The family are photographed on p.309 of 'a century remembered'. Again I'm not sure whether my cousin, Rose's children, Ann and Peter or Stephen's children, Sandra and Graham used the chair, they were certainly all brought up in the village. I remember it as my highchair and I know when my elder sister and brother's families spent time 'between houses' staying with us or my Grandmother, their children used it. During the 1980s my children Victoria and Robert used it exclusively and now 100 years after it came into the family my grandchildren are still enjoying its sturdy, smooth wood and versatile features – especially the rocking chair!

A DABBLE IN AN ASHRIDGE POND

The meeting on September 13th 2009 was intended to be held at the pond on the village green, but there was not a drop of water there. The dense vegetation of Reedmace and Bur-reed had probably helped to suck it dry. Instead we took our equipment, with Graeme Cannon's permission, to a pond in Ashridge Park in the woods between Prince's Riding and Thunderdell Drive.

The pond was about 25 yards by 10 with several patches of open water and varied vegetation, the most interesting plant being the Bog-bean with low sprawling shoots bearing large 3-leafletted leaves.

There were eight of us, and two dogs. These latter delighted in sampling the water in our bowls, no doubt lapping up some of our sample creatures. In spite of this we found about 11 different little animals, most of which are pictured on this page. The newt tadpole was the only vertebrate, the Great Ramshorn was the only mollusc, and there was also

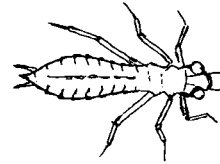


Great Ramshorn Snail: body and shell all black, shell about 1 inch broad or 25mm.

Newt tadpole: golden sandy colour with pink gills.

An aquatic Annelid worm (*Lumbriculus?*), brownish-pink.

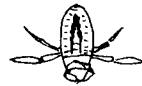
All magnified  $\times 1\frac{1}{2}$



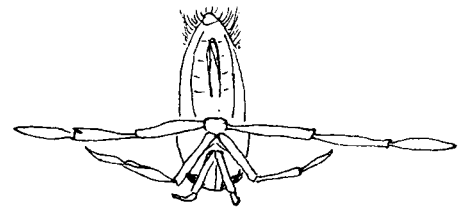
Dragonfly nymph, dark brown, 17mm  
Magnified  $\times 1\frac{1}{2}$

one species of true worm. The rest were insects. The biggest of these were two dragonfly nymphs: the one illustrated and another caught by our youngest, Amelia Rae, which was bigger and a different species. (We let it go, so I couldn't draw it.) She also found a small reddish midge larva, also not drawn here. As for the two Water-boatmen, both kinds were quite common, and as we watched one of the backswimmers which was just hanging in the water, quite still, made a lightning snatch and started feeding on it instantly. Back-swimmers feed by sucking out the contents of their prey, much as spiders do.

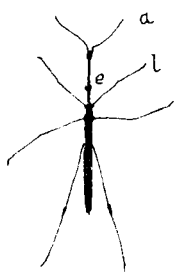
Two kinds of water-boatman, magnified  $\times 1\frac{2}{3}$



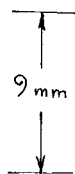
This Water-boatman does not turn upside-down. It is a wingless juvenile, 6mm long, but will not grow nearly so big as the Back-swimmer.



Our usual view of the Back-swimmer at rest floating upside-down with its tail up at the surface and body slanting down to the head. 15mm long, but a semi-foreshortened view.



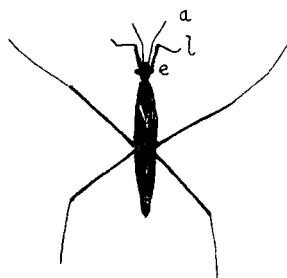
Water-measurer



Magnified  $\times 2\frac{1}{3}$

a: antenna

e: eye



Pond-skater

l: first leg

The two creatures on the left live on the pond surface but never get wet, not even their feet, which are water-repellent. The Pond-skater can skate rapidly over the surface by the symmetrical rowing motion of its four hind legs. The Water-measurer moves all six legs in alternate pairs in a walking motion, and is slower.

- John Leonhardt

## AUGUSTUS SMITH'S FENCE DEMOLITION COPIED

We recently discovered the existence of a poster that showed that the action of Augustus Smith of Berkhamsted in throwing down Lord Brownlow's fences was by no means the only operation of that type in the 19th century.

Here is a transcription of the poster put up in 1870, which resulted in a crowd assembling at Plough Green (near Clapham Junction) to pull down the fences at Wandsworth. Read the small print at the foot, in which Augustus Smith's action of four years earlier is cited as a precedent.

# WANDSWORTH COMMON

**"E'en now the devastation has begun,  
And half the business of destruction done.'**

## **To the Inhabitants & Working Men OF WANDSWORTH & BATTERSEA**

Will you allow Bankrupt and Speculating Builders, Land Societies, Beershop Keepers, Railway Companies, Tailors, Gentlemen, and Noble Lords, to rob you and your children of their Common Rights and Footpaths, and the liberty of walking on God's earth, without a struggle? During the last thirty years enclosures have been made by the late Mr. W. Keller and the late Mr. Wilson, the enclosure for the Telescope, the enclosures by the Railway Companies, the Patriotic School, the St. James's Industrial School, the enclosure by the Prison, the enclosure by Mr. Costeker and Mr. Smith, making a total of upwards of 200 acres! Most of these enclosures have been filched from the Common and resold at an enormous profit.

WHAT'S THE REMEDY? Down with the fences! Preserve your Footpaths, show the Lord Spencer and the Vinegar Men on the Board of Works, who have neglected their duty, that you are determined to maintain your rights like true Liberals and keep them like true Conservatives.

Follow the Noble Example of Mr. Augustus Smith, who destroyed three miles of Fence on Berkhamstead Common; the men of Wigton who broke down the fence erected by the Earl of Galloway; The Men of Buckinghamshire who broke down the fences on Northall Common; the Men of Surrey who broke down the Fences on Shalford Common, and so Preserved their Rights!

**Men of Battersea and Wandsworth, GO AND DO THOU LIKEWISE!**

Cursed is he who removeth his neighbour's Landmark, and robbeth the poor of his inheritance and joineth land to land to increase his riches.

**DOWN WITH THE FENCES!**

The Berkhamsted Common story is told in various local histories and is well-known in Little Gaddesden. The details, briefly, were that John, 2nd Earl Brownlow (and the first of that title to own Ashridge), supported by his mother Marion, Viscountess Alford, enclosed about 200 acres of Berkhamsted Common with a fence in 1866. He owned the land, but it was subject to commoners' rights. He offered land in Berkhamsted in compensation. Augustus Smith, the owner of Ashlyn's Hall in Berkhamsted, objected on behalf of the commoners affected by the enclosure, and raised support against it. He hired a contractor to remove the fence. A force of 120 navvies was taken to Tring station from Euston by special train, arriving in the small hours of March 6th. During the night they pulled up the fence and threw it down. It led to litigation which was not settled until 1869. The judgement went against the enclosure. By then the Earl had died (having always been of very poor health) and was succeeded by his younger brother, Adelbert, who, as the third Earl Brownlow, owned Ashridge from 1867 until he died in 1921. Their mother died in 1888 and is commemorated by the stone Celtic cross, seat and fountain at the entrance to the park at the north end of the Green. She was actually a great benefactor of the village, and was responsible for our first piped water.

## 9. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	George Godar	The Old Rectory	842274
Vice Chairman	Anne Wooster	Vine Cottage	842469
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Secretary & Minutes Secretary	Anne Wooster		
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Walks and Country matters	Josie Jeffrey	12 Bede Court	843261
Footpaths	John Leonhardt	21 Little Gaddesden	843550
Membership Secretary	Lyn Hyde	22 Little Gaddesden	842267
Newsletter Editor	Anne Wooster		

**Note:** If you have used your RHS Map a lot and it is now in tatters, please present the old map to a member of the Committee and it will be replaced free of charge.

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The views expressed within all RHS Newsletters are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Committee.

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## 10. SUBSCRIPTIONS

As ever, a plea for prompt payment of subscriptions - £2 per person. Please drop the this slip, together with at least £2 (cheques are quite acceptable) into Lyn Hyde at 22 Little Gaddesden (or your nearest committee member). If you are not yet a member and would like to join, please do the same. Very many thanks.

Name: .....

Address: .....

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