

Member of



# NEWSLETTER May 2015



## Spring has 'sprung'!

### Natural Hartford

As the local conservation group we are sometimes accused of being too focused on the built environment of the village while overlooking its natural delights. So this newsletter will aim to redress the balance!

*We had a particularly good presentation from the Godmanchester Nature Reserve on May 19th. Please see a report overleaf.*

### Bat & Bird Boxes

The bat and bird boxes on the riverside meadow have been put up by the District Council as part of work for their Higher Level Stewardship Agreements they have with Natural England on how they manage various areas of grassland across the District. They have also put up some Barn Owl boxes.

Countryside Services entered in to HLS (higher level stewardship agreement) with Natural England and as part of their agreements they are putting in features such as roost boxes for certain target species. As well as cutting the hay meadow grassland areas at certain times. They are also doing tree work as well under these agreements.

*Am I the only one to think the elegant bird box is rather too accessible to tree climbers?*



### The young trees are not for cutting



We have recently heard from a resident of Main Street that people have been challenged when caught in the act of cutting down healthy young trees in the copse off Church Lane.\*for fire wood \*

This is totally unacceptable and considering the availability of dead wood absolutely stupid! Please keep your eyes open against any future threats.

### We want your Hartford nature photos...



We are running a nature photo competition at the **Family Fun Day** on Saturday 20th June. There will be 3 categories: under 11; 11 to 16 and over 16.

Please email a high res image (just one per entrant please) to [info@hartfordconservation.org.uk](mailto:info@hartfordconservation.org.uk) by May 31st latest. **Clearly state** your name, the subject of the photo, where taken (must be within Hartford) and which age group you are. Prizes will be awarded to the winners and all short listed photos will appear on our website.



## A well kept secret on our doorstep

A small but attentive audience were introduced to "Godmanchester's well kept secret" when Amy Robinson, the Ouse Valley Education and Community Officer for Bedfordshire, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust, recounted the history and development of the Godmanchester Nature Reserve, from floodplain grazing, gravel pits and wet woodland restoration of near continuous network of flower-rich meadows.

An ongoing project within the Ouse Valley Living Landscape Scheme, the reserve is the result of co-operation between the Trust and the current owners Lafarge Tarmac of the now redundant gravel pits which sit between the river and the old Huntingdon to Ely rail line. The Trust is currently fundraising to purchase the reserve from Lafarge Tarmac so that they can safeguard it for future generations on wildlife and people to enjoy.

It's a very old site with evidence of Neanderthals to Romans, and several fossils dating back 250million years ago found during quarrying in the 1980s. A key factor in its success is the willingness of the developers to accommodate wildlife by the creation of habitats such as sand banks for sand martens.

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## Forthcoming Events:

**July 14th: village walk with local historian David Huffard. Meet at the King of the Belgians at 6.30pm. Cost £2 a head. This was very popular when last done in 2011.**

Local people under the guidance of Ron Foster, the former restoration manager have worked tirelessly. Local farmer Bob Thompson, a former reserve warden re-establishes reed beds and osier beds, resulting in a habitat for bearded tit and bitterns.

Amy explained that the various ponds and features reflect the site's history including Clifford Reeve Way, dedicated to the memory of his brave action in saving the crew of his Sterling bomber in 1942 and Teddy's lake after a local farm owner. Roman Lake is on the site of a Roman well.

Wintering wigeon have become a seasonal attraction and an area called Highsides is currently being stripped back to encourage the return of ringed plovers and other waders.

Willows are being conserved and pollarded to encourage rare and beautiful beetles, as are ancient hedgerows.

Successes are many and varied including nightingales, kingfishers, the occasional otter, egrets, newts and the rare scarce chaser dragonflies.

The Reserve is open to the public and always keen to welcome volunteers. The Heritage Lottery Fund has funded lots of free events on the reserve too. Please see [www.wildlifebcn.org](http://www.wildlifebcn.org), call 01480 473161 or email [amy.robinson@wildlifebcn.org](mailto:amy.robinson@wildlifebcn.org) for details



*We are planning an evening walk around the Reserve, provisionally on 11th August, details will be circulated soon.*

### Saturday 21st June

Hartford Family Fun Day: Street party and dog show; stalls in the Village Hall

### Saturday 5th September:

Art Display at the Village Hall  
Tony Twist Retrospective