



Newsletter

August 2025



Love Hambrook Marshes

Tufted vetch, with A2 bridge in background

Welcome

For the third year, there will be a Riverfest this month, celebrating the beauty, wildlife and health benefits of the river Stour. Once again, there is a host of events taking place between 21st and 28th September. You can view the full programme and book events [here](#). An inter-faith walk on 27th will take in part of Hambrook Marshes.

Canterbury is one of the very few cities in the country to boast a free-living population of beavers along the river in the centre of the city. The Friends of Kingsmead Field and the Canterbury District Biodiversity Network are keen to celebrate the presence of this unique animal and to raise awareness of the important role that beavers play in the ecology of our chalk stream, and have commissioned a London street artist to produce a mural featuring two beavers, one on land and one in the river, with a weeping willow framing the image. The cost will be £5000 and if the money can be raised through crowdfunding by 15th September, the mural will be painted during the Riverfest and unveiled at the Riverfest Fair on World Rivers Day, which is Sunday 28th September. A simple mock-up of the design, which will frame a large window at the Curzon, is shown on page 2. You can contribute to the appeal – for some reason I can't get a direct link to work, so you'll have to follow these few steps: Type “crowdfunder.co.uk” into your browser; once the Crowdfunder page is open, click on “Explore” at the top of the page; then add “beaver mural” in the keyword box, and “Canterbury” in the location box. Many thanks.



Mock-up of what the beaver mural will look like

What's happening on the Marshes?

A beautiful rustic bench commemorating Dylan Bayliss, who died on the Marshes in June, was installed on Hambrook Marshes on 25th. His mother, Flo Bayliss, worked closely with Hambrook trustees to ensure that a worthy but appropriate seat could be produced, and we are very pleased with the final result. A routed inscription on the seat back reads:

*Dylan Kevin Bayliss –
eternally loved and
missed.
Deep peace of the
quiet earth to you.*



The willow maze received its third, and possibly final, cut of the season.

Wildlife Report

August was another quiet month, with very little of wildlife interest to report, so this will be a short paragraph! Two collared doves (right) appeared on the old railway embankment on 4th, while on 19th there were three, but none have been seen subsequently.



Kingfishers are naturally very strongly associated with water, and when we see them in flight they are usually following the line of a river or crossing a lake, but they are perfectly happy going overland as well. On 25th one flew across a field, presumably after hunting along one of the ditches at the back of Hambrook, and heading for the Stour.

By the end of the month I was beginning to see signs of preparations for migration, with an increase in the number of warblers – mainly chiffchaffs – feeding in the scrub on the side of the embankment. Birds that migrate southwards into Africa face many obstacles: not least are the vast tracts of barren land, such as the Sahara Desert, where the birds won't get a chance to refuel. To get round this, the birds feed up intensively in the days prior to migrating, building up thick layers of energy-rich fat beneath the skin, and increasing their weight by as much as 25%.

Thanks to Dave Smith for the photos of collared dove and kingfisher

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