

## **OTTERBOURNE CONSERVATION GROUP**



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### **Newsletter - Summer 2005**

At the time of writing this Newsletter, the spell of very hot weather has suddenly turned much cooler. Hopefully this does not signify the end of Summer. Having said that, the countryside is very much in need of rain. The Bourne Stream has almost dried out and the Water Voles, normally resident on Sponder's Mede, have left presumably to go downstream in search of the damper environment to which they are accustomed. Hopefully they will return in the Autumn.

One area that does not seem to have been too affected by the drought is the new pond, which was dug by Southern Water in conjunction with BTCV two years ago. This lies to the east of the railway, by the Public Footpath beyond the Kiln Lane old churchyard. Dennis Bright was photographing the area recently and drew our attention to the inconsiderate dog owners who were allowing their charges to bathe in the pond. We were able to persuade Southern Water to prevent this by the installation of some sheep netting. Unfortunately the many Newts, which were in residence two weeks ago, have now disappeared; presumably taken by a local Heron, to which Newt would be a delicacy. However the pond is still worth a visit for the range of other water creatures which is present. At the same time you may also wish to take advantage of the new bench in the old churchyard, which will be in place by the time you read this.

Members may have noticed that the decline in Swallows and House Martins continues, for reasons, which are not entirely clear. Oakwood Estate and around the Old Parsonage are now the only areas in Otterbourne where Martins can be seen in regular numbers and even there they are less than hitherto. Swifts on the other hand do not seem to be similarly affected, even though they have similar feeding habits.

We hope to be able to take part in the Community Week being organised at St. Matthew's in September, and to present a small display of local history items from our archives. I look forward to seeing some of you there.

Michael Warne  
Chairman

19 July 2005

*An independent Group affiliated to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, a registered charity.*