

Footpaths

The footpaths around West Butterwick seemingly go off in random directions and terminate at equally indiscriminate destinations, however a cursory glance at maps from the 19th century and early 20th century will reveal that these destinations were the site of pumping stations used for land drainage of these low lying and once very wet lands.

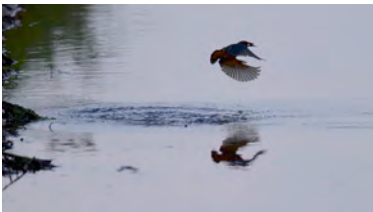
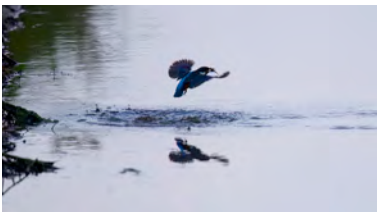
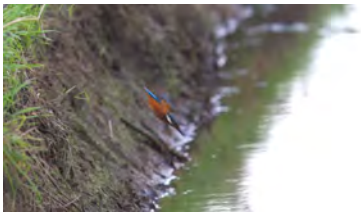
Evidence of some of these pumping stations still exist, an old steam engine boiler has been used as a culvert at Rushcarr, while at the opposite end of the parish at Newlands, much of the stone and brickwork work remains of a scoop wheel type pump. The bricks interestingly being stamped with the word “drain” on them, this exempted them from the brick tax that was in place during the time of construction.

Another pointer to the the past are the outcrops of old dark coloured tree stumps or “Bog oaks”, Semi-petrified trees that have been languishing in the peat strata underground for hundreds of years. These tend rise to the surface of the land and are the bane of anyone performing deep cultivations on the land, these “Bog oaks” serve as a reminder that part of this area was once forested.

A walk around these footpaths could not be described as “challenging” as the only perceptible gradient would be if one scaled the Trent bank, “Rewarding” would be an appropriate adjective if one appreciates wildlife, the parish being host to rich selection of fauna, notably Skylark, lapwing, Yellow Hammer, Corn Bunting, Yellow Wagtail, Grey Partridge, Starling and Fieldfare (Each flagged red status by the RSPB), also Reed bunting, Stone Chat, Barn Owls and Little Egret among many others.



A drain side walk may be interrupted by the distinctive blue flash of a kingfisher, at least a pair of which reside on the the drainage network.



Although very rare in some parts of the country this parish boasts a good population of Hares, and an apparently increasing population of the elegant but shy Roe Deer.



The abundance of wildlife is due in no small part to the conservation efforts of local farmers who strive to balance the growing of crops, typically Wheat, Barley, Potatoes, Oilseed Rape and Red Beet along with maintaining a wildlife rich habitat on these fertile soils.