



LANDSCAPE: A special landscape – notes and answers

Introduction and background

- **What is landscape?** Landscape means an area as it is perceived by people. Its character is the result of the constant interactions between people and nature.
- **The Little Ouse Headwaters** is a very special landscape area and worth getting to know. It includes the main river valley and four tributaries with their smaller valleys which run into it.
- Hundreds of years ago, in medieval times, all the way from Hopton to Roydon was one long boggy fen, the biggest valley fen in East Anglia (and probably in England). It was a very different landscape to what we see now.
- The Little Ouse is not a typical valley. The river drops very little as it flows. When a river has such a shallow slope it doesn't behave like a text book river with a speedy upland stream and then turning into a slow meandering river as it nears the flatter lands near the sea. Ours start slow and meandering, and just get bigger! (They used to meander more than they do now. In the past many stretches of river have been straightened. To find the old course on a map - look out for places where a parish or county boundary wiggles through the fields, following the old river route and the nearby river is now straight as a ruler.)
- The Little Ouse is a major feature in this valley. It is the county boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk. **Slide 9 Garboldisham is in Norfolk, Thelnetham is in Suffolk. The source of the Little Ouse River is just to the west of the B1113 road (over on the right hand side of the map). The source of the River Waveney is just across the road. They flow in opposite directions.**
- **Slide 14 – By the time the river has got to Scarfe Meadows it is wider because it has been joined by several tributaries as well as many field drains.**
Slide 16 – Many more rabbits live on Broomscot Common (dry heath) than on Bleyswycks Bank (flood meadow) because their burrows are less likely to flood. .
- **Slide 17 – Broomscot Common would be on the extreme left hand side of the diagram. Reeds like to grow right beside water (and into the shallows).**
- **Slide 18 The building is Thelnetham windmill, built in 1819.** The mill used to grind local grain into flour. The last full time miller, Alphonso Vincent, died in 1932. It was renovated in 1980s. In 1990s several tons of flour were produced and sold each year. Now needs volunteer help – any offers?
- **Slide 19 - 20 (the simple answer is in slide 20) Local families had a patch of fen from which they could cut peat for fuel and cut reed and sedge for repairing their roofs. The main slope**

of the roof was made of reed and the ridge (where it has to bend) was made of saw-sedge which is flexible enough not to break when bent, so it made a waterproof ridge.

- Slide 23 Historically the very wet valley bottom was seen as the source of peat for fuel and of crops like reed and sedge. The drier valley sides were used for grazing. During and after World War II even some of the wetter bits of the valley were drained in an attempt to grow food crops. Since 2003 the LOHP have been taking on and managing land for wildlife, aiming to restore them to something like their former high conservation value, and to join them up and (re)create a continuous wetland corridor.
- Slide 25 questions are answered on Slide 26
- Slide 27 The Great Ouse goes into the sea (the Wash) at Kings Lynn. This scene is from Clenchwarton Road, looking upstream to the A47 bridge over the Great Ouse.