

Info on Fen Drayton (RSPB)

The complex of lakes and traditional riverside meadows next to the River Great Ouse used to be gravel workings. Situated in the heart of the Cambridge growth area and a key component of Cambridgeshire's 'Green Vision'. The complex consists of ten main lakes; Oxholme Lake, Elney Lake and Moore Lake having been designated specifically as a nature reserve. Information boards have been provided to give access details and free trail guides and events leaflets are available from the Elney car park. A manned Exhibition Trailer is also on-site on weekends and through the school holidays. Several public rights-of-way and trails cross the reserve. Disabled access is possible to one of the viewing screens.

Large numbers of ducks, swans and geese winter on the lakes. In summer, terns, hobbies and a variety of dragonflies are regularly seen. Otters are also present. Since the extraction of gravel began in 1953, at least 213 species have been recorded in the area with some 65 species being regular breeders.

Designated as: Local Nature Reserve

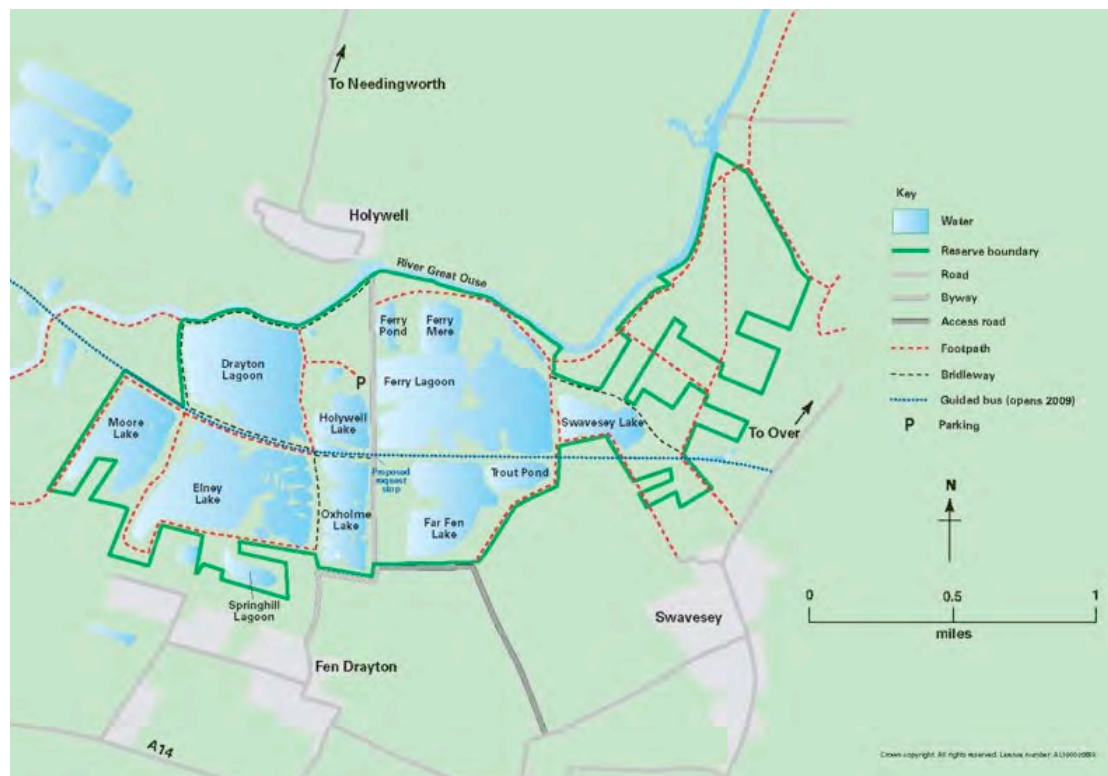
Visitor Centre: No. A manned Exhibition Trailer is on-site on weekends and through the school holidays.

Parking: The entrance to the lakes is signposted off Fen Drayton Road, between the villages of Fen Drayton and Swavesey. From here, you can reach the two car parks at Holywell Lake and Elney Lake by following signs posted around the site. There are cycle racks available in the Holywell Lake and Elney Lake car parks. Disabled car access to one viewing screen (sign-posted), which has concrete standing and crushed limestone parking area.

CGB: The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway running between Huntingdon and Cambridge has a request stop at Fen Drayton Lakes. Buses run at 10 minute intervals (Mon – Sat) and hourly on Sundays between St Ives and Cambridge (www.thebusway.info).

Trails: There are a number of public and permissive rights of way around the lakes and two open access fields next to the Holywell Lake car park. The site is subject to periodic flooding and care must be taken as to which paths and bridleways can be accessed.

Events: Various throughout the year.



2. Mare Fen Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and County Wildlife Site (CWS)

Mare Fen lies approximately four kilometres to the north-west of the site. It is managed by Cambridge Council as wet grassland meadow which is grazed during the summer by cattle and allowed to flood during the winter. During the winter the reserve supports over-wintering wildfowl and waders, and during the spring and summer a range of aquatic plants is present along with abundant reptiles and amphibians.

3. Over Railway Cutting CWS

Over railway cutting lies approximately two kilometres to the north-west of the site. The site comprises a south facing slope with dominant scrub and open areas of unimproved grassland with calcareous influences. Strong colonies of grizzled skipper along with a wide range of other butterflies have been recorded here.

4. Madingley Brick pits CWS

The brick pits lie approximately five kilometres to the south-west of the site. The site comprises a small group of flooded pits surrounded by mature scrub and trees. The site supports a nationally rare liverwort and is important for invertebrates.

5. Coton Countryside reserve.

The Countryside Reserve is a working farm environment and has one of the best local panoramic views across countryside, including the historic skyline of Cambridge and Coton village. Coton Countryside Reserve is located near the village of Coton, just to the west of Cambridge. This publicly accessible site is being created and managed by local charity and membership group Cambridge Past, Present & Future (CambridgePPF) – formerly the Cambridge Preservation Society. Covering more than 300 acres (120ha) of actively managed pasture and agricultural land.

In 2010, CambridgePPF appointed a new farm tenant at Coton. The Trumpington Farm Company is now continuing to manage the land under a Countryside Stewardship agreement with Natural England.

Wildlife-friendly farming techniques are being adopted and new recreational routes have been introduced. Walkers, cyclists, joggers, pram users, disabled people and horse riders can now access the reserve from adjacent public footpaths and bridleways, creating a major public green space that is within easy reach of Cambridge and nearby villages.

Designated as: Country Park.

Visitor Centre: No.

Parking: 'Martin Car Park' access from Barton Road A603. Open everyday. Parking currently free. 9.00am and 6.00pm (end March to end October - British Summer Time); 9.00am to 4.00pm in winter (early November to end March).

CGB: Not advertised. Local buses - Citi 4 (Camborne bus, stop at Coton Turn); or can use sightseeing bus and then walk along main road through the village.

Guides: Throughout the year guided walks are provided to give deeper insight into the countryside reserve, its wildlife and management. See leaflet attached.

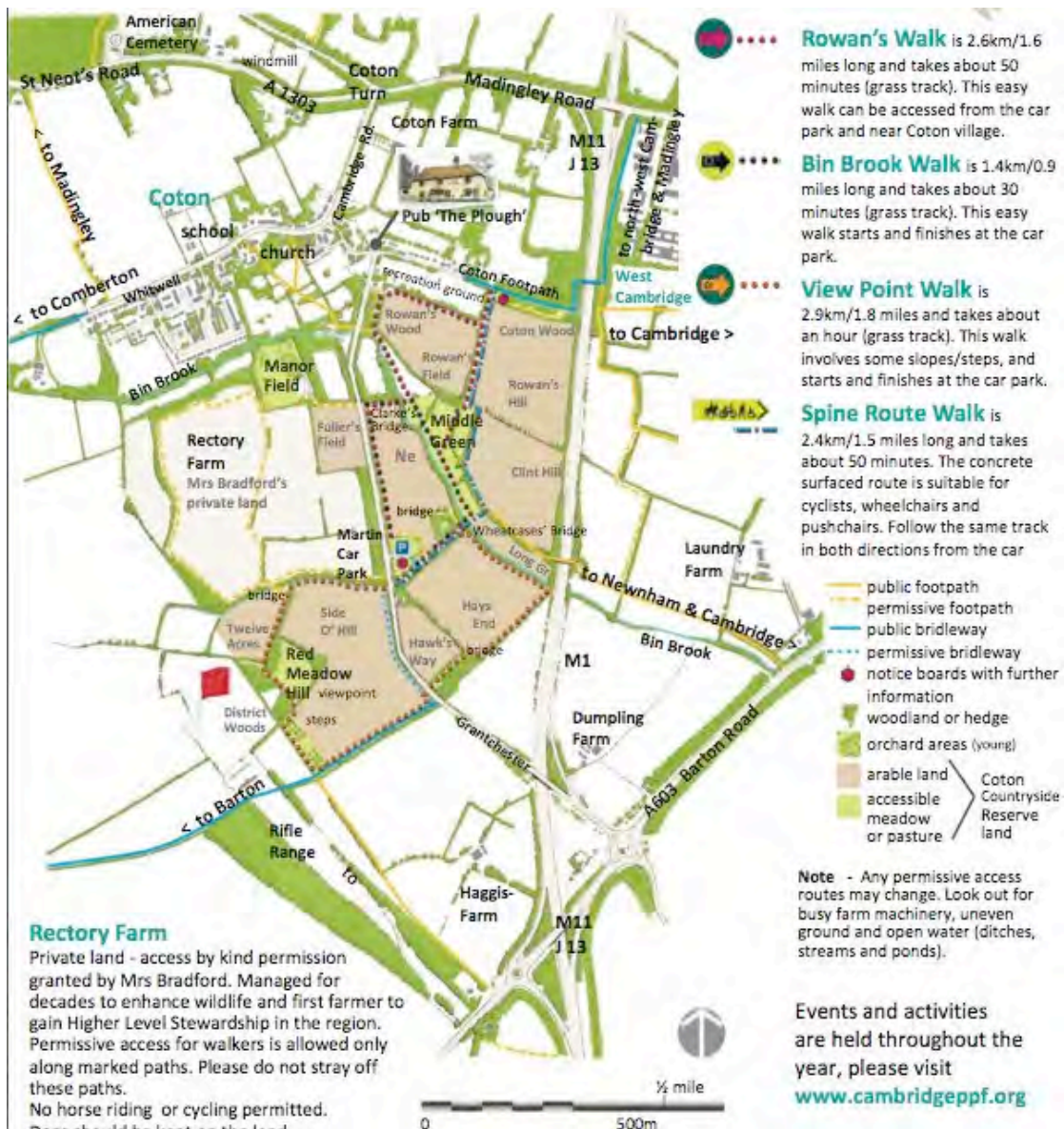
Trails: Rowan's Walk, Bin Brook Walk, View Point Walk, Spine Route Walk

Events: Events and activities are held throughout the year. Including Saturday, 12 November 2011 Introduction to navigation using GPS at Coton Reserve.

The management group is planning large and small works and are looking for funding, sponsorship and support for projects such as:

- Car park - Phase 2 - surfacing of 50 more spaces
- Reserve Centre - housing a ranger base, public toilets, education rooms and visitor information centre
- Site furniture - informal benches and seats
- Informal Fitness Trail - informal exercise stations linking with Coton Village and West Cambridge Athletic Club

- Paths and sustainable access - further improvements and linkage with the village and local bus network; further information boards.
- Boundary improvements - including M11 noise reduction
- Directional signage - improvement of way markers
- Pond - pond dipping deck for schools and groups at the heart of the Reserve
- Surveys and management plans - covering wildlife conservation and historical research
- Habitat improvements - (Phase 2) - including specific habitats such as the riverine wildlife improvements along Bin Brook corridor and ditches; wetland area near brook
- Maintenance equipment and machinery - including tractor, trailer and other accessories, etc
- Farm ranger post - salary support to enable better practical conservation and visitor management including environmental education.



6. Wicken Fen (National Trust)

Wicken Fen is well used by local people and visitors from further away: **40,000 visitors per annum visit the Fen**. More than 6000 school children come to take part in formal education programmes and there are events for families and individuals that attract a further 3500 visitors each year.

As a result, the Fen is an important tourism attraction in East Cambridgeshire and plays a valuable role in the local economy by attracting people to the District and providing local employment. Wicken Fen offers a variety of walks and guided trails designed to cater for all ages and ranges of mobility and provide great opportunities to see Wicken Fen's wildlife.

Wicken Fen is home to over 8,000 species of wildlife. There are many hides on the ancient Sedge Fen, or around the Mere and ponds. A great favourite is the Tower Hide which gives an outstanding elevated 360° view of the reserve and wider vision lands.

Barn owls, Kestrels and Hen Harriers are regularly seen foraging over Sedge and Burwell Fen's, The Mere attracts a vast array of native and visiting wildfowl and rare species such as bittern, otter and water vole. Wicken Fen's herds of Highland cattle and Konik ponies can regularly be seen grazing on Baker's Fen and Guinea Hall.

Designated as: National Nature Reserve; Site of Special Scientific Interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Special Area of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive; Wetland protected under the international Ramsar Convention.

Visitor Centre: The Visitor Centre features a permanent exhibition of information about Wicken Fen, its history and ecological importance. Wicken Fen National Nature Reserve and Visitor Centre is **open daily from 1000 - 1700.**

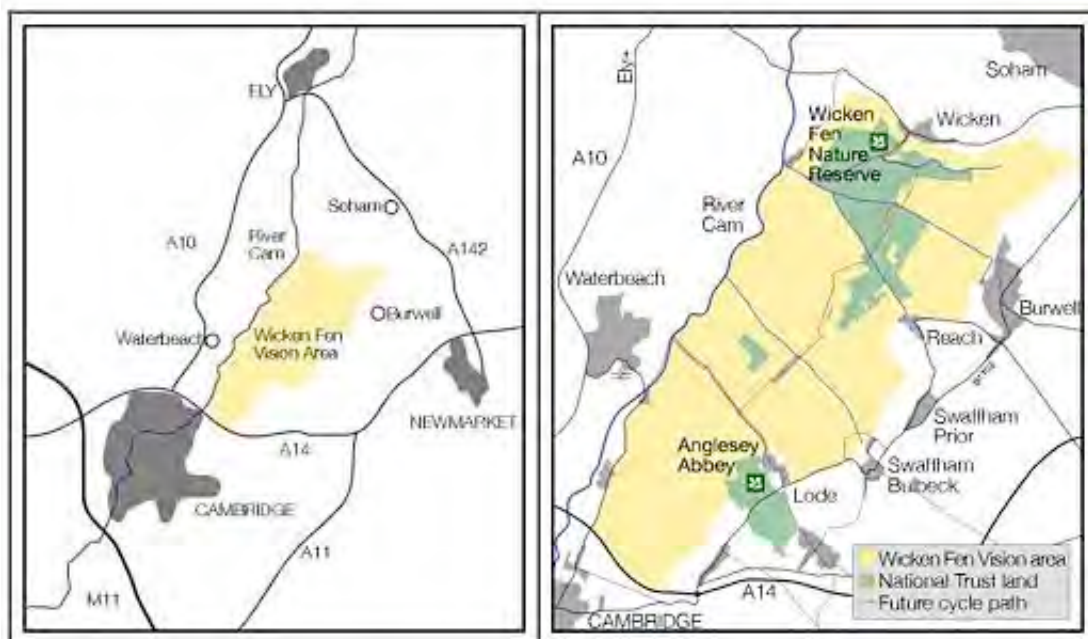
Parking: Pay and display for non-members.

CGB: Not advertised.

Trails:

- Boardwalk Trail - A ¾ mile circular path, on a raised boardwalk through the ancient undrained Sedge Fen, a unique remnant of the fen landscape which once covered much of East Anglia..
- Nature Trail - A 2¼ mile (1¼ hour) in-depth look at the ancient Sedge Fen.
- Adventurer's Trail - A 2¾ mile (minimum 1¾ hour) exploration of Adventurers' Fen leading to Wicken Fen's hides overlooking reedbed, marsh and open water.
- Viridor Credits Walk - A 6 or 7 mile walk exploring the wider Vision lands such as Baker's, Burwell Fen and Hurdle Hall. This walk is designed to show land in various stages of transition back to traditional fenland habitat.

Wicken Fen Vision: The Wicken Fen Vision is an ambitious plan to create a new nature reserve covering around 53 square kilometres between Cambridge and Wicken Fen. This will be the biggest project of its kind in lowland England - it won't happen overnight, in fact it will take up to 100 years. Today The National Trust owns 930 hectares (around 2,300 acres) in the area.



Statutory sites:

OVERHALL GROVE (SSSI)

- Overhall Grove is ancient secondary woodland now dominated by small-leaved elm (*Ulmus minor*) and represents a woodland type which is nationally restricted in its distribution. The wood overlies the site, fields and ponds of a medieval manor house and was well established by 1650. This break, or discontinuity, in tree cover with no primary woodland nucleus remaining has resulted in a classic example of the long lasting effects on the ground flora of the removal of woodland cover. The woodland that had developed by the end of the 17th Century was oak over ash

Coppice-with-standards and was planted with elm when coppice management declined. Elm has developed by suckering and is now dominant as massive standards with oak and ash. The site lies on moderately steep slopes with heavy clay soils throughout. Rides, clearings, ponds and a meandering stream provide additional habitats of general value. C. 5km south west of the site

MADINGLEY WOOD (SSSI)

- Madingley Wood is an example of the ash-maple woodland type characteristic of the chalky Boulder Clay of eastern England. The western sector of the wood is of ancient origin whilst the eastern half is of relatively recent origin thus providing valuable opportunities for study into colonisation processes and historical ecology generally. The older primary woodland holds standards of pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) with ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*) being common. Old hazel (*Coryllus avellana*) coppice, and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) dominate the shrub layer. The secondary woodland holds a mixture of elm *Ulmus* sp. and ash with a shrub layer of elm suckers and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). The ground flora is typically of dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*)-bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) type. The woodland has also been noted for its moss flora. The site is of particular educational and research value in view of its long association with the University of Cambridge.

C. 6km south of the site

ELSWORTH WOOD (SSSI)

- Elsworth Wood is located approximately 13 kilometres west of Cambridge. It is the surviving fragment of a curious ring-shaped wood unusually situated on a ridge between two valleys. This wood has probably existed since the late 13th Century. Three types of woodland are represented, all of which are nationally uncommon. It is the best example in Cambridgeshire of a wood whose canopy is dominated by field maple (*Acer campestre*). This type of woodland appears not to be known on the continent and therefore has international significance. In addition there is a good population of oxlip (*Primula elatior*) which is restricted to ancient woodlands in parts of East Anglia and the East Midlands. The wood is also known to be of importance for its invertebrate fauna and a number of nationally uncommon beetles have been recorded. C. 7km south west of the site

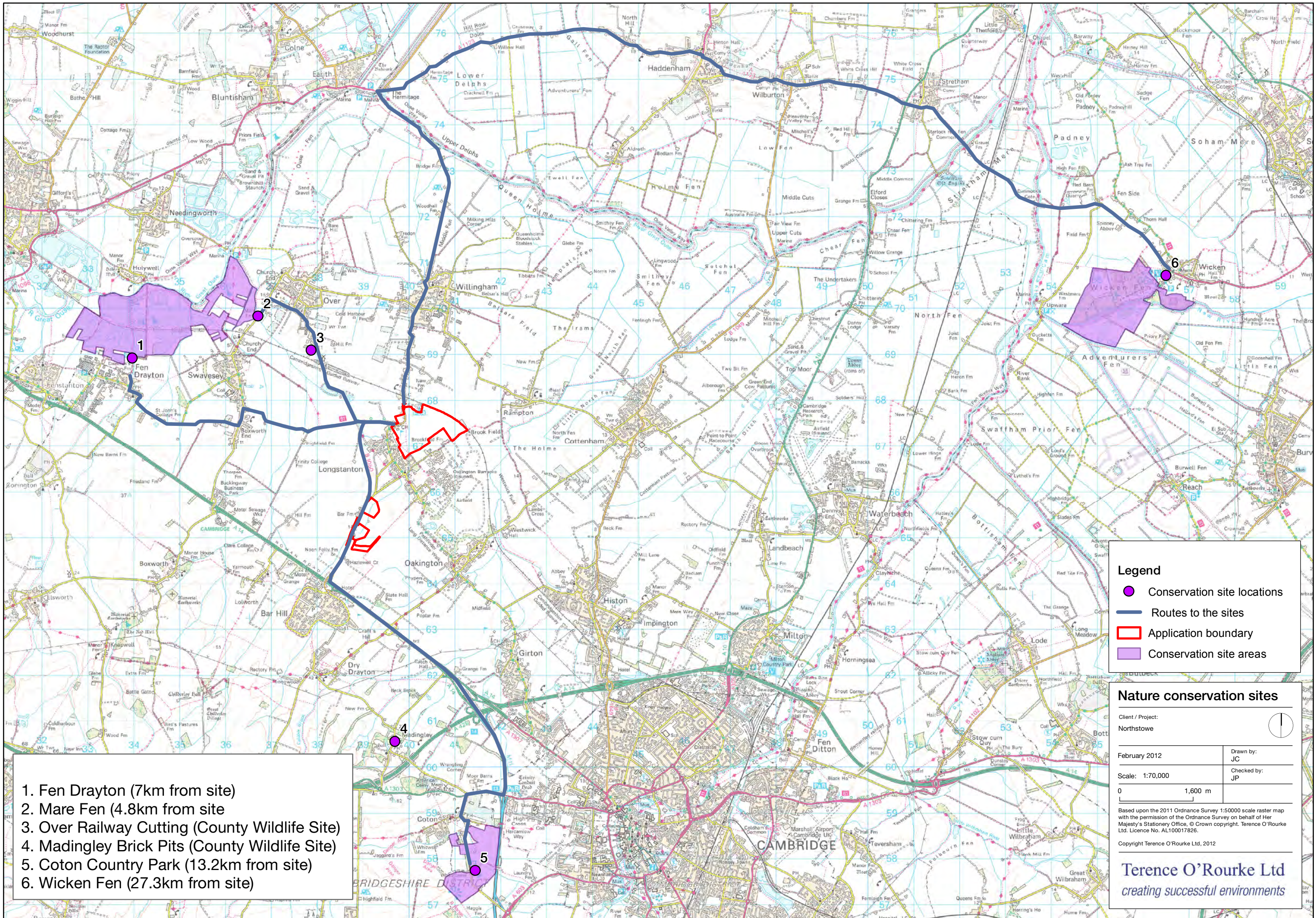
BARRY FEN (SSSI)

- This site represents a washland habitat of ornithological value and holding neutral grassland communities of a type now scarce in Britain. The site is located close to the internationally important Ouse Washes and this factor influences the use of Berry Fen by wintering wildfowl,

especially when the Washes are too deeply flooded. In particular, the Bewick's swan numbers reach nationally significant levels. The wash grassland is characterised by grasses such as marsh foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*) and reed canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). This wet grassland grades into stands of reed sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*) towards the wetter parts of the site, together with clumps of slender-tufted sedge (*Carex acuta*). The ditches add further diversity, retaining open water into the summer months. Wetland herbs such as the local sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), marsh ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*) and the uncommon narrow-leaved water-dropwort (*Oenanthe silaifolia*) occur. Most of the site floods irregularly during winter and wildfowl other than Bewick's swan may reach numbers of county significance. The site is c9km north of the site.

OUSE WASHES (SSSI)

- The site is one of the country's few remaining areas of extensive washland habitat. It is of particular note for the large numbers of wildfowl and waders which it supports, for the large area of unimproved neutral grassland communities which it holds and for the richness of the aquatic fauna and flora within the associated watercourse. The capacity of the site to hold wintering and breeding waterfowl and waders is of international significance. Of particular note in the winter are the large numbers of teal (*Anas crecca*), pintail (*Anas acuta*), wigeon (*Anas penelope*), shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), pochard (*Aythya ferina*) and Bewick's swan (*Cygnus bewickii*). The grassland communities of the area are characterised by such grasses as reed and floating sweet grass (*Glyceria maxima* and *G. fluitans*), reed canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), marsh foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*) together with a variety of sedges and rushes. Typical herbs include amphibious bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*), water-pepper (*Polygonum hydropiper*) and tubular water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fistulosa*). The associated dykes and rivers hold a great variety of aquatic plants, the pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp) are particularly well represented. Other aquatic species include the fringed water-lily (*Nymphoides peltata*), greater water-parsnip (*Sium latifolium*) and the four species of duckweeds (*Lemna* spp). The limnological interest of the Ouse Washes is further diversified by the Old Bedford River and River Delph, both good examples of base rich, sluggish, lowland rivers. The flora includes the fan-leaved water-crow foot (*Ranunculus circinatus*), yellow water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*), arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*), long-stalked pondweed (*Potamogeton praelongus*), perfoliate pondweed (*Potamogeton perfoliatus*), and river water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*). The associated aquatic and semi-aquatic fauna is similarly diverse. The site is approximately 10km north of the site



- 1. Fen Drayton (7km from site)
- 2. Mare Fen (4.8km from site)
- 3. Over Railway Cutting (County Wildlife Site)
- 4. Madingley Brick Pits (County Wildlife Site)
- 5. Coton Country Park (13.2km from site)
- 6. Wicken Fen (27.3km from site)

Legend

- Conservation site locations
- Routes to the sites
- Application boundary
- Conservation site areas

Nature conservation sites

Client / Project:
Northstowe

February 2012

Scale: 1:70,000

0 1,600 m

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