

## Nature Notes for Trimley St Mary

Compared to sixty or so years ago, when the village was mostly arable farming and grazing land; the modern village is densely populated, affected by intensive farming, the Port of Felixstowe activities and a major road, but these only add to the varied habitats.

(Maybe a community nature survey would spring some surprises.)

### **Woods**

These are:

Egypt Wood, near Candlet.

Chapman's Grove (was Jocelyn's Wood), in Cordy's Lane (private property).

Christmasyard Wood on the track (aka Langston Avenue) from Searsons Farm to Fagbury Point. This is the only accessible wood as you can walk through it.

Salters, Garden and Painter's woods on the 'marsh', are also on private land.

Fagbury Cliff, although some trees may be up to 200 years old, were 'topped up' towards the end of the last century.

From about 1984, 'noise' screening plantations were planted (to reduce the noise from the port). Starting from the bank at the end of Chapman's Grove, around the Port of Felixstowe perimeter, from Langston Avenue to the site of the old Marsh Barn and from Searsons farm through to link up with the tree 'avenues' at Trimley St Martin.

'The Willows' a small copse to the North East of Keepers Track, off Cordy's Lane.

The oaks in Blofield meadows are estimated to be about 300 to 400 years old.

## **Water**

The only pond left is at Searsons Farm (in earlier years, a children's treat was to watch the two Suffolk horses take their bedtime drink from it, at the end of their working day, and to feed the ducks.)

The other pond was at Blofield Hall (demolished). Sadly, this has been overgrown in all of living memory.

Two other ponds, now dried up/filled in, were in what was a meadow in front of Keeper's Cottage; and one in the meadow opposite Spriteshall Lane, which was drained when the Dock Spur road was built.

The Trimley River runs underground from St Mary's Close to the end of the McManus estate, then turns right towards Blofield. If you wander from the railway arch (known as the 'Cattle Arch', from the days when the meadows were grazed) to the corner of the meadow, you can see the tunnel it flows through under the railway line. Presumably it then continues to run into the Orwell.

There is also a small stream that runs behind Candlet 'farm' and eventually joins Kingsfleet.

### **Reservoir (on Trimley Marsh)**

Recently in 2017, a new farm reservoir has been created on Trimley marshes near Painter's Wood. This is to supplement Loompit Lake, as a water source for irrigation systems for the fields in both St Martin and St Mary, between the railway and the River Orwell.

## **The River Orwell**

This starts as the fresh water River Brett, almost as far away as Bury St Edmunds; then as the Rivers Rat at Stowmarket; then the Gipping until it becomes the tidal salt water River Orwell at Ipswich.

There are two species of seal in the river, Common and Grey. Also, although remotely possible, Harbour Porpoise.

On the land side, a herd of Fallow Deer, range from the Orwell Bridge to The Port of Felixstowe. Brown Hares are also seen on the marsh.

Rabbits are far less abundant than in the 1950s, but they can occasionally take you by surprise.

Unless you are really lucky, the smaller mammal sightings are rare: stoats, weasels, voles etc.

Most of the bird life to be seen, is influenced by seasonal migration. Some wading birds start their 'autumn' as early as July.

**Trimley Marshes Nature Reserve** (Suffolk Wildlife Trust)  
(Binoculars would be useful for viewing the reserve)

Theses were created in 1988, as compensation for the vast area of intertidal mudflats lost to Felixstowe Port expansion. This area was a feeding ground for important numbers of wading birds and wildfowl. The reserve consists of a reeded lagoon, grazed land and areas with seasonally controlled water levels. The 'hides' are named after notable birdwatchers from earlier days. There is an information centre. However, it is not always open. [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org).

**The Controlled Retreat St Martin**

This began in 2003. The plan was to create a new area of salt-marsh, to replace the area lost to river erosion. Another objective was to reduce the risk of flooding. During its creation, the southern end, was 'seeded' with dredged mud from further up the river, to establish 'mudlife' such as crustacea, worms and seaweeds.

'All wildlife is unpredictable, so just enjoy what you discover.'

For additional information please refer to the Nature Notes to be found on the Trimley St Martin Parish Council website: [www.trimleystmartin.onesuffolk.net](http://www.trimleystmartin.onesuffolk.net) Then from the menu on the Home Page, select 'Footpath map and Walking Routes' and then 'Nature Notes'. There are lots of photographs here when you click through the links.

*18/2/2022 Robin Biddle.*