

A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme

Land west of Brampton Biodiversity

Comment from Dr J Patrick Doody Ecologist and resident of Brampton.

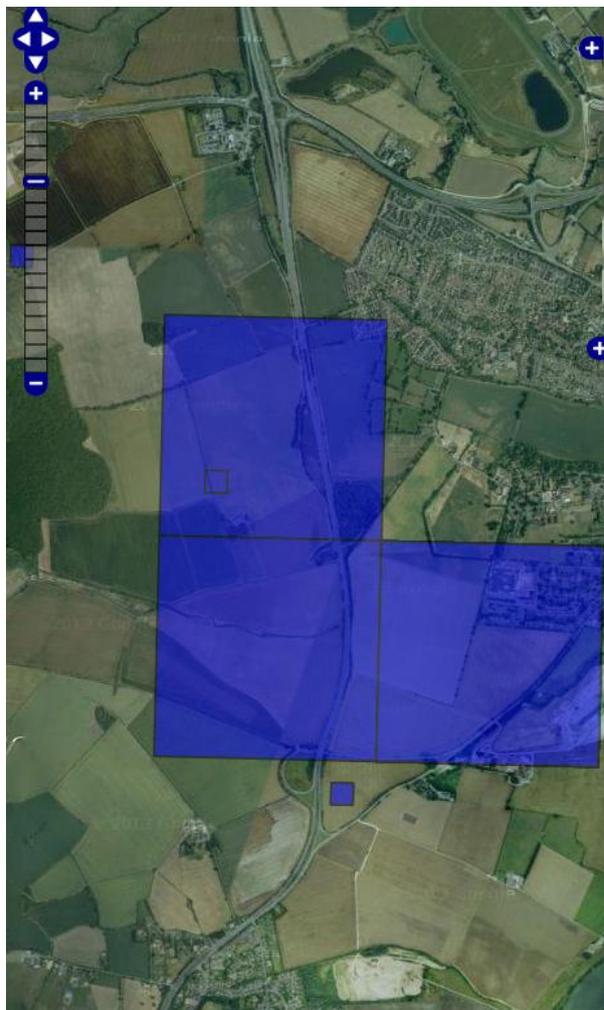
Please note all the comments relate to the Parish of Brampton and are based on 30 years recording in the Parish as well as a two-year nationally funded Biodiversity Project (2013/14) designed to provide a comprehensive description of the Parish its landscape, history and natural history. It will be a snapshot in time, a lasting legacy for future generations. It will also contribute biological data to the UK National Biodiversity Network. As it includes land within the Parish affected by the A1/A14 proposals it has the additional benefit of highlighting some of the features impacted by this development.

During 2013 and 2014 with funding from the National Biodiversity Network and support from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Record Centre, Brampton Parish Council and the Huntingdon Fauna and Flora Society a comprehensive survey of the biodiversity in the parish was undertaken. Some 170 species have been recorded within the corridor of the proposed A1/A14, which given the largely agricultural nature of the land use, gives an indication of the biodiversity in the area.

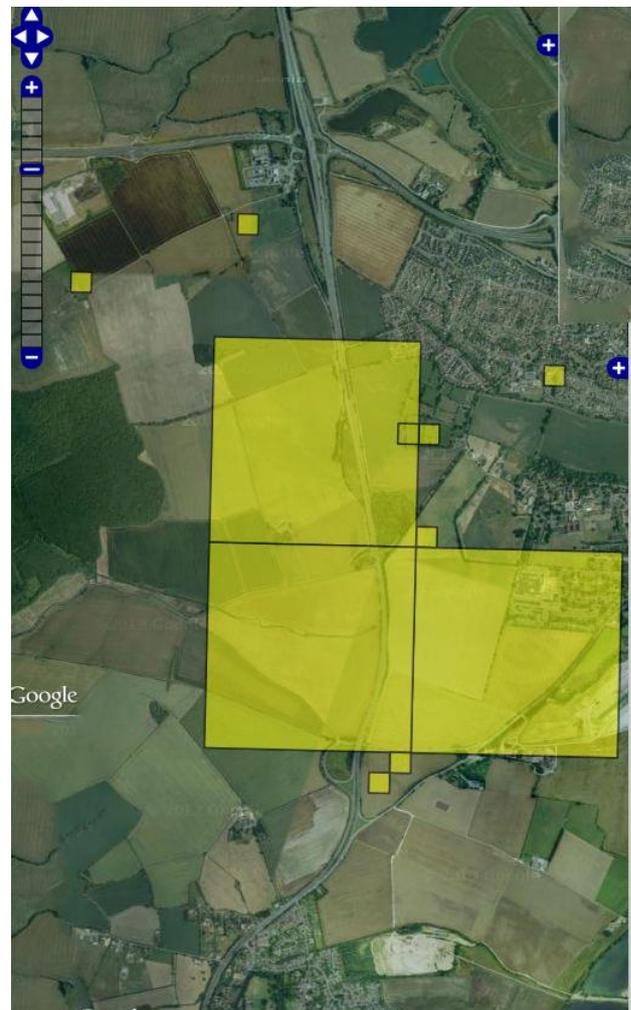
The maps and information below provide a summary of some of the less common species.

Brampton Biodiversity Survey, distribution maps of a selection of species

Golden Plover



Lapwing



The locations for these species are all on arable land bar one, which is a record of a flock of Lapwings flying over the village. These fields appear to be traditional winter-feeding locations for both species. They do not occur every year, as the type of crop is important to their value in any one year. However, these species can be present in significant numbers and a few thousand were present on occasion in the 1990s. Although numbers have decreased considerably since then in keeping with other birds that rely on farmland for food in winter, there were hundreds in 2012.

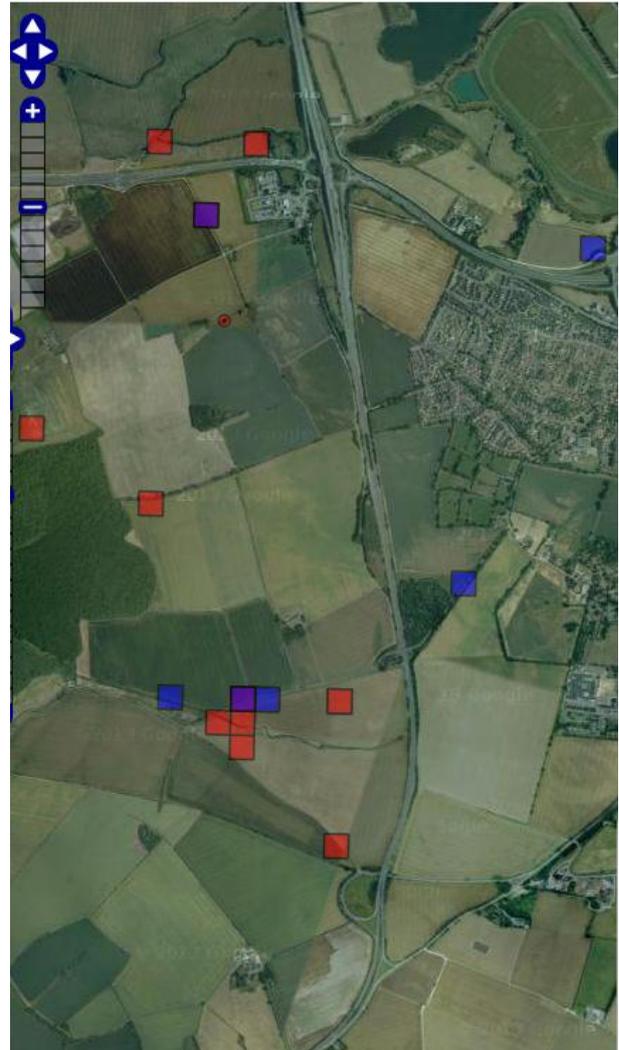
Note these fields are not regularly surveyed; these are occasional records and their use may be much more frequent than these numbers imply.

Moles



During 2013/14, a survey of areas with active Molehills took place. Their distribution within the A1/A14 corridor is shown on the map opposite. They are largely absent from the regularly cultivated agricultural land, but as the map shows they find refuge along the roads and tracks, and within uncultivated permanent pasture.

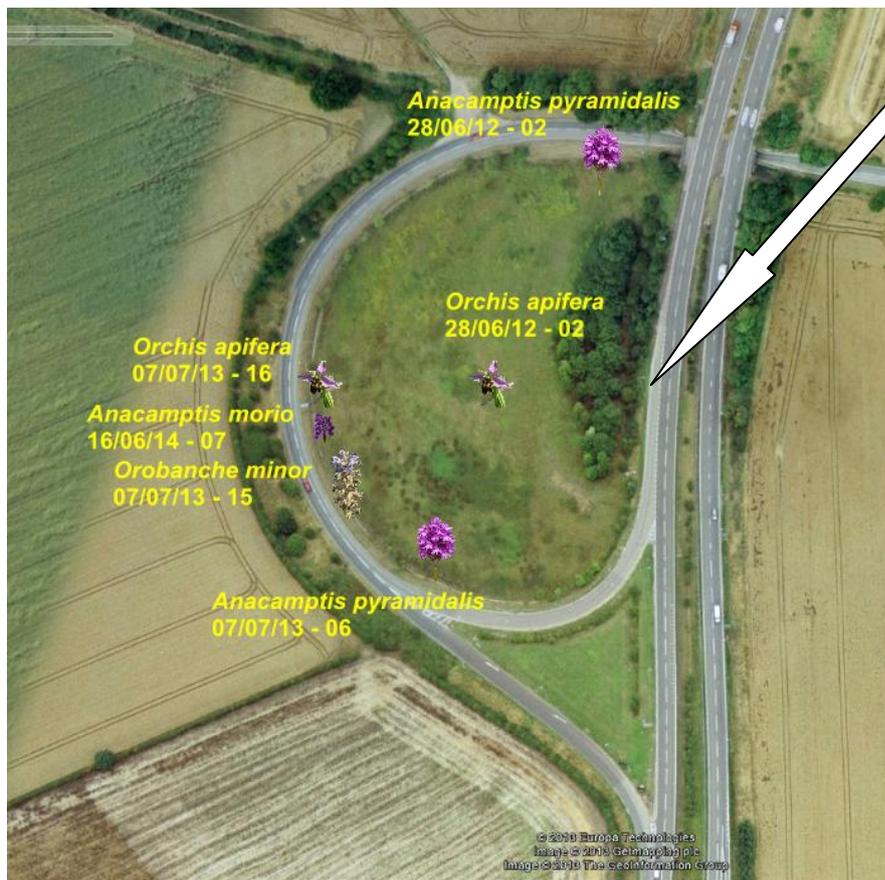
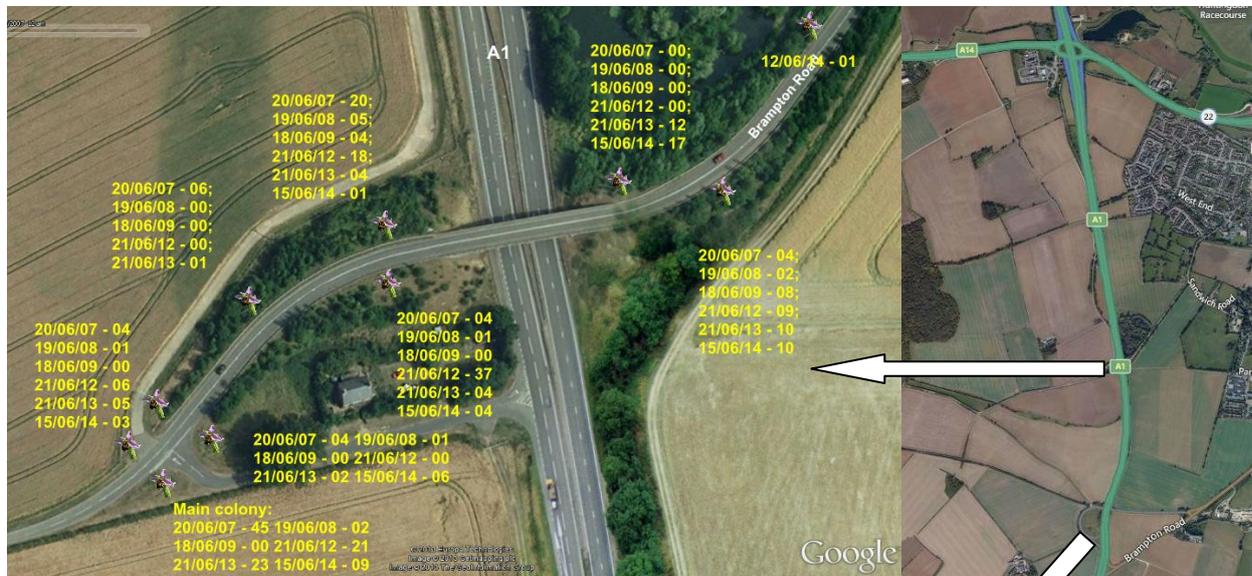
Yellow Hammer & Whitethroat



Yellow Hammer (red squares) and Common Whitethroat (blue squares) are two once common farmland birds, now much reduced as breeding species. These species still survive in the few remaining hedgerows in this arable landscape.

Orchid locations

There are two locations with a rich flora including orchid species. The first is near the A1 flyover on Brampton Road; the second at the southern end of the Parish is a County Wildlife Site. The map below shows the two locations in relation to the existing A1.



The more detailed Google Earth pictures give the date and number of flowering spikes for each species. The site to the north only has one species Bee Orchid. The site to the south has 4 species, Bee Orchid *Orchis apifera*, Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, Green-winged Orchid *Anacamptis morio* and Common Broomrape *Orobanche minor*.

In 2015 the number of flowering spikes of Green-winged Orchid

Anacamptis morio had gone up to 36. Counts of the other species have not been undertaken yet as they flower later in the season.

Additional comments to the Examining Authority's (ExA's) first written questions and requests

Whilst looking through the written questions provided by the Examining Authority there are a number of comments that are relevant to the issues raised. My comments are as an 'interested party'.

Q1.2.4 Applicant Natural England Environment Agency

Natural England (RR para 3.2.5.2) refer to further surveys being undertaken in relation to badger and water vole. a) Can the applicant confirm whether this work has been completed and if so, what are the findings and how do these findings inform the proposed scheme?

The route will affect several places where there are badgers. There is no definitive map of their location but there are setts in the following locations:

TL195690 active earlier this year

TL 204697 previously active

Q1.2.7 Applicant Natural England Environment Agency

The ES indicates at para 11.5.38 that no direct land take would occur at Brampton Meadows SSSI but that the scheme would leave the SSSI surrounded by roads. An ecological mitigation area is proposed to enhance the resilience and value of the existing SSSI habitat. Please provide precise details of this proposal including its long term management and how would this be secured.

*This site has suffered in the past through lack of management. This is despite agreement with the Highways Agency to provide money for restoration of transplanted turf, which was part of the mitigation when the original A14 was built destroying part of the SSSI. **I have a detailed draft paper on this, which is available on request.***

Q1.9.10 Applicant How has the design of the proposed scheme between Brampton Hut and Brampton Junction sought to address the landscape and visual effects in a comprehensive manner?

This is of course of relevance to Brampton. Lighting along a stretch of road this size and length will have implication for a variety of species. Bats will almost certainly be affected. Has any detailed assessment been made of the presence and movement of bats and other nocturnal species?

*Dr James Patrick Doody
Brampton Biodiversity Project*

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