

***The A47 It happened in our time and on our Watch
Thickthorn Changes TR010037
Representation from Andrew M Cawdron rep IP no. (20028139)***

It happened in our lifetime, it happened on our watch
We really killed the birds and bees, but no one can be sacked.
And no one can be found to blame,
but we should all be so ashamed.

I don't really understand why we are discussing new road building in the middle of a Climate
Emergency.

So why now ? Why object to the building of roads now?
Why complain now ? Poor old Norfolk never did make the Motorway age.

The Highways Agency today were reporting 1 hour and more delay times between junctions
on the M25 so having three to four carriageway lanes doesn't always help. There were black
sections on the update map which means traffic was not moving. Frustrating. So even if we
upgrade particular junctions and side roads, delays will still occur.

But it also means we as a species, homo sapiens, are not solving the problem. This is not a
problem we can build our way out of. One can tinker and upgrade, enlarge and change, but
the core issues of people numbers, vehicle numbers, journey numbers only change and
enlarge to fill the space.

So that's what we've done, it happened on our watch. Quite apart from the killing cides we
place upon the land, we are increasingly placing wider and wider killing zones to fragment
our countryside and imprison the remaining wildlife into smaller and smaller areas of
disconnected habitat and ecosystems.

In this section of the A47 /A11 floodplain area runs the Cantley Stream, which drains into Mill
Stream and thence the River Yare and is a natural attractor of all things bio to come and drink.
The proposal is for this stream to have enlarged culverted extensions at road crossing points
and for the whole alignment to be reconfigured with major change roadworks taking place to
Cantley Lane south and the new Cantley Lane Link Road. There is a statement that the Cantley
Stream realignment will be reconstructed and "ecologically matured" to optimum condition
prior to it's reconnection to the existing stream and the decommissioning of the original
alignment. I would respectfully enquire how this can be achieved during a major roadworks
construction programme ?

It is proposed to sever any existing area ecology links with a major construction site and
material storage compounds to the area. The sequence of works would indicate that the
stream diversion works will have to be in place and the stream diverted before the Cantley
link road can be constructed. This implies no time at all to generate bio-diversity to the
revised stream route. The construction and storage areas stay sterile for two years, with big
construction traffic moving around, and no landscaping. This is eco isolating stuff. Assuming
the twigs start to go in the ground after two years there is little to show for it for the first five
years.

(Assuming that the planting regime is sound, which has not been the case on the NNDR).

Meanwhile, at the Thickthorn junction area the speed and potentially the quantity of our carriageway traffic has increased, so the proposals generate an even larger distance barrier, a louder noise barrier, a greater pollution barrier, a larger loss of dark skies barrier.

Everywhere throughout the proposals are notes stating vegetation clearance area. Detention basins receiving polluted road traffic surface water are noted as discharging into the Cantley stream without a safety pond. This means any road crash pollutions are straight into the water environment.

My argument, Sir, is that we are all paying too high a price for our "Freedom of Movement" and it is the real other residents of the countryside who are paying it. They don't have a voice here, but we are increasingly aware of how important they are, from the pollinators to the older, mature trees.

Nobody to date has put all the pieces of the A47 upgrades together with impacts upon the Tud, impacts upon the Cantley stream environment by the Thickthorn land grab, impacts upon the trees, hedges and arable land taken by the Burlingham dual carriageway, Can somebody put these projects together and provide a cumulative impact statement upon hectares of land taken, trees removed, country wildlife sites changed and environments disturbed and isolated ? How is biodiversity net gain to be achieved?

We lose carbon holding ground and vegetation cover, but these don't seem to be taken into account and the works themselves generate tonnes of CO2 emissions during construction.

What we do know is that we are adding to an already polluted environment and a carbon emitter at a time when the IPCC committee has provided us with the starkest warning yet that 'carrying on as we are' is unsustainable and will only continue the emissions and pollutions of transport to our detriment.

One may shift some minor pieces on the chess board of vehicle transport, but the impacts of the consequential pollution will last forever. There is a current advert on the Television which asks "what does it take for you to do something?"

There isn't any form of mitigation for the loss of so much bio-diversity and a wider asphaltting over of the countryside. I put it to all the planners involved, that there is no long term plan to control traffic, there is no plan, only the continuation of proposals that have already been shown to fail.

This is not a plan for the future, this is a repeat of failures from the past.

Somehow, in the 1970's and throughout the last 50 years we have poisoned the Planet and this County, with our endless demands for growth in crop yields, housing, roads, travel and consumer products, much of it fossil fuel derived.

I would therefore plead for reason to prevail and for these road schemes to be cancelled and instead for real plans to be made to reduce the travel and vehicle over consumption and hence reduce our pollutions. I close with this line from my recent letters.....

So what did you do in the dying days
as the sun cooked the earth in a carbon haze ?

Andrew M Cawdron. Dipl. Arch. R.I.B.A. (retd)

Recollections from a fifties and sixties Norfolk

(Sixty five years ago, when Wensum Park in Norwich still had a bathing area into the Wensum River (and a black tarred boathouse), you could spend your day on the steps leading into the river, fishing for and finding, crayfish, minnow, stickleback, dace, roach and trout fry, pinheads, bullsheads and gudgeon, caddisfly tubes, let alone frogs and newts in the adjoining banks. We did spend our young days there in the summer, in the river.

This swimming area was closed later because of we had polluted and poisoned the water so badly it became unsafe to be in the River. Were we paying enough attention to the environment ?)

The same was true for almost every stream running across the county that one could access, even via farmland. Our father would often crank up the Ford 8 or 10, Prefect (the car was largely alone in our terraced house street in those days, not wall to wall both sides as they are now), on a warm Sunday in 1955, park off road and take a picnic to the edges of the streams at Buxton, Spixworth or Crostwick, tributaries of the Bure running through meadow land. Again, the fish and wildlife in those streams abounded. Now they have become largely sterile and inert. Were we paying enough attention to the environment ?

(Fifty five years ago, in 1965, one could wake in the darkness before dawn, wrap a scarf around your neck and drive from Norwich to London along the country roads via Newmarket and Saffron Walden and not see many other motorised vehicles. HGV's didn't travel at those times. And nor did many others. It was a magical time to drive. Were we paying enough attention to the environment ?)

(If you took your girl to the beach at Yarmouth in the early evening, you had to clear the splattered insects off your windscreen before making the return trip, the numbers of flying creatures along the A47 Acle Straight were that numerous. Now, one can do the same drive without an insect splatter on your windscreen. Were we paying enough attention to the environment ?)