

A Virtual Walk Around the Fairfield Nature Reserve

Led by: Mandy Bannon, Tony Finn, Ruth Haigh, Helen Hicks, Sue Nieduszynska

Arrival: Video taken by a drone over Fairfield, organised by Laura Connery

Introduction: Sue

Slide	Text
1. Map of the path	This event is as a result of a Heritage Lottery Fund "Sharing our Heritage" grant obtained by Hilary Short, who unfortunately is ill and unable to be with us this evening, The grant will pay for items such as notice boards, events such as this and a footpath map to be available on a leaflet and electronically. The focus is the ancient Green Path which runs across the reserve which Mandy will tell us about

The Green Path: Mandy

Slide	Text
1. Map of the path	"Public Footpath Number 41" as it's known by Lancashire Highways, or Kendal Pads or Long Pads as parts of it is known locally, has been a well-used thoroughfare for centuries. Starting at the end of Sunnyside Lane by Edenbreck Farm Cottage, the footpath runs between Big Meadow and the orchard, crosses Lucy Brook and is lined by high-banked hedgerows, before opening out onto Aldcliffe Road opposite the canal.
2. Travelling monks	This ancient byway is first mentioned in the charterbook of Furness Abbey in 1285 which records receiving a grant of <i>two acres of land and half an acre of meadow lying in the (open) field of Edenbreck next to the green road which leads towards Aldcliffe.</i> Local historian Mike Derbyshire tells us that the manor of Aldcliffe was then owned by Lancaster Priory, and the road will have been used by the monks and their staff to visit Aldcliffe Hall, which was the administrative centre for Aldcliffe and had been owned by the priory since at least the late 11th century.
3. Section of "Speed" map 1610 showing Cockersands and Furness Abbeys	Linking with other routes, it is also possible that the path served as a vital artery between key places such as Cockersands Abbey, a few miles south, to the Castle and Priory in the centre of Lancaster and even further afield to Kendal in the north and across the bay to Cartmel Priory and Furness Abbey, that at one time controlled fishing areas and salt pans in Morecambe Bay.
4. Medieval travellers: a) 2 pedlars walking b) Man & woman on horseback c) Pedlar	So if we travelled back in time, who would we meet along the path? As well as salt-carrying monks , we might meet <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peddlars and merchants carrying their wares such as raw flax to be processed along Aldcliffe Road• People travelling to the Lancaster Assizes, for "entertainment" or the execution of friends or family such as the Pendle Witch Trials• Job hunters visiting annual hiring fairs• Catholic priests and followers moving between safe houses as a

<p>stopped by gatepost d) Monk on horseback</p>	<p>result of anti-catholic laws</p>
<p>5. Lynchets 6. Woodcut showing medieval plough</p>	<p>The path's other significant function of course, has been to provide access to the land around it. The lynchets terracing which you can see here on Grammar School field, shows evidence of traditional farming methods. Each terrace is the width of a plough which would have been pulled by oxen. Since medieval times, people living in the town centre would have had strips of land here, which they tended as tenant farmers, growing crops such as oats for their own use. So the path would have been used by men, women and children travelling to and from their fields, to work and harvest their produce.</p>
<p>7. 1807 woodcut showing Lancaster castle from Bulk area</p>	<p>And there wouldn't have just been <i>human</i> traffic between town and farmland. As this woodcut of the other side of Lancaster shows, <i>animals</i> played a much bigger role in human life, so this path would have seen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxen being led to plough their strips of land, • Cattle such as our White park rare breed and sheep being led to and from market • Horses carrying people or goods and pulling carts of night-soil from the middens – (that's human excrement collected and used to fertilize the fields). <p>So the path's surface would be rucked from the wheels of heavy carts, trampled by animal feet, and as it would have been strewn with manure, was probably quite rich-smelling too!</p>
<p>8. Musket shot with other finds.</p>	<p>The path has also seen military presence – there are musket shots from the 1700s which were found on our fields and cannon balls have been found nearby in the allotments. Cartridge cases from the first and second world war have also been found from when there was a rifle/gun range near Carr House Farm.</p> <p>[If you've got time at the end – do come and look at some of the artefacts that the metal detectorists have found.]</p>
<p>9. Roman cavalry headstone restored</p>	<p>Given the metal detectorists' finding of a Roman coin dated 300 AD on our fields, could this land have been under Roman occupation too, when Lancaster was a Roman garrison town? After all, the Roman cavalry headstone found in 2005, was buried less than half a mile away under the flats before the traffic lights at Penny Bridge.</p>
<p>10. View of Lancaster castle from Flora field?</p>	<p>Not only has the path felt the tramp of soldiers' marching boots, down the ages, it has also felt the trudge of prisoners' feet as they were led to work the fields from Lancaster castle prison. Some time in the 19th century a chunk of land in Flora field was owned by a charity for the benefit of prisoners to learn useful skills. And this land was eventually passed to NACRO, the discharged prisoners' charity from whom the</p>

	Fairfield Association bought the land in 2012.
11. Edenbreck farm- cottage	So let's return to the beginning of the footpath to find out more about past and present landmarks along the way – over to Hilary who's waiting by Edenbreck Farm Cottage.

Growing up at Edenbreck Farm Cottage: Sue reading Hilary's account of an interview with Fraser Granell–Watson, owner of the cottage

Slide	Text
11. Edenbreck Farm Cottage	<p>The buildings that are now Edenbreck Cottage are thought to include one of the oldest dwellings in Lancaster. It is thought that monks travelling north to Furness Abbey stopped at Edenbreck Cottage. In early maps this building is shown as a barn and this may be explained by the fact that animals (cattle and horses) would have been stabled at ground level and people would have stayed in the upper storey.</p> <p>The building probably became a farmhouse in the mid nineteenth century and it has been used on and off (mainly on!) by the Loxams since then. Robin Loxam's father (Thomas), uncle and cousins all farmed from these buildings. The family lived in the cottage that abuts Sunnyside Lane and the adjacent buildings (moving from towards the 'Pads' footpath were: the Dairy (now Fraser and Helen's hall), milking parlour, loose box, outdoor (Dutch barn) and the piggery.</p>
12. Map	<p>The Loxams ran a dairy farm that extended across the fields which we now call Fauna (without the present footpath which the FA put in) and the The Grammar School field. What is now the Millennium Orchard (on the other side of the 'pads' footpath was also used to graze the dairy herd and was known as the Hay Meadow and the extensive pasture which included the paddock and extends as far as Lucy Brook was know as Tewit Field - a reference to the noise of lapwings)and the area which became Fairfield allotments in 1951.</p> <p>Mounting steps remain on the Cottage side of the current boundary and there is still a water trough on the allotment side of the wall.</p>
13. Photo of mounting steps	<p>Robin Loxam's father, Thomas, later moved to and rented Carr House Farm but kept the lease on Edenbreck where Fraser lived, and shared a bedroom with his two brothers, until he was around 15 years old. Thomas Loxam was still farming when the three brothers shared a pound a week (and argued the toss about 'leftover penny) for taking the cows over to Carr House farm in the evening. In the winter evenings this involved a dark journey down the Pads footpath and across the boggy fields which now form part of Fauna. Fraser remembers that it was cold, wet and very dark (no Abraham Heights) and in the dark, it was hard to be sure that you hadn't missed a cow - in which case you had to go back and find it.</p>
14. Map 15. White park	<p>The area stopped being a productive farm about 30 years ago and the dairy cattle (Frisians followed by Holsteins) largely disappeared. Robin</p>

Cattle	<p>introduced the familiar White Park cattle about 10 years ago. The White Park were introduced partly for their aesthetic appeal and partly for ease of management on a farm on which nobody relied for a living and everybody had other work. In general, White Park do not need overwintering and eat most things. Fortunately, they are also ideal for the cultivation of a wetland area attractive to snipe and other wetland birds.</p> <p>Fraser lived in Edenbreck Cottage with his two brothers until the family moved to Carr House Farm when he was about fifteen. The three brothers shared a single bedroom and the Cottage was both very cold and beset by mice. Memories of the cold include the frost on the inside of the windows, the practice of getting dressed before you got out of bed and a speedy wash (the Cottage had only cold running water). He also remembers being constantly awoken in the night by Robin running down the stairs to reset the mouse trap. Robin had a small air pistol with which he finished off the mouse before resetting the trap! In the morning, Fraser would make as much noise as possible when coming down the stairs, in the hope of not seeing the resident mice.. There was an outside toilet which one summer became home to a nest of bees which Robin duly set about smoking out. Unfortunately the roof and the woodwork in the toilet caught fire and for some time the family at Edenbreck Farm had to use the toilet at Carr House Farm.! Fraser commented on the lack of girlfriends keen to visit a house that was cramped, cold, infested with mice and at best had an outside</p>
16. Window	<p>Eventually the Loxam family moved into Carr House Farm and Edenbreck Cottage was rented to various tenants whilst Robin's sister used the converted barn area as livery for her horses. The Loxams continued to rent and sublet the Cottage which the Council refused to sell. As a result the building fell into a very bad state of repair. The roof leaked and the rot was such that the only original timbers remaining are those framing the window which looks out on to Sunnyside Lane.</p> <p>Fraser and Helen bought the buildings in ?.. the intention was to move in and renovate. They stayed in the house three days before realising that it couldn't be done. It cost £30,000 to gut the Cottage , leaving only the outside walls standing. The Cottage still has, no footings and stands on traditional padstone foundations.</p> <p>The extension exterior wall is approximately four feet below the level of the public footpath. This makes the new house warm and easy to heat. In the past, the exterior of the farmhouse was whitewashed and the house has always been known as the 'white farm house, although recent renovations have resulted in a stone wood and brick construction. Fraser and Helen plan to restore the white exterior to the back of the Cottage. The mice are no longer co- habiting with the Loxams but nature is on the</p>

doorstep in the shape of a fox who visits every night, Helen and Fraser are happy that things have come full circle and Fraser is once again living at Edenbreck Cottage, with his granddaughter next door, and moving the cows from field to field.

The Orchard Path: Sue

Slide	Text
17. Path	We start along the path by the Orchard
18. Alder	And stop to look at a solitary Alder Tree in Big Meadow, seen in this winter scene with the Fauna path somewhat foreshortened behind. It is solitary because volunteers consistently remove saplings. If we didn't the wet area which we have created would evolve into marshy woodland. Alders thrive in wet conditions as the wood doesn't rot in water and the great cities of Amsterdam and Venice were built on alder piles.
19. Woodcut	The timber was also used for wooden pipes and buckets. Perhaps country women with wooden pails like these from the 17 th century were amongst the travellers along our path.
20. Heron , dragonflies	This is also a good place to pause and look at what is around, so let's see what might be around. Looking towards Big Meadow we may see a heron by the pond– maybe this is why there aren't any frogs. On the pond in the summer there are often dragonflies.
21. Magpie	Even magpies can be doing something interesting.
22. Birds in Orchard 23. Butterfly 24. Hedgerow	Look and listen out for birds in the orchard – I'm sure these are familiar - and butterflies along the path – do you recognise this? I believe this is a gatekeeper on the bramble, because of the two white spots on the eye. And of course the lovely view across the hedgerow to the castle
25 Orchard Stones 26. Posts	If you look closely you can also see signs of recent agriculture. As Hilary explained the Loxams farmed here but also Adrian Gifford from Holme Farm at the bottom of Westbourne Rd brought his cattle into these fields. Stone gate posts are easy to see – they are everywhere ... some of which we have recycled ...some in situ.
27. Laid Hedge	Not quite so obvious are earlier examples of hedge -laying. This picture was taken at Edenbreck but if you look closely you can see where David Loxam laid the hedge , with our volunteers more recent work above
28. Footpath	Further along the path meets Lucy Brook which was culverted at this point to make better access between the fields, for tractors for example. And here we must now walk on and turn up the Pads Path where we meet Tony and Yoda

The Long Pads: Tony

Slide	Text
29. Long Pads from near stone	Our walk now takes us across the stone bridge over Lucy brook and onto the Long Pads. Leave the houses and come with me on a journey of

bridge	imagination along this ancient trackway.
30.Lower Sowerholme	<p>To the left are the now pleasant pastures of Lower Sowerholme. Not so some 700 years ago when plague and famine were common place events, not to mention the wasting of Lancaster and the surrounding countryside by marauding Scots</p> <p>Imagine the scene before you. The townspeople of Lancaster desparately searching their fields for food. Their children facing starvation and probably certain death in the bitter winter months to come.</p>
31. Long Pads path from near stone bridge	<p>On a brisk late autumn morning, the last golden leaves fluttering in the breeze and the west wind bringing the first chill of winter, step back in time and walk along with some of those people who may have travelled this path many centuries ago; a monk on his way from Aldcliffe or Cockersands to the Priory, follow a farmer as he drives his oxen to plough his strip field on Flora hill, his weathered brow as furrowed as the fields he ploughs. Or maybe pass a young peasant girl wrapped up against the chill wind as she travels to the town to sell her wares.</p> <p>Amongst the finds that the metal detectorists found in the Flora fields was a collection of halfpenny coins. They suggested that they may have been from a purse on account of their close proximity to each other. Could a purse such as this have belonged to such a girl? All her worldly wealth lost.</p>
32. Flowery Hedgerow	Walk the track on a warm evening in early summer and experience the sights, sounds and scents of our hedgerows. Hedgerows overflowing with wildlife. Not a drop more can be squeezed in!
33.May Blossom 34. Hedgerow Collage 35. Hare	<p>Drink in the heady perfume of the blossom, (photo of Bee on Flower) listen to the buzzing of a bee, watch a butterfly dancing from flower to flower searching for nectar (photo ofbutterfly) or listen to the melodic song of a blackbird (photo of Blackbird) as it bids you goodnight.</p> <p>Out from the hedge bolts a hare, zig- zaging across the field and into the safety of the barley field.</p>
	<p>But now it is time for some audience participation..... Yes, I can see fear and panic creeping across some of your faces! What me? you say. No one told us about this. Rest assured, it is entirely voluntary.</p> <p>Close your eyes and let your imagination flow free. What can YOU see, hear and smell? (ask a few people to share their thoughts)</p>
36.Arable field from gate looking up to Pony wood	<p>Towards the end of the Long Pads, take a moment to rest and look over the gate into our arable field with its margin of wild flowers. Appreciate the beauty and tranquillity.</p> <p>It is said that one must never stand next to a field of corn and whisper a secret. For if you do then soon everyone will know of it. For as you know a field of corn has many ears!</p> <p>Which is now probably a good point to pass you on to Helen who will take you up to Pony wood</p>

The View from Pony Wood: Helen

37. Drumlins with Turbine	This is the place where the planned new path will give a panoramic view of Lancaster. Here we can muse on the different eras that have affected Lancaster or left their mark on the city. The small hills here are deposits left as the glaciers of the Pleistocene ice Age melted slowly away. We can also see evidence of the nuclear power age with the pylons marching their way to Heysham. The wind turbines tell us of the present Green power movement. This is the hill where thousands of pink Foot Geese gather early in the mornings as many of you will have seen and heard.
38. Lake District Hills	This magnificent photo of Paul's shows our proximity to the Lake District. I am wondering if this is Black Coombe. You experts can tell me later. Wainwright called this a carpet slipper walk which our family has tackled on New Year's Day a few times.
39. Factory Chimney	Circling around here beyond the roofs of Abraham Heights we can see evidence of the manufacturing age with that tall chimney. It was part of the power station (coal fired) of Williamson's lino factory which employed many hundreds of Lancastrians. Lino was a well known Lancaster product, and just used as its backing fabric.
40. The Castle	Coming round to the north there's the view of the castle and the Priory built on another Drumlin- ice age deposit. Also it is the site of the Roman Fortress with the garrison's bath house. I hope the heating was good - better than now. Its an excellent look out spot above the river in different directions
41. The Storey	Swinging round eastward we can see the spire of the Storey building which was the new Mechanics Institute and built in celebration of Queen Victoria's jubilee. It was a centre for education with an art school and gallery. It housed a chemical laboratory, now a print studio and there were class rooms and a library - a gift to the people of Lancaster from the Storey brothers . These is telephone house another era which continues to the present mobile age
42. Town Hall	Further east there is the Town Hall built by Williamson the younger, Lord Ashton, The arial of the Police station used to attract flocks of starlings circling and settling on it. And next is St Thomas' spire
43. Ashton Memorial	The final of this panoramic view shows the monument in Williamsons Park. This was a quarry site where James Williamson created employment in the 1870s for the local labour force to create the park. Local mill workers had been put out of work at the time of the American cotton famine. American influence ion Lancaster at that time meant no cotton was coming in to the mills because The Confederate army over in the states was fighting to continue using free labour of slavery but was finally defeated. Williamson's son has the monument and palm house built later.

44. Cromwell Rd entrance	Now we will continue the walk along the proposed path down hill from Pony Wood to the canal towpath. We'll turn left to meet up with Ruth at the corner of Cromwell Rd.
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Carr House Meadow and Farm: Ruth

44. Fauna Path from Cromwell Rd	At the bottom of Cromwell Road and through the gate into the nature reserve stop at the notice board. Until 2011 there wasn't a path; it was one large field bordering Carr House Farm; hidden in the trees behind us.
45. & 46. Wet area of Hay meadow	The dictionary definition of "Carr" is that it is an old word for boggy land in which scrub, especially willow, ash and alder, have become established. This still characterises the land around this area today. The cause of the bogginess is Lucy brook.
47. Axe Heads	Three stone axe heads have been found in this area. They have been dated as probably being from between 2,000 and 3,000 BC. They were probably made in the Langdale area of Cumbria which was a stone tool manufacturing area during the Neolithic period.
48. Size of axe head	They are polished and do not appear to have been used so they may have been placed as part of a ritual to mark a special place.
49. & 50. Hay meadow	From around the 1860's until May 1929 this land was owned by the Ripley Hospital Trust, or Charity, which was actually an orphanage school rather than a hospital. In 1929 the land passed from The Ripley Hospital Trust to the then Borough of Lancaster. We can only speculate that the Charity needed the income from the sale of the land to fund their school. In 1929 the tenant farmer of Carr House Farm was Robinson Loxam, forebear of the present tenants. This tenant farm has now been in the Loxam family, for 5 generations, about 100 years. It was mixed farming but predominantly dairy, with about 20 cows; the milk was bottled on the farm and delivered in the Fairfield area up until the 1970's
51. Map	Lancaster Borough later became known as Lancaster Corporation. Maps from the mid 1900's show a playing field here that was instated by Lancaster Corporation for use by local schools. A number of local residents remember walking to the playing field from Dallas Rd and other schools for their games lessons well into the 1970's. Robin Loxam recalls that they did not farm around the playing field or mow it, rather the cows grazed it and the children had to avoid the cow pats! It is not known when it went out of use and reverted to pasture though it is shown on Lancaster maps into the 1990's
52. White Park Cattle in Hay Meadow	Lancaster Corporation ultimately became Lancaster City Council. Since 2011 the Fairfield Association has leased the land from Lancaster City Council, for the Fauna nature reserve, for a peppercorn rent. But the Loxam family provide a much needed service by grazing not dairy cattle

	but their White Park cattle an ancient and endangered breed. The cattle graze the grassland and assist in the creation of the wildflower/hay meadow.
53. Wildflowers in Hay Meadow	In spring the meadow is covered in wild flowers such as yellow rattle, yarrow, sorrel, clover and buttercups. They are excellent for bees and other insects which in turn are good for birds.
54. Barn Owl	There must also be small mammals as a barn owl has been seen flying over the hay meadow at dusk. Though this photo is taken from the Long Pads path
55. Haymaking	In July or August the hay is cut and stored for winter feed for the White Park cattle. We will now continue our walk with Sue

Upper Sowerholme : Sue

Slide	Text
56.Upper Sowerholme 57.Roe Deer	Beyond the Hay Meadow is Upper Sowerholme, a secluded area which few venture into. The ground is uneven, it is very wet, with a developing reed bed. Neighbours with chickens report the presence of a vixen and we have had roe deer. Woodcock and Snipe and are found there
58. Big Meadow 59. Snipe	In the winter there are as many as 150 snipe in the rushes in the reserve - snipe look like this and if you are very lucky you may see one like this.
60. View from path 61. Thrush	We end our walk along the Fauna path. Until Fauna was created in 2011 this was one big field and we were not able to enjoy this landscape and it's wildlife.
62. Fauna stones	But we must hurry on as Mandy is waiting by the Fauna stones

Conclusion and Thanks: Mandy

62.Fauna Stones	As we've seen, all sorts of people from priests to prisoners, peasant farmers to landed gentry would have used this green path – and even before this path existed, we know that Neolithic people had a presence nearby, as the discovery of the bronze-age axe-head demonstrates. As we appreciate the footpath today for its tranquillity, it's likely that the path of yesteryear was much busier and noisier as people jostled with animals along their journey. The path's surface would be rucked from the wheels of heavy carts, and was no doubt strewn with manure, so it would have been rich-smelling too!
63.lapwings over Flora field?	But although there have been many changes in terms of the footpath's use, as well as the land-use around it, many of the flora and fauna that we view from the footpath today would have been observed by our

	<p>fellow travellers of old. A hare running across West field or the lapwings' flamboyant courtship display over Flora field are just some of the sights that would have been seen from the path and can still be seen today.</p>
64. Picture Credits	