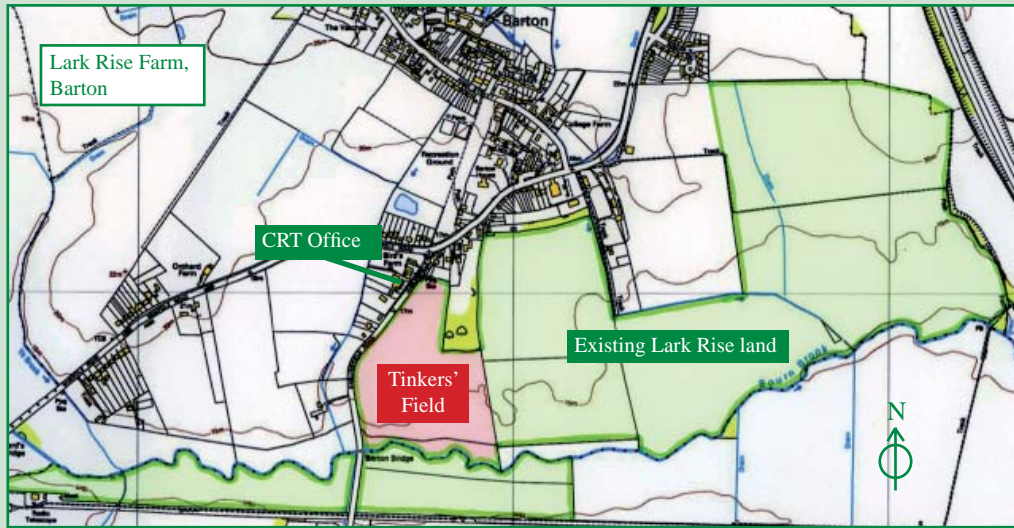




## Tinkers' Field Appeal

The CRT owns Lark Rise Farm in Barton, 400 acres of former 'barley prairie' which is now farmed in wildlife-friendly ways. Tinkers' Field is the last vital piece of the Lark Rise jigsaw puzzle. It comprises a 30 acre organic field bordered on three sides by existing Lark Rise land. It takes its name from the time when tinkers would stay there before moving on for harvest and fruit-picking in the Fens.



*Out of the blue, the CRT was given the opportunity to buy Tinkers' Field. Inevitably, this meant that we had to dip into our financial reserves and divert money away from other high priority projects.*

Tinkers' Field is important because it will increase the CRT land, so enlarging the area of our wildlife-friendly farming. It will also feature an area of water meadows through which the Bourn Brook flows. Not only will it benefit wildlife, but it will also provide safe, off-road access for visits to other parts of the farm.

## Wildlife

The CRT has worked tirelessly over the past decade to improve wildlife habitats on its land in Barton. We have replanted hedges, sown conservation headlands, switched to spring-sown crops, planted woodland, reintroduced hay meadows, created grass margins and beetle banks along with bird seed mix, pollen and nectar strips.



*Barn owls are back after 40 years*

We are proud of the fact that we now have barn owls on the farm and otters living in the brook. Skylarks and hares are here in abundance, marbled white butterflies are regularly recorded since we successfully introduced them. Native but rare grey partridges are flourishing, and cowslips and bee orchids appear each spring and summer. These wildlife improvements are monitored by a team of volunteers.



*Otters are back along the Bourn Brook*

We will install owl boxes on Tinkers' Field to provide more nesting places for barn owls, and an otter holt on the island in the brook will encourage otters to maintain their presence. In addition, we will explore the possibility of erecting a small bat tower.

## The Bourn Brook

The CRT is dedicated to preserving the Bourn Brook which supports a wealth of wildlife including its resident otters - a rare and special sight in East Anglia. The brook has its source in the village of Eltisley, 10 miles west of Cambridge, runs east through Caxton, Bourn, Toft and Barton to join the Cam at Byron's Pool in Grantchester, where the poet, Lord Byron, is reputed to have swum.

Winter flooding traditionally deposited silt to fertilise the meadows and prevented dangerous flooding downstream. Water held up in the countryside reduces the risk of flooding downstream eg. in Cambridge. A large section of the Bourn Brook, which runs through Lark Rise Farm, is now flourishing again thanks to the efforts of The Countryside Restoration Trust. Robin Page, Chairman of the CRT, is passionate about the project, "The brook has been sadly neglected and abused. The bed was five feet higher before dredging in the 1970s - the meadows would once have flooded 20 or so times a winter. The CRT has already shown that sensible management has a massive effect."

## Farming on Tinkers' Field

The farmland of Tinkers' Field will continue to be farmed organically as it has been in recent years. The Barton Sheepwash was also once on the land. The CRT hopes to reinstate this ancient feature. This will appeal to all those who have an interest in the history of the village and old farming methods.



*Hares are abundant again at Lark Rise Farm*