

The Bughtlin Burn

Prompted by the Nats cancelled trip to the Braidburn, I set myself the task of tracking the Bughtlin Burn. It's a tributary of the Almond, roughly Y-shaped with the two branches of the Y in the houses between Drum Brae and Maybury Road before crossing the Maybury in a single culvert to follow the fields to Cammo then drop quite steeply into the Almond a little way upstream of the A90 bridge. All told it's about 3km in length.

I spread my exploring over two days' permitted exercise (4th and 5th May 2020). Day 1 concentrated on finding the source. Looking at the map on my phone, and I find Opencycle map best for this sort of thing, I had an idea where it might start at least for one branch. After a certain amount of going around in circles and trying not to look too conspicuous, I concluded it probably was culverted from somewhere near Drum Brae Avenue. The dry pond near the care home might be a clue to its former location and old maps show curling ponds in that general area. The first real evidence of it was near the east end of Craigmount Brae. At this point, and especially this year, it is really just a dry ditch.



The "source" of the Bughtlin Burn

The whole of that area is crossed by a confusing network of footpaths. Once you get your eye in you realise that these often follow the two branches of the Bughtlin Burn, hidden behind the trees and shrubs.

At the "source" there's a surprising amount of wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) which gives way to quite a lot of Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*). Along the way there is a good mix of trees - some most likely to have been planted as the houses were built and the paths laid out, some which have got there naturally or as garden "escapes" and a few

which may be remnants from when the burn was part of the field boundaries. Here's a selection of the photos I took.



Gean (*Prunus avium*)



Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) - "May" out



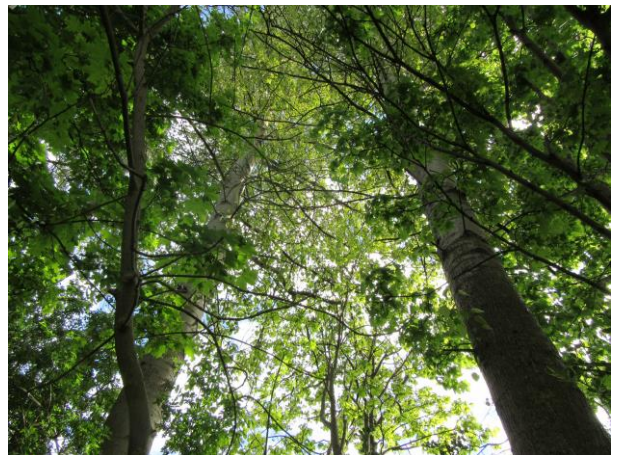
Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - not out



Pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) In leaf and flower



Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*)



Poplar - probably Hybrid poplar (*Populus robusta*)



As to the burn itself, there was little of interest. One or two hart's tongue ferns (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) and male ferns (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) on the banks were the only hint at a moist environment.

The mystery of the day was two holes in the grass at one place where the burn is a culvert. Pound coin for scale in the left-hand photo below. Voles, or less probably, adders were suggested as the cause.



At the end of day one, I'd worked out where the two Y branches went, and realised I must have run past it many times without noticing, but otherwise was not greatly impressed. I do think it will be worth a look again especially after a bit of rain.

A typical view of the burn and path network near East Craigs School

Day 2 Maybury Road to the Almond



I started this time at junction of the 2 branches of the burn before it goes under the Maybury Road

At the moment there is very little traffic to deal with when crossing the Maybury Road. However, the paths on either side are “unofficial” and require a bit of care.



Access to the east side of Maybury Road. The white rail is loose and of no practical use for support



And looking back up to the path from the other side of the Maybury Road into the rough field



The rough field



The other side of the Maybury Road culvert

In the rough field the burn, or at least its margins, started to feel a bit more interesting. There was a good mix of plants and on a sunny day butterflies - mainly green veined white (*Pieris napi*), orange tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) and one small tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*).



Pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*



White dead-nettle *Lamium album* and Crosswort
Cruciata laevipes



Green alkanet *Pentaglottis sempervirens*



Something crosses here on a regular basis!

The track through the rough field seems well enough used by people especially dog walkers as a link to Cammo Road. But to follow the burn I had to turn at right angles and go along the edge of an arable field, sown probably with barley.



Barley or wheat?



Field margin – definitely not easy walking



One patch had clearly been very wet for much of the winter but now the clods of clay were a warm spot for a buff-tailed bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*.

As you get close to Cammo Road the vegetation takes in a woodland character.



Hybrid bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* x *hispanica* and ivy *Hedera helix*



An obliging orange tip *Anthocharis cardamines*



The burn follows the fields for a bit before crossing into Cammo estate



Somehow by this stage it has picked up enough water to flow. Given how wet the fields in Cammo were all winter it could just be drainage from them.



By the footbridge in Cammo. Much trampled by people and dogs.



From Cammo to the Almond it goes into a little "gorge" sometimes at the bottom of gardens so not possible to follow.



Almost at the mouth and looking like a proper woodland burn



The Bugtlin Burn joins the Almond with some marsh marigolds



Looking back from the mouth with a little waterfall under the footbridge



On the other side of the Almond - lilac in full bloom!

Concluding thoughts

Although some bits were undoubtedly more interesting than others, my impression is of a surprisingly varied burn across its 3km length. Much depends on the surrounding land use rather than the properties of the burn itself. Given its scale, that's hardly surprising.

The section by the fields by the Maybury Road now borders the area of new houses. The developer's constraints and opportunities maps identified it as an area requiring special but unspecified attention. It will be interesting to see what they make of it!