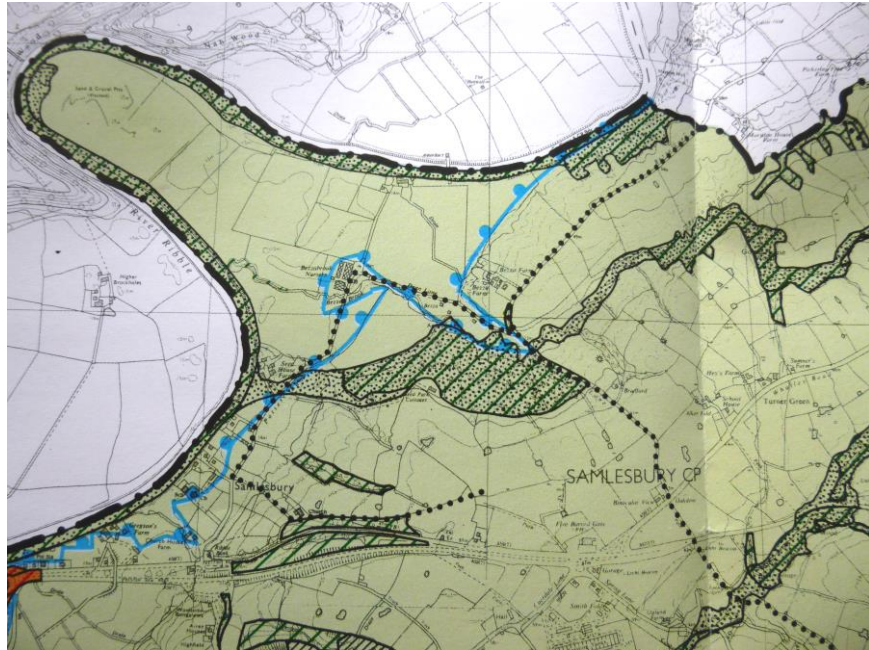


## Ecological Objection to Harleyford Aggregates

A number of areas in the parish have, like Lower Hall, been designated as **Biological Heritage Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Conservation Areas.**

But Lower Hall is special – eg. there are orchids at the bottom of the Bend, otters, grass snakes, deer, badgers, bats, owls (three types), water-loving and woodland birds.



The land alongside and half-way across the Ribble is already a **wild life corridor**, therefore a very necessary refuge, as the banking directly opposite the proposed extraction site has SSSI status. (Woodland now covers some of the area that the *Ribble Sand and Gravel Company* worked in the 1920s and '30s, and forms part of this corridor.)

Potters Lane, which gives access to Lower Hall and a number of other dwellings, crosses a Conservation Area (as will *Harleyford Aggregates'* proposed access). It also serves as a **footpath, bridleway and safe cycle route**. (Please note that the dotted line on the above map fails to define two other lengths of footpath in the immediate area of the proposed quarry access.)

In medieval times the Ribble was famous for its prolific runs of **salmon and sea trout**, but by the 19<sup>th</sup> century they had been fished almost to the point of extinction. In time, both they and other species began to slowly recover, but they have been particularly successful since the **removal of the weir in May 2020**. This was funded at significant cost to the Environment Agency to enable fish to re-populate, and as yet no up-to-date survey has been published to reflect this. Quarrying activities will undo the progress made.

The Ribble is very powerful, and is constantly eroding the land. Where it undercuts the north bank it causes a reddish 'scar' as it flows against it in a swirling motion, making it **unstable** and prone to **land slips**. We understand from police frogmen that several feet of soil have been washed away from underneath the banking on the Brockholes side, leaving tangled tree roots dangling in the water.

With an SSSI site of mixed, broad leaved deciduous trees and yews on the Red Scar and Tun Brook side of the river (as mapped by Lancashire County Council's Ecology Department), the ecology of the whole area would be compromised by a gabion defence wall erected around the Bend.

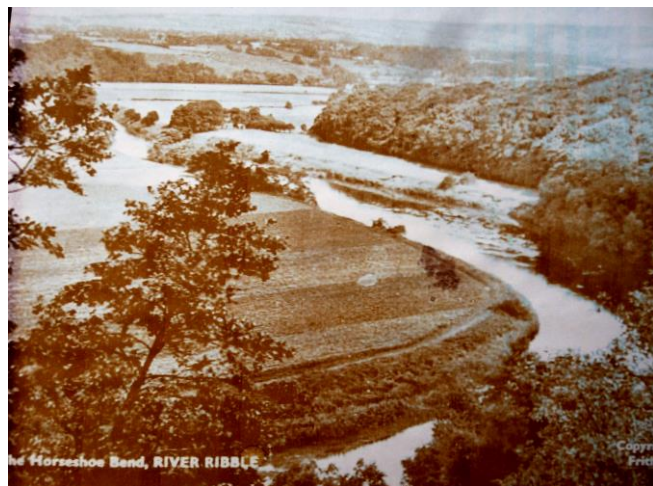
Flood defences on the Samlesbury side would potentially increase further landslips on the opposite banks, which in turn would increase the risk of flooding and damage to the Samlesbury side of the river, and the quarry site.



*Land slips that have occurred on the Red Scar banking in recent years*

At some time in the past, oak posts were driven into the river bed alongside the banking on the Brockholes side – which might have had something to do with trying to protect it. They are visible when the water is low.

The photograph opposite (taken c1890), shows a four acre → field on the far side of the river (in Brockholes), that is no longer there.



All of the relevant land in the application is included in LCC's own SSSI Risk Zone, a reference document used to determine the likely impact on SSSI's, SAC's SPA's and Ramsar Sites (England 1976). **The latter has designated Brockholes, Lower Hall and Elston as one of the various sites around the world which requires Special Notification for Development.**

In addition, the Lower Hall and Seed House areas are used by *Lancashire Badger Trust* for training in trapping and surveillance, owing to the high number of setts in such a close proximity.

Samlesbury's estimated 4,386 statute acres are fragmented by two rivers and several ravines, but in addition the parish has been carved up by the M6 and two ex-trunk roads. For approximately 1½ miles the A59 is a dual carriageway and the A677 almost bisects the parish. Between them, these highways already produce considerable noise, fumes and danger.

If gravel extraction goes ahead, it would be another gross intrusion into the countryside – because heavily laden wagons would be grinding their way up a steep slope to the A59, **compounding existing noise and fumes.** The A59 and A677 already carry heavy traffic, much of it **travelling at twenty or thirty mph above the speed limit** (50mph on the east-

bound carriageway). It will also **introduce more dust into Preston and Blackburn's green lung.**

The site's proposed entrance and exit sits on an **inadequate sight-line**, and **within the non-construction boundaries** of a large distributive gas pipe to the east. This cannot be rectified by re-locating westwards, because of ancient woodland.

In 1970 the parish was excluded from the central Lancashire new town area. It had previously been designated 'white' belt, which had 'for the most part to lie undisturbed and be kept in existing use,' ie. agriculture.

We understood therefore, that:-

- \*The complete green break between the two large conurbations was necessary,
- \*that the fact was important and had been recognized and accepted,
- \*and that both industrial and domestic development was proscribed.

At a five-day public enquiry in 1970, the Minister for Housing and Local Government admitted that this was essentially a green area, and soon afterwards Government policy saw the parish (including the brewery site), upgraded to **green belt**. **Despite this, the National Planning Policy Framework guidance has been largely ignored and intrusive industry allowed.** The parish has reached saturation point.

There is much talk today about the stress that we are inflicting on Mother Earth and how necessary it is to **put Nature into recovery**. Samlesbury, Brockholes and Elston are already areas of refuge for wildlife, and Samlesbury is an ideal place in which to start. Recovery could begin here.



*Harebells on part of the river's retaining wall behind the ruin of the 1623 Hall.*



*Fungi colonising a tree at the bottom of the Bend.*

*Windflowers*

