

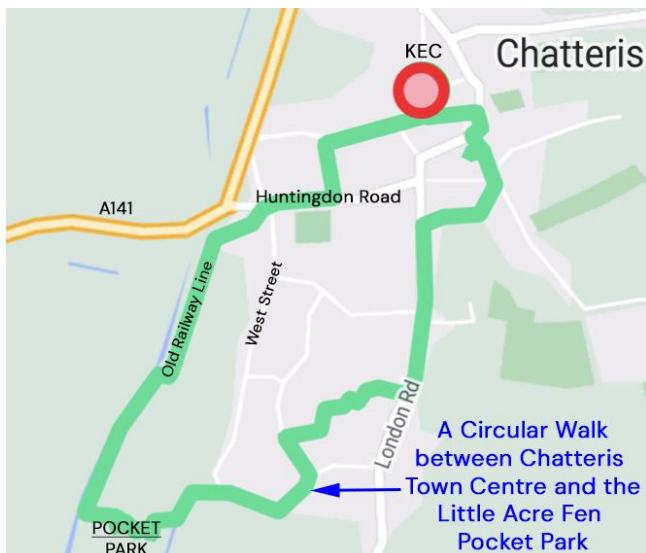
FRYER'S POND



Fryer's Pond is situated in the southwest corner of the *Little Acre Fen Pocket Park* which itself is located on the southwest outskirts of Chatteris. The pond is named after Alfred Fryer (1826 – 1912), a renown Chatteris Botanist, Naturalist and Entomologist. N.B. There is a short biography and a picture of him at the end of this article.

On the side of the pond you will also see a sculpture of a *Fen Tiger* built a few years ago by some apprentices from Stainless Metalcraft.

The map below shows a circular walk (approx. 3 miles) that the Walking Here A group did in August from the King Edward Centre (KEC). Alternatively, for a shorter stroll, one could park at the Huntingdon Road end of the Old Railway Line path and walk to the Pocket Park.

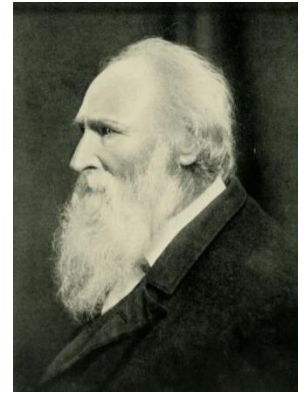


A general view of the Pocket Park

ALFRED FRYER – Chatteris Botanist, Naturalist and Entomologist

The Fryer family had been farmers in Fenland for generations. Alfred was born on Christmas Day 1826 in Chatteris, son of Daniel Fryer and Elizabeth Fortescue. His father was a farmer of considerable wealth who believed in allowing his children to follow their natural instincts and desires rather than impose a profession or a trade on them.

Aged 14 he attended the Collegiate School in Leicester. It was at Leicester that he showed his love of language, science and natural history. Alfred could read fluently in French, German, Dutch, Latin, and some Swedish and Danish. He could write in eight different languages and speak in four, useful in his chosen field of botany.



Whilst at school Alfred became acquainted with the celebrated naturalist and explorer Henry Walter Bates and Alfred Russell Wallace who worked with Charles Darwin on *The Origin of Species*. Alfred had to forego an offer to accompany Bates on an expedition to South America as he had just lost his first wife and had a daughter to care for.

Alfred returned to Chatteris, living in Wood Street. He cultivated a large garden in which he grew fruit under glass. With his second wife Clara he had eight children. He was a prolific walker, exploring at great length and distance, the Cambridgeshire Fens from Chatteris to Ely and Cambridge. He was particularly attracted by ornithology, entomology and conchology, writing manuscript lists of the local birds, butterflies and fossils and continued this interest up until his death. His work and investigations into pond weeds, especially Potamogetons or *pots* as he referred to them, led to him being elected as an Associate of the Linnean Society (ALS) in 1897. After his death in 1912, his collections were donated to the British Museum.