

An aerial photograph showing a wide, green river valley. A dark, winding river flows through the center of the valley. The surrounding fields are lush green, with some areas showing signs of agricultural activity like furrows and small structures. The lighting is bright, casting long shadows from the trees and fields.

Prof. Franz X. Bogner holds a Chair in Biological Education in Bavaria, he is both an ecologist and teacher educator. In the past 15 years he has made numerous flights with his camera and authored more than three dozen aerial photography books, each with a strong conservation message. Currently, *The Cam*, is his 41st book in a 'culture & nature' series about European rivers and their associated regions deserving of special protection. The original idea for this title was conceived during a sabbatical fellowship in Cambridge.

Stephen P. Tomkins has lived, on the ground, in Cambridge for more than 46 years, first as a Cambridge student and then as a secondary and sixth form teacher and then later as the Head of the Science Faculty at Homerton College. He was latterly a University of Cambridge Lecturer in biological education and remains an Emeritus Fellow of Homerton College. He is a supporter of local nature conservation and a member of the Cam Valley Forum, an organisation seeking to protect the River Cam. He has written the text for this book.

An aerial photograph of a river valley. The river flows from the top right towards the bottom left, winding through a landscape of green fields and some trees. The lighting is dramatic, with long shadows cast across the terrain, suggesting early morning or late afternoon. The overall scene is a wide, open valley.

PREFACE

This book is an aerial portrait of the Cambridge river in what might be called 'Cam Country' - that wide valley catchment of the River Cam. Its focus is on those landscape features seen from the air that might catch your eye, as indeed they caught the photographer's. It is also a portrait of a small but hugely significant little river. Reading the text and reading the pictures will give you a novel perspective. The exclusively aerial photographs are all from that local area surrounding Cambridge and fed by the Cam's tributary rivers; many images are also from Cambridge itself and the country which runs with the Cam as it drains northwards into the Fens.

A good portrait should please the eye by painting with patterns of light and colour. Franz Bogner achieves his art by flying at the very first and last light of the day. Shadows impart depth. As with any good portrait, it requires the viewer to ask questions. Why are form and environment as they appear? What was the historical context and what is the contemporary setting of each picture? Few of us can fly to see such a bird's-eye view. These views may well be neither more beautiful nor more informative than those taken from the ground but they are often very different or curious and often quite striking – revealing unfamiliar aspects of the countryside through which our Cambridge river runs. For anyone who knows Cambridge this book should add to their understanding of the City, the environment in its surrounding 'Cam Country' and of its very special and most historic river.

The authors wish to thank their light aircraft pilots for their great patience, care and availability. Most of the flights for this book were made with **John Trevor James** who deserves our special gratitude for his great skill and seasoned advice.