

Main Work Party reports.

6th May—Howes Meadow—20% of northern side of meadow raked and cleared to fire site.

20th May—Jary's Meadow—All areas cut on the 15th May, raked and cleared to fire sites. Some vegetation placed around fire site to dry out before burning.

3rd June - Buckenham Woods—Cancelled.

10th June - Buckenham Woods — Area around steps and a small area within the main area mown, with all vegetation raked and cleared to fire/spoil sites.

Additional work.

3rd May—Howe's Meadow—20% of meadow mown ready for main work party.

15th May—Jary's Meadow—Area around fire site on western side of the meadow mown along with areas at the bottom of the bank. Central, bramble/blackthorn area, and the area to the north, bordering the fen mown. Both gate areas and path network mown.

22nd—26th May—Jary's Meadow—Vegetation around fire site turned to help with the dry out process.

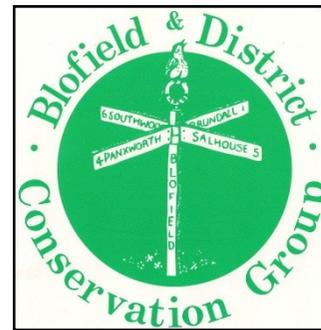
27th May—Jary's Meadow—Two of the heaps burnt.

14th June—Hemblington Church—Southern conservation area mown ready for main work party.

24th June—Lingwood Church—Conservation area mown ready for main work party.

**BADCOG AGM will be on the 8th September.
Agenda to follow in the next News Letter**

**Please note
The BADCOG website is currently not being updated.
We are working on the problem.**



BADCOG NEWS.

No.190 July 2017

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Wild Flower Surveys

By David Pilch

I recently attended an afternoon at Hickling Broad organised by Norfolk Wildlife Trust as part of its Norfolk County Wildlife Project. This aims to deliver a two year project, between Feb 2016 –18, aimed at engaging local communities with the wildlife in their local County Wildlife Sites and churchyards. Specifically:

- By increasing appreciation and enjoyment of County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) and churchyards by local people we will develop a wider and better understanding of the ecological value of these local sites including as part of Norfolk's habitat networks.
- With targeted advice, training and support develop the skills of local volunteers and community groups to record and manage their local places for wildlife stimulating a sense of ownership and pride in their sites.
- Through the support of volunteers and community groups we will enhance these sites through better recording to inform conservation management.
- Help build a sustainable approach to both recording and conservation of 70 CWSs and 30 churchyards in Norfolk, enabling more sites to be recorded and managed.

This will be achieved by 2 project officers working within the communities of 100 participating sites delivering a programme of outreach, a series of community events, survey training workshops and bioblitz events. The results of this work will be celebrated locally and through two targeted conferences.

The County Wildlife Action project aims to:

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- Encourage local communities to visit, enjoy and learn about the wildlife on their local sites.
- Widen public awareness of the value of CWSs and churchyards for wildlife and ecological networks.
- Enable local communities and volunteers to get actively involved in recording wildlife.
- Develop skills in volunteers to enable long-term monitoring
- Advise on and support community engagement in on-going management for wildlife.

The workshop I attended was aimed at training volunteer recorders. My identification skills certainly needed re-honing. The botany course I did as part of the Natural Science Tripos at Cambridge majored on palaeobotany which is not a lot of use when you are faced with an unfamiliar yellow flower. In the session the emphasis was on the gradual accumulation of knowledge. Initially we got familiar with the characteristics of the ten chosen families for the day. To this end the terminology of different types of plant habit, leaf form and flower morphology were reviewed.

The first family studied was the Buttercup family (Ranunculaceae) with the following features:

- Very varied, mainly herbs
- Alternate leaves, no stipules
- Leaves usually palmately lobed/divided (more than 3 radiating veins or >3 leaflets).
- 5 petals and sepals (4 in clematis)
- Usually many stamens and carpels (not fused) forming a superior ovary.
- Can be confused with the ROSE family but these always have leaf stipules and an epicalyx (extra calyx).

We went through in a similar way looking at the features of the Campion (Caryophyllaceae), Dock (Polygonaceae), Geranium (Geraniaceae), Cabbage (Brassicaceae - formerly Cruciferae), Carrot (Apiaceae - formerly Umbelliferae), Bedstraw (Rubiaceae), Pea (Fabaceae - formerly Leguminosae or Papilionaceae), Mint (Lamiaceae - formerly Labiatae), Daisy (Asteraceae - formerly Compositae), families.

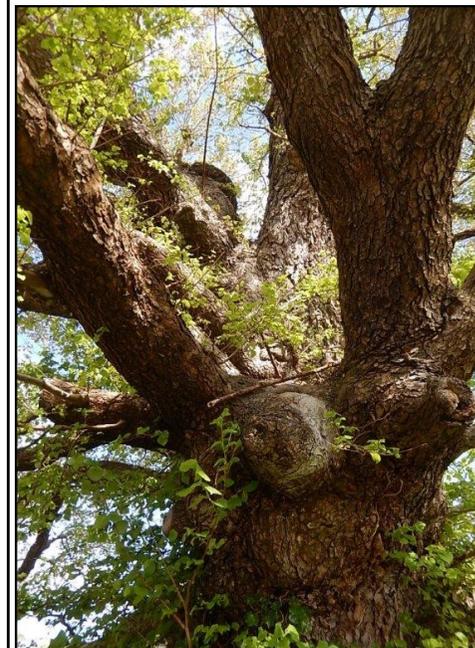
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Cotswold Elms Ernest Hoyos

When Coral and I went down to the Cotswolds for a few days in early May one of the places we stayed at was in the hamlet of Upper Swell, a mile or so west of Stowe on the Wold. I immediately noticed these two magnificent Elms. They were in flower at the time, hence the creamy look. This also aids identification.

It was then that I remembered that an elm cutting Norfolk Forestry club had been given to plant in our 12acre wood at Barford had come from these trees. It came through a club member who has a relation in the Cotswolds. I'm vice chairman of the forestry club and on making further enquiries the information I've gleaned is that the genetic integrity of the Upper Swell elms has been verified through the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh. They are surviving mature English Elms, *Ulmus Minor*, and are an absolute rarity, particularly so as, of the various species of elm in Britain, the English elm was most susceptible to Dutch Elm Disease.

Pure chance Coral booked a B&B at Upper Swell, but I'm glad she did!



A BATTY SLEEPOVER

The magnificent Church of St Andrew and St. Peter Blofield, rises up above the trees and fields with one of the tallest towers in Norfolk. What better way to share this treasure than by hosting a fun filled Batty sleepover for families during the half term holiday. Many children have been camping but not usually in a Medieval building. Children were enticed with the promise of discovering bats nearby and the hunt was on for our very own 'Batman' who would help us locate these only flying, amazing mammals.

With torches in hand we ambled through the churchyard and on through the fields to Braydeston church where our 'batman', Tony McKie, explained all about the pipistrelle bats and the sounds they would hear.

There was great excitement as the first bat swooped low to catch its night flying insect. It wasn't long before everyone could see them darting between the bushes and trees looking for prey and everyone became silent trying to hear the bats without the aid of a detector..

Thank you Tony for making our evening so informative and enjoyable.



I had a bit of catching up on the names here!

Following the theory in the lecture hut we ventured onto the reserve where we were able to see and identify examples from these families much of which required the use of a hand lens. We rounded off the afternoon with tea and cake.

This was a long way from the ivory tower botany of the past when the presence and distribution of plant species was not recognised as an important indicator of ecological health and climate change. It was heartening to find the interest of younger people in the project. I was the oldest of the twelve.

If you would like to take part in the NWT project and happy to do a little bit of training, then contact Gemma Walker at NWT to join the 200 or so volunteers.

Swallowtail.

On a recent walk at RSPB Strumpshaw, Matthew, Di and I were very lucky to experience something very special in the lifecycle of the swallowtail butterfly. First, we noticed a late developed caterpillar on some milk-parsley. Then out of nowhere, a swallowtail butterfly appeared, hovered over the top most leaf of the same plant and carefully laid a single egg on the underside of the milk-parsley. Upon further investigation, we found what looked like bird droppings but were in fact another 3 smaller swallowtail caterpillars. What a treat and Matthew managed to get the photos!



Photos: Matthew McKie

Annual Orchid Counts.

Since 1994, BADCOG has undertaken a count of the orchids at our two County Wildlife Sites at Howes Meadow and Walsham Fen. We do the count at the same time of the year every year, using the same method giving the count continuity. We know that we will miss some orchids and other will be counted twice, but it gives us a good indicator of numbers.

The count at Howes Meadow took place on Monday 19th June, on a very warm evening. The second thing to strike us all upon entering the meadow, (the first being the awful fence along the eastern boundary) was the height of the vegetation. The recent heat wave has resulted in great growing condition on the meadow. It was noticeable though that the reeds were less dense where rattle was plentiful. As predictable, the southwest section of the meadow gave the highest count again this year, with the north the least. This was in the main due to the thick tall reeds in the northern section and the abundance of bindweed. I'm sure many orchids went unrecorded in this area!

The count at Walsham Fen took place on Friday 23rd June. As you can see from the graph, we were up by 6 orchids on last year. However, we did also record 40 orchids in Jary's Meadow, in a small area we cut every time we do management here. Thank you to all who help with the count.

Tony Mc

Work Party Dates 2017

All work parties start at 10:30am, finishing at 1.00pm.

15th July—Blofield Church

18th July—Blofield Church (Green Gym at 1.30pm)

29th July - Jary's Meadow

12th August—CWS Howes Meadow

19th August—CWS Howes Meadow

2nd September—CWS Walsham Fen

16th September- Buckenham Woods

20th September—CWS Howes Meadow

A good turnout at our two CWS is requested as there is always plenty to do.

