



BADCOG NEWS.

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CARE, CONSIDERATION AND COLLABORATION

As members of a conservation group, we obviously care about the environment and its inhabitants. One of the main talking points of today though is the global crisis we find ourselves in and what can be done to improve the situation.

In the larger scheme of things we have to rely on the politicians and heads of state to make the appropriate decisions based upon the information which they are given. These could reverse or at least to slow down the damage which we as human beings are doing to our planet. The issues to be addressed are far ranging and at times overwhelming both on a global and more personal scale, from what we eat, the clothes we wear, the things we buy, how we dispose of the items that we no longer need or those that require replacing, how we light, heat and clean our homes, how we journey to work and travel to other places in our free time. The list is seemingly endless. All of our actions have a consequence.

Most of us are familiar with recycling everyday items whilst other things may need more thought or investigation concerning their disposal. Those of us who eat meat on a daily basis, could consider consuming it maybe 3 or 4 times a week instead – less land being used to grow food to feed the animals who feed us.

Do we really need to buy 'things' – can we make use of what we already have, not follow trends or fashion however tempting they may be. Clothing can be difficult – polyester, acrylic and nylon are plastic and items containing these imitation yarns, when washed, release tiny plastic microfibers into our water supply. Natural fibres, such as wool and cashmere, are biodegradable as are yarns such as modal and lyocell

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which are made from the pulp of sustainable beech trees. Cotton, though a natural product, is a concern in view of the scale of its production. The Aral Sea is fast disappearing as neighbouring countries divert its waters to supply their cotton crops whilst the local people are losing their water based livelihoods and the Sea is unable to support the wildlife which once thrived there.

With regards to movement, the environment will thank us for driving at a reasonable speed and for braking more efficiently. Making fewer journeys will be beneficial too – can you do without that thing which you've run out of until your next major shopping trip? Maybe we could collaborate with neighbours, relatives or friends to share a mutually convenient trip to the shops or travel together to an event which we are both attending. This has the added benefit of social interaction, the lack of which can affect many people today

From shopping locally, avoiding pre-packaged goods and buying eco-friendly products to planting single flowers and native species to campaigning for the preservation of hedgerows and ecologically important areas of land and for stopping irresponsible companies from polluting our rivers and others from illegal dumping. Saving the planet is a cause to which the dedicated individual could fully commit. However, our way of life and personal circumstances will no doubt dictate the extent to which we are able to contribute towards making a difference but there may be changes we can all make which wouldn't cost us too dearly in terms of time, money or lifestyle.

Frances Milliken

Talks and Meetings

Methodist Chapel, Chapel Road, Lingwood

Start time 7.30pm.

Refreshments available after talks.

13th March - A presentation by Adrian Reed on the local geology scene and landscape formation.

10th April - A talk by Garth Coupland.

HOW HELPFUL ARE HEDGEHOGS TO US AND THE ENVIRONMENT?

Hedgehogs are seen as an indicator species for the health of the natural world because they feed on soil invertebrates, so a big decline in hedgehogs implies the quality of the environment has significantly decreased. ... *“Whilst it is certain that nature can live without humans, humans cannot live without nature.”*

Hedgehogs Statistics - length: 15-30cm; tail: 1-2cm; weight: up to 2kg; average lifespan: 2-3 years.

Their habitat. They need a fairly large and well connected area to forage in. Access to habitat such as your garden is crucial for helping urban hedgehogs. If you could make a 13cm/5inch hole in your gate or fence, and perhaps talk to your neighbour about putting a hole in the boundary between you, then you can make a big difference.

Encouraging insects to your garden is the best way to provide food for hedgehogs. Log piles, long grass, garden compost, nectar rich flowers will all encourage worms, beetles, caterpillars, millipedes and earwigs, slugs and caterpillars for hedgehogs to feed on.

Providing extra food will help them out in very dry periods when the soil is hard and rooting up insects difficult, when they need to build their body mass before hibernating and when they emerge, on some warmer winter nights, and wander in search of food.

Recommended food is ground up peanuts, those sold for bird feeders are good. Place this food in a dish under an upturned box. [A plastic mushroom box works well, weighted down to prevent wind or curious animals moving it]. This keeps the food dry and if you cut just one entry hole in one end it will deter rats, squirrels and others from entering [they like to see an easy exit].

Do not put out bread and milk as this makes hedgehogs very ill. They can drink from a dish of water or a pond, as long as there is a way for them to get out of ponds, maybe a ramp.

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You may not see or hear one snuffling around the garden as they are mostly nocturnal so look out for signs they leave on the lawn - medium-sized, black droppings full of insect bits.

Hedgehogs hibernate in the winter, from about November to April depending on the temperature, in a nest of leaves or logs called a 'hibernaculum'. A grassy corner, a pile of leaves and space under sheds or decking are all places where hedgehogs will potentially hide, nest or hibernate.

If you come across a hedgehog which appears unwell or a small hedgehog in the late summer or autumn which weighs less than 450g please ask advice from an organisation like PACT on 01362 820775. An underweight 'hoglet' may not survive the winter but at PACT he can be nourished and cared for.

Did you know that -

A large proportion of the hedgehogs on Alderney are blonde!

Hedgehogs are absent from some Scottish Islands.

Their spines are actually modified hairs and the average hedgehog has about 7000 of them, which can be raised using powerful muscles along their back.

These creatures can roam up to 2 miles a night in search of food.

Helpful gardeners can - stop using chemicals and slug pellets, check before strimming; be careful with your bonfire [which may have been his dry, wild corner]; link your neighbouring gardens to increase his range and to help him keep away from roads.



THE GUELDER ROSE

Guelder rose is our native member of the vast Viburnum family, beloved of many ecologists as they often combine a source of nectar with berries, and sometimes glorious fragrance as well.

Guelder rose is a deciduous shrub reaching to 4-5m, with rather maple-like, palmately lobed leaves which turn crimson before falling in autumn, and in summer sports flat clusters of small white flowers surrounded by larger sterile flowers, which are followed by these glorious translucent red berries, which happily are slightly less-favoured by birds and so we can enjoy them into late winter after which they are, inevitably, eaten by a variety of bird species including thrushes, wax-wing and also bullfinch. Although it can be used in mixed-berry jellies, it is best avoided by humans as it is mildly toxic. Guelder rose is a calciphile, and as with many other calciphile species such as purging buckthorn, it is equally at home in hedgerows on chalk as in calcareous fens; another name for it swamp-elder, which demonstrates its preference for boggy areas. Look for it on the wooded edges of fens, and also around nature reserve car-parks!

Jo (Dr Jo Parmenter)

(Article first appeared in Broadsheet issue 185)



LINGWOOD WEATHER ROUNDUP 2019

My last write up took us to mid October 2019. We'd just experienced one of our wettest days on record when 80mm of rain fell on Sunday 6th October causing local flooding in E. Norfolk. The rest of the month continued wet, although nothing on that scale. The month's total came to 141.5mm or 228% of average and the wettest October on my records, although we had 140.2mm in Oct. 1993.

October 2019 was also a chilly month with a mean temperature 1.4c below average

November continued on a wet and cold trend. I recorded 77.8mm rainfall 119% and a mean temperature of 6.8c, 0.9c below average. December finished the year with 67.9mm of rain, 112% but with a mean temperature 0.4c above average, and no snow.

The total rainfall at Lingwood for 2019 was 689.6mm. Well over half, 362mm fell in the last 4 months, turning a largely dry year into a wet one, 108% of the long term average.

January 2020 has started the year very mild with a mean temperature 2.3c above average, the mildest since 2008. Rainfall of 53.6mm, slightly below at 96% and of course no snow!

I don't want to talk it up, but snow is definitely becoming rarer, in fact there was no white Christmas anywhere in Europe except, perhaps high in the Alps.

Ernest Hoyos

Work party dates.

7th March—Walsham Fen

21st March—Holly Lane Pond.

4th April—Howes Meadow

18th April—Jarvis Meadow

2nd May—Walsham Fen

16th May—Buckenham Woods

30th May—No work party. Walk TBD, details in next New Letter.

13th June—Lingwood Church

27th June—Hemblington Church

Work parties start at 10.30am and finish no later than 1pm.

Winter hedge planting

On Saturday 25th January eleven BADCOG members turned up to plant a mixed native hedge alongside the permissible footpath from Peters' Wood in Lingwood, up to the public footpath which leads on to the Community Wood. Over 900 trees/shrubs were provided by NCC consisting of: 150 – field maple, 50 – hazel, 50 – blackthorn, 575 – hawthorn, 25 – hornbeam, 25 – spindle, 25 – holly, 10 – purging buckthorn (the food-plant of the caterpillar of the Brimstone butterfly). Guards were fitted around each plant to give them some protection in the early years and also to prevent rabbits/deer having a nibble at them.

Tim Gurr kindly granted permission to plant on his farmland and our chairman undertook a lot of preparation for this scheme by strimming the bank beforehand, then marking out where each plant should to be planted.

We didn't quite manage to finish the job on the Saturday and five members returned a few days later to plant the remaining 40m of hedge.



Main Work Party Reports

Dec 28 – Railway Wood – Annual maintenance carried out. Fallen cherry tree cut up and cleared to wood pile. Area at bottom of steps scythed. Path to west end of site scythed. Aspen suckers cut back. All cut vegetation cleared to spoil heaps.

Jan 11 – Lingwood Pond – West compartment – S boundary hedge trimmed top and S side. East compartment – S & E boundary – bramble and vegetation trimmed back using scythe and strimmer, willow cut back. W boundary – bank by road – encroaching bramble cut back, area scythed, willow branches overhanging road cut down, entrance area to causeway scythed and some willow cut back. W corner – shrub and holly trimmed back and vegetation scythed. N boundary – overhanging branches by pavement railings cut down. Area between wall and pond scythed. All cut vegetation and branches raked and cleared to piles for future clearance. Litter pick carried out and the village sign cleaned.

Jan 25 – Lingwood – Hedge Planting – Peter’s Wood Area Footpaths –

11 members attended this Work Party and over 600 mixed hedge plants were planted, canes and protective guards fitted. The plants comprised:- 150 Field Maple - 50 Hazel 50 Blackthorn – 25 Hornbeam – 25 Spindle – 15 Holly – 10 Purging Buckthorn and 575 Hawthorn.

Feb 09 – Buckenham Woods – Main area- Previously top cut by farmer, some areas raked and cleared to a central pile for future burning. Causeway path – encroaching vegetation cut back and cleared. Area north of steps to east of path vegetation and bramble cleared from trees and shrubs and raked and cleared to fire site. East of main area by most recent tree planting area – hazel saplings and bramble cut down and some scything carried out. All cut vegetation raked and cleared to spoil heap. Site litter pick carried out.

Feb 22 – Jary’s Meadow – East Meadow – Fruit trees pruned and area around scythed. Bramble area at north side by path and some next to an oak tree cut down. Fallen spindle removed. Western end of meadow 1 oak tree cut down and 7 had side branches removed. West meadow – 2 oaks had side branches removed and encroaching bramble over path cut back. An area of bramble obstructing bridleway cut back. All cut vegetation and timber raked and cleared to fire sites.

Walsham Fen – A large fallen branch across a dyke near the spoil heap Area G, chain-sawed and removed.

Additional Work Party Report

Nov19/22 Dec 05/13 -Howes Meadow – Area D – bank south side of stream/dyke -continued with task started on 19 Nov – scythed and cleared reed to first bridge with exception of short narrow length of good reed just before bridge. Area A north side of stream at east end to east boundary fence – Willow herb removed and cleared to east fire heap.

Jan 02/14/16/21/27/31 – Howes Meadow – Area C/D – Raked and cleared all cut reed to spoil heaps from Nov/Dec AWP’s plus additional 25metres west of the west end bridge

Jan 14 - Pre Tree Planting – 34 mile round trip to collect 900 mixed hedge plants, canes and spirals.

Jan 21 – Planting site – Marked out approx 850 planting spots on field boundary banks. Strimmed rank grass on one section.

Jan 21/22 – Planting site FP3 – Oak trees in planting area, side branches and ivy sawn off to enable planting up to trees. Most of cut vegetation moved to Peter’s Wood.

Jan 24 – Pre Tree Planting – EH lifted plants from his garden and bagged them up in even proportions

Jan 28 – Hedge Planting - Peter’s Wood Footpath Area – The remaining 220 + plants planted and canes and guards fitted.