



BADCOG NEWS.

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Tree planting at All Saints Churchyard, Hemblington

The Hemblington Parochial Church Council, in collaboration with the Hemblington Parish Council, arranged for 3 small-leaved lime trees (*Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire') to be purchased and planted in the gaps along the churchyard's eastern boundary. A fourth tree, a Japanese flowering cherry (*Prunus Shirofugen*) was also planted at the main entrance to the churchyard. This was to commemorate HM Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee. As the trees needed to be planted on the day they were to be delivered, some preparatory work was required - clearing undergrowth, digging holes, etc.

A group of nine volunteers gamely appeared and all four trees were planted on the morning of Thursday 16th February. The PCC is most grateful to all those involved, especially BADCOG chair Ernest Hoyos, churchwarden Simon Mutton, Friends committee members Gwendoline Slater, Peter Harvey, Steve Briggs and Sue Rowe, and Friends group members Tricia Dolamore, John Applegate and Peter Rowe.

A further working party was planned to take place in March, before the nesting season began in earnest. If anyone is interested in helping keep the churchyard well managed for its wildlife you will be warmly welcomed. Please contact the Friends secretary for further details: (01603) 715804.



Monavale Vlei is Under Threat - a follow up from the article in the last newsletter.

As is the case with so many wetlands Monavale Vlei is under threat from development. Below is a digest from a local Harare newspaper in December last year.



The Monavale Vlei is currently under threat from a developer who intends to build between 105 and 121 cluster houses.

To protect the Vlei, the Conservation Society of Monavale is coordinating a petition to stop the building of the cluster houses which puts the wetland, a Ramsar Convention recognised site, under threat. A private developer who owns a piece of land in the area is planning to build cluster houses but residents say the housing project poses an environmental threat if allowed to go ahead. The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty under the United Nations that calls for the protection of wetlands.

“The Monavale Vlei is under threat of development again. It has been proposed that 105 cluster homes be built on this important wetland, which is a recognised Ramsar Site, and a key player in Harare’s water supply and climate resilience. “Building on Monavale Vlei will destroy it. We need to stop this! We need to stop this for several reasons,” reads the petition. The petition say the cluster houses would have a serious impact on Harare’s water crisis while the Monavale Vlei is also an important educational source as it offers students an opportunity to carry out research.

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“The Monavale Vlei has shown itself over time to be a crucial resource to the country in marking our national commitment to the Ramsar Convention and the reduction of wetland loss. Monavale Vlei is a Ramsar site, recognised

nationally and internationally as one of 2,453 important wetlands, ranked along-side places like Victoria Falls, Mana Pools, Lake Chivero, Okavango Delta, and Drak-ensberg Park,” reads the petition.

It said like all the listed Ramsar Convention sites, the Monavale Vlei plays an essential role in refilling rivers and water tables. “Monavale Vlei feeds river systems that feed into Lake Chivero — the city’s main water supply. Destruction of this wetland will have dramatic and lasting effects on Harare’s water, making a bad situation, much worse.” The petition added that building on wetlands was not advisable as the structures suffer damage in future.

Pine Martens in the Kielder Forest.

Once thought to be extinct in England these elusive carnivores were caught on camera in the Kielder Forest 5 years ago. Forestry England placed 50 den boxes there in February 2022 and within 24 hours of the installation pine martens were filmed nearby.

In autumn 2022 four times as many scats were recovered in the area with the den boxes as had been found there the previous year.

'Encouraging results though more data is needed', said a Forestry England ecologist.



Eclectic Reflections on musing through past BADCOG newsletters – continued

1983 – a group got together to restore Holly Lane Pond. This group became BADCOG.

2023 – It's 40 years later – and we are still here!

From Sept 2011 - Once again the weather was good for this now annual BBQ event at Jary's Meadow. This site had been made ready the day before with a planned work party. Once darkness had set in, some of us set off hoping to see the glow worms on Walsham Fen. As we did a complete circuit, we kept seeing these remarkable fluorescent lights deep in the undergrowth.

From Nov 2011 - We are now looking at possibly leasing Howes Meadow and Walsham Fen which might then enable us to claim the Higher Level Stewardship grants currently being used by Norfolk County Council, and pay towards contract help. However, this is a slow, uncertain process.

From Mar 2012 - Six BADCOG members joined a large group of villagers to help plant trees and shrubs on the Village Green, Lingwood. 26 small leaved limes were planted to form an avenue and 6 oaks were distributed around the green and 100 shrubs were also planted to form a hedge.



From July 2013 - Reed buntings have been seen at Jary's Meadow. It's also nice to report that sedge warblers are again at Walsham Fen this summer and during the orchid count a grasshopper warbler was heard. Numerous azure and blue-tailed damselflies have been seen at Lingwood Pond.

From Jan 2013 - The year 2013 will be the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Blofield and District Conservation Group. A number of events are in the planning stage to mark this occasion.

From May 2013 - Each year, BADCOG members try to accomplish at least one planting scheme. This year we planted a hedge along Norwich Road, Strumpshaw on 23rd March. 480 hedge plants were planted. In time, the hedge will develop into a wonderful wildlife habitat in addition to enhancing the local environment.

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From Sept 2013 – BADCOG has completed a Health and Safety Risk Assessment and produced a leaflet 'Being Safe'. This is also available on our website.

From Nov 2013 - To celebrate our 30th anniversary, without doubt, our summer outing to Narborough's chalk railway embankment was the highlight, not least because of our conveyance, a 1959 coach. Also, there was the amazing show of pyramidal orchids and other chalkland plants and abundance of butterflies and moths. That summer day was topped off with tea and cakes at Gooderstone Water Gardens.

From March 2014 - To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, a hectare of arable land behind Lingwood St. Peter's Church, was planted as a new wood. The initial planting was a community effort, but BADCOG members were once again heavily involved, helping out with their knowledge and expertise in planting 'bare root' trees and shrubs.

From July 2014 - Annual orchid counts at Howes Meadow and Walsham Fen have been undertaken by BADCOG members for many years now, dating back as far as 1994, if not earlier. Counts are normally carried out at around the same date every year and using the same counting method.

From Sept 2014 - A big thank-you to the Great Yarmouth 'Green Gym'. who came to our rescue to finish off the clearance of Blofield churchyard. Thirteen enthusiastic volunteers raked and cleared the churchyard in 2 hours, all of whom enjoyed their day at Blofield and it was a pleasure working with them.



To be continued in next issue ----

One of the few remaining chalk streams on the planet.

Work is starting on two new wetlands in the River Kennet valley in order to increase biodiversity especially the number of mayflies, dragonflies and other insects along the river's path.

The 45-mile-long river rises near Marlborough and flows into the Thames at Reading. In recent decades run-off from farms has caused pollution problems, drying out the water meadows.

New Ark, Action for the River Kennet, has partnered with local landowners, Amazon Web Services and The Rivers Trust to create two new wetlands in Wilton and Fyfield to slow and filter water, improving water quality and protecting river flows.

The wetlands will be completed by the end of this year.

Anna Gurney 1795-1857

Archaeological finds of north Norfolk. Anna's interest was stirred.

There have been many interesting finds around the north Norfolk coast
One report included:-

Bones and flint tools found in coastal deposits near Happisburgh in riverine deposits of the Cromer Forest Bed include flakes, fragments, a hand axe, a scraper and a hammer stone. The hand axe is believed to be the earliest tool yet found in Europe; it was probably used as a knife for cutting up carcasses. This flint assemblage is important to understanding prehistoric Europe.

At Runton the broken tip was found of a thin pointed hand axe.

A barbed antler point found in the North Sea suggests there are many more early Mesolithic sites under the North Sea off the Norfolk coast the coast being then much further out than the present coast line.

Domestic finds at Kelling Heath, one of the richest sites of this time in Norfolk, suggest that Mesolithic hunters there would have had magnificent views of the wide plains that are now the North Sea.

Anna was the first female member of the British Archaeological Association.

Coastal erosion

Much has been broadcast about the effects to property coastal erosion at Hemsby and Happisburgh.

Happisburgh, now a coastal village, was once some distance from the sea and parted from the coast by the parish of Whimpwell which has long since been eroded away. Historic records indicate that over 250 m of land was lost between 1600 and 1850. More recently the village was affected by the tragic floods of 1953.

The cliffs at Happisburgh range in height from 6 to 10 m and are composed of a layer-cake of several glacial tills separated by beds of stratified silt, clay and sand. It is likely that Norfolk cliffs have been eroding at the present rate for about the last 5,000 years.

BADCOG to host Norfolk Wildlife Trust

As part of the NWT programme of 'Workshops for a Wider Community', BADCOG will be hosting a walk around both Walsham Fen and Jary's Meadow on Wednesday 7th June. Entitled, 'Wildlife & Wildflowers at Walsham Fen', the start time is 10am from Hemblington Church and the walk is about 3 miles long. We are aiming to finish at about 12.30pm. The event is free but booking is essential through Eventbrite at www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on.

How many of these have you heard?

From a glossary of Norfolk words and phrases: -

Bishee-barnabee - ladybird; bishimeer - ant; colt - young reeds; dag - heavy mist; dodman - snail; draw-water - goldfinch; early peep - twitch grass; erriwiggle - earwig; fulfer - mistle thrush; harnser - heron; hay-jack - whitethroat; hilda - white elder; King George - peacock butterfly; mawkin - scare-crow; pick-cheese - blue tit and common mallow flower; pightle - small field enclosed by a hedge; quince - thicket of gorse or furze; ring-dow - wood pigeon; troshing - threshing.

According to George Borrow Norfolk is "where the people eat the best dumplings in the world and speak the best English."

Work Party Reports

March 04 – Howes Meadow – Area A – approx. 75metres mown, raked, and cleared. Vegetation cleared from edge of stream that had previously been dredges from the stream a few weeks before. All cleared to fire site/spoil heap. East boundary conifer hedge cut down to head height. 7 members +2 other

March 18 – Holly Lane Pond – Roadside hedge cut back. Tidied up bank and around pond. Bramble cut back. All cut vegetation raked and cleared to spoil heap. Litter pick carried out. 6 members + 3 other.

April 01 – Jary's Meadow – West meadow – SW corner scrub area, bramble and bracken cut and cleared. 5 members

April 15 – Howes Meadow – East boundary – Conifer hedge cut back. Area B – west boundary Hazel hedge cut back. North boundary – large Aspen cut down. Cut vegetation raked and cleared to fire sites/spoil heaps. Tidy up of spoil heaps carried out. 7 members + 2

Additional Work

March 16 – Walsham Fen – Areas A1-A2- H -J and K mown in preparation for clearance by BVCG

March 22 – Walsham Fen – Areas mown on March 16th raked and cleared to spoil heaps.

BADCOG WORK PARTY DATES

13th May—Buckenham Woods

20th May—Walsham Fen

3rd June—Lingwood Church

17th June—Hemblington Church

1st July—Blofield Church

4th July—Blofield Church (Green Gym)

Work parties start at 10.30am and finish at about 1pm.

All welcome!