



## BADCOG NEWS.

No 210: November 2020

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### Chairman's Update

Despite Covid we have kept to our programme of work parties after our initial start up again on August 1st at Blofield Church where we cleared the pre cut north half of the churchyard. Thereafter, our usual management at Walsham Fen, mowing along the board walk and areas D and E took place, followed by mowing and raking at Jarys Meadow.

From September on we concentrated much of our efforts on Howes Meadow, greatly helped by dry, warm conditions. With pre mowing, rowing up with the old hay turner and using my vehicle pulling the 3mx5m sheet we cut and cleared the entire south side and half the north side plus we moved the pile from under the mature oak in the NE corner, as it could have been a fire hazard to the tree.

During this 3 weeks of dry weather I was able to burn the piles of dry cut vegetation on at least two occasions when there was a suitable breeze to take any smoke away from houses.

Another routine job carried out at this time was getting the Sycamores and Buddleia in the sand pit at Buckenham Woods topped by the local farmer prior to a meeting there with Strumpshaw PC, BDC and tree wardens about the future of this popular public site. There may be money to spend on improvements from housing developments in Strumpshaw.

After the long dry spell rain was forecast for us from 23rd September. Sure enough, about 10mm fell, then on the 24th rain really set in with a vengeance. A depression became established over the N. Sea, the effects of which were really only felt in Norfolk and East Suffolk resulting in 48hrs of continuous rain and a NW gale with gusts up to 70mph, which brought down many trees in north and east Norfolk sadly, including our big old oak, mentioned earlier in Howes Meadow.

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Here at Sunny cottage, we lost our power for two days due to a falling tree and were without our phone for nine days.

Many places on this side of the county, but even further west, finished with well over 100mm of rain for September, twice the monthly average and making Norfolk the wettest county in the country, and at the time of writing, 15th of October we have not had a dry day since 23rd September. Since then, in 24 days, we've had 166mm of rain (over 6.5inches), a quarter of our expected annual rainfall.

One important additional work party we've managed to fit in despite the weather is to cut and clear the southern half of Blofield churchyard.

### **Autumn Postscript**

What a year this has been and of course Covid19 will continue to be a concern for the rest of this year and into the next.

BADCOG has had to adapt as has every organisation. Our indoor meetings are in abeyance and initially so were work parties and our sites suffered as a consequence. However, once we able to resume work on our sites members set to and by dint of hard work and good planning we are set to end the year with annual maintenance of the sites up to date.

Sadly, a further casualty will be our Christmas walk and lunch. Nevertheless, I would like end this final newsletter of the year by thanking those who have helped throughout the year by contributing to the newsletter making it informative and educational. Please continue to send me your snippets or articles.

David Pilch

### **Membership renewal.**

BADCOG Membership subscriptions are now due.

The cost for a annual membership remains the same as last year:

£5 per single membership or £10 per family membership

You can pay by Bank transfer to:

**Lloyds Bank. Sort Code: 30 99 97. Account No: 00642538.**

**Name: Blofield and District Conservation Group.**

Or forward any cheques made payable to BADCOG to:

**Frances Milliken, 45 Heathway, Blofield Corner Road,  
Norwich NR13 4RS**

## Tree casualties

BADCOG is often involved in tree planting and the importance of this was highlighted in the result of the strong winds at the end of September. Our large oak in Howes meadow was brought down into the site, a fallen ash tree blocked the public footpath in Blofield churchyard and our membership secretary Frances was blocked in by a fallen oak which filled her front garden. So as well as increasing the countries stock of trees we must also bear in mind that there is a gradual loss of mature trees that need replacement.

In the picture of our activities at Howes Meadow in 1988 the ice was so thick on the dyke that we were able to drag the telegraph poles along it for our bridge building. The oak tree that has recently fallen can be seen on the extreme right of the picture. Sadly the other oaks on the boundary have also succumbed over the years.



## Marsh Harriers at Wicken Fen.

Once on the brink of extinction and now amber on the RSPB's conservation list these birds seem to have benefited from the fall in visitor numbers this year.

Conservation efforts had boosted numbers to 400 nesting pairs in the country and this year, the quiet conditions having suited them, at least 12 chicks have successfully fledged at the National Trust's Wicken Fen Nature Reserve in Cambridgeshire making 2020 the best breeding year in more than 20 years.



**Footnote:** In the last two News Letters some may recall my articles on the subject of the butterflies I've recorded this year. Since then I can add another to the records, the Small Copper, seen at Jary's Meadow on 24th September. This brings the total for the year to 29. I was very pleased to have seen this species as I think it's one of the most stunning butterflies we have in the UK.

Tony Mc

**BLOFIELD AND DISTRICT CONSERVATION GROUP**  
**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2020**

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Rural Payment Agency	824	1029	
Grants/Donations	1360	2095	
Subscriptions	225	285	
Refreshments	11	22	
Interest	1	1	
Book receipts	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	3462
	2451		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Materials		266	
Insurance		145	
Hire of Hall	112	112	
Speakers costs	280	185	
Secretarial costs/newsletter distribution	119	134	
Newsletter	150	180	
Machinery running and Repairs	325	36	
Hire of Equipment	40		
Contractors	212	314	
Donation			
web site	77	48	
Book		10	
Others		16	1446
Net Surplus	<u>1136</u>	<u>16</u>	2016
Balance brought forward	16904	14888	
	<u>18040</u>	<u>16904</u>	

**Represented by**

Land	At Cost	6550	6550
Lloyds bank		8588	7457
Santander		2773	2773
Cash in hand		129	124
		<u>18040</u>	<u>16904</u>

## Treasurers Annual Report 2020

This year has been a difficult time for the Group with the period March to July being 'Lockdown' and work parties having to meet the social distancing rules.

The effect on our finances has been that our income for the year being reduced by £1011, representing by subscription down by £63 and donations down by £735. The RPA receipts are now paid on time so we should see the payment annually in one sum rather than in two.

Due to UK Power Networks digitalising their records, our name was removed from their records. The matter is being dealt with by them but it may be the new year before the matter is resolved.

The Expenditure for the year is only slightly down on the previous year. Our largest cost this year has been the repairs to equipment. This year we spent £158 on new rakes for which Dr David Pilch was successful in obtaining a grant for £150 from a scheme run by Broadland District Council. (This figure is included in the Grants/Donations figure of £1360).

It may help members to know we can accept your subscriptions (which are now due for 2020-2021) by bank transfer. Details are:

**Lloyds Bank. Sort Code: 30 99 97. Account No: 00642538.**

**Name: Blofield and District Conservation Group.**

## Large Blue butterfly reintroduction

Butterflies are barometers for changes in environment and climate.

Sensitive creatures with particular requirements and the management of their habitat can make all the difference.

On some of the slopes of Rodborough Common in Gloucestershire the best grazing was provided by Luing, Hereford and Longhorn cattle creating the right conditions for red ants to thrive. These are critical in the life cycle of the large blue butterfly which had been declared extinct in the UK in 1979. The grassy slopes where it lays its eggs had become overgrown or destroyed.

Management here by the National Trust has also encouraged the growth of wild thyme and marjoram on which the large blues lay their eggs. Now 750 butterflies have emerged from chrysalises at the common.



## Let beavers help the environment.

The dams and ponds created by beavers improve water quality, make habitats for other wildlife and help reduce flooding. Projects in various parts of Britain are placing the creatures in protected rural areas.

Beavers create habitats that allow hundreds of other species to return and flourish. They slow the flow of rivers, reducing the danger of flooding. Young salmon grow faster and are in better condition in areas where beavers live.

The RSPB endorses the reintroduction of beavers through well-planned and licensed releases. It is working with other organisations to assess the suitability of various river systems to support them.

In Scotland, a licensed trial reintroduction of four families to Argyll has been successful and a large and expanding (unlicensed) population has inhabited the Tay catchment for more than a decade.



In November 2016 Scottish Government announced that beavers are to remain in Scotland as a protected species but with an active management programme and that further releases will require a licence. RSPB publicly welcomed this announcement.

In England, there is a small population of beavers on the River Otter in Devon, from either an unlicensed or accidental release. The RSPB supported the Devon Wildlife Trust's successful application to Natural England for this to become a licensed English trial reintroduction.

These animals were once native to Britain but were hunted to extinction 400 years ago. Conservationists would like to see a commitment to a strategy of accelerating restoration projects.

### Beavers in Norfolk

Those who have followed episodes of 'Springwatch' will know of the Cornwall Beaver Project. Here in Norfolk, at Wild Ken Hill on the coast, a project is turning 1,000 acres of marginal farmland and woodland over to nature.

As part of a re-wilding scheme, two female beavers were introduced to a large enclosure before lockdown and now it has been possible for two male beavers to join them. Beavers create ecosystems by felling trees and building dams.

The female beavers have already begun to transform the area at Snettisham into a wetter and more open habitat which will boost nature over time.

Beavers are thought of as ecosystem engineers, creating habitats which other species like to use, including aquatic invertebrates, birds, bats and fish. The rise in water level has also led to sightings of otter there.

## **Tyred out at Buckenham Woods**

Our chairman encountered a local teacher eyeing up the tyres dumped at Buckenham woods and said he had a school project that wood give them a home. This is detailed below by John Brierley a member of the Papillon project. More information can be obtained from their website.

The Papillon Project is a Norfolk based charity, led by former teacher Matt Willer, which aims to create and improve school allotments across our region. The overriding aim of the project is to help grow produce that can be used in school canteens, in order to teach pupils about sustainability and where



their food comes from. A passion of the project is to use materials that have sometimes come to the end of their 'primary use' to demonstrate that lots of 'junk' can have an alternative purpose. It was to support this cause that Buckenham Woods became involved, when a local teacher spotted over two hundred fly-tipped tyres which had been abandoned. It took two visits to clear the tyres - which have now been put to good use in the Sprowston Community Academy allotment, creating this path in the picture. This is just one example of the brilliant work that the Papillon Project is doing, supporting young people and their communities.

For further information on the project, see the website:

<http://www.thepapillonproject.com>

## **BADCOG Work Party Dates**

**14th November: Strumpshaw Stone-pit**

**28th November: Snowdrop acre**

**12th December: Jary's Meadow**

**19th December: Railway wood**

**2nd January 2021: Lingwood Pond**

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

### **Main Work Parties**

- Sep 05 - Howes Meadow** - Area C - 50% of cut vegetation raked and cleared to spoil heaps.  
**Sep 19 - Howes Meadow** - Area D - cut vegetation raked and cleared to spoil heaps.  
**Oct 03 - Jary's Meadow** - East meadow south boundary bank- approx 1/3rd strimmed. The area at bottom of bank, the path network to west meadow and the bracken area, all raked and cleared to fire sites.  
**Oct 17 - Walsham Fen** - Area G - Mown, raked and cleared to spoil heaps.

### **Additional Work Parties**

- Aug 26 - Cremer's Meadow** - An area mown  
**Aug 27 - Howes Meadow** - Area C mown  
**Sep 02 - Buckenham Woods** - Steps area mown  
**Sep 03 - Buckenham Woods** - Area around fire site and adjacent bank cut using brushcutter  
**Sep 04 - Lingwood Church** - 95% of conservation area mown  
**Sep 07 - Lingwood Pond** - West compartment - area adjacent to west boundary wall mown  
**Sep 07 - Lingwood Church** - Conservation area - cut vegetation raked into rows.  
**Sep 09 - Howes Meadow** - Area C - continued with clearance started on Sep 05 WP.  
**Sep 09 - Jary's Meadow** - The two main fire sites burnt.  
**Sep 09 - Walsham Fen** - Spoil heap at end of boardwalk burnt  
**Sep 09 - Lingwood Church** - Raked the cut and rowed vegetation to the roadside end of conservation area with exception of field edge of area leaving large pile by yew.  
**Sep 10 - Howes Meadow** - Area C - Some parts scythed. Final clearance carried out. Area D mown.  
**Sep 10 - Lingwood Church** - Cut vegetation cleared from site and taken by trailer to Mrs Dickinson in Lingwood for horses.  
**Sep 12 - Buckenham Woods** - Steps area raked and cleared to fire site. Later in evening all vegetation at fire site burnt.  
**Sep 16 - Walsham Fen** - Large spoil heap burnt  
**Sep 17 - Howes Meadow** - Area D - Mown vegetation rowed using hay-turner  
**Sep 21 - Howes Meadow** - Remains of old piles of cut vegetation burnt  
**Sep 28 - Howes Meadow** - Started clearance of fallen branches from oak on boundary fence.  
**Sep 30 - Howes Meadow** - Continued with clearance of oak branches from hedge.  
**Sep 30 - Jary's Meadow** - East meadow - south boundary bank mown working from bottom up 5 cuts back and forth. Path network to the bracken area in west meadow plus the bracken area mown.  
**Oct 01 - Lingwood Pond** - The piled cut reed in SW corner moved to roadside by boundary hedge awaiting future clearance.  
**Oct 01 - Blofield Church** - Conservation area S of church mown  
**Oct 02 - Howes Meadow** - Finished clearance of fallen tree from boundary hedge, except for high branch that will require use of ladder.  
**Oct 09 - Howes Meadow** - Area B mown and the bramble area brush-cut  
**Oct 12 - Howes Meadow** - Cut up fallen tree, small branches taken to fire site.  
**Oct 16/18 - Howes Meadow** - Continued tree clearance  
**Oct 19 - Howes Meadow** - Ladder used to enable removal of high branch overhanging boundary hedge.  
**Oct 22 - Howes Meadow** - Continued tree clearance.  
**Oct 22 - Walsham Fen** - Area A1 and approx 25% of A2 mown. Mower then u/s.