

### Main Work Party Reports

**Aug 31 – Buckenham Woods** – Vegetation along causeway and around trees planted there, cut back using brushcutter and hedge trimmer. All vegetation cut plus the areas mown at WP on 29 Aug raked and cleared to fire site and spoil heaps. 10 members.

**Sep 14 – Howes Meadow** – Area D and half of Area A NE section, raked and cleared to Area A east fire site. 5 members +1.

**Sep 21 – Strumpshaw Stone Pit** – Conservation area raked and cleared to spoil heap. Some cutting back of bracken and bramble on bank area carried out using hedge cutter. Cut vegetation cleared to spoil heap. 3 members.

**Sep 28 – Walsham Fen** – Areas D/E raked and cleared to spoil heaps. 6 members +1

**Oct 12 – Howes Meadow** – Area C raked and cleared to spoil heaps. 7 members +1

**Oct 26 – Buckenham woods** – Cut back bramble, bracken, nettles etc, around the newly planted trees in the eastern section of the large glade area. 6 members.

### Additional Work

**Aug 27 – Howes Meadow** – Area A – Scythed, raked and cleared a border around the fire site. Prep ready for when conditions suitable for burning.

**Aug 29 – Buckenham Woods** – Area around steps – around the 3 seats – both sides of path to main gate – around bike parking area and along the causeway, all mown.

**Sep 03 – Jary's Meadow** – East meadow west fire site and West meadow fire site burn carried out.

**Sep 04 – Howes Meadow** – Area D, area A east section and paths north side of dyke and north boundary path as far as fire site all mown.

**Sep 05 – Creamers Meadow** – Area approx. 30m x20m mown. Prep for their WP to clear next week.

**Sep 09 – Howes Meadow** – Area A – E end fire site burn carried out, left smouldering.

**Sep 17 – Lingwood Pond** – Compartment West – South boundary hedge pond side trimmed back with hedge cutter. Cut vegetation raked and cleared to SW corner for future clearance.

**Sep 17 – Howes Meadow** – Raked and cleared paths not completed at WP Sep 14.

**Sep 18 – Strumpshaw Stone Pit** – Conservation area mown.

**Sep 18 – Walsham Fen** – Areas D/E, top of all boardwalks + area around spoil heaps mown

**Sep 18 – Jary's Meadow** – West meadow – scythed bracken.

**Sep 19 – Howes Meadow** – Area A – E fire site burnt.

**Sep 21 – Howes Meadow** – Remaining cut vegetation from WP 14 Sep raked and cleared to Area A east fire site. Later pm, burning at East fire site.

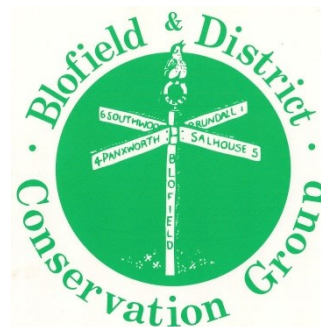
**Sep 22 – Howes Meadow** – Mower transported to meadow. Enlarged the area around centre West pile using mower. Pile then burnt. Later in evening – Checked both fire sites safe and burnt out.

**Oct 02 – Howes Meadow** – Area C mown.

**Oct 08 – Blofield Church** – NW SW & SE conservation areas mown.

**Oct 18 – Lingwood Church** – conservation area mown.

**Oct 21/22– Lingwood Church** – mown vegetation raked into rows and cleared.



### BADCOG NEWS.

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### BADCOG Chairmans Annual Report—2024

At last year's BADCOG AGM, I was voted in as Chairman, replacing Ernest who had held the post for over 35 years. In my short time as Chairman, it's very pleasing to report that the group has continued in the same vein and we have continued to undertake 'practical wildlife conservation management' at 12 sites in the local area. This is alongside the management of a further 4 sites working with other groups.

Despite the very wet spring this year, that seems to have encouraged the vegetation to put on an extra few inches, we have undertaken 25 main work parties, along with an astonishing 81 additional work parties. These additional work parties can range from finishing off a task leftover after a main work party, to preparing sites ready for a main work party, all of which is vital to ensure the main work parties are completed as efficiently as possible

This year it's also very pleasing to report that volunteer numbers for our main work parties is at an average of ten. Ten hard working BADCOG volunteers can achieve a great deal in a couple of hours, so thank you to all our volunteers for your work this year.

We are also very grateful to a few other groups who have helped BADCOG out this year. First The Yarmouth Green Gym, who have once again done a sterling job raking and clearing Blofield Churchyard, and secondly the Bure Vally Conservation Group, who have helped us out at Southwood Church and at Walsham Fen, so thank you to both groups.

Also, a new group have formed at Limpenhoe church, who are very willing to get involved with the Churchyard wildlife management there. This is very encouraging and should help reduce our commitment there so we can concentrate on our main sites which I think many will agree, all need a bit more attention.

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BADCOG volunteers have also been actively supporting other local community groups this year, by helping out at Cremer's Meadow and Strumpshaw Community Orchard.

As many would have seen and read about, we are very grateful to Councillor Paul Newstead, from Broadland DC, who provided the funds for a new gate at Jary's Meadow, so thank you Paul.

This year we undertook only the one orchid count, that being at Howes Meadow. The orchid numbers here were disappointingly low compared to other years, however, I understand that numbers were also disappointing at Cremer's Meadow, so may be its just one of those years. Interestingly, in the NCC publication 'Your Norfolk', there was an article about 1million trees being planted in Norfolk. This got me thinking about all the planting BADCOG has undertaken over the past 5 years, let alone the past 40 years. Tony Bowyer, who has maintained our records for many years, did a bit of research and he discovered that BADCOG volunteers had contributed to this five year total, with the planting of 164 trees and just under a thousand hedging plants, which is a great effort. All in all I think we could maybe add a zero on both these figures with the amount of trees/shrubs BADCOG has planted since 1983!

Finally, I would like to thank all the committee members for the work they do in the background, all of which helps BADCOG successful in look after the local environment, both for wildlife and people. We hope to continue doing so again over the next 12 months.

### **Sweet Briar Marshes – October talk by Matt Wickens.**

Matt Wickens is the NWT Urban Nature Reserve Manager for Sweet Briar Marshes. His interest in wildlife and nature was nurtured by his 'outdoorsy' childhood. In his current role at Sweet Briar, he is now enabling local communities to get vital outdoor and wildlife exposure and to enhance the area for wildlife too.

The site is 90 acres on the NW of Norwich, bounded by Marriot's way and the River Wensum with Sweet Briar Road going through the middle. Historically there was a canalization for sewage, arable and grazing fields and the M&GN railway. It is now a mix of rough meadow, grazing marsh, periglacial depressions forming ponds, old hedgerows and young woodland.

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### **Tree diseases: - Identifying declining health in some oak trees.**

We regularly hear of diseases affecting in particular our native tree. In the 1970s a virulent strain of Dutch Elm disease swept the country eventually killing millions of our elms. Recently its been the turn of ash trees, many succumbing to Chalara or ash dieback.

Last week I spent a glorious autumn day at Blickling with about 30 people, many of them tree wardens from the eastern region. We were led and guided by experts from Forest Research, Alice Holt, Farnham in Surrey. They showed us how to identify Acute Oak Decline, AOD as it affects the stems of some trees. On the outer bark, vertically arranged, weeping stem lesions and, in at least a third of cases, the D shaped exit holes of the adult native Agrilus beetle are distinguishing features. As recently as the 1980s Agrilus was thought rare in Britain and listed in the Red Data Book. More recently sightings have increased and are linked to AOD.

I've noticed in recent years as I drive around the county a few apparently newly dead mature oaks. If they are leafless in the summer, but still have twigs or small braches, they haven't been dead long. This may or may not be due to AOD but it's been found that many of these trees do exhibit the symptoms we were shown. If a portion of the bark is removed where the D shaped exit holes of the Agrilus beetle have been identified the inner bark larval galleries left behind appear to be an open invitation to fungal pathogens which degrade live root tissue.

Affected trees have so far only been found in Southern England, rarely further north than East Anglia to the Welsh border. As AOD seems to occur in areas of low rainfall and higher summer temperatures East Anglia would seem to fit the bill. With climate change, increasing temperatures and frequent droughts so more trees are under threat and succumb to these ever-present threats.

There were two AOD days at Blickling and similar events in other parts of the country. I think these types of events are classed as Citizen Science involving the general public. Forest research had marked 60 oaks in Blickling Park with numbered labels. After our introductory talk and explanation, we were each given a clip board with the 60 numbers and asked to go out and fill in on our sheets yes or no for visible cracking of trunks and yes/no where visible D shaped exit holes were found. Some of the trees had both, some had one or other and some were healthy and unaffected. It took us several hours to complete but the idea was for us to become familiar with the symptoms and to be able to go out on our own patch and make a note of any oaks we see apparently suffering from AOD. If found Forest Research ask to be notified through <http://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk>.

Not wishing to finish on a pessimistic note, research has found that trees with AOD stem lesions do not always die, in fact up to 40% of monitored trees produce callus tissue over the decay and enter remission.

## Carbon Capture in The North Sea

A new series of reports published by a coalition of nature charities means the UK is the first nation to map and estimate the amount of carbon stored in its seabed habitats, including in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

The report is part of *The Blue Carbon Mapping Project*, and is completed by the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) on behalf of WWF-UK, The Wildlife Trusts and the RSPB.

The report reveals that 37.4 million tonnes of organic carbon are stored in just the top 10cm of seabed sediments (principally made of mud) in the North Sea, plus coastal habitats including salt marshes and seagrass beds.

The North Sea covers 114,000 square kilometers. This vast area is host to habitats that capture and store carbon, known as 'blue carbon'. They include seabed sediments (made of mud, silt and sand), vegetated habitats (seagrass meadows, salt marshes, kelp forests and intertidal seaweeds).

UK seabed habitats could capture up to 13 million tonnes of organic carbon every year – almost three times the amount sequestered by the UK's forests.

Seabed disturbances, which includes bottom trawling and offshore development, are identified as threats to blue carbon stores, as nature charities call for stronger protections for UK seas.

### BADCOG WORK PARTY DATES

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

**All welcome**

**2nd November—Jary's Meadow**

**9th November - Snowdrop Acre**

**23rd November—Howe's Meadow**

**7th December—Walsham Fen**

**21st December—Railway Wood**

**4th January 2025—Lingwood pond**

**Check website for any changes!**

A third is SSSI (designated in 1988) and the rest a County Wildlife site. Under pressure from unsympathetic use, Norfolk Wildlife Trust appealed in 2022 for funds to purchase the area being sold for £600,000. £300,000 was raised in four months and Aviva matched the funding!

With the area in safe hands, work starts to enhance the area. Various surveys are done to ascertain what is there now. Plants identified, some evidence of water voles, 7 (possibly 9) types of bats, invertebrates, birds etc. No reptiles have been found. Some species have been lost over the years, but with improving the habitat diversity, this could be reversed. Testing for Environmental DNA in the ditches is a new way of determining what is on the site. Norfolk and Norwich Naturalist Society will be doing their biological recording during 24/25 on Sweet Briar Marshes. Other tasks involve removing litter, controlling Himalayan Balsam, making scrapes on the flood plain, reducing pond shading etc etc.

A £60,000 grant from BIFFA funded the removal of old internal fences and the replacement of the perimeter fence. There is an accessible path in conjunction with Inclusive Norwich. Cyclist are allowed, but asked to dismount for pedestrians.

NWT has about 100 British White cattle (black noses and ears). This is a hardy breed ideally suited to rough grazing. Six have been deployed at Sweet Briar Marshes to resume habitat management there. They wear a modern 'cow bell' of Norwegian design. It has a solar panel and electronics. Matt has an app and he can draw virtual fields on the map to control the grazing area. If the cattle approach the 'boundary' the 'bell' beeps and the cattle soon learn to keep within their designated areas. The cattle are also kept an eye on by Matt and volunteers daily.

Sweet Briar Marshes will continue to evolve and provide a valuable access to open spaces for people from the surrounding areas to experience nature.

*Judith Robertson*

### BADCOG EVENING MEETINGS.

**Every 2nd Friday of the month, starting at 7.30pm**

**Strumpshaw Community Hall, Mill Road**

**8th November—A talk about the 'Pathmakers' by Simon Fowler and their work on countryside access.**

**No meeting in December**

## Stock Doves

Earlier this year, I had several conversations with fellow bird-watchers in which the conversation turned to Stock Doves. I have always been rather fond of these birds, and it seems from the conversations that I am not alone. Several of these conversations concerned the fact that, although quite common, Stock Doves are not at all easy to observe well. They are notoriously wary and do not allow a close approach. In the past when I have taken part in bird censuses, I have occasionally had to rely on hearing their call in order to be certain they were present. Fortunately Stock Doves have a distinctive call, which can be heard from quite a distance, and sometimes it can sound almost owl-like. Like other members of the dove family, the call is delivered with neck puffed up and bill closed.



Stock Doves are smaller than their Wood Pigeon relatives, and about the same size as their other British near relative the Rock Dove. Few bird-watchers in Britain have the privilege of being able to see genuine wild Rock Doves, so have to make do with their domesticated descendants, racing pigeons and town Feral pigeons for comparison. The main identification features of Stock Doves are the lack of any white in their plumage, the dark eye, the short black bar on the wing, metallic green neck patches, and the black wing tips. Many field guides mention *two* short black bars on the wings, but I only ever notice one bar.



Stock Doves can be found in mature open woodland, and parkland with large old trees. They can also sometimes be found on coastal cliffs, where they could theoretically overlap with Rock Doves or their Feral pigeon relatives. The preferred nesting site is a cavity in old trees, but I have regularly found them nesting in vacated owl

nest-boxes. They will also nest in old farm buildings and even in Rabbit burrows.

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For many years I have tried in vain to watch and photograph a Stock Dove in the act of calling. The wary nature of these birds makes such an ambition a true test of field-craft, but this spring I managed to photograph one calling. Perhaps the bird felt sorry for me.

*Hans Watson*



## The Ivy Bee (*Colletes hederæ*)

Ivy bees feed mainly on ivy, so they time their emergence to fit in with the flowering period of this common plant in the autumn.

The ivy bee was first recorded in the UK in 2001, and has now been found in much of Southern England and Wales and in the Channel Islands. As suggested by its common name, Ivy is the main plant used by this bee for pollen. It is seen when ivy is in flower, from early September to early November.

Ivy bees nest in loose, light or sandy soil on southern-facing banks and cliffs with ivy nearby for foraging. They are solitary bees, from the family known as plasterer bees, but when conditions are suitable there may be thousands of nests in the same area.



The ivy bee looks similar to a honey bee; it has an orangey-brown, hairy thorax, and distinct black and yellow stripes on its abdomen.

They are found in coastal areas and in towns and gardens.

**Note:** Recently BADCOG attended an event organised by Acle Church called, 'Celebrating nature', where we had our own display/stand to show what we do for the local wildlife. At this event, an ivy bee's nest was pointed out in the graveyard. These small bee's can be easily overlooked so it maybe worth a closer look.