

Main Work Party Reports

July 01 – Blofield Church – NE & NW conservation areas raked and cleared to spoil heaps. 11 members + 5 church members + 2 children.

July 15 – Howes Meadow – Wet conditions. Path network- all the cut vegetation raked into a row in the centre of paths to dry out before being removed at a later date. 7 members

July 29 – Walsham Fen - Area G. Raked and cleared to spoil heaps all of area that was mown. Boardwalks with exception of approx. 50metre section S of hide, raked and cleared to spoil heaps. 9 members

Aug 12 – Howes Meadow – Area C - raked and cleared to fire site and spoil heap. 6 members + 1

Additional Work

June 24 – Jary's Meadow – Entrance gate area and around adjacent fire site mown. Lopped the blackthorn around the entrance area and lit the vegetation at fire site near gate. West Meadow – Bracken area mown.

June 28 – Southwood Church – Scythed round gravestones and young hornbeam. Conservation area mown.

July 03 – Blofield Church – Some strimming carried out

July 04 – Blofield Church – Strimming and scything.

July 06/07/12 – Jary's Meadow – W meadow -clearance of bracken cut on 24 Jun.

July 16 – Howes Meadow – Scythed around wood pile and seat.

Jul 19 – Walsham Fen – Area G mown. Along the top of the boardwalk mown along with a meter strip both sides of the boardwalk also mown and around the large tussock.

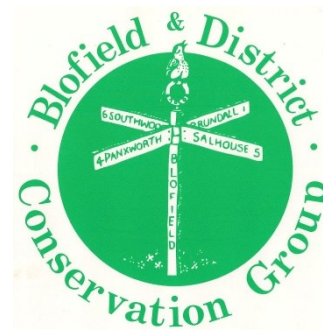
August 03 – Howes Meadow – Area C mown. A row and a ¼ of wet vegetation, raked on 15 Jul fluffed up with pitchfork.

August 05 – Howes Meadow – Path network raked and cleared to fire sites/spoil heaps.

August 16 – Howes Meadow – Vegetation at two fire sites burnt and reduced by 2/3rds.



Photo: Milk parsley in flower at Walsham Fen
29th July 2023



BADCOG NEWS.

No 227: September 2023

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BADCOG 40th Anniversary Celebration.

On the 6th August, Ernest and Coral, invited BADCOG members, supporters, and friends along to their garden to celebrate 40 years since the formation of the group.

The weather was favourable for the event, with just a stiff breeze rather than the heavy rain and strong winds the day before.

Those attending were treated to some lovely homecooked scones and cakes, one of which was decorated especially for the occasion.



L to R: Tony Bowyer, David & Barbara Pilch, John & Elaine Elvin, Coral & Ernest, Frances Milliken and Penny & Denis Carter.

Ernest, BADCOG's long standing Chairman, has been the driving force behind the group for almost all of its 40 years, but also attending was Dr David Pilch, who back in 1983 was the real motivator for the formation of BADCOG. David saw that some of the local wildlife habitats were in decline and decided that action was required. But also in his role as a GP, David understood the benefits of outdoor physical activity and saw the opportunity to combine the two. The first project volunteers undertook was the restoration of Holly Lane Pond, a site where BADCOG still undertakes an annual work party today.

Interestingly, as Ernest explained in his speech, to start with most people mistook the 'C' in BADCOG to represent Conservative. Whether this affected recruitment numbers we will never know. Although membership numbers have always fluctuated, today it is as healthy as ever with keen, likeminded people all helping to improve the local environment and giving wildlife a helping hand. This is something nature desperately needs today and in the future, so lets hope we can keep up the momentum and in 10 years time have another big celebration.

Owl box at Walsham Fen/Jary's Meadow

John Elvin

The Barn owl box, erected on a large oak tree bordering Walsham Fen and Jary's Meadow, was made and donated by a local company arranged by my daughter, Claire. My son David, helped me erect it in September 2017.

Over the next 2 to 3 years, I visited the location regularly during the summer, occasionally seeing a Barn owl in the area and on occasions at the box. I've also often seen Barn owls working the fields around the area.

A few years ago I did have a ladder on site, so I took the opportunity to clean out the box and found some egg fragments inside. Over the past winter and spring, every time I walked past the box, an owl has taken flight from the box.

On the evening of 6th July this year I went to do some work at Jary's Meadow. I walked through the Fen towards the meadow and as I approached the oak tree with the box, I was aware of an owl on the box's platform. I approached slowly and the owl stayed on the platform just looking around. As I was now out in the open I slowly backed away and went to Jary's Meadow via the bridleway/track. Walking through Jary's Meadow there are a couple of places where the box can be seen but the owl had gone, presumably back into the box. I was sure that it was a youngster even though it looked full size. If it had been an adult I think it would have flown away.

The very next day I went to Jary's Meadow again, this time going via the bridleway/track. When I came to the point where I had a good view of the box, a Barn owl came out of the box and flew onto a nearby branch. This was

quickly followed by a second owl and then a third, by which time the first owl flew off to another tree.

Footnote: For a few years now we have been aware of Barn owls using the box, but this sighting by John is clear evidence that they have successfully reared young. This is obviously a good habitat for them with a good supply of rodents at both the meadow and fen. Another little success for BADCOG



The event was advertised by the NWT as, *'Wildlife & wildflowers at Walsham Fen – A chance to find out how local volunteers manage Walsham Fen and Jary's Meadow.'* Later this message was received from Lucy of the NWT – *'Thank you to the whole BADCOG group for all the work you do for wildlife'*

On this positive note we are now up to date, having looked through all 226 newsletters and been reminded of all the projects BADCOG has been involved in, how much our amazing volunteers have achieved in 40 years and how our dedicated members have supported us.

Update on sites.

At the beginning of the year, a number of heritage apple trees were planted in Strumpshaw Stonepit, a site that has been managed by BADCOG since 1984. Bob, the landlord of the Shoulder of Mutton PH, has taken on the role of looking after and caring for these trees and in July of this year, a small work party was held at the site to cut back and clear the head-high bracken that was overshadowing these trees. It will be interesting to see if this additional work will have any effect on the bracken when BADCOG has its annual work party at the site in late October.

With the wet July we experienced this year, we were at one point behind with the management at Howe's Meadow. At the work party on the 15th July it was found that the vegetation that had been cut the week before, was just too wet to move. This meant an additional work party was held on the 5th August to finish the job. Luckily on the day there was a two hour window without rain and six volunteers successfully managed to rake and clear the path network around the site. The following week, with the weather still set fair, a successful work party of keen volunteers managed to rake and clear a large section of the meadow, meaning we are now back on track with our work at Howes Meadow which is a relief.

The work party at Walsham Fen was also a great success. There was a large amount of heavy wet vegetation to remove from a large section of the Fen and alongside the boardwalk. Again, with a good turnout and some hard work from our volunteers, we managed to rake and clear the whole lot. Thank you all!

Eclectic Reflections on musing through past BADCOG newsletters

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

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

March 2019 - The 200th newsletter. The front page of this newsletter featured a reproduction of the front page of the very first newsletter in 1985.

From May 2020 - The lockdown has had a number of consequences for BADCOG activities, both on and off our sites. Work parties have had to be cancelled and visits to Pensthorpe and The Little Ouse headwaters postponed. Our reserves will therefore be especially in need of our volunteers when work can resume, although in many cases this will mean deferring season sensitive work until next year.

From Sept 2020 - Since our usual venues are unavailable for the foreseeable future, we are unable to hold our AGM this September, so we ask members to accept the status quo with the committee for the present.

From Sept 2021 - There have been no evening talks throughout last winter and no outings due to Covid.

From Nov 2021 - BADCOG participated in the 'Great Big Green Week', a week-long national event. Our involvement was two-fold. Firstly, to highlight our conservation work around our parishes, we had a stand/display in Lingwood Village Hall. Our second contribution was a 5-mile themed walk around Lingwood and Strumpshaw. A map was available from the Village Hall which guided people around 11 locations where BADCOG has carried out wildlife conservation management.

From Mar 2023 - Seven BADCOG members helped to plant 140 trees on new public land behind the Wyngates development in Blofield.

From July 2023 - On 7th June, BADCOG hosted the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) with a walk and talk at two of our sites, Walsham Fen and Jary's Meadow.

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Agenda for the 39th Annual General Meeting of BADCOG to be held on Friday 8th Sept at 7.30pm at Strumpshaw Community Hall.

- 1. Apologies for absence.**
- 2. Minutes of the 38th AGM to be read, agreed and confirmed by the Chairman**
- 3. Matters arising**
- 4. To receive and adopt the Chairman's report**
- 5. To receive and adopt the Treasurer's report**
- 6. To elect the following officers to the Committee:**
Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Hon. Treasurer
Hon. Secretary
- 7. To elect members of the Committee**
- 8. Any other business related to this AGM**

**The AGM will be followed by a talk from our President,
Richard Hobbs.**

Annual Orchid Counts.

BADCOG has been compiling a record of orchid numbers at Howes Meadow for almost 30 years now, and at Walsham Fen, we've been counting for over 20 years. As seen from the charts, numbers recorded can vary from one year to the next.

To try and ensure continuity, counts are generally carried out at the same time of the year: the week of the 21st June, using the same counting method. However this year counts were later than normal; one week later for Howes Meadow and almost two weeks later for the Walsham Fen count. This can have a big impact on the numbers recorded, mainly at Walsham Fen.

With the very warm weather we experienced in June, the vegetation was much higher than normal, above head height in places, making it impossible to see some orchids, particularly those that had already 'gone over'. We believe that if the count had been at its normal time, numbers would have been much higher than recorded.

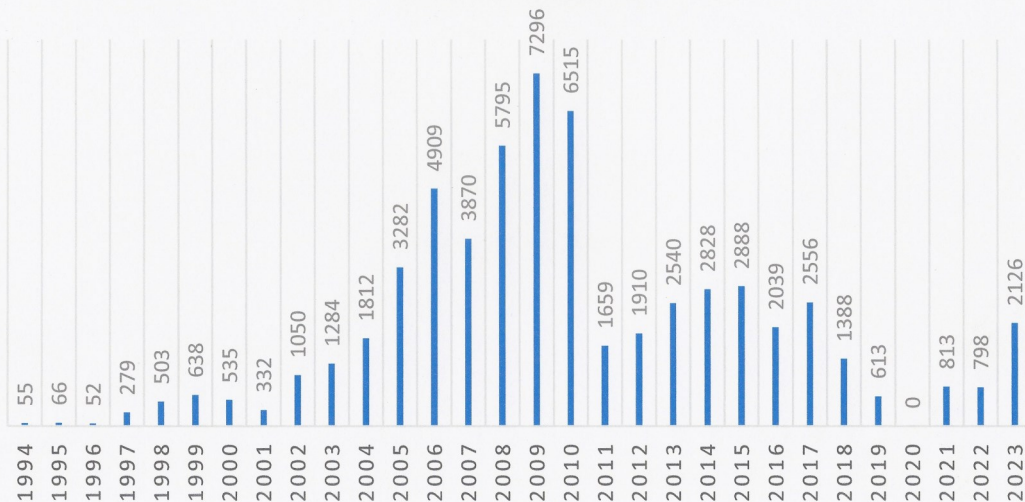
A big thank you to all who helped with the count this year.

Right: A typical count, using a rope as a guide: individuals count all orchids in front of them and to the left or right of them up to the next counter.

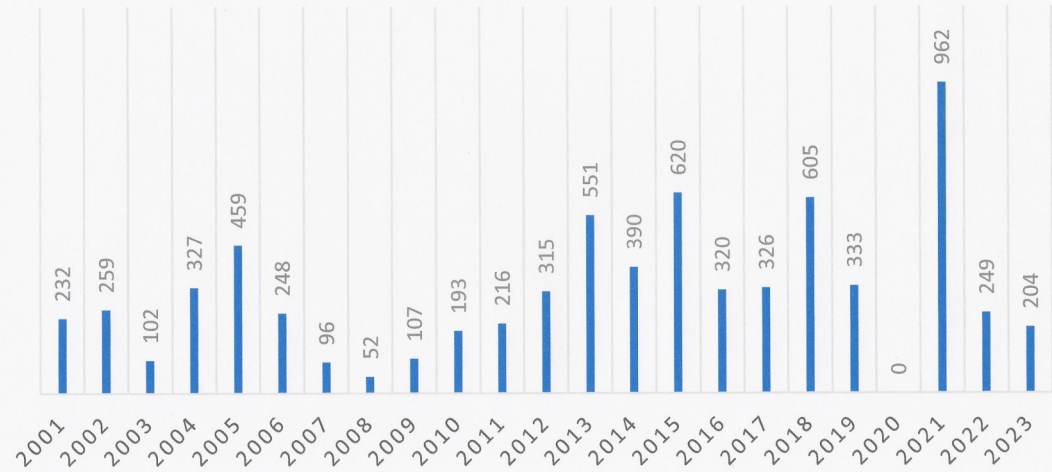
Tony McKie



HOWE'S MEADOW ORCHID COUNTS



WALSHAM FEN ORCHID COUNTS



BADCOG Talks

8th September—Richard Hobbs will give a talk after the AGM

13th October—To be Notified

10th November –North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

12th January—Members evening.

9th February—Garth Copeland—Slugs & Snails.

**All BADCOG Talks take place in the
Strumpshaw Community Hall starting at 7.30pm**

BADCOG WORK PARTY DATES

2nd September—Jary's Meadow

16th September—Buckenham Woods

30th September—Walsham Fen

14th October—Howe's Meadow

28th October—Strumpshaw Stone-pit

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

All welcome!

Please note, the website is currently not being updated and we are working on it. Members will be kept up to date via emails where possible.