

### Main Work Party Reports

**July 06 – Blofield Church** – NE & NW conservation areas raked and cleared to spoil heaps. 9 members + 2

**July 20 – Howes Meadow** – Raked and cleared approx 50% of what was cut at additional work party on 10 Jul. A 20m x 20m area just inside main entry gate. Area C alongside of dyke as far as Area D. Area A – 75% of path by dyke and around both fire sites. 7 members + 1

**Aug 03 - Walsham Fen** – Area G raked and cleared to spoil heaps. 7 members + 1

**Aug 17 – Jary’s Meadow** – East meadow (Grassy Hollow area) from main entry gate to fire site and the path network raked and cleared to fire sites. 8 members + 1.

### Additional Work

**July 05 – Blofield Church** – Strimmed around gravestones.

**July 10 – Howes Meadow** – Area inside main gate- Area C alongside of dyke to Area D - Area A 75% of path by dyke and around both fire sites mown.

**July 15 – Limpenhoe Church** – Conservation area mown.

**July 21 – Howes Meadow** – Continued clearance of cut vegetation from WP Jul 20<sup>th</sup>

**July 22 – Howes Meadow** – Continued with clearance

**July 25 – Howes Meadow** – Clearance completed.

**July 27 – Walsham Fen** – Area G and top of all boardwalks mown.

**July 27 – Jary’s Meadow** – Small area both sides of main entry gate and an area at west end of West meadow mown (Bracken patch).

**July 31 – Jary’s Meadow** – area in west meadow mown on 27 July – raked up approx 75%.

**Aug 01 – Jary’s Meadow** – West meadow – completed clearance of bracken area to spoil heaps.

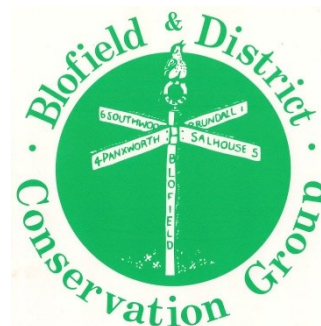
**Aug 08 – Strumpshaw Community Orchard** – Scythed around apple trees – raked and cleared to spoil heaps.

**Aug 12 – Jary’s Meadow** – East meadow, Grassy Hollow, path network and area around all fire sites mown. Blackthorn by inside main entry gate and bramble/nettles by edge of bridleway cut back.

**Aug 14 - Dyes Rd Blofield, Bradeston Farm, Buckenham and Hassingham.** - Roadside trees recently planted scythed around. All done twice this year.

**Aug 16 – Jary’s Meadow** – The 3 fire sites were lit early am after some rain had ended long dry spell. All fires reduced by approx 2/3rds.

**Aug 22 – Moulton St Mary Church** – Front section of churchyard mown. Mower transported by EH.



### BADCOG NEWS.

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### CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2024

It's been a busy time the past couple of months for our BADCOG volunteers. Not only have we completed the cutting and clearance of Blofield Churchyard, but we have also made a start on the annual mowing and clearance of our three largest sites: Howe's Meadow, Walsham Fen and Jary's Meadow.

With regards to Blofield Churchyard, BADCOG is very grateful for the help of the Yarmouth 'Green Gym', who once again raked and clear of the southern half of the Churchyard on the 9th July. As always, the team did an excellent job. We are also very pleased with the help we received from the Bure Valley Conservation Group (BVCG), who raked and cleared Southwood Church on the 3rd July. Here BADCOG mowed the whole site a week before they arrived, allowing time for vegetation to dry out. It's also very good to see the 'Friends of Limpenhoe Church' being proactive in the management of this interesting churchyard, by helping with the mowing of the conservation area. This was followed up by the 'Friends' raking off the area at a later date. Within the next few months it's planned to do a second cut here for the 'Friends' to clear, all of whom are very keen to enhance the whole churchyard. Interestingly, whilst mowing, we discovered a pyramidal orchid, which is a new record for the site.

Over the past couple of months, we have also been able to complete a work party at each of our larger sites; Howe's Meadow, Walsham Fen and Jary's Meadow. The work party at Howe's Meadow was on a very hot day, and all of us were struggling with the heat, so consequently we didn't finish the job. However, a big thank you goes out to David Fowler and John, who went back periodically over the next week or so, to finish off the job. With good turnouts at both Walsham Fen and Jary's Meadow, and the weather in our favour, we have also managed to complete both work parties at these sites, so a big thank you to all for your support and help. It was also good to see a good turnout by BADCOG members at the Strumpshaw Community Orchard work party. It's going to be interesting to see how this work effects this site, a site BADCOG has been managing since 1984. As you can see from page 7 of this Newsletter, we do have a busy work party program coming up, with some on 3 consecutive weeks. This is to try and get on top of some of our sites that require a bit more work and attention. However, as we all know Strumpshaw Stone-pit and Snowdrop Acre are relatively easy work parties, so these are in-between the more difficult ones. Let's hope the weather is kind to us this Autumn so we can continue with our good work.

Note: Inside this issue of the Newsletter, you should find a copy of the Agenda for the AGM on Friday 13th September.

## Edible Aliens Hans Watson

Almost every week there seems to be a news item regarding invasive alien species. The vast majority of these reports involve either dramatic, highly visible, or gaudy species, such as Asian Hornets, Muntjac, American Mink, Signal Crayfish or Himalayan Balsam. Quite often these reports include exaggerated claims that can mislead the public, and even create fear. There is however, no doubt that these non-native species can pose significant problems for our native species, and in some instances can even cause extinctions. Sadly the list of non-native species being recorded in Britain grows larger every year, and includes some that have been here and prospering almost unnoticed for well over two hundred years. The reason that they have not had much publicity, is that they may not have caused any problems yet, or otherwise drawn attention to themselves.



Few-flowered Leek

Two species of alien plant came to my attention on walks last spring, and both were closely related plants in the Allium family. These were the Few-flowered Leek (*Allium paradoxum*), and the Three-cornered Leek (*Allium triquetrum*), both of which flower in April and May, and can form large patches. A few years ago, I visited a wood in Essex which had a ground cover consisting of nothing but Few-

flowered Leek. Three-cornered Leek appears to not be quite so prolific in this respect, but this may be because it comes from the Western parts of the Mediterranean and our occasional cold winters and frosts may check its progress. As with many other alien invasive plants, their presence in the countryside is often the result of the failure of people to be aware of, and observe the strict laws relating to disposal of these species.

Both of these plants have been cultivated in gardens for many years for culinary purposes, and both are used as flavouring in stews, and for salads. There are quite a few recipes available on the internet, and I can recommend their use in salads and sandwiches. Also, both of these plants possess antibacterial and antifungal properties.



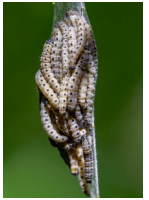
Three-cornered Leek

## Spindle Ermine Moths



Stunning photographs were captured by Butterfly Transect volunteer Jonathan Houseago on a survey at Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Black Bourn Valley nature reserve. His photos show spindle ermine moths (*Yponomeuta cagnagella*) in large numbers suspended from spindle trees.

The large amount of individuals present provides them a 'safety in numbers' and results in a ghostly-looking tree. There are three species of ermine moths that create thick webs in shrubs and trees, making it look as if Halloween has



come early. These webs can appear between May and June, disappearing later in the summer. Adult ermine moths are very similar in appearance being white or grey-ish with black dots.

Whilst the defoliated spindle trees may look like they're on their last legs, the damage to the tree is minimal and leaves will return once the caterpillars pupate.



## BADCOG WORK PARTY DATES

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

All welcome

- 14th September—Howe's Meadow
- 21st September—Strumpshaw Stone-pit
- 28th September—Walsham Fen
- 12th October—Howe's Meadow
- 26th September—Buckenham Woods
- 2nd November—Jary's Meadow
- 9th November - Snowdrop Acre
- 23rd November—Howe's Meadow
- 7th December—Walsham Fen

**Check website for any changes!**

So understanding the causes of the above problems and with a more enlightened view of the importance of our environment some improvement has been achieved and perhaps we may aspire to that of some hundred years ago.

Where the wash of Hickling waters  
Lap the sides of grassy bank,  
Where Phragmites tall and slender  
Grows with marsh grass thick and lank.

When you stand upon the look-out  
And t'wards Catfield Dyke you gaze,  
Such a herd of swans you see there  
All amidst the morning haze.

*By Stuart Boardman*

David Pilch

#### **BADCOG EVENING MEETINGS.**

**Every 2nd Friday of the month, starting at 7.30pm  
Strumpshaw Community Hall, Mill Road**

13th September—AGM followed by members evening.

11th October—A talk about Sweet Briar nature reserve from the NWT.

8th November—TBN

No meeting in December

#### **CELEBRATING NATURE EXHIBITION**

**Sunday 8th September**

Acle Church Hall

Creationtide Church Service at 10am followed by the exhibition at

11am until 1pm in the Church Hall. Refreshment available

BADCOG will be attending with the BADCOG Stand/display.

#### **2024 BADCOG AGM**

**Friday 13th September 2024 at 7.30pm. All Welcome!**

**Strumpshaw Community Hall**

**Mill Road, Strumpshaw**

The AGM will be followed by a members evening, where members can share their stories, give a brief talk, or just share some photos of the natural world they have experienced over the past 12 months.

#### **Persistent Elms**

Elm trees were once stalwarts of the UK countryside that towered out of hedgerows, lined fields and woodlands. Glance at the landscape paintings of John Constable for a vague idea of what has been lost. Elm timber made ships, chairs and even water pipes until the 19th century. These trees, and the world they held up, came crashing down when Dutch elm disease caused what is arguably the worst change to the UK's countryside in living memory. The fungal disease carried by the elm bark beetle arrived on UK shores early in the 20th century and killed some elms but left the majority standing. Elm trees were not out of the woods though – a more virulent strain arrived in the 1960s and destroyed most of the UK's 30 million elms. Since the near total loss of elm save for a handful of trees that avoided the disease, generations have grown up without seeing a mature elm in the landscape. This has entrenched the public perception of elm as a lost species.

While I grew up in the countryside surrounded by trees I had always believed that the elms were gone. It was another fungal infection, ash dieback, responsible for wiping out the majority of Europe's ash trees, that sparked my interest in tree disease. As I began a PhD researching how society responds to the loss of a tree species I started thinking about elms more. All of a sudden, I was noticing elms hiding in hedgerows.

It is the characteristic asymmetry of elm leaves, one side joining the stem further down than the other side, that gives this species away. It turns out that millions of elms still exist across the UK, particularly in southern England, as small hedgerow shrubs. In fact, these stunted relics are, according to one government plant pathologist, more numerous than the pre-epidemic elm population.

Elms have persisted by producing suckers: new stems that the trees send out from their roots. The tree may succumb to disease and die but new stems appear and take its place. These suckers allow the tree to regenerate until they are caught by the disease again, allowing elm to exist today in a cycle of life and death or what a former ecologist described to me as a perpetual adolescence.

*By James Weldon*





## A Perspective of Hickling Broad

### Then and Now

When I first started sailing on Hickling some 45 years ago its ecology was in a parlous state. At the time I got to know the warden Stuart Linsell who gave a good account of this in his book "Hickling Broad and its Wildlife" published in 1990. In it he identifies the symptoms and analyses the causes of this decline.

Over-enrichment of the water by nitrates and phosphates had led to eutrophication and the preponderance of algae producing a pea soup appearance to the water with little light penetration and blanketing any aquatic plants. The nitrates came from agricultural fertiliser run off while the phosphates had two origins; firstly from inadequate sewerage treatment and secondly from the guano produced by the black headed gull roost on the broad, estimated at 250,000. These birds spent the day scavenging in the refuse tip at Martham. When the tip closed numbers fell to 10% of this.

Enrichment of the water also led to disappearance of marginal reed swamp. This decline was also hastened by the "ever increasing hordes of Canada and greylag geese", the past grazing of coypu and by boat wash. The consequence was that storms would cause the detachment of large areas of floating vegetation or "hovers" and the loss of small islands.

In his book Stuart said "The reader might think that after reading such a catalogue of catastrophes that there cannot be more gloomy tales to tell" Not so, he related further natural and man made disasters.

Two natural poisons had killed birds and fish:

Firstly in 1969 the alga *Prymnesium parvum* appeared in the waters of Hickling and Horsey. It liberates toxins into the water reducing the oxygen content leading to numerous disastrous fish kills, none worse than that first one in 1969. The condition favouring *Prymnesium* was the increase in salinity of the water. This resulted from another ill judged intervention by man.

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In an attempt to counter the problem that plant growth was causing for boating in Horsey Mere it was decided to dredge it thus destroying the aquatic flora and as local marshmen had correctly predicted "the crust was broken and in came the sea water".

Secondly the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum* which exists in the silt of most broads proliferates in warm weather and the super-summer of 1976 saw botulism at its worse with thousands of waterfowl, gulls and waders dying.

"And yet another gloomy story! Sailing across Hickling Broad any year in the 1960s or earlier one would see four hundred mute swans, a superb sight as the slowly progressed through water lilies, marestail, water milfoil and other aquatic plants in crystal clear water." Since 1970, however, Stuart noted the swans had virtually gone. In most years no more than three or four pairs nested and only one in 1985. Most of the plants had gone and with them the swans' food. Sadly some of those staying would exhibit the effect of lead poisoning from anglers' weights.

What is the state of Hickling Broad's ecology now? Sailing across it on the first of August this year the water was clear with a lot of millfoil growing, such that the weed cutting boat was clearing the main channel. There was a significant breeze and the water quite rough but there were perhaps two hundred swans around the margin of the broad in various locations.

there are normally more than this but the rough water may have hindered feeding and some may have gone elsewhere.

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