

Main Work Party Reports

Jan 03 – Lingwood Pond – Cancelled due to weather conditions.

Jan 17 – Jary's Meadow - West Meadow – raked and cleared to fire site- Cut back and cleared some willow and blackthorn in areas of meadow. The old gate linking the meadow with Walsham fen was removed and new gate installed. A 15-metre barbed wire fence was erected from the gate to the oak tree, the N boundary of site. Members 9 + 1.

Jan 31 – Howes Meadow – Area C – Pollarded the remaining tree not included on 29 Dec 25, Cut sections of reed alongside of stream

leaving some cover for wildlife. E boundary hedge trimmed and drainage from road improved. Cuttings from roadside hedge and all other cut vegetation raked and cleared to fire site/spoil heaps. Members 8 + 1

Feb 14 – Walsham Fen – An area of reed was cut alongside of ditch between Areas G and K/F to improve water flow, cut vegetation raked and cleared to spoil heaps. To improve access in muddy area by gate, branches cut to approx. 1 metre in length were laid. The Owl box was reinstated back onto the oak tree (Picture right). Members 9 + 1



Feb 28—Buckenham Wood—An area of sycamore was cut about 20m inside the wood from the gate on Wood Lane. All cut sycamore were treated to prevent regrowth. Three barriers were constructed to prevent further paths developing in area reserved for wildlife. Some paths were lined with cut branches to keep walkers to the recognised paths. Members—7.

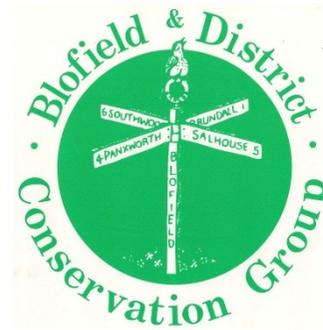
Additional Work

Dec 29 – Howes Meadow – Start pollarding trees by stream. Area C - Middle willow completed. Small-leaved lime – branches up the trunk and others hanging down removed. Task not completed. Area A - Low willow by stream – trimmed. Some clearance of cut branches to fire site carried out.

Dec 30 – Howes Meadow – clearance of branches and vegetation completed.

Jan 13 - 2026– Jary's Meadow – NW section of meadow plus a small area at base of large oak tree that has Owl box – mown.

Jan 24 – Lingwood Pond – Maintenance carried out following the cancellation of detailed WP of Jan 03. S and E sides of site trimmed back hedges. N boundary a number of willows were coppiced. A general tidy up of the whole site was carried out and all cut vegetation raked and cleared and then removed to village allotment site. The PC sign and Notice board was cleaned. Members 8.



Chairmans Update—March 2026.

We are pleased to announce the installation of a new gate connecting Jary's Meadow to Walsham Fen, replacing the former smaller gate and enhancing access for the BADCOG mower from the meadow. The gate is secured with a combination lock set to **1984**, commemorating BADCOG's founding year. Additionally, we have restored the fence between the meadow and fen to help prevent access from the Fen onto the privately owned Meadow. Funding for this gate was provided by NWT, which offers financial support to organisations managing County Wildlife Sites such as Walsham Fen and Howe's Meadow. For approximately five years, an owl box has been positioned on a tree near the boundary between Walsham Fen and Jary's Meadow. Last autumn, inclement weather displaced the box; however, following repairs and thorough cleaning, it has now been reinstated. We remain optimistic that Barn owls will return to nest in this location, as the box has proven popular in recent years. We extend special thanks to John Elvin and his son for their assistance with this task (refer to the image on the back page of the Newsletter).

Recent visitors to Buckenham Wood will have observed ongoing maintenance activities, particularly within the Buckenham Ancient Woodland Trust (BAWT) section, a part of the woodland not previously managed by BADCOG. In pursuit of a more integrated management approach, BADCOG may increase its involvement with BAWT in the future. At present, we continue to manage the Strumpshaw PC (SPC) section, as we have since 2005. A new management plan for the SPC area is currently being developed, which will provide greater clarity for upcoming BADCOG work parties.

The Lingwood Pond work party, initially planned for January 3rd, was postponed due to bad weather and instead occurred on January 24th. Time limitations meant that five birdboxes, supplied by Lingwood & Burlingham Parish Council and made by Brundall Men's Shed, couldn't be installed during the event but were put up a few days afterwards. Continues over page.....

BADCOG NEWS.

No 242: March 2026

President: Richard Hobbs

Chair: Tony McKie, Teal Barn,

Vicarage Road, Lingwood,

NR13 4TT

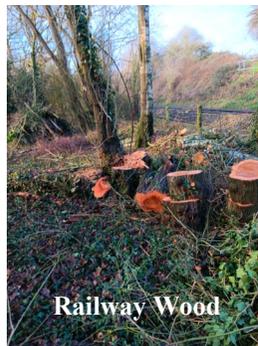
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In January, I received emails from two people asking permission to visit Snowdrop Acre after learning about the site in a publication. Because rare snowdrop species grow there, the location remains intentionally discreet; however, information about access is listed on our website and states 'access by prior arrangement or during BADCOG work parties.' After consulting with BDC, the site owners, both groups were permitted to visit and later shared how fascinating they found the wood. Positive feedback about our conservation work is always valued. Since their visits, BDC has carried out tree maintenance on site, addressing potential risks of falling trees near the railway track.

Also in January, Ernest was contacted by a Network Rail (NR) maintenance team at Railway Wood about concerns over trees leaning toward the track. NR assured Ernest they would handle the issue at no cost to BADCOG. At the December Railway Wood work party, possible hazards had already been reviewed, and none were found. The NR team's completed maintenance is advantageous, as arranging such work independently would have incurred significant costs for BADCOG.



Visit to Cantley sugar Beet Factory by Wherry Maud Trust Members 23.1.26

Cantley is one of four sugar beet processing plants operated by British Sugar, part of ABF (Associated British Foods), the other three being Bury St. Edmunds, Wissington and Newark. Cantley is the oldest, dating back to 1912. Original beet would have been carried to the factory by rail from rural stations or by wherry, hence the relevance of this visit by the Wherry maud trust.

The factory processes around 1 million tonnes of sugar beet between October and March each winter, all grown in this part of Norfolk, with the average distance travelled being around 28 miles. It produces 100,000 tons of sugar, serves 600 growers and employs 98 people of which only 9 are needed to monitor the automated process overnight. Millions of pounds have been invested to upgrade the plant to be more environmentally friendly, including reducing emissions and ensuring that the waste water released to the river is of a high quality. A gas turbine powers the factory. Continues next page

Lingwood Weather, second half of 2025

Ernest Hoyos

My last weather report for this area was for the first seven months of 2025 until the end of July. It had been dry with below average rainfall for the first six and a half months, then the second half of July turned wet, and we ended the month with 63mm of rain, 119% and the first wetter than average month since September 2024.

As for temperatures, January was the only colder than average month and in fact the year ended so.

As soon as August arrived and we thought the weather would be back to normal it turned dry again with no heavy summer showers or thunderstorms until the very end of the month when on the 29th 11 of the total 18mm fell. It was also the warmest August since 2022.

So, by the end of the eighth month, we'd only had 230mm of rain or 58%. In the same period in 1976 we'd had even less, 216mm.

September turned out marginally wetter than average as did October, both with 107% of expected rainfall.

Finally, November '25 really bucked the trend with 109mm rainfall, 4.3 inches, it wasn't to continue though, December was our driest since 2016 with 36mm, 56%. the years total was 503mm, 19.8 inches 78%, and the driest since 2011. That year was by far the driest on my records with a total of only 422mm or 16.5 inches due to a very dry Spring and also an unusually dry Autumn. The following year, 2012 made up for it with 766mm, over 30 inches.

As a matter of interest, the Wildlife Trust facilitated the excavating of up to two centuries worth of silt from the Marl pit in the field near us in August as part of their 'Ponds Project'. The pond was completely dry, which has only happened on a few occasions since we've been here. When the work was completed, we were left with a 3 to 4m deep pit right down to a grey clay base. To date as I write, the pit is ¾ full and I estimate, anything up to 3m deep water.

As I've reported before, I've measured the depth to the water level in our well, which we don't use. The highest I've measured was 2m from the top in Jan. 2024, this after the wet 2023 when we had 780mm, 30.7inches of rain. By August last year the depth was 6.25m down from the top. Now, mid February it's come up to 3.5m or 11 feet.

BADCOG WORK PARTY DATES.

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

14th March—Holly Lane Pond

18th March—Note: BVCG at Walsham Fen

28th March—Buckenham Woods

11th April—Howe's Meadow

25th April—Walsham fen

[Check website for more details and for any changes/ cancellations.](#)

Buttle Marsh

Harry Mach from the Broads Authority gave a very interesting talk to our Friday evening meeting on 9th January. He is the Sustainability Manager at the Broads Authority, which covers a multitude of areas, but his talk that evening was regarding the carbon footprint of the Broads. A 1980s soil sample survey showed that peat in the Broads area is shrinking, and carbon dioxide is being released. This is continuing to this day.

DEFRA has tasked the Broads Authority with becoming carbon net zero by 2050 and to restore peat lands in the area. A grant of 2 million has been awarded for restoration of an area called Buttle Marsh. It is on the inside of a bend in the River Ant south of How Hill. It is an experimental area to assess the feasibility of peat restoration in the Broads in general.

Old maps of area show Buttle Marsh as marsh land with ditches, which are still evident now. However, the area has been a grazing marsh since the 1940s. In 2003 the Bittern Project was launched. Scrapes and new banks were constructed, but bitterns were not attracted to nest there as the area was still too dry.

The current plan for Buttle Marsh is to dam the site and pump water into it with a wind pump. Not as simple as it may seem. The Environment Agency describes the pumping of water as water extraction and this is not allowed between 31st March and 1st November, when the site is at its driest and requires the most water. The building of a reservoir was considered, to be filled in the winter months. However, this has been rejected. Re-siting a wind pump to the north of the site is hoped to allow the most advantageous collection of water. Any work to be done on the site has to consider the law on wildlife. Water voles, which are having something of a resurgence in population, have to be moved. DNA testing of the water has shown that eels are present on the site too. An eel screen has had to be designed to fit on the water pump, to exclude these.

Work should start on Buttle Marsh when all the planning applications have been agreed. This will be the start of the peat restoration in the Broads.

Judith Robertson

BADCOG Evening Talks 2026

13th March—Local wildlife photographer—Steve Reeve

All talks take place on the 2nd Friday of the month starting at 7.30pm

Venue: Strumpshaw Community Hall. NR13 4FS

This is the last talk of the season, so thank you John for organising a wide range of interesting talks this winter.

We are now urgently looking for someone to take over John's role, so if you are interested, please let me know.

Whilst much of the sugar leaves the site during the main processing period, there are also large silos for storage which allow the bagging and distribution to continue through the summer months.

We were given an introductory talk with an overview of the company, its operations, and the role of Cantley. We then donned our PPE and headed out across the site which is constrained by its location next to the river Yare, and by having a railway line running through the middle of it. First we saw the arrival bays for the lorries bringing the beet in from the farms. Each one is logged as to the source farm and tonnage, and some are then selected for random sampling to monitor the quality – both the sugar content of the beet, and the ratio of impurities (soil, stones etc.), after which they are tipped out and a digger pushes the beet in to mounds to await processing.



The processing starts with the beet being washed, including a power-wash in a large drum, before dropping on to a conveyor belt which carries the beet across the railway line in to the main factory. We walked across an enclosed bridge alongside this conveyor.



Once in the factory the beet is shredded to maximise surface area for the extraction of the sugars from it, before being added to hot water. We were taken through the various processing areas (some very warm!), shown samples of the sugary liquid at each stage, and also shown the computerised control

room from where the entire process is monitored.

One unexpected element is the use of limestone – the lime is added to the sugary liquid as part of the purification process and then separated off again and turned in to LimeX which is used as an acidity regulator by farmers.

Cantley produces white, refined sugar (the final crystallisation process is done in a vacuum so that it boils at 70deg C, avoiding discoloration) which is despatched in bulk, either bags or tankers, to commercial clients. The plant at Bury St. Edmunds produces the Silver Spoon range for retail.

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Throughout the process waste (by product, and heat/water) are re-used wherever possible, the dried fibrous material from the beet being used at the Bury St Edmunds factory as a biofuel. At other factories it is turned in to cattle feed. Soil from the washings is dried and sold as topsoil and the stones also separated washed and sold

.Our thanks to ABF British Sugar for hosting this tour and providing such a detailed insight into their operation. Also to the WMT Trustees for arranging the visit.

This is an edited version of an account by Ian Bloomfield of the visit and whose kind permission has been given for this article.

For those who would like more information about Maud and the opportunity to support and sail in this unique clinker built wherry visit The Wherry Maud Trust website: www.wherrymaudtrust.org



Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

Statistics: **Length:** 6-9cm - **Tail:** 5.7-6.8cm - **Weight:** 15-40g - **Average lifespan:** 5 years
Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Listed as a European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive.

Habitats: Farmland and Woodland

About: Dormice are not mice (Muridae) but nocturnal rodents belonging to the Gliridae family of which there are 9 genera and 28 species distributed over Africa Asia and Europe. The British species is the Hazel Dormouse. They are rarely seen owing to the fact they spend most of the day asleep! At night they come alive, climbing high into the trees on the hunt for a tasty snack. Their favourite foods are hazelnuts, berries and insects. Dormice build nests out of grass and leaves ready for the female to give birth to up to seven young. In autumn, dormice start looking for the perfect spot to hibernate for winter. They often choose to sleep in logs or leaves at the base of trees or just beneath the ground where they can avoid the winter cold.

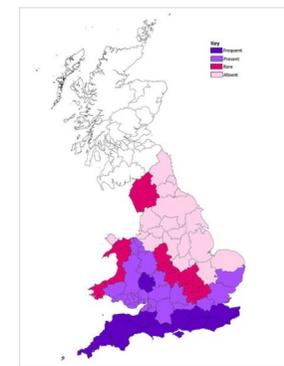
How to identify: The hazel dormouse has gingery-brown fur, large black eyes and a long, fluffy tail; it is much smaller than a squirrel.

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Distribution: Mainly found in southern England and Wales.

Hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) are currently not recorded as having established wild populations in Norfolk. While they are present in neighbouring Suffolk, they are generally confined to areas further south and west in Britain. They are a protected, endangered species requiring connected, high-quality deciduous woodland and thick hedgerows to thrive. Dormice are thriving in Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserves, including Bradfield Woods and Arger Fen.

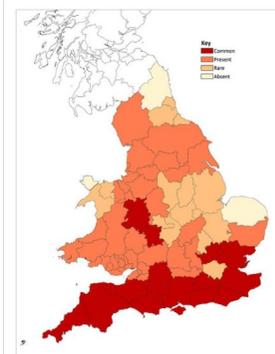


Current dormouse distribution in the UK
people's trust for
endangered
species

To ensure a sustainable population and re-colonisation of nearby woods and hedges it is essential that we restore and strengthen links between such woodland SSSIs.

In order to help dormice in Suffolk the Wildlife Trust emphasises it is important to know where they are. By recording any sightings or evidence of these legally protected mammals, from nests to nutshells, you can help keep Suffolk a dormouse stronghold.

Did you know? Hazel dormice, like many of our other small animals, hibernate through the winter months in order to survive. If food is scarce outside of hibernation season, they can save energy by dropping their body temperature and going into a state of 'torpor'. In fact, dormice can spend nearly three-quarters of the year 'asleep' in some form! Historically a survey showed that dormice were recorded throughout England and Wales in various numbers being absent only in Norfolk, Northumberland and Anglesey. In 2018 they were recorded as being absent in all counties north of a line from Suffolk to North Wales except for rare records in Cumbria.



Victorian dormouse distribution in the UK
people's trust for
endangered
species

Bird box maker extraordinaire'

A remarkable short film about a man who has made over 200 equally remarkable bird boxes can be found on this YouTube link

<https://youtu.be/FBVoGiiPec8?si=9RAFduh76j5d7m82>