Main BADCOG Work Party Report

Sept 05 – Jary's Meadow and Walsham Fen – Two fire sites at Jary's Meadow burnt. At Walsham fen area G and boardwalk raked and cleared to spoil heaps. Members 5 + 1

Sept 19 – Howes Meadow - Area D finally mown after mower breakdown at AWP on Sep 15. All cut vegetation raked and cleared to fire sites/spoil heaps. Areas A and B paths mown and approx. 40% raked and cleared. NW fire site lit and left to burn. Members 9 + 1.

Oct 03 – Walsham Fen – Areas D/E raked into rows, with less than 10% cleared to spoil heaps. Members 3.

Oct 17 – Buckenham Woods – Area in and around steps raked and cleared to fire site. Cleared an area within the bluebell area of bramble and other vegetation. A number of sycamore saplings on edge of glade were pulled out. Members 7.

Additional Work

Sept 01 – Walsham Fen – Area G and top and sides of boardwalk mown.

Sept 15 – Howes Meadow – Area D approx. 20% mown before mower breakdown.

Sept 21 – Howes Meadow – NW fire site re-stacked, other small piles left over from main WP moved to fire site.

Sept 29 – Walsham Fen – Areas D/E and a 3metre strip alongside the boardwalk within Area C mown. Areas C/D/E edge of boardwalk within area and the edge of stream cut with brush cutter.

Sept 30 – Howes Meadow – NW fire site re- stacked on 21 Sept, relit and left to burn.

Oct 09 – Walsham Fen – Area D west side continued with raking and clearance following WP on 03 Oct.

Oct 12 – Walsham Fen – The remainder of areas D/E and a 3metre strip alongside boardwalk within Area C, raked and cleared to spoil heaps. Encroaching bramble alongside bridleway cut back to aid vehicle access to Jary's Meadow.

Oct 13/14 – Lingwood Pond – Small sallow in western section of pond coppiced and a small section of reed cut. All vegetation removed to allotment green waste site.

Oct 19 – Howe's Meadow – Eastern fire site burnt.

BADCOG Friday evening talks

We are currently seeking a speaker for Friday 13th November.
Please keep an eye out on our website
No Meeting in December
Talks are held in the Strumpshaw Community Hall starting at 7.30pm

BADCOG NEWS.

No 246: November 2026

President: Richard Hobbs
Chair: Tony McKie, Teal Barn, Vicarage Road, Lingwood, NR13 4TT
www.badcog.co.uk
Contact details on website

BADCOG Chairmans annual report for the AGM
Friday 11th September 2026

Since our last AGM, BADCOG volunteers have once again had a productive and successful year. There have been 25 main work parties this past 12 months, with a further 69 occasions when additional work was carried out. This includes mowing sites in preparation for main work parties and returning to complete unfinished tasks. Work parties depend entirely on volunteers, and average attendance over the past 12 months was 8 volunteers per work party, which is similar to the last year, but still down on the 2024 numbers which was 10. A huge thank you goes out to all our volunteers for their hard work this past year.

The number of sites we manage remains unchanged at 13, comprising of:

Two ponds, Holly Lane & Lingwood Village Pond.
Three woodlands, Snowdrop Acre, Buckenham & Railway Woods.
Five churchyards, Blofield, Hemblington, Lingwood, Southwood & Limpenhoe.
Two meadows, Howe's & Jary's Meadows.
And finally, Walsham Fen.

At both Southwood and Limpenhoe churchyards, BADCOG carries out the mowing with the BCS mower, while the Bure Valley Conservation Group or church members rake and clear the sites. At Blofield Churchyard, we also receive valuable help from Great Yarmouth Green Gym who undertake the raking and clearing of the southern half of the churchyard. Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year.

We also help mow part of Cremer's Meadow, for which we receive a donation that is greatly appreciated.

This summer, NWT surveyed two of our sites: Howe's Meadow and Jary's Meadow. Howe's Meadow was assessed to confirm that it still meets the County Wildlife Site criteria, while Jary's Meadow was surveyed for possible inclusion in the wider County Wildlife Site that includes Walsham Fen. I hope to receive the report during the winter.

In spring, Sam Brown from NWT visited Walsham Fen to review our site management following the decline in orchid numbers in 2025. After the review, Sam concluded that our management is sound and that the cause of the decline is unclear. Orchid numbers at Walsham Fen remain low, while those at Howe's Meadow remain healthy. Thank you to everyone who helped with our annual counts this summer.

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In January, the small gate between Jary's Meadow and Walsham Fen was replaced, and a stronger fence was installed along the boundary between the two sites. The work was organised by David Pilch, with most of the funding provided by NWT. Thank you to David and NWT.

Also in January, the barn owl box at Walsham Fen was cleared out, refurbished and replaced. Our thanks go to John Elvin and his son for doing most of the heavy lifting on this project.

We have also installed several bird boxes this year around Lingwood Pond and in Buckenham Wood. Those around the pond were supplied by Lingwood PC and built by Brundall Men's Shed, while those in the wood were provided by Strumpshaw PC and built by a Lingwood resident. Thank you to everyone involved.

At Buckenham Wood, many visitors will have noticed the ongoing management work, especially in the middle section. A wider management plan for the whole wood is still being developed, particularly for the Strumpshaw PC section. As BADCOG has helped manage this part of the wood since 2005, I have been asked to contribute to the plan, which we hope will be completed soon. This will be a long-term plan, so visitors should not expect major changes overnight.

At Snowdrop Acre, a local tree surgeon milled a fallen elm tree into planks on site. It was fascinating to see the process take place where the tree had fallen. We hope some of the planks will be used to make a bench for a BADCOG site of our choosing. The bench will be built by Brundall Men's Shed and funded by BDC.

In November we had reports of a fallen tree blocking the public footpath through Railway Wood. BADCOG volunteers were quickly on site, and the tree was removed allowing safe access through the wood again.

In addition to our members' evening, we welcomed four guest speakers to last year's winter talks, all of which were very interesting. Thank you to John for organising them. The Talks Co-ordinator role is now vacant should anyone wish to take it on.

In December Ernest took a group around his part of Buckenham Wood which was a very enjoyable and educational morning and in May, we visited Grange Farm, Lessingham. It was an interesting opportunity to see how the farm has moved away from livestock and arable farming to become a wildlife-friendly farm and visitor attraction.

The BADCOG stand/display had three outings last year: two Annual Parish Council meetings, at Strumpshaw and Lingwood, and the Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards and Fair at the Forum, Norwich, where it attracted a great deal of interest.

The only negative issue to report this year is our collective decision to close public access to Walsham Fen. This is due to the poor condition of the boardwalk, which is hazardous in places. The entire 380-metre boardwalk now needs to be replaced, with the old structure removed and disposed of properly. This is well beyond BADCOG's resources. Norfolk County Council and other agencies are aware of the problem, but the landowners, Norfolk County Council, have shown little interest in resolving the problem. However, BADCOG will continue to manage the fen for its wildlife value and keep open areas where we can access the site safely.

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Broadland Community Award 2026 & Norfolk Churches Trust Churchyard Conservation Award



I'm extremally pleased to announce that BADCOG were the winners of the 'Broadland Community Awards 2026' in the 'Environmental Champion' category. Although we don't do what we do to get awards, it's very nice to get the recognition for all the hard work put in by our volunteers and our supporters. When formed back in 1984, the groups aims where; '*to promote interest in the natural history and conservation of places of wildlife interest within the area*'. That is still the case today. In addition to a certificate and a nice trophy, we also received a sum of £250 to donate to a charity or community group of our choosing.


Hemblington Church.
Sue Rowe with the award

Also in October, Hemblington Church were the winners of the Norfolk Churches Trust (NCT), 'Churchyard Conservation Award', with Blofield Church being one of three runners up. NCT received 33 applicants, so it was very rewarding to see that two church's that BADCOG help manage made the final four. This is a good indication that our practical management practises are sound, but it goes without saying that NWT do help keep us pointing in the right direction. Very well done to both churches.

Tony McKie


Blofield Church.
Daivd Pilch with certificate

BADCOG Work Party Dates.

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

Check website for more details and for any changes/cancellations.

14th November—Howe's Meadow

28th November—Snowdrop Acre

12th December—Jary's Meadow

19th December—Railway Wood

2nd January 2027 - Lingwood Village pond

Spruce; Grown more recently in plantations for timber and wood pulp in paper making this tree was introduced around 1600 from Northern Europe.
Poplars; The most common are white poplar, black poplar and aspen poplar. They are all introduced species but there are poplar species which are primeval.
Maples; the field maple is a native tree unlike the prolific sycamore. This produces such numerous offspring from its winged seeds that if it had been present before organised farming practices uprooted them there would be forests of sycamore. Thus it is surmised that it could not have been in England much before the fifteenth century.
Birches; the silver birch is a native and primary coloniser of clear ground. Its relative the downy birch favours wetter ground.
Cypress trees; are introductions, the Italian cypress in about 1600, he Monterey cypress in 1840. However, the commonest cypress to be seen is the Leyland cypress. This fast growing and hence popular screening tree is a hybrid between Monterey and Nootka cypress.
The Larch; is a deciduous conifer tree introduced for its excellent timber. The first specimens were brought from The Alps and planted at Dunkeld in 1738. D Pilch

Knettishall Heath

Knettishall Heath near Thetford was acquired 14 years ago by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. This 434 acre site has many interconnected habitats varying from river valley and wet woodlands to grassland, heathland and wood land. Ice Age deposits of chalk and acidic sands from retreating ice flows create the characteristic Breckland soils and plant life. Bronze age burial mounds and worked flints lie amongst post medieval banks and pits and excavations left from training of the WW2 Home Guard.
Suffolk Wildlife Trust has helped the site transition from country park to nature reserve. The 'churr' of the nightjar has returned and woodlark numbers have been increasing. The woodlark's Latin name *Lullula arborea* means songster of the trees. Its *ee-lui-ee-lui* song has been described as sweet but melancholy. Other heathland species to be found here are woodcocks and stone chats. With the Little Ouse river forming the northern boundary, also meandering past the valley fens of Thelnetham and Redgrave and Lopham, brown trout have returned as well as water voles, dragonflies and damselflies and kingfishers frequent the river.

On a much brighter note, two churchyards managed by BADCOG, Blofield and Hemblington, have reached the finals of the Norfolk Churchyard Conservation Awards. The results will be announced next month. (See page 7)
Finally, a heartfelt thank you to all our volunteers who have helped in so many ways over the past 12 months. This includes members of the main and sub-committees, as well as everyone who has taken part in our main wildlife conservation work parties.

Hedgehogs
Interesting facts



A fossil of a hedgehog skeleton in the Natural History Museum is from the Middle Eocene period 56 – 33 million years ago.
In 1566 they were considered vermin with a bounty offered for collection of them.
Their leg bones are quite long. We don't often appreciate the length hidden by the creature's 'skirt'.
They frown as a precursor to curling up.
The hedgehog is a symbol of NATO embodying a spirit of determination.
A peaceful creature which bristles if attacked.
The British Hedgehog Society's patrons include (until recently) Dame Twiggy and Ann Widdecombe.

Some guidelines for humans.

Try to link your garden to a neighbour's or to open ground.
Keep a wild area/make a log pile. Check before mowing and tie up garden netting. Do not use pesticides. Try not to disturb hibernating hedgehogs.
Main dangers are roads, dogs, strimmers, pesticides and badgers.

How to help

Put out food and water (not milk - they are lactose intolerant). Food can be ground-up peanuts.
At this time of year a small hedgehog wandering around is likely to come from a late litter and may lack resilience and sufficient weight to survive the winter.
If one is ill we need to act fast to save it by seeking out and delivering to a hedgehog rescue centre.

A Tree Miscellany

Alders and Willows; There are many species of both. One of the alders has been here since before the Ice Age which it survived , so it is one of our oldest trees. Willows were among the first to appear as the ice retreated. In this case four species were represented – the white willow, the round leaved willow, the sallow and the species which gave rise to the ancestor of the cricket bat willow.

Box; This is another ancient native, now mainly found in hedging and under dual attack from blight and the box moth. In ancient time there were graceful trees growing on limestone hills as there still are in France and Iran.

Birch; Birch trees were some of the first to colonise the land when the Ice Age ended and may even have endured it. Silver birch and downy birch may be encountered.

Cedar; This splendid large tree, Cedar of Lebanon, was first introduced as a landscape feature in the late 17C. Two other species were introduced in the early 19C.

Hawthorn; The two British species are among the country's most ancient trees, belonging to a group of about a thousand different species in the Northern Hemisphere.

Beech; While not having the ancient pedigree of the alder, willow and hawthorn, it has been present for three to four thousand years. It favours free draining chalky soil; it does not grow well in cold wet areas.

Scots pine; No pine or conifer was present in England until about six thousand years ago when, as the ice retreated, scots pine, which can stand a great deal of cold and had been surviving on the edge of the ice began to move north and at one time all England was covered by them. However as the climate warmed it became favourable to trees such as oak, ash and later beech in England and less so to scots pine which nevertheless was able to move into Scotland as it became less ice bound. Scots pine was not reintroduced into England until approximately five hundred years ago.

The Ash; This is in decline now owing to ash die-back has been a feature of our landscape since the Ice Age ended some eight thousand years ago.

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The Holly; is a tree that has been here for a similar time to the ash.

The Monkey Puzzle; Featuring as an occasional ornamental tree it is a native of Brazil and was brought back as cones by the botanist Archibald Menzies in 1793.

The Juniper; A small conifer, this is one of the primeval trees of England.

The London Plane; apparently thriving in the polluted air of cities this is the commonest urban tree of the Western World. Historically the tree is interesting, as a species of plane in our region was wiped out by the Ice Age, but in about 1500 a species from SE Europe and later one from America were introduced. These hybridised and became the "London Plane" of today.

The Gean, Bird Cherry and Blackthorn; are all members of the same genus and make themselves known in woodland in Spring by their white flowers.

The Horse Chestnut; is a relative newcomer. In 1576 the Flemish botanist Clusius received from his friend, the ambassador to the Sultan of Turkey, seeds from a lovely flowering tree that grew there. Clusius planted these conkers, they thrived and the trees were named horse chestnuts because of their resemblance to sweet chestnuts. They were first seen in England in 1600.

The Sweet Chestnut; introduced by the Romans it was valued for its nuts and timber.

The Oak; There are hundreds of species in the oak in the world. Our native deciduous two are the sessile and pedunculate oaks. After the scots pine retreated northwards they dominated all areas except the chalk hills and downs. Its timber was used for sips and buildings. This along with its use for stoking furnaces for smelting iron was responsible for the disappearance of the oak forests. The evergreen holm oak is an introduction about two hundred years ago.

The Yew; This primeval tree is most commonly found in churchyards. The reasons for this being cited as historical, religious and practical. The latter related to the fact that the enclosed nature of churchyards protects grazing animals from this tree the foliage and berries of which are highly toxic. Probably not true is the suggestion that their location protected the source of archery bows from woodcutters as most of the yew for bows came from Spain.

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