

Main Work Party Reports

July 11 – Blofield Church – NE & NW conservation areas raked and cleared to spoil heaps. Members 8+2. **Note:** The remaining of the churchyard as raked and cleared by the GYGG on 14th July.

July 25 – Hemblington Church – Conservation area raked and cleared to spoil heaps. Members 6 +2

Aug 08 – Howes Meadow – Area C raked and cleared to spoil heap and fire site. Members 6 + 1

Aug 22 – Jary's Meadow – Area around apple trees and E meadow to the path to WF gate raked and cleared to fire sites. Members 5

Additional Work

July 03 – Southwood Church – Conservation area mown ready for clearance by BVCG on 08 July. Litter pick carried out inside church walls and alongside the outside, 100 metres each side of church.

July 06 – Blofield Church – NE & NW conservation areas mown and strimmer used around gravestones.

July 09 – Jary's Meadow – Pulled bracken in original area, west end of W Meadow.

July 10 – Jary's Meadow – Remaining bracken strimmed.

July 12 – Howes Meadow – Path network commenced mowing

July 13 – Jary's Meadow – Area raked and cleared.

July 13 – Howes Meadow – Completed mowing path network and around fire sites.

July 14 – Lingwood Pond – Wildflower margins around pond mown, raked and cleared. 2 large builder's bags of rank vegetation taken to PC allotment site. Good "Green hay" spread around site to improve biodiversity.

July 15 – Howes Meadow – Start clearance of paths.

July 17/20/21/22/23/24/25 – Howes Meadow – Continue with clearance.

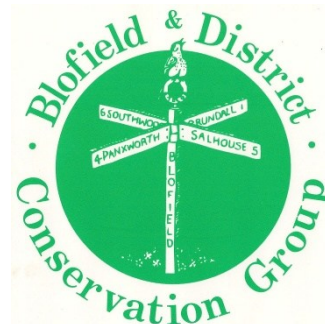
July 20 – Hemblington Church – conservation area mown

July 26 – Howes Meadow – Path clearance completed.

July 30 – Howes Meadow – Area C mown ready for WP 08 Aug. Mower transported by EH.

Aug 11 – Limpenhoe Church – Conservation area mown.

Aug 18 – Jary's Meadow – Area around apple trees and the E meadow to the path to the WF gate mown.



Chairmans Update—September 2026

BADCOG NEWS.

No 245: September 2026

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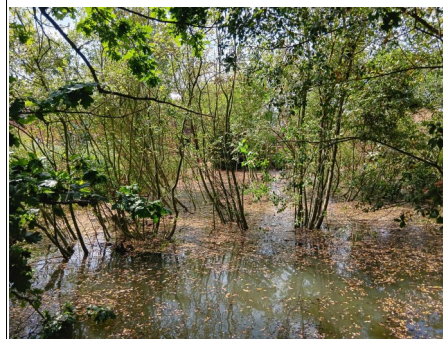


Several developments have occurred at Lingwood Village Pond since I began writing this newsletter item. After an exceptionally hot, dry summer, the pond has almost completely dried out for the first time since I moved to the village in 1993. This is not an unusual event in the western section, which often dries out even in a wet summer, but the eastern section normally retains some water.

Fortunately, and to the relief of the wildlife and many concerned residents, the western section is now half full again following a burst mains water pipe along Vicarage Road. The burst happened the day after tree surgeons cut back many of the larger willows in the then-dry western section. This tree work had been planned for last winter but was postponed because high water levels made access difficult. By opening up the area, it should improve water quality by allowing more light into the pond. At the time of writing, the eastern section remains dry, which may give the Parish Council an opportunity to remove some of the silt that has built up over the years. If carried out, this should also improve water quality in that section, which



Dried out eastern section.



Thinned out western section.

is used more frequently by the large population of semi-tame mallard ducks. To help with any future action by the Parish Council, I have contacted Norfolk Wildlife Trust for advice, as a 1997 pond survey by Steve Henson, prepared while he was developing a management plan, suggests the pond may be clay-lined. If so, this will need to be considered before any work begins. This information came from Mr J Benns, a local resident. Continues over page

As many readers of this Newsletter will know, BADCOG has been involved in the management of Lingwood Village Pond since 1988. However, it was not until 1997 that Steve Henson, a BADCOG committee member who worked for NWT, produced a management plan for the Parish Council. This plan recommended creating a wildlife margin around the pond, but this was never implemented, and the grass-cutting contractor continued mowing the verge right up to the hedge. About five years ago, I asked the Parish Council to leave a 1.5m strip uncut to see what would happen. As hoped, wildflowers began to re-establish themselves and in the years that followed



I scattered wildflower seeds, some of which I had collected while out walking the local footpaths. Now that the roadside verge and the margin has been allowed to grow naturally, there is now an attractive display of wildflowers in the spring and early summer (image right). Later in the summer, I cut and rake these areas, managing them in much the same way as our churchyards. I believe this approach could easily be adopted elsewhere. Interestingly, there were many posts on the Lingwood Facebook page about this subject, prompted by an article about a city council saving many thousands of pounds by planting verges with wildflowers rather than paying contractors to cut them every couple of weeks. Although I think this is an excellent way to improve the environment, councils need to consider carefully which wildflowers they grow along verges. Some mixes contain flowers with only a short flowering period, which may benefit pollinators but does not necessarily support the full lifecycle of some butterflies. Certain butterflies need grasses on which to lay their eggs, and their caterpillars rely on



these grasses for their foodplants. I recently saw a striking example of this in a garden where the flowers were spectacular, but there were no grasses to be seen (image left). A far more beneficial mix would include both native wildflowers and a variety of native grasses. Continues next page.....

BADCOG FRIDAY EVENING TALKS

Our Autum/Winter talks resume again on 11th September starting with our AGM followed by a Members Evening.

The talks program is:

11th September

AGM followed by a Members Evening

9th October

Vida Armstrong 'Do you know your plants?'

13th November

TBN

No Meeting in December

Talks are held in the Strumpshaw Community Hall starting at 7.30pm

BADCOG 2026/7 SUBSCRIPTIONS

With the AGM due to be held on 11th September, subscriptions are now due.

If you would like to continue to help and support BADCOG, please pay your subs.

It's only £5 per individual, or £10 per family.

While the amount is modest, renewing helps us keep our membership database up to date so we know who to contact about our activities and who should receive the newsletter.

It is very easy to pay your subs via bank transfer.

Bank: Lloyds of Great Yarmouth

Sort Code: 30-99-97

Account Number: 00642538

Thank you.

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.](#)

5th September—Walsham Fen

19th September—Howe's Meadow

3rd October—Walsham Fen

17th October—Buckenham Wood

31st October—Howe's Meadow

14th November—Walsham Fen

THOMPSON WOOD NEAR THETFORD FOREST

Thompson Wood is the Woodland Trust's largest reserve in Norfolk. Here are hares, skylarks, kestrels and lapwings but until 5 years ago when the trust bought the site it was mostly potato fields, pretty much a desert for nature. Last winter 26,000 saplings were planted and another 114,000 will go in by 2028. Children from nearby Thompson village helped and can now watch the young trees from their classroom windows.

On the wood's southern fringes is a complex of prehistoric 'pingo ponds' dating from the last Ice Age. Gouged out by retreating glaciers these wildlife rich water lands were obliterated by centuries of farming until £45,000 from Defra's Species Survival Fund helped set about reviving them, assisted by Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Eight ponds up to 60 meters across have been restored and twenty more could follow. Water mint, water forget-me-not, bog pond weed grow here and the banks teem with dragonflies.

A walk takes in open land where stone chats, larks and linnets have colonised the land - once cereal crops, now grassland - and views of Thompson Water. Created as a fishery in the 1840s it is now a natural haunt for otters, kingfishers and 19 dragonfly species including the Norfolk Hawker and the Scarce Emerald damselfly.

The 6 mile walk begins at the Great Eastern Pingo Trail car park at Stow Bedon on the A1075 about 15 km N.E. of Thetford.

(The NWT reserve Thompson Common contains 400 pingo ponds.)

In memoriam

HOWARD KIMBER 1935 - 2026

It is with sadness we have learnt of Howard's death. He was an enthusiastic helper in BADCOG's earlier years following his retirement and move to Blofield Heath. His wife Janet predeceased him.



Although some wildlife may be struggling this summer, butterflies have had an excellent year. The most striking example has been the abundance of Painted Lady butterflies (image left). These butterflies have a remarkable life cycle: they overwinter

as adults in subtropical Africa, then set off in April for the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, where they lay their eggs on thistles and mallows, the caterpillars' main food plants. By May, the eggs have developed through the caterpillar and chrysalis stages, and the new adults are on the move again, crossing the Mediterranean to the Iberian Peninsula and southern France. There, they mate and lay eggs once more, and by June the next generation is flying across the Channel to the UK and beyond, where the cycle begins again.

This northern European generation then uses high-level winds to travel back to subtropical Africa for the winter. With more summers like the one we have just had, could Painted Ladies become a regular sight in our gardens? That would be a welcome sight.



Staying with butterflies, there have been several interesting sightings in Buckenham Wood this year. As part of ongoing survey and monitoring work by the Buckenham Ancient Woodland Trust and Strumpshaw PC, Ernest and I have been helping with the UK Butterfly Monitoring Survey of the wood. The survey involves one person, or a small group, walking the same route each week and recording the butterfly species and numbers seen along a transect. Alongside a healthy population of peacock, comma, gatekeeper, holly blue, speckled wood and the white

butterflies (Small, Large, Orange Tip & Green-veined), we have also recorded silver-washed fritillary (image above right). Even more excitingly, Ernest has evidence of a purple emperor butterfly (image left) in his garden. In a later Newsletter, I hope to share this year's survey data with you.



THE 'NATIONAL BATS IN CHURCHES STUDY' AS PART OF THE 'BATS IN CHURCHES PARTNERSHIP PROJECT'

The Bats in Churches study was a national, partnership-led research effort (2019–2022) embedded in a bigger conservation programme (2019–2023), led by Natural England and major heritage and wildlife bodies (including Church of England), with the Bat Conservation Trust playing a central role in delivering the science.

The Study found that:

- Around half of churches surveyed had bats, rising to approx. 78% in older churches.
- Estimated 8,000+ churches nationally host bats.
- 12 species recorded out of the 18 native species resident in England.
- Churches act as critical refuges, especially in intensively farmed landscapes.

It also looked at human attitudes:

- Most church representatives felt positively or indifferent about bats.
- Only 10% recorded negative responses when bats were present.
- But problems (droppings, damage, cleaning burden) influenced negative views.

The Core Research Publication was published in September 2025 in the People and Nature Journal. **Search online for “Understanding Bats in Churches: A citizen Science approach” by C Boothby.**

The research was just one “workstream” of a broader programme that aimed to:

- Help churches cope with bat-related issues (damage, hygiene, usability)
- Develop practical mitigation solutions
- Train volunteers and professionals
- Build a national evidence base for policy and licensing

The full project worked directly with 100+ churches and ran for approx. 5 years (2019–2023). The Final Evaluation Report was published in November 2023. Search online for “Bats in Churches Final Evaluation”.

See also: <https://batsinchurches.org.uk/reports-and-resources/>

DO YOU KNOW WHERE OUR (Blofield Church) BAT ROOST ENTRANCE/EXIT IS?



In June 2021, **St Andrew and St Peter in Blofield** took part in The National Bats in Churches Study (some background on this is in the accompanying article left for those interested). As a volunteer for the study, I put ultrasonic audio recording devices in the church overnight for two nights and managed to find some droppings just before the usual church clean took place. Analysis of these found evidence of 5 species of bat:

Both audio & DNA evidence:

Pipistrellus pipistrellus
(Common pipistrellus)

Myotis nattereri (Natterer's Bat)

Myotis brandtii (Brandt's bat)

Audio evidence:

pipistrellus pygmaeus
(Soprano pipistrellus)

Eptesicus serotinus (serotine)

I would love to continue monitoring the church via taking part in the annual June emergence Roost Count survey with the National Bat Monitoring Programme run by the Bat Conservation Trust.

But I cannot find the Roost exit! I've spent many an evening over the years walking laps around the church, waiting to see that rush of bats as they leave but have yet to see it.

Does anyone know where it is (or they are – could be more than one exit)? There will be a high number of bats leaving in a very short period of time around sunset, so if you see it, you'll know. Whilst the above survey did not give us information on how many bats, the audio recording only got halfway through the second night as the device batteries ran out – an indication of a lot of audio recording and thus a fair number of bats

If you know where the roost exit might be, please can you call or message Lucy O'Brien on 07941 398 717, or let Gill or Tony O'Brien know (01603 713720).

Lucy O'Brien