

# Newsletter

## Summer 2017

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## Brandon Country Park Bioblitz

We held a successful Bioblitz at [Brandon Country Park](#) on 8<sup>th</sup> August with excellent representation from Suffolk Naturalists' Society's County Recorders and local experts. Everyone managed to dodge the showers and although the conditions were not ideal, being a bit too cold for much invertebrate action, we managed to record well over 300 different species in the park (with more records yet to come in).



SBIS and Suffolk Naturalists' Society at Brandon Country Park Bioblitz



Experts Dave Basham (bees and wasps), Adrian Knowles (bees and wasps) and Peter Vincent (flies) in the walled garden at Brandon Country Park

The Bioblitz provided a good opportunity for the public to join in and learn from experts about fungi, flowers, bees, wasps, flies, spiders and birds during guided walks. There were also opportunities to do pond dipping and go on bat walks - both of these were sell-outs. Records from the day can be viewed [here >](#)

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## Planners' Update Summer 2017

The SBIS quarterly Update on biodiversity and planning matters was circulated to over 300 people in early August.

**Topics included:** Planning and Biodiversity seminar 2017, free training on biodiversity for Planning Authorities, Ipswich Wildlife Network, Urban Green Space and Health, District level licensing for Great Crested Newts and Green Roofs and Living Walls, with the Protected Species focus on Great Crested Newts.

The Update aims to provide accessible information about biodiversity issues in relation to planning. View the update on ISSUU [here >](#) and previous Updates are available on the [SBIS Planners' Page >](#)

If you would like to receive this useful newsletter, please contact Gen Broad—[gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk), tel: 01473 264308.

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

## Planners' Update

<p><b>Summer 2017</b></p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Issue 6</p> <p><b>Inside this Issue:</b></p> <p>East Anglian Planning &amp; Biodiversity Seminar 2017 <b>1</b></p> <p>Free training available for Planning Authorities - Biodiversity and the Planning System <b>1</b></p> <p>Ipswich Wildlife Network - Linking Habitats Around the Town <b>2</b></p> <p>Urban Greenspace and Health - World Health Organisation <b>2</b></p> <p>MPs call for Immediate Release of 25-year Plan for Nature <b>2</b></p> <p>UK Government Publishes Brexit White Paper <b>3</b></p> <p>Natural England to roll out new national approach of District level licensing for Great Crested Newts <b>3</b></p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy Review <b>3</b></p> <p>How can the character of landscapes be assessed to inform plan-making and planning decisions? <b>4</b></p> <p>Green Roofs and Living Walls <b>4</b></p> <p>Protected Species focus - Great Crested Newt <b>5</b></p> <p>Suffolk Biodiversity Planning Group and Collaborative Members <b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome to the SBIS Planners' Update!</b></p> <p>We aim to provide accessible information about biodiversity issues in relation to planning. If we can help with training events, factsheets or in any other way, please do contact us and we'll do our best to provide what you need. Previous Updates are available on the <a href="#">SBIS Planners' Page &gt;</a></p> <p><b>East Anglian Planning and Biodiversity Seminar 2017</b></p> <p><b>Save the date! 24th November 2017</b></p> <p><b>Venue: East Suffolk Councils' offices in Melton, near Woodbridge</b></p> <p>The agenda is in draft at present - the day will include the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on key national issues related to biodiversity in Development Management and Spatial Planning</li> <li>Green Roofs and Living Walls</li> <li>Biodiversity Enhancements / Net Gain for Biodiversity</li> <li>District Level Licensing for Great Crested Newts</li> <li>The implications of Brexit</li> <li>A section highlighting what planners can do for farmland birds and dormice</li> <li>Ipswich Borough, Babergh and Suffolk Coastal District Councils Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)</li> </ul> <p>Places will be free for non-commercial organisations; a small fee will be charged for others. Please note that space is limited, so numbers may be restricted.</p> <p>Updates will be available on the <a href="#">SBIS Planners page &gt;</a> Last year's presentations are available on the <a href="#">SBIS ISSUU website &gt;</a></p> <p>Please contact Gen for further information (email <a href="mailto:gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk">gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk</a>)</p> <hr/> <p><b>Free training available for Planning Authorities - Biodiversity and the Planning System</b></p> <p>Suffolk Wildlife Trust, in partnership with the Suffolk Biodiversity Planning Group, will be leading free training sessions for interested planning authorities on biodiversity and the planning system.</p> <p>There will be two types of session available. One is for validation staff looking at what ecological information is required with an application and how this fits into the 1App validation process. The other is for development management and planning policy staff looking at assessing ecological information and using it in decision making and plan writing.</p> <p>If you would be interested in either type of session (or both!) for your team please contact James Meyer (<a href="mailto:james.meyer@suffolkwildlifetrust.org">james.meyer@suffolkwildlifetrust.org</a>) for more information.</p>
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When you look around your village or urban community I bet you can soon find a few patches of land which could be described as under-used. I'm thinking of gaps in hedgerows, areas of verge which are so wide they grow an annual crop of docks and thistles. Maybe you can see a spare patch in the local allotments area.

We certainly found a few in our village of Hartest. And we filled them with apples and plums for the benefit of all.

The idea was given to us following a very successful scheme in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where 15 communities got together to find spaces for what is called 'The Scattered Orchard Project'.

Hartest Parish Council was approached by Emma Black, Countryside Officer for the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project who offered us five traditional fruit trees.

We were delighted to accept and now we have a scattered orchard of our own which will bring benefit to all in years to come. By chance we had already planted a Bramley Apple on the corner of one of the roads leading out of the village back in 2014 and in January this year we planted two plums - a Czar and Purple Pershore and a dessert apple James Grieve along one of the boundary fences of the cemetery and two more apples, Peasgood Nonesuch (cooker) and St Edmunds (dessert) at the entrance to the village's Millennium Wood.

The wood was planted to mark the Millennium back in 2000 and contains wild cherry and lots of hazel nut trees to add to the mix and now very much coming to maturity.

The idea is two-fold really, to make traditional orchard fruit available to the village residents (and wildlife) and to help preserve some of the declining number of old fashioned varieties we used to enjoy.

It is important that any fruit trees planted should be easily accessible to everyone and the village take a collective responsibility for looking after them.

It's brilliant and we can't wait to pick our first fruit.

Further information at [Hartest Village website >](#)



Local resident John Kemp in Hartest Community Orchard

# Monitoring Tubular Water-dropwort and Greater Water-parsnip in East Anglia

Pete Case, Freshwater Habitats Trust

Freshwater Habitats Trust is a national organisation dedicated to protecting all freshwater life; our largest current project, the Heritage Lottery funded '**People Ponds and Water**' has been running since 2015 and is connecting many thousands of people across England and Wales with freshwater wildlife. We are helping volunteers to take an active part in protecting freshwater for the future by gathering meaningful data that will make a real difference to how we understand and protect species and habitats.

**PondNet** is a sub project of People Ponds and Water; a volunteer monitoring network putting in place regular standardised checks for both common and rare freshwater species. As we continue to roll out the project in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, our priority this summer is to set up monitoring and checks for target wetland plants; Tubular Water-dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa* and Greater Water-parsnip *Sium latifolium*. Both are Priority Species for conservation in England and Wales. Tubular Water-dropwort was once common throughout England and Wales and although it is still widely distributed, significant losses have occurred across its range, particularly since the 1950s associated with lack of grazing and intensification of agriculture. Greater Water-parsnip has declined rapidly over the last 200 years, mostly due to the drainage of wetlands and loss of suitably managed habitats. It is classified as Scarce in the UK, due to its still widespread but declining range.

Understanding these declines, and updating records on where these rare species still occur is vital, requires the collection of standardised, comparable data. We are attempting to revisit as many sites as possible where the species has previously been recorded, working with national recording schemes and Local Environmental Records Centres (e.g. CPERC/NBIS/SBIS), who have kindly provided records of these species. They are also helping to promote the project to the recording community.

The PondNet methodology for recording Tubular Water-dropwort and Greater Water-parsnip has been designed to record these species where they occur within pond habitats. In ponds, we want to assess the population of these plants by recording abundance (approx. count of individual plants), population strength (whether the species occurs in surrounding ponds), and document habitat conditions and water chemistry within the pond area.



PondNet volunteer Kate Pruden recording Tubular water-dropwort



Greater Water-parsnip



Tubular Water-dropwort at Avon Meadows 8th July 2016

In addition to the pond-based monitoring, and to account for the fact that both species occur widely in non-pond wetland habitats, this year we are broadening this survey to include fens, ditches and other wetland sites where these plants grow – this is particularly relevant for East Anglia where records for both species are rarely from typical ponds! A simplified recording form is available so volunteers can simply record presence of either species if they encounter them in habitats which are not ponds. At these non-pond sites we are interested in presence/absence only.

For both surveys, the species record, habitat information, grid reference and photos can then be uploaded to our website; allowing us to generate maps with the 2017 distribution. Alternatively, if you have seen either species recently, please drop me an email with a grid reference and preferably a photo.

Details of the survey and the recording forms can be found on the PondNet TWD + GWP 2017 survey page [here >](#)

If you would like to help with monitoring, please contact Pete Case, Regional Project Officer for Central England. [pcase@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk](mailto:pcase@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk) for more details.

## Join Beach Bonkers this summer!

Kate Osborne

It's one of the few things you can do that's a real treasure-hunt. I honestly don't know what you're going to find – but I do know for a fact you will find something. Beachcombing Suffolk's special shingle beaches never palls because twice a day, every day, the tide casts up treasures anew.

A short walk should reveal at least ten different shells. One of these might be a limpet shell. The teeth of a limpet are found on its tongue and they use them to scrape the algae off the rocks where they live. Scientists have declared that limpet teeth are the strongest natural substance on the planet.

Empty egg cases include those of skates or rays known as "mermaid's purses". Eggs laid by whelks resemble a bundle of Rice Krispies and the first few that hatch out eat all their siblings!



As the tide goes out you might see the glint of gorgeous sea glass glittering in the sand – Suffolk’s shingle stones smooth the broken glass until it resembles frosted jewels. This is litter, but relatively harmless and inert litter. Plastic litter, however, is ever present on our beaches, breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces but never disappearing.

The stones hold and hide treasures too – some of them are even treasures themselves! The shingle stones are a fantastic place to find fossils including sharks’ teeth and, just occasionally, if you’re very lucky, a mammoth’s tooth! As hard as it is to believe, eighty million-year-old fossil sea sponges are a wonderfully common find on Felixstowe beach.



Above: glass bottle stopper  
Below: Green sea glass


**Join Beach Bonkers on a beachcomb this summer to learn the best places to look on the beach and to identify your finds.**  
**All Beach Bonkers walks and other events are listed online. Visit [www.beachbonkers.org.uk](http://www.beachbonkers.org.uk) or call 0751 255 7200.**



Fossil Woolly Mammoth tooth

## Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve update

### Adrian Cooper

We have now become members of the National Biodiversity Network - the UK's largest partnership of wildlife conservation organisations. This will allow us to do a lot of new networking!

I'm also excited to tell you that the Bristol Schools Nature Reserve (BSNR) has now been launched. The BSNR is based directly on the work of Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve and encourages schools in the Bristol area to allocate part of their land for wildlife-friendly plants, hedgehog homes etc. The BSNR was launched on 10th June at the Bristol Festival for Nature. [Here is the YouTube video >](#) It would be so wonderful if schools in Suffolk could follow the Bristol example.

Finally, I can tell you that the Summer edition of Communities magazine has featured a beautiful two-page spread which describes our work so far.

[Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve Facebook >](#)

**How to Create New Nature Reserves**  
By Dr. Adrian Cooper

**Getting started**  
The original idea behind the Bristol Schools Nature Reserve was born out of a meeting with children during the 2015 Bristol Summer Festival. Since that time, the project has grown into a network of schools across the city, each with their own nature reserve.

**What's in it for me?**  
The Bristol Schools Nature Reserve is a fantastic opportunity for schools to create a green space on their premises. It provides a valuable learning resource for children, and a place where they can enjoy the outdoors. The project is also a great way for schools to contribute to the local environment.

**How to get started**  
If you are interested in creating a new nature reserve, there are several steps you need to follow. First, you need to identify a suitable location. This could be a school garden, a field, or a piece of land nearby. Next, you need to get permission from the relevant authorities. This could be the school governors, the local council, or the landowner. Finally, you need to plan the reserve. This involves choosing the plants and animals you want to include, and deciding on the layout of the reserve.

**Benefits of a nature reserve**  
There are many benefits to having a nature reserve on your premises. It provides a valuable learning resource for children, and a place where they can enjoy the outdoors. The reserve can also help to improve the local environment, and provide a habitat for wildlife.

**For more information**  
If you would like to know more about the Bristol Schools Nature Reserve, please visit our website at [www.bsnr.org.uk](http://www.bsnr.org.uk). You can also contact us by email at [bsnr@bsnr.org.uk](mailto:bsnr@bsnr.org.uk) or by phone at 0117 925 1234.

It is always a pleasure to come across an excellent book written about trees; these books are written by people with profound knowledge and understanding who can convert research into a structured book for the reader. The Ancient Oak in the English Landscape is one of those excellent books, it is well researched, highly informative and includes great pictures, charts and maps and is skilfully written by Aljos Farjon with contributions on biodiversity from Martyn Ainsworth, Keith Alexander and Pat Wolseley, all of whom have greatly added their expertise to this book.

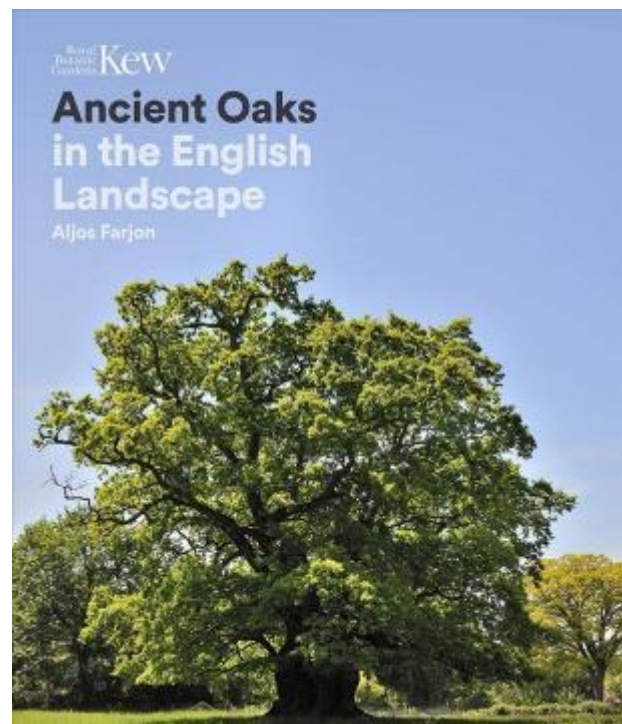
Aljos has applied scientific rigour to his research, thoughts and discussion, he starts off by making it clear how significant ancient trees are within the English landscape along with their importance for culture and biodiversity. The book is about English Oaks, both *Quercus robur* and *petraea*.

In the introduction Aljos gives a precise overview of the cultural importance of ancient trees.

In **Chapter 1** the life of the oak tree from acorn to maturity, senescence and death along with the physical characteristics and every stage of life and death. In **Chapter 2** the age of trees is assessed in some detail where Aljos focusses on estimating average ages in years, on oaks of both a minimum and maximum girth up to the largest oaks alive. Aljos has sensibly given a date of 1600 (in a rounded number) in English history after which oak trees are unlikely to be ancient. Aljos admits he is interested to know what happened in the Middle Ages and the Tudor times as this was the time when truly ancient trees alive today originated. In **Chapter 3** you can find the 6m+ diameter oak tree maps that highlight concentrations and where ancient trees are spread out and this leads to the speculation of why there is landscape change. In **Chapter 4** Aljos splits the oak trees in Medieval and Tudor deer parks before 1600 and discusses their landscape and land-use context and he says these are of great significance although 75% have now gone. In **Chapter 5** he discusses land-use types; amongst these are Royal Forests and wooded commons that currently account for up to 85% of the present ancient oaks in the English landscape. In **Chapter 6** there is discussion on why more ancient oak

trees survived in England than elsewhere and he looks at oak trees in Europe. In **Chapter 7** Aljos explains which countries have the most ancient oaks in Europe, the discussion ranges from deer parks, modern forestry, wars, revolutions and land ownership. In **Chapter 8** Aljos goes back further in time as the ancient trees we see today go through a few generations to get back to pre-history. Aljos in **Chapter 9** has evaluated nearly all the sites in England that have significant numbers of ancient trees and out of these he considers 23 being of most importance. In **Chapter 10** the three guest specialists write about biodiversity associated with ancient oak trees and in **Chapter 11** conservation issues are addressed including declines, threats and management, some of which are disputed or even out of date as research into oak tree decline is being carried out in greater detail than ever before.

Aljos Farjon is a wonderful writer; dare I say it, like Charles Darwin and Oliver Rackham. He has highlighted the significance and importance of the ancient oak trees in the English landscape and I am sure this book will stimulate much discussion around the country. This book will sit with my 'special' books on trees and will become a constant reference book in the future.



## Return to Bobbitshole

Caroline Markham, GeoSuffolk

The Ipswichian Interglacial is dated at about 120,000 years BP, and it was 65 years ago that the lake deposit which defines it was found whilst constructing the sewage works at Bobbitshole on the southern outskirts of Ipswich. The ancient clays and peats were full of plants and animals – huge quantities for freshwater shells; plant seeds, wood and pollen; and large numbers of voles teeth. The presence of freshwater tortoise plates (pieces of the plastron) suggested a warmer climate than at present during this interglacial. During the millennia of deep cold which followed the ice sheets reached as far south as Norfolk and the Ipswichian flora and fauna were banished from the frozen Suffolk landscape.

GeoSuffolk was invited by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to join in with their 'Wildlife Challenge' – a bioblitz at Kiln Meadow in Bestead Brook Park on June 11<sup>th</sup> this year and since Bobbitshole is on the eastern edge of this area, we decided to 'geoblitz' the Ipswichian flora there. How many have returned to the area with the climate amelioration of our modern interglacial? We discovered that the local bioblitzers, dog-walkers and family groups were all familiar with GeoSuffolk's panel on site, and so also with the Ipswichian Interglacial. The Ipswichian plant fossils were studied and recorded by Professor Richard West\*, and armed with his list, we joined the botanical walk led by Martin Sanford of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society. We found several plant returnees on this walk and further

searching, especially in wet areas (it is after all a 120,000 year-old lake deposit) produced more. In all we found 39 of the 105 plants identified by Richard West, i.e. 37% - not bad for a day's work.

The quality of the plant record at Bobbitshole means that many plants can be identified, usually from seeds, down to species level. For example, West identified three *Carex* species – *C. acutiformis*, *C. riparia* and *C. rostrata*, of which we found only *C. acutiformis*, the Lesser Pond Sedge on June 11<sup>th</sup>. However fossil pollen, though more plentiful, usually only allows identification to genus level, so for example *Epilobium* is on West's list. We found *E. hirsutum* and *E. tetragonum* and so ticked the Willow Herb genus on the list. The Ipswichian trees and shrubs were mostly identified by their pollen and we found all of them except the Montpellier Maple, *Acer monspessulum* – possibly an indicator along with the freshwater turtle of warmer climate than today.

I would like to thank Bob Markham for creating our plant list from Richard West's record, and Peter Brinkley for his plant identification skills.

Caroline Markham 31.07.17

\*R.G.West, *Interglacial Deposits at Bobbitshole*, Ipswich, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, May 1957.



GeoSuffolk's information panel explaining the Ipswichian Interglacial. This is sited in the car park to the east of Kiln Meadow.



# Ambitious 6-county Orchards Project Hits Go!

## Orchards East

**ORCHARDS EAST** is an exciting new project now rolling out across the whole of East Anglia. The Landscape Group in the School of History at the University of East Anglia has been awarded £477,700 by the National Lottery for a three year project looking at our regions' orchards.

The project builds on the work of their partner organisation, Suffolk Traditional Orchards Group (STOG), using similar methodology to survey orchards and improving our understanding of traditional orchard management and history.

The English landscape has been described as the richest historical record we possess. Orchards are an integral part of this landscape, but have been relatively poorly researched; they are important for landscape and biodiversity as well as being a rich resource for local communities.

Working across Bedfordshire, Cambridge, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, the project will recruit and train members of the community to survey local orchards. They, and other volunteers, will receive training in traditional orchard management – helping to halt the decline of these vital skills.

Head of the Landscape Group, Professor Tom Williamson says: "I am delighted that we have been awarded this National Lottery grant. Orchards are an important heritage resource, both in terms of biodiversity and as key features in our historic landscape."

The project has two principal components. The first is mapping the historic orchard sites from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed OS maps of the early 20th C and recruiting volunteers to visit as many of these sites as possible. If the orchards still exist, the volunteers will survey them and, in selected cases, will investigate their wildlife, crop varieties and historic origins.

In addition to STOG, many local and regional organizations are already associated with the project, including county orchard groups such as the East of England Apples and Orchards Project (EEAOP), Bedford and Luton Orchard Group (BLOG), Cambridgeshire Orchard Group (COG), Hertfordshire Orchard Initiative and the county Wildlife Trusts.

Most important to the project are the six local environmental record centres, LERCs, who have already started to map historic orchard sites to generate local maps for Orchards East's volunteer surveyors. These are Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BLBRMC), Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC), Essex Wildlife Trust Biological Records Centre (EWTBRC), Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (HERC), Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) and Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS).



Orchards East works in 6 counties in the east of England.  
Courtesy of [www.picturesofengland.com](http://www.picturesofengland.com)

The second component of the project is to raise our understanding and appreciation of orchards, and, in particular, those of the traditional form. This means trees on vigorous rootstocks in natural or semi-natural vegetation (including lawns!). The project will run workshops for a wide audience across the region on different aspects of orchards including planting, management and restoration as wildlife habitat, crop production and crop use, tree propagation and fruit and nut identification.

As the project continues we expect many individuals and local groups to be involved, especially volunteer surveyors, parishes and their community orchards, the Wildlife Trusts (some of which already own traditional orchards), local authorities, garden associations, and, indeed, anyone with an interest in fruit or historic landscape.

Several regional and national organizations will play important roles in the Orchards East Project:

- Natural England (NE) who define and administer the concept of UK Priority Habitats.
- The Peoples Trust for Endangered Species, who are commissioned by NE to collate and manage a national inventory of Traditional Orchards in England,.
- The East of England Apples and Orchards Project (EEAOP), who amongst many other activities sell fruit trees for gardens, run courses and operate fruit identification at Apple Days in the region. EEAOP are the legacy organisation who will take the project forward after the 3-year HLF funding.
- Fruitid, the website [www.fruitid.com](http://www.fruitid.com) that provides descriptions, historic documentation and imagery of fruit cultivars
- National Fruit Collection and their scientific curator at the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development - University of Reading.
- Greener Growth CIC, that designs, plants and manages traditional orchards in prisons, schools, and for councils, institutions and organizations across the region.

In addition, there are many local orchard groups and others across the region managing sites varying from small allotments with just a handful of trees, to village community orchards, large country house orchards, nationally important and historic sites and AONB sites. There is a huge range of organizations which can become involved in this innovative and inclusive project.



Paul Read helping a Suffolk landowner to survey her orchard



Orchards East Project Manager, Rachel Savage, at the Metfield Allotments Community Orchard launch



Gt Cornard Primary School planting a cherry orchard in the Country Park



Ancient Tree Forum and STOG visit to Rummers Lane Orchard, Cambridgeshire

For further information and to find out how to get involved, contact :  
Project Manager Rachel Savage  
Tel: 07814 938016  
email: [Rachel.savage@uea.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.savage@uea.ac.uk)  
or  
Survey Coordinator Gen Broad  
Tel: 01473 264308  
email: [gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk)

*The OE website is under design, please watch this space!*

### Suffolk Coast and Heaths Beachwatch

The Spring Beachwatch Survey took place on 24th April with 15 of our volunteers. 17 Kg of rubbish was collected and 100m of beach was cleaned and surveyed. Finds included a large lump of paraffin wax (to be sent to the Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquatic Science (CEFAS)) for analysis and plenty of HDPE plastic to be sent to TerraCycle for recycling.

### Snapshot...of a Beachwatch event at Aldeburgh....

Fifty Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, along with siblings and families, turned up in force on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July for the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB event organised for the Deben District Scouts. In total they collected 10 Kgs of litter and a staggering 300 items along 200 m of beach in Aldeburgh. These included plastic and polystyrene, cord, shopping bags, fishing net and lines, broken glass and bottles, balloons - and a car filter!

### Volunteering

- **The 2016 Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Coast & Estuary Warden Scheme Report is now available to [view >](#)**. It was a record-breaking year, with a 3-fold increase number of wardens submitting reports, the highest since the scheme began in 2009. What a fantastic effort!
- **Volunteers are needed to map tranquillity.** The AONB team is looking for some additional volunteers to help field test a tranquillity map of the Deben estuary area. Volunteers will receive training and must be available to travel to the rural environment around the Deben Estuary. If you are interested, please contact the AONB team on [schaonb@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:schaonb@suffolk.gov.uk)
- **Our wonderful volunteers contributed...1,975 days to the AONBs in the last year!** This is equivalent to 10 members of staff, so the AONBs benefit hugely from the work of volunteers. They have worked across a range of areas, including Conservation; Walking route surveys; Beachwatch; Greeters; River restoration; Footpath work; Wardening; as Rangers; and as Work Placements.

### Stour and Orwell Conference

The annual conference attracted 75 delegates and excellent media coverage. The agenda included speakers from: UK Power networks on archaeology finds; Natural England on the England Coast Path; a new Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy in East Suffolk; and an update from the Marine Management Organisation. Delegates raised over £150 for the Grenfell Tower Charities.

### England Coast Path

Natural England is progressing the project on all sections of the Proposed Path on the Suffolk Coast and southern shore of the River Stour: Harwich to Shotley Gate; Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry; Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey; Bawdsey to Aldeburgh; and Aldeburgh to Hopton on Sea. [Further info >](#)

## East Suffolk Greenprint Forum supporting local communities

As part of its celebrations of 20 years of thinking globally and acting locally, the East Suffolk Greenprint Forum ran a competition to support communities and charitable organisations as they proactively seek to do more for themselves.

The recipients of support and funding were Blyth Wood, Friends of Parkland Wood, Ringsfield Eco Activity Centre and Wild Boyton.



## Bats in Churches Partnership Project

Bats are rare, fascinating and misunderstood mammals, and were in serious decline over the 20th century, but some species are now beginning to show early signs of recovery. The large breeding bat colonies found in some churches can be of national, and even international, importance and recent studies have shown that many such populations are highly dependent on the churches in which they roost. Loss of woodland and the conversion of barns and other traditional buildings used by bats may have added to the pressure on churches as the only available roosting sites. This project seeks to safeguard the future of bat colonies in churches whilst reducing their impact on the historic buildings and congregations. Our key messages are:

- *Bats and people can be together in churches without conflict; we are actively finding new ways to make this happen.*
- *Churches are very important for community, heritage and ecology*
- *Our project churches are at the forefront of this exciting national project; the culmination of 20 years of research. We are all delighted to be part of this Heritage Lottery Fund project.*

During the development phase (until March 2018) we will be working with some key 'Pilot' churches to help test, evaluate and refine approaches to managing the impact of bats. This phase will also explore volunteer training, recruitment and public engagement methods and the creation of a new National Bats in Churches Survey. Preparation of detailed proposals will be made for a second-round HLF application for the further funding of a five year delivery phase (running until 2023).

Please see our project website: <http://www.batsandchurches.org.uk>

If you would like to make an expression of interest in volunteering please email the Volunteer Officer Lisa Campbell-Bannerman at [Lisacb@bats.org.uk](mailto:Lisacb@bats.org.uk)

## Elm - the only host plant for the White-letter Hairstreak

Rob Parker, Butterfly Conservation Suffolk Branch

When Dutch Elm Disease (DED) struck Britain's Elm trees, pessimists said it would be the death knell for the White-letter Hairstreak (WLH). Forty years later, the species has suffered setbacks in many areas, but is by no means lost. In Suffolk, we still have plenty of elm, although we have lost a lot of mature English elms and mature Wych elms, the latter being the variety favoured by the WLH. Fortunately, the Huntingdon variety, widespread in East Anglia, has fared better than other varieties, and the butterfly has adapted to lay eggs on the sucker growth which often sprouts healthily from the root system of dying trees. Thus the butterfly has lived on, despite the countryside being littered with the still-standing corpses of dead elms.

A good deal of work has been going on in UK, France and Spain to find disease-resistant strains of elm, and to propagate these in order to replace the elms in our countryside. There have been successes at several levels, and Butterfly Conservation has been working to get some promising varieties planted to provide the

necessary host trees for future generations of the WLH. Two different varieties of elm have been planted in Suffolk recently as a long term conservation measure:

***Ulmus laevis*, the European White Elm** is not genetically resistant to DED, but it benefits from being unappealing to the elm bark beetle. The adult beetles spread the spores of DED when the females lay their eggs into the bark of most elms. However, they avoid this variety, which grows well in most of Europe, where it supports colonies of WLH. Until now, it has not been planted much in UK.

***Ulmus minor* "Ademuz", a variety of Field Elm**, has been cultivated in Spain as a strain genetically resistant to DED, and these are now available commercially.

Two years ago, Andrew Brookes of the Hampshire Branch sent freshly harvested seed of *Ulmus laevis* to other Branches interested in a similar conservation measure. I received an envelope of seed (free, with compliments) and sowed some at home. I used very

little, but passed some on to interested Committee members, and we engaged the interest of the Parks Departments at St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Borough Councils.

As a result, we finished up with small amounts growing with members, and two parallel ventures on a larger scale. At St Edmundsbury's Nowton Park Nursery about 50 young plants were grown in a propagation tunnel by a project employing youngsters with learning difficulties. At Ipswich's Chantry Park, the charity ActiveLives grew about 20 for us.

This very generous co-operation, at no cost to Butterfly Conservation, patiently nurtured seedlings through the winter of 2015/16, kept them moist and fertilized, potted them up and reached the winter of 2016/17 with plants ready to be planted out in suitable locations. The shortest, home grown specimens, were about a metre high, whereas the strongest had reached head height in the nurseries.

In the meantime, Andrew Brookes had obtained some commercially grown "Ademuz" from Spain, and one batch of a dozen was purchased by Suffolk Branch, at a cost of £9 each plant. These were delivered in January 2017, conveniently ready for planting at the same time as the locally propagated White Elms.

Planting decisions resulted in a mix of public and private sites, spread between West and East Suffolk, as follows. They were planted by volunteers in groups of about 3, usually close to an existing WLH colony or in a place where the species had flown in the past. Most went into the ground in February/early March, protected from browsing by tree guards and stakes.

## **European White Elm**

### **[West Suffolk 53]**

4 by stream at Tayfen Meadows, Bury St Edmunds.

6 on private land near Thurston.

1 on private land at Fornham.

33 at Bury St Edmunds, beside Lark, planted 2 Mar 2017

9 awaiting planting, St Eds Council land, beside Lark.

### **[East Suffolk/Ipswich 21]**

3 Alexandra Park

3 Chantry Park

3 Christchurch Park

3 Landseer Park

3 Holywells Park

3 Waldringfield (planting deferred)

3 Stutton (Private land)

### **Disease resistant Field Elm 'Ademuz' [12 total]**

A courier brought the plants on 14 Jan 2017, well wrapped and with plenty of

moisture around the roots. The tallest were just over a metre. Most were planted promptly, close to a known White-letter hairstreak colony..

3 Near Aldeburgh, (Trudie's garden, Private)

3 at Newmarket Plantation, Cavenham. (Private)

3 in Holywells Park, behind Susie Mellor memorial bench.

3 for Waldringfield (awaiting planting).

Now we must wait and see; obviously it is going to be a few years before any of these trees are big enough to support a White-letter Hairstreak colony. Two of the sites lie on existing butterfly transects, which should assist future monitoring. Let's hope it turns out to have been a useful act of conservation – both for the elms and the White-letter Hairstreak.

## **New Grant Fund - Anglian Water Flourishing Environment Fund**

This fund offers grants to projects that enhance the status of wetland habitats and/or wetland species. To qualify, the target habitats and species should be those of principal importance, as defined by Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Community Act 2006. A range of grants will be awarded from £2,000 to £10,000.

Deadline: 18th September 2017

Visit [Anglian Water >](#) to find out more and download the form from the [Cambridgeshire Community Foundation >](#)

## Suffolk's Nature Strategy a County Council Priority for 2017-2021

Suffolk County Council's plans and priorities for inclusive growth, health, care and wellbeing and efficient and effective public services, have been approved by full Council. Strong and resilient communities and thriving local economies supporting each other, are at the centre of their priorities for 2017 to 2021.

Plans and priorities for Suffolk natural and historic environment are included on page 8 as part of Inclusive Growth and **Suffolk's Nature Strategy** is listed as one of Suffolk County Council's key strategies.

For more information visit [Suffolk County Council >](#)

Download [Suffolk's Nature Strategy >](#)



## Snippets from Natural England

- **The Unfrozen Moment - Delivering A Green Brexit**

Secretary of State Michael Gove sets out his vision on the future of our natural environment. [Read more >](#)

- **England Biodiversity Indicators published**

The *Biodiversity 2020* indicators are dependent on a wide variety of data, provided by Government research bodies and the voluntary sector. As Official Statistics, the presentation and assessment of the indicators has been verified by the data providers, and the production and editing of the indicators has been overseen by Government statisticians in Defra. [Read more >](#)

- **Plan for roadside NO2 concentrations published**

[The UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations](#) produced by Defra and the Department for Transport outlines how councils with the worst levels of air pollution at busy road junctions and hotspots must take robust action. The Nitrogen Dioxide plan, although aimed at human health protection, should benefit ecosystems too. [Read more >](#)

- **Pantheon published**

Natural England and the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) have launched a new online database and analytical tool called Pantheon, which helps us better understand conservation status and habitat-related traits of invertebrates. [Read more >](#)

- **National Lottery backs plan to save 20 species from extinction**

In one of the most ambitious conservation projects ever undertaken, 20 UK species facing extinction will be brought back from the brink thanks to £4.6 million from the National Lottery. The Back from the Brink programme will address the needs of threatened species in 150 key habitats and landscapes across England from the Yorkshire Dales to Cornwall and including the **Shifting Sands project** – securing a future for the Brecks. This Telegraph article from 15th April 2017 provides further [information >](#)

It will focus on saving some very rare and elusive species from extinction, including the shrill carder bee, chequered skipper butterfly, ladybird spider and northern dune tiger beetle. The Brecks scheme reflects the unique and special character of the Breckland landscape, will be backed by almost £500,000 and involve a wide-ranging partnership of conservation organisations. It will focus on 16 rare species - five plants including Field Wormwood and Red-tipped Cudweed; five invertebrates including moths such as the Basil-thyme Case-bearer moth and Lunar-yellow Underwing; two reptiles; and four bird species, including Stone-curlew and Woodlark, will all benefit from the project over three years with a legacy of 10 years and beyond. [Read more >](#)

## Free maps of greenspaces in Gt. Britain

Ordnance Survey has released a new map of greenspaces throughout Great Britain. The new map provides the public with a rich source of information on the location and extent of greenspaces up and down the country. Greenspaces featured on the map include local parks, play areas, sports pitches and allotments. The free maps of greenspace, which include areas such as National Nature Reserves, will provide a valuable resource to the public and public sector organisations who manage these important sites. As well as providing information about access points to these sites, this rich dataset will provide a framework that will support a wide variety of analysis on our greenspaces to ensure they continue to prosper. For more information and to download the maps visit [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk) >

## From Sudbury Area Wildlife newsletter

To sign up, contact Nick Miller [nicknewmiller56@gmail.com](mailto:nicknewmiller56@gmail.com)

Chalk grassland is one of Britain's scarcest habitats. Among Sudbury's chalk quarries however, a tiny remnant was uncovered when scrub was cleared on the old **William Armes site** (behind Sainsburys), and Sulphur Clover, Small Scabious, Cowslip, Restharrow, Red Bartsia and Ploughman's Spikenard are some of the wildflowers of chalk grassland, that have since made a phoenix-like reappearance! Others, such as Meadow Vetchling and Meadow Barley, are plants of heavy clay.

July brought heartening information on our woodland butterflies, with sightings of White Admiral – eight were counted in Assington Thicks by Martin Peers, and another a mile away. Martin also saw two White-letter Hairstreaks at Great Cornard's Shawlands Wood,. This welcome, but increasingly rare sighting, shows the benefit of conserving areas of bramble and rough woodland round the edges of town.

\* **THE WILDLIFE GARDEN** \* is dedicated to wildlife and helping you attract a wide range of species into your garden. **57 Station Road, Sudbury, Mon – Sat: 9.30am – 5pm**

Contact: [thewildlifegarden@gmail.com](mailto:thewildlifegarden@gmail.com) tel: 01787 312339

## Bures community clears alien invasive species

Andrew Ward, Environment Agency

A morning work party to clear non-native invasive plant species (NNIS) on the River Box was organised by some residents of the parish of Bures. They have helped out with previous removals under the guidance of Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project Officer Alex Moore da Luz.

After landowner permission had been obtained, four local people and Andrew Ward from the Environment Agency pulled out Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* along the river and the adjoining willow plantation. Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum* plants were also identified and the information passed onto local farmer Dennis Ambrose, who has already carried out some removal of this NNIS.

Himalayan Balsam is also known as Policeman's Helmet or Indian Balsam and is native to the West and central Himalayas. It is found mostly on river banks and in damp woodland, but can also grow in other damp habitats. Introduced as a garden plant in the early 19th century and first recorded in the wild in 1855, it is now widespread in the UK. Its seeds are spread by an explosive dispersal mechanism; and the seeds are small and easily carried by wind or water.

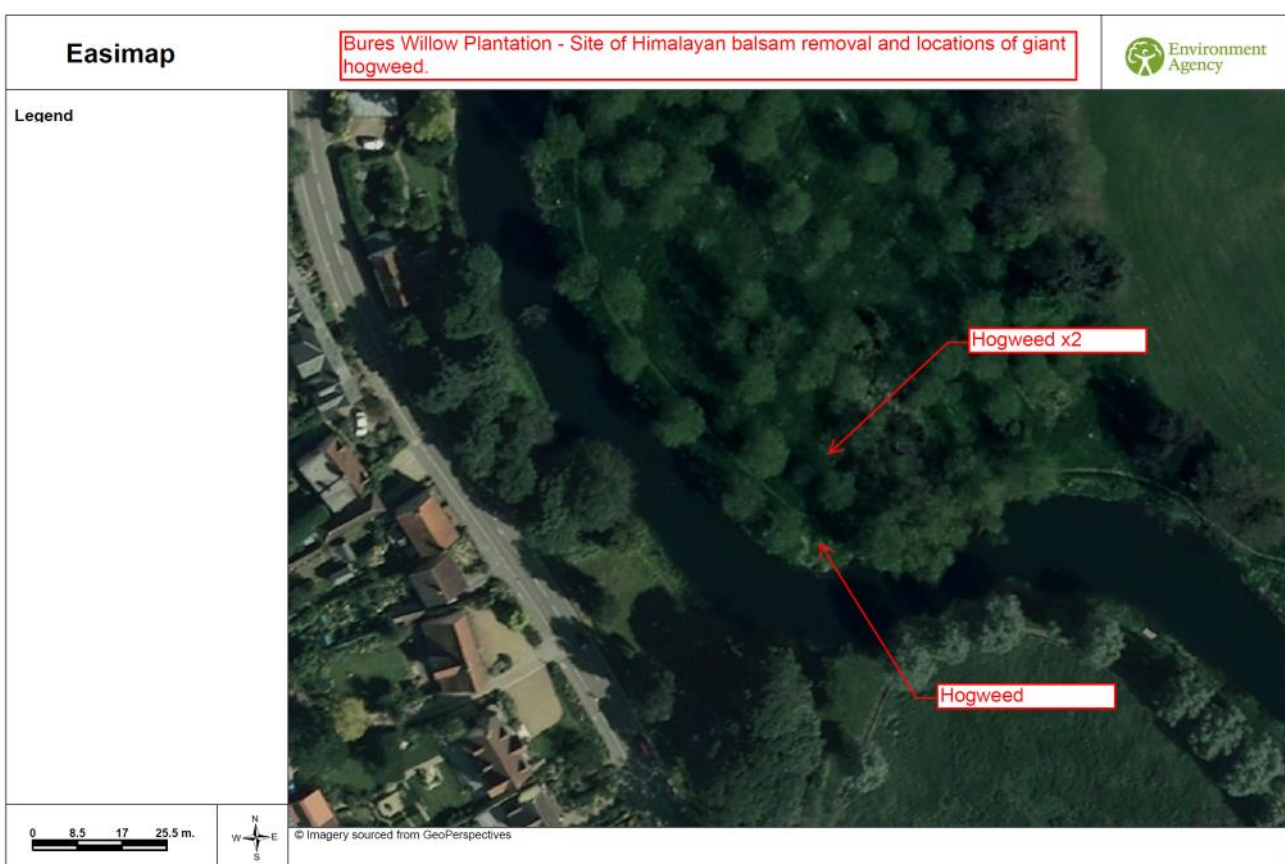


Photo: GBNNSS

Himalayan Balsam is a problem because it out-competes native species in ecologically sensitive areas, particularly on river banks. Where it grows in dense stands along river banks it can impede flow at times of high rainfall, increasing the likelihood of flooding. Die back of extensive stands over winter can leave river banks bare and exposed to erosion. Himalayan balsam is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise allow this species to grow in the wild. [NNSS Himalayan Balsam Factsheet > Giant Hogweed species information >](#)



Residents of Bures helping to remove non-native Himalayan Balsam from the banks of the R. Box



To find out more about Non-native invasive species, visit the [GB Non-Native Species Secretariat \(NNS\) >](#)





### ***Sharing information about Suffolk's wildlife***

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service is the One-Stop-Shop for biodiversity information in Suffolk. Operating as an independent and objective centre for biodiversity data we collate, manage and mobilise species and site information for the benefit of Suffolk's wildlife as a whole.

**News** [SBIS website >](#)

**Events** [SBIS News / Events >](#)

**Funding Opportunities** Check out the SBIS web page to see if any of these funds can benefit your conservation or community wildlife project. [SBIS News / Funding >](#)

**Project Fund** We have a small Project Fund available to individuals and communities for research, habitat enhancement or to benefit Suffolk species. Please contact Gen Broad if you're looking for small amounts of funding for your project.

**We welcome species records from the public. You can make a valuable contribution to wildlife conservation - why not try out [SuffolkBro online](#)? It's easy and fun!**

All records are verified via iRecord and our County Recordors and then added to our database for Suffolk (currently 3.25 million). Species records help us to understand the distribution and patterns of Suffolk's wildlife as well as informing the conservation activities of key partners and the planning process.

Follow us on Twitter [@Suffolkbis >](#)

Like us on [Facebook >](#)

Share photos on [Flickr >](#)

**Newsletter Publication dates** : Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.

Deadline for Autumn 2017 newsletter articles: **Friday 29th October 2017.**

*If you'd like to share the work that you or your organisation / group is doing to protect biodiversity in Suffolk, please send your article (with photos) for inclusion in the next newsletter to Gen Broad*

**Thank you to our readers for supporting this newsletter,  
all feedback is welcome!**

#### **Contact Us**

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