



Brundall Church Fen Local Nature Reserve

BRUNDALL CHURCH FEN Local Nature Reserve is a quite unique 'wet woodland' site situated to the south of St Laurence Church and is accessed via Church Lane. Lying to the east of Brundall Broad, between the railway and the River Yare, the site comprises some 3.133 hectares (7.743 acres) of fen and alder carr and is an area of former grazing marsh, forming part of the flood plain of the River Yare. It is owned by Brundall Parish Council and we are delighted to be working in close co-operation with Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority on its conservation.

Brundall Parish Council purchased Brundall Church Fen in March 1980 from Mrs H F Geary. Faden's Map of 1797 shows the entire flood plain area of Brundall as fen or marsh. The first edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1838 indicates the area as grazing land. By 1908, a few patches of mixed woodland were present, with a strip of woodland adjacent to the upland margins.

In the 1980s, two "roadways" crossed the site, following the route of the current boardwalk and main footpath, with the land between them being denoted "meadow".

Owing to the gradual decline of grazing during the 20th century, the site has seen extensive scrub and carr woodland development. It remained unmanaged for several years and that helped it to become the jewel it is today.

In 1998, Brundall Parish Council took the bold decision to create a conservation area at Brundall Church Fen whilst still providing a public amenity area. It was not an easy task, balancing the interests of the various user groups, but the Council gradually succeeded, encouraging them to work in harmony.

The Broads Authority was most supportive and provided practical help and advice. Without that expertise and encouragement the task would have been all the more daunting.

Then, on 21 July 2003, Brundall Church Fen was officially granted the status of a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) following the signing of an Agreement between Brundall Parish Council, English Nature and Norfolk County Council, and its management passed into the safe hands of a dedicated Management Committee.

Without doubt, it is because the site was "neglected" for so many years that it is so important today. It was not subjected to the "management" carried out so unsympathetically during recent decades. One of the problems many such sites have suffered from is that people want woodland

to be tidy. Luckily, Brundall Church Fen is far from that and it will remain in its current "natural" state that makes it so valuable.

Many woodland wildlife species depend on large old trees, standing dead wood and large fallen trunks and limbs. We need standing dead wood for insects to inhabit and those insects are a food source for our bird populations.

Standing dead trees play host to numerous wood-rotting fungi and holes in them are used by owls and bats. They soon become covered with lichens. When they eventually fall to the ground, a new set of insect species inhabit the decaying wood, more species of wood-rotting fungi take over and different lichens cover the slowly rotting trunk.

Of course, one has to consider public safety when retaining standing deadwood and that is why public access to Brundall Church Fen Local Nature Reserve is restricted to the designated pathways and boardwalks only. By making such a restriction, we are able to retain fine examples of old standing dead trees and numerous fallen and wind-blown trees left intact to rot down naturally.

Several of our fallen and wind-blown willows have now re-rooted and second generation trees are growing from the fallen ones. The visitor can see examples of very large wind-blown willows that have continued to live on and now have fresh, vigorous growth shooting from their mighty, fallen, moss-covered trunks.

One of Brundall Church Fen's best attractions has to be the large reed bed. Occupying the centre of the site, the public are not permitted to access it. However, fine views may be obtained from a number of points. Accessing the reed bed is dangerous, even for trained and experienced personnel. It is a truly wonderful sight to watch a heron glide over the reed bed on a misty evening.

As stated earlier, Brundall Church Fen will never be neat and tidy and it will never become a play area. Having said that, the local Brownies, Guides, Scouts and Cubs make extensive use of the facilities to earn environmental badges, etc.

Brundall Church Fen is also an important amenity area within the village and the Management Committee is always mindful of the requirements of such users. Anglers have always used the site and they will be encouraged to continue to do so. In addition, it is a popular place for weekend walkers with many families enjoying a Sunday afternoon stroll with the dog. There is no reason why Brundall Church Fen should not fulfil the purposes of both a Local Nature Reserve and a local amenity area. Users just need to exercise some thought and respect for both the site and each other.

The Broads Authority maintain 24-hour moorings on the river bank, providing a beautiful amenity for those holiday makers and boating enthusiasts seeking a more peaceful and natural spot to spend the night.

An abundance of wildlife freely inhabits Brundall Church Fen, including Chinese water deer, foxes and water vole. However, the most exciting fact is that otter has been seen on several occasions. Needless to say, the Management Committee will do all it can to provide a safe habitat for the otter and afford it the maximum protection possible from the predatory mink that inhabits the river banks.

A formal Management Plan has been agreed for the site and is available for public inspection on request to the Clerk to Brundall Parish Council.

When visiting Brundall Church Fen, please be considerate. Take your litter home with you. Remember that it is a Local Nature Reserve. Small creatures easily become trapped inside discarded bread bags or tin cans and, as a result, die a slow death. Obviously, fires are not permitted because, whilst the site is by nature wet, in summer months the northern wooded area plus the dried out sections of the site become a tinder-box.

In 2006, Brundall Parish Council won a prestigious CPRE Norfolk (Norfolk Society) award "for the creation and management of Brundall Church Fen Local Nature Reserve".

Enjoy the delights of Brundall Church Fen ... It's free!



Left to right – Heidi Thomson (Norfolk County Council), Lee Cozens (Broads Authority) and John Fleetwood (Brundall Parish Tree Warden) at the official opening of Church Fen Local Nature Reserve on 23 July 2003.



Brundall Church Fen LNR Plant List

Trees and Shrubs

Ash, common	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Birch, downy	<i>Betula pubescens</i>
Birch, silver	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Blackcurrant	<i>Ribes nigrum</i>
Box, common	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
Broom, Butcher's	<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>
Buddleia	<i>Buddleia davidii</i>
Cherry, wild	<i>Prunus avium</i>
Dogwood, red	<i>Cornus alba</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Elm, wych	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Hazel, common	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Hop	<i>Humulus lupulus</i>
Horse-chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Knotweed, Japanese	<i>Reynoutria japonica</i>
Laurel, cherry	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>
Lime, common	<i>Tilia x europaea</i>
Maple, Norway	<i>Acer platanoides</i>
Oak, pedunculate	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Oak, holm	<i>Quercus ilex</i>
Plum, Myrobalan	<i>Prunus cerasifera</i>
Poplar, balsam	<i>Populus trichocarpa</i>
Poplar, Italian	<i>Populus 'serotina'</i>
Poplar, white	<i>Populus alba</i>
Privet, common	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
Privet, glossy	<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>
Privet, oval-leaved	<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>
Raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>
Redcurrant	<i>Ribes sativum</i>
Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>
Rose, dog	<i>Rosa canina</i>
Rose, Burnett	<i>Rosa spinosissima</i>
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>
Spindle, common	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>
Spindle, Japanese	<i>Euonymus japonicus</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Willow, almond leaved	<i>Salix triandra</i>
Willow, crack	<i>Salix fragilis</i>
Willow, grey	<i>Salix cinerea</i>
Yew, common	<i>Taxus baccata</i>

Grasses

Cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Frome, wood false	<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>
Grass, annual	<i>Poa annua</i>
Grass, rough	<i>Poa trivialis</i>
Grass, sweet	<i>Glyceria maxima</i>
Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
Reed, canary	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>

Wild Flowers

Alkanet, green	<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>
Angelica, wild	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>
Avens, water	<i>Geum rivale</i>
Avens, wood	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
Balsam, Himalayan	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>
Balsam, orange	<i>Impatiens capensis</i>
Bitter-cress, large	<i>Cardamine amara</i>
Bitter-cress, wavy	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>
Bittersweet	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>
Burdock, lesser	<i>Arctium minus</i>
Buttercup, creeping	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Campion, red	<i>Silene dioica</i>
Celandine, lesser	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>
Chervil, bur	<i>Anthriscus caucalis</i>
Chervil, rough	<i>Chaerophyllum temulentum</i>

Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>
Chickweed, bog	<i>Stellaria oliginosa</i>
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Clover, white	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Cone flower	<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>
Creeping-Jenny	<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>
Cuckoo flower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>
Daffodil	<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Daisy, oxeye	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Dead-nettle, red	<i>Lamium purpureum</i>
Dead-nettle, white	<i>Lamium album</i>
Dock, broad leaved	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
Dock, clustered	<i>Rumex anadensis es</i>
Dock, wood	<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>
Elder, ground	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
Fern, Buckler	<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>
Fern, male	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Fern, Matr's tongue	<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>
Figwort, water	<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>
Forget-me-not, water	<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>
Goldenrod, Canadian	<i>Solidago anadensis</i>
Gypsywort	<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>
Heliotrope, winter	<i>Petasites fragrans</i>
Hemp-agrimony	<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>
Hemp-nettle, common	<i>Galeopsis tetrahit</i>
Herb-Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>
Hogweed, giant	<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>
Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>
Iris, yellow	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>
Ivy, ground	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
Kingcup	<i>Caltha palustris</i>
Knapweed, common	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
Loosestrife, purple	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>
Mint, water	<i>Mentha aquatica</i>
Mustard, garlic	<i>Alfaria petiolata</i>
Nettle, common	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Nightshade, enchanter's	<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>
Nipplewort	<i>Lapsana communis</i>
Parsley, cow	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>
Plantain, greater	<i>Plantago major</i>
Plantain, water	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Reedmace	<i>Typha latifolia</i>
Sandwort, three-nerved	<i>Moehringia trinervia</i>
Sedge, greater pond	<i>Carex riparia</i>
Sedge, lesser pond	<i>Carex acutiformis</i>
Sedge, remote	<i>Carex remota</i>
Sedge, tussock	<i>Carex paniculata</i>
Skullcap	<i>Scutellaria galericulata</i>
Snowdrop	<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>
Speedwell, germander	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>
Thistle, creeping	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Thistle, sow	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>
Thistle, spear	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Twayblade, common	<i>Listera ovata</i>
Valerian, common	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>
Water-lily, yellow	<i>Nuphar lutea</i>
Water-parsnip, lesser	<i>Berula erecta</i>
Water-starwort, common	<i>Callitriche stagnalis</i>
Waterpepper	<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>
Willowherb, great	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>
Woundwort, hedge	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>