



HLF PROGRESS REPORT Q4 2015



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HLF Report – Breaking New Ground Progress Report



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01/10/2015–31/12/2015

Programme A

A1 - Ground Disturbance

A project meeting took place on 7th December for all partners where they focused on the progress with the ground disturbance work, pre disturbance baseline surveys, historic environment work and follow up monitoring. Pre-baseline flora surveys have been completed on some of the sites, and all partners have plans in place to deliver the ground disturbance work. The group explained that monitoring work would be most valuable if the monitoring commitments focused on the invertebrate response. Invertebrates generally respond quicker to ground disturbance management than flora, however, the lead monitoring partner NBIS originally put in to do flora monitoring as part of this project though due to project timescales and plants not fully responding for 2-4 years post disturbance it was decided that invertebrates would be monitored instead. To uncover how priority birds respond to ground disturbance management, the group were happy for RSPB to investigate the possibility of integrating some stone-curlew tracking work into the project.

NWT

Following all the preparation work over the summer at Weeting Heath by Norfolk Wildlife Trust, machinery including a digger and tractor and trailer to move topsoil arrived on site and ground work commenced on the 14th September at Weeting Heath and ran through to 6th October. The first area to be turf stripped was the one hectare plot in the middle of the heath with the earth being transported and emptied in the agreed place on compartment two. Once this was completed the machinery operators then concentrated on the two smaller areas towards the north of the compartment.

The final area to be turf stripped along the eastern boundary required there to be an archaeologist present while work was being carried out. However, nothing of archaeological importance was found so this did not affect our time frame for completion. Once all the turf stripping was completed and the material had been moved the excavator operator spent three days profiling and grading out the soil to form a long bank running horizontally along compartment two as agreed in the proposal.



Soil in piles ready to be profiled and laid into a bank.



Top soil removal at Weeting Heath

BHP sites

A date has been set for NWT in-house machinery operator to carry out the topsoil removal works and is due to take place in February 2016. SSSI consents are approved in writing so that work can commence as planned on all these sites. BNG Meetings attended have been attended by the project officer.

This quarter NWT have had two external conservation volunteer work parties at Weeting Heath with volunteers helping to pull up small pines on the heath. This is an important part of the habitat management of the site, preventing the heath from reverting to woodland.

HES

This quarter the Historic Environment Service has focused on managing the programme of archaeological works associated with ground disturbance works. Following archaeological monitoring of turf stripping at Weeting Heath in September, on 15th November, Heather Wallis spent a day monitoring the excavation of pits at Santon Street by Forestry Commission/Friends of Thetford Forest volunteers. Around 28 pits were dug on the site of a known Roman settlement, each of which had the potential to disturb/uncover numerous Roman artefacts. However, there were very few finds: one possible worked flint, one modern iron post fitting and a burnt flint.

A2 - Conserving The Brecks County Wildlife Sites

Gorse Industrial Estate in Suffolk has been officially designated as a new CWS by Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership.

Work has continued advising owners of County Wildlife Sites (CWS) with a view to planning restoration work due to take place later this winter and next winter. Further management plans were written and management advice has been given to landowners and managers of CWS. Practical management work has been carried out on one CWS with work planned on one further site, before Christmas and work on two others in the next quarter.



Work being carried out at the new CWS at Gorse Industrial Estate

- CWS 827 Part of sandpit plantation-pingo restoration work. Tree felling and pingo clearance planned to happen by end Dec 2015.
- Discussions and site visits with BTO regarding a ground disturbance project at Nunnery lakes on CWS 708. To happen Jan-March 2016.

- Works planned for CWS 701 to coppice some alders and open up glades in the woods for ground flora. To happen Feb 2016.
- Works are planned for CWS 719 by the end of March including tree clearance around pingos and scrub control on meadow.
- Management work has taken place on the new CWS at Gorse Industrial Estate - flail and collect of whole site carried out by contractor. Broom also flailed and stumps treated.

Volunteers are in the process of identifying the remainder of the invertebrates collected during sampling in the summer. The report will be ready for the end of 2015 and submitted with the March report.

The 2015 training workshop for CWS site owners and managers took place on 9th November at Santon Downham conference centre. The workshop focussed on advising owners/managers on Countryside Stewardship and for this reason was led by FWAG officers with support from NWT and SWT staff. FWAG delivered a presentation about the options of the new scheme and an informal discussion was held looking at people's feedback/concerns with the scheme. Attended by 8 local farmers and conservation managers.

Progress has remained slow in persuading Breckland Council and Thetford Town Council to allow sites within the town to be designated as CWS, even though they passed the criteria. These are sites which would be very suitable for volunteer involvement. However, NWT conservation staff met with officers of Breckland Council in October and a decision is promised by the end of the year. This would allow restoration management to commence in the Spring.

Breckland Council has committed to managing their sites for conservation and amenity even if they decide not to allow designation as CWS. One option would be to carry out restoration even if the sites aren't officially designated as CWS. This would help improve the biodiversity value of these sites and would encourage the council to consider designation in the future. Alternatively arrangement will be made for funds to be spent on other CWS in the BNG area

SWT work carried out during this reporting period was predominantly administrative. Tasks included the collection of data for sites visited so far using MapInfo and SBRC records. The SWT team attended a meeting with Dorothy Casey, Head of Conservation to discuss the project's targets for 2016.

Began drafting management recommendations for Ducksluice Meadows and Brandon Memorial Playing Fields CWSs. These will be finalised by March 2016 and evidence submitted as part of the next quarterly report.

A3 - Pingo Project and Frog Pool Re-introduction

Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Post reintroduction of the northern pool frog to Thompson Common there has been a considerable amount of habitat management carried out. This work will both improve the habitat of the release location and also the surrounding area to encourage dispersion of the species over time. Large areas

around the pingos have been cut using a tractor mounted topper to control the development of scrub on the site. NWT have also had a number of volunteer groups to help control the alder and willow regeneration around the fringes of the pingos. Brash and scrub that has been cut has also been burnt on site.

The NWT Conservation officer has provided support to areas where there are key pingo sites outside of NWT ownership. She has arranged a site visit with contractors to organise appropriate scrub clearance at Hockham. It is a site just outside of the BNG boundary that advice has been given to. It is privately owned, less than a mile from Furze Allotment CWS which is within the boundary & has had BNG funding. Gorse scrub is being cleared from one of the pingos to open it up to the adjacent grassland which is grazed by red poll cattle with the intention of opening up the pingo to grazing.

This quarter there have been two external volunteer conservation work parties; one with 8 volunteers and the other with five volunteers. Both groups carried out crucial habitat management in the form of removing scrub from the fringes of pingos. All groups thoroughly enjoyed the days and were pleased to be contributing to the conservation of the pool frogs at Thompson Common. One of the groups was filmed carrying out the work as part of a NWT promotional film about Breckland.

ARC Trust

This quarter has seen useful progress with the project, mainly planning work for 2016 and beyond, after an extremely productive summer period which saw the first releases at Thompson Common. The key activities in this period have been:

- (a) Reviewing project activity to date, and planning future action, especially via volunteers on the Pool Frog Expert Group
- (b) Liaison with the Institute of Zoology over biosecurity and health surveillance arrangements.

Since these discussions are ongoing, details of the outcomes from these activities will be included in a future quarter.

The ARC Trust team continued to promote the project via their website whilst maintaining stocks of leaflets about the reintroduction at Thompson Common

Nine volunteers attended the Pool Frog Expert Group meeting on 16 September 2015 (not previously reported). They contributed extremely useful information to help with reviewing reintroduction progress, and planning future activity. Their proposals are being incorporated into work plans for 2016 and beyond.

A4 - Pine Lines and Pine Connections

The first trees went in the ground during this quarter on the Euston estate. There was various publicity associated with this including tweets and a press.

The team at Norfolk FWAG have been making efforts to line up the school visits during the next pine line planting season (Feb –March 2016), and have so far received one confirmed visit from Raleigh School however there is a lack of interest in taking up the offer of the school visits. Efforts will be redoubled in the New Year to attract more interest from schools.



A mechanical auger being used to dig the holes for the new pine lines on Euston estate

The lack of volunteer hours to date in the project will be addressed next year through the monitoring program.

A5 - Engine House Restoration

The final site boundary has now been agreed with the Forestry Commission as a result of consultation with immediate neighbours.

The project architect visited the site mid-December to review the building condition, make an assessment of specification and restoration works relative to the available budget and is in the process of drafting works proposals for Building Regulations consent.

A site meeting with the FC land agent is planned for mid-January to agree the boundary markers on the ground and agree proposed tree works.

Ivy was cut from the base of the building to allow it to die off prior to removal.

A6 - Grant Fund

A6/1 – Sandlines

This project is complete although a selection of poems will be displayed at The Apex in Bury St Edmunds at the BNG exhibition in January. A meeting took place on 4th December to discuss arrangements.

A6/2 - Brecks Landscape Patterns

This project is complete although a selection of the artwork produced will be displayed at The Apex in Bury St Edmunds at the BNG exhibition in January. A meeting took place on 4th December to discuss arrangements.

A6/3 - Thetford Munzee Trail

This quarter the Thetford Munzee Trail was promoted at two events: Wild About Norfolk at Easton College near Norwich on Saturday 10th October and half term promotion was held outside the Leaping Hare Tourist Information Centre in Thetford on Saturday 24th October. The events provided a useful opportunity to engage families in the Thetford Munzee Trail concept and to encourage them to have a go at the trail.



Norfolk Trails promoting Thetford Munzee Trail outside the tourist information centre

The survey participation deadline was Sunday 1st November which tied in with the end of half term. The survey achieved 17 responses; 15 complete and 2 incomplete with a response rate of 85%. The feedback showed that for the 17 survey respondents, 67 people played Munzee; 40 of which were family members and 14 of which were a local Cub Scout group who

earned badges from participating in a community activity to learn about their local area. The average size of a family was 4 people which generally consisted of parents with younger children.

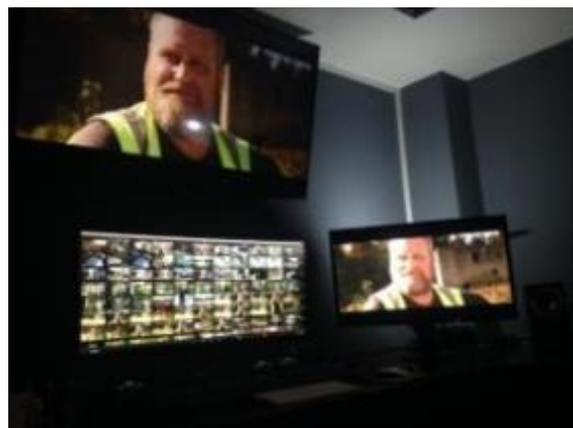
The prize draw was drawn on Monday 2nd November by a member of the Norfolk Trails team and several witnesses. The winner received £150 worth of Go Ape Vouchers for the family to use in Thetford Forest. All other survey respondents were sent a free family pass to Thetford's Ancient House Museum as 20 had been provided for the cause.

14 of the 67 players were a local Cub Scout group who earned badges from participating in a community activity to learn about their local area. Several respondents came from the Thetford and Brandon area but few came from further afield such as Norwich and surrounds, Downham Market area, one came from Hitchin area and one came from Soham area.

A6/4 – Perfect Peace

The team have been editing the footage, grading (colouring) the film, whilst also composing music for it and doing additional ADR (adding additional sound effects and voice overs). The film is in the final stages of post production and should be ready for release in February/March 2016.

The team have been learning how to use new software – Adobe Premier Pro, after effects and grading software.



Five students (part of Create’s 90 second film school and are NEET’s). were shown the film and asked to comment on the edit.

One of the NEETs from the project who was involved with writing the script has gone on to write a screen play.

A6/5 – Goshawk Tagging

No activity this quarter as it isn’t nesting season.

A6/6 - Flint Murals

One of the murals has been incorporated into the Breaking New Ground ‘Flint Rocks’ exhibition at Ancient House in Thetford as an example of how flint can be knapped and used in artwork. The rest are in storage at Brandon Country Park while it is decided on their next location.

Programme B

B1 - The People's History of Thetford Forest

Forestry Commission (FC) trained an additional volunteer on interview techniques bringing the total number of volunteers trained up to 12. 6 interviews in total have been recorded and are now being edited and typed up by the volunteers.

Two evening drop-in sessions have been held where volunteers, retired foresters and members of the community can come and look at old photos, share information and help archive the photos. This has helped the volunteers preparing for interview to learn more about the forest's history and meet potential interviewees. It's also encouraged retired foresters sign up for interviews and gain an insight into what is happening in some of the photos and where they were taken. 10 volunteers took part in each session



Volunteers and retired foresters meetup at a drop in session to record the forest's history

A trip to the Norfolk Records Office (NRO) was organised for 10 volunteers to demonstrate best practice in archiving, restoration and to demonstrate how the project's oral history interviews will be stored and accessed. One the day, Karen Gaffney, Assistant Education and Outreach Officer, welcomed the group and gave a short history of archiving in the county; the purpose of keeping records and the wide range of records stored at NRO. In the Search Room, she explained the procedures for accessing and viewing documents, including the Sound Room for listening to oral history recordings. In one of the five storerooms, she explained the optimum conditions for conservation of the documents and showed the group some of the movable shelving and the 'mass storage' system.

A highlight of the visit was going to the Conservation Department where the Conservator had a selection of historic photographs currently being repaired. He talked to the volunteers about the ideal storage for photographs and how to apply this to the FC archives. The group then viewed the King's Lynn charter (and its seal) granted to it by Charles 11 in 1662 and heard about the work required to conserve it.

Finally, there was a selection of maps, leases, letters and estate records with the theme of 'trees in the Brecks' awaiting the group in the Green Room, especially fascinating to the volunteers as they showed the landscape before Thetford Forest was planted.

A photographic display and the chance to listen to the interviews recorded to date (via laptops, recorders and headphones) was held in December for FC staff as part of an end of year get together at the Santon Downham Village Hall. The aim was to encourage more people to volunteer or come forward for interview. 44 people attended over the two hour session.

The project now has a database of 30 people who have signed up to be interviewed or who have been nominated.

B2 - Enchanted Forest

Meetings have taken place to organise the dates for the two split events in 2016. The Enchanted Heath event will take place over the October half term at West Stow Country Park with guided walks, children's activities and a spectacular light show.

The Enchanted Forest event will likely be a single day in the summer.

B3 - Family Fun Day

No activity this quarter.

B4 - Wildlife Recorders of Tomorrow

Another busy quarter for the NBIS team, they have been developing resources, the draft rebrand and text edit of the species surveillance handbook is complete. Further to come and additional species group sheets for species groups not covered are already in development. The Wildlife Recorders of Tomorrow web area and online recording survey forms have been updated.

Continued promotion of project to get more volunteers, alongside promoting individual events. This



Children learn about Brecks species at the Brandon Country Park BioBlitz

has been through Twitter and Facebook; media (including 2 press releases for Bioblitz and Birds event which was picked up by Radio Norfolk and they created a facebook quiz; adverts on partner websites or promoted by partners through their volunteer lists or e-newsletter in the case of NWT, BNG and NCC Trails team; posters and leaflets in shops and Thetford tourist office. Large amounts of publicity including a double- page spread in Funoutside (education magazine that goes

to 30, 000 families and schools), an article in About Thetford and also Tern (NWT magazine).

Total sign up for the project in general so far is 121 people, exceeding the output of 60 targeted. More are to be added to the list. Some have already been recording and sent in records, others are recording currently and not yet records in. Future events have been planned to train and record.

BioBlitz at Brandon Country Park was a great success, the team are still receiving records but totals on the day were around 260 species with the final total expected to be around the 300-320 mark.

An estimated total of 100 volunteers were involved in recording.

Successful 'Lichens of the Brecks' heathland field meeting on 8th November with 12 attendees, plus an expert tutor. 30 species recorded on Thetford Warren, 13 on Weeting Heath.

Also, 'Birds of the Brecks' workshop on 5th December with 31 volunteers attending, very successful and was much appreciated by attendees. An introduction sessions was held in mid-December and more are planned for the new year.

Programme C

C1 - Brecks Forest Way

Norfolk Trails have now taken delivery of the waymark discs and branding plaques. Habitat Regulation approval is being sought from Natural England prior to signage installation.

The bridge replacement works at Brandon were completed in October 2015 and the boardwalk at Two Mile Bottom was installed in November 2015. For the step removal/ramp construction at Santon Downham, a Flood Defence Consent Application has been submitted to Environment Agency. Discussion concerning the design/construction of this installation is ongoing with the contractor.

For the river restoration works, a 6 month path closure is in place on the bridleway between Santon Downham and Brandon, which runs until mid-April. Notices have been posted at either end of the path and these are checked regularly and replaced as necessary.



New boardwalk at Two Mile Bottom was installed in November 2015.

A fourth meeting was recently held with Forestry Commission (FC) to discuss the timescale for works between Santon Downham and Brandon. FC have confirmed that they will be unable to complete works by the end of the financial year. As the locations of the woody debris installation do not impact on the section of path programmed for the step replacement, it has been agreed that NCC will continue with this work and also

undertake a section of re-surfacing where there will be no additional disturbance. These works will be on schedule for completion by the end of March 2016. Any additional re-surfacing will be carried out after FC have completed. The current path closure will need to be extended to account for the new timescale and FC was advised that they will need to apply to NCC for this to be actioned.

C2 - Brecks Earth Heritage Trail

Activity this quarter has included preparation work by Tim Holt-Wilson involving a recce of sites and drafting information about them. Also purchase of a MOTO E smartphone to enable testing of drafts of the app.

C3 - Brecks Rides

During this stage of the project, research is being conducted and the resulting information will form the foundations of the leaflet that will be produced for the trail. Historical and other factual information, places to go and things to see are the types of information that will be featured in the literature.

The route between West Stow Country Park and Brandon Country Park has been finalised but the team are still waiting for the outcome of the Forestry Commission's OSA report, to see whether they will allow a route through High Lodge. It is hoped this will be finalised in early 2016.

C4 - Wings Over The Brecks

NWT

After a successful season capturing live images of nesting stone curlews on the heath, all that was left to do was to collect in the equipment and put into storage for next spring.

The remaining budget of the Wings over the Brecks steering committee will be used by NWT to purchase further equipment; to increase the flexibility of the camera system at Weeting. This will allow more opportunity to film birds and hopefully the opportunity for live streaming.

RSPB

Not as much activity from RSPB this quarter as the Community Engagement Officer left at the end of September. So we've kept things going on a low level while we recruit for a new officer, who is due to start in January 2016.

The roaming display is waiting to be installed and will be picked up by the new officer in January.

Further interest from BBC Springwatch in the goshawks and ongoing conversations about feasibility between partners. This would represent excellent coverage for the WoB project and Breaking New Ground in general.

A bat walk was delivered with Suffolk Bat Group at High lodge at 4.30-7pm on 30th October. Very popular and over-subscribed. 35 people attended. Successful bat sightings and various species were picked up on the bat detectors. Good promotion of the project. Two project activity stands were run in half term on 27th & 29th October, 11am-3pm. BTO ringing demonstrations on 27th and craft activities and self guided trail and craft activities on 29th.

Four volunteers have been involved in the project this quarter through helping at the October half term events and project stands and through editing footage. The event/stand volunteers have been talking to the public about the project and the species that we are focussed on and their wider Brecks setting. They have directed the public into the cafe to see the footage for themselves and have given out project leaflets to help them understand what they see on the screen. They have been supporting the public to take part in the activities on offer which teach them about the wildlife around them.

The editing volunteer has spent time going through the footage and editing to capture the best bits that can be shown on the screens. Unfortunately the roaming display has been further delayed due to not having an officer in place to deliver the work. This will be rectified in January 2016.

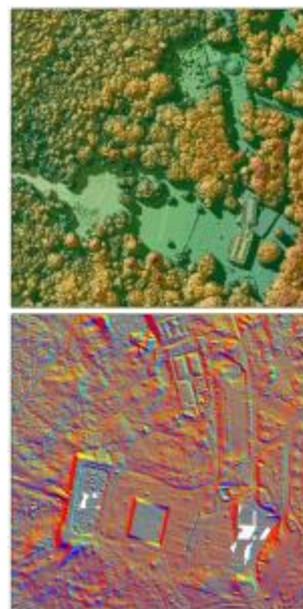
C5 - The Brecks Heritage Trail

This project is not yet active.

C6 - Revealing the Landscape – LiDAR

Workshop held for BNG partners and other heritage and landscape professionals to disseminate information that has come out of the project. 35 people attended the day at Santon Downham Village Hall on 22nd October. Presentations were given by Peter Crow from Forest Research and Rachel Riley from Forestry Commission. There was much excitement in the room about the vast amount of new features which have been uncovered by the project with people eager to get their hands on the information. Whilst the data is very new, project partners will be required to sign an agreement before gaining access to the information. This is so that new sites can be properly analysed by experts and to reduce the likelihood that sites could be exploited by metal detectorists.

The web data resource for the LiDAR data is in the process of being developed.



Brandon Country Park LiDAR
 1) With tree canopy
 2) Without tree canopy

C7 - Digital Access to The Brecks

Discussions took place as to the effectiveness of releasing a BNG app within the saturated app market. It was decided that with the possibility that it would not get many downloads, long term maintenance costs and that all BNG info is readily accessible across all devices with the website and social media channels, we would look to produce something different.

A brief was drawn up for tenderers to put together a piece of digital interpretation of Thetford Warren Lodge, encompassing its history and to tell the story of the building and warrening in the Brecks. The tender was left open to interpretation by the tenderers to use their creative license as to how to produce this. It could be a short film, an interactive website, an audio tour etc. Tenders are due back on 22nd January for the BNG team to assess.

Our social media channels are growing by the week, albeit steadily though our post-reach is into the thousands. The website continues to be updated with news stories, events and opportunities.

The LiDAR data has been converted to software called Quick Terrain Reader allow for the LiDAR images to be viewed using free software. This is over and above the LiDAR project outputs to make the data accessible to project partners that do not have access to high-end terrain mapping software. The intention is then to make it available for the public via the BNG website once the sensitive areas have been mapped.

C8 - The Brecks from Above

This project is not yet fully underway, but preparatory work documenting and managing the sources required by the project, establishing whether these were already held or still required was undertaken. In addition, the team liaised with project partners regarding the use of sources and methodology, not least through attendance at Breaking New Ground's Geological Landscapes Day School and the Brecks LiDAR workshop.

A digitisation planning meeting has been arranged for January.

The project design for an enlarged Breckland National Mapping Programme project, which was reported upon last quarter, was submitted to Historic England in November. They have a number of comments on the project design that need to be addressed before funding can be confirmed. It is hoped that an amended project design can be submitted before Christmas, or in early January at the latest. Any changes made to the project design, or any related delay, are not expected to impact upon the Brecks from Above project.

C9 - Connecting The Brecks with its Archives

The main outcome of the quarter was the successful installation and opening of the Flint Rocks exhibition at Ancient House on 20th November. This entailed the final design, sign off and printing of graphic panels and labels, mount making, interactive design, sourcing of sound effects, installation of AV, pinning on of prehistoric flint artefacts, installation of objects and graphics, setting lights, and arranging the opening event. The launch event coincided with the Kids in Museums Takeover Day and youngsters from the Museum's after-school History Club and Teenage History clubs 'took over' the event. They made speeches, cut a ribbon to the exhibition room with a piece of flint and led flint handling activities around the Museum for visitors to enjoy. The evening concluded with presentations of the young people with Takeover Day certificates by John Ward, chair of the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee and concluding remarks by Robert Kybird, Mayor of Thetford.

Objects for the display include a decorative flint design in the form of a horse set into a block of mortar made by master craftsman William Carter of Brandon. This item had been rescued from the wall of the library in Brandon earmarked for demolition as funded by the Breaking New Ground grant fund. Other examples of flint craftsmanship include a flint necklace and flint alphabet by Bill Basham of Brandon.

Volunteer and Artist in residence at the Museum, Dan Morgan made a model of flint miners from the 20th century AD and the 20th century BC which is displayed imagining their meeting. A sound

effect of a flint ‘lithophone’, feely boxes and flint fact cards form part of the interactive unit. Fossils from 100 million years ago form a display under a reconstruction painting of the late Cretaceous sea when chalk and flint were formed. A unit promoting the Breaking New Ground project is included in the room and a display of Japanese obsidian provides an international comparison.

The following Friday was the switch on of the Christmas Lights in Thetford and over 300 people came through the Museum to enjoy the activities laid on and take in the new Flint Rocks exhibition. Splendid volunteers from the East Norfolk Militia fired their flintlock muskets in the museum garden.



Ben from Teenage History Club showing off the collection at the opening



Window display as part of the exhibition at Ancient House

C10 - Journal of Brecks Studies

This project is not yet active.

C11 - Beastly Brecks

Tangram Theatre Company was appointed to deliver the programme this quarter after initial discussions. Site visits were made with John Hinton from Tangram and Ed Goodall from Breaking New Ground to West Stow, Brandon, Thetford Warren, Ancient House and other key locations. Subsequently after this trip and some extra fact finding research, the theatre company are now preparing the script.



The next key milestone is getting the schools on board and happy to participate, contact with schools has been made and will be followed up in the New Year. The two non-school productions will be held at West Stow at the Big Brecks II event in March and at the Dragon Festival in late June.

C12 - Upon this Rock

This project is complete.

C13 – The Big Brecks Fest

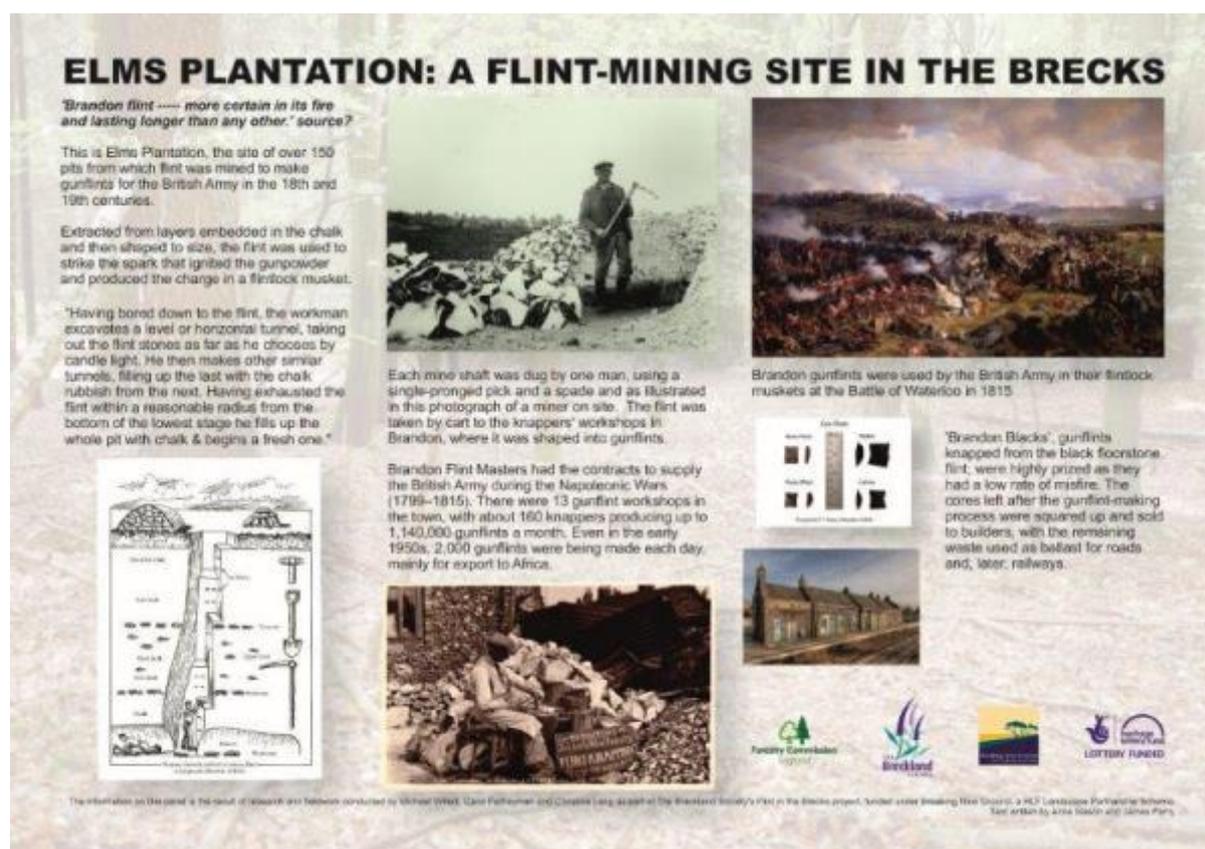
This project is complete.

C14 - Flint in The Brecks

The team at Breckland Society have been concentrating on writing the report to conclude the project and bring together its findings and outputs.

The draft report is currently (December 2015) with the designer and editor, with printed copies anticipated for January 2016. Milestones for the written report and leaflet are on track.

The interpretation panel (below) providing information on the gunflint mining industry has been installed at Elms Plantation, as agreed with the Forestry Commission.



All volunteer training milestones have been met in terms of date, and exceeded in terms of participation numbers.

Webpages, drawing on the Flint in the Brecks Report, will be created in January/February 2016 and will include the results of the volunteer research into the use of flint in the churches and the gunflint industry

C15 - Brecks' Warrens and Lodges

On 3rd October, NHES Community Engagement Officer Claire Bradshaw provided training in the care, cleaning and classification of the artefacts found during the site investigation on 19 September. The volunteers put this training to immediate use as they spent an hour washing and sorting the artefacts and attempting identification.

The second part of the session was devoted to training in how to write an archaeological report of the site investigation. The volunteers undertook responsibility for writing up their particular part of the investigation and also for the introductory and methodology sections. It was agreed that early January 2016 would be the deadline for the first drafts of this report.

One volunteer undertook archival research into the census records to see if Reed Fen Lodge was listed. She found warreners and their families at Reed Fen Lodge from 1841 to 1901. In addition, she listed warreners living in Thetford during the same period (not at a lodge but in dwellings in the town) and these may be engaged for work in the trapping seasons.

A second volunteer researched newspaper accounts and found considerable evidence for poaching convictions.

The volunteers are keen to continue the investigation of the Reed Fen Lodge site with at least another day. The NHES Community Engagement Officer has confirmed that she need not attend as the volunteers have received the training. However, the Project Manager and the Forestry Commission's Conservation and Heritage Officer will attend.



Volunteers cleaning artefacts from the Reed Fen Lodge investigation

The first Saturday in February 2016 is the provisional date.

C16 - Sheep in The Brecks

This project is not yet active.

C17 - Brecks Military History

This project is still in its early stages. This quarter Peter Goulding of Breckland Society has set out a basic structure for the report following rough chronological periods between 1900-1949. The reporting of archaeological fieldwork and archival research will be based on the reporting system used by previous Breckland Society Projects.

The following archival sources worth investigating so far are:

- Suffolk Record Office - wide range of relevant sources, venue for the training day
- Norfolk Record Office - a small number of potentially important sources, including a rare photograph and a war diary
- STANTA archive- limited but with a large number of potentially very important photographs
- Swaffham Museum - large number of sources, includes important photographs the 1911/12 manoeuvres, and artwork produced by WW2 German POWs
- Cockley Cley Hall private papers - potentially very important archive with details of military camps, POWs and details of the 'Kindertransport'

Several other archives will also be investigated, especially Ancient House Thetford, Thetford and Watton Newspaper Archive and Bury Free Press Archive. This will definitely provide enough tasks for the volunteer group to investigate, each archive also has a specific focus of content for the project .

Several potential archaeological sites have also been identified for investigation. These are:

- High Ash army camp (likely venue for the training day)
- Two airfield sites -Bodney and East Wretham, administered by STANTA. If this fieldwork can be agreed then it would be a rare opportunity for volunteers to carry out fieldwork on an MOD firing range. Discussions continue.
- Site of WW1 Tank training area, possibly with surviving practice trenches and a 'machine gun berm'. If there is anything remaining here it would be of national importance.
- Cockley Cley hall possible remains of WW2 POW camp.

So far 16 volunteers have come forward to get involved with the project, from Oxburgh History Group, West Norfolk Aviation Society, Breckland Society, Thetford History Group and the Forestry Commission. Several other volunteers have also expressed interest, and several oral history interviewees have all come forward.

The project is also helping start the creation of the Thetford History Group, a newly started initiative by Thetford Library which will be an ongoing legacy.

The first two months have laid a good foundation for the project, with good interest from volunteers. The next step is to book, advertise and run the training days in February and March to prepare the volunteers to undertake their research.

The next challenge is to effectively engage with Suffolk Record Office to organise dates for the archival research training, and with the Forestry Commission for permission to run the archaeological fieldwork training. Probably due to the time of year, people working part-time and

taking annual leave etc it is taking a bit of time sort out. Hopefully something should be arranged in within the first two weeks of January at Suffolk Record Office.

C18 - Creatively Interpreting The Brecks

The 8th workshop took place on 17th October and following the collection of many different and colourful Fungi specimen the previous day, Jonathan Revett commenced with a 45 minute illustrated talk which was well received, followed by a painting class with demonstrations, instructions and one-to-one tuition from tutors.

In advance, Reinhild Raistrick (the tutor for the day) had set up some individual collections of fungi on damp Oasis to represent them growing in their natural habitat, surrounded by leaf litter, moss and grasses, which attendees could easily replicate using their own choice from the wide selection. Reinhild also had handouts which very much helped with the understanding of how to draw them.



Attendees to the 8th workshop painted a variety of different types of fungi.

There followed two demonstrations by Isobel and Reinhild on the watercolour techniques and colour mixing involved with painting both the fungi and the base habitat materials surrounding the composition.

It was well attended by 25 people (5 more than the allocated spaces) and feedback was 'Excellent' (Grade 5) on the majority of forms returned.

Volunteers and members of the public have been involved in setting up and taking down the workshop.

".....my first time with watercolours which I have avoided in the past- A really friendly and supportive environment meant I was confident to just have a go whatever the result....."

".....I will now go fungi hunting....."

".....it has given me insight into the local area rich in fungi"

At the conclusion of 2015's workshops, all the collected paintings have been mounted and covered ready for display at The Apex in January 2016 along with the paintings from the first year, making a total of 31 which will go on display to the public.

C19 - Landscape Revolution

This quarter the team at UEA have continued working on the collation of existing research data, the creation of new GIS datasets and additions to existing datasets.

The pressures of teaching and consultancy project deadlines meant that it was not possible to hold any workshops this quarter so these are now planned for Spring 2016 (dates and venues to be confirmed in our January project meeting).

The School of History has provisionally agreed to appoint a research assistant in Landscape History on a part time post which will increase our capacity on all fronts.

An initial call for student volunteers has resulted in the recruitment of 15 volunteers, including both undergraduates and postgraduates. We have identified a range of tasks (e.g. gathering archive references, assisting with workshops, developing and testing the website and research toolkit) which will be allocated once the students return for the new term in January.

In addition to recruiting volunteers through workshops and through general publicising of the project we are also planning to directly contact members of relevant historical organisations including the Norfolk Gardens Trust and the Centre of East Anglian Studies.

A meeting with the School of Computing at UEA has been arranged to discuss the design and content of the project website (with a particular focus on interactive maps).

Following the long delay in starting the project (see previous quarterly report) the team are still running behind schedule but feel they have the time and resources to make significant progress during Spring 2016 by reducing their teaching and consultancy project commitments for 2016 to ensure maximum time is devoted to this project.

Programme D

D1 - Discovering the Archaeology of The Brecks

The fourth quarter of 2015 has seen something of a hiatus for the Discovering the Archaeological Landscape of the Brecks project, as proposed budget cuts to the Norfolk Historic Environment Service resulting in the loss by April 2016 of 5.5 fte members of staff (including several members of the project delivery team) has meant that a rethink of the rest of the project has been necessary.

A Mid-Term review meeting was held with BNG management at which the revised approach to the delivery of the project was discussed and approved. All delivery staff are confident that the promised programme of events can be delivered, albeit with more sessions being sub-contracted than originally anticipated. Additional elements, such as improved web-based mapping of archaeological records within the project area and a short booklet about the archaeology of the Brecks area have been brought into the programme in response to audience demand.

Staff have also had a regular input into the Disturbed Ground and Brecks from Above projects throughout this quarter, as well as attending the BNG Education Group meeting at the end of September.

Participation and promotion in this quarter centred around publicising and reporting on the works so far to internal and external partners. This has included the convening of a heritage projects forum meeting to be held early in the new year at which representatives of the heritage-related BNG projects will be able to discuss their respective works and identify common ground.

Following the Mid-Term review, work has begun on the preparation of a 32-page booklet about the archaeology of the Brecks which will summarise the key archaeological sites and features from the study area, ranging from the earliest evidence for human occupation to Cold War military sites.

All of the sessions delivered to date have resulted in considerable follow-up interest from the participants, many of whom have begun to provide additional information about archaeological sites and monuments with which they are familiar.

During this reporting quarter the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service has temporarily relocated into the building next door to the former office, before moving to a new office on the north-east of Bury St Edmunds in March 2016. The bulk of files and reference material have been placed into short-term storage in Stowmarket, and this has an impact on their effectiveness as a Service, but they will continue to deliver on their commitment to all of the various strands of the BNG project with which they are involved.

A public consultation is currently underway regarding cuts and redundancies to the staff and services of the Norfolk Historic Environment Service which will have a direct and detrimental impact on this project. Provision for community archaeology is one of the areas which it is proposed to do away with, resulting in the loss of the Community Archaeologist post that is a fundamental element of the current project delivery team. Other posts highlighted for redundancy or early retirement include the historic buildings officer who has been instrumental in the provision of the Brecks and Mortar sessions to date, and two members of staff in the Finds Identification and Recording Service who

were lined up to deliver artefact identification workshops later in the programme. The consultation closes in January 2016, with the outcome being made clear in February 2016.

As has already been discussed with the BNG management team, this obviously presents difficulties with regard to the provision of the project strand in its current form, but following the Mid-Term review all staff are confident that the promised programme of events can be delivered, albeit with more sessions being sub-contracted than originally anticipated.

This issue will be kept under constant review as the NCC consultation process progresses.

D2 - Caring for the Built Heritage of The Brecks

OBees have organised and delivered three successful day schools at West Stow Anglo Saxon Village construct two bench seats. The final three day schools are organised and due to take place in January, March and April 2016. Over two thirds of the places have been sold in total already. Each day school included two presentations from heritage experts including a question and answer session, demonstrations, hands-on practical sessions, networking opportunities and signposting to other BNG projects



‘Mortar the Point’ took place on 17th October, starting with two lectures from Rory Sumerling, a heritage expert, about traditional bricklaying and lime, plus practical sessions. Participants learnt about the importance of lime in traditional buildings, how to work with lime, mortar mixing and a traditional approach to brick-laying. Two seat bases laid under the instruction of two tutors. 27 places sold – 25 attended.

‘Caught Knapping’ took place on 14th November with two lectures from Mike McConnell, a heritage expert, plus demonstration and practical sessions. Participants learnt about the use of flints in construction, also about why old buildings get damp and how to remedy damp. They took part in grading flint, before a dry run construction and then built up two small flint walls that will be used as bases for benches at West Stow. Flint knapping demo showed how flints were converted by hand into decorative pieces for buildings. 47 places sold – 40 attended.



‘In the Frame’ took place on 5th December, starting with two lectures from Rick Lewis about timber framing and timber frame repairs. Participants watched repairs and peg making demonstrations, then got practical experience of doing both. They used shave horses, mauls, draw knives, chisels, saws, froes and augers. They also walked through the woodland at West Stow and identified what made a good tree for timber framing and other traditional purposes. 51 places sold - 38 attended

Four OBees volunteers contributed 10 days in the last quarter. Mostly this was helping with participants during the day schools showing them practical skills and how to use tools. This was well received and the learning of the participants enhanced due to the greater number of volunteers supporting the paid tutors. Volunteers also helped by preparing

materials and loading them up to take for use during day schools, and after ‘Caught Knapping’ returned to West Stow to point up the flint walling in the seat.

Some feedback from the courses included:

“The course had all I needed to learn about.”

“Thanks for a fantastic day!!!”

“Nice friendly instructors. Thank you for the opportunity to learn.”

D3 - Heritage Skills Work Placements

No work placements have taken place this quarter but several discussions have taken place with partners with a view to taking someone on.

D4 - Geological Landscapes - Land Manager's Day School

Delivery of this event took place on 19th October starting with introductory presentations delivered by the following professional speakers in the morning:

- Introducing Geodiversity – Tim Holt-Wilson
- Geological Archaeology – Edward Martin (retired Suffolk archaeological officer)
- Geodiversity in Countryside Stewardship – Charlie Ennals (Norfolk FWAG)
- Geodiversity in Natural England’s work – Debbie Gosman (Natural England)

Guided walks undertaken at three sites during the day school:

- Knettishall Heath – delivery assisted by Steve Aylward (Reserves Manager, Suffolk Wildlife Trust)
- Thompson Common – delivery assisted by Paul Waterhouse (Conservation Officer, Norfolk Wildlife Trust)
- Lynford Swell Pit – delivery assisted by Neal Armour-Chelu (Conservation Officer, Forestry Commission)

There were twenty-two participants in the ‘Brecks for Land Managers’ day school, of which four of them were people also giving presentations. The breakdown of the types of people is as follows:

Historic environment management	3
Nature reserve management	6
Farm management	2
Biodiversity specialists	1
Geological specialists	3
Woodland & forestry specialists	4
Rural grant advisers	1
Government agency land management advisers	2

The discussion forum with Q&A session was not achievable in the time available in the morning so it took place during the field trips.

Only three sites were visited rather than the intended four, as the group had the benefit of a site manager’s guided tour at the first site, which took over an hour rather than ¾ and this affected subsequent timings.



Tim Holt-Wilson introducing geological features in the Brecks



Tim demonstrating a large geological feature to various land managers



A glacial remnant 'pingo' at Thompson Common.



Land managers learning about the importance of pingos.

D5 - Communicating the Ice Age Brecks Day Schools

This project is complete.

D6 - BNG in the School Grounds



This quarter, Green Light Trust (GLT) have taken children on field trips to the Brecks. The two schools that will have pingo style ponds built in their grounds went to Thompson Common to explore the unique landscape. Two other schools had each an eventful day at Brandon Country Park exploring the natural habitat, tuning in with their senses to the surroundings of the forest. 145 students in total and 14 members of staff attended the field trips.

GLT held an introductory event at the last school to sign up to the project, Thetford Grammar School. The team are engaging with year 6 and year 12 students at this school. 24 school pupils took part along with 3 members of staff.

GLT also held a Forest School introductory event at Brandon Country Park for 15 participants from the five participating schools. The session was run by Forest School practitioner Gill Chapman of the GLT and assisted by Mia Witham, project leader.

Finally, materials for the build of a tree nursery at each school were delivered ready to be built in January and the creation of a grass heathland began at IES Breckland. With the guidance of Suffolk County Council senior ecologist Sue Hooton, students hand dug 1 metre square patches in a space allocated in the grounds where spade size heathland grass tiles were embedded in.



IES Breckland pupils digging 1x1m patches to transplant heathland into in their school grounds.

D7 - Brecks Uncovered

A very successful quarter with Suffolk Wildlife Trust bringing 4 schools; St Christopher’s, Drake Infants, Forest Academy and Elveden and their KS2 children to Lackford Lakes nature reserve or Knettishall Heath. The programme extended their learning of the Breckland environment that had taken place in the previous academic year within their schools grounds. 199 pupils attended the trips in total.

It was noted that many children had not been to their local green spaces and this outdoor learning inspired them back at school to create poems based on their experiences.

6 volunteers helped with the school visits, helping to prepare for the events, sharing their knowledge with the children and leading small groups. Some of the group sizes were very large so by splitting them up, the children had more personal contact.

Feedback included:

“Thank you for an enjoyable, informative day that the children will now take back to the classroom to inspire their learning”.



Poems produced by KS2 pupils from St Christopher’s School on display

“The children said they weren’t aware how many animals and habitats there were in the Brecks”.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust have been busy developing an in-depth teaching session plan for Year 2 for the new team to deliver the last session at Grimes Graves next year. The Year 3 session plan has been started and a required resources list has been compiled, ready to be ordered. Work has started to create a booklet which will promote NWT nature reserves in the Brecks and sign post to other useful contacts to leave the schools with a legacy and further develop education about the Brecks. This resource will provide schools with information about the range of Brecks habitats that they can visit and explore such as the pingos at Thompson Common, Stone Curlews nesting at Weeting and the heaths of East Wretham.

D8 - Barnham Cross Common - Skills for the Future

On 3rd October, Plantlife ran a monitoring event for 10 participants on Barnham Cross Common, introducing project and why the Common is important, why it is undergoing habitat improvement and that one of the main aims is that 13 Brecks plant species are hoped to return, etc.

The group walked to areas that had been rotovated in March 2015. Tim Pankhurst from Plantlife and Ann Sherwood, a plant expert, explained the survey method and the group jointly surveyed a 2m x 2m quadrat for plants. Smaller groups then surveyed 3 further quadrats, learning more about the species and how to identify them.



Participants learning about Breckland plants and how to survey them

The event went very well. Participants were keen to learn and will hopefully attend further monitoring events. As it was the first monitoring event it was really a training morning, helping people to identify the plants and explaining the surveying methodology.

One of the participants said that he would come out to the Common more often, now that he knew more about the plants that were there. Another participant was a student studying ecology and she felt that it was good training and that her fellow students would have been disappointed to have missed it.