



30 Years

*of a community working
together to secure the natural
world in their neighbourhood*

BONDS MEADOW NEWS

Summer 2018





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Thirty years in the life of a tree can take it from the smallest six-inch sapling to a landmark many feet tall, with a thick strong trunk and large

boughs full of leaves and fruits or nuts. After 30 years, depending on the species, it will provide habitat for a large number of insects, which in turn will lie at the base of an important food chain, serving the birds that will be roosting and maybe nesting and who themselves may become a meal for the speeding sparrowhawk or a stealthy fox. This growing tree may also provide some shade for a rambler on a hot summer's day, a place of play for the climbing child or simply a subject for meditation and reflection for the busy person out to find some peace.

And so it is that this year we look back at 30 years of the Bonds Meadow Association. Just over 30 years ago the meadow was in the frame for possible development, so some concerned and dedicated folk took up the cause and took positive action to protect the area. Once this had been achieved the Association was formed to formally manage and undertake the care of all the diverse habitats that make up "the meadow". Some of the trees planted at that time will indeed now be maturing, providing all the benefits mentioned above, as well as many more besides and of course all the other work. Sowing, mowing, pruning etc. has been put into the meadow throughout the ensuing years and has also borne its flowers, fruits and young. The work continues and will do so we hope, long after the current volunteers and committee have gone. But it's a good time now to say a very big thank you to all of those over the years, present and past who have played their role in preserving and conserving Bonds Meadow.

Summer View Celebrates 30 Years of Association



Left—is a 1990s photograph of the main footpath looking south. Right—Current day.



Christina, whose passion and commitment for the natural world has shaped the Meadow during the biggest part of the 30 years.



Sunhenge, later replaced with a copse of silver birch.



Sometime in the mid 1980s a Manpower Services project team take a bow. Can you see any familiar faces?

Asides with Ivan Bunn



The **Eurasian magpie** or **common magpie** (*Pica pica*) has become a common sight in recent years and is believed not only to be among the smartest of birds but among the most intelligent of all animals. Perhaps because of its intelligence and cunning ways, the poor old magpie has been associated with the devil and has become a symbol of misfortune. Magpies are gregarious birds and even today many people on encountering a single one will still mutter “*Devil, Devil get behind me!*”. Others will respect the bird with the greeting “*Good morning Mr Magpie*” or similar variants or simply by saluting the creature.

According to tradition it would be best to rearrange a journey if you see a single one. If one is seen on the way to church it signifies that death is present!

In Scotland it was once believed that the magpie carried a drop of the Devil’s blood under its tongue which perhaps comes from another belief that the magpie was the only bird not to wear full mourning at the Crucifixion.

Perhaps these superstitions stem from the fact that, according to tradition, the magpie was the only bird that refused to enter The Ark preferring to stay outside. In Celtic lore the magpie is associated with and sacred to the biblical Magog who in turn is associated with apocalyptic traditions.

Traditionally magpies are said to be thieves and particularly attracted to stealing shiny things. Recently “experts” have experimented with the bird to test this idea and have come to the conclusion that it is not true. However, perhaps during the experiments the crafty magpies fooled the scientists!

For reasons still argued about, it was in earlier times, called *Maggot-Pie* or *Maggot-the-Pie*, which was often shortened to *Maggot*. The Deeds of the Manor of Oulton record that in 1476 there was a large wood in Oulton named *Magottes Wode* situated at the southern end of present day Wood Lane.



This year’s RHS Chelsea launched Action Oak, a new initiative to protect oak trees with the aim of:

Working with owners and managers of oak trees and woodlands to help to protect the trees from a range of threats.

Funding research to improve our understanding of the threats to our oak trees and to inform best management practices;

Using established professional and citizen science networks to record changes in the distribution, age and health of our oak trees to identify priority areas for action;

Encouraging organisations to join the Action Oak Partnership and people to support Action Oak.

Bonds Meadow contains many oak trees and the association will closely monitor, and where practicable, support the project.

Health, Wellbeing and Bonds Meadow

There is increasing evidence that the natural world significantly improves a community's physical and mental health and brings people and communities together.

An assessment published by Manchester City of Trees that caught my eye summed up the advantages rather well.

Improving air quality—Trees, woodland and other green infrastructure improve air quality by intercepting harmful particulates, which are a contributing factor to respiratory conditions such as asthma.

Reducing stress—Residents suffering from stress experience less anxiety when they have a view of trees. Physical signs of stress such as muscle tension and pulse rate are also measurably reduced when moving into green surroundings.

Aiding recovery—Convalescing patients with a view and access to greenery have been shown to recover more rapidly, and require less pain-killing medication than those who only have a view of buildings.

Alleviating depression—Taking part in nature-based activities helps people who are suffering from mental ill-health and can contribute to a reduction in levels of anxiety and depression.

Shading us from the sun—Thinning of the protective ozone layer coupled with more extreme weather patterns is being linked to the increase in skin melanomas, the most rapidly increasing form of cancer in the UK. Dappled shade of trees provides a useful barrier to harmful ultra-violet radiation.

Encouraging physical activity—Green spaces provide space to exercise, which

improves memory and cognitive function. People who use parks and other green spaces are three times more likely to reach the recommended level of physical activity than non-users.

Reduce obesity—Children living in areas with good access to green spaces have been shown to spend less time in front of television screens, computers and smart phones and to have 11-19 percent lower prevalence of obesity compared to children with limited or no access to green spaces.

Bringing people together—Trees and woods can help to bring people together and strengthen communities, reducing loneliness and isolation.

Watching the latest Sir David Attenborough documentary may enthuse our support and understanding of the natural world, but actually getting up off the sofa, walking and getting involved in an open natural environment like Bonds Meadow will be better for us all and it's free.



Thirty years of community working together to secure the natural world in their neighbourhood

Although an active group known as Friends of Bonds Meadow had existed pre-1988, it is accepted by the committee that 1988 was the year the Association actually came into being.

A news report by Steven Downes published in the Eastern Daily Press dated 16th September 1993 details what was possibly the culmination of the struggle to retain Bonds Meadow for the community and highlights the “tireless” work the late Jay Hobbs, then Chair, had put in to save the area.

Future of wildlife haven is secured

The future of a wildlife haven near Lowestoft has finally been secured following a 10-year battle to save it from developers.

Bonds Meadow, at Oulton Broad, has been bought by Waveney District Council from Suffolk County Council for £18,000, along with the separately priced nearby Gorleston Road school site.

Local residents, councillors, and the Bonds Meadow management committee had fought for a decade to save the site, off Sands Lane, from being turned into a residential development.

Now the plan is to create a nature reserve at Bonds Meadow which is used by hundreds of children for their nature studies, and is a haven for insects, wild flowers and birds . . . Local residents and councillors were delighted at the news about Bonds Meadow.

Bob Blizzard, Waveney’s council leader, who has pushed for years for the council to buy the site said, “We’re delighted that we’ve been able to secure the future of this much loved site so it will remain forever as a natural area for the community.”

Oulton Broad county councillor Nick Brighthouse said “I’m very pleased indeed that it’s being kept as it is. It’s important to keep open spaces available.”

Jill Hobbs, who lives near Bonds Meadow, said her main feeling was relief. “I’ve got small children and I take them up there whenever the weather’s nice and they love it”, she said.

Leslie Fielding, 80, whose front path joins Bonds Meadow, said he was pleased and relieved and also paid tribute to the secretary of the Bonds Meadow management committee, Jay Hobbs, who is currently on holiday in Scotland. “The result is a reward for all Jay’s work. He has worked tirelessly to keep the site as it is” said Mr Fielding.

Brian Hunter, parish councillor for Oulton and a district and county councillor said, “I’m delighted it’s been saved. I was born within a stone’s throw of Bonds Meadow and used to play there as a kid”.

The Bonds Meadow site has been bought, along with the Gorleston Road school site, from Suffolk County Council. Mr Blizzard explained. “We will develop some social housing on the site of the old school. By doing this we’ve secured the future of Bonds Meadow . . . it’s in our control.”

More images of 30 years

The report marked the successful culmination of many years of constant pressure on the authorities and demonstrates how a community working together can occasionally achieve something special. Many of the original “friends” are still actively serving on the committee and indeed our ever-hardworking secretary Margaret, is still a regular member of the Tuesday workparty.

Sincere thanks are given to everyone past and present that have supported or been involved in some small way firstly, in securing Bonds Meadow for the community, and secondly to the two Project Managers, the many willing volunteers, workparty members, webmaster, committee members, WDC, SWT, Norse group, MPs, councillors of so many authorities and our loyal few that pay a very small membership fee every year that helps to keep us afloat. All have given their valuable time, energy and donations to our very special community amenity.

We look forward to the future and many years of growth in the trees and shrubs planted over the past couple of years.

Many of us will never see the full impact of our labours That is life and as volunteers we know the entire project is about preserving a little bit of the natural world for the coming generations.

Finally we must continue to hold out some hope that the footpath will be re-opened by the time our 60th year celebrations arrive.



Message from Project Manager



In the six months since our last newsletter, Bonds Meadow has in some ways blossomed due to the care and attention that the volunteer team has

lavished on it. However the upheaval caused by the laying of the foul water sewer continued to cause us problems.

By now the pipe way should have been laid, and the subsequent mess and devastation should have been a thing of the past. As it is the contractors have yet to complete their task which is heading for a year round project. This project has impacted onto volunteers, with some being put off having to work in muddy and inhospitable surroundings. Where our numbers had swelled to 16, there are now usually six to seven regulars every Tuesday morning. Attempts to start up an occasional Saturday morning working party to put down bark onto pathways received limited support. Much was achieved but more volunteers are required.



The Tuesday working party has been concentrating on clearing large areas of

undergrowth to facilitate sunlight. One notably is near to the tank traps and community orchard. Another area has been cleared alongside the low meadow. This has given us the opportunity to plant 360 trees in these areas, and alongside the main pathway. The trees are planted in woodland types, so we now have a working



wood, a wildlife wood, a year round colour wood, and a fruit wood. The trees were donated as a result of a successful grant application from the Woodland Trust.

Forthcoming projects include the opening up of a new drainage ditch which should ensure that the currently blocked ditch is for a short distance bypassed. This project needs to be undertaken in the summer when the water levels are low, and the mud has firmed up enough to permit us to work across it.

Finally, a plea for more volunteers. We meet every Tuesday morning from 9.30am to 12.30pm. You can be sure of a warm welcome.

We have all the necessary tools. Just bring yourself, and plenty of enthusiasm.

Ring me if you would like more details—Peter Aldous Tel. 01502 514157 or 07941906946.

Praise from Radio Suffolk

It's a compliment to all their hard work that the volunteer team have been recognised with another award recently. Radio Suffolk presenter Guy Campbell visited us and presented the working party with the Good Egg Award, for volunteering services to the Community. Several of us were interviewed live on air by Guy, and the editorial article was broadcast a few days later on Radio Suffolk.



Grow Wild

Royal Botanic Gardens
Kew Bonds Meadow are pleased to participate in the Royal Botanic Garden's, Kew Grow Wild national outreach initiative. People taking part are doing something positive where they live: connecting with wild flowers, plants and places around them, taking notice of nature, getting active, learning new things and sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm.

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.” – *Author Unknown*

Enthusiastic help required

If you are someone with a good knowledge of natural world identification, in any specialism, and are willing to give a little time to assist in our project to record the biodiversity of Bonds Meadow and to accurately catalogue onto our recording group within the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service, please make contact through our website or Project Manager.

There is no fixed time and you can work on your own or with a group.

It would particularly suit a willing Ecology student. However anyone with an interest is very welcome.

Records submitted will help build up our understanding of Bonds Meadow wildlife and ecosystem as well informing other conservationists

Butterflies of Britain



Lindsey has thankfully had a very successful 2018 despite being unable to access Bonds Meadow. It is hoped she will be planning to hold a Big

Butterfly Count this year subject to access but it is not in her diary yet. Those of you that use Facebook please search for Butterflies Of Britain to find out more about their activities and education programmes.

Footpath Closure

It was anticipated the footpath would be open in March. However shortly after the contractors returned, they again exposed obstructions that have required further redesign.

Despite our many requests for the full reinstatement and reopening of the footpath, at the time of publication the lead contractor, Persimmon Homes have not offered further comment.



Work continues on the pipeline in Cambrian Crescent and the entrance to Bonds Meadow is now used as the contractor's storage area.

Sadly Persimmon through their inaction, appear to have little concern for the inconvenience and length of time the closure of a public footpath has had on the community.

Be assured the Association will continue to monitor the situation but it has no authority to affect the process or re-opening of the footpath.



Sands Lane entrance with soil and fill stockpiles. Mud surfacing in the foreground.

The contractor is not maintaining fences and barriers. Although there is probably only a small risk to safety, members of the public are advised to take care or avoid completely areas where fences have fallen and are lying on the ground plus where there are unfinished footpath surfaces.



There are areas of missing footpath surfacing that may cause tripping.

Memories of Bonds Meadow



Charles Swan remembers Bonds Meadow was in some ways a Kingdom of two halves. "The Hall Road end was the playground for the lads from Holly Road, Commodore Road and Hall Road. The garden at the back of 4, Hall Road was indeed my Kingdom. On level ground was the pitch for football. "coats for goalposts", cricket, chasing, cowboys and Indians and of course den building, anywhere and everywhere, up trees, behind blackberry bushes, underground (ex wartime trench)". "The land to the left side was open marsh and was full of wild flowers, meadow sweet, ragged robin, willow herb and common orchid. With no trees the grass became very good hay and was used by Mr Tubby. The meadow became in turn a chicken farm and a duck farm, but for some of us it will remain in our hearts forever. At the Sands Lane end, on the wall of the cottages, two little girls used to sit and I married one but that's another story".

Forthcoming Events

AGM

Annual General Meeting **BONDS MEADOW COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

to be held
at
Oulton Community Centre
on
23rd June 2018 at 10:00 am

Guest Speaker: Ivan Bunn

Big Butterfly Count

Come and take part in Citizen Science and help count butterflies in the Meadow. Fun family activities and games for all.

Pending the opening of the footpath and safe accessibility.

During school holiday see BOB's Facebook page for announcement

30Year Celebration.

An event is to be held in late summer to celebrate 30 years of the Bonds Meadow Community Association. Please check on our website and Facebook pages nearer the time. Notices will also be posted at entrances and with local businesses.



Find us
[facebook.com/bondsmeadowoultonbroad](https://www.facebook.com/bondsmeadowoultonbroad)

Twitter: @bondsmeadowob

website at: www.bondsmeadow.org

News: bondsmeadownews@gmail.com



The Association has no direct funding and always welcomes sponsorship, donations and offers of help. You can support us by becoming a member of the Bonds Meadow Community Association. Minimum donation £6 a year (or £1 a year for unwaged). All subscriptions are spent on maintaining Bonds Meadow. Contact Margaret on 01502 584261. Alternatively visit Facebook or website above.

A Final Thought

Some worrying statistics came out of a recently published survey that concluded “Three-quarters of UK children spend less time outside than prison inmates” and “a fifth of the children do not play outside at all on an average day”. It would appear the lure of digital technology is resulting in youngsters leading enclosed unnatural lives. Many adults enjoy the serenity of spending time in nature as a way to escape the stress and craziness of everyday life. Not only can fresh air and natural scenery have a positive impact but outdoor activities for children can also improve the overall quality of children’s lives. Therefore, natural areas such as Bonds Meadow, located within Oulton Broad’s dense residential area should be prescribed as free therapy for family health and wellbeing.