

DECEMBER 6th BOOTON COMMON (1 mile E Reepham), O.S. map 133, grid ref. TG 110 228

The common contains an interesting variety of plant communities including dry heath, mixed scrub, grassland, alder carr, wet mixed coppice and fen. We will be clearing scrub

DECEMBER 13th SPARHAM POOLS (12 miles NW Norwich), O.S. map 133, grid ref. TG 073 180

This attractive site comprises deep and shallow pools with islands. The interesting and varied habitats also include scrub, open areas, sandy banks and gravel. The pools are surrounded by birch and willow scrub, mature trees and gorse. A wide range of birds visit the site. We will be clearing brambles and birch regrowth from the heath/grassland area around the pools.

CHRISTMAS TASK

DECEMBER 20th SWANNINGTON UPGATE COMMON (8 miles NW Norwich)

O.S. map 133, grid ref. TG 143 183

This is an interesting and varied site, with a range of habitats. The variation in soils and wetness has caused a wide range of vegetation including dry acidic heathland, wet heathland, fen, birch and alder woodland, scrub, bracken, rough grassland and ponds. We will be burning lots of prefelled gorse, and probably cutting down some more.

As this is the Christmas task, we will be following Corps tradition by sharing goodies round the fire at lunchtime and at the end of the task. There should be baked potatoes, soup, and anything else you care to bring along.

JANUARY 3rd WAYLAND WOOD (1 mile S Watton), O.S. map 144, grid ref. TL 923 996

This ancient and historic woodland is managed in the traditional way as coppice with oak standards, and has a varied and attractive ground flora. The wood was mentioned in the 11th century Domesday Book, and the medieval boundary banks can still be seen. We will be doing some coppicing.

JANUARY 10th PENSTHORPE (2 miles SE Fakenham), O.S. map 132, grid ref. TF 947 291

Pensthorpe is advertised as “The Natural Centre of Norfolk”, and was host to the 2009 Springwatch series on BBC TV. It is 500 acres of ancient fen meadows, woodlands and lakes in the Wensum valley. As well as the Conservation Centre (where rare UK birds such as cranes and corncrakes are bred) and a collection of water and other birds, there is a large area of nature reserve. We will be improving a dragonfly pond by coppicing the surrounding scrub, and removing some of the pond weed.

JANUARY 17th SUTTON FEN (16 miles NE Norwich), O.S. map 134, grid ref. TG 372 229

This RSPB reserve is a large area of nationally rare and internationally important fen habitat. It contains breeding bitterns, marsh harriers, rare swallowtail butterflies and Norfolk hawker dragonflies, rare plants and much more. It is not open to the public, so this is a rare opportunity to see this important site. We will probably be clearing scrub, but if water levels are too high we could be fence or bridge building.

JANUARY 24th HICKLING BROAD (18 miles NE Norwich), O.S. map 134, grid ref. TG 428 222

Hickling Broad is the largest expanse of open water in the Broads system. The National Nature Reserve contains 600 ha of open water, reedbed, fen, grazing marsh and woodland. It is home to marsh harriers, bitterns, swallowtail butterflies and Norfolk hawker dragonflies. We will be clearing scrub or burning reed.

JANUARY 31st CATFIELD FEN (16 miles NE Norwich), O.S. map 134, grid ref. TG 367 215

This Butterfly Conservation Reserve is part of the Ant Broads and Marshes National Nature Reserve, which is one of the best and largest remaining areas of fen habitat in Western Europe. Many uncommon and rare plants and animals are found on the reserve, including milk parsley (the food plant of swallowtail butterfly caterpillars) and crested buckler fern, and dragonflies such as the Norfolk hawker.

We will probably be clearing scrub.