

DECEMBER 4th 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, reed bed, fen, grazing marsh and woodland. It is home to marsh harriers, bitterns, swallowtail butterflies and Norfolk hawker dragonflies. We will be clearing scrub from Cotton's Marsh, which is not normally open to the public.

DECEMBER 11th 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 2010 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 coppicing and clearing some scrub. You normally have to pay to see this attractive site, so this is your chance to get in for nothing and help nature.

CHRISTMAS TASK

DECEMBER 18th FOXLEY WOOD (7miles NE Dereham) O.S. map 133, grid ref. TG 050 229

At 180 ha, this is the largest remaining area of ancient woodland in Norfolk. The rides have a rich flora which supports a great number of woodland insects. Much of the wood is managed by coppicing areas in rotation. We will be coppicing and having a nice bonfire.

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.

DECEMBER 25th

Your task today is to enjoy yourself, be nice to family and friends, eat and drink lots, wear silly hats, and laugh at cracker jokes. *Merry Christmas and happy New Year.*

JANUARY 1st BUXTON HEATH (9miles NW Norwich) O.S. map 133, grid ref. TG 172 215

This site is a SSSI managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Natural England, and is a mosaic of lowland heath, woodland and scrub, with a valley mire. It is one of the best examples of this rare habitat type in Norfolk. It has a rich flora, and some rare mosses, liverworts and fungi. We will be clearing scrub from the mire (damp boggy bits).

JANUARY 8th 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 clearing some birch scrub.

JANUARY 15th ALDERFORD COMMON (9 miles NW Norwich)

O.S. map 133, grid ref. TG 127 186

This is an important site because it has a large area of chalk grassland, which is fairly rare in Norfolk. Chalk grassland is usually the most species rich habitat for plants. We will be clearing scrub which is shading out some of these plants, and possibly raking up some pre-cut vegetation (bracken etc.).

JANUARY 22nd CALTHORPE BROAD (16 miles NE Norwich) O.S. map 134, grid ref. TG 410 257

The main interest of this site is the broad and its plant life. The broad is surrounded by carr woodland, small areas of open fen, and an area of unimproved grazing marsh. The site is a National Nature Reserve used for research, and is not open to the public. So this is a rare opportunity to see an interesting corner of Broadland. We will be building bridges, and clearing scrub and small trees from the edge of the broad so that the reed fringe can recover.

JANUARY 29th STRUMPSHAW FEN (7 miles E Norwich) O.S. map 134, grid ref. TG 342 067

This RSPB Reserve is beside the River Yare, and contains open water (Strumpshaw Broad), scrapes, woodland, grazing marshes, fen, and extensive reed beds. We will be clearing and burning scrub. Hopefully, we will also see some interesting birds. We usually see Marsh Harriers and Barn Owls, and have seen a Goshawk and a Bittern!