



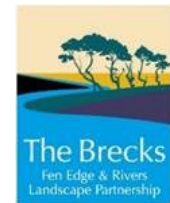
RECENT EVENTS

Visit to Euston Hall and its grounds
AGM at Fullers Mill
Northwold Manor



OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Planning the BFER Legacy
Obituary of Keith Eldred



EVENTS

Saturday October 7th
Visit to Falconers Lodge, High Ash.
Now fully booked.

Saturday October 21st.
Conservation Seminar at Euston Mill. For the
Industrious Rivers research group.

Sunday October 29th
Fungus Foray at Foulden Common with
Tony Leech. 15 places, members only.

November 7th 11-12.45. A curator's tour of
the 'Made by the River' exhibition at the
Ancient House Museum, Thetford with an
opportunity to meet volunteers who helped to
research and curate it. This will be followed
by a meeting of the Industrious Rivers
research group.

Further details of these events can be found
on the Breckland Society website. Members
will also receive an occasional message by
email to inform them of forthcoming events
for the year. They will also be notified by
email when tickets for the Society events are
available on the Eventbrite website.

RIVER RAIDERS REPORT

Free copies of this report are now
available. Society members should already
have received theirs. While stocks last
further copies can be collected from the
BFER team at The Carnegie Rooms,
Thetford during office hours, and while
stocks last.

**THE BRECKLAND SOCIETY AND
THE BRECKS FEN EDGE AND
RIVERS PARTNERSHIP (BFER)**

Industrious Rivers, the latest Society
project, will be completed in early 2024.
A report on the various project activities
will be published next spring.

Plans for the Legacy of the BFER project
are being formulated. An interim account
of the progress of this can be found on
page 6.

Guided visit to Euston Hall

On the morning of May 24th we met our tour guide by the ticket booth, from where we were taken down to the Hall. The front entrance was hung with several paintings, of 19th century Derby-winning racehorses, as well as 18th and 19th century portraits of members of the family. There were fine commode cabinets, highly decorated with marquetry and which featured pictures on their sides. There was a Fitzroy barometer, named after Admiral Robert Fitzroy, grandson of the 3rd Duke of Grafton, captain of HMS Beagle on its great voyage of exploration when Charles Darwin visited the Galapagos Islands, and one-time governor of New Zealand. Fitzroy was the first to incorporate a barometer, thermometer and storm tube, and he also invented the term 'weather forecast'.

We then moved on to the dining rooms, which again were furnished many paintings, part of the collection of the family which contains the largest collection of portraits of Charles I and Charles II and members of their families. There was also a portrait of Barbara Villiers, mistress of Charles II, one of whose children married into the Fitzroy family. This great room was damaged by a fire in the 19th century and then remodelled to accommodate the many family portraits.

We continued through the rest of the Hall, some of which is very much part of the family home, including a TV hidden in one of the old cabinets, and several modern musical instruments. We were also shown some of the bedrooms, which were clearly used!

After the tour we gathered for lunch in the tearoom tent and enjoyed a walk around the gardens and a visit to the watermill, concluding a very enjoyable and informative visit.

Tony Grover

Obituary of Keith Eldred

The Society was very sad to hear of the recent death of Keith Eldred, owner of the former RAF Barnham Cold War nuclear bomb store, now the Gorse Industrial Estate.

Keith bought the site after it was decommissioned in the mid-1960s and converted it into first a mushroom farm, and then into a light industrial site.

He was extraordinarily proud of its Cold War heritage and put a huge amount of time and his own money into ensuring it was preserved for future generations, including persuading English Heritage to list it, despite the extra burdens that imposed on him.

He hosted several visits from the Society in recent years – and countless visits from other organisations. When we first tentatively approached him about visiting, he and his wife Margot (who died about a year ago) could not have been more welcoming.

Fittingly, Keith's ashes were scatted at the site he loved and did so much to preserve and share with others.

Alan Clarke



An evening visit to Northwold Manor

Warwick Rodwell and Diane Gibbs, the owners of the Grade II* listed Northwold Manor, welcomed members of the Society to their beautifully restored home for drinks and canapes before guiding them on a tour of the house.

Warwick described the history of the house, explaining to members how 'The Manor House is a multi-period brick building, lying directly opposite the parish church. It is Listed Grade II* and was mainly built and constructed between c.1680 and 1814 by the Carters, one of Northwood's most prominent families, and with wide social connections that extended into Nelson's circle. It was built and occupied, until 1919, by the Carters who were the most prominent family in the village, with wide social connections, extending into Nelson's circle.

The Northwold estate was broken up and auctioned in 1919, and in 1955 the house was sold to property developers who intended to demolish it. Instead, it was boarded up and used as a store for old furniture, a situation which continued until 2014. By then the house had fallen into a state of extreme dilapidation, with holes in the roof, water pouring in, ceilings and floors collapsing, and dry rot everywhere.

Kings Lynn Council took possession by Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and sold the Manor on to Warwick, whose plan was to carry out a conservation-led restoration. Work to that end has been non-stop for the last nine and a half years and is nearly complete. After 60 years of the house being uninhabited, Diane and himself were able to move into the main part of the Manor in 2019.

All the historic rooms have been retained intact and restored, and spaces for essential facilities have been provided by carefully designed additions to the house which blend in with its various periods of construction. The garden is currently being resurrected, and the Regency axial vista from the street, through the house, and down to the property boundary, has been reinstated.'



2010



2010



2020

3. Northwold Manor. Central block. Reroofed and dormers rebuilt; timberwork repaired; brickwork repairs and selective repointing; new cast iron rainwater goods; iron railings refurbished and limestone plinth renewed. Viewed from churchyard.



2021

13. Northwold Manor. South side of the central section. Since this face of the staircase (entrance) hall was built of 'Cambridgeshire white' bricks, the new crenellated cloakroom was constructed to match. The glazed double doors are part of the 1814 work, repositioned in the addition.

All photographs and notes by kind permission of
Derek Rodwell

An evening visit to Northwold Manor (continued)



2013 Northwold Manor. Central block, inner hall, view south-east.



2013



2021 Central block, inner hall, view south-west.

8. The hall of the C17 house which, having suffered from water penetration for decades, was in parlous condition. The transverse oak beam had failed at both ends and on the north side of the room the ceiling had completely collapsed, along with the chamber floor above it. Much of the ground floor had to be reconstructed as well. The tripartite glazed doorway in the south wall, seen here, was inserted in the early C19, replacing a sash window. It required considerable timber repairs.



2021

10. Northwold Manor. West wing, porch-tower. View north inside the entrance hall. Dry rot had consumed all the lath-and-plaster wall-lining and doorframe on the east (right-hand) side of the hall; also the west doorframe was similarly damaged. The arch-topped door to the right-hand cupboard was found in one of the cellars of the central block, twisted and broken into two pieces as a result of the collapse of the floor in the room above. The delicate lead fanlight had been vandalized and required repair. Remarkably, the galleried staircase was unscathed.



2014



2018

7. Northwold Manor. East wing and interior of courtyard. Restoration of the north range, involving repairs to rubble masonry, pointing, reroofing, partial reconstruction of chimney stack, fitting new timber casement windows; reconstruction of the partly collapsed east range, following original design; new fountain and paths.

Report of the Annual General meeting and private visit to Fullers Mill Garden, West Stow

On the lovely warm, sunny evening of June 14th 2023, 30 members made their way through the tall pines of the King's Forest into the enchanting riverside setting of Fullers Mill Garden for the Annual General Meeting. The Meeting took place outside, in the shade of a gazebo, and we enjoyed a glass of fizz whilst the business was speedily transacted. The Reports from the Treasurer and Chairman were noted, the Annual Accounts were unanimously approved, and the Committee was re-appointed for another year.

After the meeting, Yvonne, a Fullers Mill volunteer, gave an interesting talk about the history of the site and the Garden's development. Whilst the Doomsday book lists two mills at West Stow, the fulling mill itself was first definitely recorded in 1458. It was on the north bank of the River Lark and no longer exists, but the mill pond and Fullers Mill Cottage, originally built in about 1650 and much modified, both remain. The cottage, surrounded by the King's Forest, was sold by the Cadogan Estate in 1936 and then purchased by the late Bernard Tickner, the Greene King



Head Brewer (and creator of Abbott Ale), in 1958. It came with a just a vegetable plot and a small island between the Lark and the Culford stream that was reached by a footbridge over the weir in the river. In his memoir 'A Scratch in the Soil' (2017), Bernard described how the Garden, through which the Lark meanders, was gradually created. With no previous experience of creating a garden, he began by levelling out an area for a lawn using 15-20 lorry loads of soil washed from sugar beet. The island was planted with a collection of different willow species, including a rare cutting from a 'Napolean Willow' tree that grew by Napoleon's grave on St Helena. His interest and knowledge increased, and he became an expert plantsman, creating important collections of plants, especially of species that like dappled shade, such as Euphorbias, Paeonies and Lilies. More parcels of land were gradually purchased from the



Forestry Commission until the Garden reached its current size of seven acres. The guiding principle of its design is an apparent lack of design, with a natural feel, using mowed areas of grass to create vistas delighting visitors and luring them to explore. Raised terraces are planted with alpines and the wetter areas contain massed Primula and skunk cabbage. There are very unusual specimens, some collected by Bernard and his wife Bess on their holidays in the mountains of Europe, including a rare Pyrenean yellow fritillary named: *Fritillaria pyrenaica* 'Bernard Tickner'.

After the talk we topped up our glasses and dispersed through the gloriously empty gardens, some with an ice cream from the visitor centre,

which opened specially for us. It also sells plants, as members quickly discovered! There were many so many beautiful plants in flower that it is hard to do justice to their diversity and charm. If you haven't been to Fullers Mill Garden, now owned by the Perennial Trust, I would encourage you to visit. Our thanks go to the staff and volunteers of Perennial who made the event so enjoyable.

<https://perennial.org.uk/garden/fullers-mill-garden/the-gardens>

Pat Reynolds

The Future Legacy of the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Partnership: A Study of the Options.

The current Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Partnership (BFER), supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, involves more than 50 partners including the Breckland Society, in delivering over 30 projects, across 4 programmes including: Restoring species and Habitats, Discovering Heritage, Developing Heritage Skills, and Connecting with Communities, and continues delivery until the end of 2024. BFER was preceded by the Breaking New Ground Heritage Landscape Partnership, which was chaired by James Parry, our chairman. Having two National Lottery Heritage Lottery-funded Partnership Schemes in the same area for over a decade is highly unusual, if not unique, and how we collectively ensure there is a long-term legacy from these Schemes is something partners and stakeholders are already considering.

Suffolk County Council have appointed landscape architects and environmental planner consultants (Alison Farmer Associates and Resources for Change) to carry out a study into the options available to secure the long-term protection and management of the Brecks area of Suffolk and Norfolk. It will build on the work of the BFER partners and draw upon experience and examples from elsewhere. The study is being undertaken on behalf of Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils, who have been working jointly for many years in partnership with many stakeholders and local interests in the Brecks to further the understanding, protection and sustainable management of this unique and special landscape, and to enable local communities and visitors to engage with and enjoy its heritage, wildlife and distinctive beauty.

The purpose of the study is to:

- Explore with partners and stakeholders the options for recognising the existing and potential value of the Brecks with reference to environmental, social and economic benefits.
- Identify the most suitable strategic, coordinated and sustainable management and delivery framework for the area.

The work will include consideration of options for:

- Recognition of the area through designation (such as the current Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
- Facilitating and resourcing coordinated delivery.
- Engaging and empowering local people, communities and business in championing the area.

The study will be undertaken through a collaborative approach with as many stakeholders and interests in the Brecks as possible and next steps will be discussed in December 2023.

Pat Reynolds, Breckland Society representative on BFER

