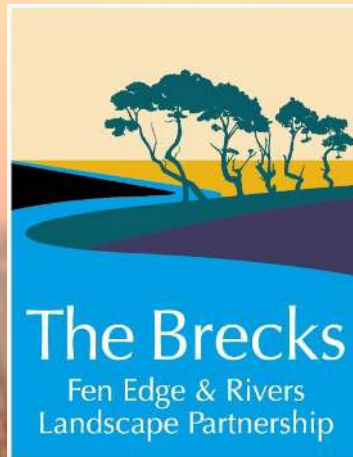


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BFER NEWSLETTER

December 2022

Welcome to the BFER newsletter

Welcome to the December Newsletter – the CHRISTMAS edition!

And somehow, we've already reached December, the mid-term scheme evaluation has taken place, and we're gearing up for the last two years of delivery across the partnership...

Before we shut up shop for Christmas however, there are still lots of festive, and well-being focussed events happening, including our Volunteer Celebration on the 8th December – see below. We hope to welcome lots of wonderful people who've been giving their time to make the scheme a success by supporting events and taking part in citizen science, surveys, and heritage skills training. As part of the event, we'll be celebrating and highlighting some of the standout activities from this year, including the environment DNA survey results and the wonderful work discovering the 'Tales from the River'.

Despite all the trials and tribulations of the first two and a half years of BFER, our evaluation partners at Glevum Consulting provided an interesting presentation to the Scheme board in November which showed that the partnership really adapted rather well to Covid-19, and that many of our planned activities did get delivered successfully. I'd provide a link and a more in-depth review, and a link to the full report in the January edition.

In other news, partners might be interested to see the new 'Children's People and Nature Survey for England' recently published online. The survey gathers information on people's experiences and views about the natural environment, and its contributions to our health and wellbeing, and seeks to understand how children and young people aged 8-to-15 are engaging with the natural environment inside and outside of school in England. [The Children's People and Nature Survey for England: 2022 update - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/childrens-people-and-nature-survey-for-england-2022-update)

I hope you enjoy reading some of the highlights of the last month in this newsletter, and that we'll see you at some of the exciting events that are coming up, but most of all, I'd like to thank you all for supporting BFER over the past year (and more), and that you have a wonderful, restful and fun-filled festive period this year.

BFER Scheme Manager



Did you see us at the World of Work (WoW) festival at West Suffolk College?

We are keen to do more to help young people get in to heritage and conservation with support for training and placements. Working with our partners we're hoping to set up work placement and training opportunities in 2023.

We would welcome any ideas from partners, and would love to make better links with schools and colleges. If anyone has any helpful contacts or ideas please do email us at bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

Project Focus

2.2 - Tales from the River



Last month we had the launch of the Tales from the Riverbank film at Thetford Library, with over 50 people attending the first screening of the short film. The audience included under 10s to over 90 year olds – the young historians who created the film and donors of memories, images and historic material – along with project volunteers, supporters, and local residents.

Community filmmaker Lewis Wickwar worked with the young people doing animation and location filming during a week-long Riverbank summer club in August at Ancient House Museum. The young people's imagination and enthusiasm brought to life oral history accounts, images and historic and new material gathered by Tales from the River project volunteers.

[Click here to watch the short film:](#)

[Tales from the Riverbank: A Fun History of Thetford's Rivers 1880s to 2000s](#)

3.3 - Heritage Rivers Craft



As part of this project we have enabled these two pigs to be permanent residents at West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village. Their names 'Æppel' and 'Æcern' are Old English for Apple and Acorn (pronounce 'Æ' as 'a' in 'cat'). They are a cross between a Tamworth, Gloucester Old Spot and a Wild Boar. They represent how early domesticated pigs might have looked 4,000 years ago. The West Stow site has evidence for pigs from the Iron Age and the Anglo Saxon settlement and the nearby river Lark would have provided the water needed to support these farming communities, their livestock and crops.

Be sure to head down to West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and say hi to Æppel and Æcern!

4.5 - Volunteer Hub & Engagement



[1] In November, BFER hosted the third in a series of guided wildlife walks with The British Trust for Ornithology. The walk explored Knettishall Heath Nature Reserve, a beautiful ancient Brecks landscape that is managed and maintained by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The group enjoyed the autumnal acoustics of woodland bird song, learning how to identify different bird calls. The walk included visiting the site of a former Second World War air base, where the group spotted a Marsh Harrier.

[2] BFER welcomed in the winter season at a family craft workshop at West Stow Country Park. In the workshop, wild-crafter Jon Tyler taught participants how to create lanterns using willow and other natural materials. Once created and decorated, the lanterns were lit, and the group carried them on a guided ambient walk through the Country Park at dusk.



(click the photo to view in full screen!)

Volunteers:

Throughout the year, Thetford Town Council's community craft group have been busily working away to create a textile Brecks River scene. 32 volunteers took part to transform a large fabric panel into a thriving Thetford River scene. Using crochet and knitting, the volunteers have created a fantastic flourishing river full of wildlife, inspired by Thetford's two rivers the River Thet, and River Little Ouse. This panel is the first of three river scenes that the group have set out to create. In their next project, the volunteers will begin to create a fabric river scene inspired by Thetford's industrial history.

If you are interested in joining the Thetford Town Council Volunteer Craft Group, please contact:

mail@thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

Does your Brecks town or village have a craft group? If you would like to take part in a BFER community craft project and create a river inspired artwork for your area, we would love to hear from you:

bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

BFER Volunteer Opportunities



Have you volunteered for a BFER supported project? We would love you to join us at our Volunteer Celebration event, Thursday 8th December 2022, 1pm-3.30pm, The Guildhall (Thetford). Join the BFER team for an informal end of year celebration. Meet the BFER team, project partners, and fellow volunteers, discover the progress of BFER projects from the year via short talks and displays, and enjoy festive activities and food. For more information, contact: bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

Would you like to become a BFER Volunteer? From assisting at events and activities, to video editing, and supporting our office staff, we have a range of flexible roles available for different skill levels and interests. Whether you're looking for work experience, to try something new, or to share your enthusiasm for wildlife and heritage through our projects, we'd love to hear from you. No previous experience is required. To find out more contact our Volunteer and Engagement Officer, Nicole, to have a chat and find out how to get involved: nicole.hudson@suffolk.gov.uk

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Our Partners below are recruiting volunteers for a variety of exciting projects in the Brecks:

Bush Adventures UK - Events Volunteers and Garden Volunteers

Charles Burrell Museum - Front of House Volunteer, Main Display Area Guide, Café Staff and Engine Specific Volunteer

Tales from the River - Research Volunteer

Run Breckland - Volunteer Marshals

Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP) – Practical Conservation Volunteer

The Icknield Way Association - Officers and Wardens

For more information on the opportunities visit: <https://brecks.org/bfer/resources/volunteer-hub/>

If you are recruiting volunteers in the Brecks area and would like to advertise your opportunities here, please email: bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

Upcoming Events

We are really excited to share with you some of the wonderful outdoor events and activities that are in the pipeline.

BFER Events

Festive Wild Craft: Thetford - 7th December

Explore natural riverside materials in Thetford, and learn basic weaving techniques to make seasonal decorative crafts

See our winter talks programme below for events coming in 2023

For more information on the events & to book: [Click here to view our events page](#)



Do you have an event you would like us to promote on our newsletter, on our website, or across our social media pages?

Please complete the form for us to share your event:

[Event detail form](#)

Winter Talks Programme

Dates for your diaries

Join BFER next year for an exciting series of Winter Talks at the Guildhall, Thetford.

Thursday 2nd February, 7pm-8pm:

Nicola Crockford: *A portal into another world: snorkelling the chalk streams of the Brecks and Fens*
During the 2020 lock down, Nicola Crockford began to explore a whole new world when she took to snorkelling the rivers near her West Suffolk home. Here she will share some of her discoveries: Brown Trout to Brook Lampreys, freshwater sponges to leeches and jewellery hoard to human skull.

Thursday 16th February, 7pm-8pm:

Dr Richard Hoggart: "*Wonderful Things*": *Howard Carter and the Discovery of Tutankhamun*
Marking the centenary of the official opening of the burial chamber within Tutankhamun's tomb, this lecture tells the story of Howard Carter and one of the greatest archaeological discoveries ever made. The son of a Swaffham artist, Carter was inspired by visits to the Egyptian collections at nearby Didlington Hall and went on to forge a career in Egyptology, throughout which he doggedly pursued the tomb of the boy-king.

Thursday 2nd March, 7pm-8pm:

Entomologist, Dr Ross Piper: *Bugs in the Brecks*
From wasps that are much smaller than a full-stop, all the way up to hand-sized beetles, insects are far and away the most diverse animals on the planet. In this talk, Ross Piper invites you to take a closer look at these endlessly fascinating lifestyles of these creatures, including some of the species you can see in the Brecks

Keep an eye out on our [BFER events page](#) on our website or social media pages to find out more about the winter talks programme

Social Media

Are you following us on social media? Click the icons below to follow us!

[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)

Are you subscribed to us on YouTube?

We will be creating more video content this year so make sure to subscribe to us on YouTube and hit the notification bell!

While we are out filming videos for you, you can watch our latest video here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iD_0hPF2r4

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