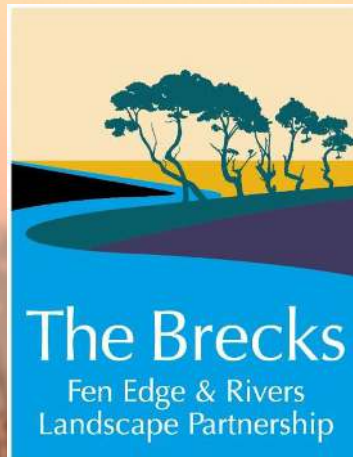


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BFER NEWSLETTER

February 2023

Welcome to the BFER newsletter

As January passes into February, thoughts turn to towards spring, the countryside bursting into life as weather improves, and evenings draw out. I'm already making grand plans for spending more time cycling, walking with my family and the dog, and talking about places we really want to go and explore this year.

Fortunately there is no shortage of places to look for inspiration and ideas, and a wealth of new activities to tempt us out to new places for new experiences.

The BFER team and partners have been busy developing a wide range of things to get involved with this year, including activities that encourage healthier lifestyles, opportunities for discovery of our unique local heritage, and great exhibitions to celebrate what makes the Brecks so special.

While we work very hard to remove barriers to inclusion for all these events though our lottery funding, it's interesting to note that free is apparently not always best when it comes to events and activities. While we desperately want to show people how wonderful our heritage is, and how much we can all benefit from enjoying outdoor lifestyles, we always have to consider the fact that people seem to place less value on 'free' stuff. As a result we find ourselves charging small fees to ensure those that booked do come along, to our events, while at the same time wanting to ensure that those who would perhaps get the most out of our events are not put off by costs in a time when everything is so expensive. We also have to ensure that we don't undervalue, or allow participants to undervalue the contributions made by those people we contract to deliver the activities we're supporting, as many of them are trying to build new businesses around the services or activities we're encouraging people to engage with.

There is no right answer to this dilemma of course, but its perhaps something to consider when you take part in these wonderful lottery funded events, or if you'd like to take part but are put off by the booking fees, in which case do make sure to let us know.

AS ever, I hope you enjoy this month's offerings, and that you do choose to take part in the wide variety of events and activities coming up



BFER Scheme Manager

Project Focus

2.3 - Industrious Rivers



On a crisp, chilly, icy day, 20 well wrapped up individuals turned up in the Council Chamber in Thetford to participate in a research session which consisted of some formal presentations, and much discussion on the practical steps on how to get a research programme under way. James Parry, Breckland Society chair and professional author, talked about historical sources and how to access and use them and experienced volunteers talked about case studies they had previously conducted them and how they 'followed the clues'. After this, time was spent 'cutting the cake' - deciding how to parcel out the research, and on reviewing the project scope, objectives and deliverables. Research will be conducted through booklets, public interpretation boards, exhibitions, and online archive along with archival research - doing desk research via the internet, and through county archives.



The Industrious Rivers project has been busy this month with another event taking place at Little Cressingham Mill, where volunteers were given a tour of the mill by Amanda Rix from the Norfolk Historic Windmills Trust and Peter Goulding a former millwright who has worked on Cressingham Mill preservation and restoration.

To get involved with projects like this just contact bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk or indrivers.brecsoc@gmail.com

2.5 - Digital Interpretation: Heritage Hotspots



This month some of our BFER partners met up at Ancient House Museum to review and discuss the Info Point displays, which will be installed around the Brecks for visitors and the public to use. We are excited to see this project come to life in 2023 and we can't wait to share more with you.

Watch this space!

3.1 - Citizen Science: Testing the Water

A flyer for an online training session. The top section has a blue background with the text '#SpawnSurvey 2023' and the Freshwater Habitats Trust logo. Below this, the title 'Online Training Session' is in red, followed by 'Amphibian ID for #SpawnSurvey' in blue. There are three small images of amphibians. The date and time are 'Tuesday 7th February 2023 : 7pm-8pm'. The main text describes the survey and asks for volunteers. A QR code is on the left, and a small logo for 'The Brecks' is on the right. At the bottom, there is a URL 'https://bit.ly/BrecksSpawnSurveyTraining' and contact information for Freshwater Habitats Trust.

This month Freshwater Habitats Trust are running an Online Training Session for their frogs and toads survey. This is a national initiative being run by FHT, that we're supporting as part of the Citizen Science Project. We are looking for volunteers to take part and is aimed at anyone who goes walking out and about in the Brecks and to keep an eye out for these amphibians. You will be able to log your results online and record both toad and frog spawn in your garden ponds, local community ponds, and any ponds you come across in your adventures in the countryside.

If you are interested in attending, please send us an email at: BFER.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

4.5 - Engagement Programme



BFER is currently collaborating with theatre company, Magic Floor Productions, who are creating plays and education packs about history of Vikings in the Brecks. The project launched publicly last month, with a KS2 Teacher CPD session which introduced the brand new education packs and their contents. Teachers from across the Brecks attended to learn more about the project, which was showcased by Magic Floor Productions and their resident Viking, Olf.

If you teach at a school in the Brecks and would like to receive further information about the *Vikings of the Brecks* education packs, please contact: bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

BFER Work Placement

In January we were joined by Thomas Heathwaite who was on an internship with Suffolk Archives. Read below to hear about Thomas's experience with us.



Hello, I am Thomas Heathwaite; and I have just completed three days work placement with the BFER team, virtually. I am currently working at The Hold, as an Intern with Suffolk Archives, and from the 6th of February will be working as the University of Suffolk's Sustainability and Built Environment Coordinator.

During my three days, I worked on, and gained a variety of experiences including a variety helping with social media outputs. Whether that be helping produce the January newsletter; subtitling an 5 minute video about the Eels in the Classroom project; social media posts for February half term; awareness days or investigating groups to advertise events. As I hadn't used any newsletter software before, using Mailchimp was insightful and may be a skill that could be required in my next role. Whilst I had already helped with social media at The Hold, gaining more experience of this is always useful particularly as this is a key skill required for my next role; and it gave me the opportunity to tailor the posts to a different target group.

One of the biggest takeaways, however, was sitting in on NLHF mid term evaluation meetings. This was really beneficial as it gave me an insight into how these evaluations are produced, and what is needed. Moreover, it gave me insights into how to manage projects, deliver them successfully, and potential potholes to avoid. Inevitably, project management skills will be a key skill needed for my next role, and any future roles, so gaining an insight into this was highly valuable.

Finally, thank you to all of the BFER team for being so welcoming, warm, friendly and supportive. This placement has been great fun, and I hope we can keep in contact.

Are you interested in joining us as an intern or know someone who would be interested, please get in touch: BFER.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

BFER Volunteer Opportunities



Volunteer with the BFER Team!

Office administration: Join the BFER team in a friendly office environment to assist with administrative project support.

Events Volunteer: Learn new skills and take part in exciting events and activities led by experts in their fields. You will assist by supporting tasks such as collecting event evaluation, tail walking guided walks, photography, and BFER promotion.

Digital Content creator: Help BFER celebrate and document the amazing landscapes of the Brecks, and exciting events and activities. From photography to filming, blogging, to video editing, we are looking for volunteers to assistance us with a range of digital activities.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Our Partners below are also 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

The River Lark Catchment Partnership - [Volunteer Opportunities](#)

Thetford Town Council - Conservation Volunteers

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

#Breathe in the Brecks



Mindfulness for Menopause: Explore the beautiful landscapes of the Brecks with Nature Therapy Practitioner, Gina Geremia

This spring, and to mark International Women's Day, BFER will be launching a new series of six introductory forest bathing and nature-based mindfulness sessions, supporting those experiencing the natural changes that come with any stage of menopause.

Each session will assist participants to:

- Identify personal wellbeing goals.
- Connect with like-minded people.
- Discover gentle ways of self-care.
- Develop ways to reduce symptoms.
- Enhance overall sense of wellbeing.
- Deepen social connections and connections to the natural world.

This programme is for you if you suspect you are at any stage of menopause.

Each session will take place at a different natural space within the Brecks and involve a guided forest bathing walk between 10am-1pm on Saturdays from 11th March to 25th March (with a mid-break for Easter).

To find out more, and to register your interest in taking part, please contact: 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

Get creative:

Develop your photography skills in beautiful West Stow Country Park with photographer, Phil Morley:

[4th February: Winter Youth Photography Workshop \(ages 10-16 years\)](#)

[19th February: Winter Photography Workshop for Adults](#)

Join local artist Rosie Copeland for watercolour workshops at West Stow Country Park:

[11th February: Introduction to Watercolour workshop \(ideal for beginners\)](#)

[11th February: Intermediate Watercolour Workshop \(for artists looking to further develop their skills and be inspired by outdoor settings\)](#)

Learn how to make flying machines and miniature rafts using natural materials at a fun family workshop with wild-crafts maker Jon Tyler

5th March: Air Gliders and River Floaters, family natural craft workshop, RSPB Lakenheath Fen Nature Reserve, IP27 9AD

Stay tuned to our events page for more information, coming soon.

Discover:

Join Brecks snorkeller, Nicola Crockford, for an evening talk about the amazing habitats under the surface of Brecks chalk rivers:

[2nd February: 'A portal into another world: snorkelling the chalk streams of the Brecks and Fens', 7-8pm, The Guildhall, Thetford](#)

Uncover the story of Egyptologist Howard Carter, and one of the greatest archaeological discoveries ever made. Join Dr Richard Hoggett for an evening talk to mark the centenary of the official opening of the burial chamber within Tutankhamun's tomb:

[16th February: "Wonderful Things": Howard Carter and the Discovery of Tutankhamun 7-8pm, The Guildhall, Thetford](#)

From wasps smaller than a full-stop, to hand-sized beetles, discover the fascinating world of insects at this evening talk with entomologist and presenter Dr Ross Piper:

[2nd March: 'Bugs in the Brecks', 7-8pm, The Guildhall, Thetford](#)

Explore:

Discover the wonders of the twilight world of West Stow Country Park at our evening family event this February half term. Join Night Explorer Jon Tyler for a winter evening odyssey of astronomy, wildlife encounters, and sensory adventure:

[18th February: Dusk Exploration, Stars and stories of the night, 6.15pm - 8.15pm, West Stow Country Park](#)

Discover the nocturnal nightlife of West Stow Country Park on this guided evening walk with bat expert, Lindsey Bilston:

[14th April, Guided Bat Walk at West Stow Country Park, 7:45pm-9.30pm, West Stow Country Park](#)

Be active:

Join Run Breckland for a family friendly 5k running event in Thetford this Easter. With prizes for the best fancy dress, this fun bunny run is a great challenge for the whole family, with a medal for all finishers. With no cut off time, it is perfect for all paces:

[Sunday 2nd April, Thetford 5k Easter Bunny Run, \(Registration from 9am, Race from 10am\), Thetford](#)

Looking for a challenge? Join Run Breckland this April for a marathon and half marathon at the Euston Estate!

[Sunday 30th April, Euston Estate Marathon / Half Marathon, \(Registration from 8am, Race from 9am\).](#)

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](#)

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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