Welcome to the June Newsletter.

The first week of this month is National Volunteers Week, quite apt for us as we turn our focus to developing opportunities for partners to support Volunteering in all forms, look for our own volunteers to help promote heritage in the Brecks, and support our development of digital content across the scheme. This includes a new 360 degree digital tour of the 'Vikings on your Doorstep' exhibition, which enters its final month at Ancient House Museum in Thetford.

A wide range of events across the partnership have provided a wealth of opportunity for people to connect to nature in lots of exciting activities. These included guided walks with Vision Norfolk, and Pathmakers, as well as a Suffolk Walking Festival walk around Brandon; craft, Nature Photography and Landscape Watercolour painting workshops; and outdoor wellbeing events with partners Run Breckland, Access Community, and West Stow Country Park. Lots more are scheduled for this month – see below!

I’m also delighted to report that we awarded a new grant to the Friends of Thetford Station, and that we’re now working with new partners the Restoration Trust to focus on building our links to Social Referring networks to support health and wellbeing in the landscape, and Bush Adventures UK CIC, who will be delivering our Youth Heritage Skills training courses over the next 12 months.

We’ll be reporting more on these initiative as these programmes develop, but you’ll also be able to stay updated by visiting our website’s project pages, which will be undergoing an extensive re-vamp this month.

BFER Scheme Manager

In this months edition
Guest Blog

Black & White Thinking
by Jude Clay

When the course leader, Phil gave us the challenge of taking black and white photographs, I was reluctant. I was sure I wouldn't enjoy this. It's the same when someone suggests watching a black and white film. I've so often felt like the characters in Pleasantville where their colourless lives are unfulfilling and restrained. Like them, I crave the vibrancy of colour that brings freedom and variety.

I had signed up to do the all-day photography workshop at West Stow Country Park. I had been looking for a photography course for at least a year because I wanted to learn how to use my camera better and how a real photographer would approach taking a shot. However, it had been hard to find one within my (very minimal) budget. The BFER-funded courses at West Stow Country Park are incredibly reasonably priced and take place over a whole six-hour day.

So, yes, I suppose you could say I asked for it really. Want to know how a real photographer might approach a shot? They're fluid with their use of colour and, sometimes, they just don't want it.

To read the full blog post, click here: [https://brecks.org/volunteer-blog/guest-blog-black-and-white-thinking/](https://brecks.org/volunteer-blog/guest-blog-black-and-white-thinking/)

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Project Focus

2.2 - Tales from the River

The project had a very successful day at the Lakenheath Big Help out event 8 May, with lots of fascinating chats with local people, hearing their stories and arranging to talk to them again. These included memories of visiting the old Green Dragon pub and paddling in the river, and memories of living in the High Bridge pub on the now vanished Lode. We showed some of our Tales from the Riverbank exhibition
and some display panels about the history of the area. The day showcased a wide range of local groups that work with volunteers locally. The exhibition is in Lakenheath Library until 7 June, at a drop-in session at Honington/Sapiston 8 June, then at Brandon Heritage Centre until 6 July.

4.1 - Water's Colour: Community Art

On the last two Tuesday evenings in May, in The Guildhall in Thetford, with the evening sun pouring through the windows, the Soundscape project was launched. The launch involved the meeting of interested parties and volunteers who were curious about an audio project involving local history, stories and myth.

Those in attendance were keen to be part of a creative team who will make a dynamic digital audio walking tour. This will require a project group writing and recording stories over the next couple of months, which they will then edit together into a digital tour which will be available to download and enjoy as audio accompaniment to a walk along a section the Brecks waterways.

There is still time to be involved in this exciting new project; you don't need any specific skills, just an interest in the local area, or being keen to be involved in local history would help...so if you missed the introduction sessions in May and want to be part of this all singing, dancing and reading audio tour then get in touch with Tim the project lead at bfer@cabaret-techne.co.uk or the BFER team who will put you in touch with Tim.

4.2 - Celebrating River Heritage

Towards the end of May, Ancient House Museum held their Viking Family Day which involved lots of activities including coin striking, coin hunt, weaving.

Please see below feedback ground the event:

"I just wanted to say thank you for organising the above event. As always, the event was enjoyable and informative....Today's activities helped to consolidate learning undertaken at the Museum and in school earlier in the year. Please see below our attempt at weaving. It was really good fun to make."
The exhibition currently at Ancient House Museum 'The Vikings, History on your Doorstep' is running until 8th July 2023, so make sure you head down to check it out before it closes.

### 4.4 - Healing Waters: Outdoor Swimming

**2 July 2023 – Introduction to outdoor swimming: have a go, learn how to be safe and have fun.**

Booking open now! 2 July 2023 Outdoor Swim Intro: 9:45: Adult & 13+ have a go, learn how to be safe [https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/outdoor-swim-intro-adult-13-have-a-go-learn-how-to-be-safe-tickets-64794758767](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/outdoor-swim-intro-adult-13-have-a-go-learn-how-to-be-safe-tickets-64794758767).


If you’ve not tried it yet – come and have a go and learn how to enjoy water safely at Lynford Water (approved by Forestry England) in a safe and friendly session with lifeguards, volunteers and some fun activities on swimming safety and care for the environment.

The event is funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, and is part of the BFER Healing Waters Project.

Coming up later in the summer: 20 August basic life-saving for children and young people at Lynford Water. Watch this space for info: [https://tinyurl.com/HWOSUpdates](https://tinyurl.com/HWOSUpdates).
4.4 - Healing Waters: Breathe in the Brecks

Run Breckland kick-started the month with a brand-new marathon and half marathon event at the Euston Estate. Over 100 runners took part in the event, which was supported by 32 volunteer marshals.

“I was very excited to be part of the inaugural Euston Estate event by Run Breckland...The course was undulating, terrain combination of sand, grass, tracks, mud, puddles and stone, everything you want in a trail run...The marshals, mainly local runners were brilliant and really lifted your spirits...I am glad I did the 2nd lap as I was rewarded with the sighting of deer, lambs, fox, butterflies and so many different birds. In fact, it was a huge privilege to be able to enjoy the estate with the gorgeous views.”  (Participant feedback)

BFER have collaborated with sound therapy and forest bathing practitioner Sound and Ground to deliver a series of wellbeing activities for Access Community Trust, at The Crossing, Thetford. Access Community assists communities with mental health, employment, and housing related support, and through the series, clients and staff have been offered meditative wellness sessions including Eco Nidra, Yoga Nidra, Sound bathing, and Forest Bathing.

4.5 - Volunteer & Engagement Programme

In May, BFER embraced the spring weather, with a series of guided walks taking place across the Brecks. These included bird song walks led by The British Trust for Ornithology, delivered for members of Vision Norfolk at RSPB Lakenheath Fen Nature Reserve, and for the accessible walking charity, Pathmakers, at Weeting and Hockwold Heaths.

BFER took part in Suffolk Walking Festival, with Project Manager Nick Dickson leading a group to explore Brandon's Nine Stiles Walk, and BFER partners West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon village leading walks around their Country Park to share its hidden history.

The month’s walks concluded with guided riverside walks in Thetford, as part of Thetford’s Whitsun Weekend Celebrations. Led by foraging enthusiast, Jon Tyler, the walks showcased the flora and fauna along Thetford’s Spring Walks.
Guided walk for Vision Norfolk, Lakenheath Fen (2) Guided walk with Pathmakers, Weeting Heath (3) BFER walk for Suffolk Walking Festival, Brandon

4.6 - 3rd Party Grant Fund

The Friends of Thetford Station were awarded a grant from the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership scheme in May. The funding, which comes indirectly from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, will go towards designing and installing two new interpretation panels that will help raise awareness of the fascinating history of the station, and the successful work of the group to encourage nature onto the site.
One panel will accompany the hybrid Common Swift/Bat boxes and solar powered Swift call device installed last year as part of the Breckland Community Green Grant Scheme. This panel will also contain information about other unusual and rare species that make the Brecks their home.

The other panel is to display information about the architectural importance of Thetford Railway Station in the context of the cultural history of the area. The overall aim is to provide a point of interest to anyone who uses or visits the Railway Station with an emphasis on celebrating the importance of the Station buildings and the work of local conservation groups.

If you have a project you would like funded through our 3rd Party Grant Fund Scheme, please get in touch: BFER.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

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**In Other News**

**Get River Positive Funding**

Anglian Water have joined forces with Severn Trent to Get River Positive by 2030, working collaboratively to drive real action and make the changes we all want to see for a better future for our rivers and environment.

More detail on Get River Positive can be found here: [https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/environment/river-health/](https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/environment/river-health/)

The Get River Positive partnership has committed to:

- Ensure storm overflows and sewage treatment works do not harm rivers
- Create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our region’s rivers
- Support others to improve and care for rivers
- Enhance our rivers and create new habitats so wildlife can thrive
- Be open and transparent about our performance and our plans

**The Five Get River Positive Commitments** are outlined below:
Our Get River Positive commitments are among many important drivers for our work on water resources and wastewater management. Our pledges will be fully reflected in critical plans and programmes, including those for Water Resources Management, Drainage and Wastewater Management, Pollution Incident Reduction, and for the Water Industry National Environment Programme.

Get River Positive Fund:
As part of the Get River Positive initiative, we have a Get River Positive Fund that can be applied for to carry out work within the Anglian region that helps us to meet one or more of our Get River Positive Commitments.

I have attached the application form to apply for Get River Positive funding.

Q: What is the deadline? Currently there is no deadline - the panel meets monthly to review and approve applications, and you should expect to have an update within 28 working days. Depending on the number of applications, submission windows may be introduced, but we will ensure this is communicated.

Q: Can organisations apply for more than one project? Organisations can apply for more than one project.

Q: What are the funding requirements? Projects are asked to be match funded of an equal amount with other partners, so that Anglian Water is not the sole funder.

Q: When does the money have to be spent? This is subject to legal agreement, but generally we would expect the money to be spent within the year requested. However, you could apply in this year and ask for the funds in the next business year.

If you have any questions about Get River Positive or the fund, please drop me an email or give me a ring: 07773 62372 and I will be happy to help or email getriverpositive@anglianwater.co.uk for more information.

BFER Volunteer Opportunities

Events & Activities Helper: Join BFER this spring and summer and assist at an exciting range of events and activities! From guided wildlife walks observing bats, birds, butterflies, and plant life, to a range of expert led talks, wild-craft workshops, community runs, wellbeing walks, and much more. Learn new skills, explore the landscapes of the Brecks, meet wildlife and heritage experts, and be part of a friendly and welcoming team.

Volunteers assist BFER by helping to greet and talk to members of the public, welcoming attendees, sharing information about BFER projects, and helping to collect participant feedback. Volunteers can also choose to get involved with hands on activities, such as craft workshops, and tail walking guided walks. All volunteers receive training and support as required, and volunteering can be carried out on a flexible basis.

See our list of upcoming events on brecks.org/events to get a feel for the types of events that you may be able to help with.
If you would like to join BFER to support our events and activities, we’d love to hear from you:
bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

Volunteer with us!

We are looking for volunteers to join us, see a list of our current opportunities:

BFER Blogger Volunteer - BFER is launching a new blog as part of its website and is seeking Blogging Volunteers to assist in writing engaging articles and content. BFER will use blog posts to reach both new and existing audiences. The BFER Blog will report on the diverse range of exciting heritage, wildlife, wellbeing, and art projects and events taking place across the BFER scheme.

BFER PR & Social Media Volunteer - We are looking for a driven PR & Social Media Volunteer to attract and interact with new and existing audiences. Volunteers should have a solid understanding of how each social media channel works and how to optimize content so that it is engaging on those channels.

BFER Video Editor Volunteer - Can you create and edit videos suitable for websites and social media? We are looking for a video editors to help create, edit and deliver content for our social media platforms, YouTube and Website.

BFER Events & Activities Helper - Events and Activities Helpers assist with one-off BFER events and activity opportunities throughout the year. Participants of these events hugely benefit from and value their interactions with volunteers. Volunteers serve as a ‘friendly face’ representing BFER: engaging visitors and participants, and generally being warm and helpful.

If you are interested in any of the above volunteer roles, please get in touch: BFER.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

Spotlight on Volunteering

Thetford Town Council’s Craft Group is a volunteer group based at The Guildhall, Thetford. The group offers opportunities for volunteers to collaborate on craft projects, using their combined skills and ideas to work on large scale artworks and installations. Previous projects have included creating hundreds of crocheted flowers, which were used to cover the exterior of Thetford Carnegie to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The group is flexible, with a weekly Wednesday morning social drop-in craft session at The Guildhall, as well as opportunities to join in with craft projects remotely from home. The group are currently working on a series of three textile panels which they are creating for the BFER project to help celebrate Thetford’s two rivers, the Little Ouse and the Thet. The first panel, which is currently on display in the Children's Library at Thetford Library, is a beautiful showcase of knit and crochet, inspired by river wildlife. 35 volunteers took part in its creation.

The group are currently working on a second panel, using felt and sewing techniques to depict a detailed scene illustrating Thetford’s industrial riverside heritage.
To find out more about the group and how to join, or if you would like to engage with BFER to set up volunteer craft projects in your area of the Brecks, contact: bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

Other Volunteer Opportunities

West Stow Country Park are looking for volunteers!
If you are interested contact West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village

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

**The River Lark Catchment Partnership** - [Volunteer Opportunities](https://brecks.org/bfer/resources/volunteer-hub/)

**Thetford Town Council** - Conservation Volunteers

For more information on the opportunities visit: [https://brecks.org/bfer/resources/volunteer-hub/](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.
Brace yourself in the Brecks for Viking Visits this summer!

This summer, theatre company Magic Floor Productions will be performing a brand-new play, Vikings of the Brecks, at events days across the Brecks. Be transported back in time to discover how Vikings came to live in East Anglia, experience invasions, and decide upon your favourite Viking leader in an interactive game show, The Plunder Games.

See the play at free open-air performances this summer:

**Saturday 17th June:** Thetford Heritage Weekend (Thetford Market Place)

**Saturday 24th and Sunday 15th June:** Dragon Fest, West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon Village (visit the BFER stall for Viking themed craft)

**Saturday 15th July:** Lark in the Park, (Jubilee Fields, Mildenhall)

Stay tuned to brecks.org/events for further information and for more Viking events check out the events below at Ancient House Museum

**Clubs at Ancient House**

**Knit and Knatter**
First Tuesday of the month 10am to 12 noon: Come and knit, natter and enjoy a tea or coffee and a biscuit. You can bring along your own knitting or crochet or get involved in one of our projects.

**Mardle and Make**
First Tuesday of the month 2pm to 4pm: Bring your craft projects and spend some time working on them in good company with a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit.

**History Club**
Every Wednesday during term time from 4-5.15pm: After-school club for children aged 6 to 11 years old.

**Teenage History Club**
Every Friday during term time from 4-6pm: Free after school club for teenagers aged 12 and over.

**Heritage Open Day: Made by the River**
Saturday 9 September 2023, 10am to 5pm

**First World War in Thetford**
Tuesday 24 October 2023, 10am to 4.30pm: Discover the industries along the rivers in Thetford and how they contributed to the war effort.

**Second World War in Thetford**
Saturday 24 February 2024, 10am to 3.30pm: Discover Thetford’s important role in the Second World War and find out why Churchill’s secret papers came to Thetford.

**Family Trails at Ancient House Museum of Thetford Life**
10am to 4pm
Included in museum admission: Adults: £5.70; Concession:* £5.50; Child: £4.80; Adult in a family group: £5.20; Twilight (last hour before closing): £2
Click here to book [https://norfolk-museums.arttickets.org.uk/ancient-house](https://norfolk-museums.arttickets.org.uk/ancient-house)

**Vikings Trail**
Tuesday 30 May to Friday 30 June 2023: Become a River Raider as you hunt for silver at the museum. Find all the coins to win a small prize.

**Made by the River Trail**
Saturday 22 July to Friday 8 September 2023: Fill your boat with cargo made in Thetford to win a small prize.

**First World War Trail**
Saturday 21 October to Thursday 23 November 2023: Find our Burrell G Company First World War soldiers hidden in the museum to win a small prize.
Christmas!
Friday 24 November 2024 to Wednesday 3 January 2024
Find the presents hidden in the museum to win a small prize.

Something Extra Saturdays
10am to 4pm

Ready, steady, Go!
Join Run Breckland this summer healthy outdoor events across the Brecks. Whether a walker, jogger, or runner, all are welcome to take part. With no cut-time, each event is designed to allow participants to go at their own pace and are open to all ages and levels of experience.

Sunday 4th June: Thetford River 2K/5K Walk/Run
Explore Thetford’s riverside and Kingfisher Lakes on this scenic route, followed by a community picnic on Thetford’s Riverside Green. As part of our Volunteer Week celebrations, volunteers from BFER and its partner organisations have been offered free entry and will receive a thank you goody bag.

Sunday 25th June: Mildenhall 2K/5K River Run
Explore the riverside paths of the River Lark from Jubilee Fields to Barton Mills on a 5k loop, or enjoy a 2k loop of Jubilee Fields. A selection of fun children’s activities will be on offer, such as ball ponds, swing ball, and skittles.

Tuesday 27th June: BFER Partnership ‘Supporting Sustainability Workshop’

Thursday 29th June
BFER & Partners’ Walks Guide Training event

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_0hPFZr4