

County Wildlife Site Survey Form
(Ref. No. 2140)

Site Name: David Hood's Meadow
Grid reference: TG 241311
District: North Norfolk

Parish: Suffield
Area: 1.3 ha
Survey date: June 20th 2007

Annotated map:

Site description:

Overview:

Two meadows forming a broadly L-shaped site; the field to the north-east is a memorial garden, with tree planting and a large, recently constructed earth-mound. This area is managed as a formal garden and although there are some remnants of formerly species-rich grassland, this area is not considered in this survey.

The second and largest meadow is species-rich meadow, with patches of impeded drainage on neutral soils; the south is wetter than the north, where the site shows evidence of being relatively free drained and slightly acidic in places. The site is divided by a stream that has been over-deepened in the past and there is some anecdotal evidence that the site has been over-grazed in the past and possibly sprayed with herbicide. A gravel track provides for informal access from the lane to the south, across the field, to the memorial garden. There is also an area of impeded drainage that has been recently deepened into a scrape.

The south, north and west boundaries of the site have tall, mature hedges, containing mature trees. The site is bisected by a clear, flowing stream, where the landowner has recorded water vole.

Habitat description:

Area 1, east of track: G5.1.1, G5.3.2, W2.2.2, O2.2.1, A2

This is a largely dry area of grassland, with a derelict hedge to the east that includes some ornamental roses and a perimeter ditch to the east.

Meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and large patches of fleabane (*Pulicaria dysentrica*) dominate the grassland here. Creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) is common, as are common mouse ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), broad leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), cleavers (*Gallium aparine*), sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), cut-leaved crane'sbill (*Geranium dissectum*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*). Southern marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza majalis praetermissa*) is frequent-occasional, as are lesser spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) and bog stitchwort (*Stellaria uliginosa*); sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and lady's smock (*Cardamine pratensis*) are frequent here.

A few wet patches support marsh foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*) and elsewhere, red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and rough meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*) also occur. Meadow sweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and amphibious bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*) are both rare in this part of the site.

Scattered scrub in this area includes bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), oak (*Quercus robur*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) near the stream. Scrub is scattered and not encroaching rapidly.

To the south of this area, against the tall hedge, creeping thistle and broad leaved dock dominate, possibly on dredgings from the ditch. Annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) and water mint (*Mentha aquatica*) also occur here, with the latter in some dense patches.

The banks of the stream again support thistle and dock where dredgings have been dumped. Water figwort (*Scrophularia aquatica*) is occasional along the eastern bank of the stream and bramble rare. The stream is clear and fast-flowing with some alder along the steep banks. The banks also support great willowherb, southern marsh orchid, hard rush (*Juncus inflexus*), brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), hawthorn, dog rose (*Rosa canina*) and false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*); perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) also occurs, but is rare. Marsh horsetail (*Equisetum palustre*) also occurs here, but is occasional.

Perennial sow thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) grows on disturbed areas near the path, as does hairy tare (*Vicia hirsuta*), which is rare on this site, common mouse ear, common chickweed (*Stellaria media*), sticky mouse ear (*Cerastium glomeratum*) and rarely, bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*).

The hedge to the south is tall and mature; composed largely of hawthorn, there are also a number of mature oaks, with ivy (*Hedera helix*) occurring as a climber.

Area 2, north of scrape: G5.3.2, G5.2.1, G5.3.3, A1.1.1, O.2.2.1, A2.

The wet scrape to the centre of the field has been artificially deepened in the past two years and broad-leaved dock dominates where dredgings have been dumped along the edge. The scrape contained water at the time of survey and had clearly flooded the adjacent grassland just prior to survey, with the draw down zone supporting a range of marginal species.

The margins of the scrape are dominated by marsh foxtail, with lesser spearwort, floating sweet grass (*Glyceria fluitans*) and sharp flowered rush (*Juncus actiflorus*) also common. A small amount of blanket weed occurs where the water is deepest (just less than 1m at time of survey). Small sweet grass (*Glyceria declinata*) also occurs occasionally.

Other marginals include flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), great willowherb, occasional water mint, patches of greater bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*), common mouse ear and rarely, bog stitchwort. Lesser water parsnip (*Berula erecta*) also occurs frequently in the scrapes.

North of the scrape, the grass is tall and rank, with Yorkshire Fog and meadow foxtail abundant and large patches of common nettle, broad-leaved dock and spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*). This part of the site is generally drier and vegetation associated with the damp hollows largely absent, although meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) occurs rarely. Ragwort (*Senecio jacobea*) is also rare in this part of the site and on the site as a whole. Other species that occur rarely in area 2 include hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), spear thistle, yarrow (*Achillea millifolium*) and common vetch (*Vicia sativa*). Creeping buttercup is abundant on this part of the site, as is meadow buttercup. Nettle is occasional here; cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) is rare in this part of the site and there are occasional clumps of false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) against the hedge.

The stream bisects the site and is clear and fast flowing. The banks support occasional hawthorn, rare gorse (*Ulex europeaus*) (1 bush) and occasional patches of watercress (*Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum*). Field maple (*Acer campestre*) occurs as a shrub; false oat grass and hairy willow herb also occur. In places, bramble scrub is developing and water figwort is rare on the banks.

A tall, mature hedge, composed largely of hawthorn with mature oaks, forms the boundary to the north and west of this site. Some bramble scrub is developing under the hedge and ground flora associated with the hedge includes hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*), red campion (*Silene dioica*), rough chervil (*Chaerophyllum temulum*) and herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*). Harts tongue fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) is rare near the hedge, as is lady's mantle (*Alchemilla glabra*) and primrose (*Primula vulgaris*); lady's mantle is rare in Norfolk and is probably a garden escape. Dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), cleavers and field horsetail (*Equisteum arvense*) are common-frequent in these areas of drier meadow near the hedges.

Some planted trees, including walnut, occur to the north of the site and there is some evidence of scrub spreading from the hedge, including, rarely, gorse.

Area 3, west of path & south of scrape: G5.3.2, G5.3.3, A1.1.1, O.2.1.

To the south of this area are a number of shallow, wet hollows, where marsh foxtail is abundant. Water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*) is rare in these hollows and both meadowsweet and bog stitchwort are occasional, as are white clover (*Trifolium repens*), crested dogs tail (*Cynosaurus cristatus*) and brown sedge (*Carex disticha*). Greater bird's foot trefoil is abundant in patches, as is amphibious bistort. Hard rush and sharp-flowered rush are both occasional, soft rush is rare and water mint common. Toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*) also occurs in some of the hollows and spike rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) is common in some hollows; marsh willowherb (*Epilobium palustre*) occurs occasionally.

Meadow foxtail is common on the drier areas between the hollows, as is sweet vernal grass. Spear thistle, marsh thistle, creeping buttercup, meadow buttercup and Yorkshire fog are dominant in this area. Sticky mouse ear, common mouse ear, broad leaved dock, clustered dock, lady's smock, field wood rush (*Luzula campestre*) and fleabane are frequent here, along with both annual and rough meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*). Ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) is rare in this area.

Broad leaved plantain (*Plantago major*) and common daisy (*Bellis perennis*) occur along the path, as does square stalked St John's wort (*Hypericum tetrapterum*) and creeping cinquefoil

(*Potentilla reptans*). South of the scrape, the drier area is dominated by broad-leaved dock and great willowherb; much of this area is covered by former dredgings from the ditch that forms the southern boundary to the site.

The vegetation in this area is largely short and not rank, except against the hedge to the south. This hedge is of the same character as the hedge the south of area 1, as is the hedge to the west of the whole site. There is no evidence of scrub invasion in area 3.

Other notable species:

Water vole known to breed in the stream.

Grass snake and common frog observed during survey.

Abundant butterflies also observed during survey, including common blue and speckled wood.

A bryophyte survey, conducted by Mary Ghullam in 2003, notes presence of *Philonotis fontana* in the wet hollows in area 3; this is one of only 5 records for eastern Norfolk.

Adjacent habitats/potential buffer zones:

To the south of the site is a small lane and to the east a garden; farmland lies beyond most of the other boundaries, including an area of rough grassland to the north-east of the site, beyond the memorial garden, which might be worthy of a survey.

Brief management proposals & site condition assessment:

In recent years, the site has been managed by horse grazing during the summer, with occasional spraying with herbicide.

A full management statement will be available to the landowner following this survey; outline recommendations include a hay cut for the northern part of the meadow, followed by grazing the whole site in late summer. An occasional early graze might also be recommended.

No further scrapes of ponds should be created in the grassland and some areas of scrub will need to be controlled.

Landowner contact details:

Land held in trust.

Contact for trust: Rupert Eris, Valley Farm House, East Ruston, Cromer, Norfolk.

Possible grants:

- Environmental Stewardship
- Woodland Grant Scheme
- Norfolk County Council grants
- Other (specify)

Assessment of site:

Habitat	Criteria passed on	Criteria failed on	Comments
Grassland	4, 6, 7	5, 8	
Open water, standing	1, 4	2, 3, 5	

Also note water voles present

Recommendations:

- Site remains CWS (boundary unchanged)
- Site deleted
- Boundary altered (specify)

✓ Notify site as CWS

.....
Approved December 3rd 2007

Plant list in English & scientific names attached.