



# RUNNING FOX WALKS

## 3 BUTTERCUP

Bats hang out at Burwash!



Those frogs have been busy...

The meadow to your left, known as Buttercup, contains a moated site (clearly visible by the differences in grass growth). This site has been partially, but inconclusively, excavated. Some opinions suggest that it may have been the early, Iron Age, site for the village whereas others suggest that it was the site of the original, probably Saxon, Manor House. The sensitive grassland management which protects this archaeological feature is assisted through our Environmental Stewardship agreement with Natural England.

The old filled-in moat provides a very ecologically useful boggy necklace around the meadow.

### Dead, dying, hollow, staghead trees

We always try to retain such trees on the farm, as the habitat they provide is almost richer than when they were in their prime. Woodpeckers feed on the insects living in the dead wood, bats roost in one of the hollow Ash trees and a pair of Sparrow Hawks is nesting in the other. Many species of Raptors (birds of prey), Corvids (crow family) and Bats use such trees for nesting/roosting.

### Riches in Ditches

Next to you is one of the few 'wet' ditches on the farm (i.e. a ditch which remains wet for most of the year) and, as such, is home to many interesting creatures and insects. Amphibians (Frogs, Toads and Newts) breed here and the ditch insect life provides food for Bats and other small mammals, birds, amphibians and other insects.

Ditches provide the watery links around the landscape between other more substantial bodies of water.

There is nothing dull about ditch water!

### Species rich meadows

We manage a number of meadows, of which this is one, that contain a mix of lots of different types of grasses as well as herbs and wildflowers.

This is why such a meadow is usually teeming with wildlife, particularly butterflies and other insects, and the small mammals and birds which feed on them and who are in turn fed on by species higher up the food chain - the Raptors, Mustelids (Badgers, Weasels etc) and Foxes. All of which are regularly seen hunting here.

A female Grass Snake is raising her family beneath the large White Willow at the edge of the meadow.

We take particular care of our meadows - not cutting them before mid-July to allow plants to set seed and ground nesting birds to fledge their young - and only lightly grazing the 'aftermath' (grass re-growth) in the autumn.

### Hay

Meadows provide fantastic, sweet, hay which calves, sheep and horses relish. When the grass and other plants in a meadow have reached a certain stage of growth - usually late June or July - we mow it down, toss it and turn it frequently (called 'tedding') to dry it out and then, when it is dry, bale it up (squeeze it into small rectangular packages tied up with string) and stack it in a barn for winter feed for our stock. The whole process takes about a week - given fair weather!

Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.



Painted Ladies love meadows

Do you like butter?

