



RUNNING FOX WALKS

A Burwash Barn Owl



4 KING'S GROVE

The field to your right (east) is called King's Grove as it once held the round barrow or burial mound of a bronze age chieftain (probably from over 4,000 years ago); sadly long since ploughed flat but still visible in dry years from the crop marks.

The field to your left (west) around the corner is called Elder Stubbs (old English for a stump) - presumably it once contained a scrubby thicket of elder bushes.

The whole area in front of you (approximately 80 acres) was worked as one large field until we became organic in 2000, when we divided the field with a beetle bank (the grassy strip in front of you).

Beetle Bank

As organic farmers, growing crops, we feel that, on balance, insects are beneficial to us. This is particularly the case for the various species of Rove and Ground Beetles who eat Aphids, Slug eggs, Orange Blossom Midge eggs, various fungi etc. To provide beetles with a winter refuge and breeding ground we have split three of our larger fields by means of raised banks of tussocky grasses and wild flowers - Beetle Banks. In the springtime the insects spread out from these concentrations to do their valuable work.

As well as being good for beneficial insects our beetle banks provide excellent feeding and nesting sites for ground nesting birds and small mammals (and, as a result, perfect hunting corridors for the small mammal predators such as our Barn Owls - we now have two nesting pairs on the farm).

Grass Margins (or, Life on the Edge)

We believe that field margins are a terribly neglected but very important (on most arable farms, the most important) ecological resource - particularly as they are usually

backed by a hedge or ditch. Together they will provide slugs and insects for frogs and toads as well as seeds, insects and grubs for small birds and mammals (during the summer you will see a colourful array of wildflowers such as the purple Field Scabious and white Ox-eye daisy, here for the benefit of foraging bumblebees and other insects.

If, like ours, they are sown to tussocky grasses and wild flowers, they will provide nest sites for ground nesting birds, foraging for small birds and mammals, good hunting for predators, refuge for beneficial insects, nectar for butterflies and nest sites for humble bees. From the farming viewpoint they provide a buffer between the weeds of the hedge bottom and the crop, saving chemicals or, in our case, hand weeding. The management of our floristically enhanced grass margins is assisted by Natural England.

We're grubby and proud of it!



Laid Hedges

The hedges along either side of New Road were 'laid' during the 2003 National Hedge Laying Championships. Some seven different styles of hedgelaying were employed but the differences are now almost imperceptible.

Arrowhead

In 2008, during field walking by a local archaeology group, a Neolithic arrowhead (the Neolithic period ran from 4000BC to 2200BC - so it's very old!) was found in King's Grove field. Was it the long extinct, huge wild cattle, Aurochs, grazing here that they hunted then, when this was still the glacial fringe?

Over 400 generations have since loved this place as we do now.

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.



Wildflower heaven for butterflies...

