









Barlow Common Nature Reserve

www.norfolk-nature-society.org.uk

Barlow Common

Local Nature Reserve

Historically Barlow Common has undergone two significant transformations. Originally common land supporting a great variety of wildlife, it rapidly became an industrial tip and most of the natural history interest was lost. Now the situation has come full circle - with the site being returned to a natural state.

Up until the early 1900s Barlow Common was an area of low-lying, marshy ground. It was used by parishioners for grazing livestock and collecting firewood.

The land value fell to almost nothing during the agricultural depression of the 1930s and the site was acquired by the North Eastern Railway Company. For nearly 50 years it was used as a ballast tip, containing a great deal of railway refuse as well as bomb-damage rubble from the city of Hull, tipped during World War II.

In 1983 British Rail ceased tipping and reclaimed the land by sealing the tip with earth. Excavation of this material from a nearby field created a depression which was specially profiled and allowed to fill with water. This now forms the mere adjacent to the information centre. Selby District Council acquired the site in 1986 to create a public nature reserve.

The surface of the former tip, now standing some 10 metres above surrounding farmland, has been planted with a variety of trees including oak, birch, rowan and alder to create new woodland.

Bird's-foot trefoil is the larval food plant of the common blue.

The yellow blooms of early evening primrose and purple flowers



Green woodpecker can be spotted feeding on ants on the greenland.

Fly agaric (right), a distinctive toadstool grows in association with the roots of silver birch and can be seen in autumn.

This woodland provides a habitat for small birds such as dunnocks, tits and willow warblers. Many types of wild plant have colonised the remainder of the tip surface, notably black knapweed and early evening primrose.

These wild flower meadows are home to a wide variety of insects including more than 20 species of butterfly and certain birds, particularly green woodpecker.

Remnants of the original common can be found on the northern and western margins of the reserve, supporting a mosaic of woodland and wetland, including ponds and reed beds. The wetland is particularly important for the widgeon and wading birds it attracts.

Barlow Common was declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) by Selby District Council, in consultation with English Nature, in March 2002.

This important status recognises its special interest and the conservation of wildlife and habitats to safeguard their future.

LNRs must provide opportunities for the study of, and research into, matters relating to the flora and fauna of Great Britain, and an education service is available. For further information contact the Countryside Service on 01757 457115.

LNRs should be used by all for quiet enjoyment and the appreciation of nature.



Speckled wood butterflies can be spotted along the old railway line from March to October.

Female common blue

Black knapweed

Bird's-foot trefoil

Male

Little green woodpecker and court (left) both seen on Redwing Pond, making their nests in the reeds.









