

16 Yare Valley - Norton Marshes to Haddiscoe Dismantled Railway

This area inspired the artist Sir J. A. Arnesby Brown (1866-1955) who lived each summer at The White House, Haddiscoe.



Herald of the Night, Sir J.A. Arnesby-Brown

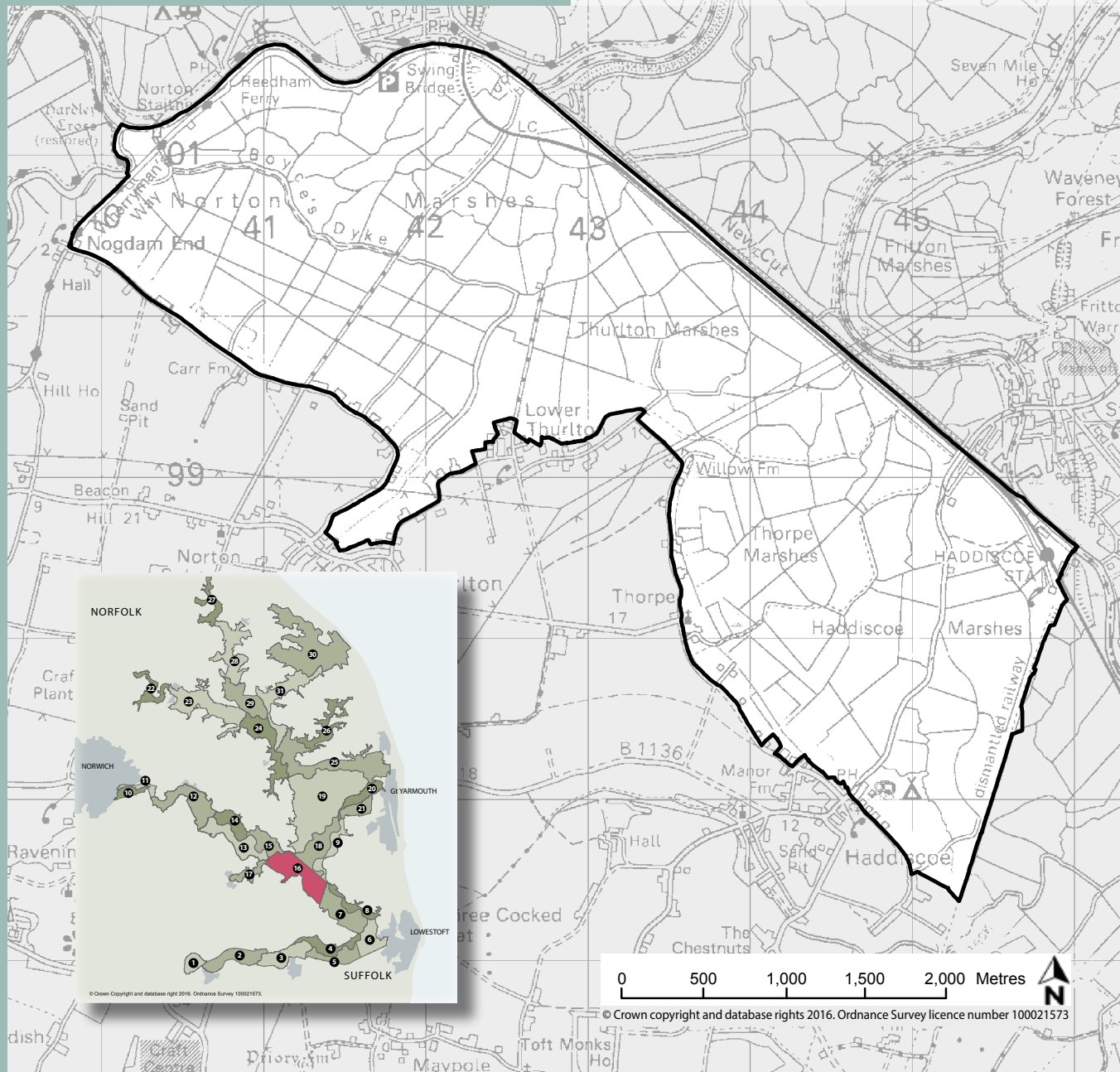
Why is this area special?

This is a vast area of largely drained marshland which lies to the south of the Rivers Yare and Waveney. It traditionally formed part of the parishes of Norton (Subcourse), Thurlton, Thorpe and Haddiscoe along with a detached part of Raveningham. It would have had a direct connection to what is now known as Haddiscoe Island, prior to the construction of the New Cut which connected the Yare and Waveney together to avoid having to travel across Breydon Water.

There are few houses within this marshland area. Those that exist are confined to those locations where there were, or are transport links across the rivers. The remainder of the settlements have developed in a linear way hugging the edges of the southern river valley side.

The Haddiscoe Dam road provides the main connection north-south from Haddiscoe village to St Olaves.

A journey on the train line from Norwich to Lowestoft which follows the line of the New Cut and then hugs the northern side of the Waveney Valley provides a glorious way to view this area as public rights of way into the middle of the marshes (other than the fully navigable river) are few and far between.



Central to the area there are a series of significant structures which detract from the sense of isolation and tranquillity which can be found within the majority of the area. These structures include the massively tall pylons which carry the power lines over the rivers and the New Cut and the modern road bridge at St Olaves. This busy intersection of road, rail and river has also been the focus of a significant amount of commercial development.

Topography and Skyline

This is a level area forming part of the extensive former estuary with three tributary valleys to the south. Much of the area of marshland lies at around -1m below OD and is slightly lower in parts. There is a broad valley floor of up to 2.7km in width. The valley side's rise up to a crest of about 10m above OD beyond the Broads area.

The southern skyline is formed by gently undulating arable farmland beyond the valley floor outside the Broads area. At certain locations the carr woodland fringing the valley interrupts the views beyond.

Arable field south of Boyce's dyke with the tall pylons carrying electricity cables over the river and New Cut in the distance. There has been considerable dyke loss in these arable areas.
Lesley Marsden

To the north, skylines are formed either by a continuation of the grazing marshes of Haddiscoe or Halvergate or by the low wooded ridge beyond St Olaves, which lies mainly outside the Broads area and which is associated both with Waveney Forest and the Somerleyton Estate. This ridge is defined by mixed and plantation woodland and forms a prominent skyline element in these views.

However there are significant interruptions to these skylines from very prominent elements such as road and rail routes and bridges (particularly the A143 overpass at Haddiscoe Cut Bridge), pylons, electricity lines and the dismantled Beccles to St. Olaves railway.

The Cantley Factory is visible in views north west from within the area, and movement of traffic along the A143 including the tall bridge over the Waveney at Haddiscoe Cut, is a feature in views to the north and east.



Estuarine Marshland

Settlement fringe

Even from Thurlton marshes the plumes of vapour can be seen from Cantley Sugar Factory . Lesley Marsden



Landscape types

Within this character area there are the following landscape types. See section two where more information can be found about the individual types.

Rivers and ronds

Carr woodland

Settlement fringe

Upper river valley marshland

Estuarine Marshland

Settlement fringe

Settlement Fringe

GOOGLE earth - Image ©2016 Getmapping plc,
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Geology and soils

The underlying strata are of clays, sands and gravels. This area is uniformly Breydon formation silty clay thinning at the valley edges towards the upland to form narrow fringes of peat and in addition along the minor tributaries.

Enclosure, scale and pattern

This is large scale landscape with wide valley floors, extensive views and big skies. There is marginally a greater sense of enclosure in the southern parts of this area than the north, due to the presence of the wooded valley ridges. Localised sense of enclosure is created when in the proximity of the flood banks of the River Yare and the railway embankment. The area is a mixture of some rectilinear dyke pattern and areas with long sinuous boundaries derived from minor watercourses and creeks.

Two of the more significant ones here are Boyce's Dyke and the Thorpe and Haddiscoe Fleet.

There has been considerable boundary loss to the north of the area and the area adjacent to the New Cut, associated with conversion to arable, which has created some particularly large irregular-shaped marshes.

The colours in the landscape are muted with the rivers and dykes reflecting light.

Main features of land cover and use

The land use is essentially for farming, both as **grazing marsh** and **arable**. Where land has been converted to arable use, dyke networks have been rationalised.

There are some small blocks of **carr woodland** along the peaty area nearer the upland although these are less of a feature here than in many of the other marshland areas.

The wooded valley sides at Fritton and St Olaves create the skyline in views east from Norton marshes albeit interrupted by the pylons in the foreground. Lesley Marsden



The dead straight New Cut with the Norwich Lowestoft Line running parallel. Haddiscoe Island lies to the right of this photo. Lesley Marsden

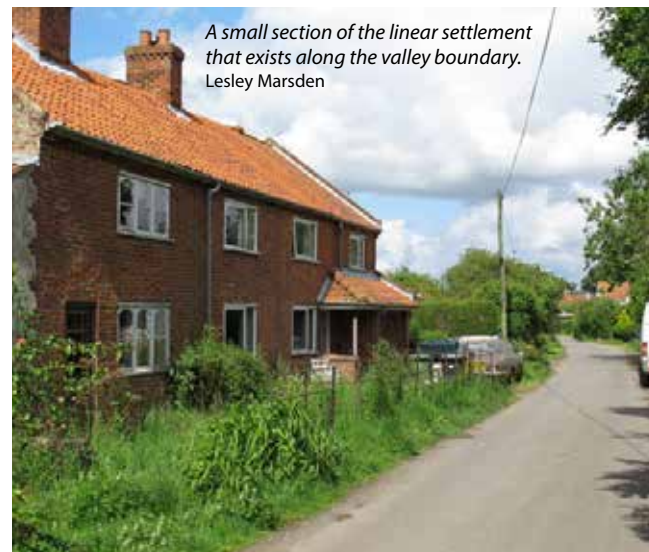
Infrastructure - Aside from the river, this area contains a number of other significant communications routes - **road, rail and water**. The most dramatic is the New Cut which forms the north-eastern boundary of this area. The Cut is a major piece of 19th century engineering creating a completely straight link between the Yare at Reedham and the Waveney at St Olaves. It was designed by William Cubitt and formed part of a larger scheme to provide a direct link between Lowestoft and Norwich. The Cut was completed in 1832, and followed by the railway beside it in 1847. It was never a commercial success and was damaged by the floods of 1953 and nearly closed.

Haddiscoe Dam is by contrast is a more winding medieval route, crossing the marshes between Haddiscoe and St Olaves. The Dam was built by St Olaves Priory in association with a new bridge at St Olaves in the thirteenth century. The Dam has become part of the A146 and is lined for much of its course by **pollarded willows**. However hawthorn scrub, established on the embankments, detracts from the unique visual qualities of the pollards, a historic wetland feature, and is also spreading out into the marshes changing their character.



This area also includes the **former railway line** between St Olaves and Beccles (1859 to 1959) that ran approximately north-south across the marshes and is very much a feature of the landscape. Two rail lines crossed at Haddiscoe Station where the bridge piers are still in situ across the Waveney and the signal box remains. There are also some terraces of railway housing. The course of the railway line has been used to form the boundary between this area and LCA 7 although the transition is actually more gradual.

Settlement within the area is generally linear in form and largely restricted to the marginally higher ground on the edge of the floodplain around the tributaries which flow into this area and form the parish boundaries. Much of this settlement (allied to the woodland on the valley edges) restricts views of the marshes from the valley side. However, a short area towards the ferry road at Norton Subcourse is unusually open, allowing views across the marshes from the road. Elsewhere there is some terraced railway housing around Haddiscoe Station, properties along Ferry Road and Norton Subcourse, and an isolated farmhouse on Haddiscoe Dam Road.



A small section of the linear settlement that exists along the valley boundary. Lesley Marsden

There are two **drainage mills** in this area both along the Ferry Road at Norton Subcourse. Mills are not a particular feature of this area although this has not always been the case. There are numerous lost mill sites. It may be they were superseded by large steam plant as was the case further upriver on the Yare, whereas areas such as Halvergate and Haddiscoe Island, where steam engines were not such a big feature, have retained many more mills.

Built heritage features include Reedham Swing Bridge which carries the railway line across the Yare; Haddiscoe Thorpe Church – noted for some early (Romanesque) features; Boyce's Dyke Mill & Engine House derelict tower which was adapted and extended to form an engine house; Norton Black Mill, a tarred tower fitted with a boat-shaped cap. This mill was particularly well photographed in its working days and is now used as a holiday let.

Old and new technologies. Norton Drainage Mill (now a holiday let) with the internal drainage board pump house which now houses the equipment for water management on the marshes. Images, Lesley Marsden



Reedham ferry arriving at Norton staithe

Helping to keep it special

Care needs to be taken when landscape change occurs, to ensure that those positive characteristics that contribute to an area's unique sense of place are conserved and enhanced. What follows are examples of local issues and opportunities.

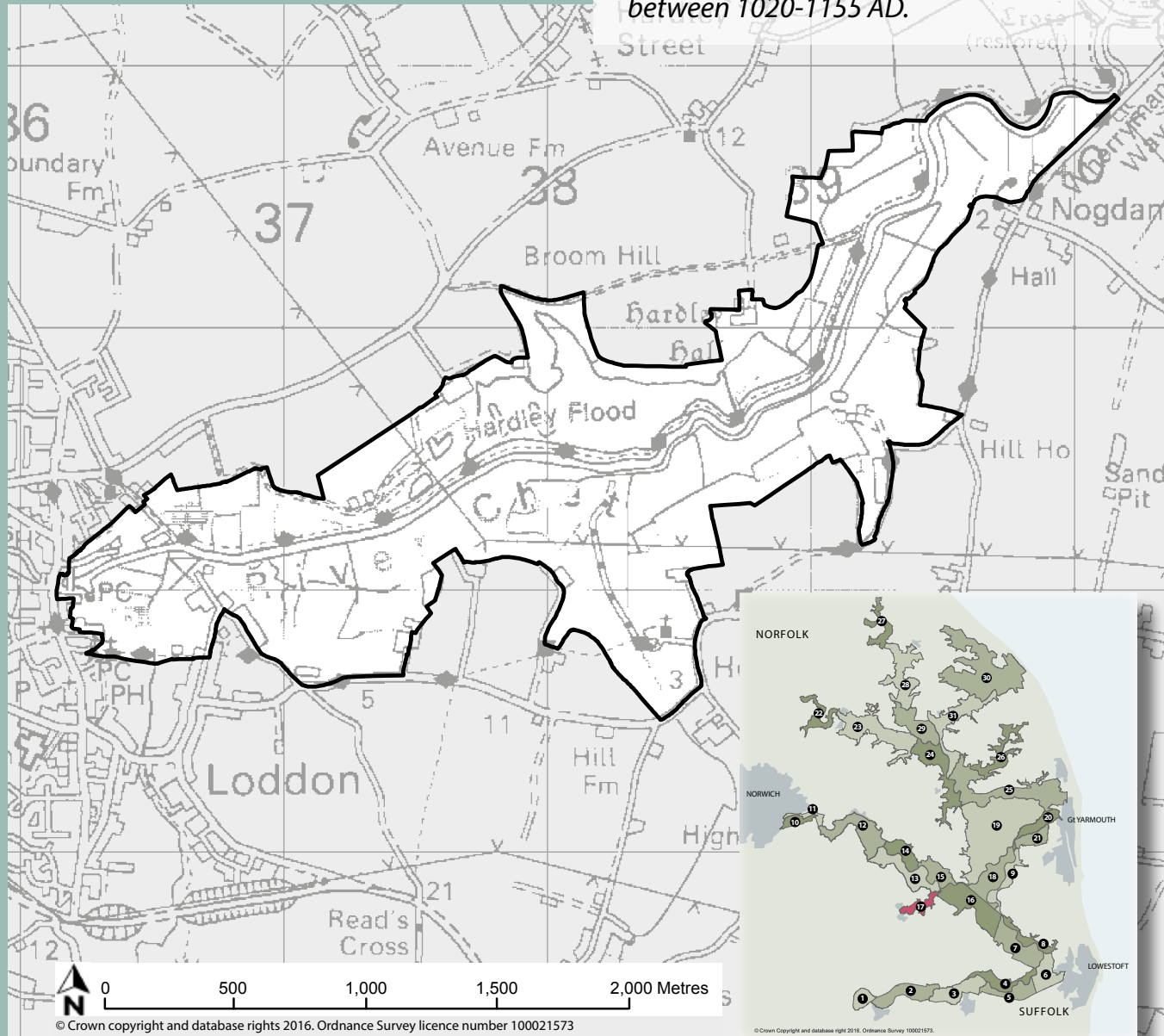
Natural Heritage - Much of the area is used as grazing marsh or for arable purposes. The water levels and quality of the drainage dykes can affect the habitat value of these dykes. There are opportunities to enhance the habitat value of the area through farming practices sympathetic to the environment. Arable cultivation of the marshes has also caused a loss of unity, a lowering of the land levels and loss of historic boundaries and boundary features. Dykes in the area are sometimes overgrown and hawthorn scrub from the Haddiscoe Dam is spreading out into the marshes.

Landscape - Visual impacts of built development and infrastructure have at certain locations detracted from the perceived naturalness of the area. These include the settlements of Reedham and St Olaves, the Cantley Factory and various pylons and electricity poles and wires crossing the marshes. Tranquillity is also impacted upon by the frequent traffic movements and noise on the A146.

Some dereliction can be found allied to settlements along with the various mixed uses of land along the settlement edge. This can have an effect on the character of the grazing marsh environment.

17 Chet Valley

The Chet Valley is the location of the very recent, significant archaeological find of an oak boat constructed by skilled craftsmen between 1020-1155 AD.



Why is this area special?

The Chet Valley is a tributary valley of the River Yare which is particularly notable for Hardley Flood, a large area of tidal washland to the north of the river which is a SSSI. It supports nationally important breeding populations of shoveller, pochard and gadwall. The Wherryman's way, one of the long distance footpath routes, which passes through the Broads follows the length of the northern river bank from Loddon and Chedgrave at the western end of the area to the junction with the River Yare to the west.

A large proportion of the area has a remote, isolated character but towards Loddon and Chedgrave the river and the adjacent area becomes much more developed and busier. Businesses catering for the leisure/recreation industry and boating have tended to expand out into the adjacent grazing marsh area.

The River Chet rises in Poringland and was once minor enough to be forded near to Pye's Mill, Loddon. Between the Yare and Loddon/Chedgrave, the river was widened, deepened and straightened to make it fully navigable for trading wherries serving two firms of seed merchants, in the late nineteenth century. Prior to this, transportation by road to and from Hardley or Langley Staithe was necessary. Most of the alteration in the course has been in the section from Hardley Flood towards the settlement area, partly moving the course northwards in doing so creating an area of riverside heathland area at Chedgrave.

Topography and Skyline

It is a small scale, narrow valley landscape. The valley floor width is around 300m, although widening slightly in the area around Hardley Flood. The valley, lying at around 2m OD, has gently sloping valley sides bound together and defined by an intricate network of small woodland blocks creating a relatively enclosed landscape. The valley crests fall just outside the Executive Area at 10-15m OD and are visually prominent in more open views such as to the west of Hardley Flood.

Skylines, notably in views west from Hardley Flood in views east from Loddon are interrupted by pylons and electricity poles forming a locally intrusive element within the area. At other locations the skylines are partly defined

by carr woodlands within the valley floor and by rising areas of open arable farmland on the upper valley sides beyond the Broads area. Views are mostly contained

within the valley due to the enclosed nature of the landscape, although breaks in the woodland create visual links with adjacent landscapes.

Views over grazing marsh on the north bank showing some of the different landscape elements in the area. Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk



Landscape types

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Geology and soils

The valley floor is peat with sands and gravel valley sides. Sands and gravels lie at a deeper level.

Enclosure, scale and pattern

Comparatively the Chet valley is a small scale landscape, the narrow river valley allied to the small scale woodland blocks create a relatively enclosed landscape.

Drained fens and arable land are spread across the north of the river, while rectilinear drainage pattern is evident to the south of the river. Hardley Flood is an area of shallow lagoons and reed beds, visible from the valley sides as a large plain of water north of the river. This and the meandering course of the River Chet, allied to small woodland blocks, create a strong variations in light and reflectivity in the valley. Combined, these elements create considerable textural variety in the valley floor, in contrast to the simple arable landscape on the upper valley slopes beyond the Broads area.

Main features of land cover and use

The land cover quite varied within the valley and consists of the open **water** of Hardley Flood, **carr woodland**, **wet fen**, **drained marsh** and an area of **heathland** and **common**. Land use of the more "natural" areas tends to be split between management for nature conservation purposes and farming which utilises the marshes for grazing. Some unmanaged areas though do exist however.

The Wherrymans way on the north bank of the Chet, follows the route of the flood bank. The valley widens out as it joins the Yare valley. Jeremy Halls - geograph.org.uk

*Hardley Flood which changes with the tides.
Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk*



The main areas of **settlement** in the area are linear in form and concentrated at the western end of this navigable river whilst. Smaller scale boatyards, boat moorings, camping facilities, public open spaces are all located at the western end of the area.

At the head of the navigable extent of the Chet is Loddon Watermill and a roughly linear **settlement** area which extends across the river (Bridge Road) joining up Loddon with Chedgrave. There are smaller scale boatyards,

Mooring facilities for boats at the end of navigation at Loddon/Chedgrave are tightly packed. Lesley Marsden



boat moorings and new riverside apartments along the river frontage, whilst camping facilities and public open spaces can also be found in the locality.

There appears little trace of the nineteenth century Loddon Industry. Most riverside development here appears to be relatively new and of contemporary design contrasting with the well preserved town of Loddon. Farmsteads can be found dotted around the edge of the floodplain on both sides of the valley.

Floodbanks and defences – Much of the Chet was timber piled to provide support for the peat soils that form the valley floor. Recent flood alleviation work has provided an alternative remedy along the southern edge of the river. The flood bank has been set back further into the marsh and the quay heading will ultimately be removed providing a more sustainable solution.



Helping to keep it special

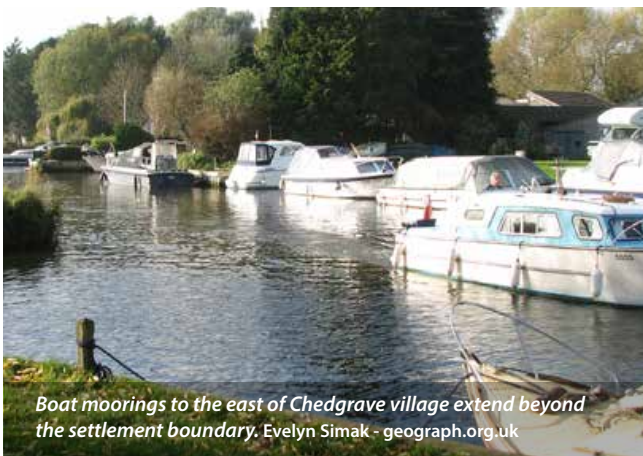
Care needs to be taken when landscape change occurs, to ensure that those positive characteristics that contribute to an areas unique sense of place are conserved and enhanced. What follows are examples of local issues and opportunities.

Landscape – Skylines and horizons of the Broads area often lie outside the national park area. Lack of development on skylines can help reinforce the sense of isolation and tranquillity which is a valued characteristic of the area. Opportunities could be sought to enhance the area through the removal of those features that visually impact on the area, which may be located external to the boundary.

Areas of settlement inevitably create pressure on the neighbouring less developed areas. It is important that any changes to land use close to the settled area on the edges of the marshes are appropriate and designed to enhance the landscape character.

◀ Loddon yacht station in the 1960's. Compared to today the area is less intensively developed. Broadland Memories

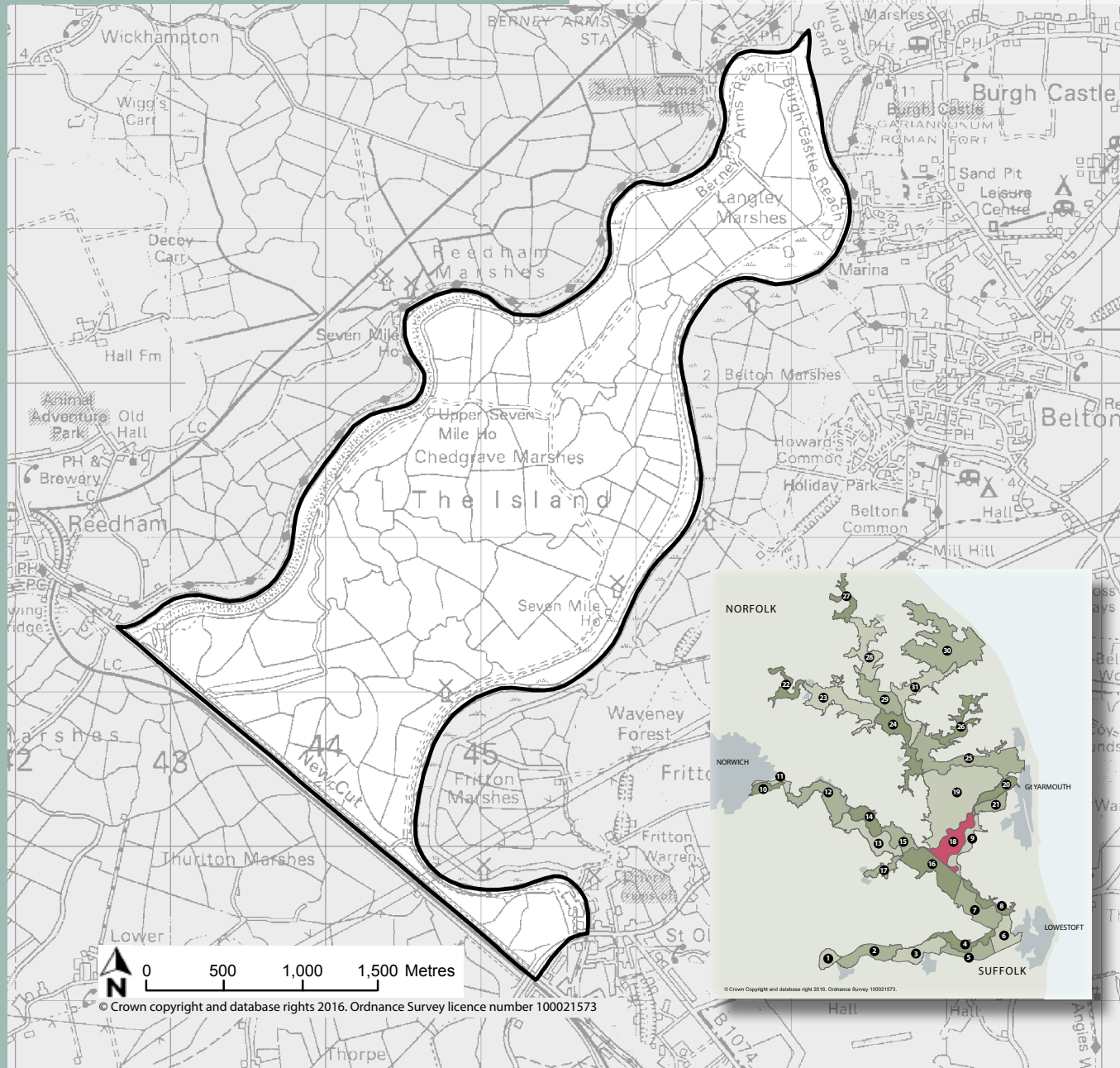
Boat moorings to the east of Chedgrave village extend beyond the settlement boundary. Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk



New housing development on the Chedgrave bank has brought a different development style to the area. Lesley Marsden

18 Haddiscoe Island

Haddiscoe - an Island created by the merchants of Norwich.



Why is this area special?

The 'island' was created by the construction of the New Cut in the 1820's/1830's, which linked the River Yare at Reedham with the river Waveney at St Olaves. Constructed to avoid the port of Gt. Yarmouth's handling charges and a means to reduce the distance travelled by about 10 miles.

Historically, the island was the location of "detached" portions of the parishes of Loddon, Langley, Toft Monks, Reedham, Raveningham, Chedgrave, Stockton and Haddiscoe but since 1935 it has formed part of Haddiscoe civil parish.

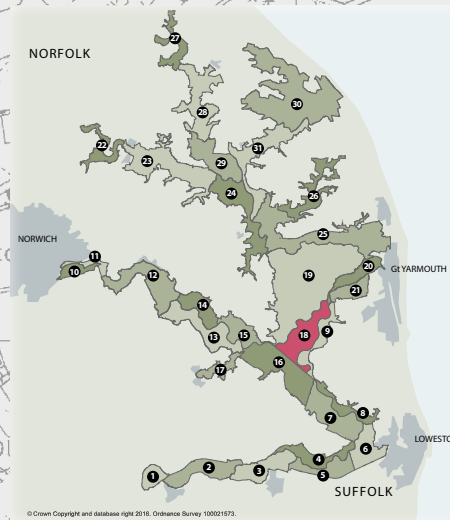
The Island shares a number of physical characteristics with Halvergate Marshes such as the large expanse of estuarine marshland which is around 2000 acres in size and the panoramic views of the wide open landscape and "big skies".

Despite these similarities it's heavily embanked watery boundaries, restricted access and the New Cut all serve to give it a unique sense of place with a distinct identity of its own.

There is a strong sense of continuity of a traditional way of life here. The marshes are retained in grazing use and around half are still let at the annual marsh letting auctions at the Bell P.H. in St. Olaves where the terms of the leases restrict the uses of the marshes.

A distinctive feature of the section of island bounding the River Waveney is the exceptional width of reed ronds. These areas between the river and the river embankments provide an area of washland and were periodically grazed in the past. Today they provide an expanse of reedbed, which used to be cut commercially.

Away from the influences some forms of development on the edges and outside the area (including the exceptionally tall pylons) the area has a strong sense of tranquillity.





Topography and Skyline

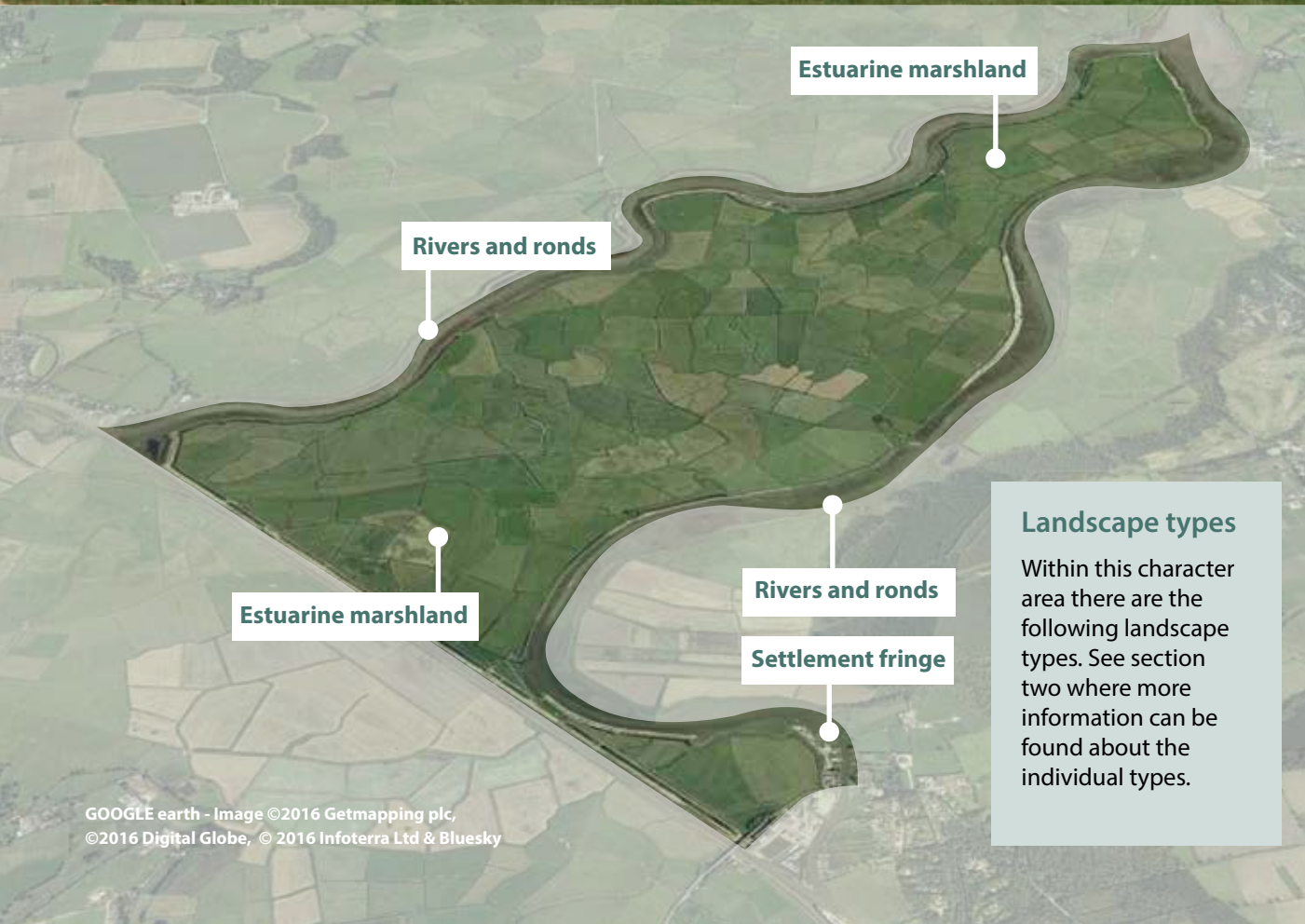
The island is level floodplain marshland at around 1m below OD to 1m above OD, bounded by the River Yare to the north, the Waveney to the south and the New Cut to the south-west.

The skyline in views to the north are limitless as the rising land which forms the relict cliff edge to the Great Estuary lies many kilometres away.

Views to the east are truncated by a similar relict cliff edge upon which grows woodland which includes the large expanse of coniferous plantation of the Waveney Forest. Towards the northern tip of the island the Burgh Castle Roman Fort and nearby boatyard both stand out as significant features visible for some distance.

Views to the south are interrupted by the massively tall pylons erected to ensure that the electricity cables that they support did not affect the boat traffic on the river and Cut.

To the east the valley of the River Yare narrows and there are views of the rising landform in Broadland District and the fringing carr woodland which lies at the foot of the valley side can be seen. Also to the east is the village of Haddiscoe lying within South Norfolk District Council area.



Geology and Soils

The deep layers are gravels sands silts and clays and the soils are uniformly Breydon formation silty clay laid down at the time when this area was part of the Great Estuary. A video of the story about this estuary which existed during Roman times can be found via this [link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kce_Uu5Rb-8).
www.youtube.com/watch?v=kce_Uu5Rb-8

Enclosure scale and pattern

Haddiscoe Island is a large scale, open, flat marshland landscape which is bounded by embanked rivers of the Yare and Waveney lying metres above the low lying grazing land. It is a simple landscape of muted colour palette, with comparatively little variation in light and reflectivity, due to the relative absence of features breaking up skylines or casting shadows.

There is little sense of enclosure other than on the eastern edge of the area where the valley edges of the Great Estuary rises up as a slopes and steeper cliff faces. Other visual boundaries are generally at some distance due to the broad valley floor, which is several kilometres across.

Toft Monks drainage mill.
Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk



Overall the island retains a significant number of sinuous curving dykes anciently harnessed from natural creeks. Those that survive tend to correspond with former parish boundaries and can often be traced for some distance across the marshland. The northern tip of the island has been largely reorganised into a rectilinear scheme, possibly in association with the rebuilding of the Langley Detached Mill by the Beauchamp Proctor Estate.

It is a simple landscape pattern of mostly grazing marsh with significant areas of reed ronds near the river courses, and which create localised visual interest and variations in colour and light.

Main features of land use and cover

Water, drainage mills and marshes are the most significant features of the area. The remains of four drainage mills and one steam engine survive on the Island all of which were working into the 1940's. The mills are known as Toft Monks, Langley Detached, Pettingells and Six Mile House. The latter two are derelict, the former two have been house converted to holiday use. Near Toft Monks mill there is also the remains of a 'Humpback' vertical steam engine made by the firm of Smithdales which, although broken and incomplete is a rare survival. The marshes are now pumped by two electrically powered pumps although over the next few years the pumping arrangements may be rationalised.

Visually the drainage mills on the island combine with those on the adjacent marshes adding to their significance in views of the area as a whole.

The main land uses on the Island are cattle grazing and until relatively recently commercial harvesting of the **reed ronds**. Unlike most other areas of marshland in the Broads there is a notable absence of arable cultivation.

The rivers Waveney and Yare are heavily embanked. These **flood banks** have been modified over the past decade and half as a result of the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project (BFAP). All the banks stand metres above the marsh level restricting not only views from the marshes

across the rivers when in close proximity to them, but also views of the marshland when on the river visually isolating the Island.

Material for the banks for the BFAP scheme was sourced from the adjacent soke dykes which have increased significantly in width. In the early days of the flood alleviation project this led to Six Mile House Mill being surrounded in water. Measures are now being taken to rectify this.



Six Mile House surrounded by water. Efforts are underway to conserve it for the future by infilling the lagoon within which it sits with dredged material.
Mike Page

For such an isolated area there is a significant amount of **infrastructure** in the area. The New Cut, allied to the railway line, forms a very un-natural boundary to the area, and is crossed by the A143 to the south eastern most extremity of the area. The Cut is a relentlessly straight waterway, contrasting strongly with the sinuous form of the two rivers.

As a feature the Cut is not visually appealing but is a significant piece of engineering. It appears noticeably higher than the surrounding land, presumably resulting from land shrinkage. A partially concrete road runs parallel with the cut on the Island's interior and provides access to the two marshman's dwellings on that side.

The only formal public access is the 18 kilometre walk around the island's perimeter. This is accessed under the Haddiscoe flyover.

Vast pylons cross the marshes where the Waveney and New Cut are closest near to the entrance. The combination of the New Cut, access under the Haddiscoe flyover and the industrial nature of part of St. Olaves creates a rather bleak functional feel to this part of the Island.



Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk

There is little **settlement** on the marshes. Although the Island technically includes a riverside boatyard and industrial area opposite St. Olaves, this has been included with the description of the adjacent area as its features have more in keeping with development on the opposite bank of the River Waveney.

On the main part of the Island there are only four isolated marsh dwellings and four former drainage windmills, two of which are now holiday homes. All of these buildings are located around the perimeter of the island.

Vehicular access is closely restricted by the marshmen and this is very much a working, rather than a leisure landscape infrequently visited by the public.

The New Cut forms the south western boundary of the Island. Some of the high surge tides over the past few years have caused the water in the Cut to overtop. The Island is the location of the tall electricity pylons which can be viewed from a great distance. Reedham and Cantley Sugar factory can be seen on the horizon. Alison Allen - geograph.org.uk



Inset images, Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk



The only settlement are isolated farmhouses.

Despite its isolated position and limited access the Island is still very much a working landscape.



Helping to keep it special

Care needs to be taken when landscape change occurs, to ensure that those positive characteristics that contribute to an area's unique sense of place are conserved and enhanced. What follows are examples of local issues and opportunities.

Natural Heritage - The expansive grazing marsh landscape with their historic network of drainage ditches and dykes are the most defining feature of Haddiscoe Island. Much of the area is managed through traditional grazing techniques which could change in years to come. The BFAP scheme has introduced very wide foldings (the area between the flood bank and the soke dyke), should these not be managed in the long term by grazing or cutting, scrub could develop.

Built heritage - The drainage mills are nationally, perhaps internationally, important landscape and historic features. To ensure their survival for future generations, new purposes need to be found for some of the structures, thereby providing an economic incentive for maintaining them; conservation work needs to be undertaken to some whilst their historical importance needs to be publicised generally.

Landscape - promoting landscape enhancement schemes to enhance the positive physical characteristics of the area such as removal of overhead power lines within the open grazing marshes.

Langley Mill. Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk



19 Halvergate Marshes

"Quite possibly the area has the finest example, range and concentration of drainage mills left in Europe, possibly the world, today"

Professor Tom Williamson

Why is this area special?

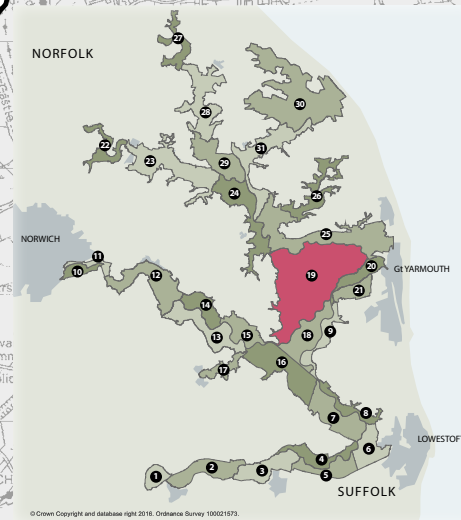
This area known as the Halvergate Marshes or Halvergate Triangle forms one of the defining landscapes of the Broads area. A vast panoramic expanse of grazing marsh and big skies, dotted with drainage mills and often teaming with birdlife. It is a unique survival. Although other marshland areas of the country like the Fens were formerly drained by windmills, unlike Halvergate, most retain only the scant remains of their drainage mills and only Holland has anything comparable. As an expanse of grazing marsh, the marshes also form the largest area in the east of England.

It is a remote and tranquil landscape with few obvious reminders of the 20th and 21st century. A deep sense of mystery can prevail as past uses and lives are hinted at in ruined buildings. Many of these mysteries await discovery.

The area has developed from an estuary that existed in Roman times but which became cut off from the sea by the formation of the sand bank on which Great Yarmouth has developed. Breydon Water, which lies to the east of this character area, survives as a relic of the open water, saltmarsh and mudflats of the estuary.

The area is bounded to the north and south by the Rivers Bure and Yare which are two of the main rivers systems in the Broads.

The importance of this area for wildlife is recognised by its numerous international and national nature conservation designations. The area is also part of a huge built heritage conservation area, so designated in recognition of its drainage mill and dyke network which are of national perhaps international importance.



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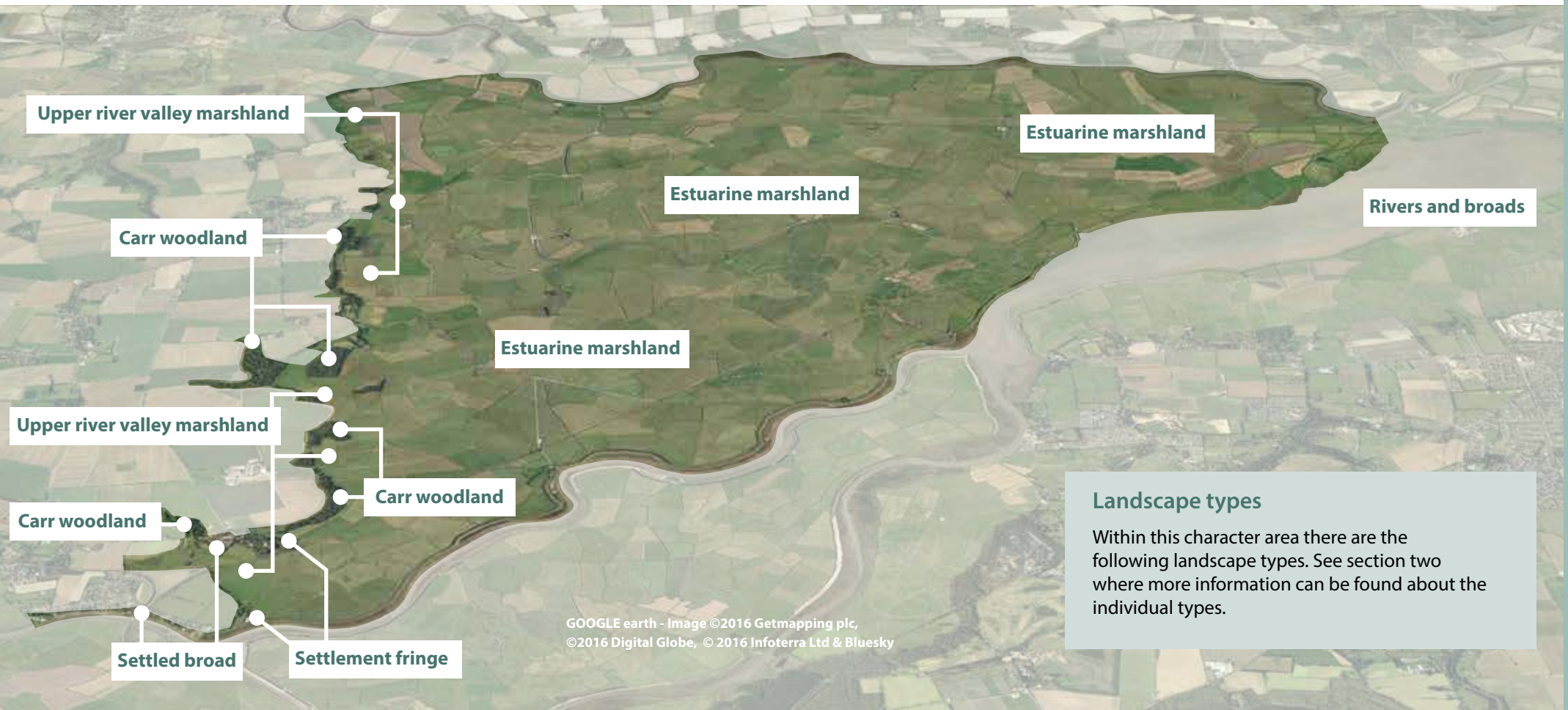
Topography and Skyline

Halvergate marshes are a vast, level estuarine marshland lying at around 1 metre below OD except for the flood banks on the River Yare and Bure which stand a few metres in height above the grazing marsh. Views out and across the marshes are often expansive. On good clear days, when stood in the middle of the area, views to the west are terminated by bands of carr woodland, although farm buildings which are sited on particularly high ground can be also seen. To the east the silhouette of Gt. Yarmouth can be made out with the backdrop of Scroby Sands offshore wind turbines.

To the south, at St. Olaves, pylons and industrial development associated with boat yards lie in the foreground of views of the woodland lying on the valley sides near Burgh Castle. To the north, the valley sides of the river Bure can be made out. Traffic movement, the occasional train and power lines, which all travel in an east west direction can be made out in the foreground of these views.

The skylines, are generally largely undeveloped and simple in character adding to the sense of isolation.

In this view northwards the skyline is formed by the crest of the Bure valley over 3 kilometres away. Fringing woodland on the valley edge is often a feature in the longer distance views. Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk



Landscape types

Within this character area there are the following landscape types. See section two where more information can be found about the individual types.

Geology and soils

Lower lying strata are the crag group sands and gravels. The soils of the marshes are uniformly silty clay thinning and giving way to a narrow band of peat along the western upland edge. These marshes are consequently wetter with rushy and alder carr areas as they are harder to drain.

Enclosure scale and pattern

The marshes are of a vast scale compared to some other areas in the Broads comprising of a very open landscape with little or no woodland cover apart from the aforementioned areas of carr on the western edge and pockets of vegetation around buildings. Only at the very edges of the area is there any perception of the valley sides and an associated sense of enclosure.

The marshes display a high percentage of the older curvilinear dyke networks although these are not evident from ground level. Marsh gates with side wings are one of the features repeated throughout the area.

The only two metalled roads in the area (Acle Straight and Tunstall to Halvergate Branch) are lined (sometimes intermittently) with pollarded willows which allied to the mills, form the only visual breaks in the foreground of views in an otherwise simple, open landscape.

Typical gates and wing walls are often the only upstanding features in a treeless landscape.

Evelyn Simak -geograph.org.uk



Main features of land cover and use



Higs Mill adjacent to a dyke are two of the key landscape features in this area. Julian Claxton

Water, drainage mills and marshes are the main landscape features in the area. The marshes retain a high proportion of sinuous dyke boundaries, which were harnessed from natural saltmarsh creeks. The most significant of these, the Halvergate Fleet, acted as a main drain embanked with summer and winter walls with an area of rond in-between to act as a washland. A former probably similar watercourse to the north of the Fleet, can be traced across much of the marshes and may explain the otherwise strange positioning of Kerrison's Mill and Marsh Farm there. Certainly by the eighteenth century, a series of drainage windmills moved water from their separate drainage levels into the Fleet which in turn drained into Breydon water via a sluice and from the 1930's, a diesel pump. Four of the Fleet mills survive, two are largely restored, one is protected and only one remains derelict.



Traditional management of the marshes for grazing often helps to promote the development of the species rich dykes.

Jeremy Halls - geograph.org.uk

Although there are some areas of arable land, the marshland is predominately pastoral (grazing marsh) with an intricate network of reed fringed dykes. The grazing marsh is used for agriculture (cattle grazing). Large tracts are now owned by the RSPB who allow seasonal grazing. In some areas conservation measures have resulted in the excavation of scrapes (shallow excavations) to support wading bird communities.

The RSPB's management for nature conservation purposes has gradually created change in those areas they manage, as a higher water table is maintained, wet scrapes are created and a number of small wind powered pumps have been introduced, designed to do the reverse of the job of the traditional mills and instead "lift" water onto the marshes.

The River Yare forms the southern and the Bure and Tunstall Dyke the northern boundary to this character area both of which are relatively wide stretches of river contained by large banks. These **flood banks** have been modified over the past decade and half as a result of the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project (BFAP) which involved increasing their height, and rolling or setting them back or on line strengthening.

Berney Arms Station has to be one of the most isolated in the country.
Stephen McKay - geograph.org.uk



All the banks stand metres above the marsh level restricting not only views from the marshes across the rivers when in close proximity to them, but also views of the marshland when on the river.

Material for the banks was generally sourced from the adjacent soke dykes which have significantly increased in width.

Infrastructure within the area included the A47 Acle Straight, as it is known, which was built as a Turnpike Road in the 1830's. It has a significant impact upon parts of this area and further afield, both from constant rapid traffic movements and from noise although this can vary considerably depending on the wind direction. The road which connects the A47 to Halvergate is known as the Branch Road. This road is like a switchback to travel along as the unstable ground below has caused the road to settle in places. 19th century "soft" engineering techniques i.e. the planting of willow trees, were used as their root structure can help to "hold up" the road embankments. These willows have become a landscape feature in their own right being pollarded on a regular basis by the County Highways Authority.

Two railway lines cross the marshes Norwich to Yarmouth via Acle and Norwich to Yarmouth via Reedham but overall have relatively little visual or noise impact. Although on construction, the lines cut across existing dyke networks much like the A47. To the south of the area there is a halt which is probably the most remote one in the country. It is located near Berney Arms, where formerly there was a station. Both here and to the north of the Reedham group of mills were blocks of railway cottages. Those north of Reedham Marshes remain albeit half demolished.

Two of the long distance trails in Norfolk (the Wherryman's Way and the Weaver's Way) cross Halvergate Marshes. Rights of Way are more plentiful in the southern part of the area than the north and their routes tend to reflect the linking up of settlements on the eastern and western edges of the Broads.

There is a small amount of intermittent **carr woodland** on the western edge of the floodplain. That which lies between Reedham and Wickhampton is older, being shown on both Faden's and Bryant's Maps. It is now mapped as Park Carr, Ashyard Carr, Decoy Carr, Drover's Carr, Miller's Carr and Wigg's Carr. The presence of this woodland on these old maps indicates that the woodland land cover in this area has been there for many centuries.



Kevin Lloyd - geograph.org.uk

Two long distance footpaths, the Weavers and Wherryman's Way meet at Berney Arms and continue along the same route into Gt Yarmouth.

Adrian S. Pye - geograph.org.uk



Settlement today is restricted to isolated marsh houses within the marsh and a series of marsh edge settlements along the western boundary. Archaeological evidence suggests however, that the marshes have been settled for at least 1000 years and much was in private ownership from a relatively early date.

Over time the marsh economy has developed from salt industry and (predominantly) sheep grazing and by the 16th century to a major cattle-grazing district. A series of distinct mounds in the marshes existed until recent years, which have been tentatively suggested as saltworking sites. Unfortunately these have now been almost entirely levelled leaving only shards of pottery to be found. One survives near Ash Tree Farm, north of the Acle Straight with a WWI pillbox set on top.

Tunstall, Halvergate, Wickhampton, Freethorpe and Reedham are located along or near the western boundary with adjacent blocks of the marshland within their parish boundaries. Other areas of the marshes were detached portions of various local parishes. These were often some distance away, Postwick, South Walsham and Cantley being examples.

Significant landscape feature in this area are the numerous drainage mills which were often associated in the past with small scale settlements. Settlement along the Yare clusters into two distinct groups - that around Seven Mile House on the Reedham Marshes and that around Berney Arms. The north wall of Breydon Water also included a large marsh farm with various cattle compounds and later a mill and cottage as well as numerous houseboats of which only the mill and a fragment of the cottage remain.

The grouping on the Reedham Marshes is largely based around the drainage of the area and includes three drainage mills, a steam engine house and a diesel engine shed as well as the Seven Mile House and some remains of a further marshman's house. The site was a particularly remote one until the diesel pump was replaced by an electric pump in the 1980's and concrete Internal Drainage Board access roads were built.

Polkey's Drainage Mill and Seven Mile Steam Engine House are part of this assemblage of structures which in past times used to help drain the marshes. Jeremy Halls - geograph.org.uk

A small hamlet at Berney Arms developed around Thomas Trench Berney's 19th C Reedham Cement Works which at one time included 11 dwellings and a chapel. The tall Berney Arms Mill, which formed part of this complex, survives along with Ashtree Farmhouse and the Berney Arms Public House. Chalk from Whitlingham was brought to the cement works by wherry, mixed with silty mud dredged from Breydon or Oulton Broad and burnt in kilns before being ground in the mill. The mill is now in the care of English Heritage and managed by the RSPB.

The Fleet used also be an area of settlement with a series of marsh farms from which the mills were later run, established along it. This was the situation until the mid to late 1940's when the introduction of an electric pump and the reduction of the Fleet to a lesser drain, meant the drainage mills and marsh houses, were gradually abandoned. In the following years, derelict and demolished buildings became a feature of this area, as with much of Halvergate. The situation has somewhat reversed today, with three of the four surviving marshman's houses now permanently occupied, the fourth as a holiday home although the rubble heap of a fifth remains.

Various access points onto the marshes are found along this side of the valley. The main one being the Stone Road from Halvergate which provided access to the Fleet Road, historically the main route across the marshes, and later connected to the Acle New Road by the Branch Road.

The River Bure and Tunstall Dyke form the northern boundary to this character area. A number of mills and potentially early settlement sites are situated along the Bure usually corresponding with the Mile house locations.

The valley sides and settlement edge to the north (outside the area) are visible and the mills combine visually with those on the north side of the Bure although the floodbanks mean only the upper part of the mill across the river is visible. At the north-western extent of this area is Tunstall Dyke, formerly connecting the Bure with Tunstall upland. The dyke apparently survived



the building of the road and railway across its route as provision was made to allow wherries underneath, however its use still died out in the late 19th Century. The dyke is now dry and overgrown, its staithe house and buildings gone. Two mills remain here, one to either side although a plantation immediately west of the dyke limits their landscape contribution.



Helping to keep it special

Care needs to be taken when landscape change occurs, to ensure that those positive characteristics that contribute to an area's unique sense of place are conserved and enhanced. What follows are examples of local issues and opportunities.

Natural Heritage - The expansive grazing marsh landscape with their historic network of drainage ditches and dykes are one of the most defining features of Halvergate. Much of the area is managed through traditional grazing techniques currently supported by subsidies which are not guaranteed for the future.

Large areas are managed for nature conservation purposes and land management techniques used sometimes has the potential to effect the historic environment in both positive and negative ways.

Conversion or reversion to arable land, driven by changing land economies, require lower water levels in the dyke networks or even their total removal, which has an effect on the historic drainage patterns and loss of potential habitat.

Built heritage - The drainage mills are nationally perhaps internationally important landscape and historic features. To ensure their survival for future generations new purposes need to be found for some of the structures thereby providing an economic incentive for maintaining the structures; conservation work needs to be undertaken to some and their historic significance needs to be publicised generally.

◀ *Howards, Lockgate and Muttons drainage mills stand in isolation in this vast open landscape.*
Images, Tim Heaton - geograph.org.uk

Archaeology – much is still to be explored about the use of this area over time. Some of the historic landscape features of the area remain a mystery. Balancing the needs of nature conservation and their impacts on the historic features of the area.

Landscape - promoting landscape enhancement schemes to enhance the positive physical characteristics and features of the area such as removal of overhead power lines within the open grazing marshes. Pollards lining the roads provide an important function because of their root structures and provide local features.

The BFAP scheme has introduced very wide foldings (the area between the flood bank and the soke dyke), should these not be managed in the long term by grazing or cutting, scrub could develop.

It is important that changes to land use close to the settlements (settlement fringe) and farm buildings are appropriate and well designed to enhance the landscape character.

Ensuring that development outside the area does not impact adversely on the special character of the area as it provides its setting.

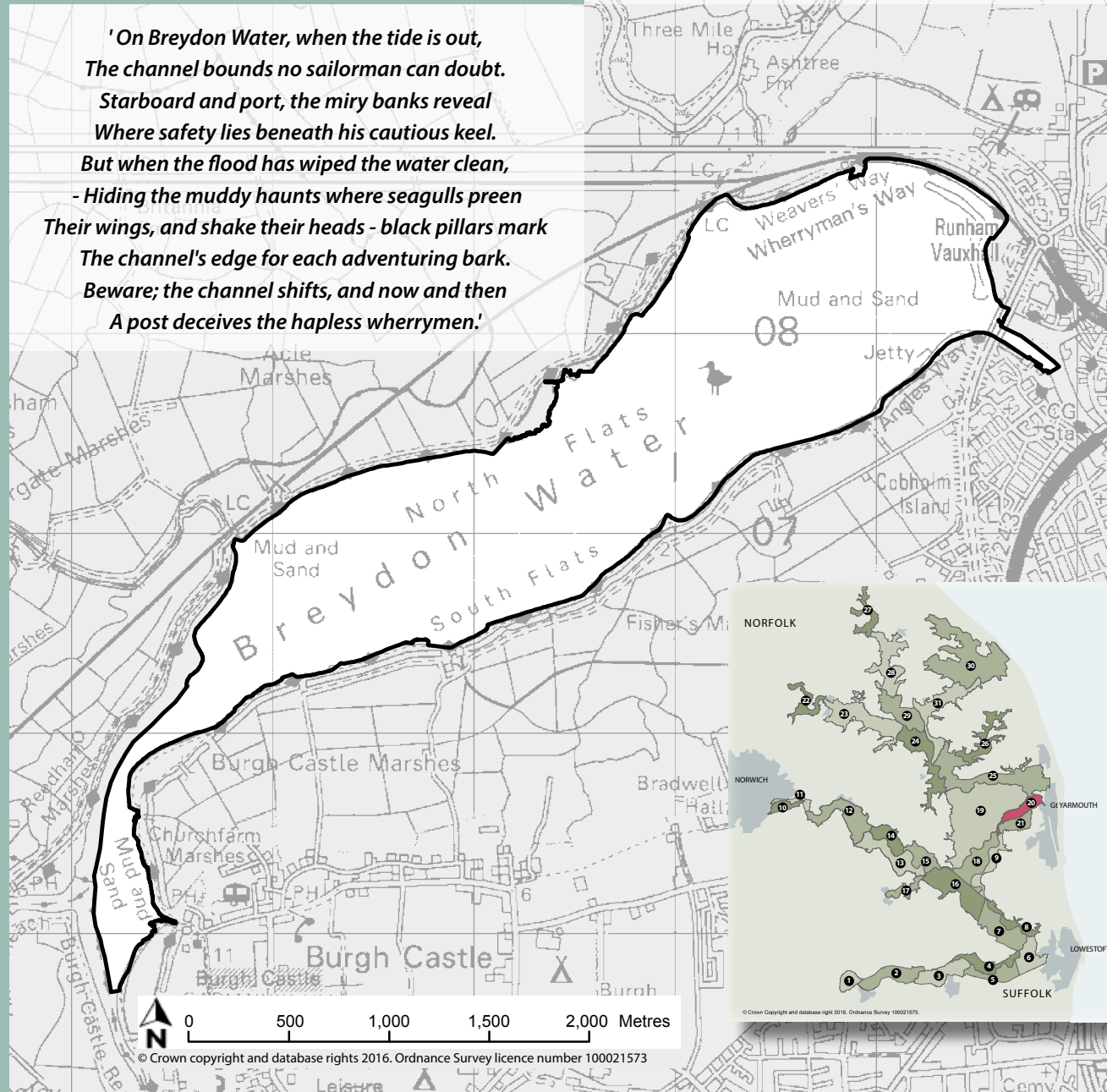
The construction of a dual carriageway along the same alignment of the A47 "Acle Straight" is a highway enhancement that has been discussed for many years. A scheme of this scale has the potential to have significant adverse effects on the character of the area and habitats.

Mitigation measures in landscape terms are likely to prove exceptionally difficult resulting in significant adverse effects.

20 Yare - Breydon Water

The treacherous nature of Breydon's channels is captured by Hugh Money-Coutts in his 1919 verse account of a holiday on the Broads.

*'On Breydon Water, when the tide is out,
The channel bounds no sailorman can doubt.
Starboard and port, the miry banks reveal
Where safety lies beneath his cautious keel.
But when the flood has wiped the water clean,
-Hiding the muddy haunts where seagulls preen
Their wings, and shake their heads - black pillars mark
The channel's edge for each adventuring bark.
Beware; the channel shifts, and now and then
A post deceives the hapless wherry-men.'*



Why is this area special?

Breydon Water is a hugely imposing and unique gateway to the Broads network. It is all that remains today of the Great Estuary that existed during Roman times which covered all of the areas occupied by Halvergate Marshes, Haddicoe Island and extended a significant distance up the Bure, Yare and Waveney.

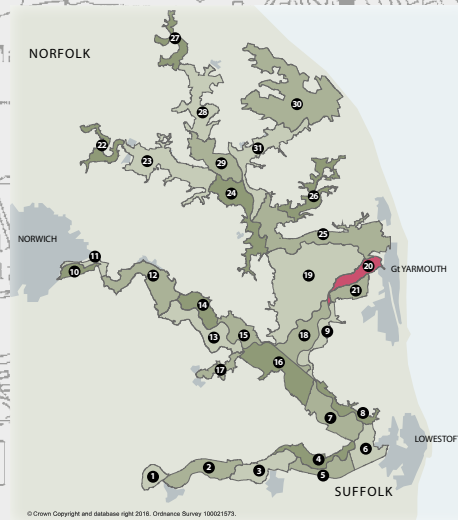
Despite its proximity to the urban edge of Great Yarmouth and the associated impacts of development in the area combined with the low level noise, sometimes apparent when the wind is in a particular direction, the majority of the area retains a stark, isolated character and a remote feel more in keeping with a coastal experience.

Its character changes with the ebb and flow of the tides. At low tide the area reveals extensive mud flats on which growths of green algae, eel grass and invertebrates attracting tens of thousands of wintering ducks, geese and flocks of Bewick's swans. It also provides an internationally significant staging post for migratory birds.

At the western end of Breydon the waters of the River Yare and Waveney join forces ultimately meeting up with the River Bure at Vauxhall Bridge in Great Yarmouth to discharge into the North Sea.

The eastern end of Breydon Water is also the meeting of the ways for three of Norfolk and Suffolk County's long distance footpaths; the Wherryman's Way, the Weaver's Way and the Angles Way which use the floodbanks to the north and south of Breydon giving expansive and elevated views over water and marshes alike.

The Breydon birdlife has long attracted wildfowlers and naturalists, a number of whom kept old gunpunts and makeshift houseboats dotted around Breydon North Wall and are now part of local folklore.



Topography and Skyline

The area is enclosed by flood banks which lie at 2-3m OD. These tall heavily engineered banks always lie in the foreground on views from the water but because of their horizontal nature they appear to reinforce the panoramic views available and vast skies. The skylines to the north and west appear limitless with no interruptions save the occasional drainage mill. To the south the relict estuary cliff at Burgh Castle can be seen. Views towards the east encompass the urban area of Great Yarmouth. Breydon Bridge is a main feature in views as are the tall modern buildings on the edge of the town. However, from time to time this skyline can oddly change as vast vessels or equipment servicing the offshore development can sometimes be seen in the deep water port. The off shore wind turbine development at Scroby Sands can also be seen in the backdrop to development along the coast.

Enclosure, Scale and Pattern

This vast expanse of tidal open water and mudflats is up to 1.3km wide where the edges are surrounded by hard flood defences which vary between 2-3m above OD although due to fluctuation in water levels these flood defences do not reduce the overall sense of openness within the area.

To the west and north, the area opens out to the expansive Halvergate Marshes, while to the east the pre medieval mouth of the estuary has been reclaimed over the centuries by silting up, and built upon with the coastal settlement at Great Yarmouth. To the south, views across Burgh Castle and Fisher's Marshes are apparent, with the cliff edges of the former estuary rising in the distance.

The landscape pattern is primarily formed by the sinuous creeks visible in the mud at low tide, which also exposes

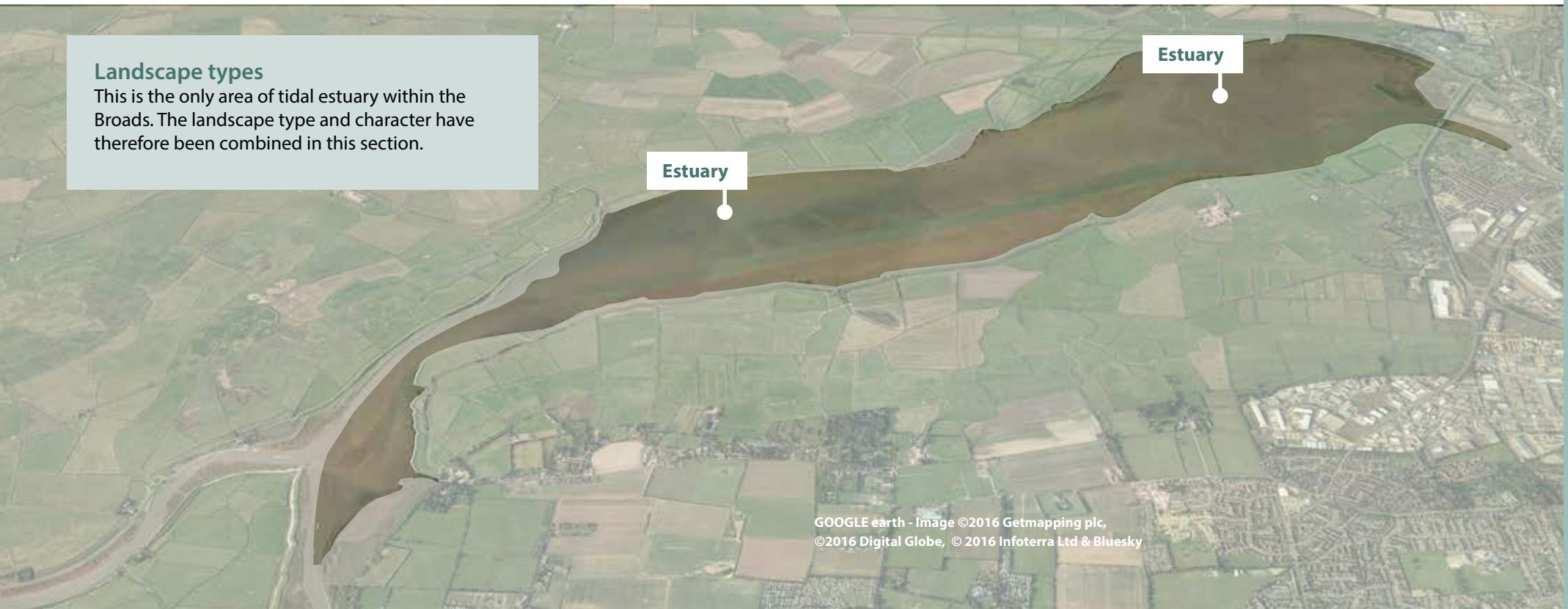
mysterious wrecks. There is a fascinating transient quality to the colour and texture of the water, patches of saltmarsh and reed bed created by the changes in seasons, weather and tides.



The remains of wrecks can be seen at low tide creating a sense of mystery.
Alison Yardy

Landscape types

This is the only area of tidal estuary within the Broads. The landscape type and character have therefore been combined in this section.



GOOGLE earth - Image ©2016 Getmapping plc,
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Main features of land cover and use

Water is the main feature of this area and with the ebbing and flowing of the tides it's use by people and birds fluctuates. Breydon Water in the past was much more integrated into the local economy as a busy hub of waterborne trade, fishing and wildfowling. Today it is predominately used by tourists travelling between the northern and southern broads or even to obtain access to the North Sea.

It is more safely crossed by boat users on a low or slack tide when the currents are less fierce. At particular times in the day therefore boat traffic becomes more evident as boat user's hurry across the waters to the relative safety of the river systems.

The navigation channel is way-marked by coloured conical top marker posts. Straying from the marked routes can potentially lead boats to run aground on the deceptively extensive mudflats.



Boats are advised to cross Breydon Water at certain times. They are also advised to keep between the navigation marker posts. The view above is northwards towards Caister.
Evelyn Simak -geograph.org.uk

Wading birds also make use of the low tides when the exposed mud flats provide rich feeding grounds. Its importance in nature conservation terms is reflected in its international and national and local designations: RAMSAR, Special protection areas (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR).



The mud flats which become exposed on low tides provide rich pickings for the birdlife. Christine Johnstone - geograph.org.uk

The Breydon birdlife has long attracted wildfowlers and naturalists, a number of whom kept old gunpunts and makeshift houseboats dotted around Breydon North Wall and are now part of local folklore. Today birdwatchers descend from afar to witness the range of birds that use the area through the seasons.



The **flood banks** which defend the lower lying land beyond are heavily engineered sometimes with small upstanding walls to provide added height. It is into Breydon that the Halvergate Fleet, an important drain on Halvergate Marshes, drains via a sluice through the floodbank on the north side.



Breydon Water has heavily engineered flood defences some of which are only visible on low tides. Christine Johnstone - geograph.org.uk

Excluding the engineered banks the other **infrastructure** of note is the railway line from Reedham to Great Yarmouth which skirts the northern edge of Breydon joining with the Norwich to Great Yarmouth line south of Scaregap. The easterly end of the A47 also wraps around the north eastern corner beside the rail line before joining the A12 across the river channel via the cantilevered Breydon Bridge built in 1985 to alleviate the traffic flows across Gt. Yarmouth's Haven Bridge.

With the waning importance of Breydon for waterborne trade, fishing and wildfowling, the cultural interest has reduced with the life and personalities and buildings of Breydon disappearing or being cleared away. A number of wreck sites, houseboats, marsh farms and mill cottages on both north and south sides have gone in recent decades although the derelict remains of Banham's Black Mill and its largely demolished marsh house on the Breydon North Wall remain, along with some wrecks on the south side.

Helping to keep it special

Care needs to be taken when landscape change occurs, to ensure that those positive characteristics that contribute to an area's unique sense of place are conserved and enhanced. What follows are examples of local issues and opportunities.

Landscape – The area of Breydon is heavily embanked for flood defence purposes. These are not the only human constructions that can be found in the area. There are remnant jetties and navigation posts within the area and to the most north easterly end the development within and on the edge of Gt. Yarmouth starts to influence the estuary character. As with any settlement there are continual and growing pressures on the land, and water in this case, which lie in adjacent areas. The prevailing character of most of the estuary is still predominantly of a stark, isolated nature. However future development on the edges of Gt. Yarmouth and at the farms located within the grazing marsh e.g. Humberstone Farm needs to be carefully considered to ensure that the any potential landscape impacts are assessed and mitigated.

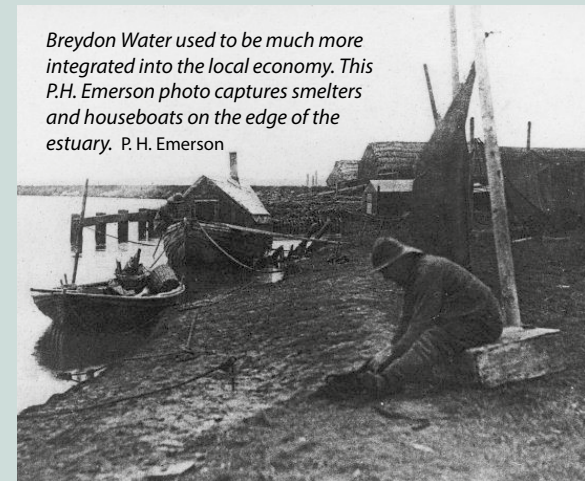
Breydon Bridge signifies the entrance into Gt. Yarmouth. The buildings and infrastructure impact on the sense of isolation to be found on other parts of the estuary. David Medcalf - geograph.org.uk



Natural Heritage – Breydon Water allied to the surrounding grazing marshes provides an immensely important habitat for bird life. Tens of thousands of wintering ducks, geese and swans visit the estuary and surrounding grazing marshes. The mudflats, exposed when the tides are out, provide a rich food supply. In spring, the adjacent marshes are filled with the atmospheric calls of lapwings and redshanks. It is internationally and nationally designated for nature conservation reasons. As well as unconsidered actions by humans which may affect the quality of the area as a habitat, the area is likely to be subjected to effects of climate change including storm events the impacts of which cannot be effectively predicted.

Historic environment – Breydon Water was in the past much more integrated into the local economy as a busy hub of waterborne trade, fishing and wildfowling. It has been recognised by historians that there is a considerable scope to learn more about the social and cultural history of the area as well as recording and assessment of the hulks and hulk assemblages that can be found on the edges of the estuary.

Breydon Water used to be much more integrated into the local economy. This P.H. Emerson photo captures smelters and houseboats on the edge of the estuary. P. H. Emerson



21 Yare - Burgh Castle Marshes

The marshes today still bear the scars of bombs dropped during the Second World War

Why is this area special?

These marshes lie to the south of the imposing Breydon Water providing an important buffer strip between the built up areas of Cobholm, Southtown and Bradwell near Gt. Yarmouth and Breydon Water which has a number of nature conservation designations because of its importance for bird life.

Both Cobham and Southtown to the east of the A12 have grown up on what was formerly part of this marshland area.

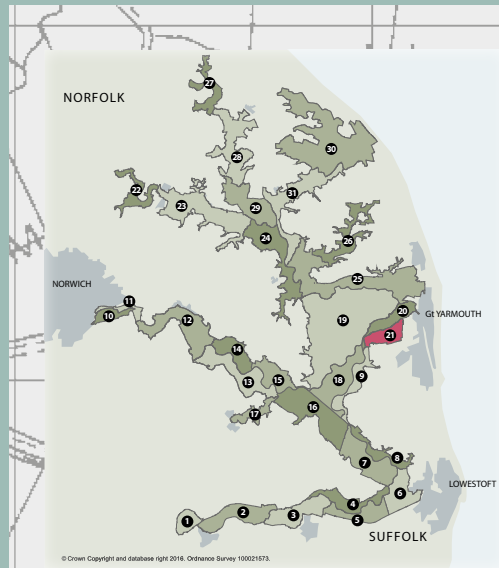
The area is bounded to the north by imposing floodbanks of Breydon Water with wide soke dykes. These banks provide the route for the Angles Way the long distance footpath. However there is no formal public access to the interior of the marshes.

The south the area abuts the valley side at the remnant cliff face of the Great Estuary.

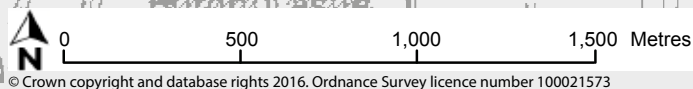
The marshes share a number of physical characteristics with the Halvergate and Haddiscoe Marshes including the presence of both linear and curvilinear dykes of medieval and post medieval form. The character of the area differs east to west as despite the proximity of settlement along the upland edge, there is a general emptiness about these marshes in the west but to the east the visual impacts from Gt. Yarmouth and its satellite settlements built development is significant affecting the character of the area.



Views across Fisher marshes towards the industrial and out of town development of Gt. Yarmouth.
Christine Johnstone - geograph.org.uk



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Topography and Skyline

As with the adjacent estuarine marshlands the area is level at between 1 metre below OD to 1 metre above OD.

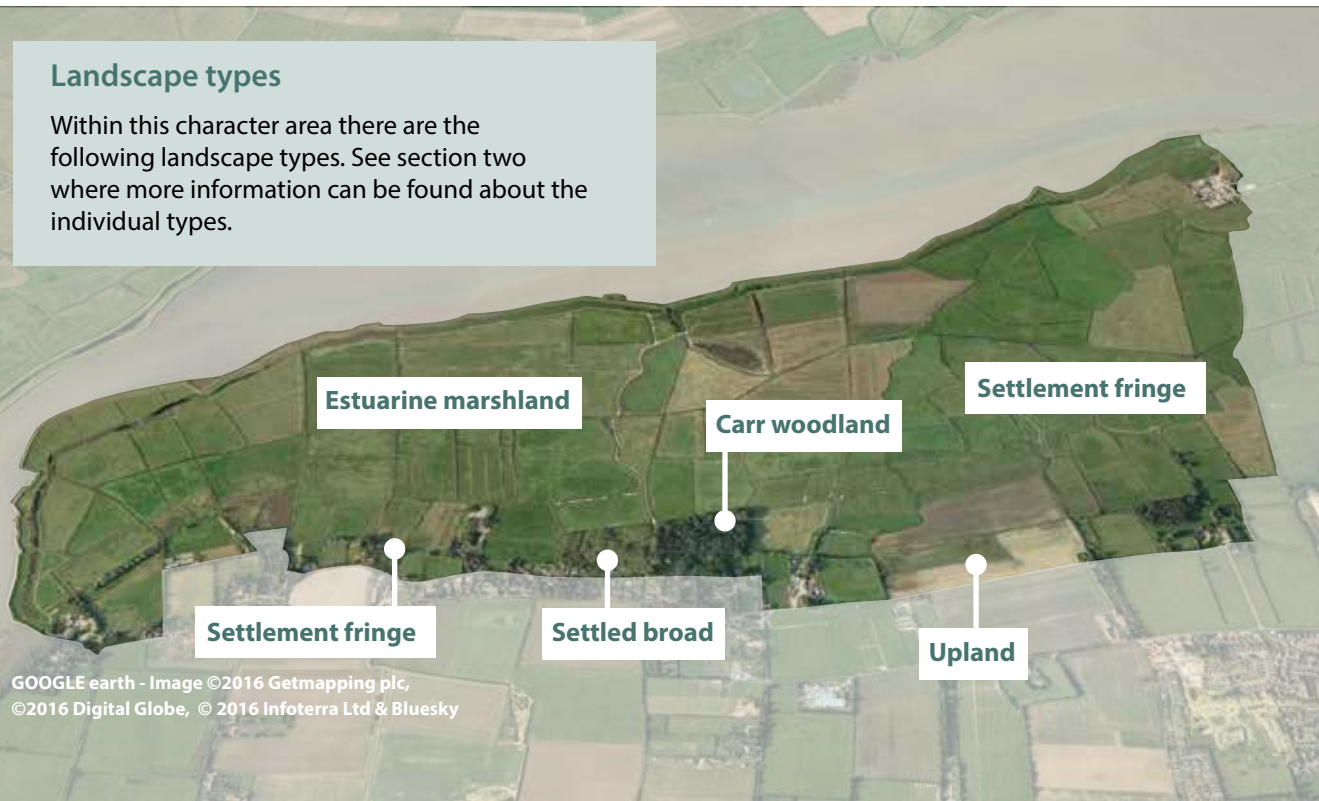
The former southern edge of the estuary rises up to around 10m above OD although not as sharply as the area around Burgh Castle Fort which is why the site was chosen for both its defence capabilities and the panoramic views it gave of the Great Estuary during the Roman period.

Views north and west are of a simple undeveloped skyline punctuated by drainage mills. The horizons to the north and west lie well outside the area. The western skyline is interspersed with bands of woodland near Halvergate. Great Yarmouth is clearly visible on skylines to the east while the rising topography and linear settlement of Burgh Castle define the southern skyline.



Landscape types

Within this character area there are the following landscape types. See section two where more information can be found about the individual types.



Geology and soils

The deep bedrock are gravels, sands, silts and clays and the soils are uniformly Breydon formation silty clay laid down at the time when this area was part of the Great Estuary.

A video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=kce_Uu5Rb-8) of the story about this estuary, which existed during Roman times, can be found via the link above and more detail about the geology of the area can be found in section one.

Enclosure, scale and pattern

This is a marshland landscape of a large scale. They are "enclosed" on its northern boundary by Breydon Water and its flood defences which are very prominent and dominating in close proximity and to the south by the rising land where the ridge or former 'cliff' edge of the Great Estuary's historic extents is a prominent feature, forming a defining edge to the area.

This edge in the adjoining Great Yarmouth Borough creates a level of local enclosure, scale and pattern which contrasts totally with the open expansive landscape across the marshes and into Breydon Water itself. The patterns of the medieval and post medieval dyke networks are simple with some local variations; for example, the sinuous nature of the dole pattern lined by willows in the east (Fisher's Marshes) are in contrast to the more linear pattern to the west (Burgh Castle Marshes) where reedbeds fringe the edge of field boundaries.

In areas in closer to proximity to Gt. Yarmouth, the marshes have additional patterns which are the scars of bombs dropped during the Second World War.

Main features of land cover and use

The larger percentage of the **marshes** are mainly still in pastoral use the remainder down to arable. Some small blocks of **carr woodland** exist towards the upland edge. However some areas appear to be totally unmanaged. Anecdotally it is understood that the area of Humberstone marshes used to be home to many horses as the land was used as grazing for beasts that were used for transport purposes before the advent of the combustion engine. Further to the east of Humberstone Farm is an area of marsh which was formerly tipped ground now contains a small park, sports field, allotments and areas for horses. Despite being located in the Broads this area is now so modified that it is of significantly different character and has not been included in this character area.

The northern and western boundaries of the area are formed by the hard Breydon **floodbanks** along which the Angles Way long distance footpath runs. Inside the floodwalls there is a particularly wide soke dyke on the marsh side as far as Humberstone Farm. A track running approximately north-south which appears to follow the line of a sinuous water course broadly divides the two with Church Farm and Burgh Castle Marshes rectilinear in form to the west and the Fishers and Humberstone containing a greater number of curving dykes, to the east. Another long sinuous dyke forms the parish boundary between Burgh Castle and Bradwell.

View north from Burgh Castle marshes towards the Breydon Water floodbanks and a small pump house.

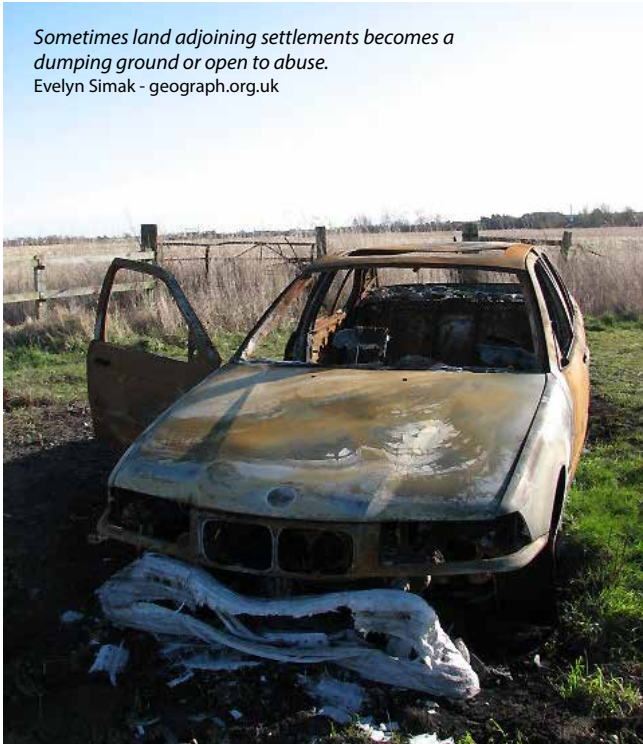


Lesley Marsden



The western edge of Great Yarmouth, specifically the industrial estates and business parks on the edge of the town can be seen from the area, and creates a local detraction from the area's otherwise remote character. However within the south western part of this area despite the proximity of local **settlement** along the upland edge, which is partly filtered by vegetation, there is more of a perception of emptiness about the marshes. There are no drainage mills surviving here but others from the wider area are visible on the horizon. The modern redbrick electric pump house has been built adjacent to the site of one. Settlement to the south west at Burgh Castle, is linear in form and follows the upland edge along with marsh farms/manorial sites dotted along to the east. Surviving farms within the marshes have become part of this fringing settlement to this south western edge.

Sometimes land adjoining settlements becomes a dumping ground or open to abuse.
Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk



Helping to keep it special

Care needs to be taken when landscape change occurs, to ensure that those positive characteristics that contribute to an area's unique sense of place are conserved and enhanced. What follows are examples of local issues and opportunities.

Landscape – The area lies within close proximity to Gt. Yarmouth and its surrounding villages. Visual impacts of buildings and infrastructure from these adjacent locations is very prominent in certain views from the marshes and footpath routes thereby reducing the sense of tranquillity and affecting the character of the area. Opportunities should be sought within existing developments to improve the landscape buffers between the sites and the "natural" environment. New development within these areas needs to be sympathetically designed to ensure that adverse effects on the landscape and the nationally and internationally designated areas in the vicinity are assessed and fully mitigated.

There are land use pressures relating to settlement fringe activities such as the provision of recreation

facilities and allotments. These pressures are directly related to the proximity of settlement and most likely increase over time. These land use types can have the effect of changing completely the character of the area. This may be on an incremental basis over time.

Lack of access – The most significant point of public access in the area is the long distance Angles Way. From this footpath, spectacular views across Breydon and its wildlife can be seen. Promotion of the route (which takes in Burgh Castle) should be encouraged in order that there can be general awareness raising of the area's special qualities.

Natural Heritage - Some of the marshes are under arable cultivation, others appear little used. Arable cultivation of the marshes can cause a loss of unity, a lowering of the water levels and loss of historic boundaries and boundary features. The area provides an important buffer zone between the settlement and Breydon Water. Enhancements to strengthen this purpose would be beneficial.



Views across Church Farm marshes. Some of the small woodland blocks fringing the valley side can be seen in the distance. Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk

22 Bure Valley - upstream of Wroxham Railway Bridge

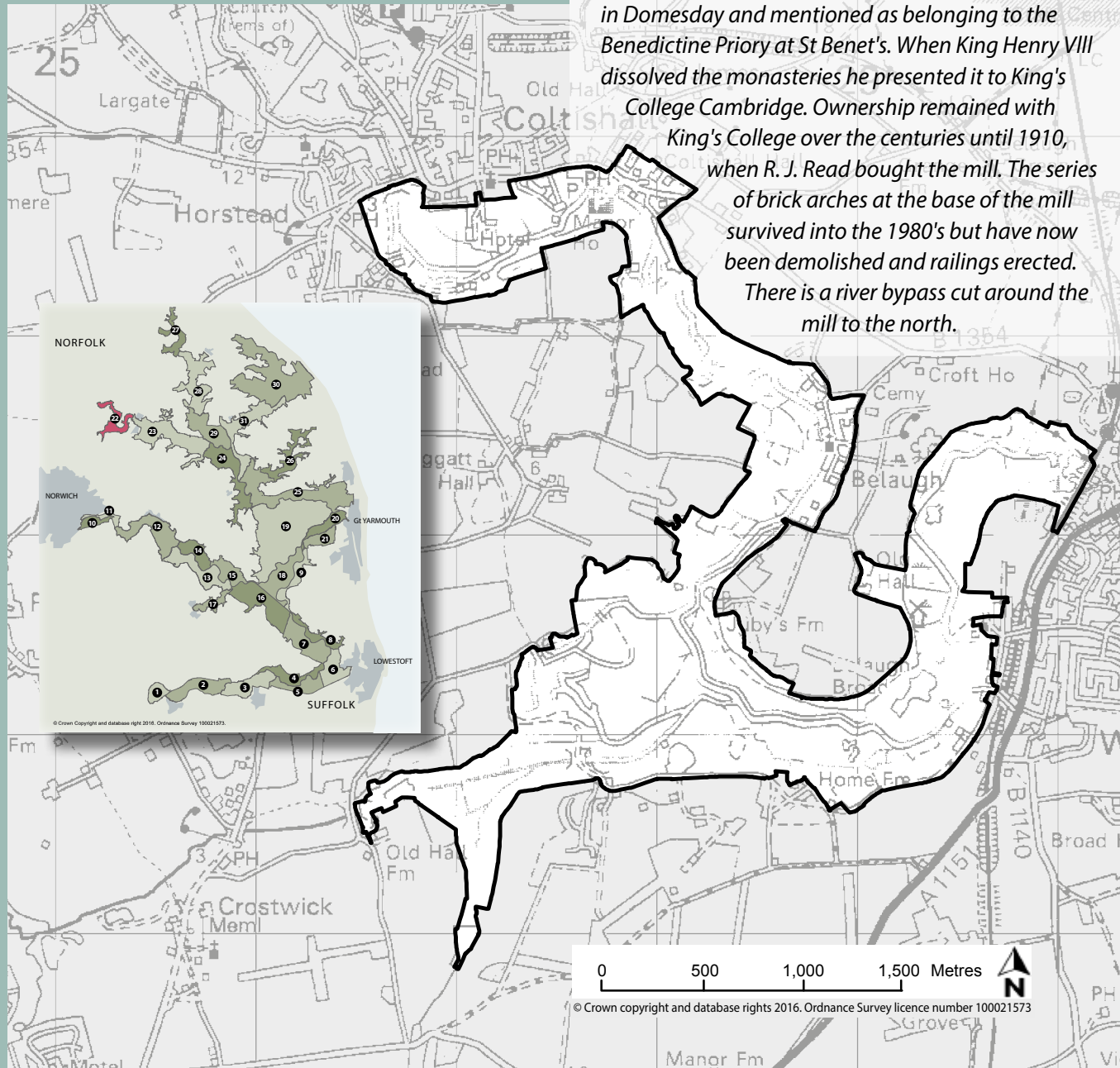
Horstead watermill was the last mill on the Bure, it was also one of the biggest, best known and most photographed mills in the county. The site was probably at least Saxon, it was recorded in Domesday and mentioned as belonging to the Benedictine Priory at St Benet's. When King Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries he presented it to King's College Cambridge. Ownership remained with King's College over the centuries until 1910, when R. J. Read bought the mill. The series of brick arches at the base of the mill survived into the 1980's but have now been demolished and railings erected. There is a river bypass cut around the mill to the north.

Why is this area special?

This section of river valley was one of considerable activity and significance in the 18th and 19th centuries. Coltishall enjoyed considerable prosperity in the malting and brewing trade, with at one time as many as 18 malthouses and an industry had grown up around the accessible chalk deposits around Horstead, Belaugh and Wroxham. The most famous of the chalk workings was the area in Horstead that became something of a tourist attraction after it was abandoned, known as Little Switzerland (other parts of the site were called Paradise and Hasboro' Gap). At these locations a network of artificial cuts which allowed wherry access to the workings can be found. Little information about the site is readily available and the entire area is private with no public access today. Map evidence suggests there were chalk pits in the area by the 18th century and cuts connecting these to the river by the 1820's. Gravel extraction has also long been a feature of this area and there is a disused pit near Belaugh.

Boat access is the only way to really view this area as much of it is private and inaccessible by foot. As the mediaeval bridge at Wroxham limits the size of boats upstream (the limit of navigation being Horstead Mill) there is reduced river traffic which helps to promote a strong sense of tranquillity, although there is a level of localised intrusion associated with the settlements of Wroxham and Hoveton to the east, in addition to the A1151 and the Bittern Line railway which cross the area on the eastern edge.

Once outside the settlements however, the area displays a strong sense of remoteness and the dense nature of carr woodland provides a high level of screening from the surrounding landscape both visually and aurally.





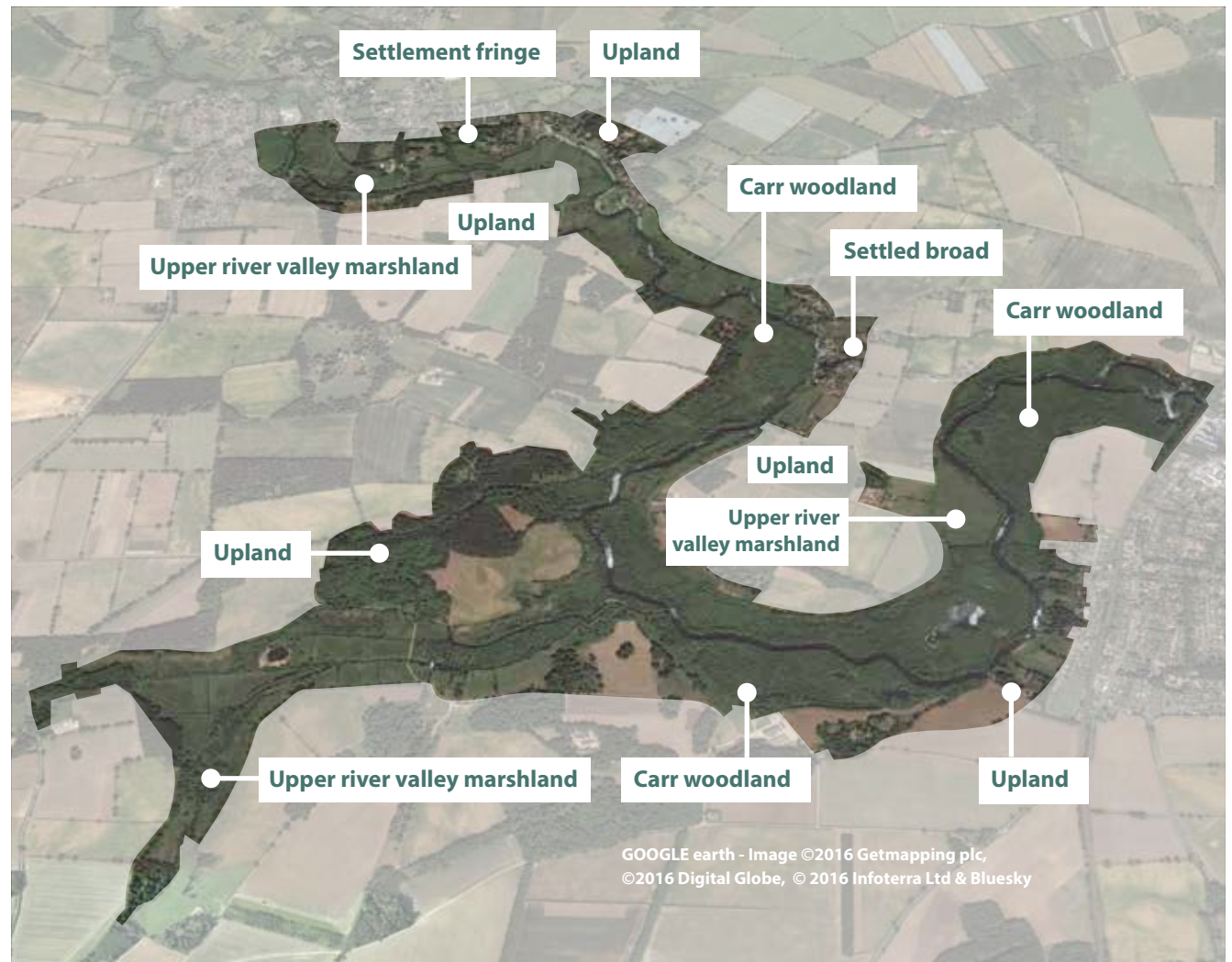
Adrian S. Pye - geograph.org.uk



The remains of Horstead Mill after a major fire in the 20th Century destroyed much of the structure. The area is owned by the local parish councils and it provides a recreational area for people. Fishing and canoeing being particularly popular as it is the only "white water" area in the Broads. Norfolk Mills

Landscape types

Within this character area there are the following landscape types. See section two where more information can be found about the individual types.



GOOGLE earth - Image ©2016 Getmapping plc,
©2016 Digital Globe, © 2016 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky

Topography and skyline

This is a narrow river valley around 2m OD with steeply sloping valley sides, tributaries and artificial cuts. Skylines are defined by a combination of carr woodland and rising valley topography (arable farmland) outside the character area. They are largely undeveloped, save for areas of vernacular settlement on the edges of the area, such as at Coltishall, although in the east, boatyards and other waterside development at Hoveton-Wroxham are apparent as horizon features.

Views are often foreshortened and greatly constrained (directed upwards rather than out into the distance) due to the density of the carr woodland which forms the skyline. However, at certain locations there are gaps in the vegetation allowing views of the undulating farmland within both North Norfolk and Broadland District. At Horstead and Coltishall, where the valley broadens out slightly there are more open views across the grazing marshes to the rising farmland outside the Broads area.

Geology and soils

The chalk which underlies the whole of Norfolk is at an accessible depth for this entire character area. The valley floor is peat bounded by gravel changing to silty clay bounded by sand and gravel moving upriver in Coltishall.

Carr woodland is a significant feature of the area. This aspect, as well as a lack of public access on land in the area, limit where the area can be viewed from. The grounds of Belaugh Church lying at around 10 metres OD afford panoramic views of these inaccessible areas. ►
Alison Yardy



Coltishall Common (open access land) is managed by a local trust which is responsible for the upkeep and day-to-day running of the site.
Helen Steed - geograph.org.uk

Enclosure, scale and pattern

This section of the Bure valley is of an intimate scale, due to the relative closeness of the valley sides at approximately 300m apart. The area has a distinctly sinuous pattern of river and small broads. A strong sense of enclosure is provided by the density of carr woodland in the valley floor and lower valley sides.

The well-defined valley topography reinforces this enclosed corridor effect, with the valley crests at 10m OD located just outside the Executive Area, within adjacent districts.

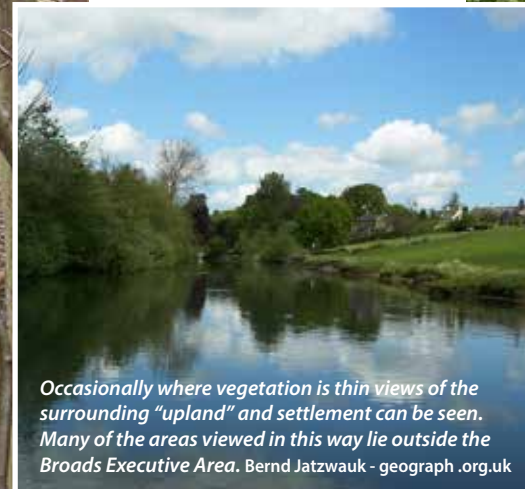
There are variations in enclosure however, created by the open riverside green and grazing marshes at Coltishall, Belaugh and Caen Meadow with views beyond the river corridor towards adjacent "upland". This predominantly well wooded, often relatively dark landscape has

variations in light created by more open stretches of the river such as that at Coltishall. The meandering course of the Bure introduces considerable reflectivity, movement and contrast within the landscape. A closely knit, intricate pattern of elements comprising of dense carr woodland cover, dyke networks and the sinuous course of the river, with riparian vegetation to the edges providing further textural variation.



(Inset left) Little Switzerland used to be the site of chalk excavations. Deep channels were cut to allow the wherries to access the workings. It became a tourist attraction after its closure. Broadland Memories

◀ Little Switzerland today showing the tangled mass of carr woodland. Alison Yardy



Occasionally where vegetation is thin views of the surrounding "upland" and settlement can be seen. Many of the areas viewed in this way lie outside the Broads Executive Area. Bernd Jatzwauk - geograph.org.uk

There is very little foot access available through the carr woodland. This boardwalk was provided to allow those mooring on the northern side of Wroxham bridge to walk to Hoveton village centre. Glen Denny - geograph.org.uk ▶



Main features of land cover and use

Land cover is very mixed and includes **fen, carr woodland, plantation woodland, broads, grazing marsh, arable uplands** and **settlement** created by boatyards and leisure development at Wroxham/Hoveton, housing and commercial properties at Coltishall.

In relation to land use much of this area appears to be unmanaged other than some grazing use in the upper reaches.

The considerable areas of carr woodland in the area, are particularly notable between Wroxham and Belaugh. There are three small broads - Bridge Broad, Belaugh Broad and Norton's Broad whilst some small grazing meadows can be found around Coltishall and Horstead. The valley sides can frequently display heathland type characteristics. There are no nature conservation designations in this area.

The area contains mainly linear **settlements** with a number of historic buildings and relicts of waterside industry. The settlements of Coltishall, Horstead and Belaugh lying along the higher valley ground are designated conservation areas (built environment). The settlement areas are notably well vegetated and are often a neat and simple contrast to the apparently unmanaged surrounding valley. They also offer the main land based access points to the river valley for example the riverside green (open access land) alongside the public house at Coltishall. These settlements form principal bases for recreational boating activity.

The primary settlements within the area, often display a strong vernacular character, e.g. red brick and dutch gables, flint and dressed stone.

◀ *The publicly accessible historic staithe and commons in the area provide the best way to view the river and the landscape.*
Renata Edge - geograph.org.uk

Horstead mill marks the end of navigation in the area. Although canoe access is available through some upstream sections. A portage route having been installed to facilitate this. Lesley Marsden





Ian S. - geograph.org.uk



J. Thomas - geograph.org.uk

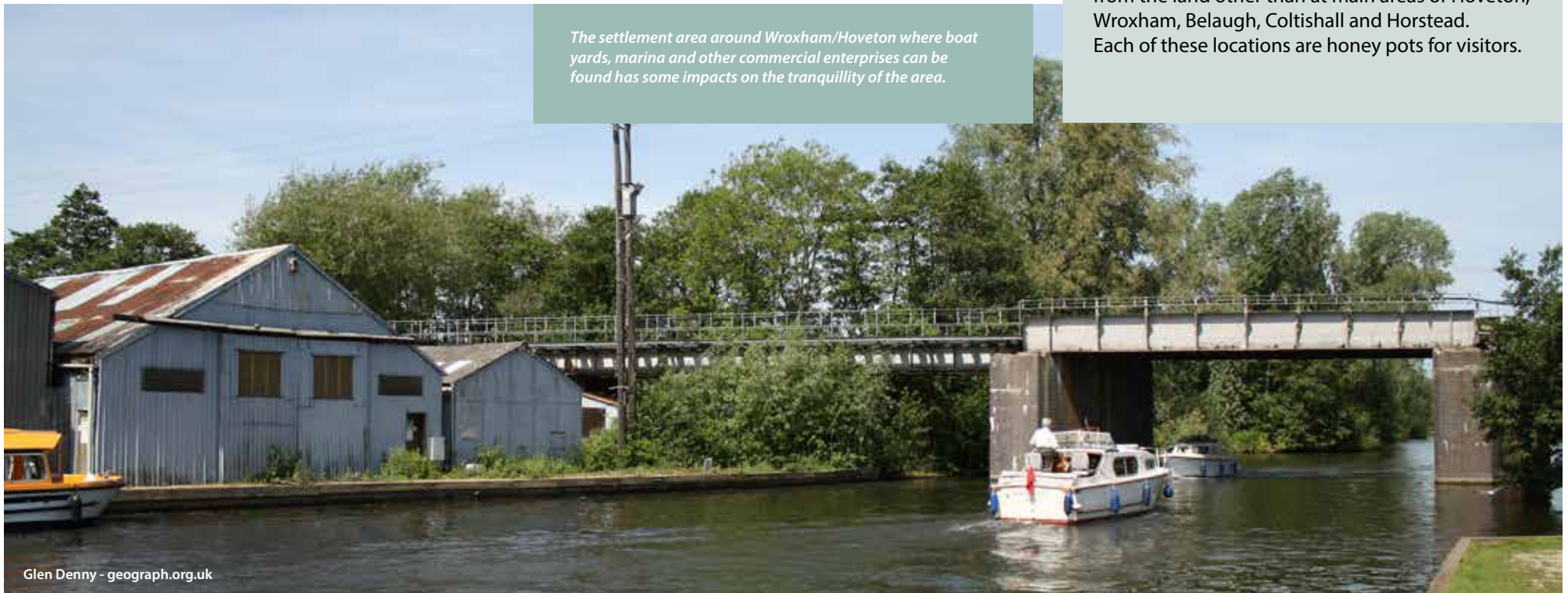
Helping to keep it special

Care needs to be taken when landscape change occurs, to ensure that those positive characteristics that contribute to an area's unique sense of place are conserved and enhanced. What follows are examples of local issues and opportunities.

Landscape - The overall perception of the landscape in this area is positive. Apart from the more urbanised area around Hoveton/Wroxham and the traffic noise associated with the bridge crossing, much appears very natural albeit unmanaged, with only a tamed appearance in the settlement areas. The areas in between the settlements are remote and tranquil.

The area is not a particularly easy area to view from the land other than at main areas of Hoveton, Wroxham, Belaugh, Coltishall and Horstead. Each of these locations are honey pots for visitors.

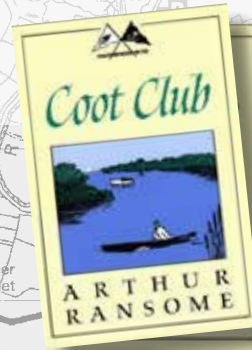
The settlement area around Wroxham/Hoveton where boat yards, marina and other commercial enterprises can be found has some impacts on the tranquillity of the area.



Glen Denny - geograph.org.uk

23 Bure Valley - downstream Wroxham to Fleet Dyke, South Walsham

Parts of the area have featured in some notable written work. Horning is central to two of Arthur Ransome's books in the *Swallows and Amazons* series – *Coot Club* and *The Big Six*. Whilst Burnt Fen Broad was owned as part of a 71 acre sporting estate by Broads writer George Christopher Davies who is credited with popularising the Broads as a destination.



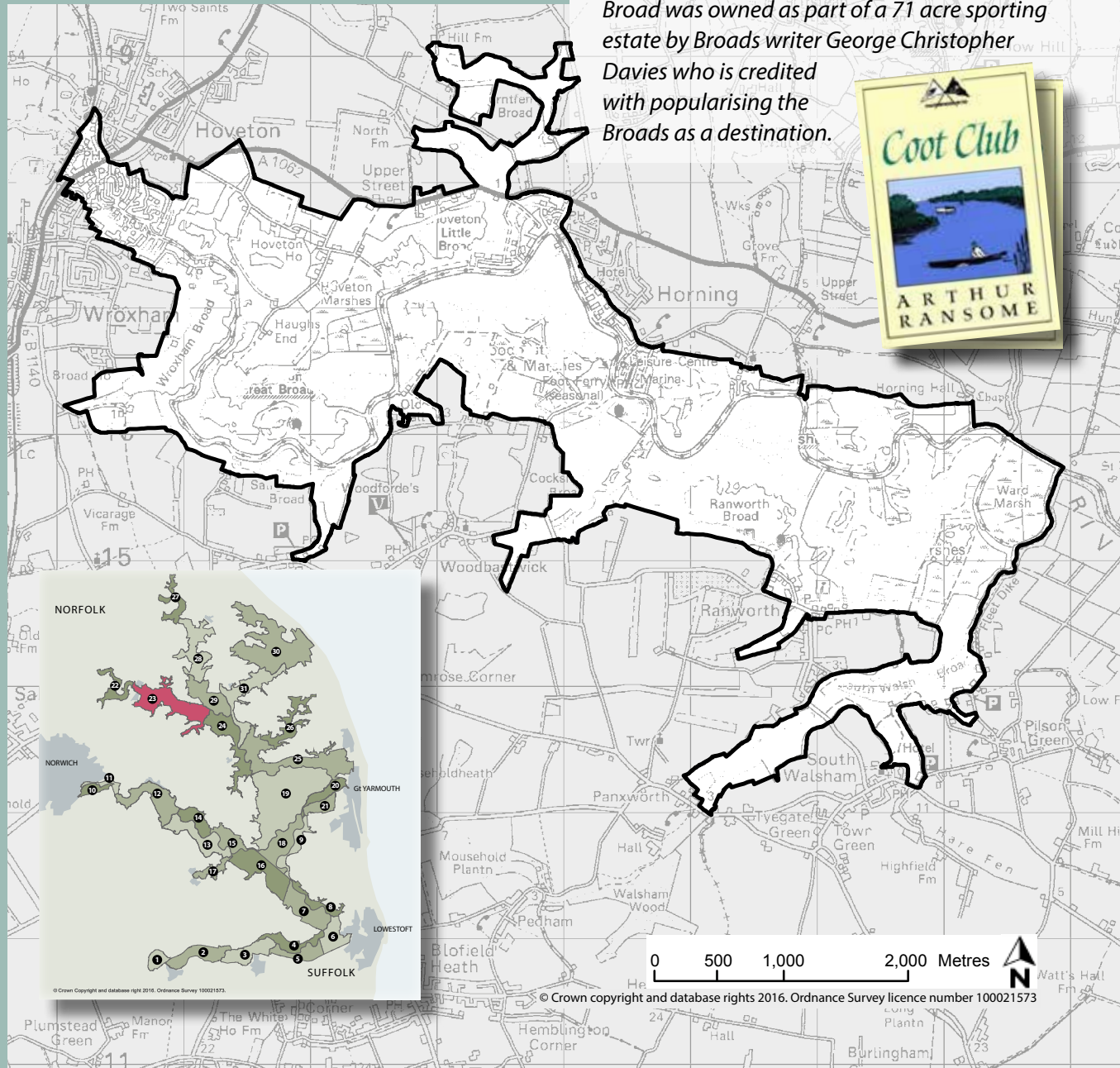
Why is this area special?

Although this area includes two of the Broads' honeypot tourist areas at Wroxham/Hoveton and Horning and a seasonally busy waterway, much of the area is inaccessible by land. This inaccessibility and volume of carr woodland creates a sense of tranquillity in most of the area which sharply contrasts with the busyness around the settlements.

The character area sits between the rather smaller-scale upper Bure valley area above Wroxham Railway Bridge and the wide open marshland landscapes beyond Fleet Dyke, South Walsham. The habitats are varied within the area and they support many species of flora and fauna. This has resulted in the majority of this area being internationally and nationally designated for its nature conservation value.

The upland area to the south of Salhouse and Woodbastwick once formed the outer extent of the extensive area of heathland that extended from the north-east of Norwich and of which Mousehold is the relict part. A particular feature of this upland area are the parklands and estate land, although they are not particularly visible from the river.

There are a significant number of broads contained within this section of the valley. They are predominantly of the bypassed type (i.e. off the main river) located within the valley floor, although South Walsham Broad, Burnt Fen and Cockshoot are within tributary side valleys. Nineteenth century maps also show large areas of later shallow peat workings throughout this area. Two of the larger broads, Ranworth and Hoveton Great Broad, are closed to navigation. The majority of the broads have become enclosed in the carr woodland which rather dominates this character area although there are also some areas of open fen notably around Ferry Road, Woodbastwick at Ranworth and on the Hoveton Marshes.

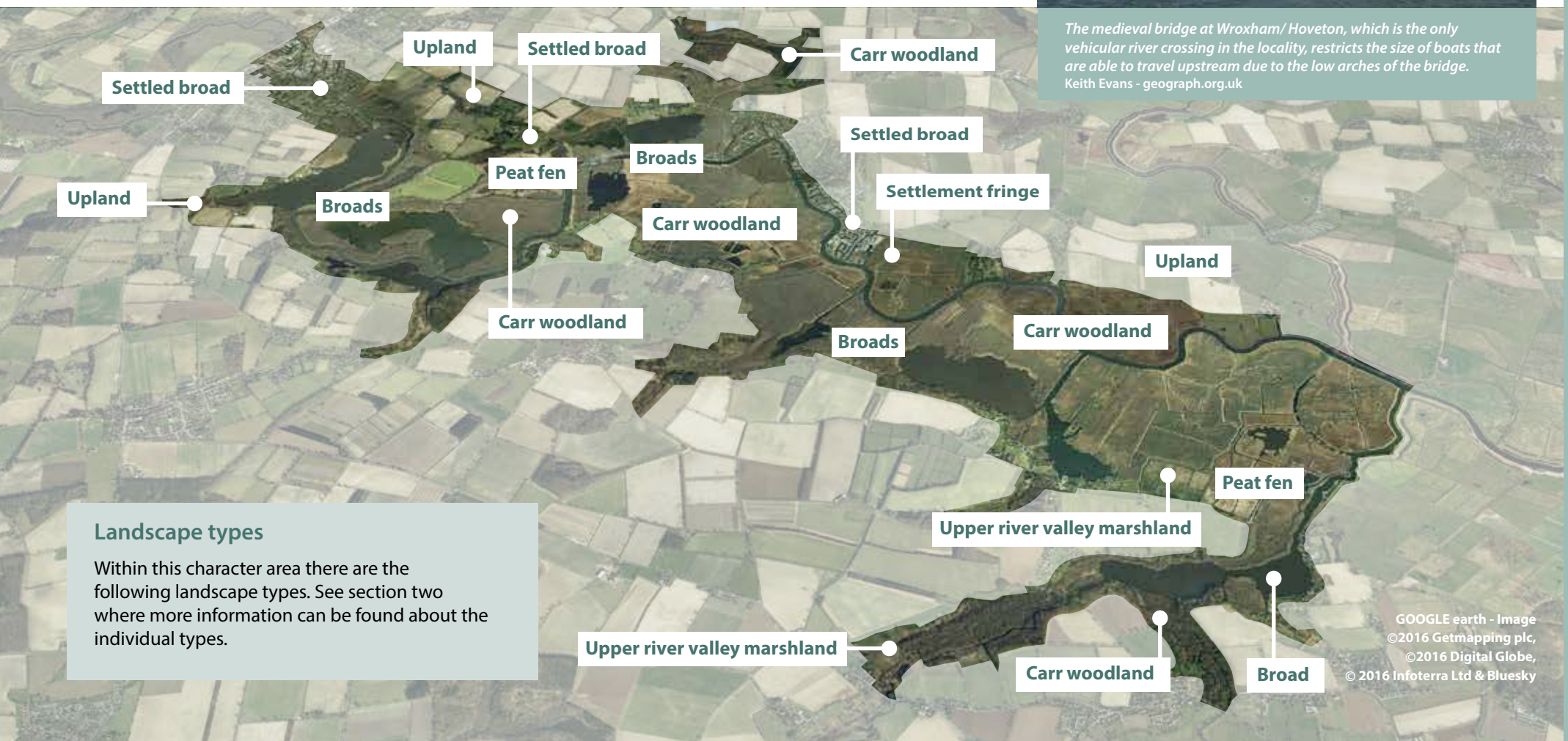


Although drainage mills are not a particular feature of this area, there were attempts to drain parts of it in the nineteenth century. These broadly correspond with the rather more open areas today although drainage has now been abandoned. Three mills survive these being Dydall's Mill at Hoveton and Horning Ferry (both of which have been converted) while the skeleton mill Hobb's Mill, Horning stands amongst reedbed on an abandoned grazing level.

The area is home to Ranworth Church which is Grade I Listed and one of best known churches in the Broads Area and famed for its rood screen. It is in such a prominent location that it can be seen for many kilometres. The other significant historic structure in the area is Wroxham Bridge which is a Scheduled Monument. As a result of the height of the arches this ancient bridge significantly limits the size of boat which can travel upstream.



The medieval bridge at Wroxham/ Hoveton, which is the only vehicular river crossing in the locality, restricts the size of boats that are able to travel upstream due to the low arches of the bridge.
Keith Evans - geograph.org.uk



Landscape types

Within this character area there are the following landscape types. See section two where more information can be found about the individual types.

Topography and skyline

The valley sides are often more distinctive here than in the Ant valley, often rising from around 0 AOD quite steeply to around 10m OD. With the exception of riverside settlements and low waterside chalets, skylines are defined largely by carr woodland in the valley floor and lower valley sides. At points where a more open (fen) landscape persists, rolling unvegetated and undeveloped valley sides form the skyline, defined by mixed farmland, and predominantly arable farmland on the upper slopes. This is particularly apparent on the south side of the river near Woodbastwick, with horizons formed by rising land within the adjacent Broadland District.

A slightly more open character near Horning Church on the north bank of the river also results in rising land within North Norfolk District forming the skyline at this point. The church tower at Ranworth is a prominent feature on the skyline in the immediate area and can be viewed from a great distance both from within this character area and from the surrounding countryside.

Views are mostly contained within the valley due to the dense carr woodland cover and sloping valley sides. Carr woodlands essentially direct views upwards, and greatly reduce the potential for more distant views, or views out. However, as described above, there are views towards the rural landscapes within Broadland District around Woodbastwick to the south of the area, and with Ranworth Church. There are also views to the farmland within North Norfolk District to the north of Horning Church, albeit filtered by trees and reed vegetation.

Geology and soils

This is predominantly an area of peat with sands and gravels to the valleys sides. The peat was extracted during the medieval period resulting in the broads which has given the area its name.

The woodland habitat makes much of the area impenetrable unless specific measures are taken. The majority of the area has been designated for its nature conservation value.
Ashley Dace - geograph.org.uk

Enclosure, scale and pattern

Relative to other broad's areas this is a medium scale landscape. The river valley is between 800 -1000m wide, in the main surrounded by carr woodland edges with distinctive valley sides rising to 10-15m beyond the Broads Executive Area. Valley sides are often masked by the density of carr woodland in the valley floor. At points the valley narrows and has a more pronounced valley side and ridge topography, e.g. tributary valley at Woodbastwick. Much of the area feels enclosed as a result of the vegetation surrounding the river. Areas of open fen provide do provide some contrast in landscape scale, notably on the Hoveton Marshes and closer to Ranworth.

Much of this area is covered with alder carr.
Ashley Dace - geograph.org.uk



Variation in terms of light and reflectivity is created by the carr woodlands fringing the river and the relatively intricate, enclosed broads within the valley (e.g. Wroxham Broad, Hoveton Great Broad and Ranworth and Malthouse Broads).

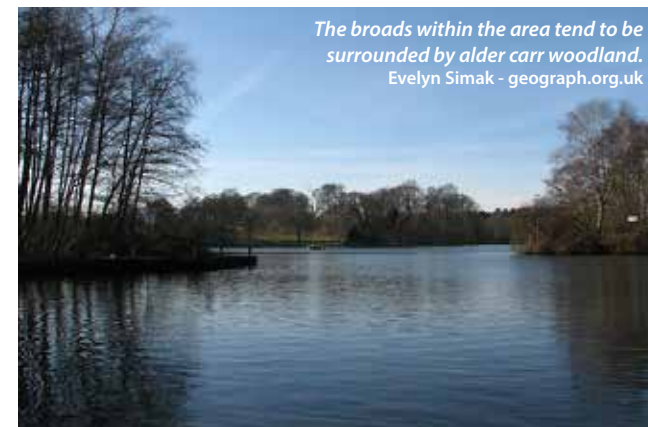
The meandering course of the River Yare also creates a strong sense of movement and light in contrast to the level of shade provided by carr woodland. fen, woodland, broads and sinuous reed fringed river.

The combination and intricacy of landscape features of fen, woodland, broads and sinuous reed fringed rivers in the area form complex patterns.

Unless fen and the reed beds are managed, the natural vegetation succession is for the landscape to revert to carr woodland.
Ashley Dace - geograph.org.uk



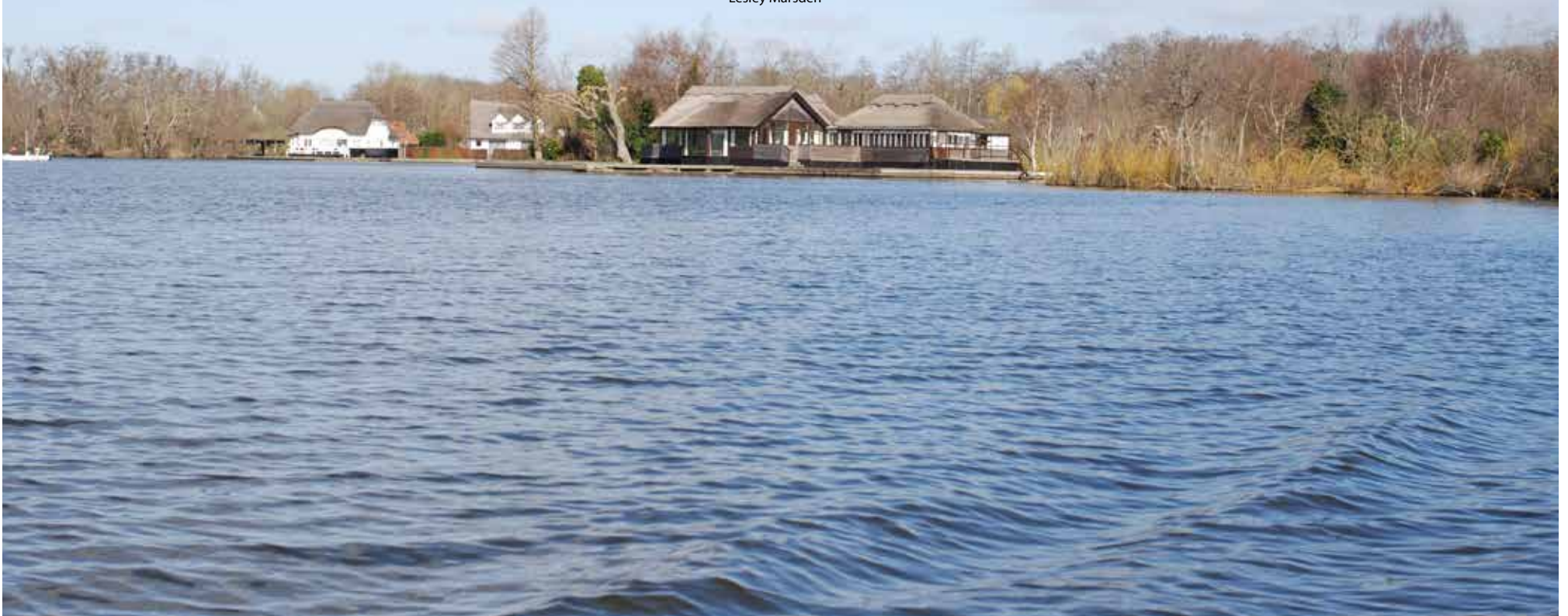
The broads within the area tend to be surrounded by alder carr woodland.
Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk



Settlements, as in many other parts of the Broads, are mostly located on the perimeter of the area, with vernacular riverside villages such as Wroxham, Hoveton and Horning having frontage with the river. The diversity of waterside settlement adds to the variety of pattern and texture, from large Edwardian villas at Wroxham, minor country houses and parkland at Woodbastwick, original Boulton and Paul timber and reed chalets to later and modern development, particularly the waterside chalets at Crabbett's Marsh.

Salhouse Broad is a location where the transition between the valley floor and the valley sides is obvious as are the changes in the soil type and vegetation.
Suse - geograph.org.uk

Wroxham Broad is the only publically accessible broad in the area where property can be seen on the edge of the Broad.
Lesley Marsden



Main features of land cover and use

This area is essentially a wide valley floor of extensive areas of **peat fen**, **carr** woodland and a concentration of **broads** across which a range of nature conservation designations apply. Land cover is however generally dominated by regenerated carr woodland with some areas of more open fen vegetation. Management of the carr woodland to riverside edges is apparent along sections of the Bure, creating a softer transition from open water to reed and marshes to woodland, and this has resulted in the by-product of enhanced access (in parts) to the river edge for anglers.

There is significant amount of open water in view of the high concentration of broads within this area.

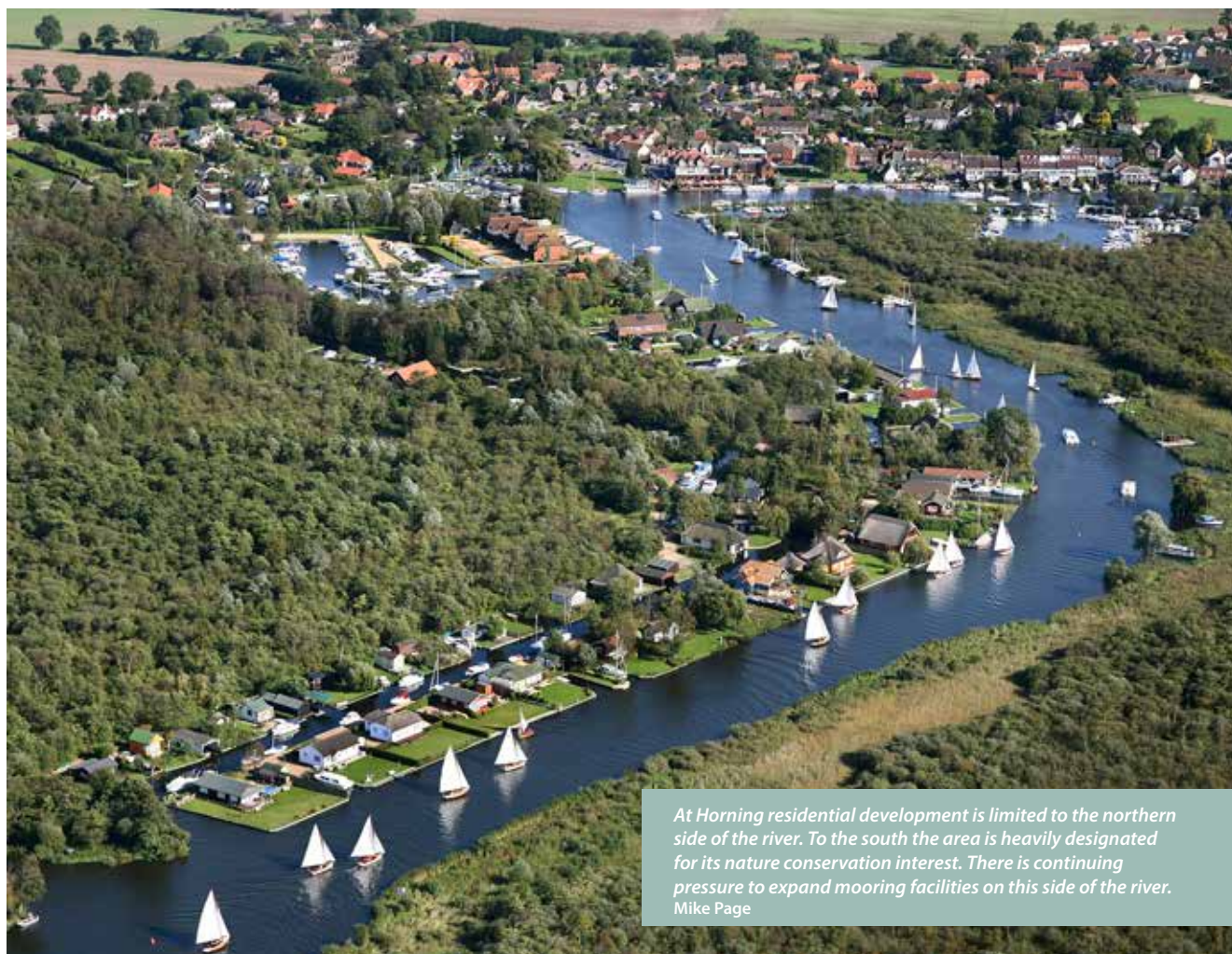
Land use is split between nature conservation management and mainly recreational use of the water and land with some very concentrated areas of **settlement** where there is a mix of commercial and residential.

Settlement is dotted around the boundaries of this entire area. However, there are two very significant areas of settlement/development in the area around Wroxham/Hoveton and Horning with a smaller area around Ranworth. The first two are predominantly 20th century developments although with older historic cores. Wroxham and Hoveton form the western boundary of this Character Area and contain a contrasting range of settlement types. Wroxham is to the south of the river and Hoveton to the north although they tend to be regarded as one area. Wroxham settlement includes the Beech Road area of large detached properties with river frontage in well-established grounds. This area also includes some quite elaborate riverside bungalows. Towards the A1151 and north of the river there are a number of large cuts, mooring basins and generally mixed uses with boatyards, modern redbrick housing and various commercial uses. Although a colourful, active place, the overall perception can be of a slightly chaotic, high density of built development with an absence of any significant open

spaces and tree cover and a sometimes surprisingly poor connection with the river.

The other main settlement area is Horning, a long, linear waterside development. Much of the development along the river frontage took place in the early 20th century more than tripling that of the late 19th century. The main change since that time has been density and depth of the development area to the north. The settlement broadly

splits between the Crabbett's Marsh area of chalet development, the historic core of Horning south of the Swan Inn (which now forms the Conservation Area) and the later infill south towards what was once an isolated ferry crossing site. The development around the ferry at the eastern end is rather mixed and more akin to the Hoveton development, including marinas, boatyards, modern holiday homes and facilities.



At Horning residential development is limited to the northern side of the river. To the south the area is heavily designated for its nature conservation interest. There is continuing pressure to expand mooring facilities on this side of the river.
Mike Page

Much of the area to the south of the river forms part of the Woodbastwick Estate. Although the Woodbaswick Hall and parkland and estate village are not within the Executive Area boundary, the estate influence can be widely seen in the hedged fields, plantation woodland and distinctive estate cottages with black and white painted joinery. To the north of the river is the Hoveton House Estate which includes the only parkland within the Broads Executive Area. The mature woodland and estate cottages are again a feature. The Avenues area of Wroxham was built into the parkland of the lost Wroxham House, which has contributed to the wooded feel of that area. The avenue towards Wroxham Broad is a surviving feature and the walled former kitchen gardens can also still be found. The Fairhaven Gardens at South Walsham (180 acres of woodland and water gardens which include South Walsham Inner Broad) are also part of this area.

Helping to keep it special

Care needs to be taken when landscape change occurs, to ensure that those positive characteristics that contribute to an areas unique sense of place are conserved and enhanced. What follows are examples of local issues and opportunities.

Landscape – The water side developments of Wroxham/Hoveton can appear to be chaotic and high density in nature, with many different development styles which are often out of scale to the size of the riverside plot. It would be beneficial if more structural vegetation was introduced within both the locality and the individual plots to mitigate this adverse characteristic and that re-development proposals are carefully assessed to ensure that further landscape impacts do not occur.

Subdivision of large dwellings/plots and pressure for additional mooring space around Wroxham add to development pressures in the area.

At Crabbett's Marsh there is pressure for the redevelopment of the more traditional riverside chalets which can sometimes result in over development of the plot and a loss of structural vegetation.

Nature conservation – There has been loss of open fen through decline of traditional fen management.

There are a range of developments types along the river and the adjacent dykes in Wroxham/Hoveton exhibiting many different styles. Large trees and shrubs help to integrate development with the natural environment. ▼
Lesley Marsden

Lesley Marsden



Peter Trimming - geograph.org.uk



Steve Daniels - geograph.org.uk



Steve Daniels - geograph.org.uk



John Salmon - geograph.org.uk

