

A peek into the world of an



urban Countryside team

Who are we?

- The service was created in 1991 with the aim of improving the quality of the habitats in our District and educating residents with regards to the biodiversity value in their local area. Back then the service covered the formal parks and there were only two Nature Reserves.
- Since then we have become a stand alone service and currently cover 18 sites.
- The team is made up of four staff members.
- Myself – Adam Hamilton. Biodiversity and Conservation officer
- Adam Wright and James Brookes – Countryside Sites officers
- Cameron Adams – Assistant sites officer.

What do we do all day?

- Eighteen sites
- Approx 275ha of land spread throughout the District of Wyre Forest
- 3 Sites of Special Interest, 8 Local Nature Reserves, 7 other areas managed for their biodiversity value.
- These areas can be split roughly into -



Lowland Heath



Wetland



Woodland



How do we do this with 3 members of staff on the ground?

- We have a dedicated team of volunteers.
- They come along every Wednesday and Thursday to work alongside one of the team helping us install public infrastructure such as boardwalks and also carry out biodiversity improvements such as scrape creation.



Sustainable management since 1999

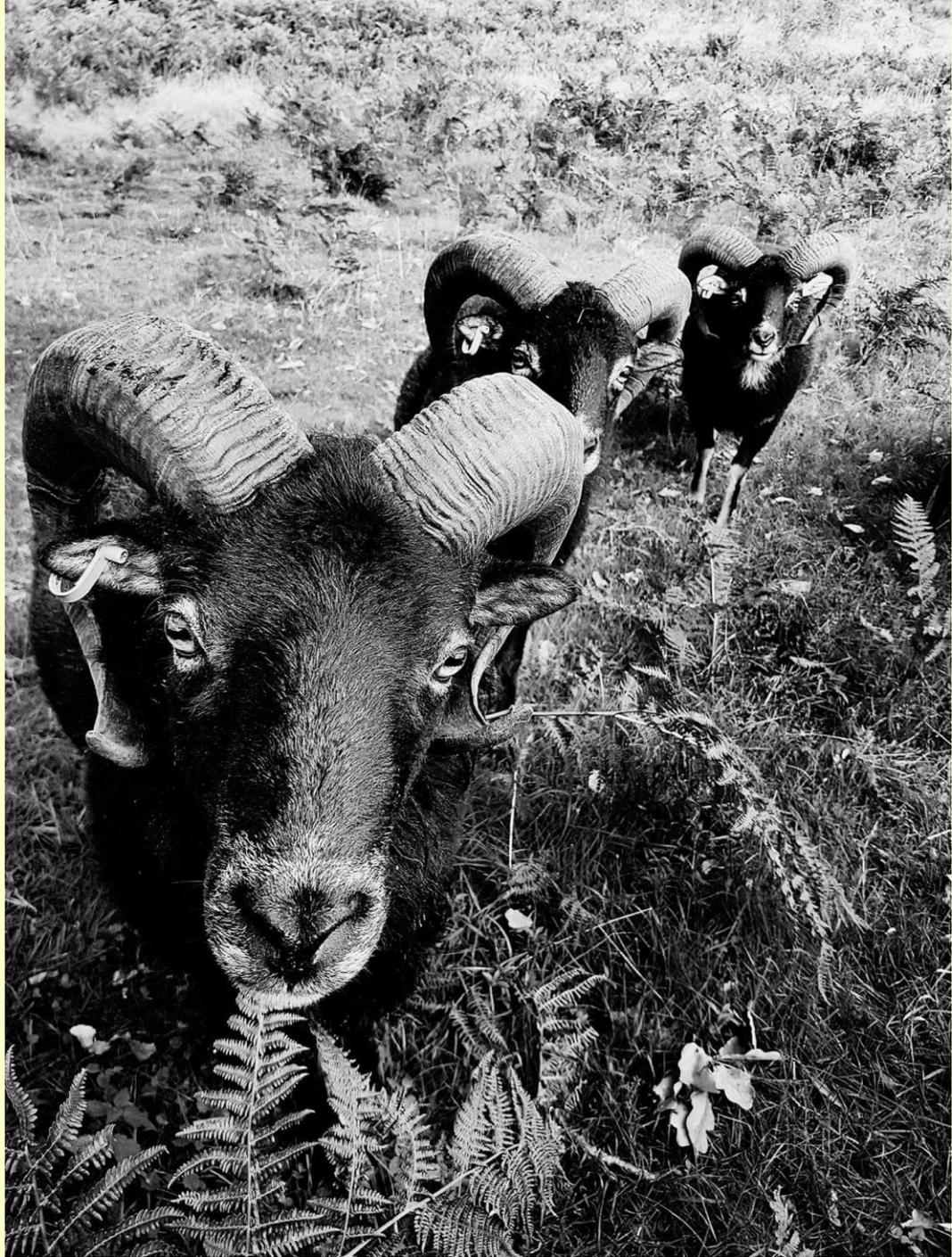
- In 1999 we, in conjunction with English Nature, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and a local farmer, set-up the Wyre Forest Grazing animal project.
- We began with a handful of non-pedigree cattle that we moved around the districts important conservation areas. This enabled us to manage the vegetation, even on the marshy sites without totally relying on machinery. The cattle hooves also add structure to the turf, and their dung is a wonderful resource for many of the invertebrates found across the reserves.





Malayan
buffling

- We are now grazing around 60 rare breed Shetland cattle, a handful of Belted Galloway and 45 Soay sheep.



Impacts upon other landscapes

- In more recent times the service has been having more of an input into other, more formal areas of open space.
- Advising other services on biodiversity queries such as bat and badger mitigation.
- Football pitches.
- Landfill sites.
- Stourport Riverside Car park.

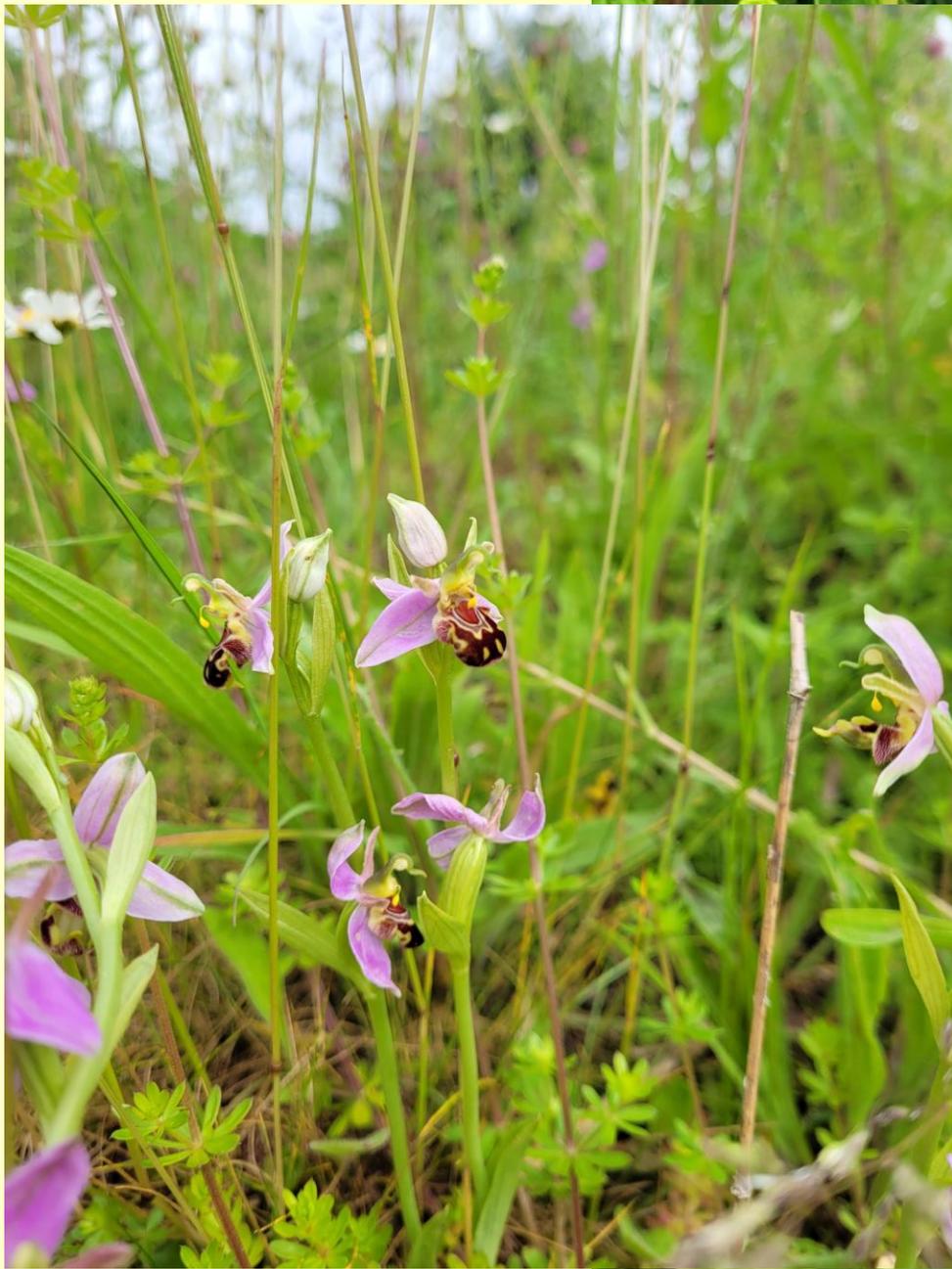




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Tanks, Blood and Guts!

- As much as my passion is for the wildlife of the sites, we appreciate that some people value the sites for other reasons. Burlish Top LNR was utilised during WW2 as an American military training camp. This was brought to life in 2013 when we re-enacted the famous Blood and guts speech by General George S Patten on site and held a dinner dance at the local Civic Centre...Spam sandwiches and all!



Access for all!

- An important aspect of managing sensitive sites within urban areas is public engagement and access management.
- Along with finding new and novel ways of funding habitat improvements, improving access for ALL members of society is a priority.
- Modern mobility aids such as powered wheelchairs are really competent and we are keen to make sure we make users feel welcome.

- This does present challenges. The sites are urban and many have cattle grazing, often adjacent to main roads so the correct infrastructure is essential.
- This was addressed by inviting along representatives from the 'Disabled ramblers group' discussing suitable infrastructure.
- It is often impossible to make entire sites 'accessible', surfaced pathways can detract from what should be wild areas, but we feel we do need to do what we can.
- Its generally as simple as replacing with kissing gates with radar locks incorporated, but at over £700 each, it's a outlay. So unfortunately does need to be a gradual process.

Thank you!!!

