



## Ponds Past and Present



The Pond Project has been running for six months now with Nigel Hand as Project Officer, appointed in June 2012.

The first phase of the project has been to gather information about the current and historical status of ponds in the project area. This area covers 25 parishes in north east Herefordshire: from Bromyard and Brockhampton in the north to Colwall, Ledbury and Bosbury in the south east, and Ashperton and Stoke Lacy in the west. We have worked with the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre (HBRC) and Herefordshire Council's Archaeological Department to produce maps for the whole project area showing both the current ponds and other water bodies present today from the Ordinance survey data, and also maps showing the ponds present in the first ordinance survey of 1880. Statistics from 11 parishes (see table overleaf) show around 75% of ponds have disappeared in the last 130 years. These for the Bromyard area are also shown on the map.

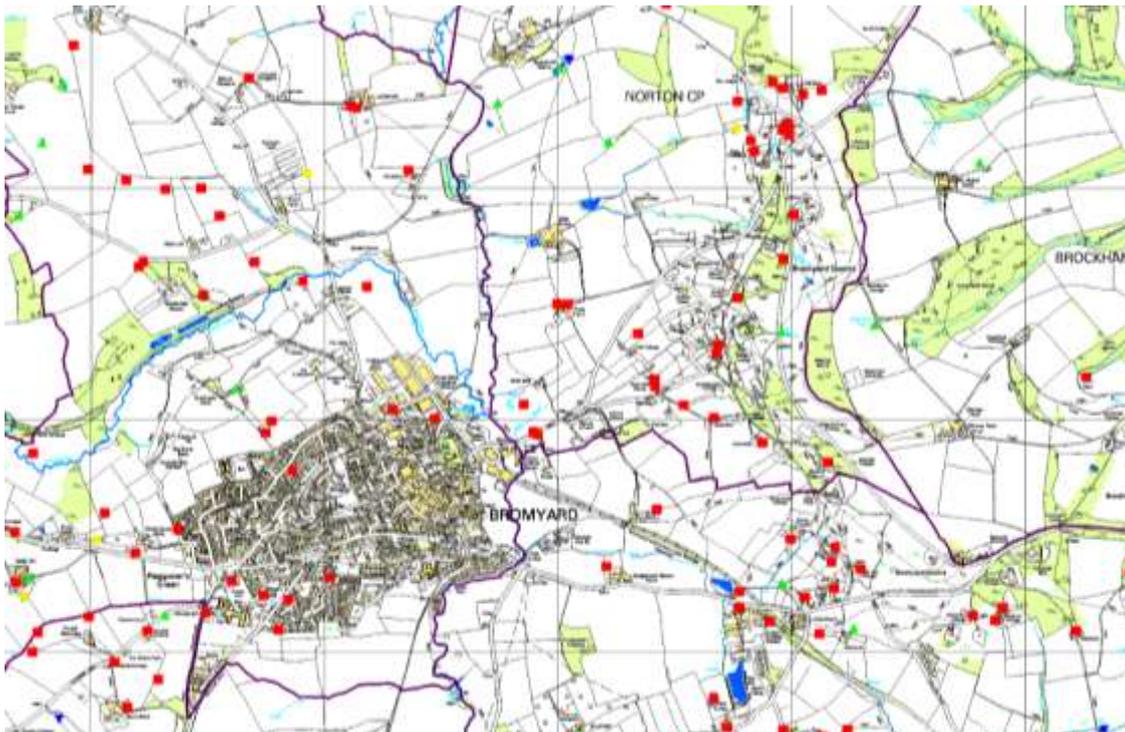
It will be interesting to learn more about these losses and survivals as the project progresses with visits to some of the ponds.

I believe the majority of pond losses shown on the map were of stock watering ponds, as they were mainly located within fields. Looking at the density of past ponds there appears to have been a much better connective network of ponds and beneficial for the well being of the county amphibian species, particularly the great crested newt. Many of the ponds have been filled in, neglected or replaced by piped water fed to cattle troughs. Hopefully through the project we can encourage restoration and correct management, and the creation of new ponds to improve the past decline.

## Community Information Events

Having done the desk exercise to map past and present ponds, six community information evenings were held at parish centres in the project area to share this information with local people, talk about ponds and pond life, and most importantly ask the local people to share with us their knowledge both of existing ponds and of ponds they know which are no longer present.

Numbers attending the meetings were disappointing but those who did come were enthusiastic about the ponds in their area and shared a lot of information **with us. It's possible that dark evenings in winter is not a popular time!** So we plan to run a few more in the spring at other times of day.



Ponds in Bromyard area

Key

- Red square: Pond Lost
- Yellow circle: Pond Modified
- Blue triangle: Pond Partially Survives
- Green triangle: Pond Survives in full



Many people who attended the winter community mapping meetings indicated they were keen to reinstate old neglected ponds and we were also pleased to hear of recently created ponds.

### Schools and Information Materials

Contacts with schools have been made and Ledbury and Bredenbury are interested in creating ponds. Visits will be scheduled next year in the spring and summer. Meanwhile work is progressing on a schools **teacher pack on similar lines to the What's that Snake? Schools pack**. Jo Polack is again helping us develop this. She has been collecting materials and meeting with teachers and environmentalists to **assess what's needed and firm up on ideas**.

Leaflets and display boards have been produced and distributed.

### Training Days

Four training days are planned for March and April next year and will cover identification of key pond species, pond ecology and surveying techniques and procedures, and practical sessions during the day at **local ponds**. **If you'd be interested to join one of these** please contact me at the Nature Trust to book a place (contact details below) - dates will also be advertised on the HART website. If you contact me early, I can

try and make sure the training days are run when you are available.

### Events Planned Next Year

1. Further community events – **if you weren't** able to get to one up to now, or would now like to attend one, please contact me. This will help us work out when best to hold them.
2. Pond celebration days – we plan three celebration days at local ponds next summer to look at the wildlife in and around the pond assisted by wildlife experts.
3. Around 12 school visits are planned
4. Pond surveys – we hope the project and its trainee surveyors will be able to survey up to **40 ponds**. **If you'd like to help in this, come on** a training day and join in the team. Already trained surveyors would also be very welcome to help us!

*Nigel Hand*

*Contact details:*

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Parish	Ponds on 1st edition	Current Status			
		Full	Partial	Modified	Lost
Avenbury	53	12	4	5	32
Bredenbury	16	1	1	2	12
Brockhampton	14	6	1	0	7
Bromyard and Winslow	82	16	3	8	55
Edvin Loach	17	5	0	0	12
Edwyn Ralph	36	4	1	3	28
Linton	68	6	1	4	57
Norton	60	8	3	1	48
Stanford Bishop	33	9	3	0	21
Stoke Lacy	36	8	1	7	20
Wacton	17	5	0	3	9
TOTAL	432	80	18	33	301

Survival and losses of historic ponds (circa 1880 first edition OS map)



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