

Holme Lacy College

In 2007, pond survey and restoration work was undertaken on a pond at Holme Lacy College as part of the Pond Restoration and Celebration Project. This project was developed by Herefordshire Amphibian and Reptile Team (HART) and rolled out in partnership with Herefordshire Nature Trust. It was funded by Herefordshire Rivers LEADER+, SITA Trust and Wye Valley AONB.



Before restoration work

D. Hardy

History

There are several ponds in the landscape around Holme Lacy House and Holme Lacy College Farm. These vary from ornamental lakes, a reservoir to field ponds with historical interest. The pond restored by the project is in the old parkland on top of the hill, and is thought to have been dug as a deer watering place as it is positioned near to what was once a deer barn. More recently the college's pedigree Hereford cattle have used it, wading across to drink or munch on the pond vegetation.

The pond is regularly used by the college for teaching students about pond life because its gently sloping sides make it a safe place to work.

Wildlife



Common toad

P. King



Water starwort

D. Hardy

The pond lies in an open position in the parkland amongst the wizened old trees. It is not shaded and does not fill with leaf litter, though grasses grow readily particularly as the water levels recede during summer. Dragonflies flit about in the sheltered banks, and their larvae can be seen emerging to metamorphose on the grasses.

Smooth newts and a toad have been recorded here, and in previous years, also great crested newts. Less common are the plant intermediate water starwort (*Callitriche intermedia*), and fat duckweed (*Lemna gibba*) which is unusual in Herefordshire.

P. King

Management



Digging out the old pond

W. Watson

The pond no longer filled the depression that was thought to be its original banks and was reduced to a pool on one side. So the aim of the restoration work was to dig out the dry side, leaving a bund between the old and new that could be removed in a couple of years once the new pond had re-vegetated. Work took place in September 2007 and the soil was incorporated into the arable field next door. A temporary fence was then erected round the ponds by the students, to allow bank and marginal vegetation to get established away from the cattle. This, and some piled stones from the excavation will provide more cover for pond wildlife in the otherwise short grass of the grazed field.

Visit the pond!

The village of Holme Lacy lies to the south of Hereford and the college is central and easy to find. There are various footpaths and permissive paths crossing the college farm. To visit the pond, park in the village and walk up the farm track (footpath) opposite the college visitor entrance. Keep walking up the track past the farm buildings until the gate near the top, and continue into the field. Follow the fainter track through the parkland into the second field, in a south-easterly direction, looking for the fenced-off area at the top of the hill in which the pond lies.

Acknowledgements

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