

## **Gorsey Piece – Holbrook Parish Council's Nature Reserve**

The Nature Reserve is located on Belper Road at the northern end of the Parish. This piece of land was purchased by Holbrook Parish Council some 40 years ago and the Nature Reserve created.

The land has an interesting history. On the 1786 Enclosure Map it is shown to be part of a larger plot in the ownership of Joseph Bagley Bradshaw Esq., however, by the 1841 map showing the field names in Holbrook, it is a separate plot named Gorsey Piece. In 1835 the owner was John Austin and the occupier John Hall junior. Later in 1843 it was advertised in the Derby Mercury as a parcel of Freehold, Arable & Grassland for Sale by Auction. The sale took place on Saturday 16th December at the Lion Hotel, Belper. Although not recorded, it was probably bought by the Strutt Estate at this time.

On the 1880 map it is marked as both a gravel pit and a quarry. It was extensively quarried during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the stone being used for local houses and walls in Belper Road. Subsequent to the quarrying it was used as a dump for household rubbish in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, local people even recall dumping ash there up to the Second World War. The land was used for agricultural purposes, mainly chickens, and then tenanted by a local builder who kept a horse

and goat there as well as his building supplies.

The Parish Council bought the plot from the Strutt Estate in 1981 and developed it as a nature reserve, clearing rubbish and planting trees. It is now a haven for wildlife and 32 varieties of birds have been recorded there. More recently footpaths have been cut through, a seat erected, a sign placed near the entrance gate, and the dry stone walls around the site rebuilt with the help of members of the then Holbrook Parish Plan Group.

The largely native planting of trees, together with an undercover of gorse and brambles, helps to supply food and habitat for a wide range of butterflies, moths and birds, all of which have suffered such a dramatic national decline in recent years.

As the trees grow to maturity, there will be a need to 'thin' some of them out to allow others to fully develop. In 2015 there were over 100 trees of 24 different species.

Holbrook Parish Council would welcome your help with the maintenance and management of the Nature Reserve. If you are able to volunteer to join working parties, or provide expertise, please contact the Holbrook Parish Clerk by telephone on 07307858622, or by email at [clerk@holbrookderbyshire.co.uk](mailto:clerk@holbrookderbyshire.co.uk).



# Plan of Gorsey Piece Nature Reserve - Not to Scale

Owned and Maintained by  
Holbrook Parish Council

Seat Overlooking  
View

Orange Path (Only) Suitable  
for Mobility Scooters

Rocks

North

Steps

Picnic  
Bench

Scrub

- Please keep to the paths to protect plants, ground nesting birds and small animals
- Please take any litter home. It can be a death trap for wildlife.

Entrance

Buggy and Mobility Scooter Friendly Gate

Pavement

Belper Road

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