



Nature Recovery
Shropshire and
Telford & Wrekin

Helping nature to recover by...

restoring biodiversity to an 11-acre field



Stony Field, New Invention

In 2018, Sarah & Simon Jameson acquired the 11-acre field next to their house in South Shropshire in the Redlake Valley.

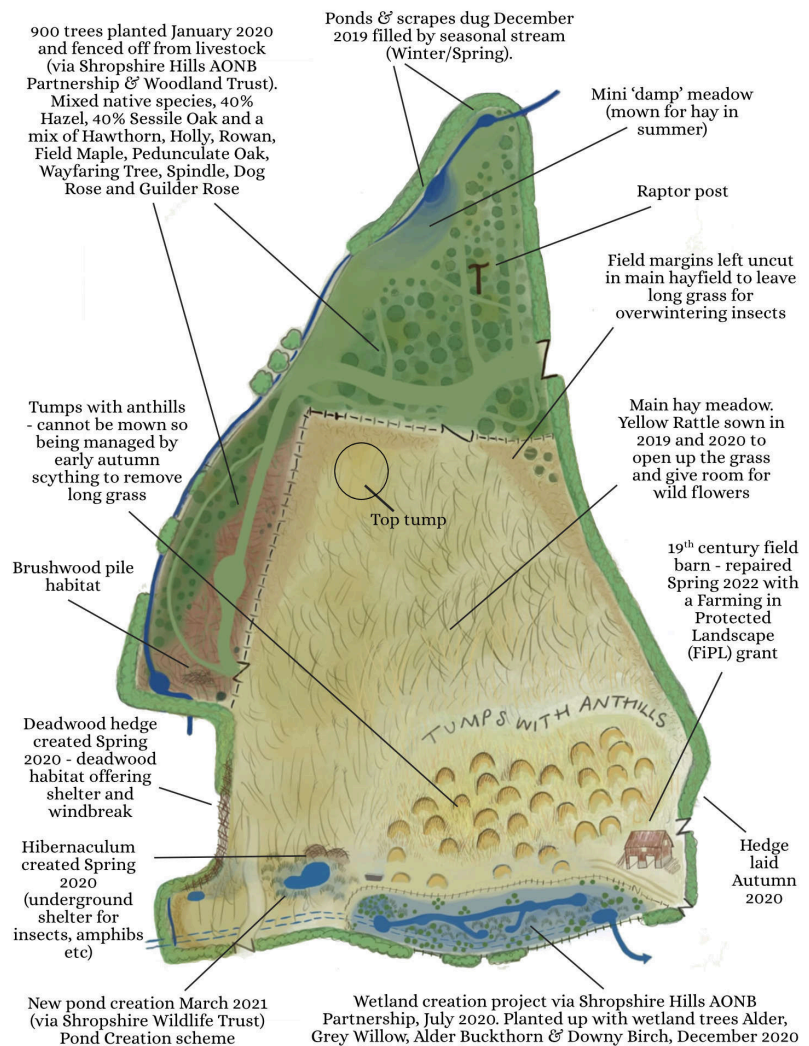
At a time of biodiversity crisis, they wanted to manage the field for nature. They had not been land owners or managers before, so the learning curve has been steep!

They have recreated wetland, made ponds and scrapes, started to manage the grassland as a wildflower meadow, created and laid hedgerows, planted 1000 trees and repaired the old field barn. Much of this work was done with the help of grant programmes administered via the Shropshire Hills National Landscape including FiPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes).

Grappling with Grass

Six acres of the field is now being managed as a traditional haymeadow with Yellow Rattle introduced in 2021. Sheep go on to graze after the hay cut until early December. Floral diversity is gradually increasing throughout.

The tumps (steep-sided hillocks) with their many active anthills cannot be mowed with a tractor, so these are now scythed and raked off in late summer. Harebells, Tormentil, Ladys Bedstraw, Birds Foot Trefoil, Betony, Yarrow and fine sedges and grasses seem to be growing well here and responding to this management.





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"So beautiful and good for you undertaking light management to have a wonderful wild/native flower meadow. You've put a lot of hard work in I'm sure but the most impressive and fabulous result"



Trees, hedgerows & dead hedges

900 trees were planted on the North and West side of the field in January 2020 (funded by the Woodland Trust) and after a very wet start managed to endure a long hot, dry spring with very few losses.

A native mix of trees was used, based around Sessile Oak and Hazel with the rest made up from a host of other tree/shrub species such as Field Maple, Hawthorn, Dog Rose, Guelder Rose, Pedunculate Oak, Wayfaring Tree, Silver Birch, Spindle and Dogwood. Wild Service saplings, Black Poplar, Crab Apple and Honeysuckle have been added since to increase native diversity still.

Existing hedgerows are being managed sympathetically. All are being "let up" currently prior to laying which will take place on small lengths over the next few winters.

Dead hedges have also been constructed to create extra woody habitat along fence lines.



Sharing the field

Stags Head field has been the venue for several arts workshops and informal walks/talks in recent years with the newly-repaired barn providing invaluable shelter in both rain and sun.



Pond & wetland creation

As part of the (then) Shropshire Hills AONB's Unmuddying the Waters project, in July 2020 wetland was (re)created at the bottom of the field by deculverting a large land drain and creating an overland watercourse with ponds and ditches. Wetland trees such as Alder and Willow were planted the following winter. A further larger pond was dug nearby via the Shropshire Pond Scheme (Shropshire Wildlife Trust) in March 2021.

Find out more about the project [here](#).