

| | 1930 1976-1993 Turfing out | | | HLS options 2006-16 | | Cutting rotation | July 2012 changes |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------|----------|--|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| North Marsh | Hay | reed | yes 1999 | HQ3 Maintenance of reedbeds 1.78ha | HQ6 Maintenance of Fen 2.82ha | 2-3 year | HQ3 to HQ7 Restoration of Fen |
| Middle Marsh | hay | shooting | | HQ6 Maintenance of Fen 3.80ha | | 3-6 year | |
| Mill Marsh | | sedge | | HQ6 Maintenance of Fen 3.13ha | | 3-6 year | |
| South Marsh | | sedge | | HQ7 Restoration of Fen 3.02ha | | 2-3 year | |
| Long Marsh | | reed | | HQ6 Maintenance of Fen 3.67ha (inc Rose Fen) | | 3-6 year | |
| Rose Marsh | | sedge | yes 1999 | HQ3 Maintenance of reedbeds 0.7ha | | 2-3 year | HQ3 to HQ7 Restoration of Fen |
| Sedge Marshes | fodder/litter | sedge | | Currently sedge | | | |
| Mill marsh West | | reed | | Currently Fen | | | |
| Fenside marsh | reed/sedge | reed | | Rough Fen | | | |
| Catfield broad marsh | | shooting | | Rough Fen | | | |
| North marsh south | | shooting | | Rough Fen | | | |

**Notes from meeting with [REDACTED]. Thursday 20th
November 2014**

[REDACTED] worked for [REDACTED] between 1976 and 1993 as general farm worker including cattle and marsh work. He carried out all the work on Catfield Fen units 11 & 3 which at the time were owned by the [REDACTED]. During that time he cut sedge and reed on the marshes as indicated on the attached map.

Site

He pointed out where the bomb holes in the marshes were near Church wood, from bombs dropped during WW11, which made 2m wide holes in the marsh. There were numerous smaller sluices to enable water levels on marshes to be kept at different heights while work was carried out on other marshes. The drains were all cleaned out by Polish refugees by hand during and after WW11. There were no subsidies and income was earned from selling excellent quality reed and sedge. There was also a farm shoot, shown in green on the map, where the management was to top marshes occasionally with a tractor and flail when conditions allowed.

Management

Reed and sedge beds were cut regularly to maintain quality.

After cutting reedbeds as close to ground as possible, he would burn bits of trash and any scrub. On occasions they would burn whole marshes in an attempt to restore good growth. After cutting, the sluice was opened to raise water levels before young growth started. They also topped up the water levels in the internal system from the external system in the summer time. He made a number of comments about [REDACTED] carrying out the sluice management.

Other comments included the many birds which fed on the insects thrived and how, after a water run-off issue from Ballcroft field which was in arable rotation, that the reed on North marsh grew strongly with very tall and thick reed and they cut many bundles which in turn increased income well above expectations.

Water flow across the surface of the marshes was essential but the quality of water was not an issue. In fact he made several comments about fertilizing marshes which he felt was beneficial.

Ditches

Historically flat bottomed boats (ex WW11) were used to transport reed & sedge from the marshes to the two staithe. One staithe (close to Rond entrance) stored sedge and the other (half way between Hubbard's cottage and Fen Cottages) reed ready for collection by thatchers. They also used a smaller boat to cart reed and sedge across marshes. The ditches were about 2.5meters wide and only deep enough for the flat bottomed boat. The sides of the ditches were mown annually by hand to allow access.

Hymacs were used to clean mud out of the ditches but the mud was spread onto the marsh surface ensuring any depressions were filled, so that the surface was level. When asked if foot drained were used, he said no, as water easily flowed over the surface.

The ditches across Great Fen were open and water easily accessed the ditch on the external side of the Rond.

Groundwater

He did not think the site was groundwater fed as water levels changed quickly after rainfall events.

Snipe marsh

When asked if he knew anything about Snipe marsh water levels, he said that the surface water from my land on Sharpe St and Summerhouse wood were the two sources of water. He doubted if groundwater entered the site. He also commented on how wet Snipe marsh was and how it was unsuitable for cattle. Snipe marsh was not cut for reed or sedge.



DATE: 27-11-14