

Before Photo 1 (Credit: Charlie Burrell):

Our old water-meadows, or 'laggs, had never been agriculturally productive, despite being drained for the purpose in Victorian times. When we released pigs in the Middle Block in 2004 they had a field day rooting in the wet soil.

After Photo 1 (Credit: Charlie Burrell):

Our restoration of 1.5 miles of the River Ardur has returned the flow of water from a steep-sided Victorian canal to its original floodplain. The land now acts like a natural sponge again, holding water and preventing flash floods downstream. Numerous associated shallow ponds, or scrapes, on the floodplain provide habitat for kingfishers, herons and other water-birds.

Before Photo 2: (Credit: Knepp archives)

The reconstructed Hammer Pond in summer 2004, a year after the first fields in the Southern Block were left fallow after we abandoned conventional farming.

After Photo 2: (Credit: Charlie Burrell)

Autumn 2017, fourteen years after being left fallow, the delineation of the fields is beginning to blur as hedges billow out and thorny scrub emerges. In the foreground an eruption of willow (native hybrid willow) provides habitat for purple emperor butterflies).

Dead Oak: (Credit: Charlie Burrell)

This old oak sat in the corner of an arable field, assaulted by ploughing and chemicals for fifty years. It began dying just as we began restoring the Repton park. Under the old regime we would have chopped it down without a thought. Now it is rich dead-wood habitat and a symbol of our change of heart.

A red deer: (Credit: Bill Brooks)

A native species, red deer were introduced to the project in 2009 when we judged the emergent vegetation was ready for some heavy hitting disturbance. Red deer break branches, dig up turf and de-bark trees.

Tamworth Pig: (Credit: Charlie Burrell)

Our Tamworth pigs create the same disturbance as the original wild boar. The first thing they did when released into the park was rootle along the verges – areas that, having never been ploughed, were rich in invertebrates and rhizomes.

Bat: (Credit: Ryan Greaves)

Thirteen out of the UK's seventeen bat species are now found at Knepp, feasting on our huge populations of insects. Bechstein's bat, a species associated with old-growth broad-leaved woodland, is rare throughout Europe.

Owls: (Credit: Ned Burrell)

All five UK owl species can now be found at Knepp, including little owls feasting on our burgeoning populations of dung beetles.