



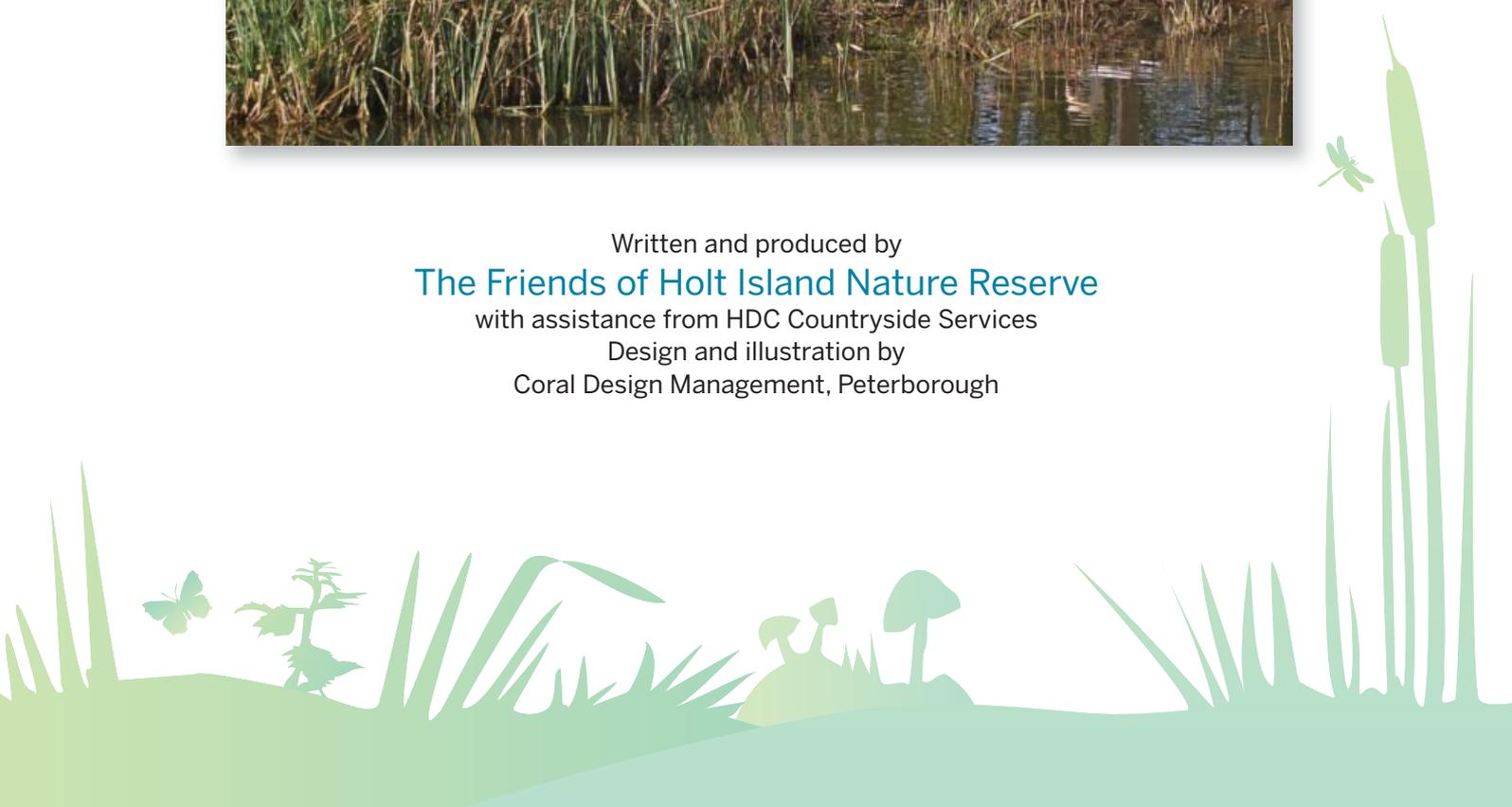
Friends of
Holt Island
Nature Reserve

Holt Island Nature Reserve EDUCATION PACK

For children aged 4–11 years



Written and produced by
The Friends of Holt Island Nature Reserve
with assistance from HDC Countryside Services
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HOLT ISLAND

*There is an island in our Slepe
That splits the Ouse's mudded deep
And in the midst the wild abounds
Within its willow-knotted grounds.*

*Warblers flirting in the reeds
Beneath the blackcaps' fluty creeds
Where dragonflies and damsels dance
In the osiered ambience.*

*Meadow sweetened, willow-herbed
Purple loosestrifed, undisturbed
Fox and muntjac languish here
Within the thicket's ecosphere.*

*A duckboard winds around the isle
That clasps this emerald jewel in style
Strung between the winding streams
The isle of all my wildest dreams.*

Christopher John Morgan
St Ives, November 2008



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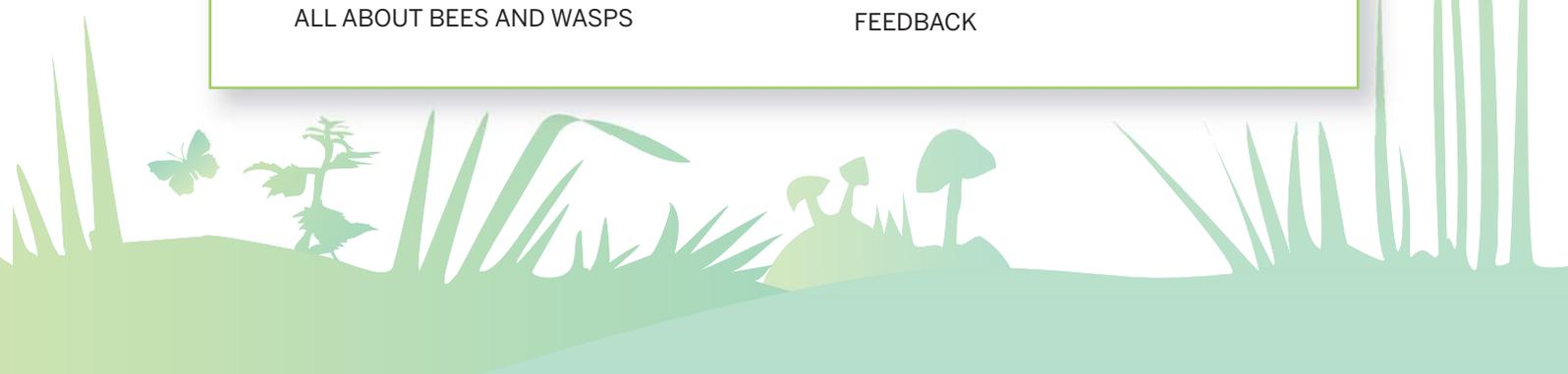
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Holt Island Nature Reserve EDUCATION PACK. Whether you are a teacher, scout, guide or any other youth group leader, our aim is to encourage you to bring children aged between 4 and 11 years old on to our Island and, through the projects and activities presented here, introduce them to the wonders of nature.

What is Holt Island Nature Reserve?

Holt Island is a beautiful, natural green oasis within walking distance of the centre of the town owned by Huntingdonshire District Council and managed by their Countryside Services Team. It is a rare example of wet woodland habitat, dominated by mature willow, ash and chestnut trees, and with reedbeds around the margins. It attracts a wide range of flora and fauna. In spring it is full of bird song from visiting warblers. Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, Garden and Willow Warblers provide a musical background of high notes from the trees and shrubs. Sedge and Reed Warblers chatter away with low scratchy



songs at double speed from the banks. In summer, stunning dragon and damselflies clatter and dash after aerial prey, and butterflies dance in the dappled sunlight. We have a resident dog fox and a family of muntjac. It is a special place.

We are lucky to have it and it is enjoyed by many – young mums needing somewhere for toddlers to test their legs, office workers on a lunch break, and people simply enjoying the peace and quiet and natural beauty. In addition, we are very aware that the Island reserve represents a wonderful educational opportunity, and it is this that we are particularly keen to promote through this pack.

How to use the pack

This pack has been compiled to make it easier for you to plan a visit and get the most out of what the Island has to offer, at any time of the

year. It contains over 60 pre-planned projects and activities and is packed with information both for teachers and children. You are invited to browse through the pages before a trip and to particularly notice the 'Teacher's pages'. These often include a RESOURCES footnote with useful websites for further information on a particular topic.

Once you have selected the project(s) you would like to undertake, you can photocopy the relevant pages from the ringbinder or you may prefer to print them out from the 'print ready' pdf of the Education Pack supplied on the CD-ROM.

How is the pack organised?

The content of the pack is varied. The first section establishes the historical perspective of St Ives and encourages children to see both the town and the Island in this context, and draw comparisons between then and now. A section on maps and map reading follows to help the children get a good grasp of where they are on the Island, and how to use grid references. The four seasons offer particular projects and so there are four sections with ideas and activities for spring, summer, autumn and winter. Finally, being located on an island on a river, we felt we should show children how our river 'works', and how lucky we are to have access to the wealth of wildlife it supports. Please note that throughout the pack, some projects have been included for indoor work in class.

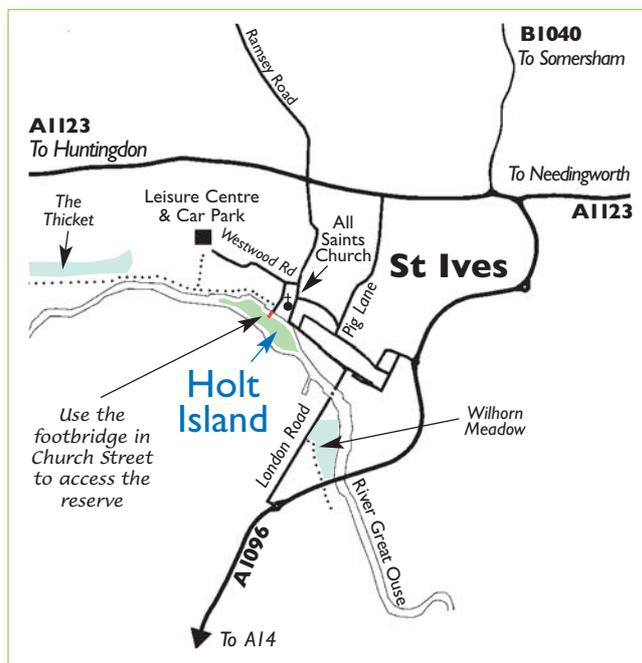
Extras

In addition to the pages you see here, you will also find extra material on the CD-ROM for you to use with some projects (this symbol  will indicate where this is relevant). The ringbinder also includes a SPOTTER GUIDE. This handy, all-colour identification guide includes illustrations of the most common minibeasts you will see on the Island, including damsel and dragonflies, butterflies, amphibians and reptiles, birds, mammals, fungi, flowers, reeds, sedges, grasses and trees. Take it with you whenever you visit!



Where is the Island?

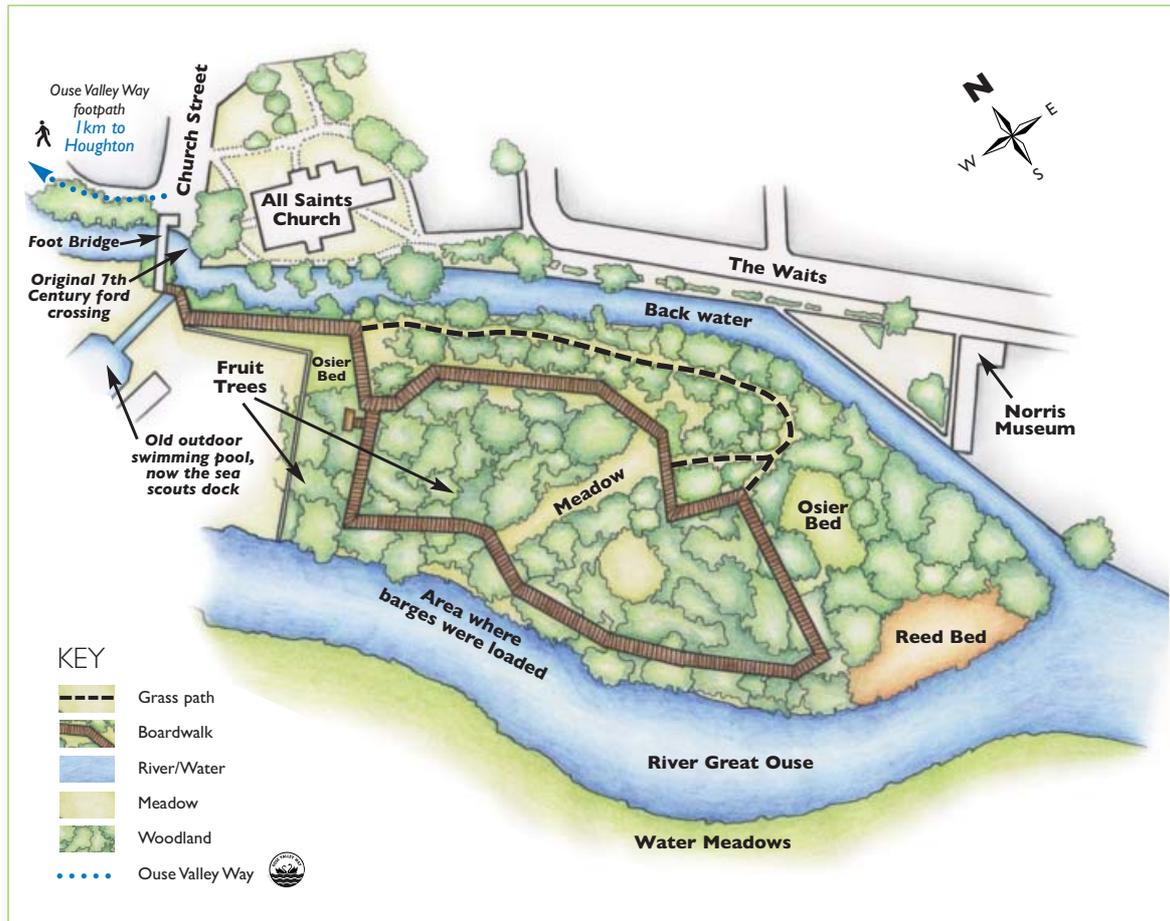
Holt Island Nature Reserve is located behind All Saints Parish Church at the end of The Waits in the town centre. The post code is PE27 6DG. It is accessed via a white footbridge in Church Road, St Ives. There is limited parking in Church Street just by the access bridge. Please have consideration for nearby residents when coming and going to the Island. The nearest public car park is Globe Place in West Street.



When can we go?

The Island is open to the public on weekends, including Bank Holidays, between April and September, normally from 10 am until 4 pm. If you visit at these times please bear in mind there will be others on the Island enjoying its peace and tranquillity. Should you wish to have the place to yourselves on a weekday at any time of year, you may borrow keys from either The Norris Museum on The Waits opposite the Island, or from One Leisure St Ives, next to The Burgess Hall at St Ivo School. A deposit will be required, and there are certain conditions you will be asked to note. These are that you will be responsible for your own safety and

that of the children during your visit (see RISK ASSESSMENTS); you should ensure the children stay on the boardwalk, grass path or central meadow; you should lock both gates



behind you as you enter, and when you leave; and ensure you have all the members of your party with you when you do leave! There are no toilet facilities on the reserve.

The Countryside Ranger organises work parties on the first Sunday and third Friday of each month throughout the year, and so it is best to avoid these dates when planning a visit. Please call HDC Countryside Services at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park to double check access on 01480 451568.

Who made the pack?

The pack has been designed and created by The Friends of Holt Island Nature Reserve, with the assistance of grant aid from COMMA (Community Aggregates Fund), and editorial input from the staff of HDC Countryside Services – see ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. If you are interested in becoming more closely associated with the reserve, please enquire about schools and group membership, and see the section ABOUT THE THE FRIENDS GROUP.

We hope you enjoy trying out the projects in the pack and your visit to our Island. Our wish is that the children you bring will not only learn something about the natural world, but also develop an interest in, and connect with, nature. Who knows, they then may become our future ambassadors for the environment that sustains us all – not a bad objective we think.

The Friends of Holt Island Nature Reserve, May 2012