



## Summary of The Real Halloween At Bradmoor Woods (West Acre, Swaffham) Norfolk, 26/7 October 2019

The Real Halloween is a family nature event run by Norfolk-based conservation charity the Fairyland Trust (see [www.fairylandtrust.org](http://www.fairylandtrust.org)), attended each year by several thousand visitors, and designed to introduce young children to nature through Workshops, games and other activities drawing on folklore and tradition.

It offers a more authentic screen-free and plastic-free nature-based celebration of autumn from before Halloween became a commercialised, sugar-fuelled horror-fest and is aimed at young children (3 – 8 yrs), their parents, carers, friends and relatives. It's set in the old native woodlands of Bradmoor Wood and takes place from early afternoon to after dusk.

*Visitors to the event in 2018 commented "Magical. The loveliest venue, brilliant entertainment" "Amazing ! a must do for every family once a year" and "Had just the best day today. Can't wait for the next one".*

The Fairyland Trust's Magical Nature Workshops appearing at The Real Halloween include:

Magic Wands (children learn about native trees by making a magic wand); Witches Owls (a story reveals the importance of Long-eared and Little Owls); Witches Bats (we find out why everybody needs bats); Wizard Training (fly, talk and walk like a Raven, Crow, Jackdaw and Rook); Witch Training (real herbs); and the drop-in workshops Witches Kitchens (make a brew, send a message); Hedgehog Houses (as it sounds) and Moon Calendars (create a Moon Calendar to tell the time with).

Sarah Wise, creator of the Fairyland Trust says "we use nature's folklore and natural history in making magical things as this is how learning sticks – while having a good time". As well as walks in the woods and all day story-telling, the event has its own pub (The Good Elf, with magical décor and real ale) and Café, and Fairyland Market with hand-made crafts, gifts and food stalls.

Magical characters include the Fairy King and Queen who are appearing in order to receive visitors in their woodland hut before their long midwinter sleep. Entertainment includes the musical duo Penny Less and the bands The Hew Hews on Saturday and Murphy's Lore on Sunday, as well as Captain Barnacle's Pirate Pantomime. The Halloween Games re-work old traditions using harvest vegetables, such as Vegeta-Boules, Parsnip-Skittles, Splat-a-Cat (no real cats involved), Conker Fishing and Shout-at-a-Sprout.

Pirate Panto



Animal Lantern Parade



The Real Halloween returns



Make A Magic Wand



Make a Hedgehog House



Hear A Unique Story



(all details are to be found at [www.fairylandtrust.org](http://www.fairylandtrust.org))

During the afternoon there are two open-entry competitions with prizes, one for creating Veg-o-Lanterns which rekindle the old rural traditions of Jack o Lanterns cut from root veg (before pumpkins got imported), and the other a more contemporary No-new Plastic Fancy Dress Competition in which points are won for home-made upcycled non-plastic costumes (adult and children's categories).



The event concludes with an extended Magical Ending. It begins as dusk envelops the site, with a telling of the Trust's unique Story of the Real Halloween, which unveils the original version of trick or treat in which humans leave out treats for the magical folk to stop them playing tricks, rather than the modern twist in which humans play tricks on one another. The story is performed by two internationally known professional story-tellers, Mike Dodsworth and Callum McGowan.

The Story is followed by everyone being able to join the Parade of Animal Lanterns, and bring Jam Jar lanterns (made in a Jam Jar workshop) on a trail through the woods. The parade wends its way back to the main lawn past partying witches and wizards, and everyone re-assembles for the Fire Show finale on the Main Lawn, where more food and drink is available.



Bradmoor Woods is a private woodland which is also part of a new rewilding project and lies just off the A47 between Kings Lynn and Swaffham. The event raises funds for the nature-engagement work of the Fairyland Trust around the UK throughout the year. Admission is by ticket only (bookable along with some of the workshops at [www.fairylandtrust.org](http://www.fairylandtrust.org)) £8.50 per person (£32 family of 4, under 3s go free) and the many activities are free or have a small charge. Parking is £1. (On the day tickets are £10 at the gate). Sorry, no dogs.