



## PRESERVING THE FLORA IN THE CHURCHYARD

An opportunity to conserve plants that populated undisturbed Norfolk meadowland for hundreds of years.

Since the 12th century, St Andrew's churchyard has remained largely untouched beyond the digging of graves. Never ploughed and never artificially fertilised, it has become an island meadow containing now scarce plants which were once common across the Norfolk countryside.

When Lucy Seely, Wilder Community Officer at Norfolk Wildlife Trust, walked the churchyard on 21<sup>st</sup> April, we were in for some nice surprises. Pignut, one of the top indicators of undisturbed ancient meadow plants found in Norfolk churchyards, rarely seen 'Town Hall Clock' (Moschatel) and Dog's Mercury, were all identified. On Lucy's advice we marked out three areas of the churchyard for a conservation mowing programme, to encourage these and other native Norfolk plants to emerge and propagate.



Pignut



'Town Hall Clock'



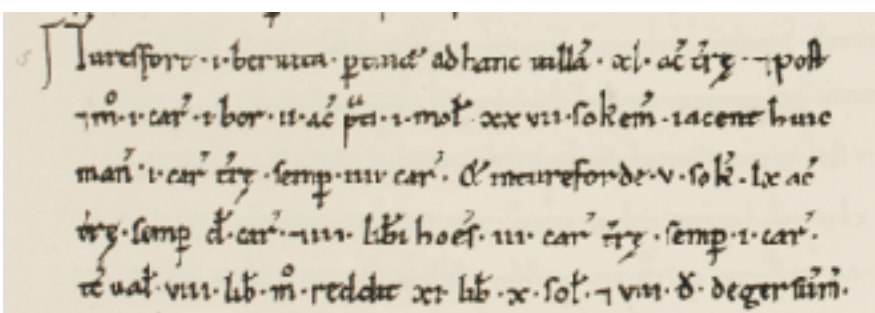
Dog's Mercury

'Town Hall Clock' has tiny cube shaped flowers with a 'clock face' on 4 sides. In WW2 Norfolk folk joked that Spitfire pilots used the top face to tell the time as they came into land!

## A BIT OF HISTORY

Continuing our exploration into the history of the church and the land around, we've been delving into the 1086 Domesday Book.

Thursford, recorded as Tursforda, was a small stable manor held by William de Warenne. William, the first Earl of Surrey, is one of the few known companions of William the Conqueror who fought in the battle of Hastings. It had a population of 32 freemen and one smallholder; two ploughs, one owned by William de Warenne and the other by the smallholder; a two acre meadow (with pignut growing back then?) and a mill. In 1066 the annual value to lord was 8 pounds. By 1086 the value increased to 11 pounds 10 shillings. We had to wait around 30 years until the church was first built but Thursford was on the rise!



"Tursforda" is Old English for the "ford of a giant or demon" a place that already sounded ancient and mythic back in 1086. 940 years later, ancient and maybe mythic is perhaps still a good description of many of us in Thursford!