

## CHARCRIT BOONSOM: COMMUNITY CHAMPION CASE STUDY

Charcrit (known as Lang), is a Mosaic Community Champion and volunteer Ranger with the Broads Authority. This is his story before and during his involvement with the Campaign for National Parks' Mosaic project.



### Life before coming to the UK

I have always loved the outdoors. Where I grew up, I was surrounded by nature, right next to three borders, Thailand, Burma and Laos - 'The Golden Triangle'. In the 1970s and 80s the landscape was completely changed by development for tourism and I become a guide for people trekking in the mountains. However, locally, we lost beautiful trees, ferns and insect habitat. In 1981 I attended Chiang Rai Agriculture College to study Horticulture.

### Living and working in Great Yarmouth

Living in Great Yarmouth is quiet, but the surrounding countryside is so beautiful. This is now my home. I had been working in Norwich for 16 years before my wife and I decided to start our own restaurant business. After much thinking and looking for a site I found a place just right next to my doorstep and we named our takeaway Thai Cottage.

### My journey with Mosaic

I was told about the Campaign for National Parks' Mosaic project by a good friend of mine, who is also a Community Champion. My first experience was going to the Picnic in the Park at Carys Meadow in Norwich and watching the children learning all about the insects and bugs in the water. Outdoor activity is fun and suitable for a family day out. My granddaughter very much enjoyed pond dipping. Then we made another family trip to How Hill, one of the most beautiful parts of the Broads.

I am a keen photographer and I see the opportunity to bring beautiful countryside images to other people. The Broads is different from other of National Parks, as you have to really look into it and then you will see the many things it has to offer.

### **Why you decided to become a volunteer Ranger**

I like well-managed countryside and waterways. Toward the end of our How Hill trip our group went to bird hide, I looked through the little window and I saw birds at far end. When I looked closer, I could see crystal clear water which doesn't happen by chance. I thought that if I get the chance, I would like to protect and look after this for future generations. At the end of the trip, Nick Sanderson (a Broads Authority Ranger) gave me a recruitment form to be an Assistant Countryside Ranger, which I thought about and then completed.

I then trained and qualified a year later. I am currently based at Lound Lake near Yarmouth.

### **What you have got out of the Mosaic project?**

Mosaic gives me an opportunity to meet other people, join groups to explore the countryside, share my love and passion for the outdoors and learn new skills in looking after nature.

Last summer, I was helping with a school outdoor activity as an educational volunteer. That was fantastic – when you see children enjoying nature and the countryside.