

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

Oct – Dec 2018



Gunton Wood



The unusually mild and dry weather between October and December meant that we didn't have to do quite so much path chipping as we normally do at this time of year, so we were able to get on with a lot of other work that was outstanding.

We finished mowing and raking the wild flower meadow, and the hedge dividing it from the PwH field was trimmed. The petrol-driven hedge cutter is heavy to use and difficult to hold up when the hedge is at full height, so David decided to attach the flat trailer to the tractor and then stand on it while Ivor drove the tractor slowly forward – this worked fairly well, so long as Ivor didn't stop & start too quickly!!

We suggested to PwH that we would like to "straighten-up" the hedge at the top of Moore's Lane, so that it would continue in a straight line from the end of the wild flower meadow through the PwH field to the main path. After they had come down to see exactly what we were proposing,

they were quite happy for us to continue. The new hedge has now been created and willows have been planted within it.

Most of the fence rails that used to line the paths have gradually been removed, but there are still a few areas where we need fences, and several of those had become rotten. The fencing gang have been very busy repairing and/or replacing where necessary. The B&B area and the secret garden both needed attention, as well as some of the very important fencing around the Wild Wood. Also a couple of areas where we need to protect special trees and snowdrops now have good solid new railings. Mark volunteered to take control of the bird boxes and, with Bob's help, has spent several work parties cleaning, repairing and/or replacing all the bird boxes. He has also numbered them all and updated the record sheets, so the annual survey should be a bit easier next time. Greg made two new bat boxes which have been put up in the Moore's Lane area. The results are available on our website under the "Downloads" tab.



One major project in November was the re-surfacing of the main path. We had noticed that the surface on the path from the pond down to PwH did not get as much mud build-up as the stretch from the main gate to the pond and asked the contractor if he could lay the same top surface onto the main path. We were fortunate in receiving some "bags of help" money from Tesco and so the new surface has now been installed and we wait to see, when winter finally arrives, whether or not our plan will work – fingers crossed!

The Saturday gang have been busy in Gunton Wood and down the path to PwH, clearing trees that were identified in the tree inspection as being unsafe. Some trees had to be completely removed and others had to have some branches removed. One large tree near the bottom of the PwH path, which had fallen from the ditch into the farmer's field, was cut up into long sections to be used as path edging. Anglian Water were

working down there at the time, and kindly used their digger to shift the very large logs from the field onto the main path, so we could then get them up to the wood where they were needed. All the Saturday work means that we have plenty of logs available for new path edging, so a lot of time has been spent in removing old rotten logs and replacing them with new ones. We try to use larger logs these days, so they don't rot through so quickly and do not move about so much. This is particularly relevant on the paths near to the pond, because we have quite often found logs picked up from the paths and thrown into the pond - the new logs would need a gang of hefty men to get them up and over the fence! We had noticed that one side of the ditch was collapsing and encroaching onto a young oak tree, so one week some of the men set about strengthening the side with 19 bags of sand & cement and some small paving slabs. We now need some substantial rain to see if the problem has been fixed.





The ladies have transplanted quite a lot of foxgloves from the nursery, where they had been maturing, into the B&B area. Protective netting was used to stop rabbits and deer from chewing them until they become established. Waveney Norse had given us a sack of daffodil bulbs, so the ladies have planted them out into various places around the wood. Towards the end of the year we started chipping the paths. WN let us know they would be delivering several loads of new chippings, so we shifted all the old chippings, which had started to rot, and used them to mulch around lots of young trees. For two or three weeks we had the tractor and trailer out, and with lots of wheelbarrows as well, we managed to chip the majority of the paths. On two of the work parties a group of youngsters from what was the Morton Rd. Youth Club, came along to help with the chipping, which was a real treat to have youngsters helping out. Also, as is usual during the school holidays, Will came along with

his happy smiling face and bags of enthusiasm – always a welcome addition to the work party.

And finally, the annual tradition of mince pies at the first work party in December was upheld in memory of June Sedgley, one of the founder members of the group, who thought it would be nice to have something special with the morning coffee at Christmas. From this we progressed into biscuits every Thursday, then into cakes on special occasions. Now each week hot sausage rolls, cheese scones and/or cakes are provided by work party members when it is their birthday – thank you June!!



Foxburrow Wood

The Saturday gang have been busy with the tree inspection work allocated to GWCP, which is now complete. They have also dealt with one tree that was not cleared by Waveney Norse after the 2017 inspection. WN still have to do all the work allocated to them as a result of 2018 inspection.

Gunton Warren Project –John Knights, Volunteer Warden.

“2018 carried on with the progress at Gunton Warren that had been achieved in the previous years. We started off by cutting back the gorse on the mid-patches under the guidance of Nick Blacker, in the face of the full force of the Beast From The East. The beach enclosures and the wooden steps were repaired, various signs were erected around the site warning the public of adder activity, and later in the year a contractor was on-site grubbing up the remaining bamboo on the top heath. Thanks to all who helped last year and hoping 2019 will be as productive and enjoyable.”

Social Events

Gunton Park Residents Autumn Litter Pick – Saturday September 29th 2018

On the morning of Saturday 29th September GPRA organised the annual Autumn Litter Pick. About 30 people turned out and collected many bags of rubbish before enjoying tea/coffee and a choice of hot cheesy or sausage rolls all provided by Tesco - lovely. Followed by a free raffle, also provided by Tesco.



Tree Inspection 2018 – Monday 1st October

GWCP had its annual tree inspection, attended by 5 GWCP members and conducted by Robert Slarke from the Waveney Norse Arboricultural team. We covered Gunton Wood, the green belt alongside Gainsborough Drive and Foxburrow Wood. Once more, we have a lot of work to do in Gunton Wood, removing or reducing trees. Fortunately, very little was needed for Foxburrow Wood or in the green belt. Waveney Norse will undertake the work that is too large for us, but there was still quite a lot for us to do. The full report is available from our website under the "Downloads" tab.

British Red Cross First Aid Course – Thursday November 15th 2018

Ten members of our work group signed up for a 2-hour first aid refresher course held in the church annex. Everyone on the course felt it to be extremely useful so we may make this an annual event.

Bury St Edmund's Christmas Craft Fayre – Saturday Nov 24th 2018

A full coach of 55 passengers set off from Gunton Church Lane well on time for our trip to Bury. We arrived on time for our allocated slot of 11.30am. We were advised that the coach would leave at 4.30pm sharp and we had to be at the dispatch point at 4.15pm. The weather was kind to us once again sunny on our journey over but cloudy in Bury, but with the light wind it seemed very cold. We then set off in our own groups to enjoy the delights of the Fayre. There were plenty of stalls in all locations throughout the Town. Food outlets were plentiful as were the craft stalls and seasonal events. Both the Cathedral and St Mary's Church had Carol concerts with teas and mince pies available. There was also the weekly market in the town centre. The only down side was that there were so many people that it was extremely difficult to walk around and browse the stalls. Our thanks to Rosemary for her organisation and our coach driver Ken.

Snape Christmas Show – Saturday Dec 8th 2018

It was a fine but windy day for a change. 51 members and friends set off on time at 10.30am for our matinee performance by the Co-op Juniors Theatre Company for the traditional story 'The Nutcracker' written by German author E.T.A.Hoffman. In 1882 the Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky along with choreographers Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov turned the story into the ballet 'The Nutcracker'. The show was adapted for the Juniors with a mix of our traditional Christmas songs. The whole party enjoyed the show. We then travelled by coach home to arrive back at Gunton Church Lane at approximately 5.30 pm.



Future Events –

GWCP Annual Workers Meal – Thursday Jan 24th

A dinner for our regular woodland workers at the Victoria Hotel in Kirkley Cliff Road. Arrive from 7pm to be seated by 7.30pm. The main bar will be closed due to refurbishment but there will be an alternate bar in the smaller conference room which is located near to the restaurant, so hopefully won't cause too much disruption.

22nd AGM – Wednesday April 17th 2019

All members and friends are warmly invited to attend our 22nd AGM to be held on Wednesday 17th April 2019 at St. Benedict's Church Hall, Hollingsworth Road. Refreshments will be served from 7 pm and the meeting starts at 7.30 pm. There will be an illustrated talk by Edwina Beaumont entitled "Local Biodiversity". Minutes of previous year's AGMs are available from the "Downloads" tab on the GWCP website.

Derbyshire – Friday May 24th to Monday May 27th 2019

Balances to be paid by March 1st please. This is now full but we do have a waiting list. A 3 night - 4 day trip to Derbyshire through Belle Coaches Holidays. Staying at the Hallmark Derby Mickleover Court hotel. The cost is £285pp with a single room supplement of £60pp.

Snape Christmas Show – Saturday 7th December, 2019

More details and flyers will be available on our website.

If you are interested in any of the above events please contact Rosemary or David by phone on 01502-515944 or by email to info@guntonwoodland.org.uk. More details and flyers are available on our website.

Look Out For – by Janet Field

In previous Newsletters we have featured items on the smaller inhabitants of Gunton Wood. For a while now we have been considering installing a bug hotel. So when some pallets became available we took the opportunity to construct one. It was several work party sessions before we began as we needed to gather many items first. After levelling the site the pallets were put on top of each other and waterproofed with felt on the top layer.



Fir cones had been collected from Scots pine, ideal for housing ladybirds and other tiny creatures. Lots of canes were carefully cut to size and inserted between the timbers of the pallets, providing winter homes for wild bees and various pollinators. Old roof tiles were put into the base, allowing slugs, snails, lizards, frogs and newts find a safe haven. Straw was stuffed in there as well as in pots higher up. All this in an endeavour to attract more tiny occupants.

In Gunton Wood we always try to conserve what we have whilst also being a local nature reserve. It was disappointing therefore to find that the fir cones and cut canes had become an attraction and most of them quickly disappeared. Such a pity as we had all worked so hard to provide a suitable safe place for these very important members of the woodland community.

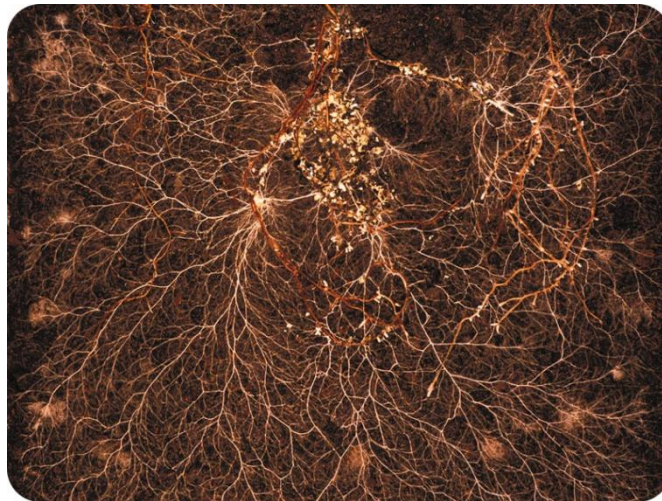
Nature Notes Life Saving Fungi (Barry Shimmiel)

Tucked away in the Kent Science Park near Sittingbourne is a laboratory working in the field of soil chemistry. For the last 10 years Plantworks have been making a product which has a very simple name Plantgrow although the real name of this material is anything but simple. It is difficult to say and even more difficult to spell, Mycorrhizal Fungi. Plantworks is the only bulk producer of MF in the UK and it is still the only soil treatment that has been granted a license by the Royal Horticultural Society as one of the most important ingredients you should use to ensure planting success.

Since the dawn of time, 500 million years ago, when plants were just beginning to colonise our planet, MF was always there living in a very special (symbiotic) relationship between soil and plants. MF spores attach themselves to the plant's roots, take food from the plant in the form of carbohydrates, and use this to form a mycelium, a mass of branching threads that capture water and nutrients from far away and then bring them back to the roots. One sugar cube size piece of soil can have up to 7 metres of these threads and a 100 year old oak tree would have sufficient to circumnavigate the globe!

So next time you come back from the nursery with a plant, shrub or tree to transfer from pot to garden remember that it takes time for the roots to find enough nutrients and water to support the top growth. In fact it can take up to 3 years before naturally occurring MF becomes fully established in the root ball. However, a light dusting of Plantgrow in the planting hole will make the plant / fungus bond inevitable and colonisation will occur in 2 to 4 weeks. No wonder the RHS is so supportive of its use.

One word of caution. It does not work on brassicas as their roots have a natural fungicide that prevents MF colonisation.



Mycorrhizal Fungi