

A Message from the Chairman (David Briggs)

Hello everyone.

We are still under somewhat difficult situations regarding the COVID-19 Virus. Although we are allowed to do more and more things that we all have taken for granted in life, it is still hard for some of us.

As we all miss working in the wood and meeting up for our weekly work parties we have been in touch in various ways. The wood has looked very different over the last months. The growth has been extensive with the usual plants taking giant stands amongst the trees. The number of people walking the wood has increased dramatically judged by the number of cars parked in the road up to the wood. It has been a very popular place to take their exercise.



We have managed to finish the last job we did before Lockdown, which was replacing Vinnies Bridge. We had got the main structure in, but then had to stop work.

The short piece of fence beside the bridge was left as a gap which was a hazard and one could walk into the ditch. This fence has now been replaced.

There have been one or two incidents in the wood and surrounding areas including large gatherings at night time and during the day and some arson. The Police quickly responded at times when needed.

We have now started small trial WP's, limited in numbers, doing some tasks around the wood. We have had to limit the small groups working to a max of 6 people in each area, keeping socially distant of course. The number of groups during the first few trial weeks was 3. These included cutting back paths, clearing the B&B area and clearing the pond of debris and weed. The wood is now in need of some loving care from us all.

It is hoped that it won't be long before we can all once again come along on a Thursday morning to meet and greet and work together, with our usual tea/coffee and of course cakes.



Events.

We have provisionally started to organise a holiday trip for May 10th – 14th 2021. We thought about returning to the lovely hotel in Cumbria that we used when going to the Lake District in 2018 but using different day out venues.

If you are interested and would like to go on the list please contact Rosemary on 01502 515944 or email on rosemarybriggs.65@icloud.com who will then send you details.

A message from Snape Maltings.

The Cats show recently advertised for May 2020 will now not go ahead until May 2021. Also, the Christmas Spectacular for December 2020 will not be held this year but will be back for December 2021.

What to look out for - by Janet Field

“There is usually lots of colour in Gunton wood mostly through tree blossom, autumn leaves and wild flowers. However some of the berries one observes are exceedingly dangerous if eaten by humans. Often seen poking straight out of the ground is Arum Maculatum, otherwise known as cuckoo pint or lords and ladies. This plant fruits in July/August with bright red berries surrounding its stem - but beware - a child eating these berries could die within 12 hours. Another plant to avoid is the commonly known Deadly Nightshade - and it is deadly - being one of our most poisonous plants. Its berries form inside the drooping bulb-shaped purple flowers and are green at first, then changing to a shiny black during June to September. This plant, sometimes called Bella Donna, contains alkaloids which attack the nervous system.



As well as berries from plants some trees also produce them, notably the holly which attracts pigeons, blackbirds and others to its shiny red fruit. But not for humans!

So enjoy your walks through the wood and keep the youngsters safe by pointing out its hidden dangers.”

Nature Notes *Who's a bird brain?* (Barry Shimmield)



Three weeks ago we were delighted to see a dozen or so swifts display their aerobatic skills feeding on insects that had just risen above the trees at the end of Gunton Church Lane following a brief rain shower. Years ago they were regular visitors but in much greater numbers then. With a body mass the same as an AA battery how do these amazing creatures manage to travel all the way from sub-Saharan Africa? It is now thought that they have two independent navigation systems. The first is an ability to feel the earth's magnetic field using special proteins in their eyes which provide them with a built-in compass. The second method uses their unbelievably clever pea sized brain. This is packed full of several billion neurons, a miracle of miniaturisation. They produce wonderfully accurate clock and compass algorithms that enable the bird to navigate by using the sun by day and the stars by night to make the 7000 mile journey to a mud nest that they had built the year before, perhaps in the eaves of an old barn.

So the next time someone calls you a “bird-brain” you should treat it as a compliment, not an insult.

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