

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

March – April 2015



Gunton Wood



In the last two months we've had really good numbers at the work parties and have therefore been able to achieve quite a lot.

The bee and butterfly area (aka 'Wally's B&B') has been planted with crab apple, elder, hawthorn and wild rose and the grass seed that John M. scattered along the old path is shooting nicely, so the path has almost disappeared now. The wild flowers that were bought with a donation from Wally, have been re-potted and are in the nursery waiting to be planted out when they're big enough. The primroses in that area have been really magnificent this year and there were also quite a lot of fritillaries, including one white one.

The snowdrops are finished now, so some of the ladies have been

splitting the large clumps ready for next year. There is already a really good covering of bluebell foliage and so we look forward to a lovely display over the next few weeks.

The annual clearing of alexanders took several weeks to complete, and is now finished. If possible, we try to keep them under control before they flower and seed, so that they don't take over the wood. They will not be completely eradicated from the wood, but they are quite prolific and their dominance can be seen along many roadsides and very close to home in Hubbard's Loke.



Waveney Norse reduced the height of a dead sycamore and we removed some other dead ones in an area to the south of the church. We then planted some of the 420 free trees, that we received from the Woodland Trust, in the area that had been cleared. Most of the planting was done during the school holidays and we were pleased that Terry's grandson Oscar and our youngest member Max came along to help. Some of the logs from the dead sycamores were used to replace rotten ones in Woodhenge and some were used to create more seats at the coffee area. We also had to fix the "men's railing" that gave way under their collective weight (too many cakes perhaps!).

Some of the more mature trees and shrubs from the nursery were planted along the path leading into the farmer's field. The weeds were cleared from around each one and chippings spread around, to help retain moisture and stop the weeds from choking them.

Some of us spent two Thursdays helping children from the school to plant trees in the burial park. It was a real pleasure working with the youngsters (aged 4 and 5), who each planted a tree and a stake was inserted bearing their name.

A team of men cleared the railway path, using our motorised hedge cutter and lawn mower. It should now be accessible again for dog walkers and ramblers, but will probably need trimming during the summer.

The stag beetle log pile has been finished and a sturdy fence built around it. We will plant out some of the hawthorns from the nursery to form a hedge round the fence. This will hopefully protect the log pile and create some low cover for small birds.



We had a meeting with Pleasurewood Hills concerning sponsorship and were very pleased to receive a cheque for £750 from the manager Liam Holmes and Woody Bear, who came along at coffee time for the presentation. We are very grateful to PwH for their continued support.

At the last work party in April, a team of men went down to Pleasurewood Hills entrance to remove some trees that Liam was concerned were in danger of collapsing onto the drive. The team worked really well and had the job finished by the end of the morning. It was a good chance for us to show our thanks to PwH in a practical way.



Brian Channing (1937 - 2015)

It is with much regret that we have to inform you of the loss of one of the Founding Members of GWCP. In 1997 Brian Channing was very much involved in helping to establish the framework of GWCP using the experience he had gained in carrying out similar work in Foxburrow Wood on behalf of Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Benjamin Britten School. He served on the Committee of GWCP for 8 years and was responsible for organising many successful outings for the group. As an accomplished yachtsman he was always ready to share his passion for the sport with other members of the Group. Brian was a great team player, he seldom missed a work party and his quiet, warm approach to life will be sadly missed by all his friends. Brian was suddenly taken ill just before the Easter Holiday and he passed away peacefully at home on Sunday 5th April. We send our deepest sympathy to Jackie, Caroline, Anna and to all the family in their loss.



Social Events

AGM - Wednesday March 18th

So it is 19 years since Barry first started putting together the plans for Gunton Woodland Community Project. It has come a long way since those first days. Our membership has grown from 40 to well over 200 households. The meeting was attended by 40 members including Cllr Steven Ardley and Cllr Mary Rudd. Our guest speaker was Mr Fred Willis who gave a talk on the ups and downs of bee keeping. He enlightened us with facts about the working hive and its inhabitants. Their social life was most entertaining. The accounts were presented and showed a small surplus for the year. The existing committee were all willing to stand once again and, as there were no new nominations, were duly elected. Updates on the various projects outside GWCP were presented. The long term work plan for both Gunton Wood and Foxburrow Wood was discussed. The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Spring Litter Pick in association with the Gunton Park Residents Association - Saturday April 18th

The weather was kind this year and 28 members attended and were given a free raffle ticket for coming along to the litter pick. The raffle prizes were kindly given by Pleasurewood Hills and Tesco Store, together with the refreshments which included Hot Cross buns. Woody Bear came along to cheer us on and draw the raffle. 30 sacks of rubbish were collected over the wide area stretching from the A12 Foxburrow Wood through to Leisure Way and onto the surrounding meadows.



The pictures show Woody Bear with the team and a picture of the pile of rubbish. It is surprising the amount of litter that accumulates in the course of just a few months.



Framlingham Castle & Shawsgate Vineyard - Thursday June 18th

A day trip has been organised to the following venues on Thursday 18th June 2015. The coach will leave Gunton Church at 8.30am sharp to arrive at Framlingham Castle at 10am. The castle opens at 10am and we will have plenty of time to explore the castle, the wall walk, the exhibition and the shop. There are limited numbers of free audio guides available on a first come first served basis. NB. The entrance is free to English Heritage Members.

After visiting the castle we have organised an optional fork buffet from 12.30 to 2pm, at a cost of £7, in the Castle Inn pub next door to the castle. They will provide a function room for us or if sunny we could use the courtyard.

Buffet - Sliced Suffolk Ham, Sliced Poached Salmon : Mixed Salads, Hot New Potatoes : Homemade sausage rolls : Cheese Board - Cheddar, Stilton, Brie : Homemade cheesecakes : Tea and Coffee.

The coach will pick us up at 2pm outside the Castle Inn pub and drive us the 1.5 miles to the vineyard where we will be split into two groups, each group will be given a tour of the vineyard (approx 45 mins.), a brief tour of the winery, a chat and a tasting of 5 different wines in the marquee plus time to visit the shop before boarding the coach at 4.45pm.

If you are interested please contact John or Mo Dickerson or any committee member or email info@guntonwoodland.org.uk.

(* If you ARE NOT an English Heritage member, the cost of the trip is £39 pp or £32 if lunch is not required.

(* If you ARE an English Heritage member, the cost is £33.50 or £26.50 if lunch is not required.

Foxburrow Wood

We finally got round to thinning out the self seeded oaks in Foxburrow Wood at the Gunton Church Lane entrance, in the hope that the ones remaining will have a better chance of survival. One was selected to be given to the church for use as a Prayer Tree.

We worked two Saturdays on a fallen beech that had leaned onto a large ash and pushed it towards the houses in Crome Walk. It looked as though it had been like this for many years and had not been spotted. The beech was across the stream, so it took two sessions to cut and remove it and make good the ash. Hopefully the ash will survive the dreaded Die Back disease. On the day of the litter pick, Colin cut up a fallen tree, re-stoned the steps and swept the boardwalks.

Gunton Woodland Burial Park - Barry Shimmield

For the 3rd Community Tree Plant on 14th March, 55 volunteers attended and, although the wind-chill factor started off high, conditions improved during the morning. A total of 960 trees including some Holm Oak and Yew, a mixture of moisture loving Willow, Alder, Aspen and Guelder Rose in "wet" areas and another mixture of Rowan, Bird Cherry and Crab Apple were planted in infill locations. Everyone cheered when the last tree was tucked away and Barry warmly congratulated all the volunteers as well as the hard working ladies dispensing refreshments in the Church Annexe. This completed the main planting programme of 5500 trees agreed with the Forestry Commission, and we were pleasantly surprised when the FC sent us their Woodland Creation Grant payment cheque within 48 hours of receiving our Claim Form, surely a record for a Government Agency!



This left a further 1550 "free" trees supplied by TCV under their nationwide "Big Tree Plant Scheme" and over the following 4 weeks these were also planted on roadside, glade and car park edges and on the embankment. Due to lack of rain, they were watered in with the help of a 12-carboy-water-bowser rigged up by Colin Fitt. In addition, 3 separate sessions were arranged with Gunton Primary School when 80 Reception and Nursery children thoroughly enjoyed planting Hazel shrubs, each with their name added to the stake so that they could return regularly to watch it develop and give it a very welcome drink of water.

There is still much to do and attention now turns towards completing the civil works including road and car park surfacing and the installation of gates and fencing.



Nature Reserve - Ray Adcock, SWT Warden

"Throughout January and February we continued work on the copse by the main entrance. It turned out to be a much larger job than anticipated. The canopy was heavily covered with brambles and it required a great deal of effort to dislodge them. We left the area now to see how it grows and if further work is required in the autumn. We also cleared the copse on the meadow of brambles which was another very manual job. We just finished the work before the start of the bird breeding season although we have been left with a mountain of brambles. We have also cleared the brambles on the roadside of the meadow from the entrance to Pleasurewood Hills up to the roundabout to make it easier to collect the rubbish dropped by walkers going to Pleasurewood Hills. The road from the roundabout to the entrance to the Pleasure Park is increasingly becoming a dumping area for rubbish on both sides of the road. It seems that people are buying food in Tesco, driving to Leisure Way and disposing of the packing, cans, etc on the road or throwing bags into the Nature Reserve. This is added to daily by the gloves and paper towels from the Filling Station. We have given the paths on the Nature Reserve the first cut of the season. Matt has supplied some hazels which have been planted in the area by the main entrance that was cleared two years ago."

Gunton Warren Project - Dave Boyle Volunteer Warden.

"Jan - Apr report. The early year tasks were to remove and burn Japanese Knotweed which was completed by all volunteers and the latter part completed by a machine. The area is now clear and it is hoped that the spring will be opened up and hopefully reed will be introduced and the area made to encourage waders. The shingle fencing was damaged by a Friday night rave party, but has now been repaired and hopefully not damaged again. The Bamboo along the beach by the Holm-oak entrance is now being removed, about half has been removed and burnt and that project is on-going. Bob Holder has taken on the task of preserving the wood signs and we are in the process of starting a reptile and butterfly survey, which Gil Drake and John Knights will be involved in, and I thank them all for their help. This will be my last report as I have decided to concentrate my volunteering on the other SWT site that I am involved in, so I have handed back the role of work party warden to Matt Gooch, I have enjoyed my time at Gunton and would also like to thank all at Gunton Woods for allowing me to report in their newsletter.. Good luck to all and thank you."

