

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

September – October 2016



Gunton Wood

September and October have been very busy months and, with large numbers of workers turning up, we have achieved a lot of good work.

The wildflower meadow and the B&B area have been cut and raked and the hedge along the PwH field has been trimmed.



We have had two loads of chippings delivered, so lots of people have been working on the paths. We were very fortunate to have a tractor donated to us by Dr. Davies from Sudbury, which has already been put to good use, transporting chippings down to Moore's Lane. David was given the honour of driving it on its first appearance, but the next week he stepped aside to let Marion have a go – there are always plenty of people willing to drive!



Some of us have been clearing leaves from the main path to try and preserve the new surface as it was becoming obvious that wet leaves which were being trodden down were starting to create mud. A lot of money and effort had been spent earlier in the year, laying a new surface to try and stop mud accumulating, so we thought we needed to stop the build up – time will tell if we have been successful.

There was quite a lot of work identified in the annual tree inspection, which has now been started. Several dead elms have been removed as well as an ash that was threatening to fall onto Gunton Church Lane. Peter Farrington asked if we could coppice the hazels which were overgrowing the fence at the back of his garden. Peter and his daughter Lexi came along to give a hand with the work and Lexi kindly baked some lovely cookies for us to have at coffee time. The resulting wood has been put to good use, repairing fences around the B&B area, the pond and the "secret garden", and some large logs have been used to repair the seat/table near to the Stubbs Wood entrance.



The ramp to the pond had started to rot and was unsafe, so that has now been removed and replaced with two steps. The gate has also been replaced and the dipping platform has been repaired. All the new wood has been coated with preservative, so it is now ready and waiting for the children to come pond dipping again next year. The ditch has been cleared again, and although it was not as bad as last year we were surprised how much it had overgrown. The ladies started the work and enlisted the help of "strimmer man" Colin to clear the nettles and brambles, plus some of the other men to help remove large trees and branches.



We have been trying for some time to solve the problem of getting water into the pond. The dam has not been working too well lately and it was suggested that we could try laying a pipe to catch the water further up the ditch. Essex and Suffolk Water donated a length of pipe which has now been laid and they have suggested that we could install a sump near to the dam, which they may also be able to help us with.



An early start has been made on clearing out some of the bird boxes, in case any birds decide to use them for shelter during the winter.

Tree Inspection 2016 – Tuesday 6th September

GWCP had its annual tree inspection, attended by several GWCP workers and conducted by Robert Slarke from the Waveney Norse Arboricultural team. It covered Gunton Wood, the

green belt alongside Gainsborough Drive and Foxburrow Wood. Last year we got away quite lightly, sadly, this year there was a lot to be removed or reduced especially in Gunton Wood.

The full report is on the website under NEWS and a downloadable pdf version is available under the "About Us" tab.



Foxburrow Wood

One lovely sunny Thursday morning the work party re-located to Foxburrow Wood where we cleared debris and rubbish from the ditch and the stream, swept leaves from the boardwalks, trimmed the path edges and cleared a large clump of Himalayan Balsam that was getting close to a resident's garden (pretty as it is, it is very invasive and can quickly get out of control). Yvon & Jenny and Jackie Channing set out enough garden chairs for everyone, on their front lawns, so coffee time turned into a lovely summer picnic!



Look Out For – by Janet Field

“Nettles - an invasive species, painfully stinging the unwary and their extremely long roots are difficult to eradicate. They are an indicator of previous human habitation, growing in soil enriched by animal manure and fertiliser. The stems are an ancient source of fibre and the leaves are used today as a cooked green vegetable.

However don't discount nettles as a nuisance because they provide a welcome nursery for Red Admiral, Peacock, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell and Painted Lady butterflies to lay their eggs upon. The resultant caterpillars feed on the nettle leaves and, hey-ho, along come the Great tits and Blue tits to pick off these juicy morsels, taking them to feed their own ravenous nestlings. A small link in nature's food chain happening every year in Gunton Woods. And for those who like a tippie...you could try brewing nettle beer.”

Social Events

Bingo with Fish & Chips – Thursday 8th September 2016

A very enjoyable evening was held at St Benedict's Church Hall when 62 members and friends of GWCP had "eyes down" for 8 games of Bingo and a raffle. David arrived with the pre ordered fish and chips at half time with tea or coffee to follow served very efficiently by Rosemary's catering team. Once again, by popular demand, our Bingo caller was that cheeky cockney and West Ham supporter Pat McCade who did a wonderful job keeping us all amused throughout the evening. The evening finished at 9.30pm and all agreed that it had been extremely enjoyable, when is the next one!! Our grateful thanks to everyone who so kindly donated prizes for the raffle, and all the helpers. We raised £186 on the evening which will go towards GWCP funds to help maintain our beautiful woods.



Gunton Park Community Autumn Litter Pick – Saturday November 12th 2016

Meet at the A12 end of Gainsborough Drive, 8.45 for a 9am start. Please bring gloves and wear stout shoes. There will be maps with areas assigned to collect litter. Refuse bags and litter pickers will be provided. There will be a refreshment break at 10.30am back at the start. If inclement weather please telephone David Briggs on 01502-515944 for information.

Snape Christmas Show - Saturday December 10th 2016

The trip to the Christmas Spectacular matinee show at Snape this year, is now full. We will be leaving Gunton Church Lane at 1.00 pm. Full details from David or Rosemary Briggs on 01502-515944.

AGM – Wednesday April 19th 2017

Cotswolds – Friday May 26th to Monday May 29th 2017

This is now full but we do have a waiting list. A 3 night - 4 day trip to the Cotswolds through Belle Coaches Holidays. Staying at the Best Western Premier Blundsdon House near Swindon. The cost is £319pp with a single supplement of £45pp.

FOR INTEREST ONLY 2018

Because we had difficulties in booking our first choice hotel for the Cotswolds trip in May 2017, I have already booked a hotel in the Lake District for early May 2018. Could you please let Rosemary know if you are interested. I will then forward details nearer the time. Thanks David.

GWCP 2017 Calendar – just a few left!

The 2017 “Mug Shots” calendar is on sale at £5 with the theme of Suffolk Wildlife Trust nature reserves. Available from Rosemary Briggs – 01502 515944.

Nature Notes – by Val and Barry Shimmield



“On a fine afternoon last Summer I took a stroll along the beach from Tramps Alley towards Corton. Easy walking on the new sea wall through granite boulder sea defences brought me to the second and last set of steps. Just before climbing to the cliff top to enjoy the views from the beautifully maintained gardens in Bakers Score, I watched the sand martins darting into their nest holes in the soft sand of the cliff face.

Small and vulnerable they avoid cold British winters by flying South to Central Africa. Then, in the New Year, their homing instinct takes over and they start the 3000 mile journey back to their birth place. How they find their way is still not fully understood but it seems they use a combination of methods. A small piece of magnetite in their heads works like a compass to indicate true North. By

night they navigate using stars. In the day they measure how long it takes the sun to pass across the sky and then calculate their latitude depending on the time of year. As they approach their destination, memory images of coastlines and landmarks take over until they find their way to that special nest hole in Corton cliff.

A sand martin is 5 inches long and weighs ½ oz. But its pea sized brain holds 100 million neurons and that is how it can make these amazing calculations. So perhaps our present day satnavs are not as good as Nature's own!”

