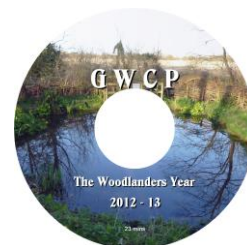


# **! Gunton Woodland Community Project**

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## **NEWSLETTER**



**December 2012 – May 2013**



*Bluebells in Foxburrow Wood 21 May 2013*

### **Annual General Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

A near capacity crowd of 69 members gathered in the main hall of Gunton Primary School for our 16<sup>th</sup> AGM which, this year, followed a slightly different format. Instead of having a Guest Speaker, Barry showed a film illustrating some of the activities of the Group over the past 12 months. As well as enabling him to cut down the length of his Chairman's Report (hooray!) this also meant that the meeting could close well before the 10 pm deadline without the usual last minute rush. Incidentally, copies of The Woodlanders Year DVD can still be obtained from Rosemary priced at £3.



*Barry's clock*

The main event of the evening was to confirm the change in leadership of GWCP. Barry asked to stand down as Chair after 15 years and David Briggs was proposed as the new Chairman. After explaining that the new Gunton Memorial Wood Project would require more of his time Barry said he would still like to continue his links with GWCP in the position of Secretary. Other changes to the Committee included Ray Adcock, who had asked to step down, the inclusion of Janet Field as Committee Member and John Dickerson as Website Manager. All the changes were put to the vote and carried unanimously. Mr Frank Devereux then spoke of the early days of GWCP, when as Chairman of WDC he planted our very first tree in 1998. He presented Barry with a very handsome "Skeleton Clock", mounted in an elegant maple wood surround turned by David Ritchie, while Val was given a beautiful bouquet as recognition of her support

during the past 15 years.

A review of the past year showed that the Group was in a healthy position financially with total cash assets of £6500, we enjoyed social outings to Floriade, Beth Chatto, Long Melford and Snape and had very successful woodland parties to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and the Teddy Bear's Picnic. For the future, several woodland improvement projects were proposed which would keep our work party volunteers fully occupied.

Harry Hill, representing Gunton St Peter's PCC, gave a progress review of the Memorial Wood Project, and Matt Gooch of Suffolk Wildlife Trust talked about plans for extensive restoration work at Gunton Warren and Gunton Denes which should be getting underway this year.

In closing the meeting our new Chairman David Briggs thanked everyone for their continuing support and enthusiasm for our very successful community group.

### **Gunton Wood**



*Working on the main footpath*

we believe that the end result will help to restore the appearance and feel of a natural wood.

Our youngest volunteer Max came along to help and we couldn't resist the temptation to see how he measured up for the job of relief digger driver. Unfortunately, he couldn't quite reach the controls so he will have to wait another year or two before he qualifies for his licence ....

The state of the main footpath has been steadily worsening over the years, So after much deliberation and some false starts, we finally bit the bullet. Gratefully accepting the offer of a mini-digger from local firm JK Munnings, it didn't take Gordon very long to scrape off the thick accumulation of rotting wood chips to leave a firm, narrower, more user-friendly path. It is, of course, work in progress but after we have planted some new trees and shrubs along the sides we



*Max in control*

## Springtime



Clockwise, *Ramsons*, *Wood Anemone*, *Anemone Blanda*, *Green-winged*, *Twayblade*

The Middle Pond in the Nature Reserve is developing into an ideal setting for amateur photographers with its primrose covered banks, perfect reflections in the tranquil water and, usually, some wildlife to provide a focal point. So, if you fancy your artistic prowess, grab your camera and visit soon, before the dreaded duckweed arrives.

Incidentally, water levels in the Top Pond are also at their historic high. Operations on its bur-weed problem have been put on hold until after the newt breeding season.



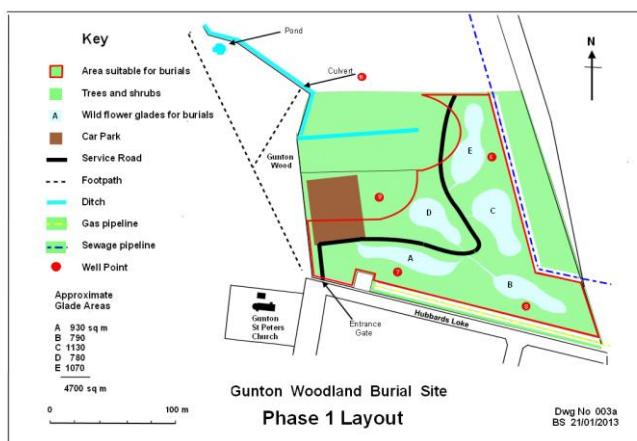
*A ménage à trois?*

### ***Gunton Church Memorial Wood***

On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013 the combined efforts of Gunton St Peters PCC and GWCP were finally rewarded when the Council granted Planning Permission for Phase 1 of the project. This followed the SCC Archaeological Service's acceptance of results of the "dig" carried out in November when GWCP member Gordon Spall operated a mini-digger to excavate 130m of trenches, 2m wide, distributed across the 5 proposed burial glades. Just two postholes were exposed neither of which indicated the former presence of any kind of structure or building. Moreover searches in the spoil heaps revealed a general lack of cultural material right across the site.

This clears the way to proceed with the execution of this important project. The first step is to gain occupancy of the land and so, in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement, the Farmer will receive 12 months' notice in October which should make it possible to start tree planting by the end of 2014.

There is plenty to do before then. Hopefully, grant funding will be available to help with the creation of new woodlands but much of this is bound up with EU legislation which is now under review.



The species and sources of the initial planting scheme, comprising nearly 6000 trees, will be chosen with care, after consulting with all the appropriate authorities, while planting operations will be planned so that as many members of the community as possible will be given an opportunity to take part.

If all goes according to plan, it is hoped that burials and interment of ashes could commence by the year 2016. As the woodland matures, it will take on the peaceful environment of a nature reserve open to the public for recreational use.

### **Social Events**

#### **Snape Christmas Spectacular 16<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

As usual it was a completely full coach that took us to Snape Maltings for the traditional pre-Christmas extravaganza of music, dance and adventure performed by the 100-strong Co-Op Juniors Theatre Company. Dazzling costumes and special effects lit up this years' show with its theme of an 'enchanted book'. On the homeward coach all agreed it was a wonderful performance and David was asked to repeat the bookings again for next year. Many thanks for the excellent organisation, David.

#### **Work Party Dinner Lowestoft College East 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

This year David had a problem fitting every one in to the College Restaurant, so seating arrangements will be amended slightly in future. As always, the College students produced a superb meal and we were fortunate that the severe snow storms of that day did not extend to Lowestoft, so that everyone was able to get home safely. [Barry missed out being snowbound in Norwich for 5 hours !]

#### **Holkham Hall 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

For our mid-journey break we stopped at Wroxham Barns where the restaurant opened early especially for us. Tea, coffee and freshly prepared scones were promptly served after which we had time to browse in several of the 'arty-crafty' boutiques. Then we headed off towards Holkham, taking the picturesque coastal route through Sheringham and Cley. After negotiating some tight corners with very unforgiving flint walls (applause for Gwen, our driver ) we had our first sight of one of the most impressive stately homes in the country. We disembarked and lined up for the obligatory photo shot ...



*The rogues gallery*

It was now lunchtime and most decided to first sample the various freshly cooked treats on offer from the Stables Café, where there were plenty of picnic tables set out in the Courtyard. Feeling refreshed it was time to start the tour of the house. On entering the magnificent Marble Hall it was a pleasant surprise to be told that we were free to use cameras anywhere and indeed there was a welcome absence of ropes and barriers enabling visitors to get very close to the superb collections of furniture, paintings, tapestries and books that the successive Earls of Leicester had accumulated since the 1750's. Holkham is ranked as one of the top 10 Treasure Houses of England and that honour is fully justified. It is still a family home and, sure enough, the present heir to the title, Viscount Thomas Coke, mingled with us, chatting away with wry comments about some of the paintings of his ancestors. As expected, the kitchen was spectacular too although none of the ladies seemed keen to exchange it for their more modest versions back home.



*Four ladies and a pussy cat*

It was time for tea so we stopped again at the Stables before exploring the Bygones Museum which brought back many memories of how home life used to be. The fine collection of vintage cars rounded off the visit while some rode the golf buggy around the estate to the Walled Garden. This was a little chaotic as it is undergoing a major 5 year reconstruction programme.

Gwen, our driver took a somewhat shorter, inland route home and soon we were back in Gunton Church Lane after an outing which everyone enjoyed very much.

#### **Switzerland 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

The long awaited Continental Holiday is almost upon us. Once again we will be piloted by our regular Belle driver Neil Ripley and it will be an early morning start at 5.30 am on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June. Luggage can be left with Barry on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> between 4.00 and 8.00 pm. Everyone should have already received full instructions, but if you have any queries call David on 515944. Don't forget to bring your passport, EHIC Health Card, Euros and Swiss francs. *Here's to a great trip!*

## National Trust Octavia Hill Award

Octavia Hill was one of the founders of the National Trust and, to celebrate her centenary, awards are being offered to those organisations and individuals who are keeping her legacy alive. GWCP was nominated by Jackie Channing in the 'Green Space Guardians' category and we are absolutely delighted to have been shortlisted along with two other groups. The polls were opened on 22<sup>nd</sup> April for just one week for on-line voting and the final results will be announced in the July edition of **Countryfile Magazine** which will feature all the shortlisted candidates. We have to say we are very proud to have reached this level in such a prestigious nation-wide contest.

## Big Lottery Fund



More good news. On 10<sup>th</sup> May we were told by the Big Lottery Fund that we had been awarded a grant of £1539 for the provision of further boardwalks in Foxburrow Wood and also to extend the fencing on the Western Perimeter along the A12. These improvements will be particularly welcome in the Winter when parts of the main footpath become impassable due to thick mud. At the same time gaps in the boundary hedgerow need to be closed with new fence rails. The work will be started this Summer.

## Cuttings

- **80 Bed Care Home on Leisure Way** The latest news we have from the site developers is that the proposed Care Home may never be built. As an alternative, they are looking into the viability of using the site for bungalow style sheltered housing. We will watch future developments closely.

- **GWCP Website** At long last our website has been moved over to the new Silver Stripe CMS (Content Management System) software. Our web address [www.guntonwoodland.org.uk](http://www.guntonwoodland.org.uk) remains the same and John Dickerson has already started to update the content. If you would prefer to receive future Newsletters by email or by downloading from the website, please contact [info@guntonwoodland.org.uk](mailto:info@guntonwoodland.org.uk)

- **Spring Litter Pick** On 29<sup>th</sup> April, 40 members of GWCP joined forces with the Residents



Association GPRA to conduct a litter pick in the Leisure Way, Foxburrow Wood and Green Belt areas. After collecting more than 40 sacks of rubbish, everyone enjoyed refreshments and a raffle all provided by Tesco as a thank you for our efforts.

- **Tree Diseases** The Woodland Trust are asking all visitors to woodlands everywhere to be vigilant for a range of diseases currently threatening our trees. Prime suspects are **Ash dieback**, **Oak processionary moth**, **Horse Chestnut leaf miner**, **Acute Oak decline** and **Asian longhorn beetle**. Details on how to recognise them and who to contact are available on the Woodland Trust website. Please clean boots and bikes after each visit and check plant sources before buying from garden centres.

### **David Wright 1939 – 2013**

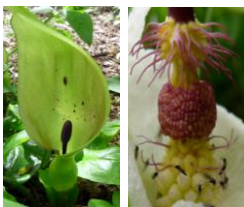
David and his guide dog Inca were very much a part of our Gunton community and would be seen in all weathers walking around the estate. So it is with great sadness that we report his death as a result of a tragic road accident on 18<sup>th</sup> February. Fearless and independent, he did the shopping at Tesco, when Pauline was unable to, and every Monday he would catch the bus into town. In fact, it was largely due to prompting by David in 2008 that the Council belatedly got around to installing the Toucan pedestrian crossing on Leisure Way. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to Pauline, who is slowly recovering from her injuries, and to his loving family. We will miss him.

### **Peter Rowland 1937 - 2012**

*Ann Rowland and her family would like to thank everyone for their letters, cards and words of sympathy since she lost Peter. These were a great help to her during such a difficult time. Their kind donations raised a total of £1,045 and this will be used towards the purchase of a new Brachytherapy Suite for treating prostate cancers at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.*

## Nature Notes

### **Arum maculatum** Lords and Ladies



Gunton Wood is full of these fascinating but very poisonous plants, also known as Devils & Angels, Cows & Bulls, Naked Boys, Cuckoo-Pint etc. Clustered in the base of the purple spadix are the cream female globular flowers, destined to become red berries, with red male flowers above. On top is a ring of hairs which trap flies attracted by the faecal odour. They get dusted with pollen and eventually escape when the spathe drops off enabling them to pollinate other plants.

*The Gunton Woodland Committee*