

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

May – July 2017

Gunton Wood



Work party numbers have generally been quite high during the summer months so we have achieved a lot of good work. The usual maintenance jobs of keeping the pond clear, keeping the path edges free from nettles and brambles, and chipping paths are always on the work list. It is usually Barry who organises the pond work, which includes clearing away duck weed, keeping the edging plants under control and removing debris (wood, branches, leaves etc.) which have either fallen in, or been thrown in. All this careful attention has paid dividends because the pond life has made a good recovery after the winter die back, and several tadpoles and newts have already been spotted.

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The tractor and trailer have been put to good use, transporting chippings, logs that are too heavy to carry and on one occasion, even some of the workers (unfortunately, Wally our official photographer, was not there that day, so no photos). There are always plenty of volunteers to drive the tractor and even more so now that it has a lovely new seat, very professionally re-covered by Paul C.



The ladies have been busy in the B&B area, planting more teasels, evening primrose, ox-eye daisies and some bluebells that were transplanted from the main wood. The crab apple trees

have grown so well that they have been given much bigger stakes for support. The buddleias are also doing really well and will need pruning and staking at the end of the summer. John organised the building of a large log pile at the back of the B&B area, which we hope will provide winter cover for bees & insects.



We had a report that the hand rail on Vinnie's bridge was wobbly, so a group of men set about repairing it, but soon found that the posts had rotted, so they were also replaced. An inspection of Freeman's bridge showed that it also needed some repairs. Both bridges are now safe and secure.

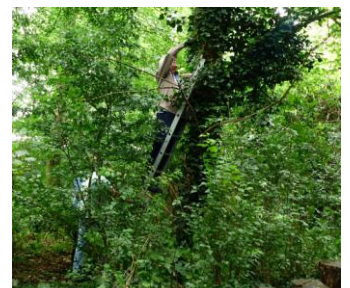
Another job that needed to be done for safety reasons was the installation of a small fence at the bottom of the steps near the railway bridge. There is a low wire fence running along the path at the bottom of the steps and we were worried that a child or dog could run off the steps straight into it, so a new wooden fence has been erected in front of the wire.



One week there was quite a lot of storm damage, which Waveney Norse helped us to clear. A large ash needed to be felled, so WN came along to cut it down and the workparty cleared away the resulting branches and logs. We dealt with a large sycamore branch that had come down and a small oak had to be re-staked. All the logs were stacked in a (fairly) tidy pile near the coffee area, ready for use as path edging and fencing etc.



We have been cutting ivy on trees where there is so much at the top that it is in danger of creating a "sail effect" in high winds. We have cut the ivy at quite a high level so that the top will die off, but the bottom will still grow to provide cover for small birds and other wildlife.





We have finally come to the conclusion that we need another shed, so most of the ladies spent one workparty clearing an area, near the existing sheds, large enough for the new one. It was a nice change for the ladies to do some heavy work and they were really pleased with their efforts (the men were quite impressed as well).

Meanwhile, Christine was on a one-woman mission to clear around all the young trees that the school children had planted two years ago along the school fence. A lot of them are

growing really well, but there are a few bare spaces which we can fill with saplings from the nursery.



The wild flower meadow has been cut around the edges, which has given a very pleasing look to the path on Moore's Lane. Also, a lot of work has been done to try and control the dock weeds and hogweed in the wild flower meadow and the B&B area. It is a never-ending job, but with perseverance we might make a difference.



Sadly, we have once again had some fire damage. One afternoon one of the habitats was set alight but, fortunately, an aerosol can that had been thrown into it exploded, alerting people walking in the wood, who phoned the fire brigade. The fire engine was there within minutes and the fire was extinguished. The following week our doggy/litter bin was once again set alight, but was swiftly replaced by Waveney District Council. Both incidents were reported to the police.

Gunton Wood Main Path

Some time ago we resurfaced Gunton Wood main path from the main gate to Moore's lane. This has proved so successful that the committee decided to extend the resurfacing all the way down to Pleasurewood Hills. We were quoted, by the same contractor that did the original work, a price of £5,200. We asked several organizations if they could help and were very pleased with the response we received. The Suffolk Foundation awarded us £2,000, local councillors promised £2,000, Warner's Gunton Hall contributed £500 and we had a surprise donation of £500 from Comic Relief. Rights of Way have said they will place the order with the contractor.

One of the consequences of the fundraising was a change to the GWCP constitution. The Suffolk Foundation spotted an error in our Constitution in that Clause 18 & 19 mention the Group BTCV but they have changed their name to TCV. We updated the document and held a special work party meeting where we put the changes to that meeting and asked for votes "for". We needed a quorum of 10% of the members which is about 20- 30 people. There were 34 members in attendance, the votes were as follows :- 34 in favour of the change and none against. The motion was therefore carried.

Foxburrow Wood

Some time has been spent in Foxburrow Wood, pulling Himalayan Balsam before it goes to seed and clearing the ditch at the end of Gainsborough Drive.

A new fence has been installed at the bottom of steps near to Crome walk which will, hopefully, stop anyone running down the steps straight into the ditch. Also, a dead elm which had fallen into the ditch at Monet Square was cut up and removed.

Social Events

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



On Friday May 26th 47 members and friends left Gunton Church Lane for our annual trip away. We travelled to Bowood House arriving somewhat later than planned because of heavy traffic caused by accidents on the M11 and M4. We then travelled on to our hotel, the Best Western Premier Blunsdon House near Swindon, for our 3 days stay. The meals were excellent and the hotel was very comfortable.

The next day, Saturday, we set off for a Steam Rail Day on the Gloucestershire and

Warwickshire Steam Railway. It was a hop on, hop off day with events going on all day at each station. Something for everyone.

On Sunday, after breakfast, we set off to Adam's Farm for a morning visit to his Cotswolds Rare Breeds Farm. There was plenty to see and do. The night before a Highland Cow had given birth to a calf and was in an enclosure for all to see as was a sow that had a litter of 14 piglets. A tractor with trailer was available to take us on a full tour of the farm. In the afternoon we set off for the nearby National Arboretum at Westonbirt where we had the option of free time or guided walks around the vast park where trees, that we had never heard of or seen before, were in all their glory. On Monday it was time to pack for our return journey home via Oxford where we had 2 hours to visit the city. Another successful trip away. Our driver Gwen was excellent throughout.



Looking forward to next year when we will be off to the Lake District in early May, details to follow. David and Rosemary.



How Hill Trip – Thursday July 27th



There was no work party today, instead 35 of us had a lovely day out at How Hill near Ludham Bridge in Norfolk. All went well, we arrived at 28 minutes past 10 for our 10.30am slot. Just as we disembarked and were wondering where to go, the Trust's director, Simon, suddenly appeared from the house to welcome us all. After a brief introduction and history of How Hill, we split into two groups. One group had a most enjoyable boat trip along the river towards Irstead whilst the other group were shown around the amazing gardens. The wooded area was a mirror image of Gunton Wood with its log edgings and "Woodhenge". We then had time for our picnic lunch which was taken either inside the "summer house" or outside in the private garden. After lunch we reversed the groups and then were lucky enough to be able to look around the restored wherry, Hathor. We had tea/coffee and a delicious piece of cake served

in the house which left us with just enough time for a little more exploring on our own before boarding the coach for the journey home. The group said that they really enjoyed the day.



Bingo with Fish & Chips and a Raffle – Thursday 7th September 2017 7pm

Come and join us for a GWCP Fun Evening on Thursday 7th September 2017 at 7pm (eyes down 7.30pm) at St. Benedict's Church Hall, Hollingsworth Road.

Tickets £8 each from Rosemary Briggs, cheques payable to R. Briggs please. This includes fish & chips, tea or coffee and your Bingo cards. Bring your own drinks, glasses and cutlery (if you forget - plastic cutlery can be supplied).

Donations of raffle prizes would be most welcome.

First Aid Talk – Thursday 14th September 2017 10am

A First Aid talk for the regular work party members in St. Peter's church annexe. Coffee 10am, talk 10.30-11.30am.

Snape Christmas Show - Saturday December 9th 2017

We will be organising a trip to the Christmas Spectacular at Snape again this year. It will be on Saturday 9th December 2017 for a matinee performance of The Land of Oz.

Full details from David or Rosemary Briggs - tel no 01502 515944.

Look Out For – by Janet Field



One of the smaller inhabitants of Gunton Wood is the ladybird beetle. Easily recognisable is the red 7-spot, similar to the logo on children's Ladybird Books. Several others may be found in our wood and local gardens. Look for a maroon/brown one with 14 white or cream spots living on deciduous trees and over-wintering in leaf litter. A bright yellow bug with 22 black spots thrives in meadows on herbaceous plants, especially hogweed. The pine ladybird, black with 4 red spots, prefers pines, ash and birch trees, hibernating in foliage of evergreen shrubs and trees. However in 2004 the much larger harlequin ladybird arrived in England. It immediately became a threat to our smaller native species, out-competing it for food, even eating its eggs and larvae when aphids become scarce. The harlequins can reproduce through spring to autumn whereas some of our natives need their rest period. So perhaps we can help look after some of these colourful little creatures by providing a ladybird tower or winter insect home catering for their smaller size".

Wild Flowers, Butterflies and Names – by Barry Shimmiel



If you want to learn more about wild flowers you need go no further than the bottom of Gunton Church Lane. Between the entrance gates to Gunton Wood and the Burial Park a small patch of ground has been sown with one packet of just 1.2 gms of wild flower seed distributed by Kew Gardens under their "Grow Wild" scheme. This included *corn chamomile* (small ox-eye daisy), *corn marigold* (all yellow), *poppy* (red), and *cornflower* (blue). The dominant plant with masses of yet-to-open flowers is *bedstraw* (*lady's* if yellow, *hedge* if white) which the Virgin Mary is said to have used as a bed at the inn in Bethlehem.

You can also see the thistle-like heads of the *lesser knapweed*, and if it's a sunny day, they will be covered by *gatekeeper* butterflies. A few days ago, up to 20 were seen feeding simultaneously. You can imagine how one or two scouts might be attracted by a special scent but how do they communicate with each other to bring the entire tribe? The gatekeeper can be distinguished from other "browns" by a false eye near the wing tip which has two small white pupils.

The naming of British butterflies is a confused story of happenstance and controversy. Many have had their names changed several times over the years. It was the 18th Century Swedish naturalist Linnaeus who brought order to the chaos with his two-word system of naming animals, plants and insects, the first word indicates the genus, or a group with obvious similarities, while the second word identifies the particular species within that group. But the words have Latin derivations and are difficult to remember so for the ordinary person the "common name" holds sway.

Amongst the 62 species of British butterfly we have such wonderful names as *Queen of Spain fritillary*, *white-letter hairstreak* and *grizzled skipper*. So finally, to complete the story, perhaps we should come back to our friend the *gatekeeper*, so aptly named as it loves field margins and corners where, very often, a 5 bar wooden gate is a common sight just as it is at the bottom of Gunton Church Lane.

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