

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

Aug – Oct 2017



Gunton Wood

Several major projects have been undertaken during the last 3 months. Most prominent was the re-surfacing of the main path from the pond down to Pleasurewood Hills. The work took a week to complete, during which time diversions onto alternative pathways were put into place, to avoid any accidents with the heavy machinery. Several of our workers were on duty each day to ensure that walkers were aware of the alternative paths and to stop anyone trying to ignore the diversions (unfortunately this was not always successful!). The new surface has been welcomed by most people particularly, mobile scooter users, people with walking sticks and mothers with buggies. There has been some criticism about the look of the new path,



which has a different surface, but over time and with more use it will soon blend in. We are sure that during the winter, when that part of the path used to become very muddy, it will be much appreciated by everyone. We managed to secure funding for the whole project (that is the royal “we”, as David did all negotiating). Our thanks go to Pleasurewood Hills, Warner’s at Gunton Hall, Comic Relief, The Suffolk Foundation, and councillors Keith Patience and Steve Ardley. The EDP printed an article about the project, with photos of David using the path. You can find a link to it under ‘Events’ on the GWCP website.



At the Pleasurewood Hills end of the main path we have now reinstated the signpost and barrier, we have also erected new fences around the culvert.



Another project has been the acquisition of a third shed. It had become obvious during the year that the two sheds we had were overflowing, and despite our best efforts to clear out and tidy-up, we still didn’t have enough room for everything. At the end of each workparty, it was like a jigsaw puzzle, trying to get all the wheelbarrows stacked on top of each other. So on 24th August a new shed was delivered and installed. The men soon got to work putting on new bolts and locks and David Barwick & Andrea Crawley got on with the task of painting. During the next 2 workparties, three coats of green preservative were put on and the two older sheds were also given a new coat. The extra space has been filled with equipment overflowing from the other sheds and, as always happens, we now “don’t know how we managed without it”.



We had a report one week that a very large branch was hanging precariously about 65ft above the path from the main gate towards the sheds. So, at the next work party, the men decided that all that was needed was a long rope with a weight on the end, which could be thrown over the branch and then they could pull it down. A gang of 5 or 6 spent the whole morning trying various ways of getting the rope over the branch, with no success. At coffee time the ladies suggested they would have had more success and perhaps they should have a go next week. It was probably that thought which made David ring Waveney Norse for their help. WN came along during the week and had no success either, so decided the best thing was to cut down the part of the tree that the branch was resting on, which is what they did! This did make the men feel better about not being able to do it themselves.

The normal work has continued, including the annual cutting of the wild flower meadow and the B&B area, lots of path chipping, clearing the ditch near to PwH, keeping the main path clear of leaves and keeping the pond clear of duckweed and leaves. After clearing the area around the school fence we noticed that some of the trees planted by the schoolchildren had died, so these have been replaced with saplings from our nursery.



Look Out For – by Janet Field

Many people probably look forward to the festive season thinking of food and alcoholic beverages. Others welcome the traditional holly into their homes for decoration over the twelve days of Christmas.

Common holly is the only European tree of this genus of about 400 diverse species. It is our most common native evergreen but absent from the remotest parts of the Scottish highlands. Holly loves non-chalky, free-draining soils and its shiny spiked leaves deter browsing animals. In fact holly is used as a protection surrounding more delicate plants thereby helping them to survive.

The bright red berries are eaten by fieldfares, redwings and thrushes but are toxic to humans. Apart from providing berries their female flower buds are one of the main larval foods enjoyed by the Holly Blue butterfly's first brood in April/May. The second brood is laid on ivy.

In Gunton Wood we are starting to screen our habitat piles by planting holly around them. What a useful tree!



Fascinating Fungi – by Barry Shimmiel

Although they have been with us since the year dot scientists are only now beginning to understand the crucial role that fungi plays in the world's ecosystem. It seems that without these strange and rather weird life forms we would not survive long on planet Earth. They now enjoy their own classification as a "kingdom" and, strangely enough, are more closely aligned to the animal rather than the plant kingdoms.

They can be divided into several different groups. Some are waste recyclers, beneficial to the environment as they are kept busy breaking down dead wood. Some are killers, such as the dreaded Honey Fungus which will destroy its host with rapidly growing black tentacles. Others are absolutely critical to woodland life. Their tiny thread like roots can only be seen with a microscope, but there can be as much as 100 metres of them in one gramme of soil!. They make close, symbiotic contact with the roots of trees from which they collect sugars to sustain themselves and, in exchange, transfer nutrients from the soil to the tree roots which enables the trees to survive. Without fungi, the world's forests would soon collapse.

Only 69,000 different species of fungi out of an estimated population of 1.6 million have so far been identified and described. Here is a picture strip of a few of the different forms that we have photographed in our own woods. ...



Liberty-cap



Artist's fungus
Moore's Lane 28/10/17



Puffball



Coral fungus



Redhead Roundhead



Shaggy Ink-cap

Sorry to end on a sombre note, but if we are correct in labelling this picture just taken in Foxburrow Wood as Honey Fungus, it does not bode well for the longevity of our most important resident, the "Robin Hood" beech tree.

One final comment from our old friend, Alan Beaumont. "All kinds of fungi are edible. But some of them you can only eat once!" So ... if you are confident you know the difference between a Magic Mushroom and a Death cap we wish you "bon appétit". But if you are unsure please don't take any chances.



Honey fungus
Foxburrow 28/10/17

Social Events

Big Red Bus outing – Saturday 5th August

Saturday 5th August saw us all waiting in Gunton Church Lane at Liz & James' house where the Big Red Bus was parked in their garden.

The day was bright and sunny and we set off at 10.30am with 47 members and friends for a trip to Southwold. We dropped some off in the town centre and then continued down to the pier car park. There we had 3 hours to spend either on the pier, the promenade or in the town. Fish and Chips and refreshments awaited - the choice was ours.



Rain threatened at about 2.45pm but by that time most were in the bus and in the dry. Soon we set off to pick up in the town where some passengers were eagerly waiting to get on board the bus to take us home.

We enjoyed the day and our thanks go to James, for driving us, to Liz, for arranging it, and last but not least, to Max, who was giving us all tickets when we boarded the Big Red Bus.



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

A very enjoyable evening was held at St Benedict's Church Hall when 67 members and friends of GWCP had "eyes down" for 8 games of Bingo and a raffle. At half time David arrived with the pre-ordered fish and chips, followed by tea or coffee, served very efficiently by Rosemary's catering team, and a surprise ice cream for dessert. 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 all the helpers and everyone who so kindly donated prizes for the raffle.

We raised £206 on the evening which will go towards GWCP funds to help maintain our beautiful woods.

First Aid Talk – Thursday 14th September 2017



Instead of our usual Thursday working in the wood we had a one hour talk on first aid given by St. John's Ambulance. Most of our usual workers were at St. Peter's church annexe at 10am. We started with refreshments - tea, coffee, biscuits. The talk started at 10.30 and proved to be most interesting and informative. This was the first talk our speaker, Jess, had given but you would not have guessed. The talk gave us much to think about and I'm sure this will be discussed at the next committee meeting. Funnily enough, the workparty would have been cancelled due to the weather!

Woodland Wedding – Saturday 14th October

Two of our regular workers – Chris & Gregg (or is that Alice & the Mad Hatter?) were married in St. Peter's church on Saturday 14th Oct. The wedding was themed on Alice in Wonderland and the church & wood were adorned with Alice-themed decorations. "Trev the Rev." entered into the spirit of the day and the service was a delight. From the church the wedding party wandered through the wood to David & Rosemary's garden for champagne & cake, before setting off to the Parkhill hotel for a Mad Hatter's tea party in the barn.

What a lovely day – congratulations to them both!



Gunton Park Community Autumn Litter Pick – Saturday November 11th 2017

Meet at the A12/A47 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. Refreshments and a free raffle, kindly provided by Tesco again, will be at 10.30am back at the start. If inclement weather please telephone David Briggs on 01502-515944 or 07516-926915 for information.

N.B. There will be a 2 minutes silence at 11am for those who wish to take part.

Snape Christmas Show - Saturday December 9th 2017

We have organised 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.

It is now full but if you would like to go on the waiting list or for more details please contact David or Rosemary Briggs - tel no 01502 515944.

21st AGM – Wednesday April 18th 2018

All members and friends are warmly invited to attend our 21st AGM to be held on Wednesday 18th April 2018 at St. Benedict's Church Hall, Hollingsworth Road. Refreshments will be served from 7 pm and the meeting starts at 7.30 pm. Minutes of previous year's AGMs can be downloaded from the "ABOUT US" tab on the GWCP website.

Lake District – Friday April 30th to Monday May 4th 2018

This is now full but we do have a waiting list. A 4 night - 5 day trip to the Lake District through Belle Coaches Holidays. Staying at the Best Western Shap Wells hotel. The cost is £359pp with a single room supplement of £60pp.

Tree Inspection 2017 – Monday 9th October

GWCP had its annual tree inspection, attended by 4 GWCP members and conducted by Robert Slarke from the Waveney Norse Arboricultural team. We walked through St. Peter's churchyard, Gunton Wood, the green belt alongside Gainsborough Drive and Foxburrow Wood, an interesting 3 hour walk. Robert did say that this year had been a bad year for trees in general and for Gunton Wood it proved true, yet again. Once more, we have a lot of work to do in Gunton Wood, removing or reducing trees. Fortunately, very little was needed for Foxburrow Wood or in the green belt. Waveney Norse will undertake the work that is too large for us, but there is still quite a lot that we can do, so we will be busy during the winter.

We are going to do some work in the churchyard one Saturday morning, tidying up some trees that have become so big they are in danger of falling into the burial area. This is in return for the loan of the church annexe for our first aid courses. The full report is available on our website under NEWS and a pdf version is downloadable from the "About Us" tab.

GWCP 20th Anniversary Calendar – only 25 left!



The 2018 calendar is on sale at £5 with the theme of 20 years of GWCP. Sales so far have been excellent and as at Nov 2nd we had only 25 left for sale. Available from Rosemary Briggs – 01502 515944.

And Finally.....

A new craze sweeping the country has even reached Gunton Wood. Liz Denny brought this to our attention – Painted Rocks! In the past few weeks many painted stones have been found in and around the area. If you don't know what they are or what to do with them here is what the Suffolk Rocks site says -

"Bringing a little magic and mystery to Suffolk and beyond! Whenever you are out and about, keep your eyes peeled for Suffolk Rocks - you never know where they may be hidden. If you are lucky enough to find one, simply take a picture of yourself with the rock and post it here. Then, either take your rock home or re-hide it for someone else to find. Feel free to join in with creating your own rocks to hide. Happy Hunting!"



Spotted in Gunton Wood at Halloween!

The First Workparty, 1998

