

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

Nov – Dec 2017



Gunton Wood

November & December working has been a mixture of large one-off jobs and the usual autumn winter work.



A new 5-bar gate has been installed at the PwH end of the main path. It was obvious when the new surface was laid, that motor traffic could quite easily access the wood. David had a gate loitering in his garden so we decided to make good use of it. We were fortunate that Anglia Water were working on the PwH entrance, trying to track down the cause of flooding around the culvert, so David asked if they could help with the holes for the gateposts.

They were quite happy to use their large hole creator but soon came across tree roots so we had to dig the holes ourselves. At the next Thursday work party a team of men went down to install the posts and the following week the gate was transported down there. After a lot of head scratching and some small “adjustments” to the posts to accommodate the gate, which suddenly seemed larger than the original measurements, the new gate was eased into place! More fencing was also installed from the new gate towards the pathway leading to the beach, in the hope that it would stop people wandering into PwH by mistake. The team then finished off the job by applying a coat of preservative to the gate & fencing.



Two posts have been erected in front of the new shed, ready for a new padlocked gate and fencing.



Following the tree inspection in October, the Saturday gang have done quite a lot of work in the churchyard, to clear the burial area and to cut back a large holly and a large oak, which were in danger of falling. We also cleared some dead elms near to the church fence and cleared the undergrowth to a depth of about 2 metres. All this work has made a big difference to the look of the churchyard, which is now a lot more open and light, and the view of the church from the wood is much improved.

A bird cherry at the back of 71 Stubbs Wood, which has been dying for the last two years, has finally been removed, before it fell onto the garden fence.

Another job that was suggested by Waveney Norse at the tree inspection was to clear around our one and only walnut tree next to the Stubbs Wood entrance. There are quite a lot of hawthorns around the walnut tree and it was decided not to remove them, but to create a hedge. Alan Beaumont has made a good start, with the help of Janet and one or two of the ladies, so hopefully it will be finished in time for the spring growth.



We had some storm damage at the end of December, when a large sycamore came down across the main path near the coffee area and a holly came down near to the wild wood. These were both cleared and cut up at the Thursday work party. There was also an oak tree that fell into the ditch further down the main path. This will be dealt with in the new year.

The main path has been kept clear of leaves, and mud has been scraped off, so it should remain fairly clear now until next autumn. We had been using Barry’s leaf blower, but decided that we now need to have one of our own. Unfortunately since we bought it the leaves have been too wet for us to use it, so it’s been back to rakes and wheelbarrows again!!



The ladies spent two work parties clearing the ditch near to the pond, but didn't manage to get as far as the bridge at the bottom, which is now heavily silted again and will need to be tackled within the next few weeks.



And, of course, we have been chipping the side paths and trying to keep the pond clear of leaves and weeds.

The last work party before Christmas coincided with Rosemary's birthday, so not only did we have delicious hot sausage rolls and mince pies from Rosemary, but David provided a surprise birthday cake and bottles of Bucks Fizz - an excellent start to the Christmas celebrations!



Look Out For – by Janet Field

In Gunton Wood we have had geo-caches hidden and now painted rocks. However we also have something hidden but it is alive and thriving.

Insects and fungi have had millions of years evolving into many species feeding on and living in dead wood, thereby assisting its decay. Hundreds of small creatures have been recorded living in decaying wood. Insects, beetles, woodlice, centipedes, slugs and snails, to name just a few.

Rotting wood can be a slow process until assisted by the activities of insects and the growth of fungi. Logs lying in shade are in an ideal situation for wildlife. Stag beetles and cardinal beetles breed in rotting wood and later on, invertebrates, which are found in soil or leaf litter, will reside there. The process continues with many little creatures combining to recycle tree nutrients to the soil. This really is an abundant habitat. So, if you wish to find something hidden in Gunton Wood, gently roll a log over and experience the activity underneath. However please replace it afterwards as we have no desire to lose this valuable habitat. Let the little industrious creatures continue their good work.



All About Leaves (with apologies for the chemistry lesson!) – by Barry Shimmield

Leaves are essential to support the life of a tree. Leaf cells contain an amazing compound called chlorophyll whose presence is required for the process known as photosynthesis. The leaf takes in carbon dioxide to produce sugars, which the tree uses as food, while emitting oxygen into the atmosphere. For example a large beech tree produces enough oxygen to support the needs of 10 people.

Chlorophyll also serves another function. It absorbs the red and blue components of sunlight so that the remaining green part of the spectrum is reflected and this gives the leaf its colour. So, you might ask, why is a copper beech leaf purple? Well, this particular species produces other colour pigments which mask the underlying green but it is possible to see the green showing through under deep shade conditions.

As Autumn approaches, trees reabsorb the chlorophyll from their leaves and this reveals other pigments such as anthocyanins which had been previously hidden by the chlorophyll. Anthocyanins are red and are produced in great quantity from the sugars that remain in the leaf. The process requires warmth and bright light during the day and cold at night to stop the sugars being withdrawn back into the tree. These are exactly the conditions that exist on the East coast of North America, causing the fantastic Autumn displays so loved by thousands of tourists, now known all over the world as "leaf-peepers".



Tesco “Bags of Help” Project

As part of the scheme for funding local good causes by charging for the sale of carrier bags, our Tesco store has selected the Gunton Woodland Burial Park as one of its possible winners. So if you would like to help please ask for a token when you check-out and drop it into the box as you leave. Very many thanks! We will keep you posted when the final result is declared.

Social Events

St. John First Aid Course – Thursday November 9th 2017



This course was a follow up to a one hour first aid talk with Q&A given to GWCP workers by St. John Ambulance back in September. It was a 3.5 hour practical session attended by ten workers. We learnt how to determine if a patient was unconscious and whether or not they were breathing and then how to deal with each situation. We practised resuscitation on Annie the dummy and also practised putting each other into the recovery position. We then had great fun tying each other up in bandages. We all agreed the St.

John Ambulance brigade had provided a really good course but hope that we don't have too much need to put our new knowledge to the test.



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



A cold but dry day brought 39 members out for our autumn litter pick. Everyone was given a free raffle ticket for helping. The local Tesco store very kindly donated the raffle prizes and all the refreshments. Over 30 sacks of rubbish plus one or two odd items were collected over a wide area including the A12/A47 road edges, Foxburrow Wood, Gunton Wood, Leisure Way and onto the surrounding meadows as far as the disused railway bridge. We were

pleasantly surprised that the amount of litter appeared to have gone down yet again; perhaps the message really is getting through!

Remembrance Day was commemorated with a 1 minute silence.



Snape Christmas Show - Saturday December 9th 2017

50 GWCP workers and friends travelled by coach to Snape to see this year's Christmas production – “The Land of Oz”, performed by the Co-Op Juniors. The show was a very ambitious production, even better than the previous years. It was based on Dorothy trying to retrieve the emerald stolen by the wicked Queen of the West. Dorothy was lured to the west and eventually rescued by the Tin Man, Lion and Scarecrow. The stage effects were hi-tech and the costumes were a credit to all the helpers both at home and back stage. Dorothy started with the Co-Op Juniors as a very young child following in her mother's footsteps, who was the Bubble Queen in this production.

Next year's production is “The Nut Cracker” and tickets have already been reserved for the show which is at an earlier time starting at 14:00 hours on the 8th December 2018. Details to follow.

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 Appleby hotel. The cost is £423pp with a single room supplement of £60pp.

Gunton Woodland Burial Park - Barry Shimmield

"The year has seen steady progress in the development of the Park. Activity level was good with the number of actual burial and ashes interments slightly higher than in 2016 while forward plot reservations were also very encouraging. In total almost one third of the available plots in Phase 1 have now been sold during the first two years of operation. It is clear from feedback received from bereaved relatives that there is a very high level of satisfaction with the concept of green burials and the way that the arrangements and administration of the Park are being carried out by Anita and Julie.

The 7000 broadleaf trees and shrubs that surround the burial glades have now been in the ground for 3 years. Lack of rainfall at critical times in the year and variable soil conditions across the field have resulted in uneven rates of growth. Willow and alder, which were planted in wet locations, are already up to 15 feet high and although other areas have not made much visible progress their root development will be continuing. Actual tree losses are still quite small with a requirement this season for less than 100 replacements. A 20 ft shipping container, installed in May, is now a fully equipped tool shed well hidden behind an attractive fence screen.

Ground water level surveys have re-started to assess changes over time and a trial has begun to find out if wild flowers can be encouraged to grow in two of the burial glades. Various species of annual and perennial wild flower seeds have been sown in carefully prepared areas and next year we will find out if they are successful, notwithstanding the ever present risk from rabbits."



Nature Reserve - Ray Adcock, SWT Warden

"The year began with a continuation of our autumn work. A decision was made early in the year that because of the wet and muddy paths in the Reserve during the winter months, the paths should be widened. I think it certainly reduced in most of the paths the very heavy muddy conditions and it did give the Reserve a new look during the summer months. Areas were cut into brambles to give the wildlife ease of escape.

We reduced our work on the Reserve to a minimum other than maintaining the footpaths and cutting back the overhanging brambles. Little work was also done on the meadow and it was wonderful to see a great display of green winged orchids on the meadow. I understand that green winged orchids in Suffolk are quite difficult to find. Common spotted orchids gave the best show that I have seen, on both the meadow and in the Reserve. We had a healthy number of bee orchids, not on the meadow but by the Filling Station. The annual bird survey was carried out during the bird breeding season and a good range of birds were found in the area. I understand that a bat survey was carried out and several different species were found on the meadow. Butterflies were present in good numbers in the area.

Knapweed is becoming a problem on the meadow, so it was cut at two different times. Part was cut early and the remainder of the meadow later with the rest of the Reserve. In clearing we found a multitude of frogs.

The remaining part of the fence along Leisure Way has been reduced in size and layered. The top pond which during the last two years has become clogged with burr-reed and bulrushes has been cleared and although there is further cleaning up to be done, it should hold water all year round.

The middle pond which has always had a problem with a lack of natural light should be much better now that several trees blocking light have been felled. It should also reduce the number of leaves falling into the pond during the autumn. Some small oaks have been felled or pollarded on the open area in the Reserve to encourage the growth of wild flowers.

It has been a very good year for our group. We have had two audits, one in-house and the other the WDC Wildlife Audit which have given very favourable reports."

Gunton Warren Project –John Knights, Volunteer Warden.

"2017 was a good year at Gunton Warren, with steady progress clearing the invasive bamboo on the beach, the numerous silver birch saplings and the Japanese Knotweed. There is still a large growth of bamboo on the top heath which will require a lot of effort to get rid of. The steps down to the beach were extended and improved, and an additional beach enclosure was erected, as well as greatly enlarging one of the existing ones. The heather patches that Nick Blacker has been working so hard on, for so long are now looking fantastic.

Thanks to everyone who helped, and hopefully 2018 will be just as rewarding and enjoyable."

And Finally.....

Suffolk Wildlife Trust have produced a report on green spaces, open spaces and County Wildlife sites for Waveney District Council. An edited version, containing just the reports for Corton Wood, Foxburrow Wood, Gunton Meadow, Gunton Warren and Gunton Wood can be downloaded from the "ABOUT US" page on our website. The full version can be seen by going to the GWCP website NEWS page and looking at the "Waveney Wildlife Audit" article.