

Gunton Woodland Community Project

NEWSLETTER

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Aug/Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec 2023



MERRY CHRISTMAS

A Message from the Chairman (David Briggs)

Hello to all our members and friends. My how time flies, it only seems 5 minutes since our last Christmas News Letter. The Work parties have continued very well with up to 25 volunteers, although because of storms and rain, several have had to be cancelled.



The work party celebrating



Inspecting and cleaning the bird boxes



Immigrants in a bird box



Raking the meadow after cutting

When the weather has allowed the volunteers to work, sufficient numbers have been out enabling us to keep up to date with all the jobs in the wood. Once again the hot dry spring took its toll on the trees that were planted early in the year, but we are hoping to replant again during the next 3 months. At the annual tree inspection by East Suffolk Council we noticed that several trees had lost their leaves and sadly died. We also found 40 sycamores that had succumbed to a disease called Sooty Bark. After consultation with the tree officer it has been decided that GWCP can no longer work on trees that have been infected with the disease. The council team came along for several days and felled some of them that were near to paths. There are many more still to be done by the council team.

It was decided that we needed to stop the heaps of chippings from spreading all over the main path, so we constructed two compounds to contain them. One of the main jobs regularly done is chipping the paths, which is very much appreciated by the walkers.



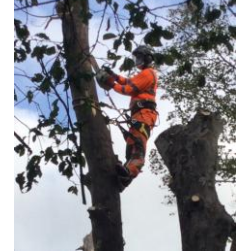
The dipping platform sub frame



The first chipping compound



Working at the second compound



East Suffolk topping tree

In April Gunton School inspected the dipping platform ready for a pond dipping lesson to be held in May. It was found to be unsafe so a disappointed group of young students were unable to enjoy the delights of discovering the variety of pond wildlife. We thought about replacing it with a similar construction but decided to try and fund a platform made from recycled plastic like our new picnic benches. A grant from our local councillor has made this possible and the project is now well underway and will be available for next year's visits from the school.

We continue with the winter work at our regular work parties held on a Thursday morning. At the moment the main task is chipping and repairs to fencing and path edging. During the next month we will be planting trees from last year which have been kept in the nursery. It is hoped that East Suffolk Council will supply some mature trees to replace the sycamores that have been lost.

We will carry on with the regular maintenance of our lovely wood.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Events. Rosemary Briggs.

Once again the bingo, fish and chips evening was a great success so we look forward to the next one.

The day trip this year was to Kentwell Hall for a re-enactment of War time through the years. We stopped off first at Lavenham for coffee. Sadly, it was the very bad weather that spoiled the day. Heavy rain set in and the group made a quick dash for coffee. Then quickly returned to the coach and travelled on to Kentwell Hall. What should have been a delightful day out turned out to be a damp and disappointing one.

Snape Christmas Show this year was on Saturday 9th December for the afternoon show. 34 members and friends attended and the show was as good as ever and enjoyed by all. There is sadness that this was the last show from the Co-Op Juniors to be held at Snape. We hope to hear from Snape that an alternative show will replace this one which has been going for the last 18 years.

We hope to have a summer day trip again next year so keep an eye out for full details.

What to look out for - by Janet Field.

It is National Tree Week from 25th November until 3rd December and as the Tree Wardens say “hedgerows and trees are some of the most powerful tools we have in the fight against climate change.”

One such beneficiary is the Mistletoe which is a good winter food source for insects and birds. If you are lucky enough to see a mistle thrush, field fare or redwing in your garden this winter you will most likely see it gorging on mistletoe’s berries.

However beware, as mistletoe’s leaves, berries and stems are all poisonous to us humans. As it is a parasite it can also harm the host tree.

Mistletoe has suffered in the U.K. from losing so many orchards, where it thrived, which is of concern to many. It still can be found on apple, poplar and lime trees and sometimes on rowan, blackthorn and willow.

How does it spread? Well, the berries can stick to the bird’s beaks and then get wiped off on a branch or twig. Or the birds may consume the berries then pass them out in their droppings.

Happy Christmas enjoy it under the Mistletoe.

Nature Notes Something Completely Different ... (Barry Shimmield)



Normally my Nature Notes cover local items in and around Gunton and this time I intended to write about one of the bird species in my garden at this time of year. But I found it difficult to wax lyrical about the rook, crow, pigeon or magpie although I guess each is quite unique in its own way.



So instead, I have chosen a family of birds that have often visited my son’s garden over the last few years. They are flightless, third largest in the world, (can grow up to 5 feet tall), with huge 3-toed claws. The female has produced one “baby” each year which the male bird brings to the garden, where it quickly matures and then moves away to find its own patch in the nearby rain forest.

The adult birds are extremely colourful with deep blue heads and necks, 2 bright red “wattles” which hang down and a huge “casque” on top of their heads. They are vegetarian, very gentle (unless provoked), have become quite used to the presence of humans and are very happy to pose for photographs.

They are the *Southern Cassowary* and to see them you will need an airline ticket to Mission Beach near Cairns on the North East coast of Queensland, Australia, which is quite a long trip I’m afraid.

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GWCP Committee.

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