

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

July – August 2016



Gunton Wood

The summer holidays have meant that we've had visits from some of our younger workers. Max has been coming along with his mum Liz since he was only two, but now that he's six and at school, he can only come during the holidays, however he is still just as enthusiastic and always brings his own wheelbarrow and rake. One week Christine brought along her four year old granddaughter Alyssa, who also brought her own wheelbarrow and rake and enjoyed her cold drink sitting on the bench with



Ivor. Then in the last week of the holidays Ken's great grandson Will joined us and worked harder than most of us, using one of our large wheelbarrows to cart cut grass away from the wild flower meadow (he was gasping for a cup of tea by the time we finished and had to have his first). As for the older workers, we have been quite busy too. Paul has built 3 new benches with donated wood. Two have been installed at the coffee table to replace the rickety fence that finally gave way (are the men eating too many cakes?) The third bench has been put at the top of the PwH field. We've tidied the nursery, which was completely overgrown, and have rescued quite a lot of young trees which should now be in much better condition to be planted out into the wood in the

autumn. We've also been keeping the path edges and entrances clear of nettles and brambles and have continued attacking the dock weeds and green alkanet in Moore's Lane. One rainy Thursday when only a few hardy souls came along, we cleared the end of the ditch near to PwH, which had become completely silted up. While we were

down there, we cleared the overgrowth along the PwH path towards the railway bridge – a good morning's work from a small number of people. The on-going problem of duck weed in the pond continues to give us plenty of work to do, but at least the pond is in quite a good condition again now. The ramp to the dipping platform has deteriorated and has been cordoned off until it can be repaired. By far the biggest job during the last few weeks has been the cutting and raking of the wild flower meadow and the B&B area. Waveney Norse lent us a large motorised grass cutter, which took David on a hair-raising trip around the meadow, he assured us he was in control, but we all kept at a safe distance! We then spent another couple of weeks using our mowers to give a shorter cut. During the school summer holidays we usually experience some vandalism and unfortunately, this year was no different. One week our wheelie bin was set alight and the fire brigade had to be called, they soon got it under control and all that was left was a charred heap of plastic. Waveney council were informed and the next day a replacement bin was supplied.



Foxburrow Wood

There was not much done in Foxburrow during July and August apart from a group going down there one week to clear the paths at the Gunton Church Lane end. We do hope to be clearing the ditches and sweeping the boardwalks soon.

Nature Reserve – by Ray Adcock, SWT Warden

“During March we continued to work on the hedge along Leisure Way and throughout the summer the hedge and the area that was covered with brambles have greened up nicely. It makes the area on both sides of Leisure Way look so much better and Gordon and his mower keep the grass under control. Litter from the Filling Station and walkers dropping litter going to PwH is still an ongoing problem. The summer has been spent keeping the paths and the area behind the boundary fence clear which is being replaced in part during the autumn. The orchids on the meadow this year were outstanding. It was the best show of orchids that I can remember on the meadow and not to be outdone the reserve orchids were also good. The meadow has also been a show of colour with the flowers of knapweed and fleabane and also an abundance of bees. The ponds have had their moorhen chicks, both sets of parents having two broods although predation has reduced numbers. Kestrels have been nesting in the dead tree in the reserve which has caused quite a bit of interest. Two chicks were raised and they hung around for some time after they fledged”.

Look Out For – by Janet Field

“One of the pleasures of working in the woodlands is observing the Speckled Wood butterfly which frequently appears during our coffee break. It is a creature of damp and shady woodlands but the male, in particular, seeks out sunlit vantage points to bask in the sun with its wings open. This butterfly happily flits and flutters about, even landing sometimes on a worker's clothing. It can be seen during March to October from a succession of different broods. However in the 1976 drought this brown butterfly became rarer as its favourite habitat of dampness and shade declined. Now though, 40 years on, re-colonisation has occurred and we can all enjoy this friendly butterfly which really does flutter by. If you were fortunate enough to purchase one of our 2016 calendars there is a lovely picture of the Speckled Wood depicted for the month of March.”



Social Events

Orwell River Cruise – Tuesday 12th July 2016



In typical woodland workers style we set off from Gunton on time at 08.30am in fine and dry conditions. Although rain was promised we arrived in Ipswich to a bright sunshine welcome. We boarded the 'Orwell Lady' and settled in on the sun deck to wait for the boat to negotiate the first lock. We cruised up to and under the Orwell Bridge which looks huge from the water. On the river were several different types of craft including sailing barges which looked magnificent under sail. Reaching the Felixstowe dock area there were large container ships being unloaded by even larger cranes. The bay was calm and we reached Shotley Point where we went through the lock into the marina. It was a short walk from the boat to the Shipwreck public house for our fish and chip lunch, after which we walked across the boatyard to the HMS Ganges Museum. We were given an entertaining

talk by one of the volunteers on the way of life for the 15 year old recruits who were stationed at the training school. We then had free time to look around at all the photos and exhibits on display. Only then did the rain appear and we made a quick dash back to the boat. Once through the lock we had a thunderstorm which whipped up the bay and the water became quite choppy, but after a short time we reached the calmness of the river, the sun came out and we cruised back to Ipswich. It was an excellent day out for our 52 passengers.

Bingo with Fish & Chips – Thursday 8th September 2016 7pm (SOLD OUT)

The Fish and Chip Bingo is at St Benedict's Church Hall, 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

Donations of raffle prizes would be most welcome on the evening.

Snape Christmas Show - Saturday December 10th 2016

We will be organising a trip to the Christmas Spectacular at Snape again this year. It will be Saturday 10th December 2016 for a matinee show leaving Gunton Church Lane at 1.00 pm.

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

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

We have organised a 3 night - 4 day trip to the Cotswolds on the above dates through Belle Coaches Holidays. We will be staying at the Best Western Premier Blundson House near Swindon. The cost of the trip is £319pp with a single supplement of £45pp, limited single rooms are available. Holiday insurance, which is not included, is £17.50pp and payable at the time of booking.

GWCP 2017 Calendar

The 2017 “Mug Shots” calendar is now on sale at £5 with the theme of Suffolk Wildlife Trust nature reserves. Available from Rosemary Briggs – 01502 515944.

Nature Notes – by Val and Barry Shimmield

“It was a quiet, windless day in early August just after a rain shower had passed. Outside the entrance gate to Gunton St Peter’s Church, the afternoon sun produced a dazzling display of light flashes from a cloud of more than a hundred bronze bodies wheeling and twisting as they snapped up a delicious meal of fruit flies and mosquitoes. The Brown Hawker Dragonfly is one of our most sociable insect friends and they will travel long distances from the ponds where they were born to gather in feeding parties. Their chocolate brown bodies with tiny yellow and blue markings reflected the sunlight producing a brief but unforgettable picture. These fascinating creatures have been on planet earth for 300 million years. They start life as nymphs from eggs laid on plant leaves just below the water, and then after two to four years, they emerge, begin to breathe air and in the space of 3 hours shed their skin to become the winged dragonfly that we all know. They live for only 2 or 3 weeks during which time they mate, lay their eggs and the cycle repeats. One of their most interesting features is their massive bulbous eyes incorporating 30,000 lenses giving them superb 360 degree vision.”

