

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

March – April 2017

Gunton Wood

Storm Doris, which arrived at the end of February, gave us a lot of work to do in March and April. About nine trees were either blown down or had to be cut down because they were leaning dangerously over pathways. The chainsaw was out and the resulting logs were used for path edging, replacing uneven and unsteady logs in Woodhenge, and for repairing & reinforcing fences around the pond and the wild wood area. One large tree was blown down onto the school fence, so that was cut down and several parts of the main trunk left near to the fence to rot down.



Waveney Norse came along for a couple of days, to complete the work that had been allocated to them in the annual tree inspection. Several large trees had to be reduced to prevent them becoming top-heavy. They brought a chipper with them, which they used to dispose of all the top scrub and they cut the larger trunks and branches into yet more logs for the men to tidy up and use. Our “trolley dolly” has been in great demand for shifting all these logs and has been repaired several times. Our work force has a vast range of skills, so it is always up and running in time for the next work party. With all this tree work, some of the men were starting to think they were becoming proficient lumberjacks however they were brought down to earth one week when they were removing yet another tree that was leaning dangerously. They tied ropes around the tree to guide it when they started cutting, but they pulled the ropes so tight, the tree just gently fell over of its own accord (not quite so professional after all).

The ladies have been busy with the more genteel jobs, mostly in the B&B area. A lot of small spreading plants have been planted, in the hope that they will restrict the grass. Clover, red nettles and yellow rattle have all been planted and some of the yellow rattle seeds that we sowed last year have started to grow so that is quite pleasing. All the new trees and plants have been watered, which we don't usually expect to have to do until mid-summer, but the recent drought has caused quite a lot of problems. The girls have also been splitting large clumps of

snowdrops and transplanting them into different areas of the wood. But, of course, they have also been in the ditch trying to keep it clear in the hope that when we do get some rain, it will be able to flow freely (they like nothing more than getting their wellies on and splashing about in the mud!).

We had a large delivery of chippings, so it was all hands to the deck to get them shifted and spread. We started on Moore's Lane, which is too far to push wheel barrows full of chippings, so our newly-acquired tractor had to be brought out. Ivor was the driver for the first week, but the following week David had been passed fit enough to drive again, so he got some practise in on the tractor. When Ivor was driving he had difficulty in getting out of first gear, but the next week, David got it stuck in fifth gear – the Norwich City fans amongst us took great



delight in the fact that the “Tractor Boys” need more training!

A team of men have spent two or three work parties over on the railway line, strimming and mowing, to keep the path wide and clear. They will stop now until after the birds have finished nesting. Some of the bird boxes in the wood that had been badly damaged by woodpeckers (and possibly squirrels?), have been repaired, but this year we have been so busy that we have not been able to do the annual box cleaning and survey. Hopefully the birds won't mind nesting on top of any debris left from last year.



As usual, we had some vandalism during the school holidays and, as usual, we have ‘cleared up, repaired and replaced’. Twice there have been logs thrown into the pond and one week part of the fence around the pond was knocked down and thrown in, along with one of the bird tables.



But, to end on a happier note, we were very pleased to receive a cheque for £1000 sponsorship from Adam Noble, the new manager of Pleasurewood Hills. They have sponsored us for three years now, which helps with insurance, maintaining tools and the tractor, and generally keeping the group running, for which we are very grateful.

Foxburrow Wood

One Thursday, the work party decamped to Foxburrow Wood, to finish off work that was started in February. About 30 young trees were planted in the areas that had previously been cleared and prepared. A new handrail was installed on the steps at the end of Gainsborough Drive and the steps top dressed with type 1 stones. The new mesh on the boardwalks was finished off and a ton of type 1 stones was spread onto the muddiest parts of the path where there is no boardwalk. The bluebell area was cleared of brambles, although the last few years' work has obviously paid dividends, because there was nowhere near the amount of brambles that we have found in previous years. It was a lovely sunny day and once again we had coffee and cakes on Yvon & Jenny's lawn.



Social Events

RHS Anglia In Bloom Awards – Friday Mar 31st

David and Rosemary went to Broadlands in Oulton Broad at 7pm on Friday March 31st to collect another RHS "It's Your Neighbourhood" and "Anglia In Bloom" award, we were given the new top award, National Certificate of Distinction. This is the first time the awards ceremony has been held here but hopefully not the last as the setting was excellent. The evening started with a very interesting presentation on the work that has been done in Bonds Meadow over the last 15 years. The event was hosted by Brian Thornton and awards presented by Councillor Peter Collecot, Chairman of the Council. Tea, coffee and a lovely buffet was provided afterwards. In the photo, is Peter Collecot presenting the award to David.



AGM – Wednesday April 19th 2017

We held our 20th AGM at Gunton Primary Academy School. 44 members attended, including Cllr. Keith Patience, Chris Brooks from The Jack Rose Society and Michael Strand from SWT. Apologies were received from Cllrs. Steven Ardley and Mary Rudd, also, from Chris Chapman, Peter Farrington, Mrs. Pinkney, Liz & James Denny and Mr. & Mrs. Fitt. The Chairman gave his report on the year's activities also the achievements and some of the problems encountered during the past 12 months. The accounts were presented by Barry Shimmield on behalf of the treasurer and showed a surplus which was larger than previous years due to sponsorship from Pleasurewood Hills, successful fund raising events, sales of the calendar and cash donations from various members. For these we are extremely grateful. Our guest speaker, Mr. Chris Brooks, gave us a slide show of "Lowestoft Then and Now" from pre WW2 to present day. His slide show was very well received and brought many memories to the old Lowestoftians present. The existing Committee were all willing to stand again and, as there was one new nomination, the floor was asked to accept the election of Peter Smith. The new Committee was then elected en-bloc. The honorary auditor Mr. Lawson was duly elected to continue for the present year. Our thanks to him. Updates on the various projects for GWCP were presented. The long term work plans for both Gunton Wood and Foxburrow Wood were discussed. Social events were discussed for the previous year and for the coming year. There was then an illustrated talk by Michael Strand on the proposed new purchase of land for the Carlton Marshes Reserve. He mentioned that the appeal for £1million was launched by Sir David Attenborough and to date over half of this has been raised. He talked about the value to wildlife that the venture would bring to the area. AOB : Barry talked about the outline planning application for the development on the land adjacent to the Travelodge. It contains an application to build 17 dwellings on the site where approval was given for a nursing home. There will be further ongoing ecology studies carried out during the coming months. It is expected to be given approval as the planning committee is in favour. There were a few days left to send any comments through to the authorities. The meeting closed at 9.40pm. David Briggs (Chairman)

Spring Litter Pick – Saturday April 22nd

Unfortunately, the Spring Litter Pick has been deferred, possibly until the Autumn.

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

This is now full but we do have a waiting list. A 3 night - 4 day trip to the Cotswolds through Belle Coaches Holidays. Staying at the Best Western Premier Blundson House near Swindon. The cost is £319pp with a single supplement of £45pp.

Look Out For – by Janet Field

In 1912 Charles Rothschild produced his original plan for nature conservation in the UK. He financed the Society for Promotion of Nature Reserves (SPNR) which eventually became the parent body of the county wildlife trusts. His daughter Dame Miriam Rothschild lived at the family home at Ashton Wold in Northants. She was passionate about all areas of conservation, one aspect of which was wild flowers. She even co-operated with Lady Bird Johnson to encourage the sowing of wild flower seed on roadside verges here and in the USA.

After Dame Miriam passed away a memorial service was held in her honour. When members of the congregation exited the synagogue they were each given envelopes containing wild flower seed which had been collected from her wild flower meadow at Ashton Wold.

I was lucky enough to obtain one of these envelopes and sowed the contents, which gave a good show the following year. The resultant flower seed of the ox-eye daisies was harvested. These seeds and a few plants have now been introduced into our B&B area and we are delighted to have this historical connection on view during the months of May to September.

Ox-eye daisies are easy to recognise as they grow up to 1m tall with bold white flower heads, 25-30mm across, and bright yellow disc florets in the centre.

Ivy Friend or Foe? (reproduced from an article in GWCP's 2014 calendar) – by Barry Shimmield

Whenever a group of woodland experts discuss this issue, it usually ends up with blood on the floor! Is an ivy-clad tree an asset or an anathema? First, some facts, ivy is not a parasite; it does not steal nutrients from the tree and its roots are confined to the bark causing no structural damage. It provides frost protection enabling thrushes, blackbirds and robins to feed throughout the winter months while its tree stems offer nesting opportunities for wrens and spotted fly-catchers. Its foliage and fruits can be poisonous to mammals but only if eaten in large quantities. In the autumn, many bees, wasps and butterflies feed on the ivy flower's nectar and pollen. So, in the overall balance of Nature, it is a big plus. In Gunton Wood, we leave the ivy on the tree, unless we judge that its bulk produces a wind-sail effect that might cause a tree with poor roots to topple over in a dangerous location. Only in these cases do we attempt to kill it by cutting its stems

Dog Walkers, Please, Please, Please

Would all dog walkers that use the Burial Park, including the path around the perimeter, please put their dog on a lead. It is one of the few areas where dogs are required to be on a lead, for obvious reasons. It would be a shame if eventually dogs were not allowed into the Burial Park and a fence erected around it, this would mean no access from Gunton Wood. If you do see someone walking their dog in the Burial Park, would you please, politely remind them that it is a dogs-on-lead area. I'm sure people do not mean to do this, they just forget because so much of our area has a dogs-off-lead policy. This is consecrated ground after all. Thank you.

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