

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

August / September 2008



Sally, Barry, BB and David

Gunton Fun Day 12th July

After months of planning, Saturday 12th July dawned with leaden skies and a grim forecast. Nevertheless, spirits were high as a band of volunteers assembled on the school playing field to erect the gazebos, marquees and the million and one items needed for the fete. This year we had arranged a joint event with Gunton Primary School and between us we planned to have 2 displays in the central arena, 9 games, 17 stalls plus 6 raffles and competitions, so there was to be plenty of choice. A flyer had been delivered to every house in the surrounding area



Richard Emery with his bees

and Beach Radio had agreed to send Beach Bunny along to open the show. By 1 o'clock all was ready, Bunny rang the Ship's Bell and for the next 3 hours everyone was rushed off their feet. After a performance by the IDC Diamond Cheerleaders the tug-o-war matches got under way, followed by a great display by the Lowestoft Dog Agility team, culminating in spectacular scenes of them jumping through flaming hoops. Games on offer included penalty shooting, boat racing, coin roll, stocks, coconut shy, crabbing and, of course, the inevitable bouncy castle. The school catering ladies were kept busy providing refreshments, the bottle draw and raffle prize tables were popular and there was a lot of interest in the country craft section where the art of wood turning and an observation bee hive were demonstrated. A rain shower towards the end of the afternoon forced



Just one more



....heave !

people to take cover but, considering how bad the weather could have been, we were very fortunate to achieve an attendance of more than 500 visitors. Fund raising results were £1061 for GWCP and nearly £1300 for the School PSFA, an excellent performance. To all those involved in helping and contributing to this success we extend our grateful thanks

GWCP only	£
Cakes, preserves	158
Main raffle	215
Bottle draw	194
Plants	77
Nearly new	108
Books	47
Merchandise	92
Boat racing	38
Coin roll	17
Coconut shy	67
Ice cream	20
Pitch fees, donors	107
Total	1140
<i>Less expenses</i>	
Dog agility show	25
St John's	19
Publicity	26
Other	9
Total	79
Profit	1061

Finally, if anyone would like a copy of the 18 minute DVD of the event, photographed and edited by Molly and Ray Adcock, please contact Rosemary on 515944. It costs just £1 which will go towards group funds.

Poplars School Visit

At the end of June we were pleased to play host to 72 youngsters aged 8 to 9 years from Poplars Primary School. The study programme covered the history of Gunton Wood and its Church, wildlife habitats and identifying as many woodland creatures as possible. The day-long visit also included a picnic and play area interlude resulting in plenty of tired legs for the long walk back to school. David and Barry spent the morning showing them our trees, flowers, birds, newts, frogs and mini-beasts and, amazingly on-cue, a real live baby muntjac deer, looking just like Bambi, strolled nonchalantly past. Everyone including the teachers agreed it was one of our most successful school visits and the 72 illustrated "thankyou" letters that we received said it all.

Here are some extracts:

Thank you for your time to show a bunch of children how you changed a wood into something really special, incredible and magical. You even know which leaf comes off a tree ... you are really smart. It was sad that one of the black poplars was dying and the other one was on the wonk too. My favourite animal was the newt which was really cute. Best thing I learnt was that foxgloves can be poisonous but make a medicine that saves peoples lives. When we saw the muntjac I turned fast my eyes watered. Thank you for showing us frogs and which water snails are good and not need to get a newt for my birthday. My favourite part was everything.



Social Events

South Elmham Hall Thursday 31st July

David organised this visit for about 20 members to be taken on a guided walk of the community woodlands and water meadows which are being managed as a Countryside Conservation area. After a very interesting tour, led by the owner John Sanderson, everybody retired to Batemans Barn to enjoy tea and home-made cakes.

Wells and Walsingham Thursday 4th September

Once again it's a full coach for what promises to be a really interesting outing to the attractive harbour of Wells-next-the-Sea, the very unusual train ride to Walsingham and a chance to find out why this village is a centre of religious pilgrimage. The coach departs from St Peters Church, Gunton Church Lane at **8 am prompt**.

Snape Christmas Spectacular Thursday 18th December 2008

Another full house! David has already received completed forms from all 57 participants and you are reminded that the payment of £21 per person is now due. Please make out cheques payable to GWCP. The coach will leave Gunton Church Lane at 1 pm, for the 4 pm matinee performance, returning at about 7.30 pm.

Main Outing Spring 2009

For next year, following many requests, we are working on plans for a 3, or possibly 4, night visit to Cornwall where there are so many interesting places to visit we are spoilt for choice. The likely dates are during the last week of April or the first week of May and we will give more details as soon as we can. Watch this space!

The Woodland Scene



Meadow Brown on Fleabane

Following the wettest August since records began, a walk through Gunton Wood is more like a trek through an Amazon rain forest. In the wildflower meadow, some Broad-leaved Helleborine bring up the rearguard to the orchid display while splashes of colour are restricted to the purple of Tufted Vetch and the bright yellow of Fleabane. Our fencing crews have performed sterling work in repairing the nursery and pond fencing, the latter due to vandalism which was mercifully little this year. [Until last week when a boy racer tried to drive his brand new car through our main gates, which were closed at the time! He is now explaining his actions to the police.] Work parties have been well supported, often up to 30 strong. Could it be the cakes that are nearly always on offer? Tasks included weeding and bramble pulls and it will soon be time for haymaking. **Saturday morning work will be resumed in a few weeks time so our regulars can expect reminder phone calls.**

Cuttings

- **2009 Calendar** The theme for next year's calendar is **Pubs, Pies and Puddings**, so no prizes for guessing what the contents are. The print run is limited, so if you want to reserve yours, at a cost of £4 per copy, please call Rosemary. Also you can order new edition GWCP Christmas Cards at £2.40 per packet of 8.
- **Gunton Nature Reserve** Suffolk Wildlife Trust have made a good start on cutting access paths around the Reserve and we have spent a few Thursday mornings assisting with bramble pulling and spreading "green hay" harvested from Gunton Meadow. Later this year we have promised to help with tree planting.
- **Travelodge Hotel, Leisure Way** Site work is still at a standstill. Natural England are expected to issue a licence soon enabling the Environmental Consultants (Aspect Technology) to commence a new **great crested newt mitigation survey**, which will take some weeks to complete. Interestingly, we now understand that the Contractors have promised to carry out remedial work to one of the ponds in the new Nature Reserve in an effort to alleviate their poor performance on the hotel site. We shall watch with interest.
- **Sea Front Air Show** Many thanks to all 36 members who helped with the bucket collections. The amount collected for the two days was £80,840 from an estimated total attendance of 445,000. Added to this was another £35,000 at the Park and Ride venues. The Air Festival Committee is delighted and has invited David to a Presentation Evening when GWCP will receive a commission donation in recognition of our efforts.
- **Dogs** We are experiencing a spate of dog fouling which is spoiling people's pleasure in walking the woods. Discussions are ongoing with WDC Environmental Officers which, we hope, will lead to new initiatives.
- **Boundary Committee Proposals** We have commented on the draft proposals for Unitary Local Government in so far as we understand how GWCP will be affected if current WDC services are transferred to a new body located in Norwich. There are many unknowns in these proposals and we will monitor developments.
- **Beware SatNav Drivers** Dog walkers using the Gunton Church Lane main entrance should be on their guard against angry motorists who end up at the wooden gates with TomTom telling them that they have arrived at Pleasurewood Hills. Convoys of cars try to turn simultaneously and there have been several near accidents. We are working with Pleasurewood to try to get the SatNav mapping errors corrected.

Nature Notes **An Uphill Battle**

Have you ever wondered how shorebirds manage to drink when they often dip just the tip of their beaks into the water. Scientists at Bristol University have just completed a lab study copying the way that the bird vibrates its beak scissors forcing the water droplets **to flow uphill**. As the drop is compressed it leans forward producing a net force which drives it uphill at a speed of up to 1 metre per second. Amazing!! **Nature did it first.**

