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## Gunton Woodland Community Project

# NEWSLETTER

October/November/December 2007



*First of all, an apology for the lateness of this Newsletter. The Editor has lots of excuses, such as being inundated with visitors, the necessity to complete the 2008 Calendar and much more. Can't wait for retirement! Anyway, here it is at last, and for a change, we will begin with ....*

### The Social Scene

#### **Summer Evening Party (Saturday 28/7/07)**

85 members, mainly woodland workers and their families, squeezed into the garden of 70 GCL to enjoy an early evening BBQ and sangria party. David and Colin worked together to convert two BBQ drums so that pork shoulders could be cooked simultaneously on rotary spits, an ingenious feat of engineering. The raffle, cake, bottle, book, merchandise and plant stalls all did well, generating a welcome profit of £560 for group funds.

#### **Gooderstone Water Gardens and Oxburgh Hall (Wednesday 5/9/07)**

The day started overcast and a slight drizzle began as our coach made its way through Breckland towards Gooderstone. Fortunately, the weather steadily improved and 50 digital cameras were soon working overtime recording the reflections of specimen trees and shrubs lining the criss-crossing waterways, while an attractive replica of Monet's Bridge triggered thoughts of next year's expedition to Giverny. Having established that the kingfisher was not going to make an appearance it was time to board the coach for a short journey to The Great Danes, a small country inn at Beachamwell, that is after everyone had put on their best smile for the traditional group photograph .....



After enjoying a very pleasant lunch, the Group then went on to the National Trust property Oxburgh Hall, a most interesting and attractive moated Tudor House, full of fine furniture and works of art. Both Ray and Molly Adcock deserve our warmest thanks for organising such an enjoyable day's outing.

#### **Christmas Spectacular at Snape Maltings (Wednesday 19/12/07)**

This trip is fully booked and there is a small waiting list, so we are sorry if you are one of the unlucky ones. The coach departs Gunton St Peter's Church at 1 pm sharp and we expect to be back by 7 pm. The show starts at 4 pm and theatre tickets plus details of restaurant options will be given out on the coach. David is organising this one and we are all looking forward to a new experience.

#### **Springtime in Paris (Friday 2/5/08 to Monday 5/5/08)**

How do you fancy a romantic interlude in Paris next May? Following the success of our first Continental trip to Holland, David and Belle Coaches have been busy planning a 4 day (3 night) excursion to take in the magic of Monet's Garden, the splendour of Versailles and the fascination of Montmartre. After taking *Le Shuttle* we will stay at the Holiday Inn, Velizy, in the South-West corner of Paris, a comfortable and spacious hotel with ensuite, airconditioned bedrooms. On Saturday, we drive to Giverny to visit the enchanting gardens of the impressionist painter and then spend the evening exploring the sights around the imposing Basilica Sacré Coeur. Sunday will be spent at Versailles where you can choose between the Palace, the Gardens, Marie Antoinette's Estate or the world famous street markets in Versailles itself. On the journey home we will pause at Santa Flora Castle in Belgium for the history museum, refreshments and a little shopping for wine and spirits. The total cost is £247 per person, **excluding** lunches, a hotel dinner on Saturday and admission to Versailles. Everything else is included. Single room supplement is £79 (limited availability). To reserve your place, contact David with a £40 pp deposit. We already have many expressions of interest so please don't delay and avoid disappointment.

## Woods and Work Parties

After our non-existent Summer we are now enjoying those ultra quiet Autumn days when the leaves turn to gold (or in our case, a yellowy brown!) and the hedgerows are loaded with berries. It has to be one of the best



Sloes



Guelder rose

years ever for sloes ..... great for making sloe gin .... and the guelder rose shrubs planted near the pond are a picture. Talking of the pond, it is a fight to keep the duckweed under control this year. We hope soon to rebuild the water level control dam with salvaged greenheart piles from the beach; so we shall need some strong volunteers!! We also plan to clean out the well.

A feature of our work parties this Summer has been haymaking which we have undertaken in Gunton Meadow near Tesco, the open area at the end of Gainsborough Drive and, of course, our own wildflower meadow. Cutting and raking off grass is an essential part of successful management of this habitat.



Haymaking on Gunton Wood Wildflower Meadow

**Saturday morning work parties resume in November so**

**please call David for up-to-date advice on the jobs, location and timing. We need you!!**

On 20<sup>th</sup> September, we passed our 20,000 cumulative working hour milestone, a splendid achievement and, to celebrate, we broke into several bottles of bubbly and an iced cake for our mid-morning break. After that, for safety reasons(!), we decided to put the tools away early for once.

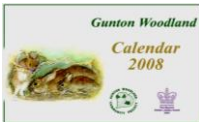
## Exxonmobil Grants

Over the years we have been fortunate in winning a total of 5 grants from Exxonmobil's Volunteer Involvement Programme, by virtue of Colin Fitt's participation in our work parties. Colin has now retired from the Company and, in wishing him a restful retirement(?), we would like to thank him very much for his help in benefiting our funds to such an extent. Exxonmobil's latest and final grant was for £500.

## Vandalism

We have suffered from the perennial bouts of vandalism during school holidays and weekend evenings when groups of teenagers can think of nothing better to do than break fences and even knock down bird boxes before smashing them. You don't know whether to feel anger or sorrow for them. If you witness events like this please call 999 on your mobile but do not get involved. These youths are unpredictable and it just isn't worth it.

## 2008 GWCP Calendar and Notelets



As a special treat for lovers of attractive pubs, good food and an interesting walk, next year's calendar describes 12 hostelries that you will definitely want to visit, so place your order now with Rosemary (515944). At £3.95 each, half of the print run has already been sold!

Rosemary also has Notelets with Keukenhof pictures for sale at £2.20 per packet of eight.

## Bits and Bobs

- **Coppicing Course** BTCV will be conducting a coppicing and hedge-laying course in Gunton Wood on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November from 10 am to 3 pm, we will provide lunch for all participants. Please contact David if you wish to participate, preference will be given to work party members who missed out last time.
- **Feathered Visitors** Two *yellow browed warblers* seem to have taken up residence near the willow coppice in Moore's Lane. Although elusive they have been spotted many times over the past 3 weeks, along with the occasional *goldcrest* and *firecrest*. The warblers are probably en route from Russia to Spain.
- **Regeneration of Corton Heath (aka Gunton Warren)** If you would like to help this project, aimed at encouraging the *stonechat* and *Dartford warbler* to return to the Denes, please contact Nick Blacker on 574819. He is looking for helpers to grow on ling and bell heather seedlings at home, prior to planting on site.
- **Walks and Talks** David has twice used our recently acquired digital projector to illustrate his talks to local groups on the Gunton Wood Project. And already another 5 engagements have been booked for the future. Guided tours of the wood are also much in demand. Such is the price of fame!
- **Information Leaflet** After a gap of 6 years, Barry has at last rewritten and updated the GWCP leaflet and a copy is enclosed with this Newsletter with our compliments. It will be posted on our website in due course, along with recent Newsletters, all in *pdf* format (for the benefit of any computer buffs out there!)
- **Travelodge Motel** Unsurprisingly, planning approval has been given for the construction of a 47 room hotel close to Potters Kiln, soon to reopen as a Harvester Restaurant. We did comment on the cramped design of the building and the risk of damage to surrounding trees during construction, but with little effect.

## Nature Notes

This is more like a quiz. The low plastic fence surrounding the site for the new Travelodge is part of a Newt Mitigation Programme. Travelling newts are diverted into pitfall traps that are located every few feet along the fence from where they are released every day into a safe area. Each trap has 3 objects in it; some vegetation, a stick and a piece of bark. What are they for? (See below for the answers)

The vegetation acts as an amphibian refuge  
The stick is an escape ladder for mammals  
The piece of bark becomes a floating raft after heavy rain