

January 2018 Update



Firstly, what a beautiful day, it's on days like this that I really appreciate working somewhere so beautiful and I'm sure you feel that way when you volunteer here? I thought I would share some photos I have snapped on my way to work and whilst walking to the visitor centre this morning...



Welcome to the first Volunteer Update of 2018, where we are mostly looking forward to all that is coming up this year. I would however just like to say a big thank you to all of you who helped with Christmas tree sales last year. We had another really good year of sales, with over 500 fir and spruce trees bought at Bedgebury adorning our customers' homes. Christmas tree sales is always a fun role to get involved in and I think those of you that did really enjoyed yourselves, contributing 77 hours of your time. Thank you also to those who have passed on feedback to Craig.



Updates from the Bedgebury Teams

Pinetum / Tree Team News

The tree team have been busy, with help from the Wednesday Wild Crew volunteers and Sunday volunteers, doing a thorough winter tidy up through the pinetum. They are concentrating their efforts over the winter months on the eastern side of the pinetum – the area between Lady Mildred's Carriage Way and the forest. There is a lot of *Rhododendron ponticum* in these sections, which, you may well be aware, is an invasive species that spreads quickly and can destruct other habitats as well as specimens in the pinetum. They will also be clearing stream lines to ensure they are smooth flowing, continuing to re-cage and clear around specimens, clear regeneration of lawson cypress, scot's pine and birch and pruning back the dogwood throughout the whole site.

You may also notice that the hedge between the overflow car park field and the main pinetum has been removed. This hedge was put in as a shelterbelt when the specimens were first planted and is no longer necessary as our specimens start to mature. This will greatly enhance the panoramic view when you first enter the pinetum. The gate is no longer necessary and you can see below Julian, Emma and Alan busy removing it.



Alongside our current apprentices, Emma and Phil, we have two new members of the tree team who are both ex-volunteers! Nik is covering Cat's maternity cover for a year and Alan is working here for three months to help tackle the backlog of work.

Don't forget to keep an eye on Emma's [Blog](#), January's edition is coming soon...



The team have been using their new Alaskan mill tool to make planks from a fallen swamp cypress tree near Marshal's Lake. Once air dried we are planning to use the timber to frame Florilegium art work for an upcoming exhibition in the pinetum.

A **tree audit** continues to take place of the approximately 12,000 trees in the collection. Cat started this in the summer and I am continuing with the help of the tree team and other team members. The information gained,

such as whether the tree is established, has a tree tie or has died will all be entered into our new Tree Database, IrisBG. The database includes information on whether the tree was grown from wild collected seed, if so, where the seed was collected, who collected it and raised the seedling and the date of planting and location in the pinetum.

We are always looking for more volunteers to join Wednesday Wild Crew and the Sunday Volunteers. We need a minimum of eight to run the Sunday Group, so please tell your

friends about this great opportunity to work with our tree team in the pinetum. Dates until the end of February are as follows:

Date	Meet @	Working @
Wednesday 31 st January	Area Office	Section 31, 38 and 18 Stream line clearance and Rhododendron clearing and burning
Wednesday 7 th February	Visitor Centre	Play Area – spreading woodchip prior to half term
Sunday 11 th February	Area Office	Section 19 and 31 - Rhododendron clearing
Wednesday 14 th February	Area Office	Section 16 Hills Avenue – Ditch clearance
Wednesday 21 st February	Visitor Centre	Visitor Centre / Car Park – dogwood pruning and other tidying
Sunday 25 th February	Area Office	Section 3 – Scrub and weed clearance
Wednesday 28 th February	Visitor Centre	Visitor Centre – tidying up dwarf conifer beds

Visitor Attraction Team News

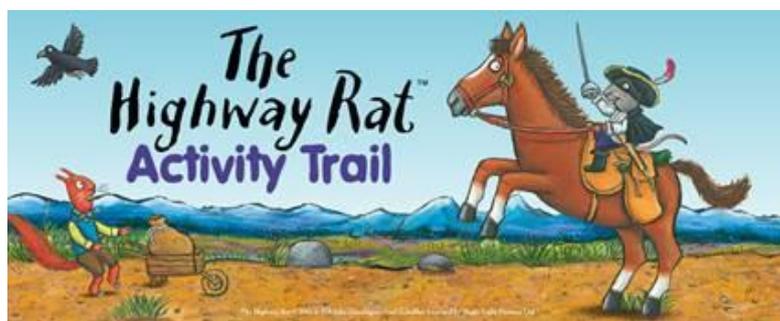
Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre welcome a new member of staff to their team – Becky joins us full time, she will also be assisting Jo with Active Forests, Clare with Events and Dan Jennings with Recreation.

The Visitor Team are busy welcoming our visitors and helping them with the new Highway Rat trail which went out at the end of last year. They are also working behind the scenes on a number of projects including walking trails, Visitor First, the car park and looking at the buildings and accommodation. I will keep you up to date with anything that might interest / affect you in the future.

We are looking to recruit new Visitor Experience Volunteers to start this spring. We have a recruitment day planned on Saturday 3rd March, so

please tell friends and family. It is a fabulous role for those who enjoy meeting people, spending time outside and sharing their love of Bedgebury.



Recreation

Dan Jennings and his team have been busy putting out the Highway Rat trail then since Christmas checking all

the play equipment in preparation for a playground inspection in early February. This includes organising new nets for the spiders web, which, would you believe cost around £4k! Some of the play equipment in the forest are reaching the end of their lifespan, as they were installed in 2006, so watch this space for news of new play equipment.

Active Forests

Sadly it is too late to book your place on this weekend's 5 and 10 mile race around Bedgebury Forest, organised by **Nice Work**, but there are more races organised for the summer, see the [Nice Work](#) website for more details. We are always interested to hear from you if you wish to marshal at any of the races – apparently the Canicross event is a really fun event to be part of – the next Canicross event is planned for 20th May.

We have recently started offering **Nordic Walking** sessions at Bedgebury. I was fortunate to be able to attend a trial session last week which, once I had got over my fear of attending a group exercise activity (goes back to school days!) I actually really enjoyed it and could see the benefit over walking without poles. If you are interested in joining, John is running trial sessions this Saturday, 3rd February and a Learn to Nordic Walk session starts the following week. To find out more go to the [website](#).

We have an exciting new event starting on Sunday 25th February - **Buggy Running!** If you have young children or grandchildren and wish to join a fun 5 km run then see this [website](#) for more details.

Events

This year's concerts are:



Friday 15th June
Paloma Faith (SOLD OUT)
Saturday 16th June
Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott, plus special guest Billy Bragg

Nearer the time I will be looking for volunteers to help out with meeting and greeting at the concerts, so keep the date in mind.

The Hunting of the Snark

Following up from the 2016 performance from theatre company, Burn the Curtain, which saw theatre goers running through the forest at night in pursuit of Little Red Riding Hood, this year's Promenade Theatre Performance is entitled 'The Hunting of the Snark'. Based on the nonsense poem by Lewis Carroll, the show will be accompanied by 'Snark Hunter', an innovative app which will bring the poem to life.

This will take place at Bedgebury on 25th, 26th and 27th October and I will be looking for volunteers to help on the nights.

Learning Team News

The learning team are going through a few changes with staff – Karen left for maternity leave earlier this month (no news on a baby yet), we have a new team member starting to cover maternity leave in February, her name is Chantelle Jay.

The Winter trail went out in December, if you haven't already walked it I urge you to do so – the theme is Plant Hunters and features our very own Dan Luscombe! Irene is working on the Spring Trail about the history of Bedgebury.

Marketing News

We are looking to recruit a new Marketing Manager, see the [civil service jobs](#) for more details, closing date is 12th February.

The Friends of Bedgebury news



The Friends of Bedgebury have a wide variety of events coming up, from dawn photography workshops through to evening bat walks. As always volunteers can receive a 10% discount on their events, see [here](#) for more details.

If you are looking for a gift, there is some new and exciting stock in their shop in the visitor centre.

Wildlife at Bedgebury

As I write this, Christine George, our volunteer bird ringer, is ringing birds outside my window, which she does from November through to early spring on still, sunny weekday mornings, approximately once a fortnight. A very small audience for each session have the opportunity to observe wild birds close up, call the [Friends of Bedgebury](#) to register your interest.

Bedgebury is a fantastic place to see birds, I was lucky enough to see a hawfinch recently, along with bramblings and chaffinches, with the aid of Christine George. See the [wildlife blog](#) to find out more about wildlife spotted at Bedgebury.

The hawfinches come here from miles away because of our excellent roost facilities, the large mature conifers, however their numbers are in decline. See here for an interesting, but rather sad article about [hawfinches](#).

Time to Talk

And finally, this Thursday 1st February is Time to Talk day. Maybe you have a mental issue you want to share with someone else or you know someone that needs to share with you? Tips on how to start the conversation and so much more can be found on the [Time to Talk](#) website.