

November 2013

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Luke Wallace

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Something to Say?

If you have any news, photos, or just have something to say, please email the Editor at burtonje@gmail.com in time for the next issue.

**Deadline for
December issue –
Wednesday
27th November**

Volunteer News

With our operational volunteer teams now firmly recognised in John Allen's work programme for the Pinetum, the Wednesday Wild Crew and Sunday group are more productive than ever. A large section of the 'red carpet route' now looks immaculate, visitors can actually see across the lake when they arrive due to the recent removal of the Willow, the labelling team are now working more closely with Dan Luscombe to increase the speed of their progress through Dan's priority areas, and benches are being installed on an almost weekly basis. To add to this valuable contribution, we also now have a weekly Plumpton group to assist with arboricultural work. Overall, operational volunteering is going from strength to strength and I feel privileged to work with such dedicated and hard-working people.

The Ambassador role in its usual form will temporarily cease over the winter months due to the season's quiet nature. However, with all the FC events planned for this period, the help of this specialist group is still very much needed. The Stick Man event (23rd November onwards) is the most prominent of these and we are hoping to have some young students to assist with front line support and learn from our existing pool of experienced and professional Ambassadors during this time. Of course, there are always the Wednesday and Sunday groups if our Ambassadors fancy a change of activity over the winter.

There are many positive changes to the volunteering culture at Bedgebury to come, some of which will be implemented in January 2014. More information on this will be presented at the volunteer Christmas gathering which will be arranged for the end of the year. Watch out for that date soon!

Luke Wallace



News from the desk of Dominic Robinson

It is incredible to see the site as busy as ever over the half-term holiday with punters out enjoying the last chance to play the jungle drums, ride the trails and enjoy the array of colours of the Pinetum before the winter really sets in. Bedgebury has never looked so good and after an intense few months of work from the many volunteers across the board there is much to be proud of.

To our great relief the much anticipated storm 'St Jude' proved to have minimal effect on the specimens within the Pinetum, with relatively few 'hopeless cases' resulting from the wind damage. This is testament to the work done by the team on many of the trees to reduce crowns, monitor and remove diseased or dangerous trees. We haven't managed to check every tree yet though so if you see some 'hanging branches' or dangerous looking limbs please let someone from the FC know.

Behind the scenes work has been progressing on a number of fronts to move the site forwards including building our site master plan addressing areas for development over future years and at the start of October we underwent an audit against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (which enables the FC to use the FSC logo to say we are sustainable) for which we carried out quite a lot of preparation! The following extract is from the report

"Bedgebury is an outstanding national environmental and regional social asset being very well managed. Excellent compliance for UKWAS."

The auditors don't give praise out lightly so this really is something to be proud of. In particular the auditors focused on our use of research and monitoring to inform management as well as the provision of education programmes. They really hit on our strong points but their summary is a great commendation of everyone's work here and I would like to pass on my thanks to everyone who has worked so hard, from preparing work plans through to making labels, weeding cages and helping lead walks and school groups – thank you. Without the work of our volunteers we wouldn't be able to achieve all this, make the site look so good, engage people in the collection and achieve such an outstanding review of our sustainability credentials.

Well done all!



Wild Crew

September saw a tranquillity return to the Pinetum after the hustle and bustle of the summer holidays. Bikes, scooters and pushchairs invading the café area almost disappeared entirely but the Pinetum was certainly not deserted – plenty of visitors with or without dogs or pre-schoolers were still to be found in plentiful numbers, all enjoying the beauty of the late Summer season.

We started work clearing the overgrown ditches which run between Reflection Lake and Marshalls Lake. An unusually heavy shower had caused flooding over one of the paths although at the time of working it was a typically warm and sunny late summer's day, warm enough not to be bothered by wet feet. We stopped work briefly to introduce ourselves to John Allen and to hear about his new role at Bedgebury.

The following week took us to an area close to the end of the Boardwalk. In an effort to smarten up all areas close to the "red route" a large team, including some of the Forestry Commission Tree Team and volunteers from the Royal Bank of Scotland spent a hard mornings' work clearing scrub and brambles, weeding cages and taking down small trees.

Cages at the start of the red route were similarly smartened up the following week with fresh mulch added. This is an area very much on show for the glorious autumn colours can be clearly seen from the visitor centre balcony. During October this work progressed along the red route as far as Leaky Lake.



One Wednesday in October there were 15 volunteers (our largest number yet) including two students from Hadlow on work experience who will be attending most Wednesdays. With such a large work force we easily managed to clear the edge of the visitor centre lake from all the trees and brambles that have grown up over the last 18 months.

Tree Labelling

Tree labelling got off to a good start in September with an anniversary celebration– one year of labelling! To mark the event Liz baked a delicious homemade chocolate cake which was enjoyed by all. Two of us are now able to produce labels from scratch which means that we can keep up to speed with label making and a small but committed team meet almost every week to put labels out or to check new sections. We have completed section 6, 7, 16 and 19 and are almost at the end of section 5, with work progressing through the massive section 24, which extends from the start of the red route right up to the walled garden and up to Leaky Lake.

We're delighted that Dan is going to oversee our efforts on a weekly basis to answer our queries about missing trees and help us with identification and location. The task we have is huge and we're not sure how long it will take us to complete it but we are really enjoying the challenge and feel our skills as labellers are steadily improving!

Anna Picken

Tree Team update

The last month has been an exciting one to say the least. As some of you may be aware, I've been on a seed collecting trip to South Korea to collect seeds from rare tree species. This trip was a joint venture with the millennium seed bank at Wakehurst Place and Westonbirt Arboretum. It was a successful trip and an amazing experience to be able to get off the tourist trail and see some of Korea's amazing national parks. Some of the trees collected were *Pinus koraiensis* (Korean pine), *Abies koreana* (Korean fir), *Taxus cuspidata* (Yew), *Cephalotaxus koreana* (plum Yew) and *Fraxinus mandshurica* (ash). All are in decline in Korea and this will help with future conservation.

The trip seemed like a distant memory once back in the Pinetum getting on with the yearly grassland management. You may have seen some of this work if you've been round the Pinetum within the last month. It may seem a bit extreme but this is a normal routine to allow the wild flowers to flourish in the spring time. The weather this morning, however, has put a stop to that as we headed round the Pinetum and forest to clear up storm damage after 80mph winds have battered the south east. The Pinetum hasn't suffered too badly with the worst of the damage being done to the *Taxodiums*. In addition *Pinus greggii* had a top snapped out which is a shame as it's our largest example on site.



*Collecting seeds from a *Taxus cuspidata*.*

*Kevin Cooper
Monday 28th October*

Sunday Working Group

A *very* wet Sunday.

Whilst the first Sunday session in September saw a large number of volunteers, which was fantastic, the second Sunday session in October was never going to see the same turn out. The day began with torrential rain which didn't let up. James Roberts and I were unsure who would turn up and fretted about how the day would unfold. To our amazement, the three people that braved the weather and showed up probably had the longest and most treacherous journeys of any of our volunteers. Paul Jenks and his daughter Sam, along with Mike Hearn, met us at the Visitor Centre and were in remarkably good spirits considering the dire weather. With James' partner also along to help, the six of us then made a start on the Willow clearance by the visitor centre, where we made great progress despite the poor conditions. We did, however, get soaked which meant the mood fluctuated between mild amusement and annoyance. Paul's trousers were so wet that he had to drive home in his underpants! Still, we had a laugh and got as much Willow down as we could.

Thank you to Paul, Sam and Mike for turning up and to James for his support. I hope November's Sunday session is accompanied by nicer weather and the return of the usual number of hard working volunteers.



Luke Wallace

Recreation News

Events:

Behind the scenes work is going into planning for Christmas, with preparations in place for an exciting children's winter trail around the Pinetum, based on the popular Stickman books, written by Julia Donaldson. Exact dates for this are still to be confirmed. We will also be welcoming back the Wealden Times Mid Winter Fair on 21st, 22nd and 23rd of November, where once again the Walled Garden and events arena will be transformed, for a wonderful winter shopping experience.

We are also planning ahead for next years' events, working with the Bedgebury teams and business partners to maximise potential, and ensure that our visitors continue to enjoy Bedgebury at its best.

Cycling:

The new section after Five Ways has now been opened, initial feedback has been very positive, a succession of rollers have been put in followed by the largest berm on the trail so I'm hoping it will really benefit the single track. The new Rock Section 'Bikea' and Magic Carpet have now been re-opened.

Waymarkers:

By now I'm sure most of you have noticed the new waymarkers popping up across the site, we're throwing away the old ones as we go.

Play Area:

Nothing really of note regarding the play areas, other than now the holidays are over we need to make sure everything is in working order after the constant use it has had so between ourselves and the play company we use (outdoorsy living) some repair work has taken place. Due to the age of the equipment I would ask everyone to keep an out for anything broken, rotten, or need of a bit of TLC and report to Craig, Mark or Dan J it would be much appreciated, thank you.



Education:

The Learning Team has had a busy and very successful summer working with bumper numbers of schools and also running summer holiday events. Whether it's taking down shelters, helping children to identify mini beasts or helping to look after the areas - we literally couldn't do it without our volunteers. We would like to say particular thanks to Jean Blatchly and Mandy Pulsford, who are retiring as learning volunteers. Both have both done so much to help learning at Bedgebury over the years, as well as being lovely people to work alongside. You will be much missed! However, we're also grateful to ALL our volunteers for all their help.

Judith Nixon

Midwinter Fair

21st, 22nd & 23rd November



Everything you could want for a perfect Christmas, including:

Festive Finds

With over 150 original exhibitors under one cosy roof, seize the opportunity to do all your Christmas shopping in one go. You'll find unique gifts and priceless pieces for all the family this festive season.

Modern & Vintage Home

Uncover unique pieces from hand-picked exhibitors selling contemporary and vintage homeware. From antique treasures to stylish new designs, uncover everything you need to make your house a home.

Fashion & Jewellery

Meet designers and makers amongst the stalls of our gorgeous fashion and jewellery exhibitors. Whether you're looking for modern design or original vintage pieces, you'll find a wide variety of the most distinctive creators.

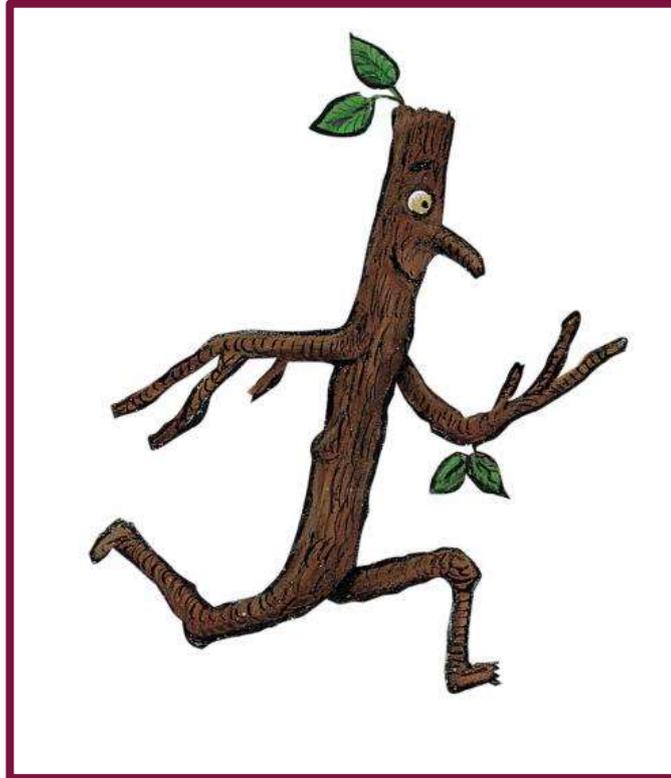
Artisan Food & Drink

Visit our food tent and celebrate fantastic British produce. Foodies will love the independent producers, wine makers and local farmers selling their home-reared and home-grown products.

Tickle Your Taste Buds

Take a break from the pleasures of shopping and refuel with friends in our Street Café, where you can pick up a cup of freshly brewed artisan coffee and enjoy a leisurely lunch from one of our fabulous street vendors. For those inclined, treat yourself to homemade cakes and an elegant cuppa in the pretty Tea Room.

Stick Man Trail



This winter, join Stick Man on an adventure around Bedgebury Pinetum. Take the whole family on a hunt for clues and activities, write poems, draw pictures, and make your own Stick Man. The fun trail will run from Saturday 23rd November through to Thursday 30th January 2014. Check nearer the time for more information. 01580 879820.

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Where else is more apt to buy your Christmas tree other than in the National Pinetum? This year, sales will take place from the Visitor Centre on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, starting from 29th November. More information will follow shortly on our website.

