



Cambridge National Trust Volunteers NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2008

Anglesey Abbey Woodland Works 28th June

Betty

A bright eyed and fresh looking group of five volunteers were met by a bleary eyed and yawning Ewan (still recovering from the Nature Walk weekend) in the car park of Anglesey Abbey.

Another glorious English summer day was forecast and the team were eager to get started. Little did they know what the day held in store as three of the five were "1st task" volunteers and the fourth a "nearly new" one. The task leader's heart must have sunk into his boots at the prospect of leading and directing this inexperienced crew!

We scurried after Ewan, whom we were working for that day, across lawns and around sheds, past the mill and beyond to the rear of the property. Our task was to thin out the unwanted trees and undergrowth behind the mill between the stream and the public footpath which overlooks a farmer's field of barley. This was to be carried out without disturbing too much wildlife, without cutting down or trampling down the entire wildlife habitat and without striking down a member of the public or his dog with a falling tree!!

The area in question looked very overgrown and, to me, quite daunting despite the fact I had helped tackle the Wimpole Folly task. I wondered how the newer volunteers felt at that point.

We trod up and down the footpath several times surveying the job whilst trying to digest our instructions which Ewan himself admitted were somewhat unclear. Then, under Tom's guidance we set to work with sawing and loping, pulling and piling until it was time for a break for lunch (except for one volunteer who was so keen to get there he'd forgotten his lunch).

After lunch was more of the same with the added pleasure of brambles. Everyone worked steadily - most of the time - enthusiasm making up for lack of experience.

One small diversion occurred when Janet announced from somewhere in the undergrowth that she had discovered "a fish in a tree." When I found her I confirmed this was indeed the case and summoned the male members of the party to have a look and secretly hoped they would deal with the matter.

Sceptical but curious two of the "boys" appeared and yes, there were the remains of a good sized pike about six feet up in a

tree. There was some discussion with various theories as to how it got there but no volunteer volunteered to remove the poor creature and put it in a more appropriate and comfortable final resting place, so it remains "a fish in a tree!" The photographer in our midst declined to take a picture because "it was too gruesome" so you will have to take our word for it. ("Who cares you are probably thinking")

At the end of the day we were treated to the usual thirst quenching tea and yummy cakes before heading home to nurse our stiff backs, bad knee and bramble scratches and punctures - hot and tired but happy with a job partly done. No, we didn't complete the task so you may still have a chance for a day in the woods!

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A trip to Barcham Nursery

Lop (with thanks to Clyde and Sian)

Where in Cambridgeshire can you find a forest of 150,000 trees? Of over 400 different varieties? Covering 150 acres? And all growing in tubs? At Barcham Tree Nursery near Ely of course! In August, CNTV were given a guided tour of the nursery by one of our members, Clyde Seagrave, who works there as the Branch Manager!! (sorry - I couldn't resist it).

It's an impressive operation. Approximately 60,000 trees are potted each year in canvas tubs which vary in size from 45 litres up to 3000 litres. Some of the trees can grow to 8m metres high before they are ready to be sold and trees are sold to

customers as far away as Europe. They vary in price from £40 for a lowly plant up to £4000 for the more exotic species.

But most impressive of all was our guide who could rattle off both the common and the Latin names for whichever tree was pointed out to him. Thus we learnt that the Latin name for the Royal Oak is *Asti Spumante*; the Sandy Beech is *Carte Blanche*; the Datsun Cherry is *Modus Operandi* and the Homebase Economy Ply is *Et Tu Brutus*.

So a big thank you to Clyde and to Barcham for showing us around and if you wish to provide us with a complimentary tree for this free advert, a Horse Chestnut (*Clippiti Cloppiti Tittiluni*) would be much appreciated.



*Now for an excerpt from Tom's Land's End
to John O'Groats diary*

End to End Start (Land's End to John O'Groats)

**The start, or maybe not, to a long cycle
ride**

Sunday 1st June

Up at 7:30, got stuff ready and waited for the Radio Cambridgeshire contact to phone. The interview went fine and I spelled out Nigel's blog address (<http://niglejog.blogspot.com>). Cycled to the station and met all the others. We got on the train at Cambridge to Kings Cross and cycled down the main road (A40) to Paddington station without a problem.

The 12:47 train arrived, Averil and I were trying to get a novel and a Sudoku book half price with it in the WHSmiths at Paddington station. We finally all went down the far end of the platform but found that there was only place for 3 bicycles left despite us having booked all

6 bikes onto this train!! Mick, Averil and I had to stay and wait for the next direct train leaving in 2 hours time (14:57)!! A very helpful customer-relations officer, François, said he would help us get on to that train. We waited 2 hours and then tried to get through the barrier onto the platform but we weren't allowed because our tickets were for the train 2 hours earlier!! Mick went to the ticket office and the cashier went to get François who fortunately got us through the barriers and onto the train.

On the way to Taunton we sat outside Bath for 45 minutes due to signalling problems and finally arrived at Penzance at 21:23. The weather looked good with the sun still high at 20:45. We cycled to the Sunny Bank Hotel at Sennen, 9 miles from Penzance and checked in and decided not to go to the pub to meet the others. The others cycled back from the pub and we went to bed.

Monday 2nd June

Had cereal, cooked breakfast and coffee then set off just after 8:00 to Lands End.



At the fake signpost

*Left: Averil, Tom and Mick
pleased to have reached Pen-
zance Railway Station*

Cycled down to Lands End. Had photos taken at the fake signpost.

Cycled through Penzance and Praze-an-Beeble, Nigel's favourite place. Then stopped at a café for coffee at Redruth. From Redruth we followed the old A3075 to Newquay, where we stopped at a minigolf and bunker café for some lunch. I had a quarter pounder beefburger and cup of tea. After lunch we followed the A39 to Wadebridge but out of Newquay Geoff had a major bike problem, his rear derailleur had snapped off and went into his rear wheel!! It looked like Geoff's End to End had come to an end, especially as it looked like only a skilled frame repairer could fix it. After discussing various options, Geoff shortened his chain so he could ride it on a single gear and limped back to Newquay. He hired a van back to Cambridge to pick up his other bike and drive back. We continued on the A39 to Camelford where we B&Bed in a large old house, Penlea House. We had a cup of tea downstairs, shower then walked into town to the Marsden Arms. They were not serving food but offered us lasagne with chips for £8.95. Had a pint and lasagne and walked back up the hill to the B&B, wrote my diary and to bed.

That was the start of 14 days cycling up to John O'Groats by Tom Howes and 5 friends in the Cambridge CTC Cycle club. If you want to find how we got on please look at the lejog (Lands End John O'Groats) blog written by Nigel.



Geoff's broken bike!

Chairman of CNTV meets the Army!

Val

In July 08 I was invited to a presentation by the Army at West Road Concert Hall in Cambridge. It was quite a gathering – some 200 people from many different walks of Cambridge life including councillors, business people, doctors, NHS staff, local government staff and the third sector not to mention yours truly!

Why was the Chairman of CNTV there?

The half hour presentation started with them explaining that those in the audience represented the community, and that “the Army is your Army so it is a sort of shareholders meeting”. The talk was “for information only – no recruitment, and not trying to change peoples’ opinions”.

What did the presentation cover?

The bullet points for the talk included:-

- “Why do we have an Army?”
- “What does the Army do?”
- “Who is the Army?”
- “Who is the modern soldier?”
- “How we select and train soldiers.”
- “Continuing development”
- “Equipment”
- “What it’s like to be in the Army”
- “Accountability”
- “Duty of Care”

What questions were asked?

After the talk, there was a half hour question and answer session with only one area off limits - anything with a political nature! The following questions were proffered (some I have précised).

Can we work with the Army to turn young troublemakers into different people? (From a magistrate.)

Why don't off duty soldiers wear their uniforms?

People in USA openly support their Army; are you envious?

How do people leave the Army if they become conscientious objectors?

Why is our Army the only one in Europe which recruits minors (from the age of 16)?

Has the new Human Rights and Health and Safety legislation affected Army training significantly?

Interesting facts

After the talk I met one of our volunteers, Steve Conrad, and we compared notes on interesting facts we had picked up.

There are about 139,000 soldiers (in total?) in the Army at present, of which 31,000 are Territorial Army and some 10,000 army cadets. (Apparently they are about the same size employer as Tesco!)

They are currently deployed in 80 countries, on 12 concurrent operations, most of which are undertaking tasks like providing humanitarian aid and peacekeeping. Logistics is a key aspect of their work at home and abroad but one that is seldom appreciated. The Army is set up to have 20% of their force deployed on operations at any one time. At the moment that has been stretched to 33%.

About $\frac{1}{5}$ th of Army personnel are posted in Germany - 22,000. Apparently, the Germans like having our troops posted there since they are treated as "aliens". This means that they then don't have to take their quota of refugees.

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The biggest (and earliest) task yet - Anglesey Abbey Goldman Sachs week

Val

We arrived at 8.10 (am!) for the first day of the influx of 500 Goldman Sachs interns at Anglesey Abbey over four days in the middle of August. Over one hundred of them were due each day.



Some of the young volunteers (Photo: Val)

During the one and a half hours before the coaches arrived from London, the Team Leads (including Roger and me on that day) had a full briefing by Richard Todd (Head Gardener) and many boxes of boots and disposable ponchos, and sacks of socks were taken into the car park ready for the onslaught.

And then it started to rain.

At 9.45 the coaches started to arrive, and those Team Leads and Assistants who hadn't been involved in previous years said "Blimey, they're so young!".

Then ensued the first chaotic milling of 100 youngsters - trying to find ponchos, socks and boots of the right size.

Richard stood on the back of a Land Rover and for each task (about eight in all) introduced the Team Lead and Assistant, briefly explained the task and said how many helpers were needed. We had to be careful not to be mown down by the enthusiastic people rushing towards us!

It was still raining, but we then had to stand outside to do a briefing. Richard wanted these to be for about 20 minutes - "to be interactive and fun". Well, that's all very well, but how do you make a 20 minute tools talk interesting!

By this time there was only half an hour to go to lunch, but we got started with enthusiasm.



At lunchtime we went back to the gazebo village and queued, in the rain, for our packed lunch. We were luckier than some coz we could go back to the bird hide and picnic in there.

When we got started again after lunch the weather started to improve and we really got stuck in for a couple of hours, and by the end we could see quite a difference - much to the team's delight. They had dug out a lot of plants, started levelling, cut down the nettles and thistles and dug out elder stumps.

It was their first taste of any sort of work like ours, and they were pretty mystified initially; but by the end they were really pleased with what they'd done.

I was interested to hear many of the youngsters say how great it was to leave London and be in the countryside for the day. I had thought that 19 or 20 year olds all loved being in London - but maybe not.

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The Goldman Sachs volunteers also constructed a pond-dipping platform. You can find more details of this on the website.



Bits from Roger

Membership update

We now have 56 paid up members and since the last newsletter we have welcomed 6 new members, Paola

Cassanelli; Duncan Hanson; Dieta Lund; Martin Morris; Maxine Von Eye and Janet Sparrow. Martin, Maxine and Janet have already joined us on tasks and we look forward to meeting Paola, Duncan and Dieta on a task soon.

Don't forget to let the Membership Secretary (currently Roger) know if your email / address / phone number have changed so we can keep our contact records up to date.

CNTV membership definition - proposal to clarify in constitution at AGM

We have had some discussions with the National Trust regarding insurance on tasks. The wording is that all NTV members are insured. The question of what defines membership is not clear, since in the past we have casually allowed people to "try us out" for one task. We feel that this is somewhat vague. So to be absolutely clear, we propose to insert the following definition of CNTV membership into the constitution:

"CNTV membership is defined as the receipt of a completed 'membership form' and payment of the membership fee"

Would all members consider this proposal and let John Everard (Secretary) have any comments one week prior to the AGM.

Proposal to be considered by and voted upon by the membership at the AGM.

Use of photographs taken on CNTV tasks

Our website is becoming known to the National Trust and we have received interest to use some of the website photographs of CNTV members at work. To enable this to happen the National Trust needs to receive permission of any participants in the photographs. We are therefore proposing the following blanket permission for CNTV members:

- a. any NEW member not wishing to have their photograph taken or used would indicate so on the membership form - a suitable paragraph will be added to the form.
- b. for CURRENT members the default will be to assume you are agreeable.

If you DO NOT wish to have your photograph passed to and used by the National Trust please email, write or speak to the Webmaster (currently Roger) by 2008 AGM.

- c. for FUTURE YEARS continued membership automatically revalidates previous preferences for photograph use.

Any photographs passed to the National Trust will include credit of the photographers name, date taken, reference CNTV as the source and a short explanation.

Photograph preferences will also be included in the CNTV database.

Website

Our website has been checked by the National Trust and they have confirmed it is in accordance with their guidelines.

The National Trust is also encouraging all NTV Groups to recruit a web editor whose task will be to create a web presence for that Group. The National Trust are to make available a facility to place on their website a webpage for every Group including an events calendar. The Group pages will follow a fairly standard format, and can include links to a Groups own web-pages. The pilot scheme for this started in June 2008.

CNTV have been invited to be part of a NT pilot scheme. We are well ahead and have our web presence solidly in place, and our page for the National Trust website has been submitted to the Trust. It includes a simple explanation of who we are and where we work, but does not include any time sensitive information i.e. the events calendar. For our events calendar we will only have a link directly to our "Task Programme" page. We will not have our events calendar directly on the NT webpage as this allows only 6 monthly updates and no update possibilities in between - rather inconvenient!

There will also be a link on our NT webpage to our own CNTV website home page.

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Thanks to Tom for providing the pictures for his article and to Roger for providing most of the remainder of the photos.