

Report on Cock Robin Wood February 2013

Another varied year, with some tasks more enjoyable than others.

Litter picks continue each week, the car park being the most needy although we do find strange little caches of cans in odd places!

Scalloping along the field edge has been completed and the existing scallops cleared of brambles and brush this year.

The hedge laying section was completed and greened up over the spring/summer. A new section is to be started next week as we progress down towards the Sainsbury roundabout.

Our plant survey this year was conducted in two parts. The first we completed earlier when the flowers were in bloom. This made identification easier for the inexperienced. Bernie Watson kindly came along later and added a few we had missed. 67 species identified.

Nature Force conducted the Opal survey this year, and although the results have not been published, I am confident that the ponds continue in fine fettle. This year the 'small' pond is considerably bigger and may, if it continues to maintain its present level, produce some interesting survey results for the first time since we took on the maintenance of the wood.

This year we decided to make a start on some major thinning of sections of the wood. Consequently, Ian Drummond kindly offered his time and a chain saw, and we dramatically thinned a section along the estate edge of Compartment A. It will be interesting to see how the wood floor develops over the next few years.

Bilton Junior School have expressed interest in running a Forest School and The Trust have had some meetings with the school. I have designated Comp C which is as far from the beaten track as you can get in CRW, has a few open areas, and lots of trees which they can thin. We are waiting for staff to be trained and I believe the intention is to start this spring.

The bird boxes have been checked and about 60% this year had empty nests, there was one failed nest (six small white eggs) and the remainder were unused.

Current work has involved clearing out dead G. Rose which has helped open up parts of the wood floor, and cutting back the huge briars which reach to the canopy. Keeping the pond clear of logs and a few bits of rubbish has developed a skill with a half brick fastened to a piece of rope which we never would have considered as a management technique!

Finally I would like to express my thanks to our worthy volunteers who turn up rain or shine on Monday mornings.

Derek Lill
Voluntary Warden