

# Woodland & Waterways Steering Committee

It has been a fairly quiet year for the woodland group with no major planting schemes taking place over the year.

However they have started to plant a community orchard on the currently farmed plot next to the lake. The trees were donated free of charge from the Suffolk Traditional Orchard Group or STOG for short. Due to these trees being planted in an area that will be grazed by sheep, more substantial tree guards were needed. The apple types planted included:

Lady Henniker                      Dual use, c.1845, pick Oct, use Nov–Jan. Raised from a seedling found in discarded cider must at Thornham Hall. Introduced by head gardener Mr. Perkins in 1873. RHS First Class Certificate 1875. A popular garden variety in C19.

Thorpeness                      Summer apple ripe August, good looking yellow with a red flush, quite large, very clean skinned, slightly greasy, good fresh juicy taste, not exactly like any other summer apple. Keeps at least a week or two. This tree is only 1m high at most but 10m across, scorched by sea-wind, on the shingle beach at Thorpeness.

Dunwich Heath                      The original tree still exists beside a small car park on NT Dunwich Heath on top of the cliff and noticeably salt sprayed and wind blasted. This tree's crop has been picked for years by local people who know it well.

Browless  
St. Edmund's Russet  
Arthur Turner  
Suffolk Pink  
Winter Gem

Most fruit trees available at commercial nurseries are grafted on dwarfing root-stock so that the trees will not grow too large for most gardens. These trees will only last about 25 years before they become much less productive and eventually die.

The trees that we have planted are mostly on vigorous root-stock. This means that they should last for up to 200 years

We plan to plant 8-10 trees every year and create a very traditional Suffolk orchard. Although by definition 5 trees make an orchard so we already have an orchard.

**Why are orchards important?** Orchards are important for wildlife, people and our heritage. The majority of orchards in Suffolk are small, often less than 1 acre, and are often managed very little. It is this very lack of management that makes them havens for wildlife, encouraging the presence of mammals, birds and invertebrates and allowing mosses, lichens and wildflowers to flourish. Orchards may contain many varieties of fruits and nuts which are no longer commercially available, so they are an important source of varieties. Orchards are also part of our natural heritage, a social and cultural legacy that is bound up with the people and diverse landscapes of the county.

Ash die back has been identified within Hoggs Kiss Wood so we will monitor the situation over the summer to see if it has spread and the impact on Hoppit Wood. In terms of numbers we have planted, ash accounts for around 480 (out of a total of 3000 trees planted in the woodland). This gives a total of 16% of the overall planting.

## Lake

The dismal summer last year was good news for the lake as it kept up to a reasonable level and was at maximum capacity for most of the winter. Levels are still looking good as we move into June so we expect not to have a problem this year.

Signs of bacterial infections on the fish have been fewer than last year so things are looking good.

Rabbits continue to be a problem and we will be carrying out further repairs to the paths this summer

The mesh on the bridge was replaced this year to ensure that it remained as slip proof as we could make it.

### **Hoggs Kiss Wood**

We started to investigate taking over the management of Hoggs Kiss Wood from the Woodland Trust but in return for paying a peppercorn rent we would have had to become responsible for grass cutting as well as insurance cover. It was decided that we would leave the situation as it is and concentrate efforts on creating the new orchard.

### **Final Note**

Next year sees the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of work starting on the woodland and lake and we are thinking about a suitable way to commemorate this achievement.

The woodland is supported by a small core of dedicated individuals plus a large number of people who enjoy the site and help to keep it litter free.

However we are always on the lookout for new people – so if anybody wants to get involved then please contact the Steering Group for more details.

There are also vacancies on the Steering Group and we would welcome anybody willing to join.