

Botany Bay Restoration Project

Botany Bay News 2017 at a Glance



(Clearwater Photography)

2017 Wild Trout Trust Conservation Award for Botany Bay Conservancy

January: Plans and Applications

The Botany Bay Community Interest Group met to discuss plans for 2017 which included applications for funding for a new bridge, an outdoor classroom and some health and safety work. We have been able to start this work thanks to SDNPA Sustainable Communities Fund, Chichester District Council, Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association (PSFFA) and Seaford College.

February: John Muir Award Presentation



Jonathan Dean, South Downs National Park Association Education Officer came to present Josef Amin with a John Muir Explorer Award and Anne Dennig with a John Muir Provider Certificate for Botany Bay. To achieve this award Josef spent the equivalent of eight days at Botany Bay in 2016, discovering, exploring, conserving and then sharing his experiences with others.

March: The Hedge Laying is Completed

Graham West (Weald Woodsman) and the BTEC students finished the South of England style hedge laying along the boundary to the school field and it has been much admired.



In an effort to re-wild an area in front of the lodge house we planted some holly whips to add to the black poplar and hawthorn we planted in 2016.



April: Community Back to Fishing Days

In addition to his weekly coaching for Seaford College students, Steve Batten (PSFFA) organised a free "get back to fishing" day which we advertised to the local community.



The day started with advice on how to set up our lines and then casting practice on the grass before we were let loose on the lake!



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May: BTEC Sessions

The Countryside Management students from Seaford College used the site for their Wetland Module supervised by Graham and Clive Thorpe. This involved investigations into lentic and lotic water environments with surveys of the flora and fauna of the still ponds and stream.



We started to see evidence of the yellow rattle in our efforts towards creating wild flower areas along the bank and in the meadow, and the bluebells in the wood were stunning.



June: Sussex Wildlife and Forest School



Sussex Wildlife Trust came to film at Botany Bay to show an example of a chalk ghyll stream and how we monitor its health by surveying the riverfly. Take a look:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-KTZktj9Qg>

Forest School Training

Anne had an action packed week in Tilgate Park for some Forest School training kindly provided by the ARC project where she learned skills in bushcraft, ropework,

charcoal making, cooking, and tool and fire safety.



July: Seaford's Volunteers

We had ten volunteers from Year 9 to help us in the wood by building brush barriers and clearing some areas of bamboo.



Hugo de Burgh started his BTEC investigative project by surveying three areas of grassland where we are working on the creation of wild flower areas.



His survey aims to show the effects of cutting, scarifying and then sowing yellow rattle in two sample areas, and comparing these to a third unmanaged area.

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August: Haymaking and Honey Harvest

Throughout the growing season Matthew and Jude Sennit have been cutting and taking off the grass on the bank of the lake in order to encourage wildflowers.



Seaford's grounds staff have also helped us and we've had some willing hay making volunteers. Thank you Jo and William Morris and Hugo.



And there's nothing like some leisurely weed clearance on a hot day!



Bee Products: We harvested honey from six healthy colonies in the wood and used the cappings to make candles.



September: Trees and Young Visitors



John Bentley from Arun Trees felled a large, leaning grey poplar and used it to make us some excellent seating.



A Visit from Seaford Prep, Years 2-5:

We had another successful visit from the Prep School for sketching, pond dipping, kick sampling in the stream and bug hunting in the wood. We enjoyed hosting the morning and the children got lots of hands-on learning experience.



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Southdown Sheep Arrive!



David and Helen Burden brought in some of their sheep to the meadow. We will be seeding some areas with yellow rattle and native Weald meadow plants.

October: Awards and Bridge Preparation



(Clearwater Photography)

Anne and Josef were interviewed for a Wild Trout Trust Conservation Award. They were joined at a reception in London by Clive Lightfoot (Botany Bay Conservancy Chairman), and Robin Bray and Steve Batten representing PSFFA which has made such an essential contribution to improving the passage and spawning sites for the wild brown trout at Botany Bay. From eleven shortlisted groups Botany Bay received the award for a small scale project that has made an "Outstanding Contribution to Wild Trout Conservation".

Timber for New Bridge and Shelter:



The old culvert crossing was taken out to improve the flow of the stream, and work on the new bridge began. Graham felled the western red cedar needed for the bridge from the College woodland, and the Seaford College grounds team prepared the bridge footings and put the cedar in place. Dylan Walker (Artisans of Wood) was on hand to

supervise and will be finishing the bridge and shelter in January 2018.



November: BTEC Projects

Three more BTEC projects are underway with bankside management (Ben Cutler), garden clearance (Matt Havard) and step building (George Fletcher).



Botany Bay Conservancy CIG:

Our Annual General Meeting was held to celebrate the achievements of 2017, and to plan for more progress in 2018.

December: EA Course and a New Ranger



Finally in December Steve, Clive and Anne attended the Environment Agency and Institute of Fishery Management Workshop and Charles Winchester our new SDNPA ranger came to visit the site with his colleague Angela Ward. We look forward to working with Charles in 2018.

Many thanks to all those who have helped us this year: SDNPA, Chichester District Council, Sussex Wildlife, Seaford College, PSFFA, Arun Trees, Artisans of Wood, Weald Woodsman, and all our volunteers.

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