

DONINGTON & ALBRIGHTON LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

We were really busy during our last Volunteer Day and were fortunate in being joined by some volunteers from the Severn Valley Nature Reserve which meant we got a lot of maintenance work done.

Around Donington Pool several yet more rotten and broken walk boards were replaced on the fishing platforms. We don't as yet have any fishermen volunteers and it would be great if some of them could spare some time to help us help them with their hobby.

With a lot of vegetation die back the extent of our litter problem has once again become apparent with cans, bottles, plastic and dog poo being the most numerous culprits.

The sucker like growths that proliferate around the base of the lime trees bordering the bottom of the Pool have again been cut back. The correct name for these growths is epicormic. They are not an indication of distress or disease in the parent tree, but rather an insurance policy. If the tree was to suffer harm the epicormic growths could spring into life as they would probably not have been affected by the problem being as they are "epi" or "on" the tree rather than intimately involved with its engine house. If they were not trimmed back and the canopy of the tree remained in good shape the growths would not prosper, though they would get in the way on our trees. If the canopy started to thin out, an indication of possible decline, the epicormic growths would grow deeper into the tree and start to take over the roles of the lost branches.

Further tidying up work around the Pool involved more brash re homing in the dry hedge by the bee hives and removing some of the cord wood logs from the side of the Pool. These have been taken by one of our volunteers who is hoping they will make a good bug and fungus home in his garden.

It was getting difficult to get into the Meadow via the kissing gate because the grassy bank had encroached onto the pathway. This has been trimmed back. The many bird boxes scattered throughout the entire Reserve have been removed with a view to them having a refurb and being replaced in more accessible sites in future so they don't get as neglected as they have been.

One of the fences erected by the Dipping Pool to prevent accidental immersions was a bit too close to the Pool and made access difficult. This has now been moved further away. The crown of several trees has been raised, a larch tree has been staked and the hedge bordering the south end of the Meadow has been trimmed.

So we had more than enough to keep us occupied. Unfortunately the unprecedented rainfall we have experienced has really adversely affected the Meadow, no more so than around St Cuthbert's Pool. In an effort to alleviate the situation the spring water mentioned in last month's article needed to be channelled into existing pipes to empty into the Pool and also by putting in some extra perforated pipe. Fingers crossed things will start to dry out.

If the Meadow does dry out one of the biggest group of people who will be happy about that is the dog walkers. We already have several dog walking volunteers but there is always room for more.

Something to cheer us all up: the Snowdrop Walk. The Conservation Area will be open, weather willing, the week end of 8/9th February. The almost completed bird hide will also be on view. Keep your eyes open for the A boards advertising it.

Feb 6th is our next Volunteer Day. Please contact Paul Fallon (paulfallon6@gmail.com) for more info

