

News from Cremer's Meadow, June 2015.

Early work in the Meadow concentrated on practical matters. One of the first tasks for the Volunteers was to empty the barn at the entrance to the site; reviewing the contents, keeping anything "which might come in useful", and sorting the rest into piles of wood, metal, plastics, rubble for disposal.

A plant survey of the site by Landscape Partnerships counted 161 native tree and flower species, all of which are rapidly growing. See photographs below of the Meadow area.



The Meadow, December 2014



The Meadow, 4th July 2015

The huge variety of flowers is the reason for the special nature of Cremer's Meadow so appropriate management by the Friends of the different areas, meadow, pond and walks is key to preserving the fundamental nature of the site. Now that the trees and shrubs are in leaf we can see that Ivan Cremer planted some interesting species along the western side of the water channel running from the pond, including an Indian Bean tree and a Gunnera.



Indian Bean tree



Gunnera



Marsh Orchid



Ragged Robin

At the moment the Indian Bean tree and Gunnera can't be reached because of the dense vegetation around them - buddleia, bramble and nettles mainly - and a wire fence! The vegetation needs to be cleared to allow light and space for the shrubs to grow properly and of course for us to see and enjoy them. There is plenty of work for Volunteers of all ages and abilities.

Incidentally, there is a magnificent Indian Bean tree in the garden of St Peter Hungate in Norwich (Princes Street) which shows the potential of 'our' tree's growth when provided with space and light.

A plant species which is not welcome is Himalayan Balsam which was introduced to the UK in 1839 as an exotic garden plant and is now naturalised, found especially on riverbanks and in waste places where it has become a problem weed. Each plant can produce up to 800 seeds which are dispersed widely as the ripe seedpods shoot their seeds up to 7m away. Once established in the catchment of a river the seeds, which can remain viable for two years, are transported further afield by water. (Information from the RHS website.) Because the Lackford Run borders the Meadow, the Volunteers were keen to use methods of non-chemical control wherever possible, and have been hand pulling up the plants before they flower and set seed. To date, Judy Davies has pulled up some 9000 plants which have been bagged prior to burning.



A young Himalayan Balsam plant : removal by pulling up from the base of the stem.

To become a Friend of Cremer's Meadow and help with the development of the site, please contact Gill Buckley 01603 717064

Jacky Heath. 4th July 2015