

Nonsuch Voles

10th Anniversary

2012 - 2022



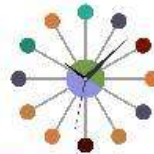
Nonsuch
Voles Helping to maintain and
improve Nonsuch Park



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Number of hours donated by the Voles
30,300



Mansion House Garden maintenance
and improvements

Number of volunteers Past & Present 29
Current number of volunteers 12

Several garden beds redesigned
with perennial planting schemes
attractive to bees & butterflies



Total Funds raised from
Wood Craft sales, grants & donations
£27,471
All re-invested in plants, Park improvement
projects & tools

Woodland Management



Over 1500 trees planted

Nonsuch Park achieved Silver Gilt for
South & South East in Bloom
in 2018 & 2019

Wood Craft sales and commissions



Working in partnership with the Park's
staff and Management Committee

Information Stalls and Wood Craft
sales at local community events

Plant and butterfly surveys



Talks given to other local
Community Groups

Introduction

The Nonsuch Voles volunteer group meets throughout the year at Nonsuch Park to carry out practical tasks which help to maintain and enhance the beautiful Mansion House gardens, the woodland and wider parkland. We work closely with the Park's staff from Epsom and Ewell Council when planning all our activities.

We started in the woodland in February 2011, working under the guidance and recommendations of the Forestry Commission and in collaboration with the park's coppice-worker who runs the “Future Woodlands” wood-yard. The Voles now manage woodland areas near the Mansion House car park, adjacent to the path up to Cheam Park and on the boundary of Warren Farm.

The Nonsuch Voles gardening group was formed by the woodland volunteers in late 2011 by the four founder members – Jon Whitehead, Alison Whitehead, Paul Airey and Daniela Borini and the first task was pruning the wisteria in January 2012. Since that time members have joined and left and today we have about a dozen volunteers who do 3 hours of gardening or woodland work on Thursdays and Fridays. We also have a woodcraft group who meet on Mondays. Before Covid, we were contributing about 3,500 – 4000 hours work per year, much of this is spent on annual maintenance like weeding, pruning, planting, edging, coppicing, bramble clearance and ditch clearance.

The motto for the Nonsuch Voles is to “Maintain and Improve Nonsuch Park” and over the years we have accomplished a large number of improvements. We plan to continue these projects in the future. In addition to our practical work, we are interested in the history and nature of the park and its garden, and some members take part in nature walks and courses to improve their knowledge. As an example, we carried out wildflower surveys and monitored the butterfly population in the woodland areas in Spring and Summer to see how the woodland management activities help to increase numbers.

In 2016 to 2019 Nonsuch Park and its gardens were entered into the annual South East in Bloom competition. We achieved a Silver award in 2016 and Silver Gilt in 2017, 2018 (141 points) and 2019 (154 points). A gold award is 170 points and a lot of hard work will be needed to achieve this level.

The Nonsuch Voles are a totally self-sufficient group and use money from the sale of woodcrafts and kindling to pay for tools, insurance, and plants.

We would like to thank everyone who has bought items from us at our craft stalls or made donations (cash or equipment), also to the Park Staff and the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee (JMC) for their continued support.

For more details, please visit nonsuchvoles.org.uk or facebook.com/nonsuchvoles.

2012 – Creation of Nonsuch Voles and general gardening tasks. Planted 1000 native bluebells.

January - First task for the Nonsuch Voles is pruning the wisteria.



November – 1,000 bluebells planted on path up to Cheam Park. Photograph below is from April 2016.



April – Round Bed.



June – Eight Beds.



September 2012 – Recruitment Flyer for the Nonsuch Awareness Day with an early version of the Nonsuch Voles logo!



Nonsuch Park Voles
Working to maintain & improve Nonsuch Park

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The Nonsuch Voles

Welcome to the Nonsuch Voles! We are a group of enthusiastic volunteers who carry out practical tasks to help maintain and enhance the beautiful formal gardens and woodland at Nonsuch Park.

We have worked closely with the Park staff in the gardens since January 2012. Since then, we've helped with routine tasks such as weeding and edging and with seasonal projects such as planting the Summer bedding and renovating areas through pruning. The garden group meets regularly on Thursdays with occasional Friday tasks.

In the woodland, we've been active since February 2011, assisting the Park's resident coppice worker in the management of a small area of coppice woodland near the Boathouse. This is supported by sales of local firewood, and there is no cost to the park. The woodland group meets most Fridays.

Our members have a keen interest in the history and nature of the park and often attend nature walks and courses to improve our knowledge. We have started monitoring butterflies in the woodland areas, to see if the woodland management increases numbers.

We look forward to continuing our efforts to complement the valuable work of the other voluntary groups, the Friends of Nonsuch and Nonsuch Watch.

We are hoping to recruit more members. If you would like to find out more, check our website at

www.nonsuchvoles.org.uk

It links to our Facebook page where we keep a diary of our activities and post related photos.

To get in touch, please email:

nonsuchvoles@gmail.com
or speak to the Park staff.

December – Tidied up part of the Dell.

Before clearance



After clearance



2013 – Assisted in woodland management tasks. Planted 1000 hazel saplings.

February – Planting the greenhouse bed with dogwoods, grasses and Euphorbias.



May 2014 – Greenhouse bed in its glory!



May – Tudor Rose design for Round Bed.



May – Summer planting.



May – Using hazel supports to plant sweet peas in the Library Bed.



May - Planting the Square Bed.



September – Eight Beds cleared and ready for Spring flower planting.



December - BBQ.



December - Helping the coppice worker in woodland management tasks.



2014 – Helped with installation of Oak Bridge near the Balancing Pond. Planted hazel grove.

During this year we sold wood-craft from our stall near the Mansion House and attended both Nonsuch Awareness Day and Sport Relief Day and we pitched at the Cheam Charter Fair and the Carshalton Environmental Fair. Helped the Park staff raise the Round Bed.

June – Helping the Future Woodlands team build the Oak Bridge near the Balancing Pond.



June – Peacock design in the Round Bed.



November – Helped the park staff raise the rear of the Round Bed to enhance the display. See 2019 for moon landing photo.



August - Wildflower bed.



August – Stall at Carshalton Fair.



April – One of the two new rose beds planted.



The new rose bed in 2017 with new low fence installed.



Poppy bed.



Square Bed with cherry tree in full blossom.



2015 – Creation of the Walnut Copse, Installation of Wickham Avenue ditch culvert. Purchase of electric utility vehicle.

We attended the Cheam Charter Fair (May), Carshalton Environmental Fair (August), Nonsuch Park Awareness Day (September) and St Dunstan's Christmas Fair (November) and a talk was given to the Cheam Woodturners in August. We also pruned the very tall 20 foot cherry laurel trees in the Pinetum down to hedge height.

June - Holly tree renovation – Before.



June - Holly tree renovation – After.



Acquisition of the electric Toro utility vehicle.



August – Creation of the Wickham Avenue Culvert.



December – Planting the new Walnut Grove.



At the end of each year we have a tasting competition
This year it was the Mince Pie Challenge and the

... winner was from Waitrose .



Rudolph one of our Xmas
Craft items!



2016 –Planted box hedges around the 8 beds and moved to a sustainable planting regime. Low Greenhouse Wall renovation. Oak tree saplings planted in Boundary Copse. Creation of Yellow Bed. Responsible for the Rose Arch maintenance. Lawn maze created.

March – Planting box hedges and spirals in the Eight Beds.



June – Oak Bridge approach improvements.



April – Lawn maze created.



August – Ditch clearance.



July – Yellow Bed creation.



October – Low Greenhouse Wall renovation – Before



After – completed in June 2017



November – The Nonsuch Voles took over responsibility for maintaining the long Rose Arch from the Friends of Nonsuch. Here we have just added manure to the roses.



December - The Voles needed all their tools when we hosted 15 Sixth-Form students from Ewell Castle School. They took on the tasks enthusiastically, helping us to clear a large amount of Cherry Laurel. Each student also planted an Oak tree along Boundary Copse.



2017 – Installation of recycled fence panels by Mansion House. Round Pond renovation. Erection of Voles shelter. Restoration Yew Room. 5th Anniversary.

February – Installed recycled fencing by Mansion House replacing a series of Heras security panels.



March – Renovation of Round Pond. Mature Aspen trees were removed from the front of the pond to allow more light in.



June - Nonsuch Voles 5th anniversary Cake.



October - New Trailer funded by a grant approved by Councillor John Beckett.



November – Opening of the woodcraft shelter.



February – Yew Room restoration done over 2 years. The Yew Room "walls" had grown extremely thick and over 30ft high. By pruning them hard over a period of a couple of years, new growth is promoted from the stem.

Before



February 2018 – Pruning complete. New yew trees planted in the gaps.



July 2021 – Yew Room looking great.



2018 – Installation of new Rose Arch with “Rambling Rector” roses, Creation of Horseshoe Bed.

January - Helped install Kissing Gate by Round Pond.



June – New “Horseshoe Bed” created from four small rectangle beds. In full bloom a few months later.



September - Installing new Rose Arch provided at no cost to the Park: the arch was courtesy of Agriframes and the “Rambling Rector” climbing roses were funded by the Stoneleigh Charitable Trust. Picture far right taken in June 2021 with the white roses covering the archway.



October – New edging installed by Yew Room.



November – New Ivy bed created with ornamental ivy, phlox and periwinkle.



December - 190 metres or so of the Pinetum back-line have now been installed with low stock-fence.



Over the years we have planted many hundreds of saplings in the woodlands. Here hazel is being planted.



2019 – Hornbeam Restoration

Attended the Whitehall “Wood” weekend event; Cheam Charter Fair; Bourne Hall “Herald of Spring” and the Nonsuch Town and Country fair.

February - Hornbeam Room . The hedge had grown to over 25 feet high in places, was brought down to a manageable height. Right picture taken in September.



May – Attending the Nonsuch Town & Country Fair.



May – The box hedges looking good despite the attention of the Box caterpillar.



July – Round Bed celebrating the 50th anniversary of man landing on the moon.



September – Nonsuch Park wins Silver Gilt Award for three continuous years.



November – Converting four small beds into one large bed. To be named the “Samuel Carson” bed after the Nonsuch head gardener in Victorian times.



From “The Garden” dated 2nd July 1881:

“Mr S M CARSON, for some thirty years gardener at Nonsuch Park, Cheam, died on May 22 last, at his residence at Gatehouse of Fleet, aged 67.

Mr Carson, who was one of the foremost plant growers of his day, was for a lengthened period an exhibitor at the great London shows, successfully contending in the classes of Azaleas, and stove and greenhouse plants, with such men as Green, Falconer, Hunt, and Barnes, all in their day grand plant growers. But plant culture was not only his strong point; he was an equally good gardener generally – an excellent man in all departments, and as such appreciated by his employer, who allowed him on his retirement from Nonsuch Park, in 1872, a liberal annuity.”

2020 – Creation of the Samuel Carson bed and the erection of the new fence at the back of the Pinetum.

January - Some of the Box hedging near the main garden entrance was badly damaged by the Box caterpillar last Summer. It was decided to remove it and replace it with some new Bay hedging, which matches the existing Bay shrubs in the bed. Whilst doing this, we uncovered some interesting flint edging which has been covered by soil for many years! We also added new edging to make it look a lot smarter.



January – Two tonnes of horticultural gravel were added to the Samuel Carson bed to aid drainage.



July – Planting out the Samuel Carson Bed.



August 2021 – Samuel Carson bed in full bloom.



March – New Pinetum fence installed, made possible by a generous donation from a member of the public.



How the Pinetum fence used to look like!



August - The Voles completed the annual clipping of the Cherry Laurels in the Pinetum. It's amazing to think that about 5 years ago they were 20+ feet high and completely overgrown.



August – The Toro electric utility has been a massive help. Here we have placed a water tank on the back so the Walnut Grove trees can have a drink.



2021 – Renovation of the large top terrace bed to form the “Acer Terrace”.

The new “Acer Terrace” bed has been a work in progress since early 2020

February 2020



November 2020



March 2021 – Excavator used to remove tree stumps.



April 2021 – Planting the grass seed.



July 2021 – Grass is grown and 7 Acer trees planted.



July – Installation of the informative sign in the Cherry Bed with a background of the flowering Alstroemeria.



October – A fully loaded Toro and trailer. A good mornings work which included edging the lawn.



October – Each year we put a new layer of woodchip on the path by the woodyard.



October - Annual cutback of the path up to Cheam Park.



October – Path sides now clear to allow the bluebells to dazzle in the Spring



October - Clearing around the hazels. Hard to believe they were only 2 foot saplings a few years ago.



2022 – Opening of Acer Terrace bed. Landscaping of Greenhouse Wall.

January – A break from pruning the wisteria. A lot sunnier than 10 years ago!



Acer Terrace bed to be opened in late spring 2022. The original Acer tree is on the far right and seven more Acer trees have been planted. Each tree has a metal guard for protection.



2022 – Now that the greenhouse wall has been professionally restored, the Voles next major project is to landscape the front part and so remove the ugly Heras panels which were put up to prevent further damage. Some repairs to the low front wall will be required.

Before restoration.



After restoration.



Area to be landscaped.



Nonsuch Voles – Annual Volunteer Hours

Year	Garden Hours	Woodland Hours	Total Hours	Number of weeks work (based on 35 hour week)
2012	705	870	1575	45
2013	1204	1779	2983	85
2014	1273	2020	3293	94
2015	1522	2227	3749	107
2016	1973	1939	3912	112
2017	2291	1619	3910	112
2018	2160	1322	3482	99
2019	1779	1667	3446	98
2020	1361	673	2034	58 (Coronavirus pandemic lockdowns reduced hours)
2021	1319	651	1970	56 (Coronavirus pandemic lockdowns reduced hours)

	15587	14767	30354	866

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