

Friends of Brandon Wood

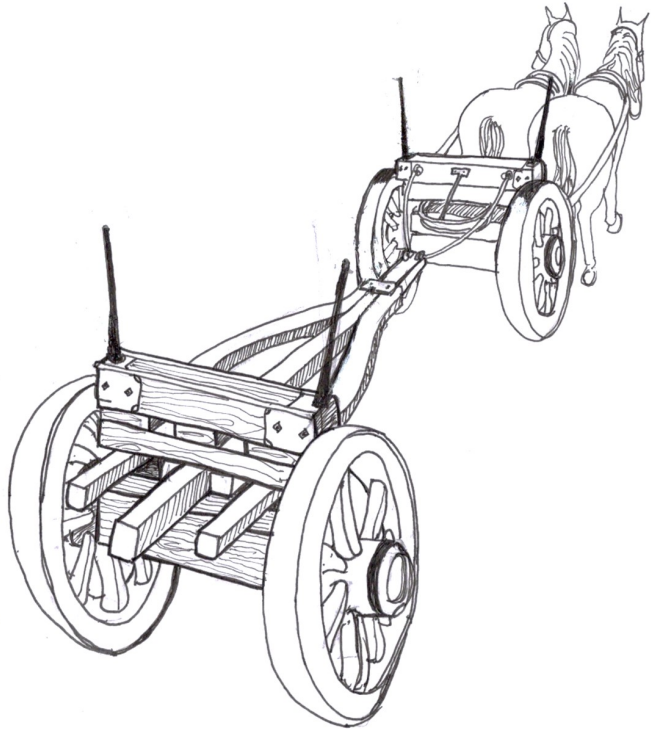
New Year Newsletter 2019



Logging Cart Project

Discovery

One cold winter's day, a discovery was made while assisting a local resident clear storm felled trees. In the middle of an outdoor storage area, the remains of a very old wagon appeared beneath moss, trees and other vegetation. A closer look revealed this to be a Nineteenth Century Logging Wagon. It would have been used in the late 19th century for transporting felled tree trunks from woodland. An artists impression is shown on the right. A thought occurred: 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to rebuild the wagon and have it displayed in Brandon Wood'?



Part of the salvaged chassis

Worn, damaged parts of the old wagon needed to be removed from the original site without damaging them or a tree that was found growing through it!

Amazingly, the ironwork was found to be in remarkably good condition. Many metal parts including the iron tyres will be used in the final construction. Inspection of various pieces enabled drawings to be made and a construction plan to be formed. Making the wheels would be the first challenge. This involves making the hub, felloes and spokes, joining them together and then fitting the iron tyre.

Wheel construction

Originally a wheel would have begun with a nave or hub. The hub would have been rough-hewn from a large section of tree trunk with an axe. The wood of choice would have been elm as its strong cross-grained fibres would prevent it splitting under strain. In the absence of any suitable elm, in our case a large number of oak planks were laminated together to form a suitable size section of timber. The large lathe required to do this job was sought and found at Axminster whose staff performed the machining for us. Next came the felloes (pronounced 'fellies') that make up the rim of the wheel. This is made in sections which are traditionally attached to each other using dowels. The rim can then be machined into a circle. Spokes, made from oak, radiate from the central hub to the felloes.



Machined hub

Wheel construction cont.

The first wheel is now complete, ready to have the iron tyre fitted. This requires the tyre to be heated in a fire until it is red hot so that it expands. It is then dropped over the wooden wheel and quickly cooled so that it contracts and holds the wheel together. Not an easy task. Only three more to construct!



The Chassis



Newly constructed chassis using some original parts

Having extracted the original chassis from its resting place of at least 40 years, the first task was disassembly. Much of the timber had rotted away but, remarkably, some was still salvageable. The stack of timber beams directly over the stub axle were held together by eight 30 inch long bolts. Amazingly, and with much effort from Pete Koch, it was possible to undo 4 of these so they could be reused.

The biggest concern was how to replace the curved beams which connect the rear axle beam to the front section of the cart. Luck was on our side! Andrew Kirby was driving around Brinklow when he noticed a fallen ash tree in a farmer's field. It

had two curved boughs. A word with the farmer and the following week, the curved sections were in the farmyard ready for collection. The project continues.....

Woodland Report

Although **conifer thinning** is still the main winter activity, our progress is slow because our usual contractors, who should have started in late September, couldn't make it at all this season. We, on the work party, are doing what we can, but necessarily slowly.

Some months ago we decided to change our supplier of **hard core** for a better quality product for paths. Walkers may notice paths with the newer, grey surface are free of minor waste associated with recycle processing, a good improvement.

Bridges which we erected a only a few years ago are showing signs of rot, and in order to try a more permanent solution we made a **culvert**, using hessian bags filled with concrete dry mix. It was not difficult and although more labour-intensive, culverts should last "for ever" and now they will be first choice for replacement bridges. Three more have been completed since.

The **Dog Pond** is being reinforced at the banks to stem further erosion. This is being done by hammering in larch posts (untreated).

Regular surveys are planned for the New Year including Butterfly recording and the annual moth count.

My usual thanks to the work party members who do work hard, and come so consistently to our sessions. Despite the additional onus of the Cart Project, we always have a strong team to carry out the demanding prescriptions of the **Countryside Stewardship** conservation contract, maintaining Forestry Commission UK standards, and ensuring we have a large diversity of species and ages.

Andrew Ireland – Woodland Manager



Culvert

Need some firewood?

Call **Andrew Kirby** on **07976 266208**

for good quality timber from our woodland

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