

"THE LOPPER"

full of little cuttings.

Number 3 April 2005

FIRST AID

Several members of the Green gym, having discovered that their First Aid qualifications were due to run out, attended a training day. They all passed out with their certificates renewed, which is good news for the rest of us!

Below is a summary of what is contained in the First Aid boxes that accompany the group to all sessions and some general dos and don'ts kindly summarised by David Gordon..

Overview

Emergency medical support for the Group is provided by first aid boxes brought onto site and by task leaders (and others) who have attended first aid training courses.

Mobile phones are carried and contact details of the nearest casualty department are kept in a red file on site.

First aid boxes

The large dark green box contains sufficient kit to comply with HSE requirements. It holds mostly dressings and bandages and also an excellent guidance book that shows how to deal with given emergencies.

The smaller light green box is a supplementary kit that contains such items as Cool Jell for burns and foil blankets to guard against hypothermia.

First aiders are not allowed to prescribe drugs to a patient. A fully conscious adult casualty is, however, capable of deciding whether or not they want to take medication that may help them, and for this reason aspirin is also carried for treatment of heart attack (assuming they are not

allergic). It must be requested, not offered

Kits are regularly replaced and updated, the next changeover being due this summer.

Accident Book

The Group maintains an Accident Book in which members can enter details of incidents leading to injury. Specified major injuries or events are reportable to HSE

Conclusion

Thank you all for taking care not to cause accidents in the first place – long may it continue.

However, if the worst happens, effective emergency treatment before professional help arrives can go a long way to reducing the effects of illness and injury and may save someone's life.

With six members having recently attended a First Aid training course we now have a total of nine people who hold a current first aid certificate. They are – Robert Watson, Richard Harris, Tony Chandler, Diane and David Gordon, Julia Booker, Jules Thomson, Jean Fowler and Robin Howles. If there are other members who hold a current certificate could they contact Fred Denton and give him details.

On Feb 23 eight members attended an 'Emergency Procedure' training course at Sonning Common Health Centre conducted by Jane Proctor (the Health Centre Practice Nurse) Those who attended were Emily

Connelly, Sarah Manocha, Jill Kendal, Gill Vaughan, Fred Denton, Peter Warrick, John Hasler and Jules Thomson.

If anyone else would like to take part in the next available first aid course, please advise Fred Denton. Tel; 0118 947 8644.

NEW REGULAR SITE

Withymead is a very new nature reserve and the Green Gym is fortunate in being invited from the start to help make it safe and accessible to the general public. It lies between the Thames and the railway line in Goring and is an important site for the rare Loddon lily as well as a wide variety of other wetland plants and birds. It has been left in trust for the benefit of residents, particularly schoolchildren, within a 10 mile radius of the reserve, in addition to other interested visitors.

There is plenty for the Green Gym to tackle from the outset (see programme), and there will be scope to use most of our acquired conservation skills as time goes by. For now the reserve can only take us for Saturday sessions, but from the autumn the Thursday crew will have the chance to work there too. Coffee break among the willows on the bank of the Thames is going to be hard to beat, Julia Booker



A FINE STRAIGHT LINE OF HEDGING AT TOKERS GREEN

HEDGES GALORE

Hedge planting has been a big feature of the winter season 2004/5. The Green Gym has planted 400+ hedge plants at Ewelme to enhance the fencing the group expertly erected during the summer. We have also been helping Tony Austin to realise his dream of recreating a 16 C map of Harpsden, by planting at least 200 mixed hedge plants on his hillside. We helped Ian Munro and the Kennylands Millennium Trust to fill in gaps in the beech hedges; but by far the largest challenge was at Tokers Green. Some years ago the Mapledurham Parish Council bought two fields from Oxfordshire County Council, when they no longer needed them for a possible school site, and have been working hard to create a recreation area for the village. The Council and local Tokers Green residents have created a splendid play area for the children and want to make the fields a special place for the community. They plan to plant up one field as a flower meadow and to mow paths round the

perimeter for walkers to use. The Green Gym was approached to help by planting a new hedge where it was needed along some of the field boundaries.

Masterminded by Robert, who did a mountain of preparation work, 1400 holes were dug, 1400 traditional hedge plants were planted and staked up. Robert's meticulous attention to detail meant that not even the most inexperienced member of the group could get it wrong. This meant that no plants were wasted and the new hedge stands straight and neatly spaced.

Before a start could be made the ground around had to be cleared –no small task- to ensure the new hedging had the best chance of survival.

Three major sessions were planned around Christmas time. There was an excellent turn out and approx 90 man (sorry person) hours were put in by the Green Gym gang. Everyone agreed that it was extremely satisfying to see a big job like this through to a final completion, and was a justification of Green Gym aims; work for health and the environment.



MORE PLANTING

WOODLANDS DAY

There will be another woodlands open day at Clayfield Copse on Saturday June 4th. As this is a Ewelme working day for the group I am asking Diane and David to take all the tools there, leaving me free to be the Green Gym representative at Clayfield Copse.

With two other dead hedging sessions booked during April and May, it would be a struggle for me to find and transport enough material for us to put on a full Green Gym session on that day.

Please feel free to visit during the day to look round – and check that I am keeping up to normal GG standards!

Robert Watson..

STOP PRESS

Did anyone hear the programme "Changing Places" on Radio Four on Friday 11 February? It gave a whole half hour to the Green Gym. The group they followed was the Rochdale group, a very different set up from ours, but they were very enthusiastic and were most entertaining. As well there were interviews with William Bird and Jules Thomson. Both sounded most knowledgeable and put the message across very well.

Congratulations Jules.

(I have a cassette tape of the programme if anyone wants to borrow it. Jill Kendal)

GREEN GYM CHRISTMAS DINNER

It may seem an age ago since everyone foregathered at Badgemore Golf Club for what, it was generally agreed, was a delightful evening. About fifty of the 'gymmers', partners and Green Gym clients attended and it was very nice to talk to people without having to keep stopping to cut down the odd tree or drag away a pile of nettles and brambles. The layout and ambience at Badgemore helped to create a relaxed atmosphere that made the evening a real pleasure.

It was lovely to see Freddy's new bride and also Tian's wife, and we hope they are now a family of three not two and a bump.

Jules treated the assembled company to some well chosen words of congratulation for a good year's work and Diane received a bouquet to thank her for all those hours spent slaving over a hot stove on our behalf!

The evening had been masterminded by Julia Booker and went without a hitch. Thank you so much Julia for all your hard work.



DIANE WITH HER FLOWERS, TAKEN BY Mike Leonard
LOVE THE HATS !

EVEN MORE PLANTING!!

As well as all the activity on the previous page there were two sessions held at Bozodown Vineyard which introduced a new aspect to the Gym's work. This was planting but of bluebells this time. Sandra, the owner wanted to spread bluebells across her valley. There were plenty on one side but none on the other. So the Green Gym were given the task of digging up the bluebells which were flourishing on a steep

(very) hillside on a Thursday session, and planting them on an equally steep slope on the other side on the Saturday. They were carefully planted in clusters and protected from deer and squirrels with wire and crowns of thorns- very appropriate this being the run up to Easter.

Besides all this, the group planted Butchers Broom plants in the shape of two G's. The letters were somewhat wobbly as once again it was a one in three slope. But it is hoped that in years to come they will grow to be a reminder that "We woz 'ere"



Various familiar figures clearing brambles and scrub on the 'sledding Hill', Peppard Common
Photo Tony Chandler.

THE ALPHABETICAL WORLD OF MIKE LEONARD

(Continued from the last edition)
(full of tiny cuttings, sundry snippets)

Why I like GG

The A to Z of a confirmed BVAP

Sweating away at my nightly lucubration I came to **D** in my lexicon of the to Z of a confirmed BVAP (by the way this rhymes if you say Z in the American way). 3 words popped up you will recall, **Digging, Danger** So let's have it for D.

DIGGING

Now we do quite a lot of digging with GG. We dig postholes in order to swing gates and holes to sink boundary posts or finger posts for footpaths. How do you dig a square hole about half a metre a side? Well you design cut it with a spade and then you heave out the soil a couple of spade's depth. Then you use an intricate tool like a giant pair of sugar tongs to loosen soil and bring it out. The funny thing is getting used to opening it to dig or thrust the points into the earth and closing it to grasp the spoil (posh archaeological term) it seems to be the opposite way to what you would think. Great fun and so appealing, as it is so gratifying when the tiniest bit comes out you think you've moved a mountain.

Now for **DANGER**. There is always an element of danger using tools even manual tools such as we use. There is always the risk of cutting yourself, knocking yourself, getting in the way of a piece of broken glass or a wayward

thorny briar. Of course you have to take care and not get too carried away. But here's the good bit. GG is **SO** professional. Not only do we have briefing sessions on the use of tools, regular updates, briefings on the dangers inherent in working at a particular site or weather conditions we also wear safety helmets with visors, gloves and boots. These are particularly important when tree felling. More in the next edition.



THE FUTURE OF THE COMMONS

The Green Gym has done a lot of work on the commons over the years in support of the 10 year management plan involved with the Countryside Stewardship Grant. That grant comes to an end this year and the question arises what should be done next?

Firstly, the Commons represent a large area, nearly as much as all the BBOWT reserves in Berkshire. Secondly they are of unique interest in Oxfordshire containing acid heath (which we have been restoring), a variety of woodland, wetlands rarely found at such a height, a geological site of special scientific interest and a lot of historical interest. In many ways they are similar to a mini New Forest and as such we should be looking a long way ahead to ensure they are both preserved and enhanced.

Yet these Commons are not fully appreciated for what they are and a considerable amount of public education for both old and young, should be done. In this connection the Interpretation Boards the Green Gym has put up are a splendid start, but more boards are needed for other sites and approaches such as Nature trails could be tried.

When we- the Conservators- first thought about it we were considering ways of making permanent improvements which would not necessitate volunteers needing to repeatedly go over the same ground; apart from being disheartening it is a waste of valuable effort, so the Conservators of the Commons set up a steering group to study how these rescued parts might be grazed. Inevitably, t we found that the project would be bigger and more complicated than first envisaged ; I thought you would like to know how things are coming out..

Jules Thomson

To be continued in our next..

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**This will be held on
Tuesday April 26 at
7.30pm at the
Rotherfield Greys new
Church Hall (behind
the church).**

Magazine contact; Jill Kendal
kendalwoodbury@supanet.co
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Tel 0118 972 2201

The Green Gym
C/o Health Centre, 39 Wood
Lane, Sonning Common
Enquiries - Robin - 0118 972
3528.