

A VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT CHRISTMAS DINNER

This will be held at Badgemore Golf Club on Monday 17 December 2007

7pm for 8 - to allow for pre-dinner socialisation

Please let Julia know if you will be attending and what you'd like to eat.

MENU 2007 PRICE £20

Starters

Chicken liver pate with gooseberry chutney

or Grilled goats cheese crostini on a mixed bed of leaves with red onion marmalade (v)

or Prawn and smoked salmon timbale with dill and lemon dressing

Main Courses

Traditional roast turkey with sage and walnut stuffing, wrapped smoked bacon chipolatas and thyme and red wine gravy

or Trout fillet with a mild horseradish crust served with dauphinoise potatoes

or roast parsnip, butternut squash and a chili pastry paridel served with a shallot cream (v).

All main courses served with a selection of seasonable vegetables and potatoes.

Desserts -
Pancotta with cranberry and port coulis

or Christmas pudding with brandy sauce

or Dark chocolate torte with spiced raspberries

or Mature Cheddar, Camembert and Stilton with savoury biscuits and grapes

Freshly brewed coffee and mince pies..

~~~~~  
~~~~~

Raking hay while the sun shines

In the middle of August the sun shone (as it always does for Green Gym tasks) for a superb morning at Greys Court. The grounds staff are going to be in the spotlight for next years opening season (April to September) when the house closes for the final stages of renovations and only the gardens and tea room will be accessible, so they are concentrating on getting everything as much under control as possible.

The long grass in both the apple orchard and under the trees at the rear of the house had been mown ready for composting and our task was to rake and load.

Raking the apple orchard was the first task and as you can see everyone was hard at work. In fact we were loading the wheelbarrows faster than the tractor could get the contents to the compost heap



The variety of only a couple of the apple trees has been positively identified, so if anyone knows of an expert in apple identification who might be passing next summer, then get them to call in to help.

There was a small diversion when a slow worm was disturbed and later a young toad, but otherwise everything went to plan and we finished early.

Chris Ash

Nuffield Place

Dear Julia

This is just to thank you for the work the Green Gym did at Nuffield Place while I was away. Everything looks just as I would have hoped. I hope you enjoyed the company of the scarecrows while you were working



Best wishes Joanna



NETTLEBED VILLAGE POND

This pond once served the village with drinking water! However, seeing it, let alone drinking from it, was hardly possible due to the excessive amount of understorey regeneration. We were joined again by the six French students (See P3) and despite the drizzle, we soon rediscovered the pond. Some members cleared the 75m footpath that runs along side the pond while a further group built a new dam in front of the existing one which was leaking. At times of heavy rain, the dam will divert the excess water to fill several linked hollows thereby creating temporary pools for aquatic invertebrates.

Tony

Magazine contact: Jill Kendal
kendalwoodbury@supanet.com
Tel 0118 972 2201

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

Green Gym



Sonning Common

"THE LOPPER"

full of little cuttings.

No 13 October 2007

THANK YOU FRED

All members of the Green Gym were saddened by the news that Fred Denton had finally succumbed to the cancer that had beset him. Thank you Fred for being such a good friend to us all.

Tributes from members.....

"He was a solid member of the Green Gym; practical but always willing and modest; invariably friendly and cheerful."

"Fred was a founder member of the group and a regular attendee. A great conversationalist who always made us laugh with his jokes and stories. Fred's boots were always immaculately cared for, putting the rest of us to shame!"



Fred was a much loved and respected founder member of the Green Gym who did much to ensure the success of the group by making new members welcome and working with enthusiasm at any task asked of him.



"I missed the early years of the Green Gym but I soon came to see Fred as close to the heart and soul of the group. It was clear he just loved the company of others. even if you were not in the immediate group around Fred you were aware of the positive buzz which came from his direction."

"It was always good to work alongside him, he was always cheerful and never downcast. He seemed to derive a great deal of pleasure from just being with everyone."

"We shall all miss him greatly and all our sympathies go out to Rose, his wife, at this sad time."

NEWS FROM THE SITES

PRESTON CROWMARSH



At one side of the busy A4074 in Benson, well concealed behind trees lies Preston Crowmarsh a charming hamlet and area of watery growth part of which has been purchased by the local authority who want to set up a nature reserve there. Down one edge runs the clear and sparkling Ewelme brook which means that the area can be wet and boggy.

So the Green Gym joined Tom (from Ewelme) to build a board walk round the reserve. so that the abundant varieties of plants and their attendant insect and bird life can be seen however boggy the site might be. A public footpath runs through the reserve. With the boardwalk people can walk and enjoy this quiet and peaceful backwater.

As the site is so accessible Tom felt that the walk should be vandal proof so it was meticulously planned and the GG did their best to come up to his standard. They did not quite finish the work in the two sessions but as can be seen from the pictures it looked very accomplished at the end..

The Ewelme stream leaves the pool. Water iris that had obscured the view from the seats at the waters edge was dug out (a tough task) so that the senior citizens of Ewelme, who like to



sit there can once again enjoy the view.

KINGS POOL



Another day of mudlarks and getting wet was much enjoyed by one and all as the GG cleared water crows foot and encroaching weed from the Kings pool at Ewelme. They had been there putting in plants some time ago and these have been so successful that cutting back had to be done before they engulfed the



pool.

Waders were the order of the

day with rakes and forks to clear the water and the channel where the water goes into the Ewelme brook. The weed was disposed of behind the wall, but big stuff went into Robert's trailer and there were some anxious moments as various Gymmers balanced dangerously on the top of the pile to enable more greenery to be packed in.

Some members removed the water iris that cut off the view from the seats at the waters edge (a tough task), so that the senior citizens of Ewelme who like to sit there could once again enjoy the view across this lovely pool.

Finally everyone got in and line abreast did a sweep across the



pool to pick up the last remaining bits of weed and leave with another job well done. *****

MILL MEADOW HENLEY

Fri July 20 - The heaviest rainfall for years

Sat July 21 - Haymaking on Mill Meadow in the sunshine.

Sun July 21 - The same scene!!! (Photo thanks to Mike Macleod)



MORE OF MIKE'S ALPHABET

What comes to mind with M? Apart from me, and Mike 2, mainly a Saturday man. Well in a way the joy of Green Gym is it is not using **Machines**, no **Machinery** is involved, power tools are out and everything is achieved **Manually**. There is something eminently satisfying doing everything by hand not always using the hand itself but to grasp, swing or manipulate a tool. Certainly with the power tool one has to use skill and judgement but there is not the same direct relationship of muscle effort and the act of production if I can express it like that. Sometimes the pleasure is directly manual such as my favourite ragwort pulling. Both hands gripping, lean back on the heels and let the weight of your body do the trick. Great stuff.

Quite a lot of GG activity seems to take place in a **Marsh** and that's fun too especially when you're squelching around trying not to get completely wet feet. Withymead is good for that, the Abingdon reserve, various ponds like at Dunsden and water meadows all over.

But M is also for **management, materials and materiel**. That is another thing about our GG it is so excellently managed, everything is to hand, you know what you are doing, where to do it, and how to do it. You have the materials mainly tools all provided, there are site sheets, signing in sheets, briefing messages, sign boards, welcome packs, paper and hardware. It's all there. Of course, materiel, is really when the armed forces are involved but we are a sort of conversation force armed to the teeth with **Mallets** and the exotic and rarely sighted **Maul**.

N is of course **Nature**, all around us and our main opponent and friend. Nature can be big N as English Nature or small n a

wealth and a mass of green that grows and grows and is alive and lives. Of course nature can take many forms all part of the interest and fascination of GG but of course **Nettles** are the critical ones. Those urticarian evergreens whether clustering around the ice house at Greys Court or filling the old orchard at Withymead are there to be slashed, grabbed (with gloves) or hewn down in their thousands with shears, sickle and scythe. Mind you we have not yet got round to scythes but Time will tell.

Nostalgia although it isn't what it used to be is a great one for me. Perhaps there is something of the country dweller of former times in all of us hearkening back to when we may have all been rural dwellers that is conjured up by Green Gym. And some of the sites with old buildings exposed, fallen timbers, overrun orchards and gardens all give that something 'away from it all' feeling. Ah meso pleasant, it's a shame to finish at 1230!

Mike Saunders



Marbled White Butterfly
melanargia galathea

This delightfully visible butterfly can be seen from late June through July and into August. Its main food plants are various grasses such as Red Fescue and it enjoys rough flowery grassland as habitat. The female scatters her eggs in flight. Winter is passed as a small caterpillar.

Letter received about Preston Crowmarsh Boardwalk (see P 2)

To The Sonning Common Green Gym Team

Many thanks for the time spent Helping Tom & Ian with the boardwalk at Millbrook Mead.

This has provided the parishioners of Benson and Preston Crowmarsh with an attractive and peaceful walk enabling us all to enjoy the natural habitat to and from the river.

Regards Pat & John Deere



OUR FRENCH FRIENDS

The Green Gym was lucky enough to have some Gallic help during July from a group of students from Toulouse University, here to improve their English and find out about conservation work. The group came along to help at Watlington Hill, Nettlebed and Aston Rowant. They worked with enthusiasm and were of great help. Their assistance was much appreciated by everyone.