

Green Gym®



Sonning Common

# "THE LOPPER"

full of little cuttings.

Lockdown Issue Feb 2021

## Tomorrow Will Be A Good Day



I love this quote from [Captain Sir Tom Moore](#).

We do have a lot to look forward to and work to do to make sure tomorrow is a good day:

We look forward to the comradeship of working again with friends at the Green Gym, and believe our work will leave behind a world in better shape for the generations to come.

--Martin b--

Thanks to Tony for this photo of a Blushing Bracket fungus [\[left\]](#), found on a willow tree on the Millennium Green.

## Spring Wood



Thanks to [Rebecca and Robert Bell](#) for these fabulous photos of Spring Wood in the snow and frost.

It is rewarding to note that the frosty meadow beyond is now visible because of the [SCGG](#) clearance of holly from the fence line.

## **GREEN GYM – BEHIND THE SCENES OF A COVID PANDEMIC**

When the lockdown was announced last March, Green Gym activities suddenly ceased. There was a pause while everyone waited to see what would happen. Then gradually your Officers started to think how we could get going again. Adding to the complications was the fact that both the Secretary and Treasurer had announced they were retiring at the AGM due in 6 weeks' time!

It was decided to convene a C-19 Planning Committee consisting of Robin, the outgoing Secretary (the Treasurer Sian didn't wish to be involved as she was moving) and the two people (Martin and Alison) who had been identified as their replacements together with Julia and myself as Chairman. In all by the time you read this we will have had 7 meetings so far, held either in my garden or house or on Zoom. There were many decisions to be taken. What would the regulations allow us to do and what precautions would we have to introduce? With over two dozen sites, would the site owners want to have us back? Some wouldn't. Would all our leaders be prepared to return while things were still uncertain? They were. Would our insurance cover us and did we need permission from TCV?

By now it was clear we would have to limit each work party to six including one leader. People would have to apply for each session and it was decided that the leaders should send out the risk assessments as usual and that Martin as Secretary elect should receive the applications and allocate places. Looking at past records it was thought that two working parties would be needed, hoping that not too many people would have to be turned away. In the event very few were. Guidelines were produced for everyone and also a separate one for the leaders in line with Government regulations. These had to cover refreshments (no cake!), tools, gloves, disinfectants and so on. A second first aid pack had to be produced along with a second set of confidential personal detail forms; Jane Starkey very kindly took charge of this. The First Aid Course had to be cancelled even though some people were now out of date. Display boards were constructed to demonstrate we were working in accordance with Government guidelines. Tony Chandler with his usual efficiency took charge of this as well as renewing all the direction signs.

What should we do about the replacement Secretary and Treasurer since no AGM had been held to elect them? After perusing the constitution, it seemed that there was no reason why the new people couldn't take over until such time as they could be formally elected. I wrote to everyone to alert them to the situation.

It was clear by July that it would be possible to start work so we set up a programme for September and October. It was agreed that we would charge half of the normal £30 for each group of six. All seemed to work well and everyone complied with the new set of rules. The programme for November and December was put together only for the November one to be cancelled. Martin very efficiently transferred this month's programme to January only for this in turn to be cancelled. As I write this it is clear that February will have to be cancelled as well.

I had already said that as I had completed 10 years as Chairman I was proposing to stand down at the next AGM. So now in the middle of all this we had officially lost our Secretary and Treasurer and were shortly to lose the Chairman! After some discussion it was decided to ask Peter Keel if he would consider taking on the role at the next AGM. Luckily, he agreed and after I had written to everyone, we decided to invite Peter to join the C-19 Planning Committee so that he was familiar with what was going on. And now we wait to see when the present lockdown will end and whether the regulations will change.

--John--



## Did someone say Cake?



Cakes are an important tradition of the **SCGG** - here are some of photos to bring back happy memories until we can share again:

**Left:** Fruitcake and gingerbread, Moor End Common April 2013

**Top Right:** Green Gym cake Greys Court August 2013

**Lower Right:** Scones and chocolate traybake Moor End Common February 2012

Thanks to **Julia** for these cakelicious photos

## Mike's Lockdown Walk

This is the one of my local footpaths called **Postman's Path**. Reputedly the on-foot route of the postman taking mail from South Stoke to Ipsden. It always reminds me of that delightful verse from Rudyard Kipling's 'Puck's Song':

*See you the dimpled track that runs  
All hollow through the wheat?  
Oh that was where they hauled the guns  
That smote King Philip's fleet*



Incidentally, I have never encountered a ghostly Victorian postman trudging over this field complete with a bag of Penny Black stamped letters. But with the gathering gloom of a January evening who knows.....?



The Postman's Path beyond the ridge links up with the Icknield Way, that thousand year old trackway that marches alongside the Ridgeway, one of our prominent national Trails.



I liked this sign **[Left]** at the gate of Braziers Park in Ipsden. Must be a ripe site for Green Gym one of these fine days



This sign **[Left]** is a bit down from Postman's Path and is on the Icknield Way just close to Icknield Farm.....  
.....but would you want to take it?!



--Michael--

## Something to look forward to

The three photos show the return of spring in Park Wood, Nuffield. They were taken in [January, March and April of 2008](#) following the Green Gym's excellent clearance of understory holly. Hopefully it can be seen that they were taken from the same spot.



--Tony--

## Priest Hill Nettlebed



A very grey, frosty morning to greet me on Sunday but within a short time it was snowing quite heavily. I left venturing out until the afternoon, which on hindsight, was a mistake as the snow was already beginning to melt. I walked up to the car park near Nettlebed cricket pavilion, up the wonderful steps built by GG some years ago, to the Priest Hill heather.

Although much snow had already melted it was still looking very pretty. Many people have been walking through this area making it extremely muddy and I was conscious of the fact that I must stay upright and not break an ankle as I did on sandy rocks a couple of years back in Australia. I thought [Rod D'Ayala's latest pond](#) excavations near the heather were very impressive with their dams to hold up the water and exceptionally photogenic.

When the weather is more inviting we must get more bramble out though officially the volunteers for the Commons Conservators have been told not to work at the moment, no doubt because of insurance. I see no reason why Geoff, David and I cannot get a little exercise soon as we have formed a "bubble" and could inadvertently remove a few bramble roots in passing by.

--Susan--

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