

Aston Rowant

The old wooden kissing gate by the Ridgeway path was narrow and overgrown, so the task at our June session at Aston Rowant was to dismantle it and replace it with a new metal, mobility-friendly, one. There were only 6 volunteers but we got the job done, though wrestling off enough stock netting to contain a herd of elephants took some time. The straining posts, of which one was to remain for the new gate, had been fixed as if for Alcatraz, so Bob's jack came in useful. When even that couldn't cope with the final post he resorted to hauling it out with his Landrover (apparently after persistent intrusion by trials bikes the posts were put in with buried reinforcement to make them immovable - it was certainly effective!). Sheelagh did a great job of clearing the nettles to make access to the field gate easier, though she felt somewhat rueful when a pair of Ridgeway Wardens turned up immediately afterwards and strimmed all the verges with powerful bushwackers. Coffee with iced buns and seed cake was a wonderful restorative. Julia

Whilst on holiday in the Outer Hebrides we came across the Scottish equivalent of a mobility access gate. The gate normally works as a kissing gate (so prevents animal ingress etc.) but when you release the hinged section the whole gate opens to allow wheelchairs etc. to pass through. Not suitable for Aston Rowant as the modern mobility access gates prevent motorised bikes getting through, but a simple solution! Chris



Footpaths: Greys Green and Moored Common

At Greys Green we created a new footpath on behalf of Greys Court and the County Council (due to historic agreements the land is owned by Greys Court and managed by the Council). The current footpath went from the cricket pitch boundary through the woods to Greys Road and along and across the road on a fairly busy stretch. The new path runs from the cricket pitch to the Shepherds Green Road, where it crosses at a quiet point, then carries on the the Greys Road for a direct crossing to the path on the opposite side. There is no need to walk alongside the busy road. The work should be complete at the next session and hopefully the footpath can be officially signposted and opened.



Glue Crust Fungus on Hazel - *Hymenochaete corrugata*

This fungus seems quite common on Moored Common; it is a fungus that can join tree branches together as seen here on Hazel. Mycelial pads bridge between and bind together contiguous stems from the same and different stools. The black colouration is a waterproof coating to the fungal mycelium which grows from infected dead wood to an adjacent living branch. The fruiting body is brown in colour and spores are released through pores. It is the only example of this kind of fungus in the UK.

At Moored Common we opened up an old bridle way and footpath which leads from the Fingest Road, near the Prince Albert pub onto North Common, via the Oaks which were 'haloed' two years ago. We also created an area for children's activities which will take place on the 12th September. Katy (the volunteer warden) and her family and another local family were also helping to make the classroom area by bringing in log sections for outdoor seating. Chris

Withmead



The landing place at Withmead has a magical feel, harking back to our early times here when we freed the rock floor and surrounding walls from green overgrowth. The area has been transformed by Robert with wooden handrails, a gate and handsome decking which is far safer to walk on than the uneven original floor. All it needed was a woven screen for extra safety behind the walls, which we duly constructed using willow and birch whips to the sound of the river gently lapping in the morning sun. Julia

A second task was to dismantle a 12' x 8' wooden shed which had seen better days. In fact it had been patched and reinforced so many times it seemed to be made of screws and nails with the odd piece of wood here and there. It actually took quite a bit of brute force to free it from the foundations and reduce it to small enough components to carry through to the bonfire area! Chris



Nuffield Place



Our September task at Nuffield Place was to make a dead hedge as a screen for the bonfire area, using material from previous tree and laurel clearances. Posts had already been put in place by another group, but we found they were too far apart to do any weaving, so Ian and Wim set about making extra posts and inserting them in between. The rest of us got creative with the horizontals, and the finished result is a thing of beauty. Julia

Julia

Dual purpose task

Our August task in Green Broom Wood was clearing brambles from the sides of the footpath and hazel coppicing. Any useful long whippy poles produced by the coppicing were gathered up by Robert for a screen-weaving project at Withmead. Julia

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Green Gym



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"THE LOPPER"

full of little cuttings.

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Temple Island Meadows

There were only 7 of us for our August visit to Temple Island Meadows, but we finished the task of dismantling a fence by the public footpath. Parts of the fence were totally obscured by scrub, mainly dogwood, so this had to be cleared before we could get out the fencing pliers. Tony Austin plans to dig out the ditch on the other side of the fence to restore running water there, before erecting a better stock-proof fence. Julia



Nettlebed Common

Sixteen GG'ers turned up for this. One team spent the morning raking up and removing cut bracken and brambles while the second team cleared around "The swings" and install three wide steps to help form part of a nature trail. Tea break was enjoyed on the pavilion veranda (Note the precise timing). Tony

