

## Dunsden Churchyard - Hedgelaying

The task for both a Thursday and Saturday was to start the laying of the hedge around the car park. Initially the whole team got stuck in clearing the hedge away from the fence behind it as well as trimming the side in the car park. The photos below show the before during and after of the preparation day:



Before

During

After

When we returned to burn all the arisings and lay the hedge there was another massive effort from a large team dragging everything to the fire trailer (much refurbished after a tyre incident on the way from Warburg to Dunsden!) and burning it while a small team started the actual laying. Gill helped trim the hedge layed two years ago and the hedge won. Finally Tony, Chris and John Bodman returned on the Saturday afternoon for a couple of hours to finish clearing up and binding the hedge.



## Nettlebed Common

After a long spell of exceptionally mild weather winter decided to arrive with an icy blast for our January session on the lowland heathland at Nettlebed Common. No snow, but the cold wind spurred us on our various tasks to keep the glade at Priest Hill open and the heather clear of brambles. Encroaching vegetation at the northern edge of the glade had previously been brush-cut by Tony ready for us to rake and stack the material within the woods. Some of our party lopped back blackthorn by the main path, processed the fallen branch of a crab apple and matted out a gorse stump. Meanwhile, a small group of us raking cut bramble on the rim of the cricket field uncovered quite a few lost cricket balls and even a golf ball! We're used to those at Reading Golf Club, of course. Mike S suggested we set up a GG Museum of Found Objects, and I suggest that if we can't find a venue we could use Mike's sitting room. Julia



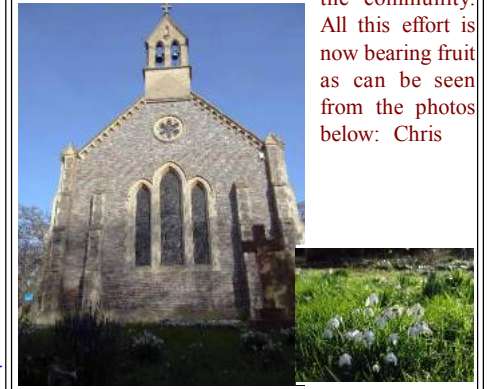
## Dunsden Churchyard - Wilfred Owen

During the hedgelaying activities Edward reminded us of Owen's presence in Dunsden at the centenary of year 3 of WW 1 and shared this verse:

What passing bells for these who die as cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can putter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries for them: no prayers nor bells,  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -  
The shrill, demented choir of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling them from sad shires.  
If you could hear,  
My friend, you would not tell with high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory  
The old lie, "Dulce et decorum est. Pro patria mori".

## Dunsden Churchyard - Snowdrops

The churchyard at Dunsden has been undergoing a transformation in the last three years. This is thanks to the planting of hundreds of snowdrops, orchestrated by John Bodman and with help from the community. All this effort is now bearing fruit as can be seen from the photos below: Chris



## Mapledurham

In January we returned to Mapledurham Village Hall to plant a hedge alongside the car park fence, which was enabled to be erected after we had cleared a wide band of scrub. Sian prepares to demonstrate her expertise with spirals. Julia



## Green Gym is Good For You!

Recently in 'the media' UK cosmonaut Tim Peake's "Extra-Vehicular Activity" (EVA) was deemed good for him. It crosses my mind that perhaps this is one way to promote getting out there into the Open Spaces and doing something useful, however modest relatively that may seem (and our human efforts are generally modest in this context). One can also take pause to admire the wonders of nature and views (just a bit more close-up and not so wide compared with that from the ISS !). Its merely a mind-over-matter thing of getting suitably dressed and out through that confined capsule door. With the right approach to it, one is provably going to benefit oneself, in some way that may be beyond description. Down here on planet Earth there's plenty of oxygen floating about in a pleasant atmosphere (our communal life-support capsule), with natural aromas to experience too. There's plenty of science and observation behind it and, hold on, there are social opportunities with other real people! Nothing truly to be afraid of, especially in this country...The real health benefits for human Mind and Body are only now beginning to be understood. Subjectively, one can admire & enhance nature's biodiversity and one's own environment too. It merely takes a little time & effort to get out there and enjoy an EVA! Geoff

## Aston Rowant

There was plenty of scrub awaiting us in the goat pen for the January session at Aston Rowant. Spurred on by the cold and two bonfires, we completely cleared one large patch. The other bonfire burnt the arisings from a previous clearance session at the bottom of the hill. Julia



The final patch of scrub surrounded!



Gill dancing on the final heap before it gets burnt.

## Kingwood Common



Despite the threat of heavy rain and hill snow, the morning remained relatively dry with intermittent drizzle.

We warmly welcome Natalie Ganpatsingh from the Intelligent Health Centre in Reading set up by our founder Dr William Bird. She was very keen to see the Sonning Common Green Gym in action and also "mucked in". Our first job of the day before coffee break was to rake up the previously brush cut material. The bonfire was brought to life over the coffee break and we were able to clear a substantial area of gorse and burn most of it. Tony

## Cleeve Water Meadows



Despite the recent wet, grey and miserable weather, we had a lovely sunny day at Cleeve. We managed to cut and burn all the willow re-growth at the river end of the site. We also moved a large pile of logs to near the entrance so they could be used for firewood. After a refreshing session

everyone walked through the sun up the lane before heading home. Chris

## Bonfires

**Our safety equipment now includes a large bottle of water to be brought whenever we have a bonfire in case of accidental burns.**

Julia

Magazine contact: Chris Ash  
chrisp.ash@btinternet.com

Tel 0118 9475441

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.

Number 47 March 2016

## Spring Forward .....

We all know that spring starts on the ???

1st February Solar (hours of sunlight)

1st March Meteorological

20th March Astronomical

So of course we change the clocks on the 27th March!

Don't forget .....

## First Aid Course

It's that time again, so 12 members of the Green Gym participated in the St John's Ambulance run training course. So we now have a dozen keen and newly re-qualified 'first aiders' ready to wrap your wounds in bandages or pour cold water on your burns! Hopefully we will keep our virtually unblemished record and not need any treatment.



Diane ties the knot!

## Reading Golf Club

We had our usual two Thursdays in December at the golf club and continued the tasks of previous years. Heavy duty hedge laying at times required the use of a chainsaw. We managed another 20 metres which ensures no access to the golf grounds through that part of the hedge. The rest of the group busied themselves trimming part of the previous laid hedge and finding stakes and binders for this session's hedge laying.

Tony



## Flowercroft

The temperature was -3°C and frost covered the low scrub in mid-cleared the frost and our 15- with a large area of encroaching ferns identified the various offenders hawthorn, blackthorn, way-spindle. 14 different species of this site last year, so our work to well worth while.

Julia



the grassy bank at Flowercroft Wood was covered in white frost when we arrived to February. Brilliant sun strong band did the same shrubs. Andrew Hawkins which included among other-faring tree, field maple and butterfly were counted on maintain their habitat is