

## **MAKIN' STEPS AT MAKINS**

We were asked by Henley Town Council to help with improving the access to the Makins Recreation ground. The ground slopes away very steeply on one side down to the path from Haywards Close and Deanfield Avenue. The steps down by the Scout Hut were in need of clearance and repair and at the other end of the recreation ground new steps were needed as the path was very steep and slippery. This was perhaps the biggest task the Green Gym has been asked to tackle so far and involved skills that were new to some members. Three sessions were allocated over a week in order that the job should be done and finished in a set time. Members have often mentioned that they find it very satisfying to see a task through and this gave a chance to do just that.



Making the new steps was one task that did need masculine strength in the digging out of the hard chalk, but as can be seen other skills were also in demand. It is hoped that Tom did not suddenly raise his end of the pole (above)! A second gang including the female Gymmers did a very good job clearing the other footpath and repairing the old outworn steps, installing new risers and posts where needed.

Wet weather did not make the task easier but the steps were finished on time and there was a huge sense of achievement at the end. As reported in the Henley Standard Julia Booker said we had received lots of comments from people saying they were pleased with what we were doing and that access for mums and toddlers to the recreation ground was much improved. The project has been included in the town's efforts for success in the "Britain in Bloom" competition.



**The finished steps -  
Something to be justly  
proud of. Local people  
were appreciative - see  
e-mail received on  
page 1.**

Acknowledgements for photos in this edition to Tony Chandler Julia Booker Vicky Beardsall and Jill Kendal



## NUFFIELD PLACE KITCHEN GARDEN PROJECT



Nuffield Place is a picturesque house built in 1914 and was once the home of Lord Nuffield, the philanthropist and creator of Morris Motors. The house is situated in beautifully set out four acre gardens, contained in which is a partially walled kitchen garden. Originally this garden was full of fruit and vegetables to feed the house, however, it has not been used for many years.

The project at Nuffield Place not only aims to restore the walled garden into a productive space but also provide an opportunity for people suffering from physical or mental health problems to improve their well-being through active participation in growing plants. This type of gardening is known as therapeutic horticulture.

Any Green Gym enthusiast will know the benefits of doing outdoor work on their physical and mental well-being. Just to mention a few positive aspects are increased fitness, reduced stress levels and social interaction with many friendly people. Similarly, horticulture  
n provide the same  
benefits

Green Gym visited the site in April to help start the renovation of the walled garden into a working kitchen garden. With the spring sun shining down on us, and with spades and saws in hand, the Green Gym team dug out four of the eight planned beds and cut down, with surprising ease, some self seeded yews which would have shaded out the beds.

For more information on the project please contact Vicky Bear-dall tel: 07855606894



## ANNUAL JAUNT

We have been invited by the Chipping Norton Green Gym to join them in a work session at Woodstock Water Meadows on Wednesday 26th September. This is the fifth and newest Green Gym in Oxfordshire, started up in April with Nina Sperinck as their leader. Nina came to see us in action at Oak Farm, and later on Robert, Jean and Diane travelled up to support the two launch sessions in Chipping Norton and Woodstock.

The Water Meadows is a beautiful site not far from Blenheim Palace, and the task will be to install a kissing gate and a 5-bar gate, with plenty of lighter work available such as ditch clearance for anyone not enamoured of post-holes! The session runs from 10 am to 1pm, and lunch will follow in one of the many pubs in Woodstock.

Please let me know if you would like to come along. We need to have an idea of numbers to plan the work session and make travel arrangements. If there are enough people I may be able to organise a coach!

Julia Booker

## CHILTERNSWILDLIFE CONFERENCE FRIDAY 2ND FEBRUARY 2007

Tony Chandler and Robert Watson went along with about 130 others who represented groups interested in the Chilterns AONB, including Wildlife Trusts and County Councils. Subject matters covered the threats to wildlife from population pressures, (roads, houses and leisure), farming and global warming.

It was encouraging to see so many groups under the same roof and singing from the same hymn sheet. On the downside, it was a sit and listen affair with ten speakers! There was general agreement that a follow up conference would be desirable with much more input from the grass roots level. Lunch was very good,

Tony Chandler





### GREYS COURT

Back in April we worked in Sir Felix Brunner's favourite bluebell wood clearing the dead wood left by the tree cutting activities. Our hard work certainly paid off when the bluebells came into flower, it was a sea of blue and the scent was heady and overwhelming



### MUDLARKS

It was lovely to see Fred Denton at Binfield Heath when the Green Gym worked on clearing the pond by Holmwood. A splendidly messy morning was had by the pond workers. (How Rebecca got quite so muddy was a mystery.) Another gang worked hard clearing the bridle path where lots of trees had come down in the January storms, which was much appreciated by passing walkers, children and dogs.



**PLEASE SIR, WE'RE JUST HAVING AN 'ARMLESS CONVERSATION**

### PasturesNew

Our programme for the next three months includes visits to several new sites. Two are likely to provide regular visits for some time to come.

**Little Oakley Wood** has long been neglected. We will begin in July by gathering up cut and fallen wood, with the prospect of bonfires later in the year. There are many hazel trees in this woodland and the main task will then involve coppicing, re-establishing a regular means of managing these trees. The cut hazel will be available for hedging work on other sites.

**The Temple Island Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** lies on land owned by the Henley Regatta Committee. A plan for its future management is being prepared with the help of Natural England and is to lead to the re-

introduction of grazing. Tony Austin of Oak Farm has agreed to oversee this process. There is an important role for the Green Gym – the site has been invaded by much scrub, especially small alders, which must be removed before the animals can be brought back.

Let's roll up our sleeves with the prospect of healthy exercise, bringing benefit to the environment and enjoying splendid surroundings – all in one!

RH



Working at Nettlebed Common scraping more ground for heather regeneration. The part cleared over the past years is showing good evidence that the heather is coming back.

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**full of little cuttings.**

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WELL DONE TO EVERYONE INVOLVED!!