



OLD FATHER TIME IS ALIVE AND WELL AND WORKING AT TEMPLE ISLAND, IT WAS A VERY EFFICIENT TOOL. AND NO LEGS WERE SLICED OFF...

MORE OF MIKES ALPHABET

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Well my big P is for **Pruning**. So much pruning and shaping and carving and clipping of bramble and branch, of briar and fern, of nettle and weed. And not only do we get a lot of this especially along footpath or hedgerow but it is so lovely to do it. There is always the right tool for the job high up or low down, deep inside a bush or clump, a branch overhead and the tool really does cut. So much easier when what you want to cut actually is cut rather than getting stuck in the blades. Then there is a lovely special sort of nice **Pain** when you attend a GG session. You 'ache' in various parts depending on the job, whether lifting **pitchforks** of cut grass (shoulders and back), digging (thighs and feet), cutting and sawing (wrists and arms) or all sorts (all over). But it's a nice sort of pain. You feel you deserve going home for a rest, you feel you have done something worth while for yourself and other people, you have shed the guilt feeling of 'I've been reading this newspaper for two hours I suppose I should get up and do something'. The body is toned, the appetite sharpened. the mind is rested and refreshed. Well my two big P's but of course I'm

mindful of **Pleasures** both **Pastoral** and in some delightful cases with waders, **Paludal**. Then there inevitably are the **Paroxysms** of mirth occasioned by the **Plaisanteries** of "he who brings the ham rolls", and the **Palaver** that ensues. Of course all of this alphabet is not a Panacea for all ills but just maybe, just maybe.... on a bright summer morning in the depth of the south Oxfordshire countryside a sort of demi-**Paradise**.

MIKE SAUNDERS

REED PULLING IN WOODSTOCK. GREEN GYM WADERS WERE VERY USEFUL.



ANOTHER MILE OR TWO OF BOARDWALK SAFELY CONSTRUCTED AT WITHYMEAD

**BAGDEMORE PARK
CHRISTMAS PARTY MENU
2008**

First course

Winter Soup - Roasted butter-nut squash and sweet potato(v)

Chicken liver pate - served with gooseberry chutney & roasted brioche

Prawn Cocktail - A retro classic served with Marie Rose sauce.

Main Course

Traditional Roast Turkey - served with sage and walnut stuffing, wrapped chipolatas & rich thyme, red wine gravy.

Escalope of Salmon - served with a tarragon cream sauce.

Christmas Crepes - served with a sauted medley of potatoes, chestnut mushrooms & rosemary.

All served with a selection of seasonal vegetables and potatoes.

Sweets

Vanilla Panacotta - creamy Italian dessert served with a cranberry and port coulis.

Traditional Christmas pudding - served with brandy sauce.

Chocolate Cheesecake - served with chocolate sauce.

Cheese Plate - Mature cheddar, brie and stilton with savoury biscuits.

To Finish

Coffee - freshly brewed served with mince pies.

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KINGWOODCOMMON

As most Green Gymmers will know, Kingwood Common is a fantastic wildlife and recreation area. Its current appearance is due, amongst others, to the hard work and sweat of the Green Gym.

The Nettlebed Commons Project aims to find a more sustainable way of managing Kingwood Common in the future, to ensure that the locally important heathland plants can thrive. A public consultation is currently under way that aims to discover the views of local residents and users of the common about possible options for future management.

The main threats to the open areas on Kingwood Common are the encroachment of bramble, bracken and birch. Without appropriate management, the heather filled glades will disappear. Possible management options include manual cutting, mechanical cutting, grazing, turf scraping, and burning. None of these options are mutually exclusive and it is likely that the most appropriate and sustainable option will include a combination of these techniques

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If you wish to know more a consultation leaflet is available from Jenni Hignett (01491 642001) or online at www.nettlebed-commons.org in the Commons Project section. It features a rather lovely (and not at all posed) photograph of Diane and Peter, so is definitely worth a look!! There are a number of ways to comment, by phone, email or on our interactive discussion forum 'Have Your Say'.

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The Gymmers were delighted to have Jenni's company at their last session when we were raking up the grass cut earlier by Tony Chandler, and pulling bramble and silver birch from the clumps of heather. Opening up the surface like this will give the heather the maximum chance to grow and flourish. It is already a mass of purple and everyone was amazed at how much it had spread since we first tackled the site.

HENLEY WILDLIFE GROUP

The Henley Wildlife Group manages several areas in Henley for wildlife including parts of Mill Meadows. The main area on the meadows is along the south-east boundary of the River and Rowing Museum where we have allowed the vegetation to grow more naturally since 1995 and dug three ponds.

This area has a variety of wildflowers throughout spring and summer but the best display is around mid-May to mid-June when the part in front of the ponds is awash with buttercups and ragged robin.

To keep this looking good we need to cut it annually and rake off the risings. The Town Council contractors cut it for us but the current ones don't have the machinery to do the raking so in recent times we have asked the Green Gym to do it. The Green Gym raking parties have been quite impressive - reminiscent of harvesting scenes in old agricultural photographs - and HWG has been very pleased with the result.

We hope that the piles of cut grass will form a good habitat for an array of wildlife including the grass snakes that were seen at our work party on the 4th of June. Our aim is to maintain nature conservation areas for wildlife and people but without the help of the Green Gym for tasks like this we would struggle to meet our objectives.

Many thanks to the Green Gym and all our helpers and supporters! HWG and the museum are working on a wildlife trail leaflet for the Meadows which will be available from the museum and other outlets in Henley when it is published. Sally Rankin

YOKELS AT WORK!



EWELME WATERCRESS BEDS

The independent environmental consultant, Sarah Coulson -Philips, appointed by the Society to prepare a 10 year management plan for the Beds and Nature reserve has now completed her report. The main purpose of this management plan review was to help all interested parties work towards a long term shared vision for the site. The Plan sets out the management focus for the site for the next ten years, and provides detailed management prescriptions for the next five years,

This report has been accepted by the Society as a framework for planning for the future.

The Society acquired the beds in November 2000 and, under the management of Beryl and Hugh Hunt, volunteers have spent 8 years restoring and developing the site. Beryl and Hugh have now retired from active involvement with the site but will be available for consultation. The Society wishes to acknowledge their debt of gratitude to Hugh and Beryl for their tireless work fund raising and organising the volunteers in this endeavour.

Now that Beryl and Hugh have retired, a new management team of volunteers has been appointed to take forward the management plan over the next 10 years, including a shared vision for the site and balancing the sometimes conflicting management objectives covering heritage, landscape, wildlife and education. The team comprises John Taylor (chairman), Tom Stevenson (Nature Reserve Manager), Vernon Miners (Public Relations), David Cooper (Treasurer), Ann Truesdale (Centre & Event Manager), Peter Harden (Deputy Reserve Manager) and Des Dix (Site and Wildlife Surveyor).

The Green Gym would like to add their thanks to Beryl and Hugh for their great contribution to the restoration of the beds, which is one of the group's favourite venues, and wish them well in their retirement.

BADGEMORE SCHOOL



Some of the pupils helped finish their shelter by weaving the sides with willow. At the same time others helped with planting all kinds of vegetables in the raised beds that Green Gym had created.. As you can see there was no shortage of willing helpers



Another interesting and different session was held at Badgemore School

Kissing Gate, Rotherfield Greys



The mobility access Kissing Gate used in previous years at the Henley Show was installed on a footpath behind Julia Booker's house, replacing a stile and as a partner to the gate installed earlier in the year. Unlike the previous session where everyone froze this time the sun shone down

. First the wire fence was removed then Eric used a sledge hammer to release the horizontal bars and the two steps of the stile. Despite the hot weather, and the need to dig five holes, work continued a pace (it was such a skilled work party!), and the job was duly completed by the end of the morning.. Although it's not a suitable path for wheelchairs, baby buggy users should be delighted Favourable remarks from dog owners and walkers were quick to follow. Tony Chandler

KINGS POOL

The task was to remove the water crowsfoot from the Kings Pool at Ewelme; a wet and weedy task but luckily the weather was warm and sunny. The Green Gym worked alongside a group from the village and a large amount of weed was removed in an enjoyable session. A human chain slid it to the bank in professional style. A big skip took the wet weed and this was quickly filled. There were some entertaining acrobatics by various workers who

jumped on the soggy pile to try and press it down. A small diversion was provided by two enormous trout which were disturbed from the depths, and which whisked slimly round the workers legs before gliding back into the shadows apparently none the worse for their adventure.



Amazingly the sun always seems to shine on the sessions at Ewelme



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Sonning Common

THE LOPPER
full of little cuttings.

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BTCV REVIEW

In July Green Gym had a visit from Chloe Kegg and Mick Deness of BTCV as part of a three year review, which has been brought in by BTCV to help and keep an eye on Green Gym groups round the country. The intention is chiefly, to give help and encouragement and ensure groups are functioning effectively.

Chloe and Mick joined in with the task of clearing and cutting back the laurel that was spreading through Felix Brunner's favourite wood at Greys Court. As usual a great deal was achieved in the session and they seemed to really enjoy themselves.

After a good lunch Mick and Chloe reviewed the procedures with members of the group and in only

one area was it felt that some changes needed to be made and there was need for some improvement; namely, that we needed better information to be kept about members in case of a medical emergency.

John Hasler had previously highlighted this issue and the group has now taken up a suggestion that each member should have an envelope containing contact numbers, pertinent medical information etc which will be kept in the First Aid Box and opened by the leader when and if necessary. In this way the information will be quickly available yet private.

The system is now in use; would any member who has not yet contributed their information please do so. Blank forms for you to fill in are kept in the first aid box.

The meeting was taken as our opportunity to say that the Green Gym Manual for self managing groups was a good idea but could be written in a more friendly tone (as voiced at the

AGM). It ought to dwell more on the joys of Green Gym and not appear too bureaucratic. The upshot was that they asked us to recast it as we would wish.

Julia Chris and John are tackling it with wet towels round their heads !!!

PS Needless to say we passed !

SNIPPETS

All Gymmers are pleased to hear that Robert Watson and Chris Ash are progressing well after their operations and wish them a speedy recovery. We look forward to seeing them again before too long..

Congratulations are in order for everyone who joined in clearing the old trackway on Watlington Hill. We have been awarded a highly Commended Certificate for the project by the Chilterns Board. Mind you I think the enjoyment everyone gained from just taking part was enough reward in itself.

It's still a good while to Christmas but please cast your eyes on the tempting Christmas menu on page 2.. The date to put into your diary is Monday 15 December, 7 for 7.30pm