

Green Gym[®]



Sonning Common

"THE LOPPER"

full of little cuttings.

Lockdown Issue 2



**Thank
You!!!**

Wecome and Thank You

I hope everyone is safe and well. A huge thank you to everyone who has sent in all the lovely stories and photos for this issue of the Lockdown Lopper. Please keep them coming.

Take care and keep safe

--martin b--

Spring Flowers from Tony



Cowslip



Pasqueflower



Wood-sorrel



Yellow Archangel

Many thanks to Tony for these lovely photos of Spring Flowers to cheer us all up, especially the rare Pasqueflower which is also known as the Easter Flower as it flowers at Easter. It is also the County flower for both Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

Dear Green Gym Volunteers,

I hope all are well and managing to stay safe at this difficult time. Many thanks to Martin for continuing with your newsletter. I sent a few photos for Martin to select from and below a short update:

The meadow is at last drying out after nearly five months of flooding – must be a record!! But it is a Water Meadow!! The benefit is much less thistle and nettle, particularly in the third of the meadow nearest the River that was mown in the autumn [Bottom Right], this now has a good regrowth of Reed/Sedge.



The Loddon Lilies [Left] are very early this year, again a record, as at early April they are already in flower!! They have also benefited from all the water and are not struggling against the Nettle and Willow Herb. The Yellow Flag Iris [Bottom Centre] will not flower until May, the stands near the gate already look very vigorous and promise a good display.

With Martin's help before the 'Lock down' started we processed all the cut Hazel into Pea Sticks and Bean Poles [Top Right]. These are much appreciated by neighbours and the Streatley Allotment Society Members. I have also saved some suitable material for minor repairs to the stockade.

I have had a couple of individual 'Workouts' in the meadow now that my regular Monday exercise class is cancelled and will at least keep the new path across the meadow 'open'.

The garden is lovely in the spring sunshine, I also sent a picture of the early Daffodil display [Top Centre].

I look forward to welcoming you all back when conditions allow, in the meantime happy to give feedback on the Meadow in your newsletter.

Take Care and Best Wishes to you all

--Charlotte Turner--

8 April 2020

Australian Adventures Part 2

In the last issue we left Susan at Rushcutters Bay about to photograph this Christmas Beetle....



.... We walked back up to Potts Point, finding a quaint bookshop and managed to purchase an up-to-date map of Queensland for the next stage of our travels. by this time it was getting very hot, we somehow ended up in to the gardens on top of the Naval car park, called

Embarkation Gardens [Right]. It was very sculpted and not really our style but there were wonderful views of the ships in the docks with Sydney harbour Bridge [Below] and the Opera House behind as well as a couple of Navy officers who were being photographed in front of their ship.



By now we were starving despite our cooked breakfast included in the hotel deal. We had a chat with an Irish girl, who was over for 6 months and working as a "guard" of the pavement because of workmen in the adjacent road. Poor thing, she was hot and bored so glad to chat but most importantly she made some suggestions for lunch. A short walk brought us to a delightful Thai restaurant which had a lunch deal for only \$10 each, about £5.50 for a wonderful plate of the most delicious ginger stir fry of

beef and rice for me and lots of cold water.

Much revived, we dawdled back towards our hotel deviating to the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf [Right]. This is now a beautifully restored building retaining much of its original fittings inside [Below]. It was built about 1910 when there was a substantial rebuilding programme to sort out the chaotic situation of all the wharves. It was an operational wharf up until the 1980s and as it was derelict and empty by 1987, the NSW government made a decision to demolish it. It wasn't until the builders went on strike for two and a half years and with a huge public protest, that the government caved in for it to be restored. It now contains some upmarket restaurants, a hotel, luxury apartments



and a public space for sculptures to be displayed. We potted amongst the sculptures and then for the first time in all our Sydney visits to this area, we could actually see inside the building. Plenty more sculptures but more interesting was the structure inside and with many retained features. Being "a wharfie" in the early 1900s was treacherous work if you even managed to get chosen to work! Times were hard until eventually workers rights were introduced.

--Susan--

GREEN GYM IN THE GARDEN

Thursday morning - rush downstairs, put on kettle, start the porridge, line up 5 thermoses.... Hang on, there's no Green Gym during lockdown. Nothing for it but to do Green Gym in the garden.



Wishing it were a usual session, I put on steel toe-caps, rigger gloves, ragged trousers and a Green Gym t-shirt, load the wheelbarrow with a few tools and park it next to a flower bed. None of the usual banter to while away our exercises, but I start the proper way with some stretches. Calves, back of thighs, quads (clutching a boot heel by my backside) [Left]. Out rushes husband - have I stuck the fork through my foot? No, just hopping while trying to balance on one leg. I survey the flower bed full of weeds and kneel down to work with a hand fork.

Now weeding is not your typical Green Gym activity, and after a couple of barrowsfull of nascent nettles and grass the coffee break beckons. I pour water from a thermos into a green mug and think with nostalgia of cakes cut into many slices. Just a biscuit today.

Back to work, but perhaps something more heavy-duty [Right] than weeding? That young birch tree is not going to grow any smaller. Unfortunately there are no helmets to hand, but this birch is a littl'un. After checking for passers-by (during lockdown?), I set to work on the bird's mouth and soon it's TIMBER! I cut the result into logs for next winter's stove and take the brush for an eventual bonfire, then eye up the next tree. And the next. By lunch time that part of the garden looks rather different. Bare, you might say.



After a sandwich I'm raring to go again and, while husband takes a post-prandial nap, decide to coppice the overgrown hazel. The saw is not up to Robert's standard of sharpness, but with hard work I cut it down to stumps in the correct stool-shape. The thin branches make a good supply of beanpoles, but what to do with the nice pile of stakes? Um.... I eye the hedge.

That hedge looks rather moth-eaten, and yes, could do with some hedge-laying. Desperately trying to remember Tony's methodology, I trim the sticking-out bits then make angular chops into the bases with our bill hook. (Actually, it's a slasher with a bill hook-type blade, so the long handle doesn't help, but needs must). The angled stems create a decent length of laid hedge before the sun gets low and husband appears. He looks shocked. I'm laying the hedge, I explain, to keep out the sheep. What sheep? The hedge must be doing a good job, say I.



Time to pack up the tools, do warm-down stretches [Left], stow away the attendance sheet (=1). I feel as if I've done three Green Gym sessions in one, and no wonder. The garden is disappearing. Husband reckons that's enough Green Gym until the real thing. Next session: weeding.

--Julia--

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