

Green Gym[®]



Sonning Common

"THE LOPPER"

full of little cuttings.

Lockdown Issue 4

Welcome

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and able to make the most of the lovely weather. Thanks to everyone for sending in the photos and words for this edition, please keep them coming. If you are missing the GG cakes this issue includes a recipe for you to try, more recipes welcome.

--martin b--

Australian Adventures Part 3 - Fires in New South Wales, Australia.

We caught the train from Central Station to Leura, in the Blue Mountains, to visit relatives, where we were taken for a short car ride on an unseasonably hot day for that area.

Once the pioneers had discovered how to cross this area, it quickly became a resort to escape the heat and high humidity of Sydney during the summer. It is a vast wilderness of crags and sandstone cliffs interspersed with a maze of deep gorges and canyons. The slopes of the hills and much of the valleys are covered in Eucalyptus trees which give a blue haze, hence the name, Blue Mountains.

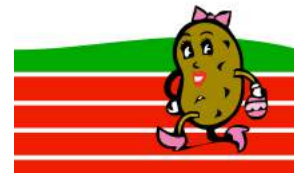
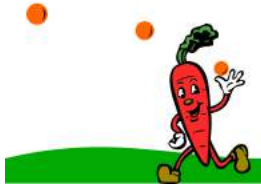
My husband's family lived there in late 1800s to early 1920s and we usually go to see the house which was a school set up by his grandparents but this year we were driven to Govett's Leap, one of the picturesque tourist spots.

Sadly, it was badly burned in the fires back in December / January. I hope the photo will show some of the devastation, though on a brighter note it had already rained enough to start the process of regeneration of the understory. It was possible to see the tree ferns

sprouting again. Some trees in Australia need fire to regenerate, so no doubt much will recover during the next ten years or so. --Susan--



GARDENING GYM



The longer this lockdown goes on the more important it is for us to keep exercising. Indeed, at the age most of us are, our muscles very quickly get weaker. And there will be a lot of catching up to do when we eventually get back to work.

Luckily some of us have gardens - ideal places to keep exercising physically and mentally. So, I've been digging in the vegetable garden. Although most of the digging got done before the lockdown there's still soil to be turned over. There are people who say you don't need to dig a vegetable garden but I disagree. There's nothing better for the muscles and the plants than forking over the soil. And two years ago we had to have a sewage treatment plant installed when our septic tank wasn't working properly. (A word of warning to those of you with septic tanks, if you have a problem the new regulations say you'll need a sewage treatment plant). We're still getting lumps of solid clay that need getting out as the plant is under some of the vegetables! I've now got the potatoes in as well – more digging.



Bending is also good to keep the back mobile. I've got the spinach, lettuce, parsnips and carrots in. Last year we put in a raised vegetable bed. My knees are beginning to creak so having the soil a bit higher certainly helps: the broad beans and onions are coming up nicely. I do not know how [Knee Pad Jill](#) manages to get down and crawl around as she does!

Luckily the weather has been great so being outdoors hasn't been a problem. But that has meant a lot of watering. So regular walks up and down with the watering can or hose. But I haven't forgotten the tea break (no cake). Nothing better than drinking a cup of tea while standing listening to the sewage plant humming gently away under the parsnips.

Keep well, keep exercising and we'll get going again as soon as we can

--John--

Remember me ??

Those happy mornings following I and my brothers and sisters round in circles pulling us up. And the aching backs and sore fingers at the end of the morning.

Well here we are again, what a pity you can't have more mornings of fun. There's always next year.....



--Jill--

Lockdown Lopper Cuttings

To help remind ourselves that although we can't easily get out and appreciate the lovely nature reserves that we were used to working on, here are some photos of 'very local' walks in Binfield Heath. Enjoy the Spring!



From the small pond we worked on (Green Pond) Binfield Heath, **Coltsfoot** (Left); which is not as common as it used to be.

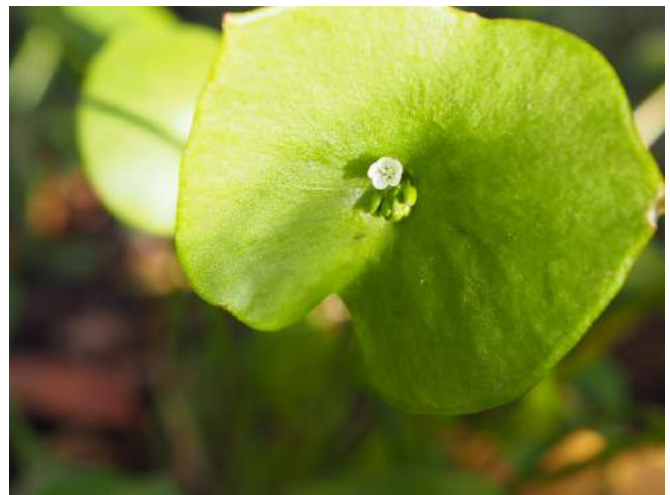


Although we could not work there it would have been lovely to visit the ... **Loddon Lilies** (picture (Right) from our front garden)



The ever more common, **Bee Fly** (Left)

A new one in our garden, **Springbeauty** (Right)



On the road between Binfield Heath and Sonning Common, **Solomon's Seal** (Left)

--Chris and Sheelagh--

Update from Charlotte

Dear Green Gym Volunteers,

I hope all are continuing to stay safe at this difficult time. I have again sent a few photos and below a short update:

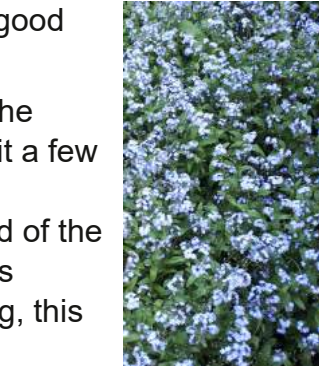
The Loddon Lillies are now nearly over, but a very good display this year. With the flooding they have spread in small pockets to other areas of the meadow from their usual place under the Willow Trees on the Cleeve Court boundary which is good news.

There is a lovely stand of vibrant blue Forget-me-not ([Right](#)) in the wooded boundary of the meadow in full bloom. I will have to wait a few weeks for more species to flower, but the signs are there!!

A large stand of Meadow-rue ([Below Left](#)) has spread in the third of the meadow nearest the River which has benefited from the increased flooding, this will flower late May to June.



The picture of the channel ([Below Right](#)) on the boundary with the Swan Hotel Meadow shows the Yellow Flag Iris which also flowers late May to June and in the foreground the pointed leaves of



the Yellow Loosestrife which flowers June to August. I will try and photograph these areas again when the plants are actually in flower!!



The garden is doing well with the extra attention!! Everything is at least three weeks early, I even have a few roses in bloom!!

I look forward to seeing you all again when conditions allow.

Take Care and Best Wishes, Charlotte Turner, Cleeve Water Meadow, Streatley.

[For those who are missing the cakes here is Charlotte's Rock Bun recipe!!](#)

4 ounces Butter or Margarine	4 ounces Demerara Sugar
8 ounces Plain Flour	4 ounces Dried Fruit
2 level teaspoons baking powder	1 egg beaten
Optional half level tea spoon mixed spice	1 to 3 teaspoons milk, depends on size of egg

Grease a large baking sheet. Rub the fat into the sifted flour, baking powder and spice until it resemble fine bread crumbs, or use the metal blade of a food processor. Stir in the sugar and fruit. Make a well in the centre, pour in the egg and milk, bind together loosely using a fork to give a stiff crumbly consistency. Shape the mixture into rough heaps on the baking sheet. Bake at 200 C, 400 F, Gas 6 for 15 to 20 mins. Makes 12, enjoy!!



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