

Green Gym®



Sonning Common

"THE LOPPER"

full of little cuttings.

Number 70 September 2021

AGM



Our much-postponed AGM was finally held on 21st July in the meeting room at Greys Church. Peter Keel was elected as our new chairman, Martin Rhodes as secretary, with the position of treasurer currently vacant. To thank all the outgoing officers, Sandra Rhodes had baked a tremendous fruit cake, which was cut by John, who had stepped down after 11 years as SCGG chairman. The rest of the cake was enjoyed at the coffee breaks of several subsequent work sessions.

Julia

Rokeby Recreation Ground



Tony led a small group to continue laying the hedge we so lovingly planted many years ago.

Julia

A large thicket of brambles and overhanging trees by the entrance to Rokeby Recreation Ground received the SCGG treatment in mid September, as these before and after photos show.



The sites and sounds of Green Gym

Usually we report on the sites and sights (good homophone that) of where we work but what about the sounds? Some of the onomatopoeia bits-whew!-4 vowels in one word-(yes, I had to check the spelling)



A recent visit to Greys Court saw one party working on the board walk and one on removing decayed fencing around mature trees no longer needing animal proof barriers. With crowbar, wire cutter, claw hammer and two stretching arms plus taut back, side planks were wrenched from uprights and nails pulled out or extracted from their original holes. Staples too.

Now, how can I spell the sound of yanked out planks? A sort of **ughhh**...or maybe a **nnnnh**.....or even a **hnnkkkk**. Well, whatever, very satisfying.

And then there is the Saturday visit to Ewelme and we are slurry moving in the stream below the bridge. Strong rain storms bring down mud and it settles as a semi-immovable mass of stodge mixed in with rotting vegetation.

So, it's shovels out, shovels in, lift and.....**shshsh weppp gwepp**.....**squelch** tries hard to get the sound but not quite right. Then **slap**, **flap shloosh** throwing it upon the bank, **squodge** and **slurp**. Heavy work but just how great are those sounds. Encourages you to keep going and miss coffee. Well.....maybe not quite.



Mike S

Streatley Church



Pruning the hedge at Streatley Churchyard produced five builder's sackfuls of clippings ready for transport to the anaerobic digester.

Julia



Ewelme

The weather is usually kind for us at Ewelme watercress beds and our August session was no exception, despite a pessimistic forecast. Our task, one of the Green Gym's heaviest, was to clear the stream below the bridge from weeds and silt. There were clumps of reed of course, and swathes of water mint in flower which smelled delicious as we carried it to the bank. Somehow the coffee table had been omitted from the tool kit, so we improvised with the "COVID compliant" sign reversed on the wheelbarrow.

Julia

Talk about déjà vu.....!



The sight of Peter, mattock in hand, carving a narrow trench alongside a fence as preparatory work ready for bedding in rabbit-proof chicken wire conjured up South Stoke to a T. Except for the absence of railway and instead the well-trodden track of the Icknield Way over the fence and bush line it seemed as if we were back there.

But this was Aston Rowant without Mr Chandler (of whom we wished well during his convalescence) the GGer completely synonymous with this lovely site set hard against the Chiltern escarpment. However we

did have the redoubtable (hmmm.....sounds like a French Napoleonic frigate) Brian to carry us through.

Delightful surprise there are 7 of us and Julia has the chocolate cake and the hot water so coffee break leaning against the 4x4 trailer goes well Perhaps a little bit too well!

The work progresses well in a series of phases- lopping back foliage growing through the old wire, clipping this away, scraping a line of the trench, mattocking out the trench, uncoiling the roll of new wire and pinning this to the fence. Once again one of the main pluses of GG work different jobs, different chances to change jobs, move on, new muscles...the complete workout.



Mike

Ewelme 4th September

Good things come in threes



Gill Vaughan, Jill Kendal and Gill Ewart



Peter Keel, Peter Hardern (Chiltern Society), Peter Taylor.

Hay raking



Greys Court



We dismantled several derelict tree guards in the field behind the overflow car park at Greys Court in August, a heavier task than you'd imagine. The guards had long done their job, to judge by the healthy trees inside, but the broken rails and stock fencing could be hazardous to beast and man alike. Work on the boardwalk beside Sir Felix's Wood meanwhile continued apace, with the session finishing just before rain set in. **Julia**

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