



## **Hello Vols**

**Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Western Volunteers newsletter. I have so many folders of photographs (17 in fact) sitting on my computer desktop waiting to be used and then filed away, that another edition beckons. Once again this will be mainly a photographic record of what we have been doing unless I can dream up some witty remarks to accompany them!**

## **In this edition:**

**Rustic Fence and Horse Corral Repair; Pipeline Weeding; Linslade Woods Rake and Cut; Swan Story Continued; Dead Wood Cutting and Chipping; Stanbridge Meadows; Grass Cutting at Stockgrove; Clophill Lakes; Aspley Guise Grass Cutting; Stockgrove Dipping Pond; Heather Seed Gathering; Odd Jobs and Bramble Pulling; Kissing Gate Replacement and Lords Hill Bramble Bash.**

**Rustic Fence and Horse Corral Repair**

**On a very wet Tuesday in September (14th) the task was to repair and extend the rustic fence along the cycle path adjacent to the area of the deceased slide. This hopefully will deter people from accessing the area that will become an open but sheltered seating area for Heron’s Hatch (an area which is now fenced off). Several other bits of rustic fence nearby between the main path and the cycle path were also repaired or replaced.**



**It was a little drier in the afternoon and one side of the horse corral was dismantled and repaired. Additionally, the horse trough was cleaned and refilled.**

**Pipeline Weeding**

**Tuesday 21st September task was to remove bramble and birch etc from the clumps of heather and gorse along the centre of the pipeline missed during the August 4th task (see newsletter No.52). Also, the grass required raking after being cut the previous day.**



**Linslade Woods Cut and Rake**

**Wednesday 22nd September was an away day to the Linslade Woods under the supervision of Ranger John. The task here was to rake up cuttings from the main rides in the New Wood after the contractor had been around them with the big mower. Here are the volunteers looking for bits of grass to rake up.**



**There is a small clearing off to the right of the ride pictured above, completely hidden by trees that once had a view over the treetops. It required cutting and raking. Alan on his trusted mower, after cutting some edges of the rides, was dispatched to cut it along with some volunteers to rake and trim the edges (there is a story here of a little incident, but I can't possibly repeat it – you must ask Alan). The top 5 photos on the next page show the clearing. The next 2 photos are of the other clearing adjacent to the pond which also was cut and raked. The bottom 2 photos are of the said pond, dry on the day, but with water on 30th October after heavy rain. That photograph was taken by Philip Braybrook from the Friends of Linslade Woods – the full photo can be seen on the Friends of Linslade Woods Facebook Group along with a panoramic sweep video.**



### Swans at Stockgrove - And then there were 4



### Dead Wood Removal and Chipping

**The Tuesday task on 29th September was to collect dead wood and to fell small dead trees in the wood north of the picnic meadow at Rushmere, and to use the chipper for their disposal.**



**Above: Lumberjacks and they're OK! (Monty Python Song)**

**Below: The chipper with Ranger Jen in charge and the boys feeding it.**



**Wednesday 30th September – Stanbridge Meadows**



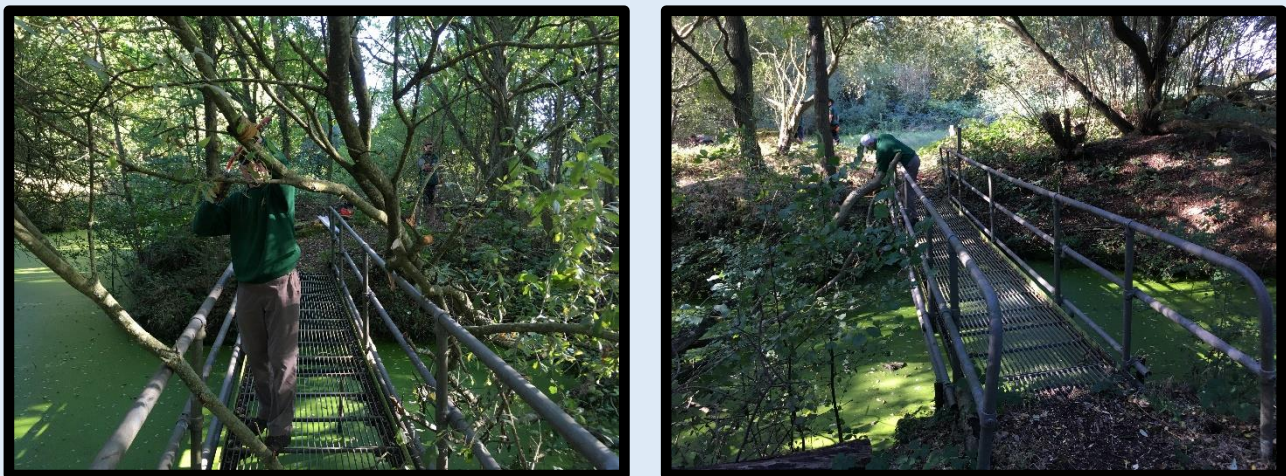
**Tuesday 5th October – Grass Cutting at Stockgrove**

**The barren look - perfected by the Tuesday boys – it was beginning to seem that all we ever did these days was cut and rake!**



**Wednesday 6th October – Clophill Lakes**

**Whilst most of the Wednesday Volunteers were at Sandhouse Lane Nature Reserve doing guess what? – cutting and raking, a select few (Ha! Ha!) were on an away day to Clophill Lakes to assist the Amphill Rangers with some fencing and cutting back.**



**First task - clearing fallen tree branches that were blocking the footbridge**

**across one of the small ponds – guess who was up for that – Peter! Whilst others went to start putting fence posts around one of the open fields.**



**Second task and for the rest of the day - clear some trees away from one part of the pond to open up the canopy and let light in the hope that the pond may clear and provide a healthier habitat. However the afore mentioned fence post task wasn't going to plan so the others joined Peter and I and we were sort of supervised by our pet Rangers Jen and John!**





**At the end of the day we went on a walk around part of the new site led by Phil Irving (Greensands longstanding ecologist). Above is one of the two large lakes.**



**Time for a wash-up (natter really) at the end of the day and last chance to grab a doughnut!**



**While some people were working Jen spotted fungi!**

**Tuesday 12th October – Grass Cutting and Raking – Aspley Guise**

**Did you know that the Greensand Trust has been involved with this piece of land known as The Townsland Recreation Ground since 2008? At which time it was asked to carry out an ecological survey of the area for the Parish Council and its report, published in 2009, can be read using this link - <https://www.aspleyguiseparishcouncil.gov.uk/old-news/>**

**Over the last few years we have been asked to cut a small area of grass at the south-west end of the recreation ground that is on a slope and too rough for the council to cut.**



**This year we also cut and raked a small area in Browns Way adjacent to the little pond.**

**Tuesday 19th October – Stockgrove Dipping Pond**

**Some of us with a few years under our belt may remember Zero Mostel’s Pseudolus and his “A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum” saying. Well now we Tuesday boys can tell you that a funny thing happened to us on the way to the dipping pond at Stockgrove. A large silver birch fell down beside us as we approached the wooden bridge where people feed the birds. Fortunately the tree stayed just inside the fence of Baker’s Wood but it could have quite easily have come down across the main path where we were walking. Not as funny as the musical comedy alluded to!**



**The Silver Birch**



**Top: Discussion on what's to be done**  
**Middle: Derek and Paul in the pond**  
**Bottom: Pond and surrounds are now clearer**



**Those not in the pond, pollarded (scalped more like it) and cleared some trees from the area to the left of the pond!**

**Wednesday 20th October**



**One of our favourite tasks (tongue in cheek) is the annual gathering of heather seeds. Here we are on Rammamere Heath before the usual trek through Kings Wood to several other heather sites where seeds can be gathered. The seeds will be used to scatter on land elsewhere in the country park where needed.**

**Tuesday & Wednesday 26/27th October**



**Very few photographs were taken on these two days! On Tuesday we were doing odd jobs around Stockgrove – including mending fences (top photo)! On the Wednesday we were on land adjacent to Old Shire Oak Heath pulling bramble (no people I’m sorry). These 2 photographs were taken the next day to show the area cleared.**

**Tuesday 2nd November 2021**

**Six-man team to remove the old kissing gate on the path from Buzzard Meadow up Lords Hill, and to erect a new kissing gate. No! we did not get in each others way; there was a lot of standing around and watching. As the photograph shows, there was a deep discussion once the first new post had been positioned before the other post was tampered in. No! Derek is not bashing the post but holding it upright while it is being correctly positioned.**



**Admiration of all our hard work or someone finding fault?**

**Wednesday 3rd November – Lords Hill Bramble Bash**



**No explanation needed – everyone knows what we are doing and even I get in on the act after Paul grabbed my phone!**

**I'm the End Piece**