

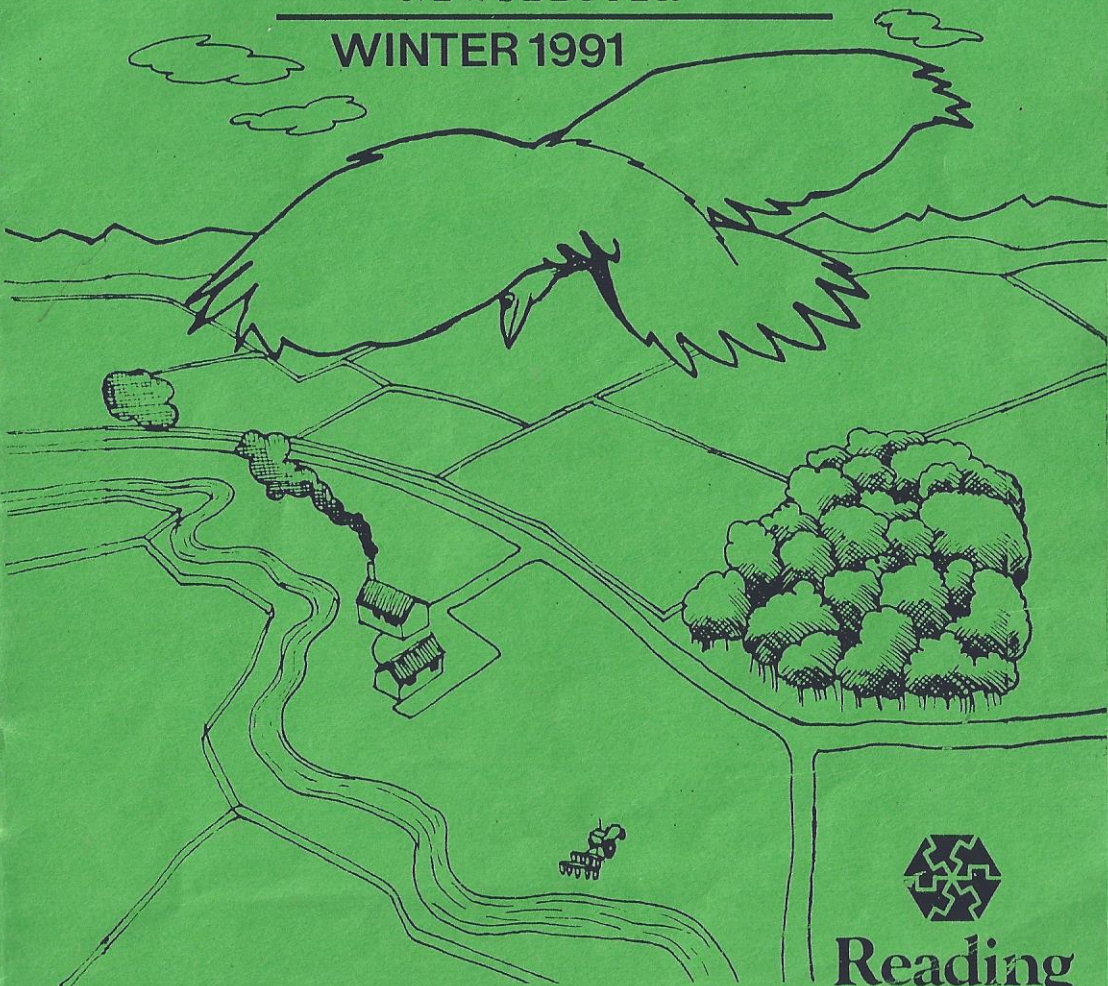
C.R.O.W.

Conserve Reading on Wednesdays



NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1991



PRACTICAL MIDWEEK
VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION
WORK TO PROTECT
OUR LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE



Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL



NATURE
CONSERVANCY
COUNCIL



D i a r y

We've had a really busy autumn work programme this year. We've been tree planting at Checkendon, bridge building at Stratfield Saye, scrub bashing in Tilehurst and clearing ponds in Ruscombe.

The Stratfield bridge building task on 11th September saw us all putting in a long hard days work to get the job done. By the end of the day, not only was the bridge completed, but also several footpath marker posts installed, and a section of path cleared, with the help of pupils from Brookfield School.

The Waterloo Meadows task on 25th September, had to be switched at the last minute, to Prospect Park, where a large area of bramble was cleared in the old Rookery, to give the woodland plants and flowers more space.

October saw us making a welcome return to Ruscombe Pond, and also a visit to Lousehill Copse in Tilehurst, for stream clearance work.

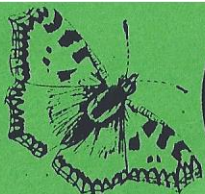
Coppicing was the name of the game at Moor Copse, near Tidmarsh, on 6th November, with trees on the menu again on 20th, at McIlroys Park. This time, it was bad news for that Aneka Rice of the tree world, the Sycamore, as we continued last year's work to clear an area of woodland of this tree, which steals the Lime-light, (*Tilia platyphyllos*) from the wood's wildflowers.

The year ended with tree planting at Northgrove Wood in Checkendon, and a Christmas extravaganza at Clayfield Copse in Caversham. Finally, many thanks to all those people who have come along to the tasks and done so much to make them a success.

CROW recently lost one of our leading lights and greatest assets.

Steve Diserens (no, he hasn't died) had been involved with CROW for 18 months, but has now moved on to pastures new, in deepest Sussex.

Thought by many, to be the area's leading authority on Hungarian culture, Steve will be greatly missed, and we wish him all the best in his new job, and thank him for all the hard work he put in for CROW.



ON

the beech

North Grove Wood is a Woodland Trust site to the north of Reading, just off the A4074 road to Wallingford, near Woodcote.

The clay-with-flints soil present throughout the area, means there is a predominance of beech, with ash and hazel also present.

The wood has provided a living for the residents of nearby Woodcote for centuries, with a local hurdle maker still working the excellent hazel coppice.

Bodgers, Beekeepers, and Cordwainers also worked the woods. The bodgers are sadly long gone, though the turning of beech wood chair legs on a simple pole lathe was once a very common sight in the Chilterns, supplying the local furniture trade.

Cordwainers, or shoemakers, used the beech to make 'lasts', the wedge shaped pieces of wood around which the shoe is constructed.

Since buying the wood in 1984, The Woodland Trust have planted other tree species, such as whitebeam and field maple. The CROW task in early December was to replace the dead and failed trees of previous plantings, with new beech, hazel and whitebeam. This was to supplement the natural regeneration in three particular areas of thin cover.

The tall plastic tubes previously used to protect the young trees have already become outmoded, with the new trees being planted using flexible spirals for protection.

The areas of ash and hazel coppice in the woodland have benefitted from being brought back into management, with the hazel being especially impressive.

The main area of hazel is worked on a 6 - 7 year rotation, and is a marvellous example of the practice of coppicing.

It is however, the towering beech trees that give the wood its character, and a walk through North Grove's 52 acres on a sunny day is guaranteed to impress.



For further information about the Woodland Trust and details of other woods you can visit please contact us at:-

**The Woodland Trust, Autumn Park,
Grantham, Lincs NG31 6LL.
Tel. (0476) 74297**

Registered Charity Number 294344

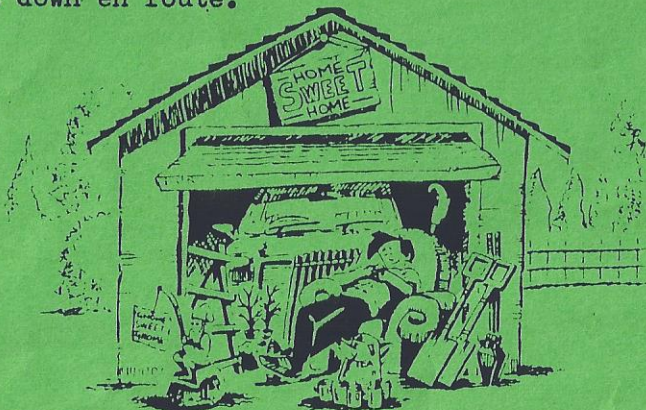


Why not come out WITH CROW?



I'VE GOT NO TRANSPORT!

The CROW minibus has a pick-up from outside Reading railway station at 10.00am on each workday. We'll take you to the site, and bring you back, usually before the 5.00pm rush. We can also pick-up and set down en route.



I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT CONSERVATION WORK!

CROW provide all the tools and know-how. We'll show you what we're doing, and why, and explain the use of the various tools and techniques.



I WON'T KNOW ANYBODY THERE!

Nor will the leader most of the time!

Members of the group change from task to task, with the faithful regulars mixing in equal numbers with new, or 'one off' volunteers.

I HAVEN'T GOT ANY TIME TO SPARE!

You don't have to stay for the entire day. Do as much as you like! Just an hour or so is fine. We work fortnightly, but don't think you're obliged to show up for every task! Come along for a day, and give it a try. You may even enjoy it!

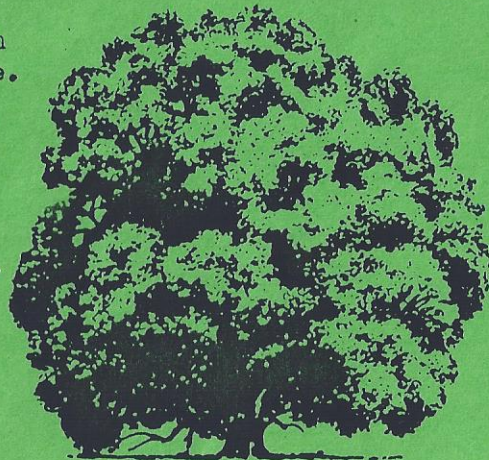
CLAYFIELD COPSE

LNR

The CROW task at Clayfield Copse on 18th December, was the first work task to be held there since the wood's designation by English Nature, as a Local Nature Reserve.

The Mayor of Reading performed the LNR designation ceremony, Reading's first, on 1st December and afterwards joined a large group of people on a tour of the wood, led by the Park Rangers.

Part of Clayfield Copse is ancient woodland, and the work undertaken in the wood conforms to the guidelines set out in the recently commissioned management plan for the site.



As the wood has not been managed for some considerable time, the work carried out by the Park Rangers and the 'Friends of Clayfield Copse' has come in for some criticism from some of the locals.

The Sycamore thinning has attracted particular scorn from a few people whose knowledge of woodlands extends no further than knowing a good discreet dog's toilet when they see one.

Indeed, the sight of a myriad of dog walkers carefully raking leaves over the latest offering from Fido's digestive tract, is all too common.

Together with the neighbouring Blackhouse Wood, Clayfield Copse represents one of the finest examples of woodland in Reading, with locally rare plant species such as Wild Service and Early Purple orchid present.

A visit to Clayfield is recommended for anyone who has an interest in woodland ecology, or in fact for anyone who simply enjoys a quiet walk in the woods.

Use the car park off Caversham Park Road, and walk across the playing field. Why not go along on the first Sunday of each month, and lend a hand with the 'Friends of Clayfield Copse' work party.

C.R.O.W.

Conserve Reading on Wednesdays



THE CROW GUIDE TO POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS.

(1) All conservation volunteers wear anoraks.

[~~TRUE~~]

[~~FALSE~~]

(2) Conservation work is messy, muddy, and not ncessary.

[TRUE]

[~~FALSE~~]

(3) All conservation volunteers listen to Fairport Convention and eat lentils.

[TRUE]

[~~FALSE~~]

(4) Conservation work is not for me?

[TRUE]

[FALSE]



The new, no expense spared, 50% bigger, 2 for the price of 1, nature of this newsletter (ie; an extra page or so) means we can give long overdue thanks to Berkshire Conservation Volunteers, (BeC).

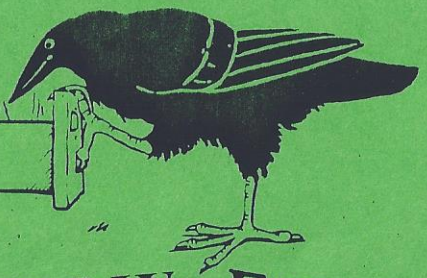
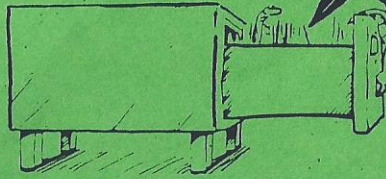
BeC make available not only the use of their minibus, but also their extensive stock of tools and equipment. Without them, CROW would not be able to function, and we are extremely grateful for their help. BeC work at a variety of sites each and every Sunday, (pick-up from outside Reading station, 9.30am), and also have an excellent programme of social events. For more info, ring Maurice Budden on 0734 874034.

competition

Enter our exciting 'Spot The Fish' competition, and win a day's conservation work with the fish of your choice! The lucky winner will be whisked off to a local woodland for a fun day's conserving with their preferred piscine pal.

To enter, simply tell us on which page of this newsletter is the fiendish fish hiding.

Send your entry, marked 'Fantastic Free Fish Competition', to the CROW address, with a cheque for £17.50 to cover administration. Winners will be notified by August.



AS THE CROW FILES

By now, you're probably thinking, what a wacky news-letter with faintly amusing graphics, but who exactly are these CROW people, and what do they do?

Conserve Reading On Wednesdays is a local voluntary conservation group, who work closely with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and Reading Borough Council's Park Ranger Service.

We are also supported financially by a grant from English Nature, (formerly the Nature Conservancy Council.)

We carry out a variety of practical conservation tasks in and around Reading, and need new volunteers to help us.

CROW was founded in March 1986, and have undertaken a huge amount of work to improve and preserve the local countryside and open spaces.

We meet at 10.00am on alternate Wednesdays, outside the main entrance of Reading railway station (look out for our minibus), and travel to the site, returning usually by 5.00pm.

You could alternatively make your own way to the work site, or we may be able to pick you up en route. Phone us beforehand for details.

We provide all the tools and know-how, as well as light refreshments. You'll need a packed lunch and suitable work clothing.

So, if you're at a loose end on a Wednesday, why not come along and give it a go? Have a great day out as well as help improve the quality of your local countryside,



