

June 2009

Sylva Trees build two new bridges from locally sourced and milled wood.



Aug 2009 Stripping the willow



The next stage is to establish paths, cultivate the planting glades and choose fruit trees. We aim to include suitable apples native to Oxfordshire. Possibilities are Eynsham Dumpling, Blenheim Orange, Deddington Pippin, Eynsham Dumplin, Bampton Fairing, North Aston Non Aynho Junction Pippin, Hanwell Souring, Oxford Beauty, Oxford Conquest, Oxford Hoard and Oxford Yeoman to name a few. **If you have a suggestion please let us know.** We will be advised by MSOG on availability, suitability and rootstock.

Flora

The increased light levels and the regular cutting of stinging nettles have encouraged plants to flourish.



The pretty yellow flowered Moneywort or Creeping Jenny is surging across the ground. It has been flowering beautifully and is now just past its best. Another yellow flower is the Silverweed. The Water mint with lilac coloured flowers, the pink flowered Water pepper along with other Polygoniums and the delicate blue flowered Water-Forget-me-not flourish. You may also see the Marsh Bedstraw with tiny white flowers. Among the larger plants is the Hemp nettle which a long leaved non-stinging nettle.

This is just a fraction of the plants on the island. With the current management plan we should continue to develop a greater diversity of plants over this small area.

For more information and photographs www.cripleymeadow.org.uk

Cripley Meadow
Allotment Association's
Open Day Sunday
16 August 11-3pm
Cripley Island Orchard
with funding from



View from Cripley Island to Port Meadow



Cripley Island is a small island adjacent to, and only accessible through, Cripley Meadow Allotments. It is part of our Allotment lease to develop as an orchard. We have Big Lottery 'Local Food' funding for this work.

Cripley Island, like much of Cripley Meadow, is surrounded by crack willow, most of which had not been pollarded for decades. Fallen willows had damaged the

banks and plots and blocked the watercourses in Fiddlers Drain, Fiddlers and Castle Mill Stream.

The March pollarding was part of a programme of regeneration. It was Lottery funded and has brought in much needed light. Pollarded willows live hundreds of years and are home to an impressive insect population.



We have kept the healthy native trees on the island. As the orchard develops other trees, like hazel and birch, will be coppiced on a 7 year cycle and harvested and logs, bird and bee boxes will provide wildlife habitats.

We will use this wood for pea and bean sticks and also harvest willow whips as we will be able to maintain some of the pollarded trees ourselves.

We are working with the Mid Shires Orchard group to select some 60+ local fruit varieties. This will help restore the local cultural heritage of fruit varieties. There were 3 old apple trees on the island, which we believe were planted by Fred Quatermaine when the island was previously cultivated as allotments. Two were dead when we took the island on but the other is being nurtured to better health.

The Orchard will give Cripsey Island a vibrant new lease of life and will be accessible to local schools for visits, and to the wider community on Apple and Orchard Open Days. St Clare's, The Cherwell School and St Barnabas have worked with us. Developing Cripsey Island orchard is a commitment to a sustainable future and to the short but green route from 'plot to pot'.

We are working towards making Cripsey Island Orchard into a managed, heritage orchard with native coppicing that will be for our members; available to the local community for booked visits by local groups and schools; and wildlife for many, many years.

Over 250hrs of member's voluntary work on working parties has been logged. Here are some of their activities.

April 2008 Clearing Fiddlers Stream



May 2008 Clearing Fiddlers Drain



January 2009 Log stacking



March 2009 'Green Warriors' rubbish...



Shed removal and more log stacking



In March 2009 the willows on Fiddlers and Castle Mill Stream were pollarded. These are low so we can help pollard them. The OCC Tree Officer decided which trees on the island were too damaged and/or unsuitable and these were removed which meant light returned for the healthy native trees.

April 2009 Raking willow twigs

