

In March 2009 the willows on Fiddlers and Castle Mill Stream were pollarded. The Tree Officer decided which trees on the island were too damaged and unsuitable trees and these were removed which meant light returned for the native trees.



April 2009 Raking willow twigs



May 2009 Moving wood chip



June 2009
Sylva Trees build two new bridges from locally sourced and milled wood.



The next stage is to cultivate the planting glades and for our members to choose fruit trees. We aim to include 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.

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

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association's Cripley Island Orchard with funding from



View from Cripley Island to Port Meadow



Join us for
Open Day Sunday
16 August 11-3pm

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

March 2008 by Fiddlers Stream



The recent pollarding was part of a programme of renewal in conjunction with the Parks department and Lottery funded and has brought in much needed light.



We have kept all the healthy native trees on the island. As the orchard develops other trees, like hazel and birch, will be coppiced 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.

The Mid Shires Orchard group is working with us to select some 60+ local fruit varieties. This will help restore the local cultural heritage of fruit varieties. The old apple trees on the island, which we believe were planted by Fred Quatermaine when the island was previously cultivated as allotments, are currently diseased and suffering from a lack of light and care – we hope to nurture them to better health.

The Orchard will give Cripley 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 and our largest pumpkin was the centrepiece at Phil and Jim's harvest festival! Developing Cripley Island orchard is a commitment to a sustainable future and to the short route from 'plot to pot'.

We are working to return a neglected space 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.

150 hrs of member's voluntary work has gone into working parties to date and here are snapshots of some of their activities.

April 2008 Clearing Fiddlers Stream



May 2008 Clearing Fiddlers Drain



January 2008 Log stacking



March 2009 'Green Warriors'...



Shed removal and log stacking

