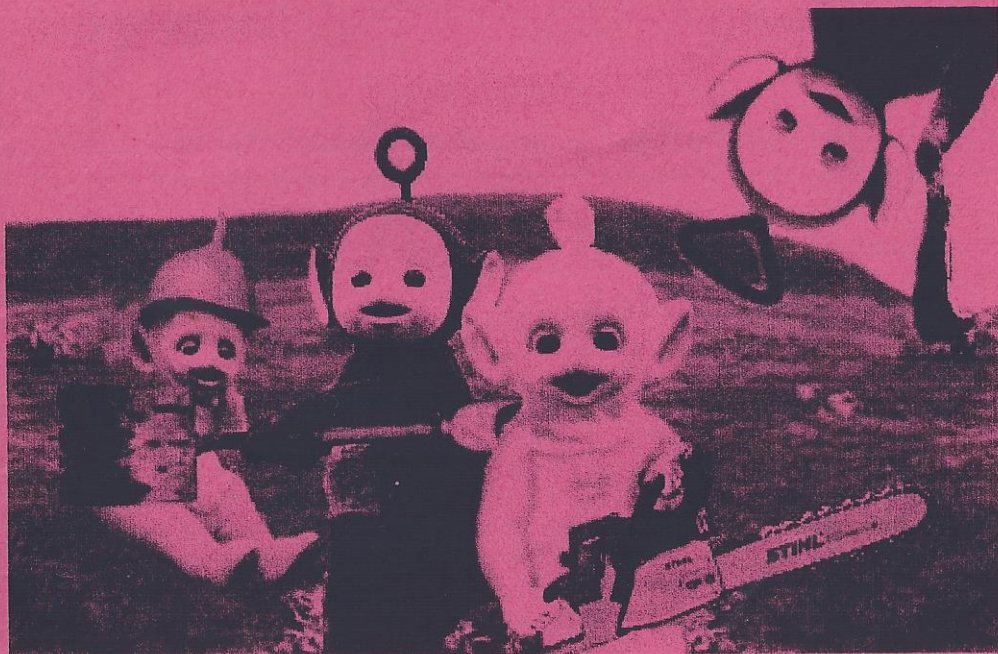


# CROW NEWS



The Official Publication of CONSERVE READING ON WEDNESDAYS

PRACTICAL MIDWEEK VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION WORK TO  
PROTECT OUR LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE



Issue no. 22 **SPRING 1998**



*British Trust for Conservation Volunteers*



# CROW Spring 1998

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with contributions from  
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## TASK DETAILS

FEBRUARY - MAY 1998

Key:



The date of the task



The type of work we will be doing



The name of the site on which we will be working



Ordnance Survey grid reference



This symbol indicates where the minibus is most likely to be parked, if making your own way, find the bus and follow arrows from there.



This indicates approximately where the task will take place

CROW hold practical conservation tasks in and around Reading (almost) every Wednesday. Anybody is welcome to come along and join in for all or part of the day. We provide transport from the back of Reading railway station (short term car park area) at 9:30am and sometimes do a pickup around midday too. You can also make your own way to the worksite and meet us there. We aim to return people to the station at around 4-5pm. All you need to bring is a packed lunch and wear sensible outdoor clothing and strong footwear. We provide all necessary tools and training and also cups of tea / coffee and biscuits. If you've not been on a CROW task before, please phone (0118) 9477917 to let us know you are coming. You can also contact us during a task by phoning mobile no. 0378 743210.

# FEBRUARY 1998



25th February



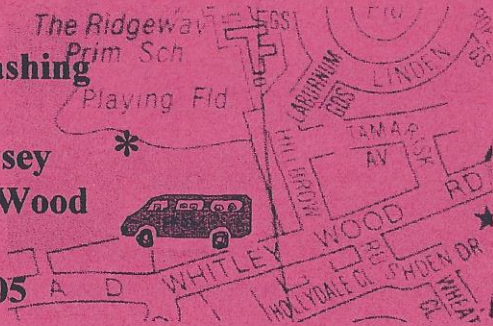
Scrub Bashing



The Cowsey  
Whitley Wood



SU 726705



Here we will be clearing mainly blackthorn and bramble scrub, we will have a big bonfire, though it will nearly go out at lunchtime. It will be nice and sunny and everybody will be impressed by the new kettle.

# MARCH



4th March



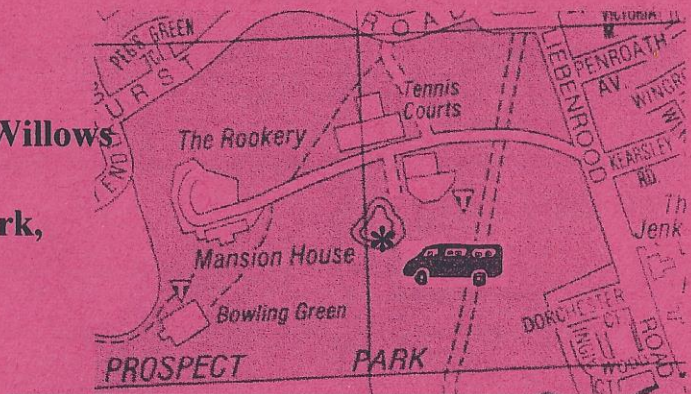
Pollarding Willows



Prospect Park,  
Reading



SU 690727



On this task which is now an annual event, we will start pollarding three of the willow trees that surround the pond. This year it will rain and will also be very windy. The minibus will get stuck in the mud. Again.



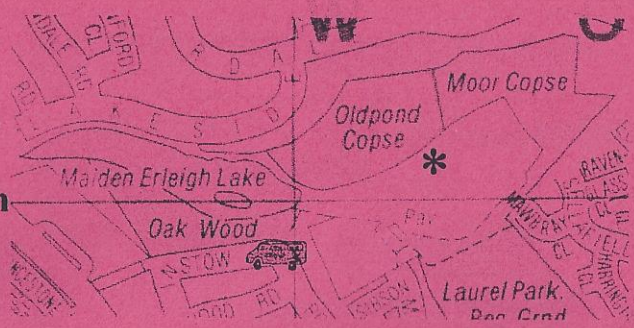
**11th March**



**Elm coppicing**



**Maiden Erlegh  
Park, Earley**



+ **SU 750709**

We will be coppicing elm trees to control the spread of Dutch Elm Disease. On this task we will be joined by some foreign forestry students from Reading University. It will be sunny and everyone will be impressed by the new kettle.



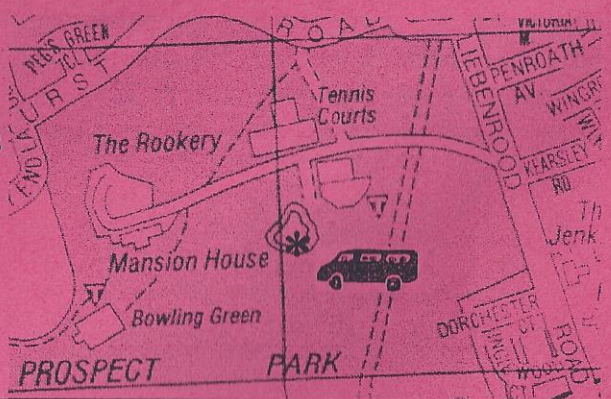
**18th March**



**Pollarding Willows**



**Prospect Park,  
Reading**



+ **SU 690727**

We return to Prospect park to continue the pollarding.



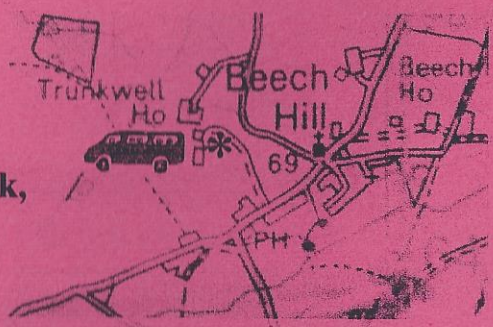
**25th March**



**Tree Nursery**



**Trunkwell Park,  
Beech Hill**



+ **SU 693644**

We will be transforming a field into a tree nursery.

# APRIL



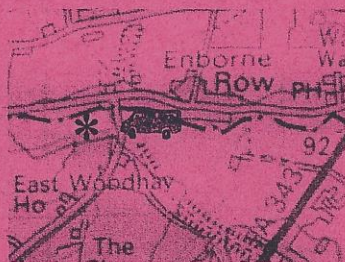
**1st April**



**Otter Holt  
Construction**



**Enbourne Row,  
Nr Newbury**



+ **SU 441634**

We shall be building another otter holt as part of the River Kennet Otter Project. This holt will be of the log pile type and will require less digging than the pipe and chamber type.

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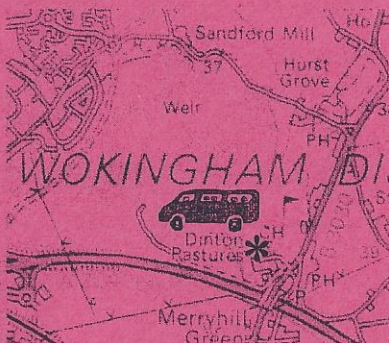
**8th April**



**Reed Planting**



**Dinton Pastures  
Country Park,  
Wokingham**



+ **SU 783718**

We will be planting reeds in one of the lakes in the park, or in a nearby lake. Meet at the main Dinton Pastures car park and follow the Crow signs or ask for directions at the rangers office.



**15th April**



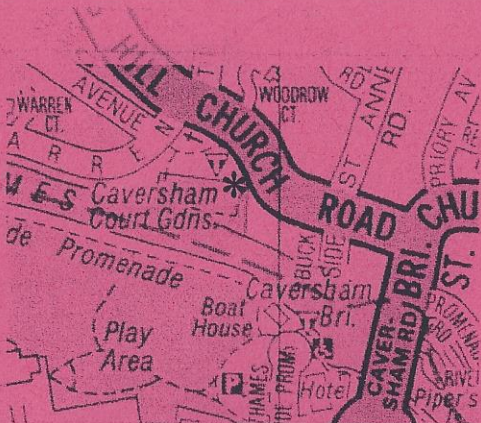
**Tools Maintenance Day**



**Caversham Court, Caversham**



**SU 709748**



It's time to grind those slashers, change those saw blades and give the toolstore a spring clean. Learn how to repair a mel or fix a broken spade.

---



**22nd April**



**Boardwalk Construction**



**Trunkwell Park, Beech Hill**



**SU 693644**



We will be working on the dipping platform area around the pond.

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**29th April**



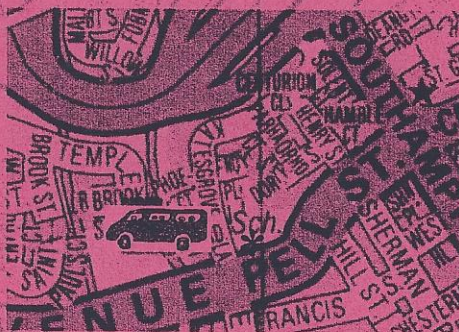
**Pond Digging**



**Katesgrove School, Reading**



**SU 715727**



# Andy B's conservation Quiz

Test your project leadership skills with this simple quiz

You are the leader of a conservation volunteer group carrying out a coppicing task at a local woodland. The worksite is 1/2 a mile from the car park and the fields in between are muddy following recent rain. There are many tools to be carried. Do you:-

- 1      A) Drive the minibus straight down to the woodland.  
       B) Park in the carpark until lunchtime when the ground has dried out a bit.  
       C) Play it safe, leave the minibus in the carpark and make everybody carry everything.

Having chosen an option other than C), on returning to the minibus at the end of the task you discover it has become stuck in the mud. Do you:-

- 2      A) Leave it there.  
       B) Get the volunteers to push while you try and drive it out, shove sticks and grass under the wheels, drive backwards and forwards at high revs, try and lever it out with crowbars under the axle, etc...  
       C) Call for assistance. (from someone with a tank).

When it becomes obvious the vehicle is not going to move, do you:-

- 3      A) Using a hand winch, attempt to pull the van out.  
       B) Tell everybody to make their own way home.

You succeed in moving the van some distance with the winch, but soon run out of suitable trees to use as a winching point. Also it becomes evident that as the van is facing the wrong way, it must be turned round in order to drive it through a narrow gap in the hedge. It is getting dark and beginning to rain again. Do you:-

- 4      A) Give up.  
       B) Come back tomorrow and try again.  
       C) Create a temporary winching point by bashing four fenceposts into the ground, reinforced by having volunteers sit on it, and use this to winch the bus round in a circle.

Having pointed the van in the right direction, it suddenly gains traction and lurches forward. Unfortunately the volunteer driving at the time does not know the route back to the carpark. Do you:-

- 5
- A) Hope he finds the right way and does not get stuck again.
  - B) Run alongside the van shouting directions.
  - C) Leap on the ladder on the back of the van as it drives past, climb across the roof 007 style, lean over the side and direct the driver.

The minibus almost reaches the carpark but becomes stuck again. It is now 3 hours since the end of the task, it is dark, it is raining very hard, there are no trees within winching distance and some of the volunteers are starting to make there own way home. Do you:-

- 6
- A) Give up like you should have done hours ago, It's all your fault for not choosing 1C) in the first place, you fool.
  - B) Two of the volunteers came in their own cars, attach a rope from the van to one car, and from the front of that car to the back of the other car and get everybody not driving to push.

You eventually succeed in returning the minibus to the carpark everyone is now tired and wet. Do you:-

- 7
- A) Leave quickly and take everybody home.
  - B) Apologise profusely and thank everyone for their help.
  - C) Admit that you only took the bus onto the mud in the first place because you wanted to try out the new hand-winch that had recently been acquired.

If you answered 1b, 2b, 3a, 4c, 5c, 6b and 7c then your name is Andrew Noyes and if you ever try this little stunt again you will either be lynched or left to get the van out by yourself.

Andrew Blake © AJCB productions 1998

7D) *Afterwards persuade the only two remaining volunteers to come with you to the tree nursery to dig up thorny bushes in the dark. - Ed.*



# Teletubbies SAY "CROW"

## COVER STORY

Although members of Crow were shocked to see the colourful antennas of the teletubbies at the back of Reading Station last Wednesday morning, Dipsy, Laa-Laa, Po and Tinkywinky have turned out to be invaluable members of the group. The tubbies are especially good at keeping up volunteers morale by jumping about shouting 'Eh - ooh' throughout the day.

In an exclusive interview with the psychedelic four, Laa-Laa told Crow magazine that the tubbies have a strong interest in environ-

mental issues. In fact, they enjoy a sustainable lifestyle in Teletubbie land where all their electricity is generated by wind-power. Furthermore, the surrounding grassland is sustainably managed by huge grazing rabbits, who keep the invasive Birch and Pine scrub at bay. as a result, wildflowers are abundant in teletubbie land.



When asked how he/she/it enjoyed coming out with Crow, Po replied "Eh - ooo ohh hee hoo Bub by oooo" ... which just about sums it up for all of us.

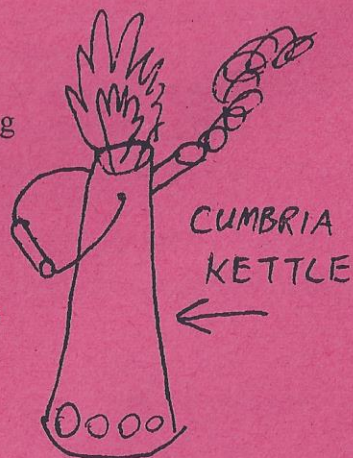
**WATCH OUT FOR** the new single "teletubbies say Crow" out in May. Also, the new Teletubbies Crow toy featuring billhook and slasher will be in the shops in July.

Yvonne Trchalik.

# Tea Break **WARS.**

For years the calor gas bottle, burner and dented old kettle have been the undisputed leaders for making the tea during conservation tasks, despite being slow-boiling, needing three hands to carry and running out of gas just at the wrong time.

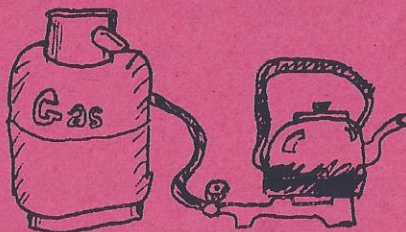
But now there is a new contender, the 'Cumbria Kettle' is a self contained unit which blends old and new technology to achieve superior tea-making performance. Looking a bit like a silver road-cone, the CK is basically a chimney made of space-age aluminium inside of which there is a jacket filled with water through a spout near the top. You light a fire at the bottom, and feed sticks in at the top. It boils ten cups of tea in only three minutes. Ok it takes an hour to light it on a cold wet February morning when you've only got BTCV leaflets and damp twigs, but thats just a minor technical hitch. It's light to carry, it doesn't consume fossil fuels and it looks good too.



*Artists impression*

The Cumbria Kettle is expensive at £80 each (about ten calor gas refills) but this price may fall as more units are produced.

Inspired by this technological advance, Crow boffins (tea science division) are working on an even better kettle, this will employ state of the art satellite technology to boil water all day long whilst burning no fuel at all. Watch this space. (Unfortunately it will weigh 1 1/2 tons)

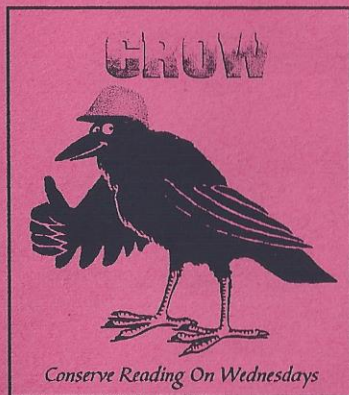


*The Boring Bits will be back when some more boring things happen*

# CROW T-SHIRTS, NOW ACTUALLY AVAILABLE!



Yes, now that the weather is getting warmer, and now that Millets are once again selling cheap plain white T-shirts, now is your chance to own a classic Crow T-shirt with a choice of one of three transfers individually ironed on by an experienced T-shirt transfer ironer. These practical yet stylish and comfortable T-shirts are a bargain at only £6 each or just £4.50 to Crow volunteers. Order on task or use the form below to order by post (add £2.50 or a large bowl of fruit to cover postage).



I want a Crow T-shirt, I want the one that looks like .....(description)  
 in.....size. Here is the money £.....  
 My name is.....  
 and I live at.....  
 .....  
 .....



NB. Due to the extremely dodgy printing process these T-shirts should be turned inside out and washed separately the first few times. DO NOT iron the printed area (why would you want to iron your clothes anyway?)

## **CROW** *Social Events*

**Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Feb** Let's have another Laserquest! Meet Fez 'n Firkin  
7:30pm prompt to play at 8pm.

**Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr** Kesty's leaving party. Contact BTCV on  
01628 771189 for details.

**Wed 15<sup>th</sup> Apr** Committee meeting at 3B's reading 7:30pm, with a  
trip to Stratfield Saye afterwards for a pub quiz.

Conserve Reading On Wednesdays, Caversham Court Environment Centre, Church Road,  
Caversham, Reading RG4 7AD.  
0118 947 7917  
[www.crowpage.demon.co.uk](http://www.crowpage.demon.co.uk)