

CROW NEWS

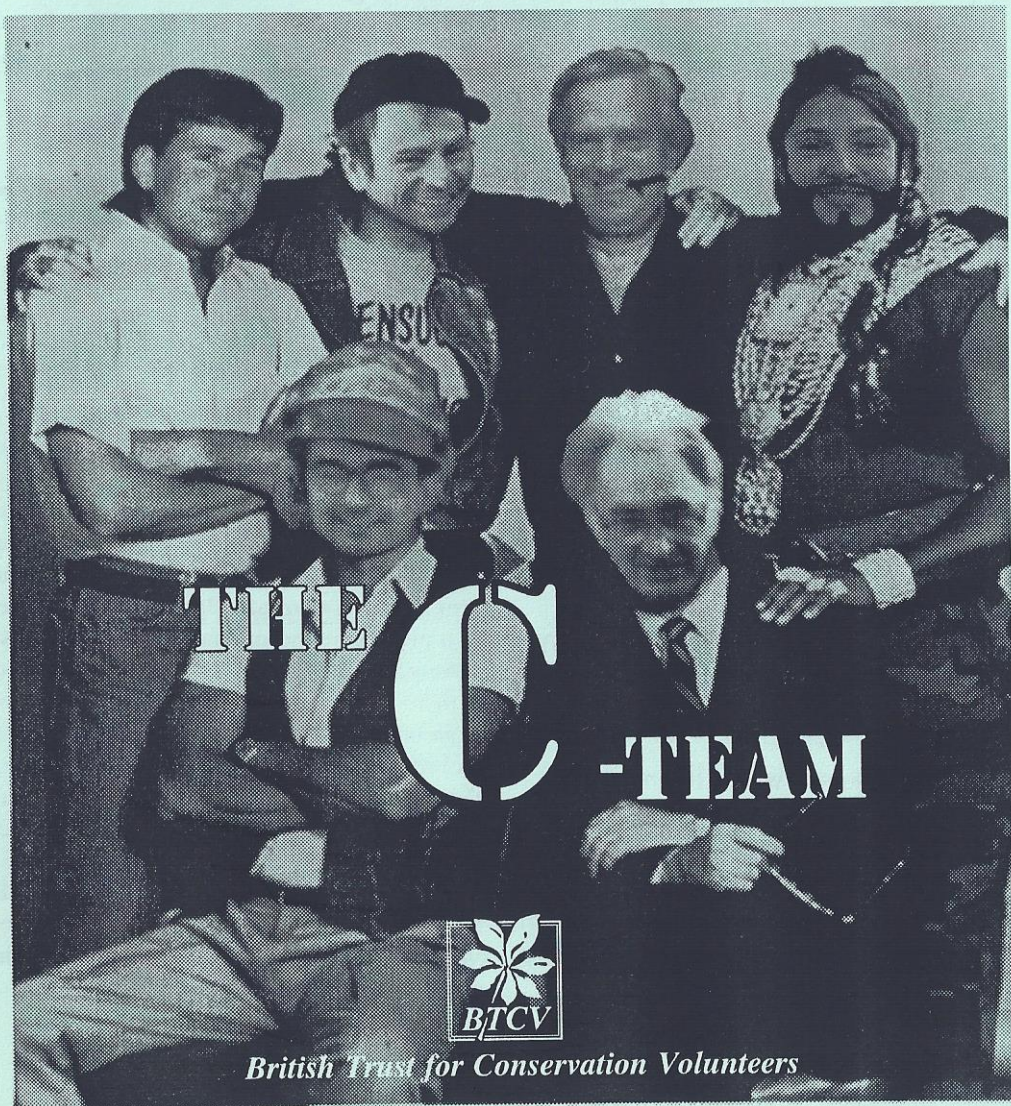


The Official Publication of CONSERVE READING ON WEDNESDAYS

Issue no.23

Winter 98-99

PRACTICAL MIDWEEK VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION WORK TO
PROTECT OUR LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE



THE C -TEAM



British Trust for Conservation Volunteers



CROW Winter 1998/9

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Have fun!

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TASK DETAILS

OCT 1998 - FEB 1999

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



Indicates where the minibus is most likely to be parked.



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) 9015200 to let us know you are coming. You can also contact us during a task by phoning mobile no. 0378 743210.

OCTOBER 1998



28th October



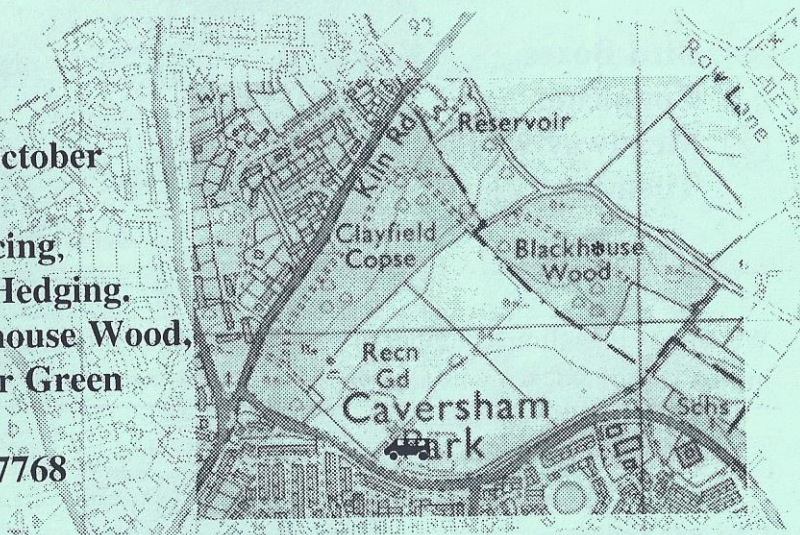
Coppicing,
Dead Hedging.



Blackhouse Wood,
Emmer Green



SU 727768



We will be clearing bramble and felling sycamore trees and using them to create a dead hedge to prevent walkers and horses trampling a sensitive area of the woodland

NOVEMBER



4th November



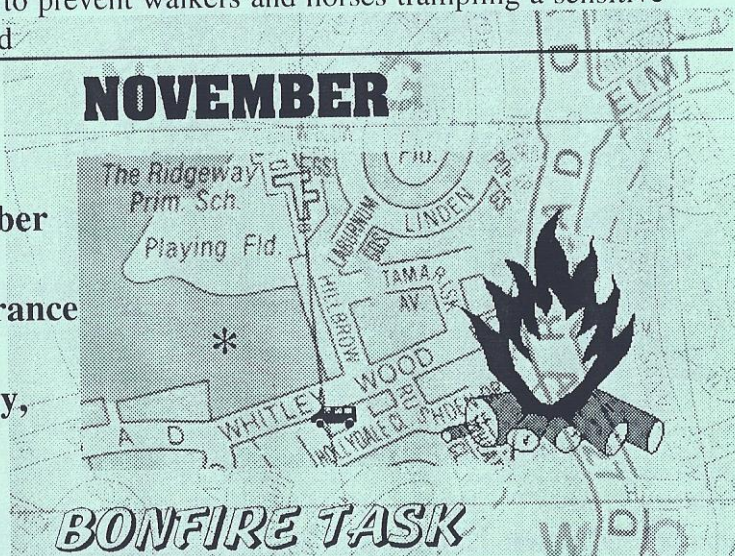
Scrub clearance



The Cowsey,
Whitley



SU 785720



BONFIRE TASK

Remember, remember, the 4th of November, gunpowder, trees-sawn and plot. We will be removing and burning scrub which has encroached on to this once open grassland site. The task will be followed by a Bonfire Night feast of baked potatoes etc. Bring a baked potato filling or something to drink.



11th Nov



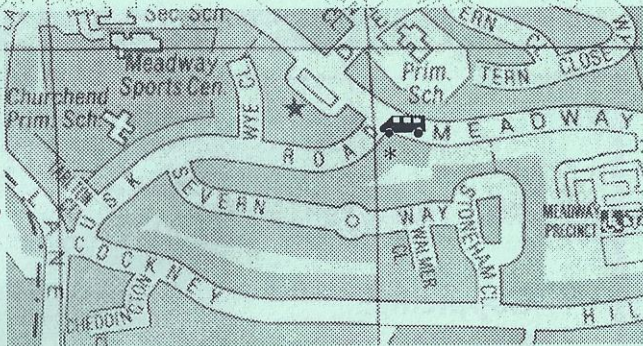
**Bird Boxes,
Coppicing**



**Meadway woods,
Tilehurst**



SU 680728



We will be installing a number of different types of bird and bat boxes up trees in this woodland, we will also do some coppicing (not on the same trees).



18th Nov



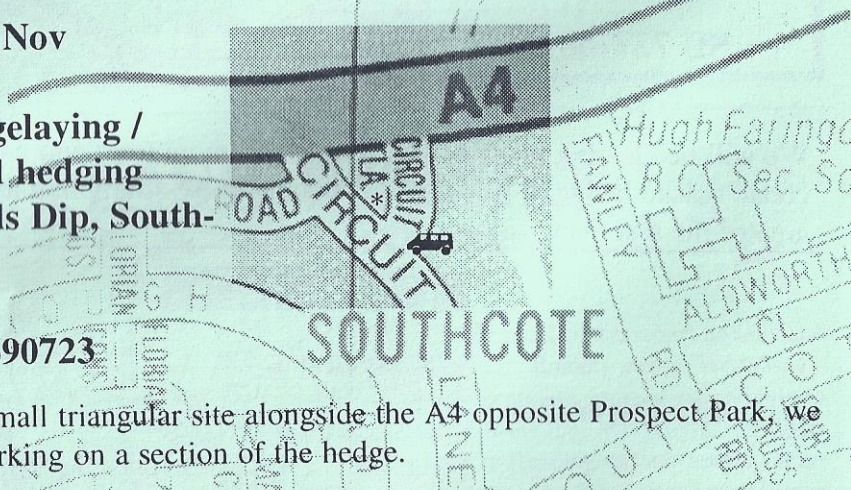
**Hedgelaying /
Dead hedging**



**Devils Dip, South-
cote**



SU 690723



This is a small triangular site alongside the A4 opposite Prospect Park, we will be working on a section of the hedge.



25th Nov



Woodland work

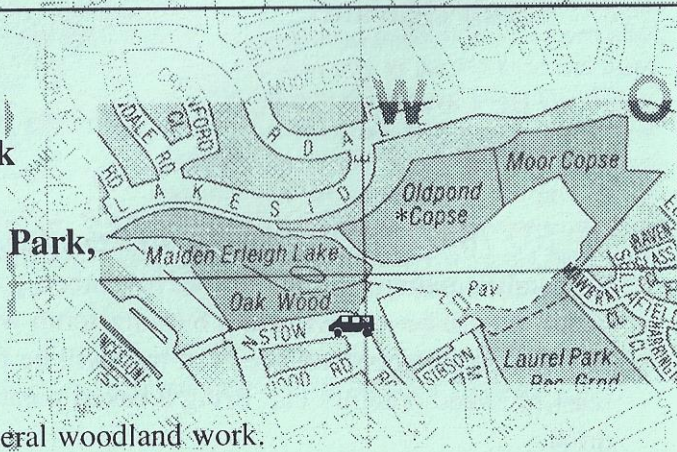


**Maiden Erlegh Park,
Earley**



SU 750709

Coppicing and general woodland work.



DECEMBER



2nd December



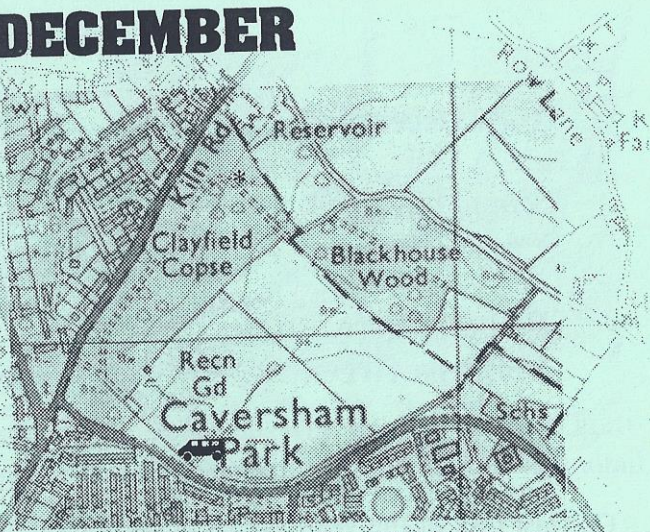
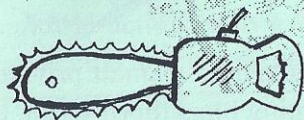
Tree felling,



**Clayfield Copse,
Emmer Green**



SU 727768



We will be felling invasive sycamore trees to open up a coppiced area of the woodland. Some of the trees will be large. Chain saw operators welcome.



9th December



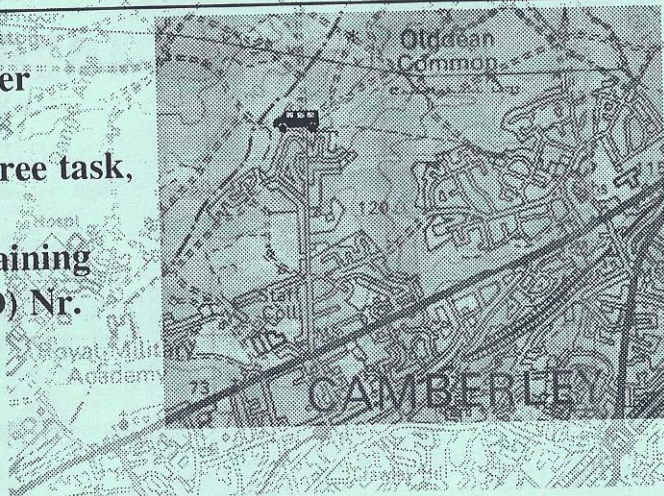
Christmas tree task,



**Barossa Training
Area (MOD) Nr.
Camberley**



SU 876622



Each year Caversham Court Environment Centre sell 'Environmentally Friendly' Christmas trees, these are Scots pine which are removed from heathlands as part of their restoration. Proceeds from the sales are divided amongst local conservation groups including CROW. This week we will be felling pine trees and delivering them to the Environment Centre. (free tree for each volunteer!)



16th December



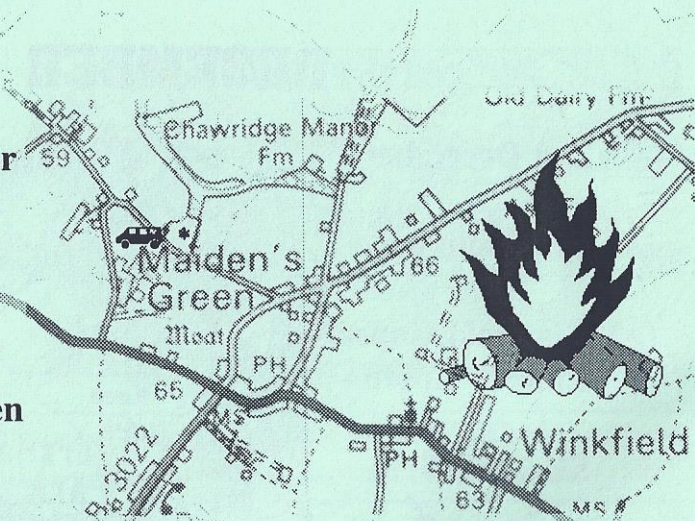
Xmas Party
(and scrub bashing)



**Bishops Acre,
Maidens Green**



SU 896732



Our last task of the year will be at Bishops Acre which is a small privately owned nature reserve. We will be clearing and burning blackthorn scrub, the task will be followed by a bonfire with baked potatoes, mince pies, mulled wine, roast chestnuts and other xmas stuff. (No carol singing).

JANUARY 1999



6th January



Scrub Bashing



**Lavell's Lake,
Dinton Pastures**



SU 784730



Our first task of the New Year will be at this nature reserve behind Dinton Pastures country park, we will be clearing invasive scrub and may have a bonfire.



13th January



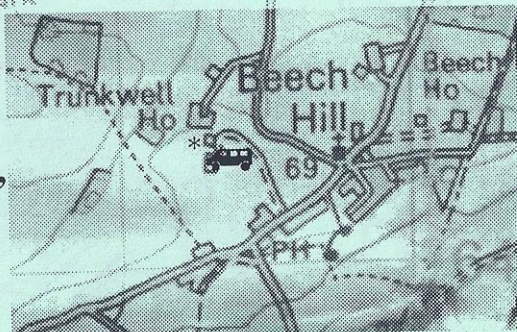
Construction task



**Horticultural Therapy,
Beech Hill**



SU 693645



HT is a centre which aims to involve people with special needs in horticultural activities as a form of therapy. We will be constructing a handrail alongside a new greenhouse



20th January



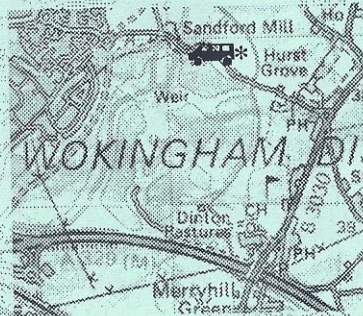
Tree felling



**Lavell's Lake,
Dinton Pastures**



SU 784730



We will be returning to Lavell's lake to fell some trees..



27th Jan



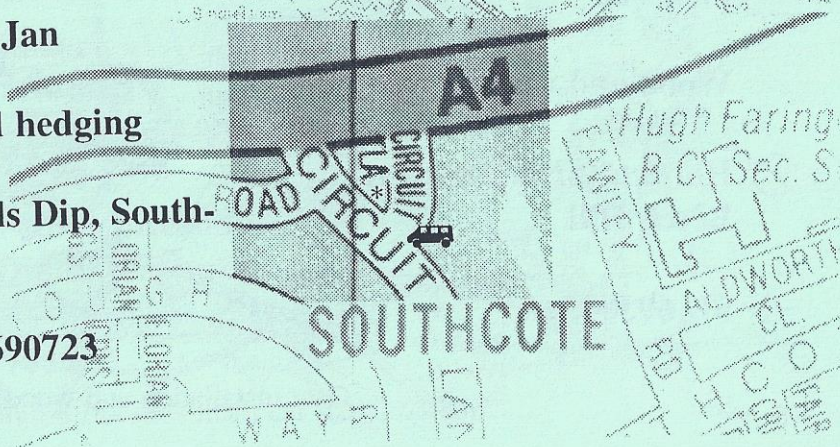
Dead hedging



**Devils Dip, South-
cote**



SU 690723





3rd Feb



Hedgelaying



**Maiden Erleigh Park,
Earley**



SU 750709

We will be laying a hedge near the park, if making your own way later in the day, look out for directions on the compound gate off the corner of in-stow road



10th Feb



Tree planting



**Devils Dip, South-
cote**



SU 690723

We will be planting new hedgeplants and will continue with the dead hedging.



17th Feb



Woodland work



**Horticultural Therapy,
Beech Hill**



SU 693645

Gate installation and woodland work



24th Feb



Scrub clearance



**Lavell's Lake,
Dinton Pastures**



SU 784730

We will be returning to Lavell's lake to clear invasive scrub and trees from the nature reserve



3rd March



Hedgeplanting



**Maiden Erlegh Park,
Earley**



SU 750709

We will meet at the park and will be planting a hedge nearby. If making your own way later in the day, look out for directions on the compound gate off the corner of instow road



10th Mar



Tree planting

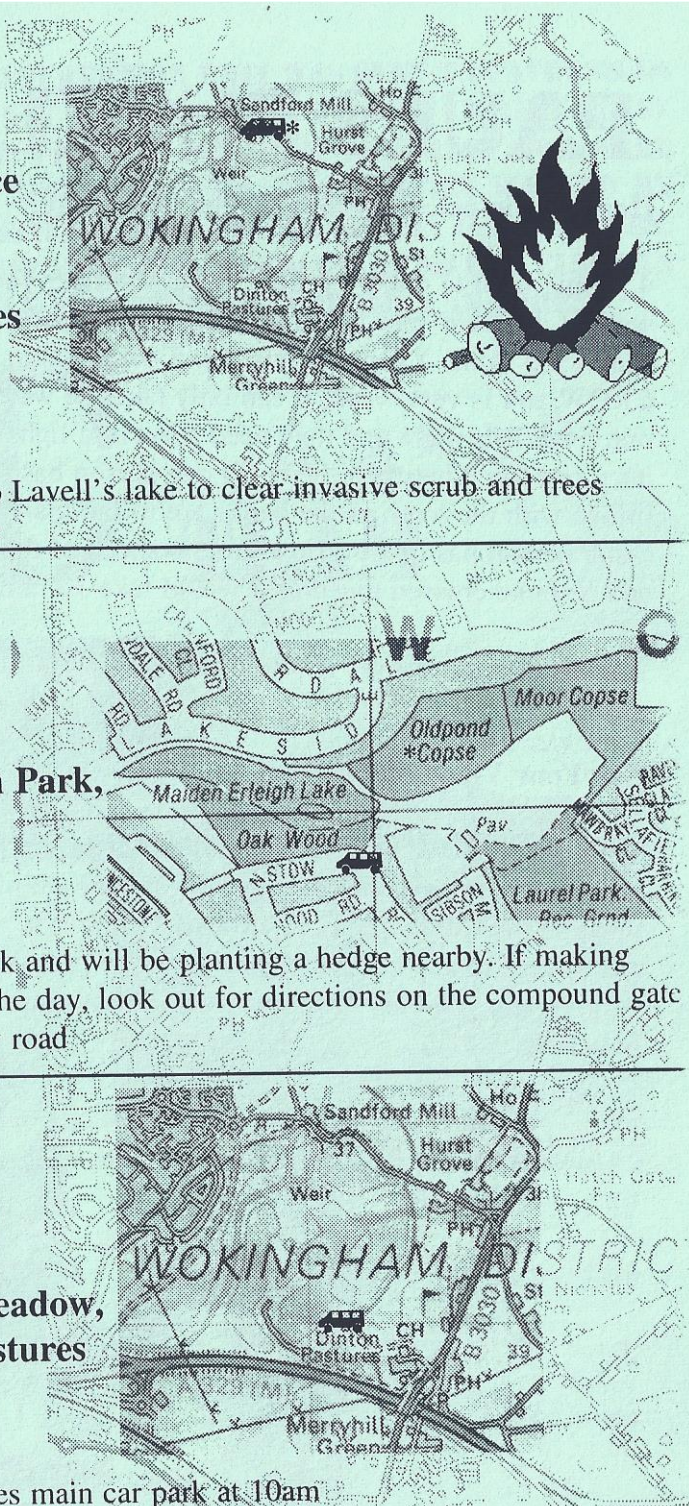


**Mortimers Meadow,
Nr.Dinton Pastures**



SU 785718

Meet at Dinton Pastures main car park at 10am



PAULS PUZZLE PAGE

How do you get everybody across the bridge?

4 people wish to cross a bridge. Ron, Maurice, Yvonne and Andy. They all walk at different speeds. It takes Ron 10 minutes to cross the bridge. Maurice 5 mins. Yvonne 2 mins. and Andy 1 min. The bridge was built by CROW and is very weak, it can only take the weight of two people at any one time. It is night and they need a torch to light the way but they only have one torch between them. So one person has to come back across the bridge with the torch as the banks are too far apart for them to throw it. The faster person has to slow down to the speed of the slower one (e.g. If Ron and Yvonne crossed together it would take 10 minutes.)

What is the fastest time it would take them to all get across the bridge?

The Four Villages.

There are four villages in the middle of a desert, the villages are arranged in a perfect square, the sides of the square each measuring 1 mile. A road must be built linking all the villages so that it is possible to travel from any village to any other without having to pass through another village. It is night and you only have one torch. What shape is the shortest road and how long is it?

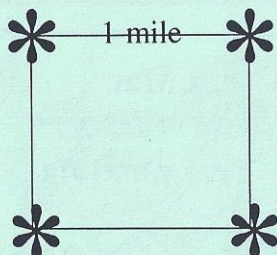
a). 4 miles

b). 2.732 miles

c). 2 miles

d). $4\left(\frac{1}{2\cos 30^\circ}\right) - 2\left(\sin 30^\circ \times \frac{1}{2\cos 30^\circ}\right) + 1$ miles

e). Who cares?

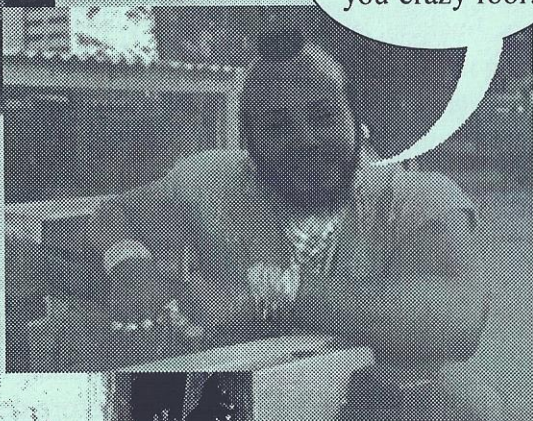


IN 1972 A CRACK CONSERVATION UNIT WAS SENT TO CAVERSHAM COURT FOR AN ECO-NET MEETING THEY DID NOT COMMIT. THEY PROMPTLY ESCAPED FROM A MAXIMUM SECURITY TOOLSHED INTO THE READING UNDERGROWTH. TODAY STILL WANTED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, THEY SURVIVE MAINLY ON HOB NOBS. IF YOU HAVE AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM, IF NO ONE ELSE CAN HELP, AND IF YOU CAN FIND THEM, MAYBE YOU CAN HIRE:

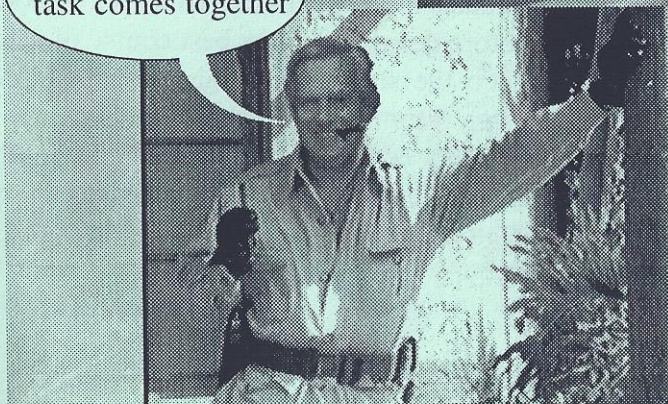
THE C-TEAM



I ain't goin
in no minibus,
you crazy fool!



I love it when a
task comes together





Early in the Summer of 1998 a new and more dangerous plot was being hatched by the Newt Liberation Front. This was no small operation involving only a few lonely newts; it was a mission of epic proportions. It all started when it was brought to the attention of the NFL's intrepid leader that a vast population of newts was under threat from developers. This prime newt site had established in the grounds of a derelict house, which had been earmarked for a development that would leave no room for some murky old ponds. And so the CROW task force was called into action....

Nets, buckets, jugs and bins were all required in order to retrieve the citizens living in the threatened ponds. It was soon realised that it wasn't just thousands of newts in danger, there was a thriving metropolis that included several minority groups: frogs, fish, tadpoles and some rather vicious looking invertebrates that verged on the antisocial. The NFL is however a very open-minded group, so compassion was shown and these too were rescued in the makeshift tanks and containers.

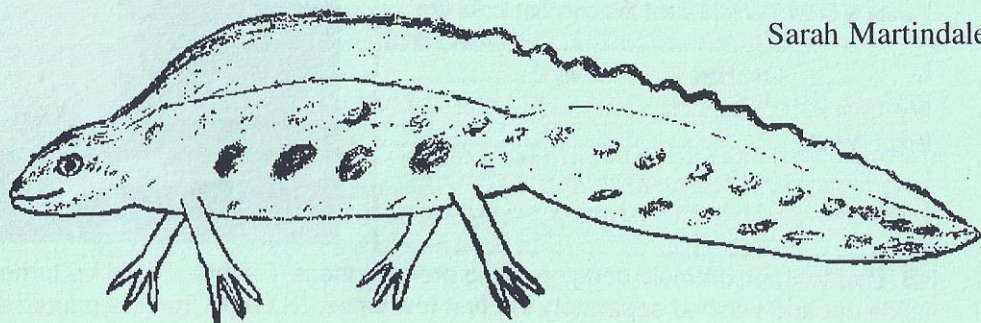
It soon became clear that many individuals might be missed without a thorough evacuation of the ponds. It was therefore decided that the best course of action was to totally drain the ponds. When the sophisticated garden-hose siphon system failed, the old fashioned bailing technique was employed. This was of course at great risk to all other members of the task force and any wildlife unlucky enough to be scooped up in a bail. It may have seemed like a dangerous procedure but was eventually completed without too many casualties.

When the Caversham site was first identified there was no way of knowing the sheer numbers involved and as a consequence the scale of the operation was initially underestimated. To gain a full appreciation of the numbers, the recently developed Noyes Technique (patent applied for) was implemented. Details of this are top secret at present but it can be disclosed that through a complex series of calculations an ordinary kitchen measuring jug can be calibrated with 20 newts to calculate the total number of newts. The results of this indicated an exact possible estimate of 457 newts retrieved from the ponds.

It has to be said that the newts and co. were not entirely happy about the confinement in our not-so-spacious tanks. The overcrowding was particularly unbearable, especially for the newts. This situation was however only a temporary discomfort to be endured for a better future. And that future was to be in the wilderness that is Caversham Park Pond. This part of the operation was perhaps the most dangerous element of the mission. The CROW all-terrain-super-van was nearly drawn into the violent waters of the duck-pond, it was only with fearless piloting that it fought the battle and remained on shore. When the vehicle was finally brought under control the threatened wildlife could be set free. In an emotional ceremony the newts and their pals scurried over the banks of the pond to begin their new lives.

For security reasons the exact release locations will remain secret, but we understand all concerned are making a brilliant recovery and should be just about ready to overwinter in their newfound sanctuary.

NB for your own safety this sort of operation should not be undertaken without expert guidance.



Sarah Martindale

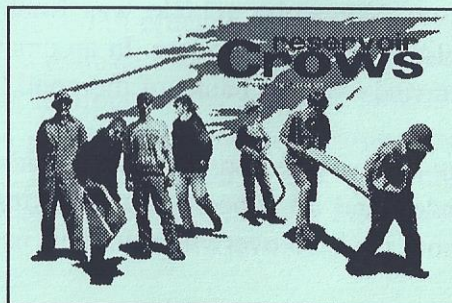
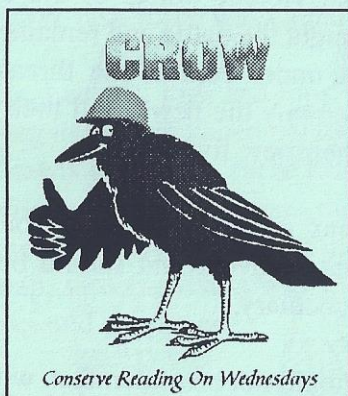
DON'T FORGET TO GET YOUR **CROW** T-SHIRTS FOR THE COMING WINTER MONTHS



These practical yet stylish and comfortable T-shirts are available in full colour on a grime-friendly white background (don't worry this will soon turn grey). They are available in a wide range of fibres:

- ★ Cotton
- ★ Polyester
- ★ Cotton/Polyester

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). *Also available is the unofficial BTCV T-shirt, which cannot be pictured here.*



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?)

The boring bits

minutes from the last committee meetings....

CROW meeting 27/10/98

VENUE: The three bee's Reading, **7:30pm** sharp

PRESENT:	AN	Andrew Noyes	MS	Mark Sixsmith
	AB	Andrew Blake	MS	Martine Saunders
	BA	Baracus	MS	Michelle Starkey
	PD	Peter Duran	MS	Matt jarvis
	LM	Nopqrs	SM	Sarah Martindale

8:43pm People start to arrive.

AN Goes to the bar.

MS Gets his holiday photos out.

BA I ain't going on no plane.

MS Chats to **MS** in the corner for most of the evening.

PD Please strike my previous comments from the minutes.

AN Points out that the newsletter is now nearly three months behind schedule and that of the 14 weeks worth of task details it contains, only next week's is not out of date.

ALL Agree to get the newsletter finished in time for next week, to this end **MS MS MS & SM** agree to write articles for the newsletter.

AB Recounts the story of how the minibus got stuck in the mud and it took 3 hours to push it out in the pouring rain.

BA You crazy fool!

MS Just a moment? How is anybody supposed to know what anybody said when there are 4 people here with the same initials?

MS Yes, I don't want to be confused with him. (MS)
Alternative names are suggested in rapid succession and order quickly breaks down until one of the bar staff approaches and asks us to leave.

BA I ain't going on no plane!

SM Actually, I don't actually remember being here at all or even saying any of this or anything.

AB Yes and I was in Scotland at the time, so I can't possibly be here.
What's going on?

AN Admits that in fact this whole meeting did not take place and was just made up to fill an empty page in the newsletter. With this everybody leaves in disgust at being merely fictional and the meeting is drawn to a close.

CROW

Social Events

- 4th Nov** Bonfire night task, bonfire, baked potatoes, and Malcolm the exploding volunteer, see task details for location.
- 16th Dec** Christmas task at Bishops Acre, bonfire, more baked potatoes, mulled wine, roast chestnuts etc. See page 6.
- 13th Jan** Ten pin bowling at Reading Superbowl, meet there at 8pm or catch the minibus at the station 7:30pm
- 10th Feb** Laserquest, meet at the Fez 'n Firkin 7:30pm SHARP



Conserve Reading On Wednesdays, Caversham Court Environment Centre, Church Road,
Caversham, Reading RG4 7AD

0118 9015200

01628 771189