

# Chairperson's Report 2015

## Thorney Lakes

### Overview

The Community Green Fair was founded in 2002 and exists to put on the Green Scythe Fair (so named since joining forces with the South West Scything Championships in 2007). Every year it seems to get more popular which is a tribute to the amazing atmosphere at the Fair, built upon the incredible hard work that so many volunteers contribute and the positive and joyous but deadly serious message that the Fair exists to promote.

At the end of last year, we said goodbye to two key (and founding) committee members, Hannah Aitken and Annie Yuill, and then lost another early this year, when Stuart Aylett decided to resign. Luckily, everyone stepped up to the plate, we learnt on the job, sometimes taking on what we hadn't expected to! I am very proud of what everyone achieved. In the end we turned out another resoundingly successful event, aided once again by good weather.

### Numbers

Estimating the number of people attending was more difficult this year due to changing the entry fee from £5/person to £10/car, with the intention of encouraging more car sharing. We clocked in around 1350 cars which translates into around 2900 people and there were some 500 walkers and cyclists, ie about 3400 people in all. The Western Gazette said we had 4000 people, which is probably not far off, including volunteers and stallholders, etc. Certainly the site felt busier than last year, surely helped by Poldark's attempts at scything! And maybe that stimulated BBC Inside Out West to come and film the scything in practice.

### Bicycles

Approximately 300 bicycles arrived at the site utilising our bigger cycle parking area by the entrance. Over 200 cyclists enjoyed a free tea & cake at the Green Info Cafe or a free bike MOT. Paul from Rock & Road in Yeovil together with Mike Ralph enthusiastically looked over nearly 40 bikes at the entrance, ensuring safety is paramount on the roads. We thank those who cycled to the site and we encourage more to do so next year.

### Setting up the infrastructure

As a green event we work to make it more sustainable and this involved two particular changes in 2015. Most visible was that we replaced the bright-coloured plastic portaloos with the lovely wooden Thunderbox composting toilets. However, the highlight for the site crew was using Jim the horse to move infrastructure around the site and to help with the hay-making.

### 11th West Country Scythe Championship

The scything competitions all went without a hitch. There was a very exciting finish for first, second and third place, with only three seconds separating them. But quality was the deciding factor. Simon Damant was judged the overall champion with a quality score of 8 and a time of 1' 20", and Andi Rickard was the ladies champion (7.5 and 1' 48"). The quality cup went to Olga Damant (9.0 and 15' 03").

Sadly, both the beginners and the masterclass scythe courses were poorly attended, meaning that these were loss making. However, for the first time we had music on Saturday evening with the Gauloise Bros — djangoid jazz guitars — who were a big hit, and whom we have asked back again for next year.

### Volunteers and stewarding

Additional volunteers on the day are critical to a smooth running event and on the whole, 2015 had better coverage than previous years, thanks to all the recruiting and then managing behind the scenes. However despite best laid plans, a few gaps emerged — thanks to those who had to step in to fill those.

Our main window on the world the rest of the year is our website, and this has been ably managed by Carole Melbourne who also doubles as our photographer. We also added more information for walkers and cyclists which judging by the numbers seems to have worked!

I'd just like to end with a few quotes from stall holders from this year.

*"Thank you and congratulations for organising such a fantastic fair. We really enjoyed ourselves and hope to see you next year."*

*"Just to say a big thank you to you and your committee and all the volunteers for a wonderful day yesterday. The weather just made it and everyone we talked to was having a great time."*

*"Just wanted to say a huge thanks for yesterday's fair - it was a wonderful day, what an atmosphere - you must be very proud and exhausted!"*

*Well yes, it is pretty exhausting, especially for those in the thick of it who do so much really hard graft, before, during and indeed after the event itself. So I would like to add my thanks to this fantastic team for whom I feel very privileged to act as chair, and also to all the other volunteers and others who make the Green Scythe Fair "probably the most enjoyable, and authentic, fair in all England"!*

*Francis (Herbi) Blake*

*October 2015*