

Hythe Green Preservation Society was happy to stage a celebration of the young wood which occupies the south-western corner. The day was well attended by a wide variety of people and offered an opportunity for everyone to explore the space and to examine the trees as well as greeting our fantastic Green Spirit wood carving which is placed at its heart.

We were supported by local handbells playing a variety of traditional airs. Live music was provided by experienced and talented musicians *Mortlake* who also beat the bounds of the wood and provided musical accompaniment to the speeches and toasts during the ceremony.

Kent Kite Flyers also took part and provided a spectacular backdrop for the young woodland. The *Scouts and Guides*, *Hythe Hops* were also in attendance, as was local brewer *Docker* with a range of beers. We were particularly pleased to have our new Mayor give his blessing and a short address before a toast (in apple juice) was drunk to the wood. The opening ceremony itself was conducted by David Horton, a descendant of Joseph Horton the original benefactor of the Green.

The trees also represent Hythe's contribution to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee nationwide 'Green Canopy' initiative and will represent a significant addition to local biodiversity as well as an enhancement to a local amenity. We have already noted an increase in birdlife with nesting pairs taking place earlier in the summer and also a significant growth in insect and butterfly numbers. The wood also now has its own hibernaculum with a large colony of stag beetles. Hedgehog refuges have been established throughout the woodland walks as well as within the underplanting. We hope ultimately to place cameras in the nesting boxes and to record the progress of their occupants.

The wood is establishing itself strongly and we will continue to water and protect it over the next few months; critical during this extreme dry spell. Hythe Green Preservation Society acknowledges the active and sustained support of HV Wooding Ltd in helping with water throughout this period and without whose help the planting would have struggled to survive.

Hythe Green Preservation Society, working with the charity Kent Men of the Trees (kentmenofthetrees.co.uk), plans to complete the next stage of the wood in Autumn with replacement planting of any unsuccessful trees as well as with a row of fifty new cherry plums planted at the wood's curved edge, serving eventually to provide a shaded path between the new wood and the Green and linking up with the covered walkway running along the southern boundary. At that time, those who sponsored individual trees will then be invited to choose "their" tree and will receive a certificate to formally identify it. Not all trees have yet been individually sponsored and we welcome further applications.