

Friends of Bookham Commons Newsletter

Supporting The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty. Registered Charity No. 205846



Wren
Troglodytes troglodytes

March 2011

Friends of Bookham Commons supporting The National Trust

Chairman:
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Subscriptions are £5.00 per annum. If you are interested in supporting the work of The National Trust at Bookham Commons and receiving this publication, please complete and return the form overleaf.

Below: A Purple Emperor investigates the Warden's foot, as featured in the national press.



We all need Friends!

The commons are looking good. We have received many favourable comments about the recent pond restorations and the opening-up of pleasant views along the paths and across the water.

Lower Eastern and Upper Hollows ponds were both de-silted last autumn and are recovering well – they will look even better this summer! Upper Eastern Pond (restored last year) has been alive with dragonflies and a pair of Little Grebe nested successfully near to the island. The bird hides look great and have been incredibly popular, they have helped the wildlife by encouraging people to watch from a safe distance!

All of this has been made possible thanks to your generous support. The bird hide appeal has turned-out to be one of our best projects
Steam on the Common at the 2010 Heritage Day



ever. Without you, the National Trust would not be able to undertake this valuable conservation work or be able to protect historic buildings or wonderful countryside.

Our volunteers have grown in number and thanks to their amazing

efforts, we have been able to tackle a great range of tasks to enhance Bookham Commons for their nature conservation and amenity value.

A great deal of the work around the pond margins, the restoration

of former woodland glades and careful scalloping of path edges has all been achieved by our stalwart volunteers.

A very big thank you to all involved.

One of our aims is to get "out there" and meet as many supporters as possible. With 42 events last year (walks, talks, exhibitions and open-days) on our patch of the North Downs, we're getting involved with the local community and generating interest in our work.

Needless to say, we need you more than ever...! By supporting the Friends of Bookham Commons and the National Trust you will be contributing to this ongoing, but essential work to keep this place as a special haven for people and wildlife, both now and in the years to come. My thanks to all of you for the help so far, the journey is proving very interesting and very worthwhile...

Ian Swinney
Warden – Bookham Commons



2011 Appeal – Waymarking and signposts!

With the commons looking better than ever, we have more visitors (possibly) than ever. Which could mean (and you know who you are!) more people than ever getting lost! Who would think that we are only 20 miles from St Paul's Cathedral?

On a serious note, it is easy to get disorientated in the woodland areas (one tree tends to look the same as another, until you get to know your way around) and we want people to enjoy their visit, not be frightened by it!

With careful siting and the use of oak posts or existing features, we can steer people in the right direction without affecting the "wild" character of the commons. Waymarking arrows will show horse riders and cyclists which paths they can use, and routed oak signs will display path names. A few more finger posts (with destinations and distances) can be deployed at strategic points.

Please help us to help others!

Guided Walks 2011

Please use the booking number **01372 220644** to reserve your place and be given joining instructions. Walks are £5.00 per adult £2.50 per child except where otherwise stated.

Song of the Nightingale
Wednesday 11th May 7.00pm 2 hrs
 Join the Warden, Ian Swinney for a two hour stroll to hear the magnificent song of the Nightingale

Nightingale Evensong
Wednesday 18th May
7.00pm – 10.00pm
 A longer listen with Ian, plus a warming cup of soup and a roll.
 Please note: £10.00 adult £5.00 per child

The Emperor's Territory
Sunday 3rd July 10.00am 2 hrs
 A chance to see the elusive Purple Emperor with our local (but internationally renowned) expert Ken Willmott from Butterfly Conservation.

Banish the Pink Peril
Saturday 9th July
10.00am – 4.00pm
 Join the Warden and volunteers to help

control the invasive Himalayan Balsam. Easily pulled, this plant is trying to swamp important native flowers, so please come and help! Barbeque lunch included!!
N.B. Booking is required (to help our catering), but there is NO CHARGE

Cream Tea Sunday
Sunday 10th July drop-in from
3.00pm until 6.00pm
 Vehicles (for mobility impaired access) by special arrangement with Warden on 07770 887683
 Revive a tradition from the 1930s by taking tea (and jam and scones!) on the lawn at Merritt's Cottage. Take a tour with Warden Ian Swinney to look at keeping hens and pigs and a way of life that used to be commonplace... £10.00 / £5.00

Woodland Heritage Day
Saturday 10th September
11.00am onwards. No entry fee
NO BOOKING REQUIRED
 Heavy horses, steam traction-engine

sawbench, charcoal making, make-your-own birch besom or wooden stool and guided tours... Lots to see and do in the woods!

Old Wive's Tales
Sunday 9th October
10.00am 2hrs

Swallow fly high... One year's seeding, seven year's weeding... Which ones are true? Sort fact from fiction with Warden Ian Swinney

Tree Folklore
Saturday 12th November
2.00pm 2 hrs

Ian looks at the role of trees in our lives, from furniture and fuel to religion and magic! Come and find-out more about these important plants that surround us!

Boxing Day Ramble
26th December
11.00am – 1.00pm
 Join the Warden for a traditional walk-off-the-Christmas-Pud!

Chairman's note

A lot of work has been put into the Commons this year and the overall impression created is a feeling of openness on the whole area, mainly due to the clearance of a number crowded, intermediate trees. This has allowed new saplings to get the light – a feeling of rebirth in so many areas.

This was emphasised greatly at the Woodlands Heritage Day on 11th September when the wardens excelled themselves by clearing a substantial area to display shire horses shifting cut trees; felled oaks cut to size to make seats and stools; and even allowing the public (and it was very well attended) to have a go and create their very own pieces. A great day out for all visitors and the wardens are to be congratulated for putting on such a good show – all over and above their regular duties. Well done and thanks from us all. Look out for the similar event due this September.

Last year we also enjoyed one of our best Cheese & Wine evenings when Maurice Rogers gave a wonderful talk on his experiences of working on the Commons 50 years ago – which leads me on to this year's event in May. See the panel alongside for details and enjoy all that we have prepared for you this year. Many thanks for your continued support.

Peter Corliss

Below: Your illustrious Chairman trying his hand at making a table leg at last year's Heritage Day.



Date for your Diary

Thursday 12th May 2010 – 6.45 for 7.15 pm prompt
Cheese and Wine Supper at The Old Barn Hall, Great Bookham

Wagons Roll

Travelling across Wyoming in a covered wagon like the early settlers – an illustrated talk by the intrepid traveller Ann Chance

Tickets – £12.00 each inclusive – obtainable from Granary Crafts, Church Road, or from Ron Smith 452361 & Anne Peck 453725.

Friends of Bookham Commons

Mrs Anne Peck (Treasurer), 8 Sole Farm Road, Great Bookham, Surrey KT23 3DJ

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 I/We enclose a cheque for £5 Annual Subscription made out to *The Friends of Bookham Commons*.

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Let's get it done in colour