

Friends of Bookham Commons Newsletter

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



March 2010

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Friends of Bookham Commons supporting The National Trust

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Wren
Troglodytes troglodytes

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.

Thanks to you!

Thanks to the generous support of the Friends of Bookham Commons, we have been able to complete our restoration of Upper Eastern Pond. You may have seen the newspaper article showing the old bottles that were uncovered, telling a tale of Victorian picnics... For more of this see our 2010 appeal

The Isle of Wight Pond has also had the benefit of careful rotational clearing of the surrounding trees and scrub, along with more work at Kelsey's Pond in the North of the commons. Our stalwart "Friends" volunteers have also helped to rescue the favourite, but rapidly diminishing, nightingale site.

New for 2010 will be our chance to meet you and to say a special thankyou, by holding an exclusive "Friends" picnic at 6.00pm on 24th June at a mystery location on the commons... We have to ask you to bring your own picnic and chairs – we'll provide the scenery and transport!

Cutting-back the vegetation near Tunnel Car Park will improve our high-profile "shop window" that the rest of the village sees and enable the old oaks to be seen and appreciated – whilst making room for young (eventual) replacements to grow.

Similar work, but on a much larger scale, to restore the Wood Pasture (or pasture woodland) in the whole of South East Wood is nearly finished. The "semi-open" woodland will have much more light, leading to a greater variety of plant life, supporting more insects, equals: more birds! The remaining oaks will have room to spread, with young "future veterans" being encouraged; and people will have a choice of landscapes to enjoy... This is all possible thanks to your loyal support of the National Trust.

My thanks to you!

Ian Swinney
Warden – Bookham Commons

2010 Appeal: Bird Hides!

No, not somewhere for the birds to hide... Somewhere for YOU to hide and watch the birds!

With the recent completion of the de-silting and bank restoration of Upper Eastern Pond we have to manage the erosion and disturbance that can be caused by large numbers of visitors and their dogs – this is nobody's fault, but a problem that needs to be resolved... A compromise can

be reached with open access encouraged at the main (Isle of Wight) pond – and keeping this pond a little bit quiet and "special".

This secluded pond was deliberately kept in an "overgrown" condition (I bet many of people didn't even know we had a fifth large pond!) to encourage the more unusual and elusive wildfowl such as teal and widgeon.

Our aim is to keep it that way, by retaining the limited access and attracting interesting and rare wildlife, yet providing a view so that it can be enjoyed – from a distance! We hope that the 2010 appeal will appeal to you...! Please give generously to this worthy cause.

Left: the Upper Eastern Pond, top – as it was in 1920, and bottom – as it is now, during the recent desilting and bank restoration.



Guided Walks 2010

You are all welcome to join us for the new series of walks planned for Bookham Commons this year. All walks must be booked in advance as space is limited. Please contact the Booking Office on 01372 220644 to confirm your interest.

The Glorious Nightingale – Bookham Commons

Wednesday 5th May
7.30pm–10pm

Join National Trust warden, Ian Swinney, for a walk to listen to the evening song of the nightingale and take in the evening atmosphere! Please wear wellies if wet and bring a torch. Assistance dogs only.

(1 mile – slightly challenging)

£4 per adult, £2 per child

Booking essential by 29th April (25 places)

Nightingale Walk & BBQ – Bookham Commons

Wednesday 12th May
8pm–11pm

Chairman's note ...

It may just be my age, but 2009 seemed to flash by! Having said that, our wardens Rob Hewer and Ian Swinney have done a marvellous job on the ponds, especially opening up the Upper Eastern Pond allowing the possibility of placing a couple of Bird Hides on this refreshed and 'quiet' pond. We are making this our Appeal for this year and I'm sure the regular birdwatchers will be keen to make use of them when built.

Also, opening parts of the Commons to give new oaks a chance to spread will do much to make a visit more enjoyable! So again, I wish you all well and thank you for your support. Keep enjoying your Commons and watch out for the special happenings listed under 'Walks', and I hope to see you in May at the Cheese & Wine Supper on the 20th.

Peter Corliss

Below: Bottles from a bygone age found in our pond during the recent work.



Join us for a barbeque and enjoy the evening atmosphere on Bookham Commons. Then walk with National Trust warden, Ian Swinney, to listen to the evening song of the nightingale. Please wear wellies if wet and bring a torch. Assistance dogs only.

(1 mile – slightly challenging)

£6 per adult, £2 per child

Booking essential by 6th May (25 places)

"Friends" Summer Picnic

24th June 6.00pm

Tunnel Car Park.

Bring your own picnic, we'll provide the transport and the scenery...

The Purple Empire – Bookham Commons

Saturday 10th July, 10am–12noon

Join butterfly conservation's Ken Willmott on a woodland butterfly extravaganza. With Ken's extensive knowledge come and learn about the stunningly beautiful purple emperor. Also, for your viewing pleasure, white admirals and silver-washed fritillaries will be available for photographs! Please bring binoculars. Assistance dogs only.

(1 to 2 miles – easy)

£4 per adult, £2 per child

Booking essential by 8th July (25 places)

Woodland Heritage Day – Bookham Commons

Saturday 11th Sept, 10am–4pm

Come along and join the National Trust for this one-off event! Discover charcoal making, heavy horses working to extract timber, wood turning and hurdle making. Watch timber being converted from oak tree to workable oak planking. Enjoy a guided tour of the woods and food from the barbeque. Meet: Follow the signs to the woods from the Tunnel Car Park, near Bookham railway station (Ordnance Survey map reference TO130 557)

01306 887485 for more information.

Booking not required.

£ Free (pay for bbq!!)

Wild Fruits of the Forest – Bookham Commons

Saturday 2nd Oct, 11am–12.30pm

Enjoy a walk on Bookham Commons with Ian Swinney and discover the wild fruits. Learn about hazelnuts, blackberries and sloes and find out why this 'wild larder' is so important. Enjoy a piece of homemade blackberry pie. Bring along the kids for this mouth-watering wander.

£4 per adult, £2 per child. Booking essential by 30th September (30 places)

Date for your Diary

Thursday 20th May 2010 – 6.45 for 7.15 pm prompt

Cheese and Wine Supper at The Old Barn Hall, Great Bookham

Bookham Commons – a journey back in time

An illustrated talk by Maurice Rogers

about his two years working on the Commons 50 years ago.

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

Subscriptions of £5 are now due. Please send your cheque with the form below to the Treasurer.

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