

# Friends of Bookham Commons Newsletter

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



Ian Swinney  
*Loci plebis custos*

**April 2013**

*Friends of Bookham  
Commons, supporting  
The National Trust*

Chairman:  
Mr Peter Corliss  
20 Harroway Manor  
1 Cobham Road  
Fetcham KT22 9LL

Secretary:  
Mrs Barbara Rombach  
9 Vicarage Close,  
Great Bookham  
KT23 3DZ

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. The last person who  
complained!!



## Mud, mud, glorious mud...!

It's a good job Bookham was named after the Saxon for beech trees... Where early settlers found springs flowing, where the chalk meets the clay. If not, you could well be living in Oakwood-in-the-marsh!

Given that mud is what the commons are famous for, we do it rather well, it has to be said... Many families in Bookham remember the rescue of small children (minus wellies) from the clutches of soggy clay. It is also the reason that the commons are still so extensive – it was too wet for agriculture. The countryside beyond our boundary was common land 250 years ago, but a great deal of Effingham, Horsley and Cobham commons are now fields. With wetlands everywhere being drained for housing, agriculture and industry, they are now a valuable, precious rarity, home to specialised plants, insects and birds. So wear your mud with pride!

many of them with very long-term aims that are not immediately obvious!

### Increasing Support

Fantastic support is also given by our volunteer group. This loyal band have worked tirelessly through the winter to improve the commons for people and wildlife, by clearing paths, restoring glades, guarding the pond margins with brushwood screens and improving the presentation of our village greens. What would we do without them?!!

You may have heard that the National Trust is currently reviewing staff accommodation across the whole country. I cannot comment on this issue, but would like to thank everyone for their expressions of concern and support. The results of the review will be announced very shortly.

Whatever the outcome of the review, the commons will need your support more than



The Isle of Wight pond – before and after work to re-profile the banks and lower the island for the ducks!

### The main (Isle of Wight) pond

Noticeably muddy is the area around the Isle of Wight Pond. This, the most recent major project on the commons, has involved the removal of over a metre (three feet to you and me) of silt, lowering the island to suit the ducks and enhance the landscape, plus a repair and re-profile of the eroded banks.

Having applied for the funding well over a year ago, we got the go-ahead when the ground was already saturated. As a consequence, the silt has not been transported far away and there is still much to be done to highlight this central feature of the commons.

As ever, we need to be patient and allow nature to work its magic. A big thank you is due to all our local supporters, who have taken it in their (slippery) stride without complaining. I am constantly surprised by their tolerance and understanding of the management tasks we undertake –

ever. Let's keep the commons full of wildlife and a peaceful haven for everyone to enjoy.

**Thank you again,  
Ian Swinney**

**National Trust Ranger – Bookham Commons**



# Walks & Events 2013 ...

With more events throughout the National Trust's London and South East Region, we are now offering fewer walks, but with the emphasis on quality and value for money. Please see our websites for more information:

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/local-to-you/london-and-south-east](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/local-to-you/london-and-south-east)

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/local-to-you/london-and-south-east/things-to-see-and-do/surrey-hills](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/local-to-you/london-and-south-east/things-to-see-and-do/surrey-hills)

## Nightingales

Wednesday 8th and 15th May

Join Ian Swinney, the Ranger for the commons, on an evening stroll to listen to the evocative song of the nightingale. With record numbers establishing territories on the commons last year, we hope that many will return from tropical Africa for this summer's evening chorus.

A charge of £15.00 per adult (accompanied children under 16 go free) includes a refreshment break halfway around. Distance is approximately 2 miles of fairly easy terrain.

Booking (via 01372 220644) is essential.

## Woodland Heritage Day

Saturday 14th September

Come and see how people have depended upon woodland for their livelihood, watch the Morris Dancers or take part in some of the woodcrafts in our woodland glade.

**Free Admission – No booking required.**  
**Follow signs from Tunnel Car Park**

### Ron Smith remembered

We were very sad to hear of the passing of Ron Smith, a great champion of the commons and a loyal supporter of the National Trust. Ron had immense experience of life, a wonderful dry wit and great wisdom from his days in the RAF, to the world of finance and more recently as our local committee treasurer for over twenty years.

Ron has left us some funds specifically for use on Bookham Commons. We would like to remember him by reviving his idea of a guided trail around the commons, where visitors can look at many of the features, gain further information and enjoy

exploring without getting hopelessly lost! As a navigator aboard a Lancaster, we feel sure Ron would approve...

### Our 2013 Project

As mentioned in our tribute to Ron Smith, we would like to provide a self-guided trail around the commons, looking at features of interest whilst making reference to an attractive, illustrated guide leaflet. Plans are already well underway for this and we would welcome contributions towards the cost. All monies raised by the Friends are banked in the "Bookham Gift" fund and held specifically for use on your favourite NT property!



The new bird hides on the bank of the Upper Eastern Pond have proved extremely popular with birdwatchers and local residents alike. The photographs show how well the ponds recover after major work has been undertaken.



### Date for your Diary

Thursday 23rd May 2013

6.30 for 7.00 pm prompt

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

**Lucy Quennel**

owner of the Fire and Iron Foundry will give an illustrated talk about Teazle Wood, Bookham.

Ian Swinney, the National Trust Ranger for Bookham Commons, will also give an update on recent work on the common.

**Tickets – £12.50 each inclusive –**  
obtainable from  
Granary Crafts, Church Road,  
or from 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.  
I/We enclose a cheque for £5 Annual Subscription made out to *The Friends of Bookham Commons*.

Name .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Telephone .....

#### BANK STANDING ORDER

##### YOUR DETAILS

To the Manager ..... Bank plc Sort Code .....

Branch Address .....

Name ..... Account No. ....

##### RECIPIENTS DETAILS

To: The Manager, Lloyds TSB plc, 120-124 High Street, Dorking

Please pay to *The Friends of Bookham Commons* Sort Code 30-92-70 Account number 1273021

The sum of £ ..... (amount in words) on ..... Annually

Signed ..... Date .....