



Epsom Common Association

Est. 1974 Patron:- The Worship the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell

www.epsomcommon.org.uk

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2011

Dear Member

It has been a long and, at times, quite hard winter but the spring bulbs are already coming into flower. The Common, too, is showing signs of new life with increased bird song, leaf buds emerging on the trees and catkins aplenty on the hazel. We had the briefest of dry spells early in the year and the paths had started to dry out, but the recent wet weather has made them heavy going again with a lot of surface water about. Despite the weather, the ECoVols have already been out on a few conservation tasks; more information on this overleaf.

Our first main event of the year will be the Annual General Meeting, which this year will be held on Tuesday 12th April, see the full details below, but please make a note in your diary now. Now, I joined the Association at the start and, apart from a short break when I was working in different parts of the country, have always been an active member. I became a committee member in 2003 when I took on the post as Vice Chairperson to help Rod Panichelli and then became Chairperson when Rod emigrated a few years later. I've enjoyed my years as Chairperson of the Association and feel honoured to have represented it but, due to family commitments, I shall not be offering myself for re-election this year. This means we need a replacement and I do ask you to consider taking on the role. If you might be thinking about it but are not quite sure, do talk to me informally and I'll be able to give you an idea of what's involved in the job. I can assure any potential incoming Chairperson that I will be happy to undertake a handover period to ensure all goes smoothly, but with our good committee that won't be a problem.

There are also two vacancies on the committee, which meets about six times a year to consider any matters concerning the Common. We would like to hear from people who have a special interest in the environment and might be able to lend an organising hand if the occasion arises. I have some nomination forms for any of the above posts and nominees should be proposed by one member and seconded by another member. The forms need to be returned to me by 5th April, one week before the AGM.

I wish to thank all of our members who already give some of their time and effort so that our Association can effectively help in the management of our Common. In these difficult financial times, more work will have to be carried out by volunteers. Please, if you can give some of your time, however small, do speak to myself or another member of the committee.

I would also like to thank Stewart Cocker, E&EBC Countryside Manager, and his Countryside Team. They plan, organise and execute all the major works carried out on the Common in line with the Ten Year Management Plan.

My thanks too go to Nick Owen, who is also leaving this year, of the Lower Mole Countryside Management Project (LMCMP) and all his hard working team. Being based in Epsom, their practical help has always been invaluable to us. I have been privileged to meet lots of interesting and well-informed people during my tenure as Chairperson and I would like to thank them all for their help, advice and the knowledge they've shared with me. I shall, of course, still continue to be a member of the Association and shall be enjoying the Common throughout the seasons to come.

I hope to see you at the AGM.

Vic Hayden

36th Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 12th April 2011 at 8.00pm

Christ Church Hall, Christ Church Road, Epsom

Following the formalities - Reports by the Chairperson and Treasurer; and election of the Committee for 2011/2012 - there will be two illustrated talks:

Wild Flowers of the Common

by Eileen Taylor

Management of our Common

by Stewart Cocker (E&EBC Countryside Manager)

Refreshments available after the talks; doors open 7.45pm

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY - DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Please note, all walks start from the Stew Pond Car Park
Wear suitable footwear, and if possible bring a pair of binoculars.

Saturday 7th May - 7:30a.m. start - Early Morning Bird Walk

Join bird expert Tony Quinn for a walk across the Common to see, and hear a variety of bird species both resident and visitors.

Saturday 2nd July - 11:00a.m. start - Butterfly Stroll

This annual search for the elusive Purple Emperor butterfly will be led by Howard Whiting. Help him also find, identify and record other butterflies, moths and invertebrates that live on our common - we suggest you may like to bring a snack on this walk.

Saturday 9th July - 2:00p.m. - Wild Flower Wander

Eileen Taylor will lead this popular walk to find and identify many of our wild flowers, and other botanical delights which can be found on our common.

ECOVOLS

We've had a great start to the year with a joint task in January combining the volunteers and staff from E&EBC, City of London Ashted Common and the LMCMP. The task started off with scrub clearance at Woodcock Corner and along Bridleway 38 then we switched to Horton Heath for the second week, where a significant area of grassland was opened up at the southern end of the 'new' part of the heath. In February our volunteers were at Rye Meadow, continuing the work started just after Christmas by the E&EBC team. Here we have been scrub clearing and halo releasing a fine ageing specimen of an oak tree. This entails cutting back any competing trees and scrub from under the spread of the canopy, which will allow the oak to grow into a veteran tree for the future.

Some of our volunteers have successfully completed a certified course in February on how to safely use our brushcutter/trimmer. We're grateful to the Lower Mole Trust for providing funding towards this course and to the LMCMP for allowing us to use their workshops for the day.

In March we will be continuing our longest running project at the Purple Emperor Walk, where we are creating the right breeding habitat for this magnificent butterfly. April will see a new project when we'll be planting out a hazel coupe on Sunday 17th and 18th. Research has shown that butterflies favour two year-old hazel as a host plant. So, by coppicing the hazel on a rotating eight-year cycle, we hope to have a constant supply of two year-old plants and lots of butterflies in the area!

We've been fortunate to have some funding to allow us to purchase some additional tools and materials for this new task through the SCC Local Partnerships and we're grateful to Cllr Colin Taylor for sponsoring us.

Do contact John Turner if you would like to lend a hand on these conservation tasks, even if you can only spare a few hours. We supply all tools, gloves, materials together with tea, coffee and even biscuits - we just need you. See our web site for task dates and details.

Don't forget our lumpwood charcoal, perfect for BBQs, at £5.00 a bag and charcoal fines, the ever-popular slug deterrent, at £3.00 a bag - also available from Lower Mole Trust at Horton Country Park; or the Old Moat Garden Centre, Horton Lane (where prices may vary); or contact John Turner direct.

EPSOM COMMON ASSOCIATION

Chairman - Vic Hayden, 27 The Greenway, Epsom KT18 7HX. t: 01372 812399 e: chairperson@epsomcommon.org.uk

Vice Chair & ECOVOLS Leader - John Turner, 10 Hookfield, Epsom KT19 8JG.

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Treasurer - Marilyn Day, 78 Manor Green Road, Epsom KT19 8LN. t: 01372 743606

Council Representative - Cllr Mike Richardson, Woodcote Ward

Committee Members (in addition to the above named) - Kathy Belcher (WRA), Cynthea Blunden (Secretary), Stewart Cocker (E&EBC), David King, Roger Newman, Nick Owen (LMCMP), Tony Quinn, Eileen Taylor.
