



# Epsom Common Association

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

[www.epsomcommon.org.uk](http://www.epsomcommon.org.uk)

## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2014

Dear Member,

Our Epsom Common Day on July 20th which marked the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Association was a great success helped of course by the good weather. I was very pleased with the large attendance and thanks to all the stallholders and the Epsom Common Club for their hard work. Special thanks go to Conor Morrow for the excellent organisation and to all the volunteers for helping to set up the site. Some of us are now expert marquee erectors! Thanks to our distinguished guests including the Mayor, Councillor Robert Foote and his wife Rosemary for opening the event, to Frances Rutter, E&EBC Chief Executive for awarding the photographic competition prizes, and to Chris Grayling MP who kindly agreed to draw the raffle. Thanks to the Cheam Woodturners for their donation of £50. And finally thanks to Stewart Cocker and Sarah Clift for their great performance as the pantomime cow.

The Photographic competition was a great success and was the talking point of the event. We received over 80 entries and choosing the winning entries proved to be quite a challenge for the committee. Congratulations to the winners:

Open Class first place: Helen Middlemas with Bracket Fungus

Open Class joint second place: Simon Hughes with Monochrome World

Open Class joint second place: Dawn Clifford with Duck Silhouette

Under 18 Class first place: Natasha Claus with White Flower

Under 18 Class joint second place: Jessica Claus with Framed

Under 18 Class joint second place: Sarah Atherton with Branching Out

Our raffle was also a great success. Thanks to our sponsors for their generous prizes:

Bills restaurant Epsom for a £50 meal voucher, won by Mr. Thompson

The Cricketers pub for meal & wine for two, won by Kath Hinxman

Hobbledown Farm for a 2 + 2 family ticket, won by Margeret Screech

Moat Garden Centre for a plant arrangement, won by Tom Grimwald

John Turner for a bottle of Prosecco and Bells whiskey, won by Louise Chadha and Eileen Putland

Jane Garrod for a decorated cake, won by Vic Hayden

We have also had some bad news. You may have seen in the Epsom Guardian that over the weekend of September 13th and 14th the Ecovols container at the kiln site was broken into and our beloved JCB Groundhog vehicle stolen along with the Stihl brush cutter and, somewhat bizarrely, John Turner's chainsaw trousers, a chainsaw helmet, a bag containing the brush cutter harness, 12 litres of water and a few disposable dust overalls. The thieves were able to cut open a substantial welded steel padlock cover and chop off a 6mm steel hasp. In addition two chains and 6 padlocks were cut to gain access to the container. A set of bolt cutters was later found abandoned by a dog walker near the site. The loss of the Groundhog is a major blow to our conservation work, and although insured will take some time to replace. We then have the problem of where to keep it in future as clearly the container is no longer safe. We did not insure our tools this year as the premium quoted was £530 per annum with an excess of £1000 which was not considered reasonable and in this case would not have covered the loss. We did have a successful working party on Barons Pond on September 21st and 22nd using a small selection of hand tools, but some of our planned sites are difficult to access without an off road vehicle. Our road reps leader Vicki Rees will be stepping down in the New Year because of family commitments. I would like to thank Vicki for all her hard work after taking over the role from Ron New and for making a number of improvements to our computer system for membership records. I am now looking for someone to take over this role which is vital to the ongoing success of the Association. The main tasks are liaising with the road reps, distributing the newsletters to the road reps, managing the membership database and collecting the subscriptions from the road reps. Please let me know if you could consider taking over this role. Vicki and I would be pleased to answer questions and provide more details.

Although the restoration of the circular path has not yet started mainly due to consent issues where the path crosses the fuel pipeline which will require additional work not planned for, we remain confident that the work will start this year.

Thank you

Martin Gandy (Chairman)

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*If you would like to get involved in wildlife monitoring (mammals, reptiles, insects or plants), please contact Pete Howarth of the Epsom & Ewell Countryside Team: [phowarth@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:phowarth@epsom-ewell.gov.uk) or 01372 745224*

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please note, all walks start from the Stew Pond Car Park unless otherwise stated and last for approximately two hours. Wear suitable footwear and clothing, and if possible bring a pair of binoculars. Sorry but dogs are not welcome on these wildlife walks.

Andrew Smith was unable to lead a fungus foray this year but hopes to be back next year.

## Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – 1:00pm – History Walk

The Countryside team will lead a walk to various locations on the Common with a historical interest.

## The Ecology of the Badger

An illustrated talk by local badger expert Ian Tilbury.

A particularly significant topic with the highly contentious badger cull again taking place

**Tuesday November 11<sup>th</sup> 2014**

Christ Church Hall, Christ Church Road, Epsom

Commencing at 8:00pm

Refreshments available after the talk – Doors open at 7:45pm

## ECOVOLS

Although the theft of the Groundhog is a major blow to our conservation capability we plan to continue with our work parties with basic hand tools until a replacement vehicle and power tools have been obtained. The remaining task days for this year are listed below.

In October we are at Blake's Pond, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> and Monday 20<sup>th</sup>; meet on the railway bridge at the end of Castle Road at 9.30am daily.

Finally in November we finish up at the Great Pond, Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> and Monday 17<sup>th</sup>; meet at the Stew Pond car park notice board at 9.30am daily.

We also have dates for the joint tasks in the New Year. The locations are not yet available and will publicised on the web site and notice boards.

**January 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>** Ashted Common joint task

**Sunday January 11<sup>th</sup> – Monday January 12<sup>th</sup>** Ecovols Epsom Common

**January 13<sup>th</sup> – January 15<sup>th</sup>** Epsom Common joint task with barbecue on January 15<sup>th</sup>

If in doubt please check with John Turner. Tel: 01372-722580; mobile: 07729-235559

## Cattle Checking report

The cattle grazing on the Common is now a regular feature from late spring to early autumn and helps to maintain the diversity of habitat which is so important for the Common's SSSI status. This year's herd of 35 steers arrived at the beginning of May. From the start one animal repeatedly escaped from Horton Heath by jumping over the fence but after this initial excitement they all settled well. They all thrived, and were effective in keeping the grassy areas under control. However, by mid-August the exceptionally dry spell had slowed the re-growth of the grass, so the farmer decided to remove them.

The health and security of the animals is checked daily, and volunteers from the Association carry out the task on several days each week. This year we gained several new volunteers, but others have stepped down. This means that we are always trying to recruit volunteers both as replacements and to increase the number in order to share the load. Those already involved find the task pleasantly rewarding. This work is vital so if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Bruce Critchley to find out more. His email address is [bruce\\_critchley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bruce_critchley@yahoo.co.uk) and telephone 01372 742520.

## EPSOM COMMON ASSOCIATION

**Chairman** – Martin Gandy, 2 Kingsdown Road, Epsom, KT17 3PU. t: 01372-723149; m: 07796-362923; email: [chairperson@epsomcommon.org.uk](mailto:chairperson@epsomcommon.org.uk)

**Vice chairman** - David King, 1 Lewins Road, Epsom, KT18 7TL t: 01372-722457

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

**Secretary** - Cynthea Blunden, 6 Isabella Cottages, Epsom **Council Representative** – Paul Ardern-Jones

**EcoVols Leader** – John Turner, 10 Hookfield, Epsom KT19 8JG. t: 01372-722580; m: 07729-235559; email: [ecovols@epsomcommon.org.uk](mailto:ecovols@epsomcommon.org.uk)

**Committee members** (in addition to the above named) – Bruce Critchley, Conor Morrow (LMCMP), Stewart Cocker (E&EBC), Roger Newman, Tony Quinn, Eileen Taylor, Gill Sanders, Vicki Rees