



# Epsom Common Association

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

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

## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2014

Dear Member,

2014 marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Epsom Common Association and to mark this milestone we will be holding an Epsom Common Day with support from the E&EBC Countryside Management Team and the Lower Mole Project. The event will be held on Sunday July 20th on Stamford Green from 11:00am to 4:00pm. This will be a family event and we expect approximately 30 stallholders to attend including Miller's Ark Animals, facepainting, woodcraft skills and many more local groups with links to natural history and conservation. The Epsom Common Club will be open for refreshments and will set up a barbecue outside the club. We will be holding an Epsom Common Heritage Roadshow and would be pleased if you could bring along old photographs, stories and memories, maps, artefacts and newspaper cuttings. The Epsom & Ewell Local History Group will record everything you bring along. We will also hold a photographic competition. There will be three categories:

- The landscape of Epsom Common
- The animal life of Epsom Common
- The plant life of Epsom Common

There will be two entry classes; Under 18 and Open. You can enter up to two photographs in each category and entries should be in full size digital jpeg format and be sent to [chairperson@epsomcommon.org.uk](mailto:chairperson@epsomcommon.org.uk) by June 30th. The committee will judge the entries and the winning entries will be printed and displayed on the Epsom Common Day, and we would also like to use any images submitted in the Association's publicity material. There will be a first prize for each age class of a digital photo frame, and the prints will be framed for the runners up.

Thanks to your membership subscriptions the Association is able to share some of the costs of running this event. We will hold a raffle on the day and I would like some volunteers to help run this and would also appreciate donations for the prizes.

The exceptionally wet and stormy weather is now behind and the Common and paths are beginning to recover. Thankfully there has been minimal impact on our valuable large trees. One of the consequences of such a mild winter has been that the first adder, a male, was found basking by the pen in the main grazing area over the weekend of the 15th and 16th February which is quite unusual. At the height of the wet period the area around Baron's Pond has turned into a local version of the Florida Everglades - lots of small ponds formed around it, with lots of fast-running streams. The Epsom Countryside volunteers have been working around Dixie's Pond on Thursday. The idea is to cut back vegetation to let in more light and to restore a series of smaller ponds above it. The exact purpose of this series of small ponds is somewhat of a mystery. Pete Howarth from the Countryside Team is currently recording mosses and liverworts across the Common.

A joint volunteer task was carried out in early January on the section of the Common alongside the railway track between The Wells and Castle Road. This was a very successful event despite the wet conditions and up to 50 volunteers were involved. A major clearance of the area was completed leaving an attractive and more open space. The Ecovols Stihl chainsaw developed a serious safety fault which was not economic to repair and thanks to your subscriptions we now have a brand new chainsaw which hopefully will see many years of service. The part of the circular path from The Wells to Ashted Common is due to be restored over the summer period which will involve temporary diversions to this section of the route which is now in a poor condition.

I would like to thank Stewart Cocker from the Countryside Management Team for the donation of a fine set of display boards. These will help us put on much better displays at future local events.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 13th May, and full details are given below. There is also a full programme of guided wildlife walks detailed below.

Subscriptions are now due and as some members have enquired about paying by standing order we have produced a standing order bank form and the road reps will have a supply of these when they deliver this newsletter. If you do set up a standing order I would appreciate it if you could let me know via the email address [chairperson@epsomcommon.org.uk](mailto:chairperson@epsomcommon.org.uk) so we can update the road reps lists.

I look forward to meeting you at the AGM

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

## 39th Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 13th May 2014 at 8:00pm

Christ Church Hall, Christ Church Road, Epsom

The formal part of the evening will be held after the guest speaker's talk

### The Historic Buildings of Epsom up to 1914

*An illustrated talk by local historian Ian West*

The present officers and committee is willing to stand again. Nominations for any of the officer posts, or for the committee, seconded by a current member, should be submitted in writing to the Chairperson fourteen days before the AGM.

Following the formalities; reports by the Chairperson and Treasurer, and the election of the Committee for 2014/2015 there will be the following presentation:

**Management of the Common report - Stewart Cocker (E&EBC Head of Countryside Management Team)**

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

## ECOVOLS

There's no task during April due to the clash of dates with Easter for the third weekend, but we're back in action in May returning to the Hazel coupe on Sunday 18th and Monday 19th. This is the fourth year of our eight year cycle and we hope to plant more hazel in this area. Our existing plants are all doing well, apart from one that's been squashed by a fallen branch from an oak tree and there's a slight possibility we may have planted one silver birch in error!

In June, July and August we start bracken pulling on every Tuesday evening from 7.00pm till dusk. We've added the Railway Meadow to our schedule, the area that was cleared in January for the Joint Task. There's a small patch of heather towards the Wells Road and it would be great to see if more heather plants might establish themselves in this part of the common. We pull bracken by hand as it can shade out emerging small plants and flowers. Why not come along and join us for a couple of hours?

- Horton Heath (meet at the vehicle access point off the old Christchurch Road): 3rd June, 1st and 29th July, 26th August
- Railway Meadow (meet on the railway bridge at the end of Castle Road): 10th June, 5th August
- Rye Meadow (meet at Wells notice board off Wells Road entrance): 17th June, 15th July, 12th August
- Hazel Coupe (meet at Stew Pond car park notice board): 24th June, 22nd July, 19th August
- Blakes Pond (meet on the railway bridge at the end of Castle Road): 8th July

For any further information do contact John Turner

### Cattle Grazing

The cattle grazing on the Common is now a regular feature from late spring to early autumn and helps to maintain diversity of habitat which is so important to the Common's SSSI status; we are looking forward to the arrival of this year's herd.

The health and security of the animals has to be checked daily, and volunteers from the Association assist with the task. We are always trying to recruit volunteers both as replacements and to increase their number in order to spread the load. Those already involved find the task pleasantly rewarding. This is vital work and if you are interested 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.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please note, all walks start from the Stew Pond Car Park and last for approximately two hours.

Wear suitable footwear and clothing, and if possible bring a pair of binoculars.

### Saturday 17th May – 7:00a.m. start – Early Morning Bird Walk

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

### Saturday 5th July – 2:00p.m. start – Butterfly Stroll

The annual search for the elusive Purple Emperor butterfly will be led by Alison Gilry. Join her to find, identify and record other butterflies, moths and invertebrates that inhabit our Common.

### Saturday 12th July – 2:00p.m. start – Wild Flower Wander

Eileen Taylor will lead this popular walk to find and identify many of the more interesting wild flowers and other botanical delights to be found on the Common.

### 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