



# Epsom Common Association

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

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

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2014

Dear Member,

As I write this report the planning for the Epsom Common Day on July 20<sup>th</sup> is now well advanced. We have had a very good response from the stallholders we have invited and we are expecting a very good day and hope to meet many of you there. As mentioned in the Spring Newsletter 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.

Our AGM on May 13<sup>th</sup> was well attended and we enjoyed a fascinating talk by Ian West on the Historic Buildings of Epsom up to 1914. Ian's knowledge of the history of the local buildings is exceptional. One message was always look up when walking around Epsom and you will be rewarded with views of some of the unusual details of our historic buildings.

The mild winter seems to have provided ideal conditions for the wildflowers on the Common. The High Meadow looks exceptionally good with several orchids amongst the Corky Fruited Water Dropwort, and Ragged Robin on Rye Meadow. It also promises to be an excellent year for insects and particularly butterflies. Large numbers of Brimstones were seen earlier in the year and Gill Sanders spotted her first White Admiral of the year on the Common between Horton Heath and the Main Grazing Area on Tuesday 17 June and the first Silver-Washed Fritillaries have also been seen. This is good evidence of the effectiveness of the cattle grazing programme and the management plan that we have been following.

The dormouse news is good - we found one in a nest box in May and another in June, in different locations. Normally you would expect the numbers to build as the season goes on. We're planning to enter our site into the National Dormouse Monitoring Project which has been going for more than 20 years. During the spring months many of the Dormouse nest boxes were used by breeding Blue Tits and most of them seem to have fledged successfully. At present we still have active wrens' nests in a couple of others. Pete Howarth has been monitoring newts in Blakes Pond and we have confirmed the presence of Great Crested Newts, a protected species.

As an extension of the monitoring work on the Common, moth traps were set up near the Stew Pond on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Paul Wheeler, Surrey Butterfly Conservation's moth expert, brought the traps and helped identify the moths caught. The idea is to record some baseline data for moths on the Common as this is an area where we have very little knowledge. Pete Howarth volunteered to spend the night on the Common to guard the equipment. The results were excellent. Over 100 species were recorded including the spectacular Poplar Hawk Moth and Elephant Hawk Moth and the beautifully camouflaged Buff Tip and Peppered Moths.

The criticism about the condition of the main circular path has not been ignored. We are confident that the work will be completed this summer, particularly because the funding will be lost if the work is not completed this year. The problem was compounded by the exceptionally wet weather this winter.

Several residents of Willows Path have contacted the Association with concerns about notice given by Surrey County Council to carry out resurfacing of Willows Path in early June. The work was to have taken place on Epsom Common land and no consents had been requested or given by E&EBC. There had been no consultation with local residents many of whom objected to the plans. I am pleased to report that the work has been suspended pending consultation and the necessary consents being granted. Action will also be taken against the dumping of garden waste and other household items on the Conservation Meadow, Osbournes Green. E&EBC has not agreed to any changes to the management of the meadow. I acknowledge that this does not meet the wishes of some local residents.

I am pleased to let you know that the Association has received a generous legacy from Ron New's estate. Ron loved the Common and was a very keen supporter of the work of the Association and this gift will help continue the conservation work we carry out.

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

# Epsom Common Day Sunday July 20th 11:00am - 4:00pm Stamford Green

We are celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the  
Epsom Common Association with the Epsom Common Day

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*

## ECOVOLS

*It's never too late to start bracken pulling!* You'll find a dedicated team of volunteers on the common every Tuesday evening from 7.00pm till dusk. We've had one session on the Railway Meadow, the area that was cleared in January for the Joint Task. We uncovered the small existing patch of heather towards the Wells Road and can report that there do seem to be some new heather plants growing close to that existing plant. We pull the bracken as it will shade out such emerging small plants and flowers. There are still some more bracken pulling sessions before the end of the summer, so why not join us?:

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

In the Autumn we'll turn our attention to the common's ponds.

In September we'll be at Baron's Pond, Sunday 21st and Monday 22nd; meet in the Loop Road at 9.30am daily.

In October we move to Blake's Pond, Sunday 19th and Monday 20th; 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 16th and Monday 17th; meet at the Stew Pond car park notice board at 9.30am daily. For any further information do contact John Turner

### Cattle Grazing

The cattle grazing on the Common is now a regular feature in summer and helps to maintain diversity of habitat which is so important to the Common's SSSI status. The Common is now hosting 35 steers which arrived early in May, and we expect them to stay until late September or early October. The animals have settled well and are doing a good job of keeping the grassy areas under control.

The health and security of the animals is checked daily, and volunteers from the Association are responsible for checks on Thursdays and Fridays and some weekend days. It is pleasing to report that we have gained two new volunteers this year, but we are always trying to increase their number in order to spread the load. Those already involved find the task pleasantly rewarding. This is vital work so 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 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.

### Saturday 9th August – 2:00pm start – Bush cricket hop

Steve Nevard will be leading a walk to detect and hopefully see some of the varied species of Grasshoppers, Bush Crickets and other Insects that thrive on our Common. Meet at the Stew Ponds car park Christ Church Road Epsom (B280) - Duration of Walk approx. 2.5hrs.

### Saturday 6th September – 7:30pm start - Night Bat Walk

Find out more about these fascinating mammals. This walk is organised by the E&EBC Countryside Team and there is a small charge of £2 per person. Bring a torch or head torch and wrap up warm. Advance booking is required for this walk, and sorry but no dogs are allowed. Please contact the Countryside Team on 01372-732000 or email [contactus@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@epsom-ewell.gov.uk)

## 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