



August 2021

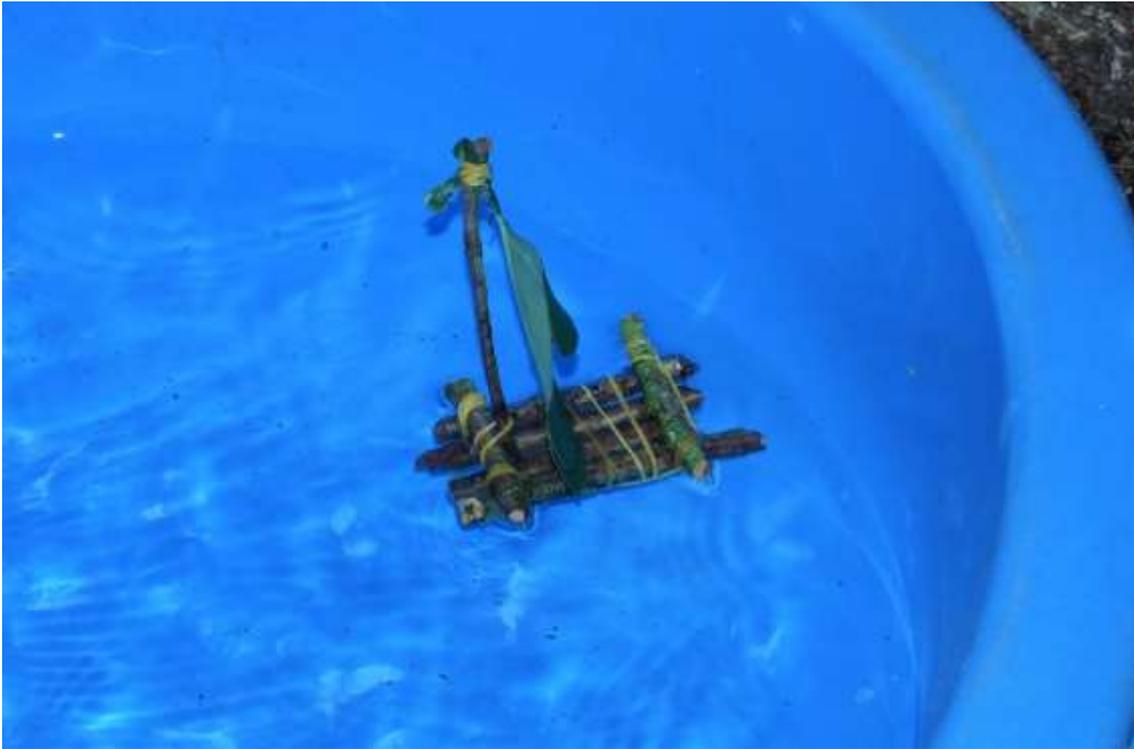


The grasslands and verges of the Commons have been amazing this year, full of wildflowers and grasses, and buzzing with life. As the photo above shows, they provide a pleasing, rural backdrop to our daily lives, a piece of the countryside within our urban setting and the reason many of us choose to live or work here.

In our monthly Newsletters we aim to keep you up-to-date with developments on the Commons, illustrate the amazing diversity of flora and fauna, and show

you some of the work involved in maintaining and enhancing the 180 acres.

The Big Picnic



The Big Picnic, organised by the Visit Chislehurst Network, was postponed due to Government regulations, but will now take place on Sunday 15th August from 11 am – 4 pm at the Cockpit on Chislehurst Common. It promises to be a great occasion, with games and entertainment. Just bring a picnic and come and join in!

We will be there offering an opportunity for children to try their boat-building skills using the materials around them. We will also have cards of local views for sale.

The Green Flag Award

Every Newsletter mentions how proud we are to display the Green Flag Award logo, but what does it mean?



The Green Flag Award is the International Mark of Quality for Parks and Green Spaces.

The scheme is managed under licence from the UK Government Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by Keep Britain Tidy, who also administer the scheme under licence in other countries.

There is a full inspection every two years, and we submit a written Management Plan on each occasion. We are grateful for all the support and sponsorship from idverde, Bromley Council's green space contractor.

Achieving Green Flag status for Chislehurst Commons is an acknowledgement of the many ways in which Trustees, Keepers and Volunteers have worked together to maintain and enhance the two Commons of Chislehurst and St. Paul's Cray.

We were particularly pleased to read a recent Green Flag Assessor's comments:

"A beautiful and valuable landscape with a unique arrangement that ensures sensitive and appropriate levels of management. The site is fully deserving of the Green Flag Award. The efforts of the two Keepers, the Trustees and the Volunteers in maintaining it are inspirational, and the site exemplifies everything that is good about community involvement in green spaces."

Oak Processionary Moth



In recent years, woodland trees in the UK have come under attack from a number of sources, one of which is the Oak Processionary Moth (OPM). The name comes from the distinctive processionary behaviour of the caterpillars which move in nose-to-tail lines.

The good news is that we can find very little evidence of OPM on the Commons this year. OPM caterpillars build nests almost solely on Oak trees and are a problem because, not only can they lead to defoliation of Oak trees, but the hairs of the caterpillars are toxic to animals and people. The latest Forestry

Commission Newsletter on OPM, June 2021, states 'With previous weather conditions holding back the development of OPM but now improving we are starting to receive reports of OPM...'

However, we have been checking for OPM throughout June, particularly in St Pauls Cray Common where it has been found in past years. We have only found two nests in that time, compared with the tens of nests found in previous years. One of the nests was on the bridle path in St. Paul's Cray Common, close to the National Trust boundary, and one was on a tree close to St Pauls Cray Road. This lack of OPM seems to align with the National Trust land and Scadbury Park where there has also been very little evidence of OPM this year.

WILL YOU BE A TRUE FRIEND OF THE COMMONS?

The 180 acres of local common land are protected by an Act of Parliament.

Chislehurst Commons has responsibility under the Act for the management and maintenance of the area. The Act, however, made no provision for funding, and we rely on the generosity of local people to enable us to continue our work. We have two Keepers whose knowledge, skills and dedication are invaluable. Everyone else who works to maintain and develop our beautiful Commons does so on a voluntary basis.

You can donate via our website at

www.chislehurstcommons.uk or go to [PayPal Giving](#).

Our Wonderful Keepers and Volunteers



Two weeks ago, our Head Keeper, Jonathan, and Kevin, one of our volunteers, waded out to the island at Prickend Pond to check on the Hawthorn tree and the shrubs that were planted last Autumn. The good news is that all are doing well and have benefited from the recent rain.



In July, a group of volunteers began work on surveying the grasslands to record the numbers and species of wildflowers and grasses that are on each site. This involves putting down a metre square quadrat at intervals across the site and studying the species that fall within it. It has been fascinating work which will provide valuable information about the different areas. We plan to develop it further next year.

A very special thank you to all the photographers who so generously share their pictures with us.

Don Drage, Peter Edwards, Jonathan Harvie, Kevin Jennings, John Stiles and Ross Wearn regularly provide amazing photos that not only enhance our understanding of the biodiversity of our Commons, but also illustrate the breath-taking beauty of the world around us.

In addition, they provide many of the photos that show the work involved in managing the 180 acres.

Their enthusiasm and pride in the Commons, and love of the natural world, shine through. Without them our monthly Newsletters would not be so interesting, informative, and inspiring.

We also appreciate the contributions we receive from our volunteers and local residents with sights that have caught their eye. Keep them coming!

Tawny Owls



There have been several sightings of Tawny Owls on Chislehurst Common which seem to indicate that a pair may have established a territory. As owls feed on small mammals, this also suggests a good population of wood mice, shrews, and voles.

A Visitor at Rush Pond



This newcomer was seen a week or two ago at Rush Pond, and its identification caused us some problems. However, consultation with the British Trust for Ornithology and the Springwatch website agreed with our initial thoughts that it is a male Wood Duck. Wood Ducks are native to America, but are a popular bird in collections over here, so he is possibly an escapee from a domestic collection.

Damsels and Dragons



This impressive banded demoiselle damselfly (*Calopteryx splendens*) is one of our largest and most colourful damselflies. Normally associated with slow-flowing water, it was a surprise (and a first record for the Commons) to see this male visiting Prickend Pond, just feet from the Pond Path benches.



This large, stocky dragonfly, seen at Rush Pond, is a male broad-bodied chaser (*Libellula depressa*). It is one of the easier dragonflies to see close up as it launches itself from a perching site to chase after any male competitors or prey. If you disturb one, stand still and wait, and it will usually return to the same spot.

A new sighting



A Marbled White butterfly was recorded for the first time last year on the heathland on St. Paul's Cray Common, but it moved too quickly to be photographed that time. The photo above was taken two weeks ago. It is particularly attracted to purple flowers such as Knapweed and Thistles which grow abundantly on the poor soils of our Commons.

The Commons in Close-up



This stunning image captures details of a Mallow flower from the area around Prickend Pond. Its deep pink stripy flowers provide nectar for insects throughout the summer.

Our Commons lie at the heart of Chislehurst and help to make it such a unique and special place. We will continue to do our best to preserve and maintain the 180 acres for present and future generations.

[Click here to access a map of the Commons](#)

There are now two additional ways for you to show your support for Chislehurst's common land.



Members of the Co-op can nominate our charity to receive 1p in every £ they spend.

<https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/47108>



We are also registered with Amazon Smile.

Visit smile.amazon.co.uk instead of the normal Amazon website and select Chislehurst Commons, and for everything you buy, Amazon will donate 0.5% to help maintain the Commons. This is another excellent opportunity to support the greenspace on your doorstep.

THANK YOU!

Thanks for this month's photos to Don Drage, Peter Edwards, Kevin Jennings, Michael Knight, Alan Porter and Mary Wheeler.

“The Green Flag Award” – by Peter Woodward

“Oak Processionary Moth”– by Alan Porter

“Damsels and Dragons” – by Kevin Jennings

Thanks also to the Editorial Team – Christine Wearn, Ross Wearn and Mary Wheeler.



Chislehurst Commons are proud to display the Green Flag Award logo.

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