



Last week's sunshine brought a sparkle to the 180 acres of Chislehurst Commons - bird song, dandelions and daisies, and the occasional butterfly - all reminders that whatever our troubles, the natural world continues on its annual

cycle.





Brimstone Butterfly

This butterfly hibernates as an adult and emerges in spring to look for nectar. They are long-lived compared to other butterflies, and can live for a year. Two have already been spotted on the Commons this year.



Dandelion

Dandelions are one of the earliest plants to flower in the spring, and therefore an invaluable source of nectar for the early insects. The radiating petals provide brilliant dots of colour against the grass.

The seed-head is a collection of parachutes. They have kept generations of children amused with the game of telling the time by the number of puffs needed to blow them all away!



Red Dead Nettle

Despite its name, this nettle does not sting. It flowers from March to October, providing nectar to insects, leaves for caterpillars to feed on, and seeds for ants to take away.



Great Spotted Woodpecker

The distinctive sound of a woodpecker drilling into a tree always brings a smile to the face.

This one nested in a willow tree on the island at Prickend Pond a year or two ago. Blue tits will also nest in tree cavities, and ring-necked parakeets have been known to usurp great spotted woodpeckers from their nest holes on the Commons.

Life at the Ponds



5 mallard ducklings have already been seen on the ponds – we look forward to moorhen and coot chicks, and last year the Egyptian geese raised a family. We will keep you updated.

And finally



A “Phoenix” Tree – (named after the legendary Phoenix bird)

These are trees that have fallen over, usually from a strong wind, or snapped off near the ground, but have managed to survive. There are some on the Common that date from the 1987 hurricane.

If there are enough live roots still attached, the tree can continue to live. What were once side branches become new trees growing along the fallen trunk.

Over time roots are created beneath each branch where the trunk is in contact with the soil, and eventually the original trunk can decay and disappear, leaving a row of trees arising from the one fallen tree.

During this difficult time, we will do our best to continue our work of maintaining the Commons and developing their biodiversity, so that they continue to be a valuable asset for us all.



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

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