



The recent warm weather has made the leafy shade of the woodland ever more attractive.

We have heard from so many of you about how valuable the commons have been to you during these difficult times. We know that the natural world can lift our spirits, and the current situation has highlighted the vital importance, to our health and well-being, of the 180 acres of common land here in Chislehurst.

Now that life is gradually becoming less restrictive, there is an opportunity to explore the full extent of our wonderful common land. St. Paul's Cray Common, shown in the background above, is part of Chislehurst Commons. It is a natural space with many different aspects to excite and delight.

**You can access a map of Chislehurst Commons by clicking on the link at the end of this Newsletter.**



A view through the woodland of St. Paul's Cray Common.

**Chislehurst Commons has responsibility for managing the 180 acres of local common land under an Act of Parliament.**

**We have two Keepers, Jonathan Harvie, our Head Keeper, and Peter Edwards, our Assistant Keeper, whose knowledge and dedication are invaluable. Everyone else involved in the administration, maintenance and development of the area does so on a voluntary basis.**

**The Act made no provision for funding, and we depend on donations and our wonderful Working Party to enable us to continue to preserve this precious natural resource.**

**Would you like to be a true friend of the Commons? You can donate now by cheque or via the [Donate link](#) at the end of this Newsletter.**

**Thank you!**



View from St. Paul's Cray Common across the boundary into Scadbury Nature Reserve.

St. Paul's Cray Common links Scadbury Nature Reserve with the National Trust land in Petts Wood, creating 570 acres of connected green space for the benefit of walkers. It also helps to increase biodiversity by providing

habitat connectivity for wildlife. Tawny Owls, for example, need to hunt over a wide area, including woods and fields, to ensure that they have reliable access to food.



Gunn Glade, at the entrance from Holbrook Lane, is named after a long-serving Chairman of the Board. A memorial Beech tree stands in a corner of the glade.

Until 1854, the footpath that now leads to Leeson's Hill was the main road to St. Mary Cray, but it was so narrow that it was difficult for two vehicles to pass, and there were numerous accidents. In 1851, for example, the newspapers reported a fatality when a waggon pulled by a team of horses

was in collision with a dogcart containing two gentlemen travelling “at a rapid speed” towards London. Three years later, in 1854, plans were drawn up and the road now known as St Paul's Cray Road was re-routed to its present position.



Dabner's Glade, on the left-hand side of the footpath towards Leeson's Hill, is named after the bakery that once stood on the site. It was a weatherboard house, originally a smithy. The old road passed between the Scadbury estate and the cottage, which became rather isolated when the road was re-routed. It was destroyed by fire in 1937, and the land, which had originally been an enclosure from the common, was returned.



Trees were often planted as boundary markers. This magnificent pollarded Oak stands at the far end of the common on the boundary with the National Trust land. It could well be 250 years old.



The boundary between St. Paul's Cray Common and Petts Wood, showing the Willett Memorial Stone on the National Trust land. The stone commemorates William Willett who lived in Chislehurst and developed the idea behind the Daylight-Saving Act of 1916.



The Common was once covered with heathland similar to this area, which was re-established about 20 years ago. In the past, grazing animals kept the heather free from any encroaching vegetation. Now this is a job for our Volunteers. Bracken, brambles, and Silver Birch seedlings, which would otherwise engulf the heather, are carefully removed.



Back-breaking work, but worth it to see the glorious sea of purple in August.



A Common Lizard, one of the species attracted to the heathland. They like dry, sunny locations where dense cover exists close by. Common lizards feed predominantly on spiders and insects. They are protected by law in Great Britain and are a Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. So it is particularly pleasing to find that our carefully tended heathland is providing them with a home.

**And finally .....**



A stunning photo of a Heathland Spider amongst the heather. There really is beauty all around on our wonderful commons!

Thanks for this week's photos to Don Drage, Kevin Jennings and Mary Wheeler.

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



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

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