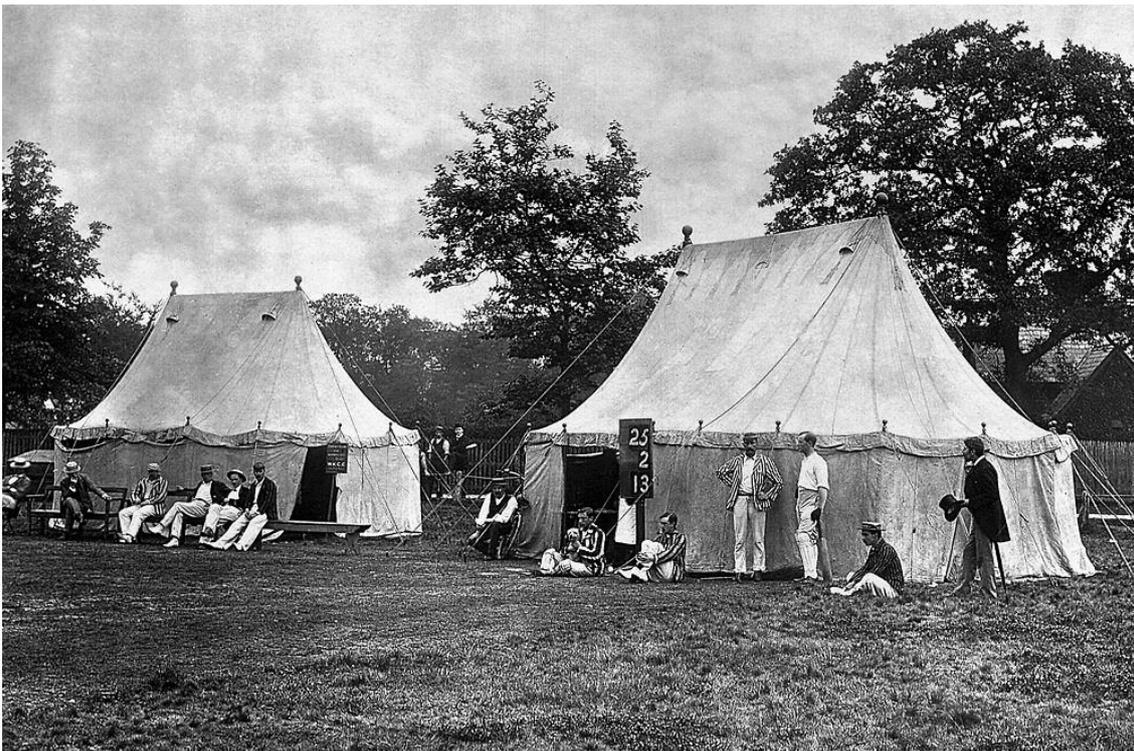




We know how valuable the common has been to so many of you during this difficult period. An open space on your doorstep for recreation and relaxation, and opportunities for connecting with the natural world.

And the Cricket Ground, which is included in the 180 acres of Chislehurst Commons, has played a particularly important part, enabling people to socially distance while running, walking, or taking the air.

West Kent Cricket Club has played at the ground since 1822, although village cricket had been played here for much longer. It was later joined by Chislehurst Cricket Club, the two clubs amalgamating in 1980 to form the Chislehurst and West Kent Cricket Club. Their use of the ground is protected under the Act of Parliament which established a Management Scheme for the common.



A cricket match was always a popular occasion. Bell's Sporting Chronicle, reporting on the crowd at a home match against the MCC in August 1838, noted that "*Chislehurst always sends forth a brilliant number of admirers of this*

*noble game, of whom the ladies of this genteel neighbourhood shine most conspicuously*", which, I'm sure we all agree, continues to be the case today.

The weather has never been reliable though. In June 1868, the ground was "*as brown as a berry*" after a drought, but in May the following year, for the opening match of the season, "*the rain came down in torrents*" and play was abandoned.



The Cricket Club undertakes the maintenance of the cricket square and the outfield, but Chislehurst Commons maintains the remainder of the area. The litter bins, for example, are emptied by our Keepers, and our Volunteer Working Party helps with the annual cutting of the hedge.

**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!**



Besides being an area for recreation, the Cricket Ground is rich in wildlife, and as much of the site as possible is maintained to develop biodiversity. Where the grass is left to grow long, wildflowers such as Herb Robert, Tansy, Cow Parsley, Dock and Sow Thistle grow in abundance.



Yellow Meadow Ants make their home in the area towards Norlands Crescent. The anthills support a variety of wildflowers and grasses typical of acid grassland.



The photo shows a flower called Cat's Ear, named because the small bracts growing up the stem resemble cat's ears. Other plants such as Sheep's Sorrel, Heath Bedstraw and a variety of grasses also flourish there.



The plants attract bees and other insects, and this is a particularly good site for butterfly-spotting. Varieties such as this Small Copper, Skippers, Ringlets and the Meadow Brown regularly flit across. The dappled shade of the woodland behind attracts the Speckled Wood butterfly.



Rooks and crows are a familiar sight on the common. They mainly feed on worms, beetles and other invertebrates which they catch by probing the ground with their large beaks. So the Cricket Ground is ideal territory for them.

However, as this photo illustrates, they cause us problems by raiding litter bins and scattering the contents around in their search for discarded food.

**And finally .....**



Another Chislehurst inhabitant.

A small mammal survey found this Bank Vole, and also a Field Vole and Wood Mice living at the Cricket Ground. The survey was carried out under careful and humane conditions a few years ago by a qualified and accredited naturalist. The approved traps were put out overnight with food, water, and bedding, and opened early the next morning. All the animals found were in good condition.

Our common is truly an amazing place, the vibrant and precious centre of life in Chislehurst, now, in the past, and for the future.

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



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

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