



# The Common

*The newsletter from the Horsell Common Preservation Society*

Volume 20

Spring 2022



Artwork by Rob McGibbon courtesy of Surrey Heathland Partnership

Welcome to The Common Spring newsletter and “Thank you” to all the volunteers, members and litter pickers whose support helps with conservation work on the Common. HCPS continue to improve the SANG meadows for public recreation and at the same time increasing biodiversity and the abundance of nature. Sometimes people ask why trees are cut down. The key is to balance the different needs of all the species and restore the rare and fragile habitat of open lowland heath. The Common means so much to us all in different ways. In this issue, find out more about dog walking, volunteering and also education in the Thames Basin Heaths and the Forest school articles. For conservationists and nature lovers, this is an exciting time as rare ground nesting birds return to breed in this “Special Protected Area (SPA). The painting above is a reminder to us that our friendly, curious dog could easily disturb and even destroy these camouflaged nests and fledglings. Please keep to the paths and if necessary, put your dog on a lead.

*Caroline Hughes, Editor*

# Remembering Geoffrey Cuttle



Geoffrey Cuttle (1933- 2022)

When Geoffrey moved from south Woking to become a neighbour of the Common, he offered his services to the Society and joined the committee as a Trustee of the charity. He was appointed Chairman in the spring of 1997 as successor to Ed White and served in that post until 2006. His skills as a Chairman were put to good use during a period when a number of contentious and complex issues needed his experience and his attention to detail.

With his steady hand on the helm the Society took bold steps in securing additional land to protect the northern flanks of the Common and to considerably enlarge the areas available for public access. This included the purchase of Mimbridge Meadows plus the acquisition of the other fields along the River Bourne and the field adjacent to the development at Beaver Creek. These parcels now form the Heather Farm SANG which is heavily used and much enjoyed by Woking's residents. Added to this, the Society during this period agreed to buy Pyrford Common from Smith's Charity and bought some useful land at Mareswood adjacent to Grasslands.

Geoffrey also during his time as Chair had to deal with difficult debates about the materials we could use on our tracks, some problematic issues with employees and contractors, and long debates about the Society's investment policy. The Society's minutes are full of carefully drafted letters and management papers in which Geoffrey promulgated balanced and well thought through positions to aid the Trustees' deliberations. Based on his career with computers, his contributions of course included help with the Society's IT which was at a very early stage when he came aboard. There is no doubt Geoffrey managed HCPS through a tricky but very successful period of its growth. He passed the Society on to his successor John Durrant in good heart and his wife Elizabeth has continued the family's involvement by being a Trustee to the present day. Geoffrey was a man who

freely gave his time in retirement to assist many community organisations. As well as this Society, he helped to found the Mayford Decorative & Fine Arts Society (now the The Arts Society Mayford), took a leading role in Woking Seniors Club and Woking Probus, and we should not forget his keen attachment to croquet at the Woking Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club in Hook Heath.

*David Robbins*

## News from the Common

by Jeremy Dalton, Estate Manager

### Storm Eunice blows through

Whenever I hear in the news that high winds have been predicted it always sets me slightly on edge. As the manager of a site responsible for thousands of roadside trees, and trees near houses, it never makes for a good night's sleep. Although we had several trees down across access tracks and paths throughout the common, luckily, there were no major incidents and overall, we didn't lose too many trees. We will be using some of the downed trees constructively, one of the Oaks and a couple of Sweet Chestnuts which came down are being turned into new benches for Heather Farm and the Bedser Trail.



*An Oak tree blown down by Storm Eunice across the perimeter track.*

### Pegasus Lives On!

The fantastic tree carving of Pegasus on the corner of Broomhall Common has caused some concern as decay is becoming apparent on the surface. In February this year we carried out resistograph testing, a method used to as-



certain the structural integrity of trees. As the Pegasus carving was once an Oak tree, we can use the same method to get a picture of how stable the structure still is. After testing the base and buttress roots as far as possible underground we were pleasantly surprised to find the timber is still in good condition. Although there is some surface decay, the core still seems sound. This information combined with the reasonably low use of the immediate vicinity, and the fact Pegasus stood up to Storm Eunice is good grounds for us to let Pegasus stand for at least another year. Eventually the time will come for Pegasus to be removed when it becomes unsafe. The carving was never intended to be a permanent structure; I'm sure we can think of a way to retain some of Pegasus on site safely when this time comes.



*Decay testing of Pegasus using a resistograph machine.*

## Keeping in touch

### The Editor

- ⇒ Rupert, HCPS Senior Ranger regularly posts information on the HCPS Facebook page.
- ⇒ Look out for "Walks and Talks" led by HCPS trustees and the Thames Basin Heaths Partnership team.
- ⇒ Coming soon, planned for release in May, there will be a new HCPS web-site with information, history, wildlife and walks.
- ⇒ There will be an on-line membership service and volunteer booking service on the new web-site.
- ⇒ Heath Week: Mon 25th to Sun 31st July. Free events suitable for all ages, especially families with school age children. For more information see

[tbhpartnership.org.uk/heath-week](http://tbhpartnership.org.uk/heath-week) and [surreywildlifetrust.org/events](http://surreywildlifetrust.org/events).

- ⇒ HCPS Walks and Talks  
Insect Walks with Andrew Halstead: Wed 13th July and Tue 26th July.  
Fungus Foray with Dick Alder: Sun 23rd October
- ⇒ For further information visit the HCPS web-site [www.horsellcommon.org.uk](http://www.horsellcommon.org.uk)

## Volunteering

By Rupert Millican, HCPS Senior Ranger

2022 got off to a roaring start with our Tuesday volunteer group - at least 15 to 20 people have been attending each week despite the worst our notoriously unreliable British climate can throw at us! While still permitted to do so, we have continued with our relentless campaign cutting-back pine and birch scrub to preserve and enhance the rare open heath. The common is looking in decent shape, with a recent RSPB party already confirming promising numbers of Dartford Warbler and Stonechat. It will be interesting to see if the pockets of bare ground we have been cutting in the heather will benefit reptiles for basking, or even Nightjars for nesting. Either way, heather regeneration within these pockets will create a more diverse height and age structure of benefit to insects and invertebrates.



*Pocket of bare ground created deep within the heath on the triangle – possible basking or nesting site?*

Now the birds are singing to establish territories and attract partners, it is time to give them some space. We will shift our efforts towards other areas of land in need of attention – this has already started on the Bedser Trail, when our Tuesday group thinned-out a pocket of dense

woodland, creating a much more attractive area of dappled shade and open ground. The cut material generated from this and forthcoming work parties will be used by local forest school groups. We have bought some fantastic new tools called tree-poppers, which allow the volunteers to extract tree saplings roots-and-all, so they don't grow back – that sounds like a win-win situation! We will start to use these at every opportunity.

Corporate work parties have seriously boosted the amount of heathland maintenance work completed over Winter – we are extremely grateful to all the local companies who have visited to help out. These days are beneficial to all involved - we get even more essential work done, whilst they become more aware of the precious heaths we are so lucky to have on our doorstep, and the importance of protecting it. Volunteer Woking want to use a recent day for McDonalds Woking as a case study – it was the first time McDonalds have visited Horsell, and their local area manager is keen to establish an ongoing relationship with us.



*Recent McDonalds corporate work party on the triangle*

WWF visited twice – once in December, and again in January. Other local companies including Milestone Infrastructure and FE Fundinfo have enjoyed worthwhile and energizing days out of the office with us.

The Woodlark is back on grasslands already – it's reassuring to know the habitat still provides enough of the right conditions to attract it; they had 2 or more broods last year, so let's hope they have similar success in 2022!

### Conservation Working Parties

Volunteer with us every Tuesday morning

10 am—1pm.

For more information email:

[Rupert.Millican@horsellcommon.org.uk](mailto:Rupert.Millican@horsellcommon.org.uk)

## Profile of a Volunteer

By Colin Swallow

*Colin Swallow regularly volunteers on Tuesday mornings. He always works with great energy and enthusiasm. He has kindly written this piece about his experience of working on the Common—Editor.*

Having reached a certain age (OK no point in beating about the bush, 60) I had the chance to reduce my working hours to 15 hours a week and had some spare time which I felt could be usefully filled with some voluntary work while meeting a new group of people.

I've spent my life working in a Diagnostic Veterinary Laboratory and have always been interested in outdoor activities, in particular Orienteering but also including Hill walking, Mountain biking, Canoeing and Skiing alongside a casual interest in birdwatching and the countryside in general.

In addition to this I've always been a "hands on" practical type of person. As a result I started to look for opportunities for Practical Countryside Volunteer opportunities.



*Colin using a tree-popper to remove Silver Birch*

I found that Horsell Common Preservation Society ran working parties for 2-3 hours on Tuesday mornings. This is an area I use regularly, am very familiar with and is very convenient as I can (usually) cycle to wherever the working party is. The working parties are always on the common so there is a sense of focusing on a defined area.

I attended my first working party some while before Covid raised its head and was made to feel very welcome by everybody in the party and the Senior Ranger. The work



typically involves scrub clearance but can include fencing work, path maintenance on the Bedser trail and other tasks. After a safety talk, all the necessary tools such as standard and ratchet loppers and bow saws are provided, not to mention tree poppers. You'll need to volunteer to find out what these are!

Importantly the jobs undertaken are up to individual choice and ability, for example, from tackling relatively large trees to removing small saplings. It's the overall result and teamwork that counts.

Since becoming weekly, numbers attending if anything have increased with usually 15 to 20 people each week whatever the weather. Many attend almost every session but there is no pressure to do so, any contribution to a session is always welcome

So what do I get out of volunteering with Horsell Common Preservation Society:

- I've met a great set of really friendly enthusiastic people from a variety of backgrounds who I wouldn't have met otherwise
- Great satisfaction from what the group achieves each week to help improve the Common. It's really amazing what a group of around 15 to 20 people can achieve in just 2-3 hours.
- A great workout in the fresh air.
- A big increase in my knowledge of wildlife, especially on the Common, thanks to the regular volunteers who as well as volunteering have specialist wild life knowledge and keen to share it. For example I've been shown a cauliflower fungus, Dartford Warblers, Stonechats and an insight into the variety of insects on the Common from these experts
- A tea break frequently supplied with wonderful home made cake produced by the most important volunteer, Jan.

And what do they get from me :) ?

Well hopefully they consider I put in a decent amount of enthusiastic work when I'm there!

You can see from the above if you have a few hours free on Tuesdays and enjoy being out in the countryside, I would certainly recommend joining a Horsell Common working party.

*"The Tree Popper" . Colin is using the tree popper to uproot the silver birch. Using loppers to cut back the silver birch is only useful for a short time as the new shoots grow vigorously again. Uprooting gets the whole tree out, opening up the area to light and allowing the regeneration of heather. HCPS has bought several differently sized "tree-poppers" - Editor.*

## Sapling Clearing

By Thomas

*Thomas completed the "Volunteering" section of his bronze Duke of Edinburgh award by cutting back scrub pine growing on The Triangle. Heather regenerated here after the large Scots pine had been cut down. By pulling and cutting out new young shoots of Scots pine, this area of heather is allowed to thrive. HCPS welcomes volunteers of all ages—Editor.*

My family and I love to visit Horsell Common for a variety of reasons. To walk the dog, go for a run or to go for a bike ride.

We go there nearly every day, so when it came to my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh, I knew that I would want to do my volunteering somewhere I loved as much as Horsell Common.

I was very pleased to hear that I would be clearing saplings to help protect the heather that nests a rare species of birds to the common. I felt that I was really helping. I also realised how much effort it is to actually maintain such a big space.

It took me 12 hours to clear my small patch of land. I can't imagine what it is like clearing the entire common. But I am still very pleased to have done my part for the Common.



# Lowland Heath and Horsell Common

By Caroline Hughes

## What's in a name?

Have you ever wondered why it is called “Horsell Common” and not, for instance “Horsell Woods”? We have to go back in history! Over 5,000 years ago, woodland was cleared for villages, pasture and agriculture. Land with sandy, acidic soil was seen to have little value for growing crops but it was important for the rural economy as poorer people were allowed to graze their livestock for hundreds of years on these areas which were “common” to all. The heather, which thrived on this acidic soil, was used for animal bedding and fuel. Constant grazing ensured that the land did not revert to woodland. This area of Surrey was part of Windsor Great Park, where royalty would hunt, until the land passed to the Earl of Onslow. Unlike the fate of many commons, Horsell Common was safeguarded from Enclosure by an Act of Parliament in 1805, by the Earl of Onslow, allowing commoners to continue grazing their livestock.



P1. Nightjar

## Geology

These open heathland areas where cattle grazed overlie the “Bagshot Sands” where sand and gravel sediments give rise to sandy or peaty acidic soils, supporting dry heath vegetation on well drained slopes or wet heath on low-lying shallow slopes and bogs in valleys.

Parts of Southeast England have the perfect geology and climate for a very special wildlife habitat, called “Lowland Heath”. History and the rural economy ensured that the lowland heath of Horsell Common survives to this day.

## What is Lowland Heath?

Lowland heath, occurring below 300 metres, is characterised by sandy acidic soils where shrubby plants such as heather and gorse grow. Many highly specialised species thrive in this varied habitat with warm, exposed areas of sand providing a habitat for reptiles, ground nesting solitary wasps and bees whilst gorse and heather provide an ideal habitat for insects, spiders and birds. However, these areas of poor fertility were considered by some as a wasteland. As the population grew post industrialisation, these areas were lost to growing urbanisation in the Southeast of England. Lowland heath is now rarer than rain forest and there remains barely 20% of the Thames Basin Heaths and these have become fragmented into separate blocks. In addition, once the practice of grazing stopped, the open heathland soon reverted to secondary woodland with scrub, Scots pine and silver birch. As light levels and the overall woodland temperature dropped below the dense canopy of trees, the heathers disappeared, and the wildlife supported by this fragile habitat declined sharply. Lowland heath risked disappearing altogether and all the specialist flora and fauna too.



P2. Dartford warbler

## Horsell Common becomes an SSSI and SPA

As threats to the environment and wildlife in general became an ever-growing concern throughout the world, the fragile and special nature of lowland heath was also finally recognised! In the 1980's, large areas of Horsell Common were designated as a biological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which gives legal protection to the most important geological and wildlife sites. In 2005, the open heathland became part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protected Area (SPA), under the terms of the



European Birds Directive. The Common is of European importance for supporting breeding populations of three protected species: the nightjar, the Dartford warbler and the woodlark.



P3. Woodlark

### Restoration and Regeneration

“It looks wild, but lowland heath is probably the most intensively managed habitat in the country- certainly in Surrey “(Ben Habgood, Surrey Wildlife Trust). For over 100 years, Horsell Common Preservation Society (HCPS) has been working to ensure the restoration and preservation of Horsell Common. The key is to balance the different needs of all the species that live on the heath. Recent surveys show that the birds for which lowland heath is their primary habitat, are breeding in good numbers. The Common is one of the richest areas in Surrey for solitary bees, wasps, ants and spiders with over 180 species having been recorded. There are now increased areas of regenerated heather and gorse, which provide vital shelter, nesting areas, nectar and pollen, and where birds can feed on insects and spiders and also breed.

### How is this regeneration being achieved?

- Autumn and winter felling of Scots pine and silver birch and removal of scrub. Removing the dense woodland allows more light and warmth into the now open spaces which allows the heather to regrow. Removing scrub stops it outcompeting the heather.



- Conservation mowing and removing the top layer of nutrient rich earth, enables dormant heather seed to germinate and grow.



- Cutting back areas of old heather so there are mixed ages of heather.
- Grazing with cattle to keep down purple moor grass and other plants which outcompete heather.



- Open sunny banks for ground-nesting solitary wasps and bees.
- By providing alternative open air recreation areas to relieve the pressure of too great a footfall on the fragile heathland habitat; a “SANG”

### What is a “SANG”?

A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace is a newly-created outdoor recreational space designed to take pressure off a Special Protected Area. Mimbridge Meadows and the Bourne Fields can easily be reached from the large, free car park at Heather Farm. With their surfaced footpaths, these meadows are fantastic for all the family and for dog walking. There are no heathland ground nesting birds in these meadows, so dogs can run around. There is another SANG on Woodham Common, which incorporates the easy access Bedser Trail, starting from the car park on Monument Road.



**We the public can do “our bit” to protect rare ground nesting birds on the heath.**

Heather looks gorgeous when in flower in late summer, but the heath can be rather drab and brown in spring and early summer. What might be drab to us, is heaven to



ground nesting birds. When walking in the Grasslands area or near the Sandpit there are vast swathes of heather, very short on Grasslands and shrubby on the Triangle and near the Sandpit. By staying on the paths and not disturbing the vegetation, we reduce the risk of damaging and destroying the nests, eggs and young birds of rare ground nesting birds. People, dogs and horses should all stay on the paths.



Keep your dog on a lead if necessary.

Hot, dry weather increases the risk of fire on the Common. Please take care; no barbeques or discarded cigarettes.

Help HCPS to continue with the restoration and preservation of this fragile and rare habitat. HCPS which owns the Common, has a policy of management to preserve a balanced woodland and heathland ecology whilst at the same time providing open access to the public, in keeping with all “commons”.



*P4. Bell heather*



*P5. Cross leaved heath*



*P6. Ling heather*



*P7. Stonechat*



*P8. Silver-studded blue*



## Key to Lowland Heath Photos

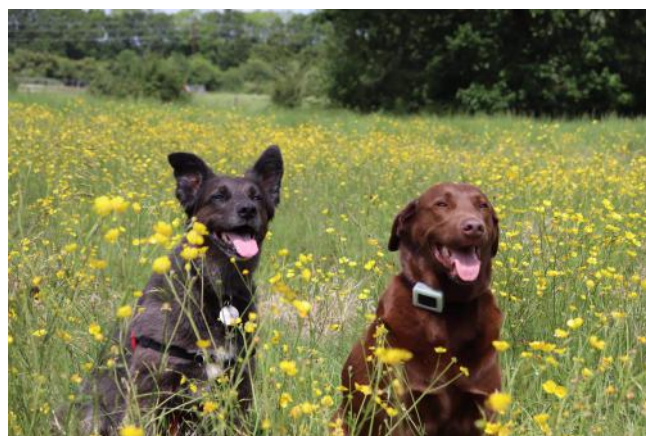
Reference	Details	Photographer
<a href="#">P1. Nightjar</a>	European nightjar arrives early May from Africa and nests in a simple scrape on the ground. They are nocturnal and fly with their gape wide open to catch insects. Their churring sound and wing clap can be heard from dusk.	Mark Leitch
<a href="#">P2. Dartford warbler</a>	Often seen perching on gorse and once called the “furze wren”. It feeds on invertebrates and nests low down in gorse or in heather.	Jon Mullin
<a href="#">P3. Woodlark</a>	A ground nesting bird which prefers very short heather.	Mark Leitch
<a href="#">P4. Bell heather</a>	The deep magenta coloured flowers at the top of the stem make this a most striking species.	Caroline
<a href="#">P5. Cross leaved heath</a>	The earliest flowering heather, often found in boggy areas, with clusters of pink flowers at the top of the stem.	Caroline
<a href="#">P6. Ling heather</a>	Seen in abundance on the Common. Flowers August and September with soft mauve flowers along the stem.	Caroline
<a href="#">P7. Stonechat</a>	Often seen amongst the gorse, along with the Dartford warbler, The call sounds like stones being clashed together, Another ground nesting bird.	Margo Scott
<a href="#">P8. Silver-studded blue</a>	This butterfly lays its eggs in ants’ nests in areas of short cropped heather and sand. It has a symbiotic relationship with ants.	Michael Jones

## News for Dog Walkers

By Sarah Bunce, Thames Basin Heaths Partnership

Are you a dog owner? Would you like to hear about interesting dog-friendly walks? Our free **‘Greenspace on your doorstep’** directory is a guide to nearly 80 circular walks ideal for dog walking. Many of the walks are handy for Horsell, and all have free parking, many with dedicated car parks. Most, if not all, have poo bins and many have surfaced paths. My top recommendations for Horsell are Heather Farm, signed off the A3046 Chobham Road, Woodham Common on Monument Road and Brookwood Country Park on Redding Way, Knaphill.

I personally visit every walk as often as I can and many have become firm favourites, with interesting history, attractive viewpoints and wonderful wildlife. They’re all different, with meadows, riverside walks, woodlands and



parklands. I keep the [online directory](#) up to date with honest appraisals, and share news through Thames Basin Heaths Partnership’s social media and the Heathland Hounds Facebook group. The group’s completely free and you’ll hear all the latest news about safe places to walk, including member reviews of the **‘Greenspace on your doorstep’** walks. You can even join regular Wednesday Walkies to explore them in company.

It's a wonderfully active community and an invaluable source of local information for dog walkers.

All the **'Greenspace on your doorstep'** walks have been created by local councils and housing developers. In the jargon, they're called SANGs, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces. They've been created as part of a conservation strategy to protect the important wildlife of local heaths. By enjoying the SANGs with your dog, you're also helping to protect local heaths and the special birds that nest on the ground there.

With nearly 80 walks to choose from, I hope you find some new favourites.

### **Sarah Bunce**

Find **'Greenspace on your doorstep'** at:

[www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/greenspace/](http://www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/greenspace/)



Find Heathland Hounds at:

[www.facebook.com/groups/HeathlandHounds](https://www.facebook.com/groups/HeathlandHounds)

## **A Celebration of Spring**

By Michael Jones, Education and Engagement Officer,  
Thames Basin Heaths Partnership

### **Spring on the Heath**

Spring is my favourite time of year (until we get to summer, at least!)

I love the lengthening hours of daylight, fresh green shoots, blossom and bumblebees emerging from their winter slumber. I love hearing bursts of birdsong from trees, hedgerows and scrub. I love the sense of anticipation of when I might catch a glimpse of my first butterfly of the year as the temperature warms, tempting them out of the safety of their overwintering hideaways. I love checking every single open flower head in the hope of spotting a hoverfly or a pioneering solitary bee fuelling up with high-calorie nectar. I love that memories of the cold, seemingly lifeless months of winter slip away quickly.

### **Brilliant birdsong**

On the heath, I look forward to the beautiful song of the Woodlark – one of our fab ground-nesting birds – a sign

that spring has most definitely arrived. Dartford Warblers start to become more active and I always try to re-learn their contact calls before the similar-sounding Common Whitethroats arrive back from their migratory adventures in Africa to confuse me. I'm sure they don't just come back to confuse me, that would be an odd survival strategy!

The arrival of spring also means it's not too long before I can get out on the heath at dusk and take part in my favourite nature spectacle – Nightjar watching! There is something fabulously magical about a Nightjar encounter. The combination of being out on the heath as darkness falls, the unworldly churring and witnessing these amazing birds flapping over my head like a butterfly-bat hybrid is a simply perfect nature experience. I'll be running lots of Nightjar walks at Horsell Common over the summer, so keep an eye out for further information.

### **Schools and the heath!**

I am grateful to be able to spend a lot of my time sharing our magical heathlands with local school groups. Introducing them to its wonderful plants and animals and hopefully inspiring them to connect with nature. They can become heathland ambassadors by spreading the word about how we can all look after this rare landscape that we are so lucky to have on our doorsteps.

Feedback from sessions has been really positive and one Year 1 child even exclaimed that they had 'the best time ever' after a seasonal walk. I think it helped that there were lots of puddles to jump in, but we also discovered lots of fascinating fungi and got to smell some coconuttty gorse flowers! These visits have really inspired children to connect with their local wildlife and led on to some amazing follow-up work in the classroom. This is brilliant to see.

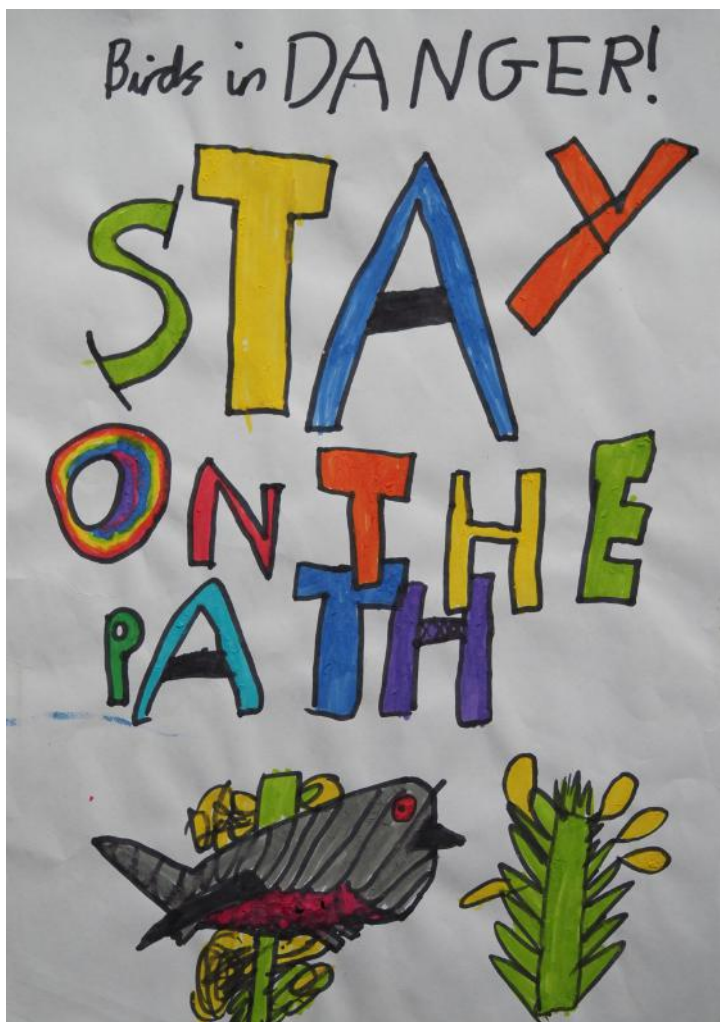
If you are a local teacher and would like to connect your children with their local wildlife, then please get in touch.



We run engaging wildlife sessions throughout the year in the classroom and on Horsell Common. Children learn about heathland and its amazing plants and animals and sessions can be tailored to meet learning objectives.

To find out more information, visit [www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/schools/](http://www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/schools/) or email [tbhschools@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:tbhschools@naturalengland.org.uk) or by following social media accounts.





*This amazing poster showing a Dartford warbler perched on gorse was made by a pupil of Horsell Junior School. Michael Jones told pupils about the rare ground nesting birds and the dangers they face from people and animals.*

## Horsell Common and Forest School

By Roman Kozlowski

Over the course of my life, I have had the amazing fortune to be involved in the outdoors. Allowing me to harmonise with nature and share this wilderness and adventure with all those I meet.

Born in London 1966, my family soon moved to the local area. A childhood of freedom and outdoors in all seasons. Many of you will recognise the shout out “Be home for Tea” as you disappeared with friends to go and play in the fields, woodlands, streams, and ponds. Rolling forward to the last decade I have been on an incredible journey delivering Forest School to children and adults.

More than 50 years into my life journey I realise that Nature, Woodlands, and Forests bring me the greatest joy. The privilege of sharing my experience and love of the outdoors has provided opportunities to work with Horsell



Preservation Society to whom I am extremely grateful and would like to acknowledge the challenging work and dedication they do to maintain and support our precious eco-systems and habitats, some of which are unique and very specialised.

I am often asked “What is Forest School?” a very good question. *Playing in the woods?*



Well, yes it is playing in the woods, which is recognised as a very important part of what we do including play theory, and so much more. There are several principles that reflect Forest School practice and can easily be accessed with a search on the internet.

My personal view as a Forest School practitioner and Trainer is that this unique ethos is based on raising self-esteem and learning “Learning how to Learn”. When we become self-confident, self-aware and emotionally aware of others we become self-actuating, and open to learning.



That is not to say a Forest School Leader is not just good at playing ! On the contrary, the training is based on research, outdoor teaching and facilitation theory, Behaviour/emotional theory and management, learning methods and how to recognise them, linking to them and personalising programmes, including cooking, using woodland tools for the best outcomes for individuals or

whole groups, and so much more.

Nature is an ever-present teacher, changing, forgiving, invigorating, and stimulating offering endless opportunities to build life skills. Highly skilled and educated Forest School Leaders provide hands-on learning experiences with an element of managed risk.

All this fun and learning has the bonus of realising the importance of biodiversity, the world about us and the ability to link to the national curriculum as well.



This provides a whole positive experience and builds a learning bridge from outdoors back into the classroom and beyond .... playing, exploring and understanding the environment and eco-systems

Children especially take ownership of the Woodland or Forest, not in a monetary sense, rather a caretaker and love to share their Forest School adventures with family and friends.



Adults love Forest School too, having had the joy to train many adults and work with volunteers to whom I am most grateful, and love observe and listen to their nature connection experiences. It is wonderful to see their Forest School journeys begin.



It is really important now more than ever to realise that we are a part of nature, and reliant on nature for all our

needs. [\*1]Sir David Attenborough reminds us that our planet wildness has been in decline in his lifetime with records from 1937 (66% remaining wilderness) to 2020 (35% remaining wilderness).

We are the most intelligent unique living creatures to have the ability to imagine a future in harmony with nature[\*1]. As I say to my students, one step at a time, perhaps our local garden of Eden is right on our doorstep.

Thank you to Horsell Common Preservation Society for a marvellous opportunity to learn!

Email : [twforestschool@gmail.com](mailto:twforestschool@gmail.com)  
[www.outdoorforestschoolltraining.com](http://www.outdoorforestschoolltraining.com)

## Dates for your diary

### TBHP Walks with Michael Jones

Date	Event
Fri 29th April	Heathland for beginners
Fri 20th May	Discovering nature with your phone
Tue 14th June	Nightjars of Horsell Common
Wed 15th June	Nightjars of Horsell Common
Mon 25—31 July	Heath Week

For further information visit [www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/thames-basin-heaths-partnership-43843802203](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/thames-basin-heaths-partnership-43843802203).

### HCPS Walks and Talks

Date	Event
Wed 13th July	Insect walk with Andrew Halstead
Tue 26th July	Zoom talk “Insects”, by Andrew Halstead
Wed 27th July	Insect walk with Andrew Halstead
Thu 11th Aug	Come and meet the cattle with Rupert Millican
Sun 23rd October	Fungus Foray with Dick Alder

For further information visit [horsellcommon.org.uk](http://horsellcommon.org.uk)