



The Common

The newsletter from the Horsell Common Preservation Society

Volume 27

Autumn 2025



As the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is upon us, it's good to think back to days on the Common when the bees hummed amongst the heathers collecting nectar and the scent of pine resin and heather filled the air. It will be time to look back over the year at the HCPS AGM, Wednesday 15th October, 7 for 7.30 pm. The AGM will be held in Goldwater Lodge. We have been lucky to avoid any big fires on the Common during an extended period of dry, hot weather but the threat is always there. Our guest speaker, Marli Holland, will tell us about Wild Fire Preparedness. We hope that you can join us, enjoy a cuppa and hear about the year's work.

It is a time to celebrate the tenth anniversary of some of the grandest projects undertaken by Horsell Common Preservation Society. This issue takes a look back at the early days of Heather Farm, the Wetlands and the Peace Garden.

Caroline Hughes (Editor)

Out and about

Estate Manager's Report

Resilience in the roots: W heatsheaf Common woodland survives through drought

Despite the scorching summer of 2025, which saw record-breaking temperatures and prolonged dry spells across Surrey, the young mixed native woodland at W heatsheaf Common has shown remarkable resilience. Planted just 2–3 years ago with whips (saplings no taller than a walking stick) this young and developing woodland is a testament to the tenacity of native species.

Woodland Composition and Survival

The woodland comprises a tapestry of native trees: Hazel, Black Alder, Wild Service Tree, Field Maple, Rowan and Guelder Rose. Each species was selected for its ecological as well as amenity value.

Despite the drought, survival rates among the saplings have been impressively high. Black Alder and Field Maple, in particular, have flourished thanks to their deep root systems and tolerance for variable soil moisture. Hazel and *Viburnum opulus*, while more sensitive to dry conditions, have shown strong regrowth after early leaf drop—a natural drought response. The Wild Service Tree and Rowan, often slow growing in their youth, have surprised many by maintaining healthy foliage, some Rowans even producing a modest crop of berries.

Black Alder: The Artist's Tree

Black Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) has long been valued for its versatility. Historically, its wood was used to make water pipes due to its resistance to decay when submerged. In the 18th and 19th centuries, alder charcoal was prized by artists for its fine grain and deep black tone—ideal for sketching and etching. The same charcoal was also a key ingredient in the manufacture of gunpowder, giving Black Alder a role in both creativity and conflict.

In rural communities, alder wood was used for clog soles, offering a lightweight yet durable material for everyday footwear. Its association with water and wetlands made it a symbol of protection and purification in folklore, often



Black Alder

planted near wells and springs to guard against malevolent spirits.

Wild Service Tree: Nature's Apothecary

The Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is a rare gem in British woodlands. Its berries, known as "chequers," were once fermented to make a mildly alcoholic drink believed to aid digestion. The tree's Latin name, *torminalis*, hints at its medicinal past—derived from *tormina*, meaning colic or stomach pain. Herbalists used decoctions of its bark and fruit to treat fevers, diarrhoea, and other ailments.

Folklore surrounding the Wild Service Tree is rich and varied. In some traditions, it was considered a guardian tree, planted near homes to ward off illness and misfortune. Its berries were also thought to bring luck when carried in a pouch or woven into harvest wreaths.

Many pubs bear the name "Chequers", as does the Prime Minister's country retreat!

Field Maple, Hazel, Rowan and Viburnum: Threads of Tradition

Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) is Britain's only native maple and has long been associated with balance and modesty in folklore. Its wood, fine-grained and pale, was used for musical instruments and intricate carvings. In mythology, it was believed to bring harmony and was often planted near homes to promote peace.

Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) is steeped in Celtic lore. Revered as a tree of wisdom, it was said that hazelnuts contained all the knowledge of the world. Druids considered it

sacred, and hazel rods were used for divination and dowsing. Today, its ecological value is equally revered—providing food for dormice and nesting sites for birds.

For centuries, flexible Hazel whips were an important building material, making a woven lattice to create fencing, and they formed the basic structure for wattle and daub walls for houses.

Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), often called the “Witch Tree,” is steeped in protective folklore. Its bright red berries were believed to ward off evil, and its five-pointed star-shaped berry base resembled a protective pentagram. In Celtic and Norse traditions, Rowan was planted near homes and barns to guard against enchantment. Sprigs were woven into crosses and hung over doorways, and its wood was used for rune carving and ritual tools. The tree was also associated with inspiration. Bards believed it could spark poetic insight.

Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*), is known for its striking red berries and lace-like white flowers. In folklore, it symbolised love and protection. In Slavic traditions, it was woven into bridal wreaths and sung about in folk songs. Its berries, though mildly toxic raw, were used in traditional remedies for coughs and colds when properly prepared.

Wildlife Benefits: A Living Habitat

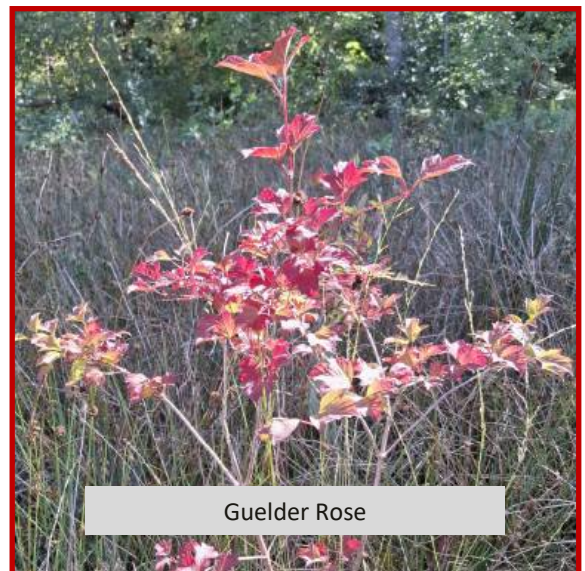
Each tree species plays a unique role in supporting biodiversity:

- **Hazel:** A keystone species for woodland wildlife. Its nuts are a vital food source for dormice, wood mice, and jays. Hazel leaves support caterpillars of several moth species, including the large emerald and nut-tree tussock. Its dense structure provides nesting sites for birds like robins and wrens.



Hazel

- **Black Alder:** Thrives in damp soils and supports nitrogen-fixing bacteria, enriching the soil for other plants. Its catkins feed early pollinators, while its leaves host the larvae of alder moths. The tree’s association with wet areas makes it valuable for amphibians like frogs and newts, which breed in nearby ponds and ditches.
- **Wild Service Tree:** Though rare, it’s a magnet for wildlife. Its flowers attract pollinators such as bees and hoverflies, while its berries feed birds such as thrushes and blackbirds. The tree’s rough bark offers shelter for insects and roosting bats.
- **Field Maple:** A powerhouse for invertebrates. It supports aphids, which in turn attract ladybirds, hoverflies, and small birds. Moth species such as the mocha and maple pug feed on its leaves. Its compact canopy provides cover for nesting birds and small mammals.
- **Guelder Rose:** A favourite among pollinators, especially hoverflies. Its bright red berries are a winter lifeline for birds like bullfinches and waxwings. The shrub’s dense growth offers safe nesting spots and protection from predators.



Guelder Rose

- **Rowan:** Known for its vivid red berries, Rowan is a vital autumn food source for birds such as mistle thrushes, blackbirds, and waxwings. Its flowers attract bees and other pollinators, while its berries support overwintering wildlife. Insects such as sawflies and moths feed on its foliage, and its modest size makes it ideal for nesting birds in more open woodland edges.

Senior Ranger's Report

Volunteering

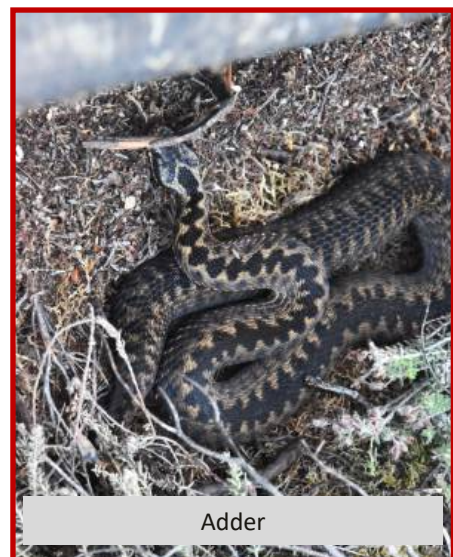
Our industrious Tuesday volunteers have completed the following tasks over the Spring and Summer:

- Removing a proportion of holly understorey from our woodlands to improve public access.
- Pruning, weeding, and mulching our orchard fruit trees to maintain general tree health and abundant fruit production.
- Removing bracken from our woodland edges where it threatens to invade the rare and precious lowland heath.
- Maintaining the ecological balance of our wetlands by removing a percentage of willow.

... and recently back out on the open heath again, to resume their perennial Silver Birch and Scots Pine culling campaign!

Reptiles

Adders, grass snakes and slow worms have been recorded on our monthly reptile surveys this Summer, indicating that the habitat is in good condition for the reptiles. Common lizards have been seen along the edges of bare ground scrapes we created in the model airplane field area and towards Antonys. This means we have four out of the six native UK reptile species present on our land!



Adder



Rowan

Heather Farm

As part of ongoing heathland conservation efforts around Horsell Common, pine trees are regularly cleared to preserve the open character of the habitat and encourage native heathland species to thrive. Rather than letting this material go to waste, the felled pine is chipped on-site and used as biomass fuel for the eco-friendly boiler at Heather Farm. This sustainable approach not only reduces carbon emissions but also gives purpose to the by-products of habitat restoration—turning conservation into clean energy.

We have recently chipped our supply of biomass for this winter, and there is a fantastic aroma of pine wafting around the yard. Max is also very pleased as he has his huge pile of woodchip back to run up and down!



Jeremy Dalton

Butterflies

We now have two butterfly transects set-up on Horsell Common, one on Grasslands, and the second on the main Common towards Antonys. I would like to thank our butterfly surveyors Simon Lumsden, Andy Brook, and

Elizabeth Wild, for doing a fantastic job surveying both transects every week from April through to end of September. They have started compiling a comprehensive data set, which can be compared year-to-year, and used to inform our habitat management decisions.

Twenty-six species of butterflies were recorded this year, and those they saw for the first time included Painted Lady, Brown Argus, Common Blue, and Purple Hairstreak. It's worth mentioning that 2025 has generally been a record-breaking year for butterflies in Surrey, and this is reflected in the numbers recorded on our transects. With one week still to go, our surveyors have already recorded 2110 individuals across both transects.



We have mowed-out a proportion of brambles and scrub from the Orchid Field next to Grasslands, and the results have been very positive for butterflies. Our surveyors attribute the presence of Brown Argus and Common Blue to this regime; removing some of the brambles allows the butterflies to access one of their main food plants, Birds-foot Trefoil, previously hidden from them under a bed of scrub. Silver-Studded Blue and Grayling numbers are also good, with both species observed in multiple locations across the Common this year.

Partner Projects

The Men's Sheds Charity has finished making a total of 11 nest boxes for barn owls, kestrels, little owls and tawny owls. Our tree surgery contractor will install them in suitable locations across the Common to provide more nesting opportunities for our local birds. Men's Sheds is a charity promoting mental wellbeing in men, by enabling them to engage with and contribute to their local

community. In the case of our nest box project, it's a double win as both men and wildlife benefit!



Surrey Choices, an organisation enabling autistic and neurodivergent people to live active lives in their local community, have already built a fantastic dead hedge for us at Heather Farm. It protects the River Bourne's bank from erosion, and provides a multitude of wildlife essential cover and foraging opportunities.



They have recently assembled over 50 woodland bird and swift nest boxes for us. We have already installed the swift nest boxes along the eaves of our shed in Rae's Field, and will put the remaining boxes up in our woodlands on Pyrford Common.

Rupert Millican

Check Horsell Common Preservation Society website <https://horsellcommon.org.uk>, for full information on the flora and fauna. You can also download back copies of "The Common".

Common Knowledge

A new insect on the Common

The Hieroglyph pine sawfly, *Acantholyda hieroglyphica*, is a European species that was discovered in Britain for the first time by Andrew Green when a single female was seen at Apsley Guise, Bedfordshire on 17th June 2024. A few weeks later larvae were found there feeding on the foliage of small Scots pine trees.

On 9th July 2025, a small Scots pine tree with larval webbing was found on Wheatsheaf Common near the recently created ponds. On 29th July another small pine tree with webbing was found in the Sand Pit on Horsell Common. In both cases, no larvae were seen, having presumably completed their feeding and having gone into the soil to overwinter before becoming adults in June next year. The larvae live within silk tubes that are covered with the larvae's ginger brown excrement pellets. This makes it easy to spot infested pine trees.



Hieroglyph pine sawfly
Acantholyda hieroglyphica

Hieroglyph pine sawfly seems to have a preference for laying its eggs on small pine trees, 2-5 years old, that are growing in sparsely vegetated places. Volunteers spend a lot of time removing pine trees to prevent them turning the open areas of the Common into a dark pine forest. Something that checks the growth of young pine trees can be seen as a positive addition to the Common's insect fauna.

Andrew Halstead

Heathland Preservation; a Pan- European priority

Creating the right environment for heather to flourish and the wildlife that depends on it, is a major part of the work on Horsell Common. We are not alone. In February, there was an international conference titled "A Place for Heathlands?" held in Denmark with specialists from across Europe exploring the past 5,000 years of human-nature coexistence across northern Europe.

Heathlands across the continent are threatened after 150 years of agriculture -driven landscape change. This is despite a rich history dating back to neolithic times when heathlands had a key role in supporting prehistoric communities, functioning as winter pasture and a source of fuel and building materials. There is a complex history of human-heathland co-existence, and these landscapes only exist with human intervention. The conference explored all aspects of heathlands, starting with neolithic man building barrows and ending with modern conservation practice. The audience was a mix of ecologists, archaeologists, paleo ecologists, artists and even a few shepherds. And the overall lesson was that "we (in this case Surrey Wildlife Trust) are not alone in our ambitions for nature recovery and protecting the remaining lowland heath in our county. We will ensure that there is always a place for heathlands in Surrey".

How reassuring. Horsell Common Preservation Society, its Estate Manager, Senior Ranger, Trustees and Volunteers are all working to preserve this fragile habitat, the rare species it supports and the connection with our prehistoric ancestors.

Excerpts from "A Pan European priority" by Ben Siggery, SWT's Research and Monitoring Manager and Director of Research and Monitoring, Mike Waite.

Restoring Horsell Common's Heathland for Nature and for the Woodlark and Silver-studded blue butterfly

About ten years ago, a part of Horsell Common known as *Grasslands* had become choked with gorse and scrub. To bring the heath back to life, we carried out a technique called scraping, carefully removing the overgrowth and a thin layer of soil. This gave the hidden seed bank beneath a chance to germinate and create a richer, more diverse carpet of heathland plants.

The results have been encouraging, but in some spots, gorse is once again trying to take over. Left unchecked, it

quickly becomes tall and woody, reducing biodiversity, increasing fire risk, and making the site harder to manage in the future. That's why we're now carrying out regular cutting to keep gorse under control and maintain a healthy balance of vegetation.

One of the most exciting visitors to this area is the woodlark, a rare ground-nesting bird that loves recently cleared heath. After the first scrape, woodlarks were spotted nesting here, a sure sign we were on the right track! But as the vegetation thickened over time, the site became less suitable for them. These conditions also provide the right habitat for the Silver-studded blue butterfly and black ants. These two species have a mutualistic symbiotic relationship. The black ants act as nursemaids to the silver-studded blue larvae and at the same time "farm" them for their sugars. The ants even allow the larvae to pupate in the corridors of the ant nest and accompany the adults when they emerge.

This month, we completed another round of cutting, with all the arisings baled and removed. Our hope? That these open spaces will once again support these species and tempt woodlarks back to nest in 2026, helping this wonderful species thrive on Horsell Common for years to come.



Some things to celebrate 10 years on

Heather Farm, the "Go to" place for a walk, meet friends and coffee, take the dog, posh wash, gym. It is hard to imagine life without this great place to stretch our legs, enjoy the wide skies over the meadows and relax. But it's only been open to us all since 2015. Paul Rimmer, Estate Manager during a period of great change, thinks back to the early days when this all came about:

"I would like to celebrate the 10th anniversary for what has become a truly amazing success story and

one rarely achieved in the poorly financed world of Nature Conservation and Public Open Space. My name is Paul Rimmer, and in the 13 years from 2008 to 2021 I proudly held the position of Estate Manager for HCPS, having previously served as a trustee of the charity since 1990.

For me, the "Heather Farm Story" actually started way back in 2009, when I, together with a friend of mine from the Surrey Wildlife Trust, climbed over the main gate of the former mushroom farm to discover 180,000 square feet of huge rusting buildings set on 14 acres of concrete that had been abandoned some 10 years previously. A site large enough to accommodate 15 football pitches. But we had a different vision and after several years work started on the creation of a new wetland centre.



The 17-acre site was transformed from an industrial eyesore into a haven for aquatic wildlife. HCPS commissioned the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust from Slimbridge in Gloucestershire to design the exciting new scheme, and engaged landscape experts, Land & Water Ltd as the main contractor.

Throughout the summer, volunteers from Horsell helped to plant the water margins with over 15,000 aquatic species, such as Reed, Marsh Marigold and Water Plantain. It would take a few years for the site to fully develop, but early signs were very encouraging, and wetland birds such as Teal and Green Sandpiper were soon recorded. Today, reed warbler, blackcap, garden warbler, summer migrant visitors, reed bunting, grey heron, coot, moorhen, Canada goose, Egyptian goose, are just some of the 20 or so species which are regularly in the Wetlands area. The cost of the wetland scheme to HCPS was approximately £300,000 which had to be taken from HCPS charitable reserves, but we considered this to be money well spent in providing the residents of

Horsell with a fabulous natural place to explore and enjoy. In these times of urban expansion, we felt it was quite exciting to return an industrial site to nature.

The next phase of the project at Heather Farm was to renovate a retained warehouse building as a headquarters for HCPS. My lasting memories of those early days began with the completion of the 30 seater cafe and a car park that boasted just 35 spaces. We firmly believed in the project, but doubts still lingered in the backs of our minds as to who on earth would come here? Would the vast number of dog walkers who use the Common on a daily basis change their routine and would enough visitors support the cafe to make it viable?



We needn't have worried, by the end of January visitors were streaming in. Within a few weeks the word had got out and the car park was rammed from dawn until dusk. Very soon we were looking at ways to extend the car park. A task that we revisited a few years later.

One particular element of the Heather Farm Story that still gives me immense satisfaction was the installation of the biomass boiler which supplies the heating for the main building. Whilst costly to install, the boiler, which burns woodchip from the HCPS estate, saves on expensive fossil fuels and is arguably a near carbon neutral heat source.

Another project that gave great pleasure was to convert the portacabin, which had been used as a welfare unit for the builders, into a modern and serviceable office for the Thames Basin Heaths Partnership. The building was donated to HCPS by WBC after being condemned by the Council as being unfit for staff use. Having arranged the transportation from its storage location in Swansea,

we set about refurbishing the building and kitting it out with furniture, all of which was donated by local companies. The building still provides a substantial income for the Society and has paid for its renovation many times over.

Another project that gave immense satisfaction was the installation of the three oak porticos. The builder had allowed for the doors to have small upvc porches but we had a substantial amount of oak from the Common, so we hired a mobile sawmill and some talented craftsmen who produced the porticos you see today!

I retired in 2021 and moved to Devon, which I love, but I still enjoy the occasional visit to Heather Farm and Horsell Common and to meet up with the dedicated team who continue to manage this wonderful part of Surrey.



And today? Work continues to improve Heather Farm to meet the growing demand with extra parking spaces, more outdoor seating for the café and sheltered seating, a beautiful "barn" extension to the café overlooking the Wetlands lake, more board walks for wet winters and improved raised paths for visitors walking through Mimbridge and Bourne meadows, helping to reduce the footfall on fragile heathland, and keeping its rare ground nesting birds better protected."

Paul Rimmer

Peace Garden

2015 also marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Peace Garden. Its history goes back to 1915, when the War Office felt the need to respond to German propaganda that suggested that Muslim soldiers were not being buried in a respectful manner concordant with their religion. It was decided to build the burial ground in Woking because at that time it was home to the only

purpose-built mosque in Britain. Over one million troops from India including what is now Pakistan, fought for Britain during World War 1. The burial ground was completed in 1917 and there were 19 burials and a further 8 during the Second World War. In 1968, due to vandalism, all burials were removed to Brookwood cemetery, and the ground was deconsecrated.



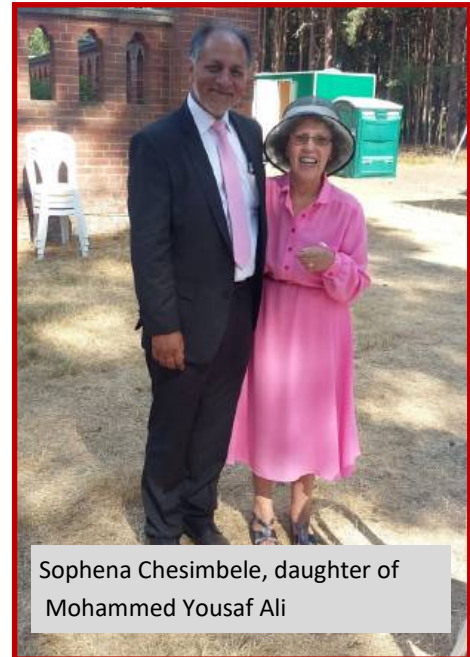
Gradually, the site fell into greater disrepair with pine trees and silver birch growing all around and inside the walls, which were crumbling. This was land belonging to HCPS and Trustees and Woking Borough Council started to work together to find a way to restore this important site and make it once more a worthy memorial to those service men who gave their lives for Britain. Dr. Zafar Iqbal an officer for Woking Borough Council was the project manager and he and Elizabeth Cuttle, an HCPS Trustee, worked together in close collaboration. They were almost giving up hope of funding but then in 2012, they were delighted to hear that English Heritage would provide 80% of the funds needed for the restoration work. WBC provided the remaining 20%. It was a joyous moment for them to see the golden finial gently lowered into place and the structure was complete once more.

The second phase of work and finding more funding, started with HCPS and WBC working together and consulting the public, to create what we now call the Peace Garden with its Islamic inspired symmetrical design and water feature. All the names of the servicemen were carved on a memorial stone with granite from India and Portland stone from England. There was careful attention to detail with the planting reflecting local heathland plants and 27 Himalayan silver birch trees, one for each soldier. In November 2015, the garden was officially opened by the Duke of Wessex with members of WBC, HCPS and Muslim and interfaith leaders.

Zafar Iqbal remembers some of the most satisfying moments. "One of the most satisfying things was to find

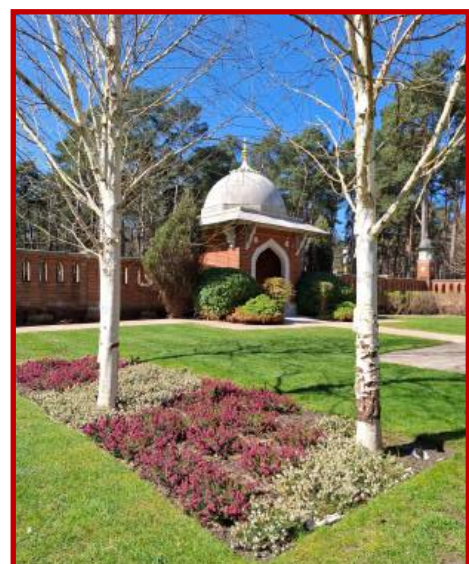
descendants of those who were buried on the site. This was no easy task as the records of those soldiers are no longer in this country as they were handed over to India and Pakistan and most of them were lost.

So, you can imagine my elation when I managed somehow to find descendants of two of the soldiers buried here, one from what is now Bangladesh and one from Northern Pakistan. One of the relatives was actually able to visit at the opening ceremony."



Sophena Chesimbele, daughter of Mohammed Yousaf Ali

HCPS is committed to maintaining the whole site including the water feature and is tackling the problems encountered over the years. Many plants have been replaced after extreme drought or cold killed several species. If you look carefully at the heathers, you will see that they are planted diagonally, lined up with two prayer stones facing east towards Mecca in accordance with tradition.



Today, the Peace Garden is held in esteem not only by the Muslim community but also in the wider community. The peace of the garden is valued by all visitors whether to sit quietly, reflect or admire the simple beauty. Throughout the year, it is used for both official events of commemoration and for private events as well as being a significant site for the interfaith community of Woking Borough.

Thank you for all the work, care and imagination of Elizabeth, Zafar, Paul, HCPS, WBC.

If you would like to know more about the history of this site, use the link below:

<https://youtu.be/GHFpVpOmskk?si=IXAXb5HQyGx3uBlx>

Guided Walks

A guided walk is a wonderful way to enjoy Horsell Common whilst learning about its flora, fauna and conservation practices. This year, HCPS Senior Ranger led a walk from the Wheatsheaf Common to the Peace Garden with interesting information about the development and planting of the area. HCPS trustee and bird expert extraordinary, Margo Scott, took us on a stroll through the meadows as the sun rose. Apart from hearing many bird songs, it was a beautiful and peaceful experience to wander in the meadows at that time of day. Andrew Halstead has led insect walks for many years as well as doing insect surveys on the Common. Every year, he discovers a new insect and has recorded more than 200 in the meadows and heathland. HCPS Estate Manager's talk had a wide scope from the biomass boiler to conservation work on the heathland. The final walk in October will be led by Richard Alder with his encyclopaedic knowledge of fungi and their amazing importance to woodland. What a range of skills are essential for the preservation of this special place! The abundance of species is testament to the care and success of conservation work.



Hannah Lane 1940 to 2025

Hannah was passionate about the welfare of Horsell Common, its heathland and the wildlife it supports. She was a dedicated and hard working Trustee of the Society for many years, from May 2011 to September 2021. She also helped in a practical way by volunteering almost every week for Common working parties, even when her health was starting to fail. She was also a very regular attendee at our Trustees meetings. She had always read the minutes of the last meeting and was ready to raise pertinent and delving questions of the Trustees and paid employees. She was a very good example of a concerned and enquiring charitable trustee.

Hannah was born into a military family and developed an interest in Archaeology at boarding school. This led to a diploma in object conservation at the Institute of Archaeology. She was involved in the Ottershaw History Society for many years, where her professional skills helped to produce a rich body of written, photographic and archival material about local history. Not only was she a member of HCPS but also a member and volunteer with Surrey Wildlife Trust. HCPS very much valued her commitment and the expertise she brought to her role as an HCPS Trustee.



Thames Basin Heaths Partnership



Thames Basin Heaths Partnership Update

This summer season has been abuzz with heathland-focused activity for the TBHP team! We welcomed Eloise as the new Communications Officer and hosted a very successful Heath Week 2025.

“As part of my first few weeks with the team, I got stuck in with the events of Heath Week 2025 which ran from 28th July – 3rd August. We had amazing attendance from locals looking to learn more about their local heathland, and we were supported by our brilliant partners. From Reptile Roadshows to Sensory Scavenger Hunts, our creative team delivered a week of innovative events across Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire. At the start of the week, wardens hosted a “Marvellous Moths” evening at Heather Farm, with a highlight being an Elephant Hawk-moth! With three or four different events each day of Heath Week, the action carried through to the Reptile and Amphibian Roadshow at Yateley Common on the Sunday.

A special thanks to our seasonal wardens for all their hard work and creativity over the last few months. Their skillset and enthusiasm dedicated to enhancing awareness of the Special Protection Area and the unique heathland habitat has been invaluable in furthering the aims of the TBH Partnership.

Eloise Phillips - Communications Officer

tbhpartnership@naturalengland.org.uk |

www.tbhpartnership.org.uk



Elephant Hawkmoth
Photo by Mark Leitch

Our Amazing Heathlands - schools and the heath

Some of my most rewarding educational sessions have taken place on Horsell Common – including the single wettest session I have ever run. A well-crafted curriculum-linked session about heathland was hijacked



by what can only be described as a mini-monsoon. Activity sheets dissolved in the sideways rain and most of the heathland became a puddle. Despite the conditions, no-one complained, and we had a great time. We might not have ticked all the planned curriculum boxes, but we created some amazing splashy memories out in nature! Memories that will last a very long time. Over the past academic year, I've delivered assemblies, in-class sessions and run lots of sessions out on the heaths. And on each of these occasions, I have been met with excitement, enthusiasm and a real desire from the children to want to help look after the plants and animals they have learned about.

In the summer term, I spent time with wonderful Eco Committees at a couple of local schools and helped them to share heathland with their peers. I was so proud to see the children stand up in front of the whole school and wow their classmates with exciting stories about the lives of incredible species like Nightjars, Adders and Sundews. They also highlighted the ways everyone can help by not disturbing ground-nesting birds (#PawsOnPathsPlease) and avoiding destructive wildfires (#BeWildfireAware) and set a competition to design posters to raise awareness. We had lots of amazing submissions and, hopefully, you spotted some of the winners' entries on a heath near you. It's inspirational to meet children who love nature and are taking real action to look after it. Great job everyone!

Get involved!

If you're a teacher who'd like to connect your children with local heathlands or run a school Eco Committee and are looking for a project to help nature, please let me know. We run a variety of free, fun sessions for schools and community groups – both inside and out on the heath.

Michael Jones - Education Officer

tbhschools@naturalengland.org.uk

www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/schools

HCPS Membership

Increase in Fees

We would like to update you about a membership rate increase that will take effect from January 2026.

After careful consideration of the continued increase in our costs, the membership rate will increase to £15.00 per year for a single member and £20.00 per year for a couple.

The benefits of your membership are primarily to support the work in maintaining the Common for conservation and recreation. This includes managing our heathland and woodlands to preserve and protect the local flora and fauna. In addition, you also receive our twice-yearly "Common Newsletter," are able to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and get updates on any walks arranged by the Trustees or Estate Manager.

Direct Debit

If you pay by direct debit there will be nothing to do as we will make an adjustment to take effect from the 1st January renewal.

Standing Order

If you currently still pay by standing order it would be great if you could log into the database www.horsellcommon.org.uk/membership and take out a new direct debit subscription. This can be added to your existing membership and should not be setup as a new membership. You will need to cancel your existing standing order with your bank as we cannot do this for you. Once we see the new subscription we will amend the database to remove the old one.

If you do wish to continue paying by standing order please can you do this via your bank as we cannot amend standing orders. Please ensure the payment reference used is your surname and the first line of your address.

The bank details for membership payments are
Horsell Common Preservation Society: NatWest Bank:
Sort code 60-24-20 Account number 18316379

All queries should be emailed to:

memberships@horsellcommon.org.uk

Stop Press

Horsell Common Preservation Society AGM

Wednesday 15th October 7pm for 7.30 pm start.

Goldwater Lodge, Wishbone Way, GU21 4RT

Our guest speaker will be Marli Holland, Rural Affairs Officer for Surrey Fire and Rescue Services, working on the Fire Investigation and Safeguarding team.

Sunday Conservation Volunteering

Conservation work on Horsell Common is so rewarding! Working in the fresh air and open spaces is great for body and soul, plus it's doing something useful for conservation. All tools and information are provided in a friendly working atmosphere. Winter conservation involves tree popping mainly! Every second Sunday from 10am until 1pm throughout the winter. Please contact HCPS Senior Ranger Rupert Millican to book, and for more information.

Rupert.millican@horsellcommon.org.uk.

**12th October, 9th November, 14th December,
11th January, 8th February**

Circular waymarked walk Bedser trail to Sandpit to Peace Garden

A 2.7 mile walk that takes you to many historic sites of Woking and Horsell Common. New information boards with all the details will be sited at the Bedser Trail Monument Road and Shores Road car parks. An easy-to-follow route with QR code and waymarker posts with bright red arrows.



Congratulations and best wishes

to our Estate Manager
Jeremy and Theresa who
celebrated their wedding on
August 20th with a reception
at Heather Farm.