

reputed to be about, having spread from its main enclave in the Tring area. Purple hairstreak butterflies were seen in abundance during the 1995 survey, and may well now breed regularly. Their caterpillars feed on the foliage of oak. The speckled wood is a generally more common woodland butterfly to be seen in the these parts of the Common . Moths appear to be abundant, and would repay further study.

2.5 Ponds

Downley Common's main pond - Manning's Pond at the northern end towards Hunts Hill - has been a prime focal point in the management of the Common, and literally came to fame in the late 1980s when DCPS's routine clearance work resulted in the reappearance after many decades of the extremely rare starfruit (Showler, 1994). As a result of its unique ecology, this celebrated little has gone very much into hiding again, and the predominant species are floating sweet-grass, soft rush, lesser pond-sedge and water starwort, with sallow regenerating in places. Summer invertebrates include southern hawker and ruddy darter dragonflies and common blue damselfly, while it is also home to frogs and common newts.

Although falling within the Cookshall Farm boundary, it is worth once again pinpointing the small pond on the opposite side of the boundary hedge to Manning's Pond, remarkable for its persistent water-holding powers, and in which the unusual large-leaved duckweed grows.

2.6 Other habitats

Although occurring mainly within the scrub or woodland habitats, the many old clay (and possibly some chalk) workings about the Common have left a corresponding scatter of pits and dells. Best known is the substantial cluster towards Oaks Wood and Hunts Hill - a popular haunt for stunt cyclists for many generations though there are many more hidden away in the Common's less disturbed and more secret places.

Inevitably the ecology of Downley Common benefits not only from the additional expanses of woodland, particularly along its eastern flank, and from its continuation northwards as Naphill Common, but also from the various semi-domestic habitats both alongside and in its midst, among which gardens and at least some of the older buildings feature most prominently. Even the expanses of Cookshall Farm have begun to attract the Chilterns' spectacular red kites, which are bound to stray across to Downley Common sooner or later!

3 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 Overall aims

The overall aims for the continuing management of Downley Common relate to exactly the same set of topics as for Naphill, namely (1) forestry, (2) landscape, (3) ecology, (4) access and (5) coordination of effort. These aims can be expressed more explicitly as follows:

- (1) To undertake such silvicultural management of the main woodland areas as to promote their continuing spontaneous development, taking full advantage of their capacity for natural regeneration, extracting any timber strictly on a traditional and sustainable basis, and leaving selected areas undisturbed.
- (2) To safeguard the attractive appearance of the landscape, bearing in mind its inclusion within the Chilterns AONB, taking steps to protect those features of known historic interest and to restore to their former more open character those parts of the commons most recently invaded by scrub.
- (3) To promote optimum biodiversity throughout the property by appropriate management of all its wildlife habitats, with special attention to the needs of individual plant and animal species of particular significance.

(4) To cater for the continuing use of the Common as an amenity for informal countryside recreation and environmental education, particularly by local people, and to encourage their taking an active and informed interest in all aspects of management.

(S) To regard all of these proposals as part of an overall strategy, to be implemented, maintained and monitored as set out in this guiding Management Plan, which in turn should be reviewed at intervals and where necessary revised or updated'- all this to be achieved by regular liaison among interested parties via the DCPS committee and its associated networks, and wherever possible with the support of appropriate grant-aid.

3.1.2 Specific Objectives

The five main aims outlined above can each be addressed through a series of specific objectives. As with the Naphill Common report, twenty-five such objectives are proposed here, of which 1-5 relate to forestry and woodland management, 6-8 to landscape and historic interests, 9-15 to ecology and wildlife management, 16-20 to amenity matters, and 21-25 to co-ordination, liaison and recording.

These categories inevitably overlap and interact to some degree, and in practice some are of substantial significance while others are of relatively minor importance. Nevertheless, this approach provides a useful foundation both for day-to-day management and for the formulation of individual projects.

The objectives are as follows.

Objective 1 . Maintain the native broadleaved woodland cover over those parts of Downley Common where this habitat is plainly well established, employing traditional, non-intensive silvicultural methods, and retaining areas of non-intervention.

Objective 2. Encourage a diverse age range and canopy structure within the woodland by retaining a proportion of trees beyond maturity, and relying on natural regeneration for the recruitment of new stock.

Objective 3. Control invasive or potentially damaging woodland and other plants and animals, notably sycamore, Japanese knotweed and grey squirrel.

Objective 4. Protect and maintain the veteran pollards and other ancient or otherwise significant trees, and initiate pollarding anew to ensure a continuity of individuals.

Objective 5. Fine-tune woodland management so as to favour specific microhabitats, particularly with regard to the retention of dead wood and the avoidance of over-tidying.

Objective 6. Have an eye for the overall landscape of the Common, avoiding or modifying wherever possible any operations which are likely to be visually intrusive.

Objective 7. Safeguard known locations of archaeological or historic interest on the Common, and always be on the lookout for previously undiscovered features or artefacts.

Objective 8 . Endeavour to restore those areas of the Common known to have been of a more open character during recent historic times, where this is compatible with preceding objectives.

Objective 9. Maintain or encourage scrub both as a habitat in its own right, and to complement adjoining habitats such as woodland and grassland where this does not conflict with other interests.

Objective 10. Continue to manage the farm hedges bordering the Common in a manner inkeeping with their ecological and historic interest, rehabilitating these as necessary by coppicing and/or laying, and adopting an appropriate field-margin strategy to facilitate the continuing maintenance of this regime.

Objective 11. Maintain existing grassland by a suitable combination of cutting and their extension by clearance and control and heathland habitats grazing, and encourage of invasive bracken and unwanted scrub.

Objective 12. Continue to maintain, and where appropriate to reclaim, the common's ponds.

Objective 13. Investigate and provide for the specific needs of particular plants and animals still present where this is likely to complement and enhance efforts at habitat manipulation.

Objective 14. Consider more ambitious moves to restore or enhance biodiversity on the Common, including the possible extension of current grazing practice, and the re-introduction of selected plants and invertebrates where this is felt justified.

Objective 15. Take into account the desirability of co-operating with neighbouring owners regarding the sympathetic management of adjoining land.

Objective 16. Maintain the existing network of definitive and permissive paths, and of definitive bridleways, ensuring these are free from obstruction, and appropriately surfaced and waymarked.

Objective 17. Ensure that due care is taken to warn the public of any hazardous work in progress, particularly regarding forestry operations.

Objective 18. Consolidate existing measures to control vehicular access to the Common without jeopardising the genuine needs of local residents.

Objective 19. Clarify and maintain a code of practice regarding the rights and responsibilities of registered commoners and other residents, particularly concerning management of commonside land opposite the Le De Spencers Arms.

Objective 20. Strive to minimise the leaving of litter, garden refuse and other rubbish on the Common.

Objective 21. Honour all statutory obligations regarding the registered commonland status of the property, planning legislation, rights-of-way and existing wayleaves.

Objective 22. Retain the current mechanism for comprehensive liaison and consultation between interested parties over the continuing management of the Common.

Objective 23. Adhere to such aspects of this Management Plan as are adopted, with the proviso that certain elements may come up for review according to the nature of the work involved, and the degree of progress made.

Objective 24. Keep comprehensive photographic and biological records of the property, extend and consolidate the ecological survey, and monitor the effects of specific management recommendations and projects.

Objective 25 . Aim to undertake a full environmental audit towards the end of the ten-year period covered by this Plan, in anticipation of the formulation of continuing and longer-term proposals.

Some of these objectives are already being at least partially met, implicitly if not explicitly, and will - or should automatically form a part of any continuing management: examples are 6, 7, 16 and 18-21. Others have come up, again on a generally ad hoc basis, for example relating to pond clearance and, more recently, to the inauguration of forestry work in the northernmost area of the Common: here, examples are 1, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 17 and 22. Others again (2, 3, 9, 10, 14, 15 and 23-25) represent topics which are only now beginning to be given more than passing attention.

3.2 Existing management

The nature of the existing inputs at Downley Common by DCPS can be gauged from the original Management Plan which is attached as Appendix III. This includes such operations as flailing or mowing tall or rank grass, nettles etc. and cutting back brambles, bracken and scrub, both to keep paths clear and to encourage a more diverse grassland flora. The Society's own tractor and attachments, driven by DCPS members, are used for the flailing work through the summer.

More regular mowing of the shorter turf of the southernmost area adjoining Commonsides is carried out by Wycombe District Council's Ecovert facility under contract to Downley Parish Council 1 (

DPC) . Less frequent cutting during 1996 has given the sward there the chance to flower and set seed, with the ecological benefits already referred to.

Heavier work is undertaken annually by DCPS working parties, and includes scrub clearance (again both for access and conservation), usually timed so as to provide fuel for the village's traditional Guy Fawkes bonfire. Manning's Pond, of course, owes the spectacular revival of its ecological interest both to DCPS itself and to other working groups they have brought in.

The Society also tackles such matters as litter, illegal parking and driving on the Common and has even undertaken drainage work at one point. An attractive routed-wood information board has been installed, as have "doggy-loo" bins for those areas most heavily traversed by dog-walkers.

More recently, as already mentioned, the West Wycombe Estate entered the northernmost part of Downley Common into the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) along with Naphill Common. Progress with this is elaborated on further under the heading of woodland management.

3.3 A new framework for management proposals

3.3.1 Compartmentalisation of Downley Common

Suggestions for continuing management are made in the next section, following once again the sequence of subject areas first proposed in Section 3.1.1 under the heading of overall aims. Firstly, however, we need to consider how best to parcel up or "compartmentalise" Downley Common for management purposes, and then to identify specific features in each compartment which at some stage may (or may not!) be deemed to require attention. Downley Common has already been divided into eleven compartments by DCPS as part of its original Management Plan (see Appendix III), and in my own incursion onto the Common in 1995 I proposed that the area north of Plomer Green lane (N) be regarded as Cpt 6 in the scheme which for the most part related to Naphill Common .

In this current proposal, I am suggesting something of a hybrid solution for the system which will take us into the new millenium. Thus, while retaining DCPS's original Cpts 1 and 2 as they were, I have reallocated Cpts 3 to 5 to rather larger units. I have to confess that I have prevaricated over how to treat "Downley Common North~' !It would be simplest just to adopt Cpt 6 as I did in my 1995 Report, and it is still very tempting to do this. Yet, in the context of this new plan for Downley Common as a whole, my original Cpt 6 now represents a very large unit - almost as large as the rest of the compartments put together. So - I am proposing three compartments, rather than just the one, for this northern sector, and have numbered them 6 - 8. Recommendations are essentially the same as in the 1995 Plan: it is only the means of identifying them that I have changed slightly.

The proposed new layout is shown on Plan E, from which it will be apparent that I have avoided the use of sub-compartments, which on this scale I think would be confusing and unnecessary.

3.3.2 Locating and identifying individual features

The most obvious permanent and regularly used tracks and roads about the Common make much the best compartment boundaries, and I have made a special effort to map these fairly accurately, though in the woodland areas there still has to be some margin of error!

Apart from the definitive footpaths (DFPs) and bridleways (DFBs) which carry their own parish numbers, paths or tracks consist of three-digit numbers of which the first corresponds to the compartment number: thus in Cpt 6, the bridleway is 23, and the path diverging from it 601. Where a non-definitive path continues from one compartment into another, it retains its second and third digits: thus path 601 in Cpt 6 becomes 701 in Cpt 4. Another point of detail is that it makes sense for boundary paths to be regarded as within rather than between compartments, so that they are more conveniently included in any management proposals. Thus, path 12, regarded as the boundary between Cpts 1 and 2, is allocated to the former; path 805, separating Cpts 7 and 8, is included in Cpt 8.

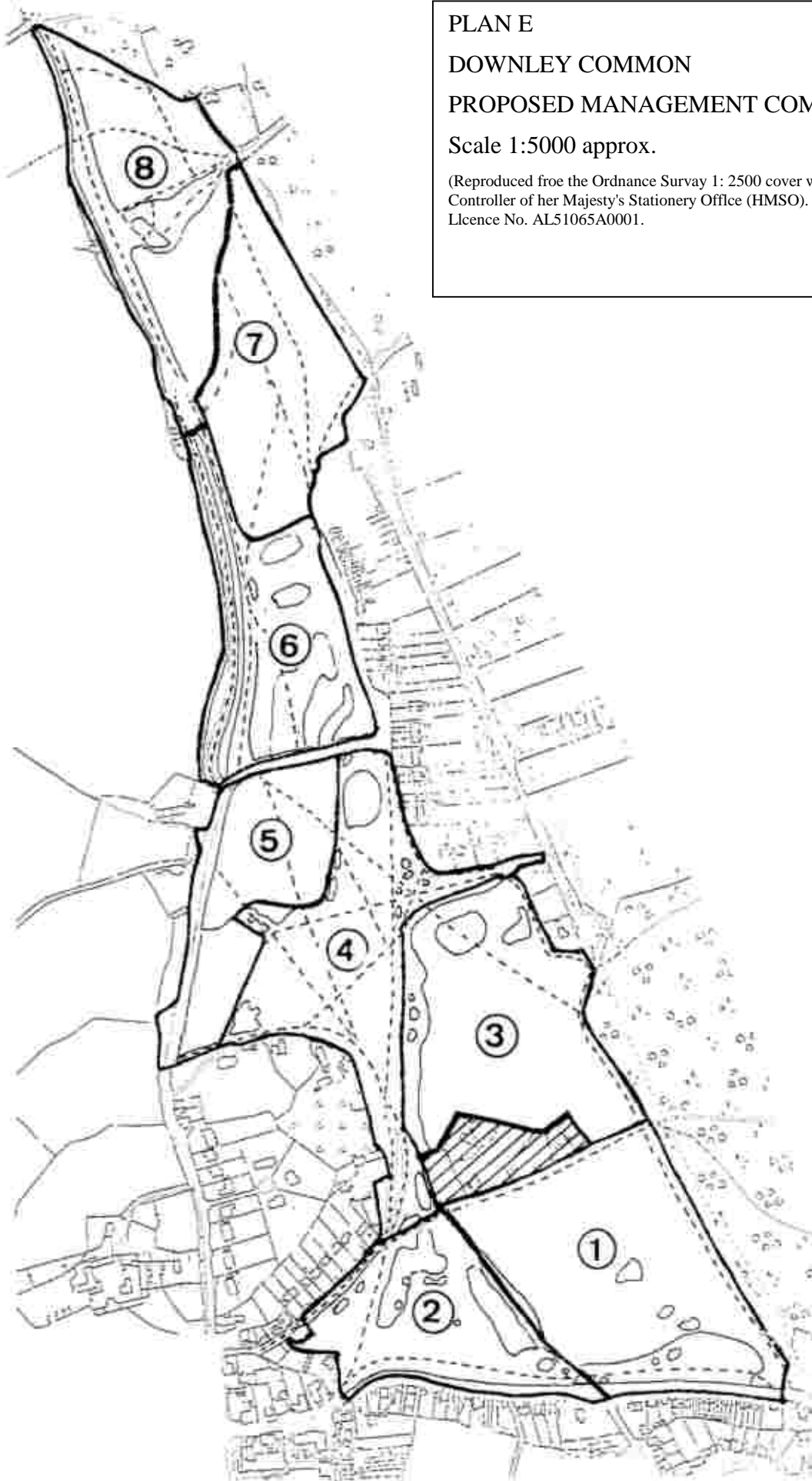
PLAN E

DOWNLEY COMMON

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT COMPARTMENTS

Scale 1:5000 approx.

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As far as other features are concerned, these are identified by a suffix letter following the number of the compartment in which they occur. Thus the Dells, now in Cpt 7, are proposed as feature 7B; Manning's Pond, now in Cpt 8, as 8C.

All this is nowhere near as complicated as it sounds, and the system does minimise ambiguity when recommending management options and priorities. A complete catalogue of features recognised so far is included in Appendix I, where locations are also given, on Plans G and H.

3.4 Continuing management

3.4.1 Options and priorities

The recommendations which follow are intended to consolidate and build on the existing plan, and have been formulated as a series of projects of varying complexity and scale, to be spread over a ten-year period. Although reflecting the aims and objectives listed in Section 3.1, these proposals are intended to be realistic and practicable in terms of DCPS's resources, or if amounting to something a little more ambitious, then to provide ample time to consider any wider implications regarding logistics and funding.

I should stress, too, that nothing here should be regarded as cast in stone, and that in the end it is down to DCPS, in consultation as necessary with the West Wycombe Estate, to decide what and what not to inaugurate.

The projects number ten in all (I-X), and encompass ecological survey and monitoring, woodland management (including attention to veteran trees), maintaining scrub and hedgerow habitats, conserving grassland and heath, further pond work (with particular reference to starfruit), and aspects of countryside recreation and interpretation. Finally some consideration is given to the individual needs of particular key species.

These projects are elaborated on in the following sections. More details on timing and possible grant-aid are given in Section 3.5; with summaries both in Table 1 and on Plan F.

3.4.2 Ecological survey and monitoring

The ecological information contained in this report includes compilations from existing records and from my own observations, and the main recommendations are based on these data. However, there is ample scope for further recording, particularly where this is undertaken in the context of monitoring the effects of continuing management. It is particularly useful to relate biological records to specific locations, and the compartment system greatly facilitates this. Observations on more specialist groups, such as fungi and invertebrates, are also always to be welcomed. Data gathered should continue to be reported to the Environmental Records Centre at the Bucks County Museum (again, see Appendix V).

These surveying, recording and monitoring initiatives are all regarded as part of Project I.

3.4.3 Trees and woodlands

There are obviously two main aspects under this heading. Firstly woodlands, and here we are talking about the encouragement and maintenance of the mature and developing woodlands of the Common where these habitats are specifically targetted.

Woodland management may be pursued essentially through a policy of deliberate non-intervention, or it may involve such silvicultural work as selective thinning or even harvesting, though obviously on a low-key, traditional basis. Selected trees should be allowed to develop well beyond maturity, and both standing and dead-wood habitats encouraged, subject to considerations of safety. Natural regeneration should be promoted wherever feasible; if deliberate replanting is deemed necessary, native species appropriate to the area should be used, ideally of local provenance. Steps should be taken to control sycamore should this show signs of becoming too invasive, and, so too, of course, should the destructive grey squirrel - though this can be a contentious issue in areas heavily used by the general public.

These aspects of woodland management constitute Project II. In Cpts 6-8, they come within the original Woodland Grant Scheme agreement (see Appendix III) , although this was devised primarily to accommodate the restoration of complementary habitats such as the grasslands along the main bridleway and the area around Manning's Pond. Some degree of uncertainty has arisen over the more extensive clearing-cum-thinning work recently undertaken in parts of Cpt 8 (particularly around 8E as shown on Plan G in Appendix I). This needs clarifying with the Estate, the Forestry Authority and the contractors: English Nature are not directly involved here since the area lies outside Naphill Common SSSI, though their views perhaps still should be sought.

Parts of the south-eastern woodland area might also benefit from some selective thinning to promote further natural regeneration of new recruits as well as ensuring good conformation among trees at a more advanced stage of development, for example in the area around II on Plan G. On the other hand, some parts of the woodland should be left as non-intervention areas, such as in 3A on Plan G and 8H on Plan H (away from the bridleway). It should be stressed, however, that strict control of the grey squirrel will still be essential. It may be worth considering a further Special Management Grant from the Forestry Authority for these additional areas.

The second major aspect under this heading concerns individual trees, primarily the ancient beech and oak pollards of the Common's old wood-pasture era, but also other key trees of specific ecological or amenity interest, and including younger examples which represent tomorrow's clumps, groves, giants and veterans. Examples of both categories have been identified in the initial field survey (for example the veteran oak at 3E on Plan G and the group of younger field maples at 6L on Plan H) . As part of Project III a more comprehensive attempt at cataloguing these and other trees should be undertaken, as was done for Naphill Common in the 1995 Plan, and consideration given to such special management as they may need, from pollarding the giants and opening up their immediate surrounds somewhat, to protecting young saplings with wire-mesh tree-guards or their equivalent.

Note that the control of woodland encroachment onto key grassland - or indeed scrub - areas is considered under the headings of those other habitats so affected.

3.4.4 Scrub and hedge maintenance

Maintaining scrub (in the sense of promoting it for its own interest as distinct from stopping it from invading grassland) is one of the most challenging of all aspects of ecological management.

Dense thickets offer crucial cover for birds and small mammals, and of course provide nectar and fruit for anything from hoverflies to fieldfares. Blackthorn, hawthorn and elder produce their beautiful masses of blossom which we enjoy - not to mention sloes and elderberries for sloe-gin and wine. The flowers of gorse reach their own golden peak in spring though always have a few flowers to show, whatever the time of year (hence the old allusion to the kissing season). In fact, gorse has declined drastically in the Chilterns, so ensuring its survival at Downley is all the more important.

However, scrub will always develop into woodland given the chance, and this can only be checked by recourse to cycles of coppicing. In Project IV, I have suggested a possible coppice rotation for Area 5C, which is illustrated in Fig. 1.

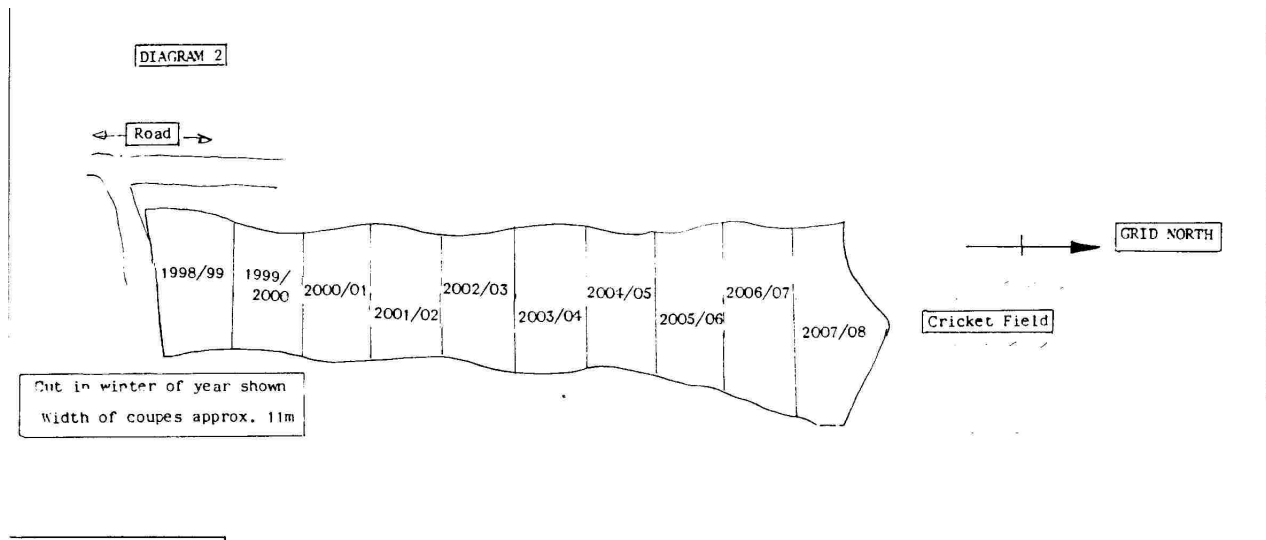
Hedges, too, represent an invaluable ecological resource, at best representing linear scrubland habitats with additional variety, value and beauty coming from hedgerow trees, as well as from the grasses and wildflowers of the hedge-bottoms and verges. I have hinted before, and do so again now as Project V, that the substantial hedge bordering Cookshall Farm (6G & 8A on Plan G) might be a candidate for laying, perhaps as part of a future Whole-Farm Plan for Cookshall Farm, and involving collaboration with Bucks County Council's annual hedge-laying demonstration and competition.

Fig. 1a. Possible scheme for scrub management

SCRUB COPPICING

Main objective. To ensure the rejuvenation of scrub as a viable habitat by coppicing selected areas back to ground level. Rotation. Initially aim for a ten-year cycle.

Suggested location and layout. Cpt 5C of Downley Common South, divided into ten mini-compartments numbered SC/1-10 (or if preferred 5Q-Z).



Other points. Cut stems cleanly to ground level. Remove cut material from treatment area for shredding or burning (ideally on the bonfire site). Be prepared to control invasive species, notably Japanese knotweed. Possibly diversify the stands, for example by sowing or planting gorse.

Alternative locations. Cpt 3 (around 3B) of Downley Common South, or Cpts 6 (area 6P) or 8 (between footpath 809 and track 811) of Downley Common North.

3.4.5 The conservation of grassland and heath

There are two crucial aspects of management involved in safeguarding, and where possible enhancing still further, the ecological diversity of Downley Common's grasslands and heathy areas. The first (Project VI) is to continue to reclaim those areas of coarser pasture from bracken and even scrub encroachment (including areas along the bridleway) in order to restore a more botanically varied sward again.

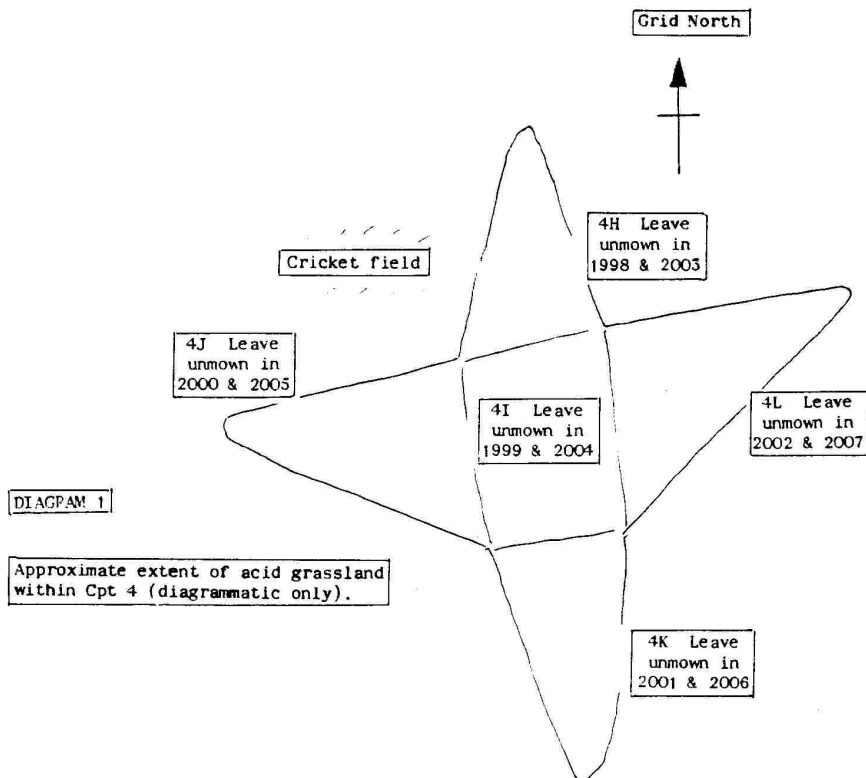
The second (Project VII) is to aim to diversify still further the structure of the grassland communities, for example by cutting some areas only once in two or three years, primarily to favour key invertebrate requirements. DCPS is well acquainted with these aspects and has achieved great results with its sophisticated mowing regimes. A possible scheme for these further refinements is indicated diagrammatically on Fig. 1.

Fig. 1b. Possible scheme for grassland management

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Main objective. To retain an undisturbed grassland canopy for a complete summer and winter season so as to permit key butterflies and other invertebrates to thrive and complete their life cycles.

Rotation. Management should be rotated so as to ensure that all areas of turf within the trial area are mown at least every second year. Suggested location and layout. Cpt 4 of Downley Common South, areas 4H, 4I, 4J, 4K and 4L as indicated in Appendix I.



Other points. Actual treatment areas should not be too rigidly geometric in outline for aesthetic reasons. Heavy accumulations of mown herbage should be removed and either composted or deposited on the bonfire site (though not before seeds or invertebrates have been given the chance to disperse). Paths dividing or crossing the treatment areas should still be mown as necessary to maintain a shorter turf. Control invasive species, notably bracken.

Alternative locations. Cpts 1 or 2 of Downley Common South; Cpt 6 of Downley Common North.

3.4.6 Ponds

DCPS is very much aware of the huge significance of Manning's Pond, and of the importance of its continuing - and careful management, which as proposed here should form part of Project VIII. This will include such further removal of willow and sweetgrass as necessary to maintain the open water (perhaps requiring more frequent attention for a while as the pond adjusts to its latest phase

of woodland clearance), and in time some further disturbance of the muddy margins in the hope of stirring u2 another flush of starfruit germination.

With the agreement of the Estate, an eye should also be kept on the other small pond (8Z) as part of this project.

3.4.7 Countryside recreation and interpretation

Various low-key inputs have been made under this heading, including waymarking the footpaths generally, providing for dogwalkers by Common Side and the pleasing routed sign near the High Street corner, these last two with help from Downley Parish Council. This shouldn't be overdone, however - Downley Common is not an urban park - and ensuring the right balance of interpretational initiatives (together with accommodating local environmental education opportunities) is suggested as Project IX.

3.4.8 Species conservation

Attending to the aforementioned adjustments to the Common's main habitats ought automatically to ensure the perpetuation of their component species. However, this cannot always be guaranteed, and in any case it can be a fascinating and revY :rding exercise to take special steps to undertake such fine-tuning as may help key species not only survive but thrive.

Starfruit is the outstanding example, of course. As part of the UK Steering Committee's response to the Rio Summit of.1992 (MAFF, 1994), a Biodiversity Action Plan has been drawn up for this, as well as other key plant and animal species, and both English Nature and Bucks County Council are currently promoting and implementing the necessary initiatives (Bucks County Council, 1996).

Other examples of threatened and declining plants which come to mind are heather and gorse, while among invertebrates there are the purple hairstreak butterfly and those fascinating grasshoppers and crickets. Though brought together here as Project X, these proposals involve most of the other projects as well.

Table 1 Possible schedule of conservation projects, 1998-2008

Proj	Obj	Work involved	Location	Commence	Note
I	24	Ecological surveying and monitoring.	Throughout	1998	
II	1/2	Thin woodland to encourage natural regen. and/or good conformation.	II, 8E	1998/99	(1)
		Intended non-intervention	3A, 8H	1997/98	(2)
III	4	Maintain veteran pollards, clearing encroaching scrub or secondary woodland if deemed necessary.	IE, 1F, 3E plus others as they are catalogued.	1998/99	(3)
	4	Bring on younger trees as individuals or groups.	E.g. maples at 6L	1998/9	(4)
IV	9	Conserve scrub habitat as such by rotational coppice management	5C	1997/98	(5)
	13	Take special steps to propagate gorse	4F	1998	(6)
V	10	Consider brinbing boundary headges into a laying cycle	6G, 8A	2002/3	(7)

VI	11	Continue to reclaim good grassland eg from bracken	3C	1998	
VII	11	Fine-tune existing species-rich grassland for key invertebrates	4H-4L	1998	(8)
	13	Take special steps to conserve heather	4I	1998	(6)
VIII	12	Continue to maintain ponds	8C	1998	(9)
IX	16	Continue to keep paths and bridleways open, but resist pressures to over-urbanise facilities or waymarking	General	1997/98	
X	13	Take steps to conserve key species eg. heather, starfruit, gorse	See projects IV, VII, VIII		

Notes:

- (1) Assess present situation regarding WGS in Cpt 8. Consider entering Cpts 1 and 3 into WGS Special Management Agreement.
- (2) Control of grey squirrel may still be needed here (and would in any case be a condition of grant).
- (3) Refer to the Naphill Common Plan for more information on this.
- (4) Plus any other likely trees which don't threaten key grassland or scrub habitats.
- (5) See Fig. 1 for possible scheme.
- (6) Including collecting seed and bringing on seedlings (and in the case of heather, cuttings), for replanting.
- (7) Subject to liaison with West Wycombe Estate and Cookshall Farm, as well as Bucks County Council re-possible demonstration/competition.
- (8) See Fig. 1 for possible scheme.
- (9) With particular regard to starfruit. Also 6Z subject to agreement with Estate and Cookshall Farm.

3.5 Ideas into action

3.5.1 Logistics and timing

Recommendations of how to set about these proposals, where to target them, and how the work might be timed, are elaborated on in Table 1 and Fig 1, and summarised on Plan F.

3.5.2 Possible grant-aid

Grant-aid is already coming from the Forestry Authority towards woodland and indeed grassland reclamation work in Cpts 6-8, through the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) agreement. It may be feasible to enter the wooded compartments 1 and 3 into this scheme on a similar basis.

Provided that there is no overlap with existing or proposed WGS areas, other parts of the Common - particularly Cpts 2 and 4 might be eligible for Countryside Stewardship funding on the strength of both grassland (and scrub) interests and public access. As an alternative, it is always possible that English Nature may be in a position to fund specific projects, especially where these relate to the recovery of key species known to be under threat.

Whatever options prove to be worth pursuing in this regard, the fact that DCPS have commissioned this overall plan can only act in their favour.

PLAN F: SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

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PROJECT VI: Reclaim grassland habitat from bracken or encroaching scrub where botanical potential makes this worthwhile.

PROJECT X: Take special steps to conserve plant and invertebrate species considered to be rare or under threat locally or nationally.

PROJECT VIII: Maintain Mannings Pond for its special ecological importance, and ideally also the adjoining farm pond

PROJECT V: Maintain hedges as key wildlife habitats

PROJECT VII: Maintain grassland diversity through suitable combinations of mowing and swiping, and possibly grazing with ponies and/or goats

PROJECT IV: Manage scrub for its own interest, introducing rotational coppicing where appropriate.

Project II. Manage woodland on a low-key basis, relying essentially on natural re-generation and including areas of non-intervention

PROJECT IX: Continue to clear, maintain and waymark public footpaths and bridleways.

PROJECT III: Catalogue and protect key trees, including veteran pollards, but also younger groups and individuals.

PROJECT I: Continue with biological recording, particularly in connection with monitoring changes in management