

# Downley Common Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter of the Downley Common Preservation Society - Issue 3. June 1997

## Working Parties

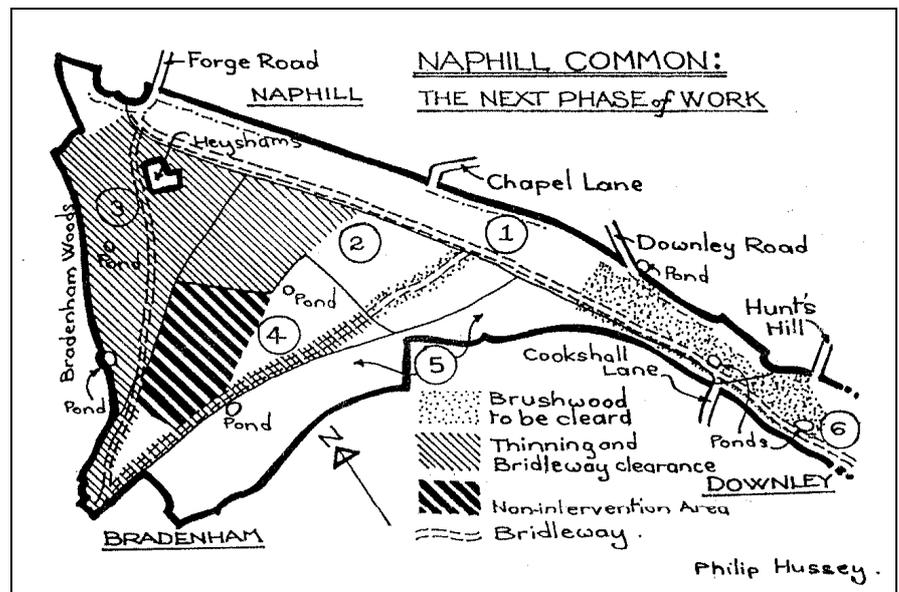
As summer comes upon us, the common is starting to blossom into its usual display, which also means that there is less work than usual to do in the working parties. Of course, you may be wondering what the working parties do normally. I've been living by the common for just over a year now, so have had a chance to see the sort of things that need to be done throughout the seasons.

During the autumn, work seems to concentrate on cutting out dead and broken wood and removing small trees and bushes where they are starting to encroach on the open spaces. This is a good time to do this as all the material can be used to build the bonfire. During the winter and early spring there is a lot of flailing to be done to remove bracken, brambles and overgrown grass. This is a good chance to drive the tractor - a lot more relaxing than clearing by hand! There are also decaying posts around the edge of the common to replace. During the warmer weather, there is always the task of clearing litter from the common as more people use it during the summer. It is also important to continue to keep own the bracken and the patches of Japanese knotweed.

The Society always needs more people for the working parties and if you would like to volunteer for them please contact John Willson on 525966 who will put you on the list to receive the schedule of working party dates and activities that he distributes from time to time.

### Tree-felling at Mannings Pond

The tree felling around Mannings Pond appears to be



complete, but there has been concern about the large quantity of brushwood that has been left where it was cut. We have expressed our concern about this and have received assurances from Corinne Woodall of English Nature that it is due to be cleared soon. The same concerns have been expressed by the Naphill Common Committee who have experienced rather more tree-felling than we have and they have given their permission for a map published in the Naphill Gazette to be reproduced here.

This gives a good indication of what is planned and apparently work is due to start in late July. While most of the map refers to Naphill Common, we are particularly interested in the section numbered (6) around Mannings Pond which is due to be cleared of brushwood.

Watch this space!

### Footpaths around the Common

Recent activities have included a

Membership Application Form			
Name			
Address			
Tel:			
Working Party?			
Grade	Family ( )	Individual ( )	OAP/Student ( )
Return to Don Murray, 31 Plomer Green Avenue, Downley			

new stile on the north side of Mannings Field and another new stile on the north side of the adjacent field. The stile on the south side of Mannings field leading to Cookshall Farm has been renovated. Volunteers for these activities should contact Owen Rush on 534558

### John Brandon's Seat

Those of you who have ventured up beyond the Le De Spencer's Arms may have noticed the trunk of a large fallen oak tree being worked upon. The intention is to shape this log into a seat in memory of John Brandon and to position it on the edge of the cricket pitch. Hard work with a chain saw and various assorted hand saws have so far cut out a section of sound wood and shaped a seat from the middle of the log.

The next stage is to move it from its present position to its final resting place. This is planned to happen on 29 June, the day after Downley Day. Even with the use of the tractor, we would be glad of as many volunteers as possible to assist with this operation. Without John Brandon's expert guidance and woodcraft we have to rely on brute force and ignorance!

### Survey Report

The Society has now received the final report from Dr Chris Smith on his survey of the Common and his recommendations for its long term management. As you can

see from the figure below, he recommends the compartmentalisation of the common into different areas that represent distinct features of the common which will therefore be treated relatively separately for the purposes of management. These compartments generally use existing footpaths and bridleways as boundaries.

The report suggests a series of aims and objectives to be achieved by the management plan. These aims address forestry management, maintenance of the appearance of the landscape, promotion of the biodiversity throughout the common, catering for the amenity aspects and coordination of all these into an overall plan.

These are followed up with a set of ten discrete "Projects", each of which tackles a particular task and which is intended to fit into an overall timescale running out to

2003. These Projects will be further elaborated in future editions of the Newsletter.

The report finishes off with some local historical tit-bits describing the old nine hole golf course and those areas of the common that used to be known as "Ninevah" and "Ganderland". If any of the longer term inhabitants of the Common know similar stories of how things used to be we would love to hear about them with the idea of including them here, so please contact the Editor, Bill Thompson on 520648

### Diary Dates

- 28 June, 10.30am Downley Day
- 29 June, 9.30am Working Party
- 2 July, 8.00pm Quarterly Meeting
- 16 July, 1.30pm Working Party
- 3 Aug, 10.00am Working Party
- 13 Aug, 1.30pm Working Party
- 7 Sept, 10.00am Working Party
- 17 Sept, 1.30pm Working Party

