

Downley Common Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter of the Downley Common Preservation Society - Issue 10 December 1999

Downley Common in Cyberspace

For those of you that are interested in such things, Downley Common now has it's own home page on the World Wide Web which can be seen on www.downleycommon.org.uk. For those of you that can access this site, I would welcome any comments or suggestions.

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Downley Millenium Celebrations

As is only to be expected, Downley Common will be playing a significant role, hosting the Official Downley celebration on New Years Eve and New Years Day. You will have seen the Parish Council's leaflet describing the lighting of a beacon and the fireworks display to be set up on the Common. On New Year's Day, we will be planting two Millenium Yew Trees; one on Commonside and the other on Butterfly Bank. Everyone is welcome to join us that morning to witness what will hopefully be the precursor of another celebration involving the Yew trees on New Year's Day 2999. You can't accuse the Preservation Society of short termism!

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Chiltern Commons Network

The inaugural meeting of the Chiltern Commons Network took place on 3 November, 1999 and attracted an impressive attendance of 23 people representing 13 different organisations, mostly common preservation societies like ourselves. Chris Woodley-Stewart of the Chilterns AONB office gave a presentation on the background and aims of the network which has started life with funding of £8000 to spend on an initial programme of works at Penn, Coleshill, Chesham Moor and Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons. Further actions will be identified as part of a "Commons Action Programme" by the Network Steering Group together with the funding requirement for it. This

Steering Group was appointed at the meeting and includes John Willson and Kristina Frydberg from Downley.

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The Bonfire

Those who attended will know that this year's Bonfire was a huge success in terms of the number of people who attended and even the weather managed to hold off for a large part of the evening. We sold what is believed to be a record 400 torches. Thanks are due to the Sunshine Montessori School for providing the Guy, to the Downley Scouts and Guides for the barbeque, to Neil Harris of Hughenden Estate for building the bulk of the Bonfire and to all those helpers who made, sold and lit the torches.

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DCPS Evening Lecture

Encouraged by advertising material hinting at an Airport on Downley Common, over 20 people attended an evening lecture by Neil Jackson of the West Chiltern Commons Project and introduced by John Willson who produced an impressive photographic survey of the Common. Neil then went on to give a little background on the history and practice of Commons including such terms as pasture, pannage, estovers, turbery and piscary. The discussion proceeded onto the issue of how to keep down the grass to prevent choking the fine grasses and wild flowers. It was concluded that we would probably end up with mainly mechanical grasscutting with some grazing where possible and feasible.

Diary

5 December 1999, 10.00am	Working party – remove tree in coppice area, flail glades	Coppice area
12 December 1999, 10.00am	Working party – prepare holes for Millenium Yew planting	Commonside
31 December 1999, 10.00am	Working party – prepare site for Millenium Yew planting	Commonside
6 January 2000, 8.00pm	Quarterly Meeting	Memorial Hall
9 January 2000, 10.000	Working party – Clear Sunnybank path and flail glades	Sunnybank
6 February 2000, 10.00am	Working party – Tree planting in Coppice area	Coppice area