

# Downley Common Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter of the Downley Common Preservation Society Issue 21. March 2003  
Web: <http://www.downleycommon.org.uk>. Email [bill.thompson@rotherwoodassociates.com](mailto:bill.thompson@rotherwoodassociates.com)

## Forthcoming Meetings

The next open meeting will be held on Thursday 3 April at 8.00pm at the Memorial Hall. Items on the agenda will include proposed working party activities, forthcoming Chiltern Commons Network activities and finance. All are welcome to participate.

The next meeting after that will be on September 4 – suggestion for agenda items for both these meeting are welcome.

## Subscriptions

A gentle reminder that subscriptions for 2003 are now due. If you have not yet filled in a standing order form, we would appreciate if you could take advantage of this method of payment, as it makes it much easier for both members and committee. If you do not have a standing order form attached to this newsletter, we can easily provide a replacement on request.

## Pollarding on Commonside

You may have noticed the activity around an oak tree on Commonside, just opposite Narrow Lane. This tree had been badly damaged in high winds a couple of months ago and after advice from WDC we decided to attempt a pollarding. The exercise has started with the removal of those sections that were badly damaged and unsafe. While this has given the tree a somewhat unusual



appearance, it is the intention to cut back the rest of the branches to create a proper pollard – this will take some time, so bear with us.

Pollarding is when a tree's

	Diary	
3 April 2003, 8.00pm	Members Meeting	Village Hall
6 April 2003, 10.00am	Working Party. Clear path by Sunnybank	Sunnybank
4 May 2003, 10.00am	Working Party.	TBD
25 May 2003, 2.30pm	Downley Walk	Village Hall
1 June 2003, 10.00pm	Working Party.	TBD
6 July 2003, 10.00am	Working Party.	TBD
3 August 2003, 10.00am	Working Party.	TBD
4 September 2003, 8.00pm	Members Meeting	Village Hall

branches are regularly cut off at a height of 2-3 metres.

This practice was far more common in the past but the practice has largely fallen into disuse, leaving ancient overgrown and top-heavy pollards scattered through the landscape. Some of the old pollards have not been cut for decades.

Most species of broadleaf trees will form pollards although not many conifers.

In the past, trees were pollarded to produce repeated crops of small-sized wood growing out of reach of hungry deer and livestock. The poles produced were used in much the same way as the coppice, and the shoots and foliage were cut for supplementary animal fodder.

Pollarding was typical in deer parks and on common land or [wood pasture](#).

Trees on stream-sides and riverbanks were often pollarded too. Trees were re-cut every 5-35 years depending on the species and what they were used for. Pollards which have not been cut for many years have top heavy crowns.

Pollarding prolongs a tree's life - done regularly, pollarded trees can survive for centuries.

### **Wycombe Wildlife Watch meeting: Chopping in the Coppice**

Our November meeting in Downley Common coppice began when some unexpected visitors from Shimada City in Japan arrived with their interpreter! Bill Thompson from the Downley Common Preservation Society explained what a coppice was. This particular coppice was being regenerated with Goat Willow, Ash and Hazel whips that were planted by the Society three years ago. The young trees were being choked by brambles and bracken, so it was our job to remove as much as we could. Tony Speight from Wycombe Rangers gave a thorough tool talk explaining how to use the loppers safely. All the children, parents and Japanese visitors (some in expensive looking shoes!) set to work and we had soon cleared a big pile.

The work was followed by a circle game where everyone introduced themselves and shared the name of their favourite trees which

included old favourites like hazel and apple as well as some Japanese trees that had amazing sounding names. The afternoon finished with some delicious barbecued potatoes and an exchange of presents. Our visitors had brought colourful paper balloons and wooden spinning tops for the children. We presented them with a lucky horseshoe each. The group welcomed four new Wildlife Watch volunteers; Toby, Saskia, Philip and Charlotte with their fathers.



Wycombe Wildlife Watch meets on the second Saturday each month.

Contact Wendy on 814068 or Wycombe Rangers on 421825 for details

Kristina Frydberg  
Wycombe Wildlife Watch leader

### **In Memoriam**

It is with sadness that we have heard of the death of DCPS member Doris West. Our sympathies to the family at this time.

### **Downley Walk**

The Annual Rogation Sunday Walk will this year be held on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May starting at 2.30pm from the Memorial Hall on Commonsideside. This year we are planning a walk over the western side of the parish ending up as usual at the Le De Spencers Arms. All are welcome.