

Downley Common Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter of the Downley Common Preservation Society Issue 29. September 2007

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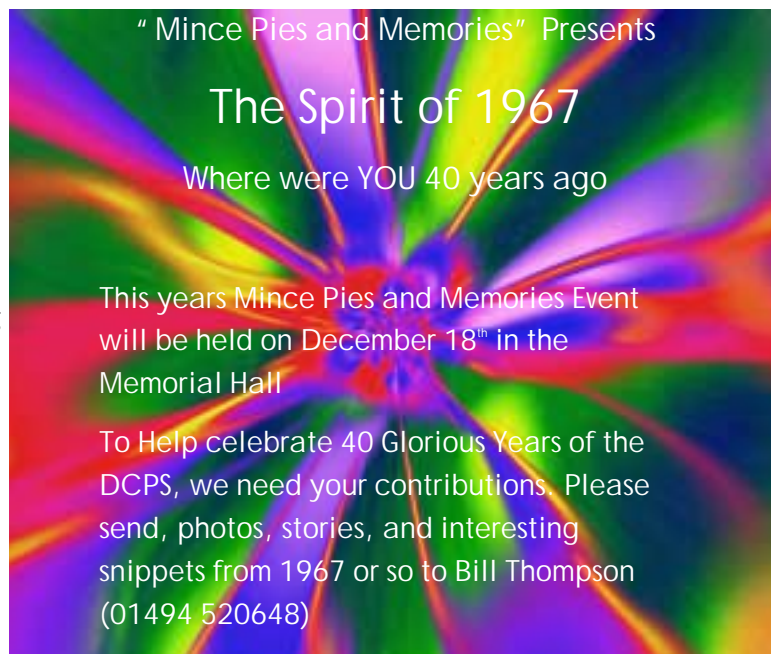
Common Activities

Log Seat

We now have the log in position. After a long wait for the protective screens to be made for the tractor windows (to protect against a breaking winch cable) we finally set about pulling the log up the hill in May. The tractor-mounted winch served its purpose in dragging the 3 tonne log up the steep slope near Well Cottage towards Commonsides. It was as well we took the precaution of anchoring the tractor to a nearby tree or the log would have dragged the tractor down the hill, not vice versa. After slowly threading its way through the woods, the log reached its final resting place near to the rapidly deteriorating bench in the glade below Commonsides. The final stage, still to be completed is to carve out the seat in the side of the log. This will probably be a spring project once the bonfire and Christmas is out of the way.

DCPS AGM

The AGM will be held in the Village Hall on 4th Oct 2007 at 8pm. All are welcome to attend and to volunteer for the Committee.



Commons Day Report

This year's Commons Day was hosted by Hughenden Manor and attracted a capacity crowd of 55 attendees.

It was held on Saturday 16th September and featured presentations by Hugh Craddock of DEFRA's Common Land, Graham Bathe of Natural England and Nicola Hodgson of Open

	Diary	
4 Oct 2006, 8.00pm	AGM	Village Hall
7 Oct 2007 10.00am	Working Party - tree cutting/hauling	Meet at Old Dairy
14 Oct 2007 10.00am	Working Party - tree cutting/hauling	Meet at Old Dairy
14 Oct 2007 2.00pm	Apple Juicing Party	Community Orchard
21 Oct 2007 10.00am	Working Party - tree cutting/hauling	Meet at Old Dairy
28 Oct 2007 10.00am	Working Party - Bonfire Building	Meet at Old Dairy
4 Nov 2007 10.00am	Working Party - Bonfire Building	Meet at Old Dairy
5 Nov 2007 6.30pm	Bonfire & Torchlight Procession	Start on Commonsides
2 Dec 2007 10.00am	Working Party - Bonfire clear-up	Bonfire site
18 Dec 2007. 8.00pm	DCPS Christmas Social Event	Village Hall
31 Dec 2007 Midnight	Beacon lighting	Commonsides

Spaces, all of whom focused on the provisions of the 2006 Commons Act that is currently being implemented.

Some interesting facts and figures relating to commons emerged from these talks. Did you know that:

- There are 7039 commons in England and Wales
- These occupy nearly 1 million acres (400kha) or about 3% of the total land area
- 51% of all commons have an area of less than 2½ acres (1 ha)
- 89 commons have an area of more than 2500 acres (1000 ha)
- There are 187 commons in the Chilterns AONB

Some facts were also clarified about the law relating to commons such:

- Rights on a common are possessed by commoners holding such rights, not the general public – so:
- There is no common ownership of commons
- There is no common access to commons
- Driving up to 15yards onto a common without the landowner's permission is trespass
- Driving more than 15 yards onto a common without the landowners permission is a criminal offence
- Under the Open Access regulations, most commons (including Downley Common) are open for walking but not for cycles, horses or vehicles except on rights of way
- Works that may impede access will generally require the consent of DEFRA. These include permanent constructions such as buildings, roads, fences etc.

The afternoon was spent walking up to Naphill Common to inspect the newly asphalted road laid across the Common in place of the old stone track. This is a development of some debate and is an example of the sort of works that would normally need approval by the Secretary of State.

My Special Place

Joshua Hurrell 11, one of the Conservation Society's youngest members, recently won a Downley School public speaking competition. All 60 year 7s were asked to write a piece about "My Special Place." Joshua's account of Downley Woods was one of the winners.

My Special Place

By Joshua Hurrell

My special place is Downley Woods, I especially like to go there in the summer.

I usually go with my Dad & my dog Skye. I like the feel of the bumpy bark on the trees, the squelchy mud & the sharp flints. The leaves at the top of the trees form a canopy that blocks out the sun. There are lots of animals, if you look carefully, like squirrels. I usually see them eating nuts & climbing trees. I also see muntjac deer the size of large dogs. They run from humans, they can run very fast. I also see lots of sheep eating grass in the fields between the woods, they seem to have no care in the world. There are lots of sounds also. I hear woodpeckers pecking the trees, Red Kites circling their prey, woodpigeons signing & the wind blowing in the trees.

Sometimes it is quite relaxing & I get plenty of exercise. I like to play fetch with my dog. I love to climb trees because I like being high up & I like the challenge of climbing higher. I also like to jump trenches & build bridges across the gullies with broken tree branches and I love to make dens.

When I'm in the woods I feel happy & free. I can't understand why more people don't use the woods. With every changing season the woods never look the same. They continue to surprise & put a smile on my face. There are many different trees in the woods, my favourite is the big old oak. Sometimes I bring my cricket set. Me & my Dad & my dog Skye play fetch the ball. We also play football, but Skye usually punctures the ball but I don't mind.

I hope you will enjoy the woods too!