



**July 2022**



Where can you see Yorkshire fog this summer? Here on Chislehurst Commons. It's one of the grasses found on our dry acid grasslands, together with others including cock's foot, common bent and sheep's fescue.





Yorkshire fog is a soft grass that can grow to a metre tall. From a distance, its flowers, and later its seed heads, appear as a purple haze.





**Join us for a stroll across the glorious grasslands of  
Chislehurst Commons.**

**Find out how they are managed and explore the  
wonderful diversity of their flora and fauna.**

**Date: Wednesday 20th July**

**Time: 2 pm**

**A free event.**

**The walk should last approximately 1 1/2 hours.**

**Booking is essential.**

**Full details will be sent with the reservation.**

**We look forward to seeing you!**

**Book your e-ticket for a place on our walk by scanning  
the QR code below or by clicking the link to  
Ticketsource.**

**Booking opens on Monday 4th July at 10 am.**



<http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/chiscommons>



June was a busy month of Jubilee celebrations in Chislehurst. The two crowns above were made at our stall at the Big Jubilee Picnic. Many thanks to all who came to see us at this event and at the Jubilee Summer Fair. We enjoyed meeting you all.





This month we were proud to be able to take the assessor for the prestigious Green Flag Award across our beautiful Commons, and to show him the results of the work of our wonderful Keepers and volunteers.



In the words of the Award Scheme itself,

*“The Green Flag Award® scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.”*

We have received the award for several years running and will let you know the results of the current assessment.

## **Drought and the Water Levels in our Ponds**



The water levels in both Prickend Pond by the High Street and Rush Pond are

currently low. Volunteers monitor water levels, water quality and local rainfall, and the reason for the current situation is simply due to the low rainfall we have experienced this year, about half the amount that fell in 2021 so far. Low water levels have occurred periodically in the past, leading to the Chislehurst Society providing funds for a borehole in 2011 to supply Rush Pond. We cannot abstract more water than is needed to maintain water levels, and these are rarely high enough for water to overflow through a connecting pipe to Prickend Pond. Topping up with mains tap water is not an option and, as the water is treated, it would not be good for the wildlife of the pond.

Volunteers will keep monitoring the situation and hoping for rain!

## **WILL YOU BE A TRUE FRIEND OF THE COMMONS?**

**The 180 acres of local common land have been at the centre of the community in Chislehurst for centuries, providing a backdrop to daily life and a space that will always be free and open to all.**

**They are protected by an Act of Parliament.**

**Chislehurst Commons has responsibility under the Act for the management and maintenance of the area.**

**The Act, however, made no provision for funding, and we**



**rely on our wonderful volunteers and the generosity of local people to enable us to continue our work.**

**We have two Keepers whose knowledge, skills and dedication are invaluable. Everyone else who works to maintain and develop our beautiful Commons does so on a voluntary basis.**

**We will continue to do our best to maintain and preserve it for present and future generations.**

**If you would like to support our work,**

**you can donate via our website at**

**[www.chislehurstcommons.uk](http://www.chislehurstcommons.uk) or via [PayPal Giving](#).**

**Thank you!**

**The Biodiversity of the Grasslands**



Our acid grasslands are an important and increasingly rare habitat. They



support a variety of plants that come into flower at different times of the year, so there is something different to see throughout spring and summer. They also attract bees, butterflies and other invertebrates, and provide shelter for birds and small mammals. The photo shows harebells and cat's ear.



This is heath bedstraw, a typical acid grassland plant, now in flower in the Cockpit area and the Overflow Glade.



Bird's-foot trefoil is a low-growing plant, also typical of acid grasslands.





This is buck's horn plantain in flower. It is small, low-growing and easily



overlooked.



The flowering plants of our grasslands support an amazing diversity of butterflies and invertebrates, all part of the ecosystem that makes acid grasslands so important. This is a comma butterfly.





Yellow rattle has been plentiful this year. It is an interesting plant that is semi-parasitic on nearby grasses. It feeds off the nutrients in their roots, weakening the more dominant, coarser varieties, and eventually allowing the more delicate traditional grasses, and also more flowering plants, to push through. The photo, which shows both flower and seed pod, includes a visiting bee.







The top photo shows peacock butterfly caterpillars on a nettle. It was taken a week ago and illustrates again the amazing web of life around us. They will emerge from the next stage of their life cycle as brightly coloured butterflies, like the one in the lower photo.

**Butterfly Monitoring – Two Requests from the  
Bromley Biodiversity Panel**

Have you seen a White Admiral (*Limenitis camilla*)?



The White Admiral is a woodland butterfly that is on the wing from June to August. It has a distinctive gliding flight along sunny rides powered by a flick of the wings. Single eggs are laid on Honeysuckle in July and the caterpillars feed on this climbing plant until the autumn when they secure a folded leaf to a stem with silk and lay dormant inside. In the following spring, caterpillars feed until fully grown in June.



Full grown caterpillar



Chrysalis

The bright green chrysalis is perfectly camouflaged and within just 21 days, metamorphosis magically produces a beautiful black and white butterfly and so the cycle repeats. Populations can vary dramatically on a year to year basis and June temperature is particularly influential. The management of woodland requires a program of selective tree felling and glade creation to maintain the mixed shady and sunny habitat that is best for the White Admiral. There is a program to promote suitable woodland habitat with climbing Honeysuckle throughout Bromley's green spaces and any records of sightings of this butterfly are very useful. If you are lucky enough to see this butterfly please e-mail the date, place (postcode or grid reference), number seen with a photo if possible to Bromley Biodiversity Partnership: [bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com) Thank you.

Bromley Biodiversity Partnership is a partnership of local groups, organisations and individuals with specific expertise committed to protecting, enhancing and celebrating biodiversity within the London Borough of Bromley.

Photos copywrite of [ukbutterflies.co.uk](http://ukbutterflies.co.uk)



## RETURN OF THE PURPLE EMPEROR

This most majestic of all our butterflies was thought extinct within Kent in the late 1980's but recently there have been exciting new records from the south of Bromley Borough. Look for them in woodland before noon in July and August when the males descend from a tall Ash or Oak tree to visit animal dung from which they obtain vital mineral nutrients. After noon, look up as they will be flying high in the tree canopy. Caterpillars can be found feeding from the end of July. Search for the distinctive feeding signs at the leaf tip of Sallow or Willow.



Young caterpillar with feeding signs



Full grown caterpillar on Sallow Adult Male. Females lack purple iridescence

New records are extremely valuable so if you see one of these butterflies or their caterpillars please e-mail the date, place (postcode or grid reference), number seen and if possible a photo to Bromley Biodiversity Partnership at: [bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com). Your information will enable the protection of any breeding colonies and the targeted management of the woodlands where they live to promote the recovery of this rare and beautiful butterfly.

Bromley Biodiversity Partnership is a partnership of local groups, organisations and individuals with specific expertise committed to protecting, enhancing and celebrating biodiversity within the London Borough of Bromley.

Images reproduced with thanks to Peter Eeles and UK Butterflies <http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/index>

## And finally – News from the Ponds



A July Newsletter would not be complete without a picture of chicks, in this case a coot followed by four young.

Our Commons are a constant source of interest, pleasure and delight, and are open to us all at all times. They are the reason many of us choose to live and work here.

We will continue to do our best to protect, maintain and enhance them for present and future generations.



[Click here to access a map of the Commons](#)



**We are registered with Amazon Smile.**

Visit [smile.amazon.co.uk](https://smile.amazon.co.uk) instead of the normal Amazon website and select Chislehurst Commons, and, for everything you buy, Amazon will donate 0.5% to help maintain the Commons. This is another excellent opportunity to support the greenspace on your doorstep.

**Show your support for Chislehurst's commonland  
while you shop!**

**THANK YOU!**

**Thanks for this month's photos to - Peter Edwards, Kevin**

**Jennings, Patrick Phillips and Mary Wheeler.**

**Thanks also to the Editorial Team – Christine Wearn, Ross Wearn and Mary Wheeler.**



**Chislehurst Commons are proud to display the Green Flag Award logo.**

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[or donate online here](#)

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