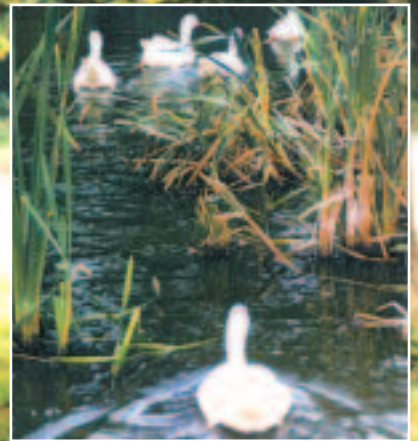


# LOCAL HERITAGE STUDY

---

Hawridge and  
Cholesbury  
Commons



Lindsay Griffin  
Editor

Hawridge & Cholesbury Cricket Club  
Bellington  
Chesham

31st April 1930.

Malcolm Stewart Esq  
Hawridge Court Farm



Dear Sir

Re your letter a short time  
I have presented your proposal to the  
and they wish me to thank  
kindness you have shown to  
It has been proposed that  
over until next winter no  
money for carrying this work.  
I have put this down

The Manor of The General Court  
of the Reverend John  
of the said Manor  
Monday the first day of October  
not less than thousand eight hundred  
before Maurice Marshall Justice  
of the said Manor

The Homage  
Thomas Jones  
Benjamin Babbitt  
William Wright  
At this Court  
the Homage referred to  
documents made by Thomas Jones  
the said William Wright

28th, March 1930.

Mrs. Bosmer,  
Box Tree,  
Hawridge,  
Herts. CEPHRAM.

Dear Mrs. Bosmer,

Manors of Hawridge and Cholesbury.

Many thanks for your letter of the  
23rd inst. I see no reason why you should not burn  
your hedge trimmings on the Common provided of course  
that it is done in a reasonable manner and does not  
become a nuisance, or upset anyone locally.

No doubt with the new scheme of  
Refuse Collecting that comes into force next month  
the contractor might be persuaded to take away such  
garden rubbish.

Yours truly,

Dated 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 1953

Henry Roderick  
Moore Esq

John William  
Randall Esq

## Dedication

This study is dedicated to the Lords of the Manors past and present and to all of those who have worked to maintain the Commons as the source of pleasure with which they provide all of us here. In particular it is dedicated to those founding members of the Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society who recognised that we have, on our doorstep, an amenity well worth preserving and who fostered the expectation that this community should actively support the Lord of the Manors in doing so. We hope to leave the Commons in the best possible condition for future generations in the hope that they too will enjoy and care for our heritage.

This Conveyance  
The Manor of Hawridge in the County of Buckingham  
the twelfth day of January One thousand  
and forty four a certain conditional  
taken out of Court by the Steward of the  
effect following (that is to say) The Manor of Hawridge  
the County of Buckingham be it remembered that on the  
twelfth day of January One thousand eight hundred and  
fourty four John Frost of Otton in the County of Southampt  
Esquire one of the beghold or customary tenants of the sa  
Manor came before William Holloway Marshall Steward  
the Manor aforesaid and in consideration of the sum of  
three thousand pounds of lawful money of Great Britain  
to the said John Frost in hand well and truly paid by  
William Tomlin of Berkhamsted County Bucks in the County  
of Bedford Esquire (which said sum of Three thousand  
pounds is the same sum that is mentioned and expressed  
to be lent and advanced to the said John Frost by the said  
William Tomlin in and by a certain indenture of  
assignment and Release bearing date the twelfth day of  
January now instant and made or expressed to be made  
the said John Frost of the one part and the said William  
Tomlin of the other part on the Security not only of the  
said hereditaments and premises here

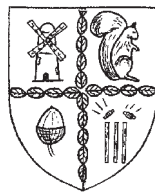
21<sup>st</sup> March 1854

of Hawridge in the County of Buck  
the twelfth day of January One thousand  
and forty four a certain conditional  
taken out of Court by the Steward of the  
effect following (that is to say) The Manor of Hawridge  
the County of Buckingham be it remembered that on the  
twelfth day of January One thousand eight hundred and  
fourty four John Frost of Otton in the County of Southampt  
Esquire one of the beghold or customary tenants of the sa  
Manor came before William Holloway Marshall Steward  
the Manor aforesaid and in consideration of the sum of  
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of Bedford Esquire (which said sum of Three thousand  
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William Tomlin in and by a certain indenture of  
assignment and Release bearing date the twelfth day of  
January now instant and made or expressed to be made  
the said John Frost of the one part and the said William  
Tomlin of the other part on the Security not only of the  
said hereditaments and premises here

# Local Heritage Study

## Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons

Editor Lindsay Griffin



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April 2003



*Pallett's Pond*



*Boundary Stone*



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*“It is believed locally that one adds  
ten years to one’s life  
by living on the Common”  
Know Your Parish, 1967*

## FOREWORD

The initiative for this study came from a grant application from Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society (H&CCPS) to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which was made in January 2001 as a Local Heritage Initiative. The application included an education programme, practical management works and a course to improve the skills of local volunteers in the use of chainsaws. Chris Woodley-Stewart, the Countryside Officer of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), suggested that a written study emphasising the importance of the Commons and promoting their heritage value might also be included. A proposal for this study was therefore incorporated in the grant application which was successful. The Society greatly appreciates the money which the Heritage Lottery Fund has provided since it has enabled work to go ahead which might otherwise have been hard to finance and it has enabled the Society to widen its vision of what it can do.

Lindsay Griffin was asked to co-ordinate the written study and she has consulted the H&CCPS committee, its membership past and present and other local organisations to bring the document together.

This study has provided an excellent opportunity to review the history of the Commons over the years and to document changes in management strategies in more recent times. We hope that it will provide our members and other interested people with information about the Commons, record the contribution of many local people to their maintenance and encourage further community involvement in preserving a valuable local resource. Although we intended to include a history of the local community in this study we now realise that it will take much longer to complete this section. Much of the work is under way and will be made available as a separate, loose-leaf document. It is intended to produce what we have to date, even though it is very much a work in progress, in the hope that it will stimulate further local interest. Further additions will be made as they become available. The planned wider study will include interviews with older and long-standing residents, further histories of individual houses on and around the Commons, and records of our public buildings and of our local clubs and organisations. The Commons are not only home to flora and fauna but also to a rich mix of human beings who all have different memories and different experiences to record. Families whose names crop up in records of the parishes several hundred years ago live side-by-side with those who have been here for only two or three generations, and those who have come much more recently. We hope that this study is only the beginning and that we can go some way to recording a cross-section of their activities and endeavours. It is also hoped that we can make use of our local web-site [www.cholesbury.com](http://www.cholesbury.com) to share information that we find.



Christine Stott  
*Lord of the Manors and President of the Hawridge and Cholesbury  
Commons Preservation Society*

# LOCAL HERITAGE STUDY

## Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons



*Views of Hawridge Common*



*Morning tea at a working party*

# LOCAL HERITAGE STUDY

## Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Obviously a study such as this can only be successfully accomplished with the help of many people and I would like to thank the following for their work in bringing it to fruition:- Each of the five chairmen of H&CCPS who still live locally and the families of those chairmen who have since died, for their recollections of experiences as chairmen; members of the Committee past and present for their recollections and corrections; Christine Stott for her insights into the role of the Lord of the Manors and for access to Manorial Records; Mike Fletcher for H&CCPS membership records; Caroline Coates for information about interviewing techniques; Steve Clark and Chris Brown for permission to use the local web-site and help in doing so and Chris for permission to include his study of the Cholesbury Fort; Paddy Thomas, Evelyn Money and other members of the Local History Group and Shirley Blomfield and the Millennium Committee for their valuable assistance and for access to the Local History Archives; Les Gomm, Windsor Thomas, David Barnard, Clive Carey and Oliver Parsons for the use of their photographs and Oliver for his patient explanation of the vagaries of computers and painstaking editing; Maureen Newall for her section on horse-riding on the Commons; Edward Newmark for his memoir and much useful information on a variety of topics; Barry Tompson for his recollections of his childhood in Cholesbury; Richard Wyatt for information about the Cricket Club; David Barnard for his sections on walkers and memorials on the Commons and also his work on the maps and on editing; Geoff Larminie, formerly Director of the British Geological Survey, for information about the geology of the Commons; Emily Martin, Environmental Records Officer for help in locating data of flora and fauna found on the Commons and Bucks Environmental Records Centre for permission to use this information; Anna Seton for her work on plant species and Chris San Martin for checking the plant data; Roy Maycock, Bucks County Recorder for the Botanical Society of the British Isles for his encouragement and meticulous attention to detail with the flora and fauna sections; Julia Carey, Bucks Countryside Officer for providing information about the dewpond and suggesting suitable contacts with other

areas of expertise; Dan Merrett, Bucks People and Wildlife Officer of Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) for his report on the ponds and recommendations for their management; Martin Albertini, Bucks County Moth Recorder and Peter Hall for permission to use their data on moths, butterflies and other insects; Clive Carey for information about fungi; Linden Bevan-Pritchard, Sue Fletcher and Jenny Parsons for help with updating the list of birds seen here; friends and neighbours who have made observations of the changes in flora and fauna over time and who have given a great deal of information about the Commons generally; Isobel Clark for help in adjusting the graphs; Robin Ollington and Frank Lee for their patience in the design and production processes; Rod Griffin who contributed the sections on management strategies and considerable help with the flora and fauna as well as many useful suggestions for editing.

I also acknowledge the foundations for such a study which former residents have laid down. In particular we are indebted to George Bunton, author of *Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons - A History*, written for the Commons Preservation Society in 1988 (revised 1992 by Brenda Nicholson); David and Joan Hay, authors of *Hilltop Villages of the Chilterns*; General Money and other founding members of the Local History Group who assiduously collected local records and filed them in the "Black Box" (now the Local History Group Archive) and to various local groups whose publications have proven very useful.

The study includes the written work of many people and I have felt it better to leave them to write in their own style rather than impose uniformity overall. Given the help that I have received, I hope my mistakes will have been eliminated but if this document sparks debate or prompts others to fill in gaps or to write their own reflections then it will also have served its purpose. Many questions remain unanswered and many avenues unexplored.

Lindsay Griffin, Editor December 2002

# HISTORY OF COMMON LAND IN ENGLAND





# HISTORY OF COMMON LAND IN ENGLAND

*Common land is uncultivated land over which certain people who are not the owners have specified rights. Commons originated in the medieval system of cultivation of lands in England where each vill or township was surrounded by arable land, meadows and pasture and also by waste-land. From each waste householders were entitled to take wood for repairs and fuel and also to turn out their beasts to graze. In the terminology of the law these rights were profits in common, exercisable over the waste or common.*

## Rights of Common

There are a number of rights which could be exercised by commoners, the most frequently used being: -

- Pasture:** the right to graze cattle or other livestock, usually a specified number to ensure that the land is not overgrazed
- Turbary:** the right to dig peat or turf for fuel in the commoner's own house
- Estover:** the right to take timber for repairs or fuel for the commoner's own use
- Piscary:** the right to take fish, fowl or game
- In the soil:** the right to remove sand, gravel or minerals for use on his own holding.
- Pannage:** the right to allow pigs to root around for acorns or beechnuts

## Land Title

After the Norman Conquest title or ownership of the waste-land was given to the Lords of the Manors who were the landowners of the smallest units of land in the hierarchy consisting of the King, Earls, Barons, Knights and then Lords of the Manors (LoMs).

In general the King retained 2/7 of the value of the land for his own use and that of his household, 2/7 was allocated to the church and the remainder to his followers.

Many conflicts of interest arose from the allocation of title to the Lords of the Manors. However the Statute of Merton (1235) and the Statute of Westminster (1285) confirmed the Lord's right to take for his own use any waste land, provided that he left sufficient for all the animals which the commoners were entitled to graze. This process was known as **Approvement**. Of course the Lord of the Manor was the final arbiter of how much land was sufficient!

As a result of changing agricultural practices and a marked increase in the population in the 19th century, an Act of Parliament was passed to control the use of approvement and in 1893 this practice was prohibited except by the consent of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Another practice, which had an even greater impact on people's rights, was that of **Enclosure**. This began in the 12th century, proceeded rapidly in the periods 1450-1640 and 1750-1860 and was virtually complete by the end of the 19th Century. Enclosure differed from approvement in that all or part of the waste was discharged from rights of Common. In effect this meant that the common land enclosed was no longer regarded as Common but had a separate use. From 1709 land could be enclosed by Act of Parliament and numerous waste areas were enclosed, at least ostensibly to provide greater food production. Perhaps as much as 1/7 of common land might have been lost overall, including that in our neighbouring villages Buckland Common and St Leonards. The loss of so many of the open spaces, especially around urban areas led to public alarm and in 1852 the Inclosures Act (that was the favoured spelling at the time!) prevented further instances except by Act of Parliament. In 1876 the Commons Act required a ministerial enquiry and approval of Parliament showing that any further enclosure would be of benefit to the local community. The last enclosure of Cholesbury Common was made in 1919 by the then Lord of the Manors, Mr Henry Turner, to "protect the cricket pitch for Hawridge and Cholesbury Cricket Club." Presumably he was concerned about the state of the cricket pitch due to the cattle grazing on it. Only the cricket square is actually roped off.



*Cricket Pitch*

According to English Nature (1999) there remain over 7,000 commons in England covering some 370,000 hectares (914,000 acres) or 4% of the total area, but there are wide differences in the amounts of common in particular areas. For example there are very few in the Midlands whereas in Surrey most villages retain their common land. Overall, historians are divided as to whether enclosure was or was

not beneficial. Where there was not the need for open land, as there is in the more densely populated south, perhaps this was not such an issue. Here in Buckinghamshire, however, common land was to provide a valuable recreational area where once it had been such an important part of the commoners' livelihoods. In the Chilterns there remain 213 commons covering 2,159 hectares (5,335 acres) or 2.6 percent of the area.

Much of the credit for the survival of the commons in this country, the protection of the rights of commoners and of the general public to enjoy them for recreation is due to a group of men including Lord Eversley, Henry Fawcett and Sir Charles Dilke. They formed a national body called the Commons Preservation Society in 1866 (renamed the Open Spaces Society in 1910). This group effectively lobbied parliament and, when necessary, the Society acted to police the protection of commons, as their henchmen did at Berkhamsted by pulling down fences which Earl Brownlow had erected.

As time went on fewer and fewer commoners exercised their rights of common and increasingly the perception grew that commons were for everyone. Legally this was not the case, but in 1925 the Law of Property Act gave the public the rights of access for air and exercise on all urban commons. Like all of the other rights of common these have been jealously guarded and have frequently been the cause of dissension when there have been conflicts of interests. Individuals have different perceptions of how the commons should be and different expectations of how they should be used. Inevitably difficulties arise and can provide those who manage the commons with a challenging role. Examples of such conflicts on Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons have been those between horse-riders, cricketers and the walking public which will be dealt with at greater length in the section on The Role of the Lord of the Manors and the recollections of past Chairmen of Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society.

In fact, the decisions relating to commons are the responsibility of the Lord of the Manor. However jealously local inhabitants might guard their "rights", ultimately the Lord of the Manor is the owner and, like all landowners, has the right to choose what should be done with his/her land provided rights of commoners are respected and the 1925 Act is upheld.

A more recent source of conflict has been investigated by Parliament. This relates to the need for many property owners to drive across common land to reach their houses. Since the by-laws specifically prohibit driving on commons, no one has a right to do so except to park within 15 yards of a road. The owners of large amounts of Common land such as the National Trust have routinely charged around 6% of the selling price of a property to grant such a right (**Lease of Easement**), and this has prompted other owners to follow suit. The example of a nearby landowner (a local council) who charged 10% caused a great deal of anxiety locally, with real estate agents and solicitors alike being keen to ensure that Leases were settled at the time of sale. Our own Lord of the Manors resisted charging more than a nominal fee

and a ruling by Parliament in July 2002 (SI 2002 No 1711) on this matter is now in place which sets fees depending on the age of the property.

**Encroachment** on commons has been and continues to be practised. This occurs when individuals make use of tracts of land on commons without the permission of the Lord of the Manors. There are numerous historical examples in Hawridge and Cholesbury. They range from annexing parts of the Common as gardens or fields, to erecting houses or other buildings. These offences were dealt with by the Manorial Court, usually by means of fines. As Bunton noted in his history of Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons, outsiders were frequently dealt with much more harshly than the locals. Sometimes encroachments have been sanctioned by the Lord of the Manors but, although he/she can sell parts of the Common to individuals, the land purchased still remains common and is still subject to all of the laws of common and their restrictions. The most recent example of a lengthy dispute regarding encroachment arose in 1981, when the then owners of Fox Barn, Cholesbury erected wooden posts on a strip of common land in front of their property. The claimants argued that the strip of land was not in fact common land but had been wrongly designated as such. The Commons Commissioner decided against their claim. However his decision was overturned at a hearing by a judge in chambers. Because of a misunderstanding, the Lord of the Manors, the County Council and the H&C Commons Preservation Society failed to contest his decision. This was a very costly exercise and pains would be taken to ensure that it does not happen again.

#### Why Commons are Important

As we have seen commons were once of huge importance to the livelihoods of commoners, and in some areas of the country they still are. In other areas such as SE England the most positive economic impact may now be indirect, as a result of visitors spending money with local enterprises such as public houses. Commons undoubtedly play an increasing role in providing open space for recreation for the wider community, but their role goes much further than that. In this country many of the farming practices and pressures of population have, over the years brought about significant reductions in the numbers of animal and plant species. Less intensively managed common land and other sites such as cemeteries have therefore become havens for some plant and animal species. Unfortunately even on commons the changes brought about by the cessation of grazing have meant that some plants, once prevalent, are becoming rarer but with active management, based on sound ecological principles, it is quite possible to reverse these trends.

Commons can also play an important role in providing valuable archaeological information about the area. "Low levels of management and minimal soil disturbance have left a "time capsule" of past activity, including numerous internationally important archaeological sites and historic landscapes".



*View to The Bury*

# HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY COMMONS



## HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY COMMONS – A BRIEF OUTLINE

*The Commons occupy a strip of land some 2.3km long, adjoining the County boundary with Hertfordshire, in the Parishes of Hawridge and Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire, high in the Chiltern Hills. Grid Reference: SP 932074 at the NW tip of Cholesbury Common to SP 951060 at the SE extremity of Hawridge Common.*

Like the rest of the Chilterns, the Commons lie on chalk with pockets of clay and weathered flints. When it was grazed the vegetation was predominantly chalk grassland with patches of plants which grow only on the acid soils of the clay or of flint where it has broken down. Other than flints, which are widespread, occurring naturally in the chalk, there are few exposures of rock in the area except for Puddingstones, which have a matrix of hard siliceous sandstone packed with pebbles. Geoff Larminie, a former Director of the British Geological Survey explains that Puddingstones would have been much more prevalent here in the past but that many would have been removed to be used as building materials. Because there were few other suitable materials many of the older buildings are of flint and brick construction, since flints were readily available and the main local industry was in brick making using the local clay. This is a long-standing tradition since the Roman remains at Verulamium (St Albans) and the Norman castle at Berkhamsted have a similar construction - flint walls with fireplaces etc. in brick. The major difference over the years was the shape of the bricks, which have become thicker over time.

Hawridge and Cholesbury Manors were separate holdings until 1650 when they were both bought by the Seare family and they have continued to be jointly owned ever since. Bunton provides a short history of both commons (Appendix I). Together they comprise approximately 42 hectares (105 acres). Most is now wooded in 2002 but as little as 40 years ago it was largely open ground, as it would always have been whilst commoners exercised their rights to graze their cattle.



*View from the gate of Hawridge Place across Hawridge Common (around 1910)*

As agriculture has become more intensive Hawridge & Cholesbury Commons have become increasingly important for the conservation of our native plants and animals in this area. This has been recognised by

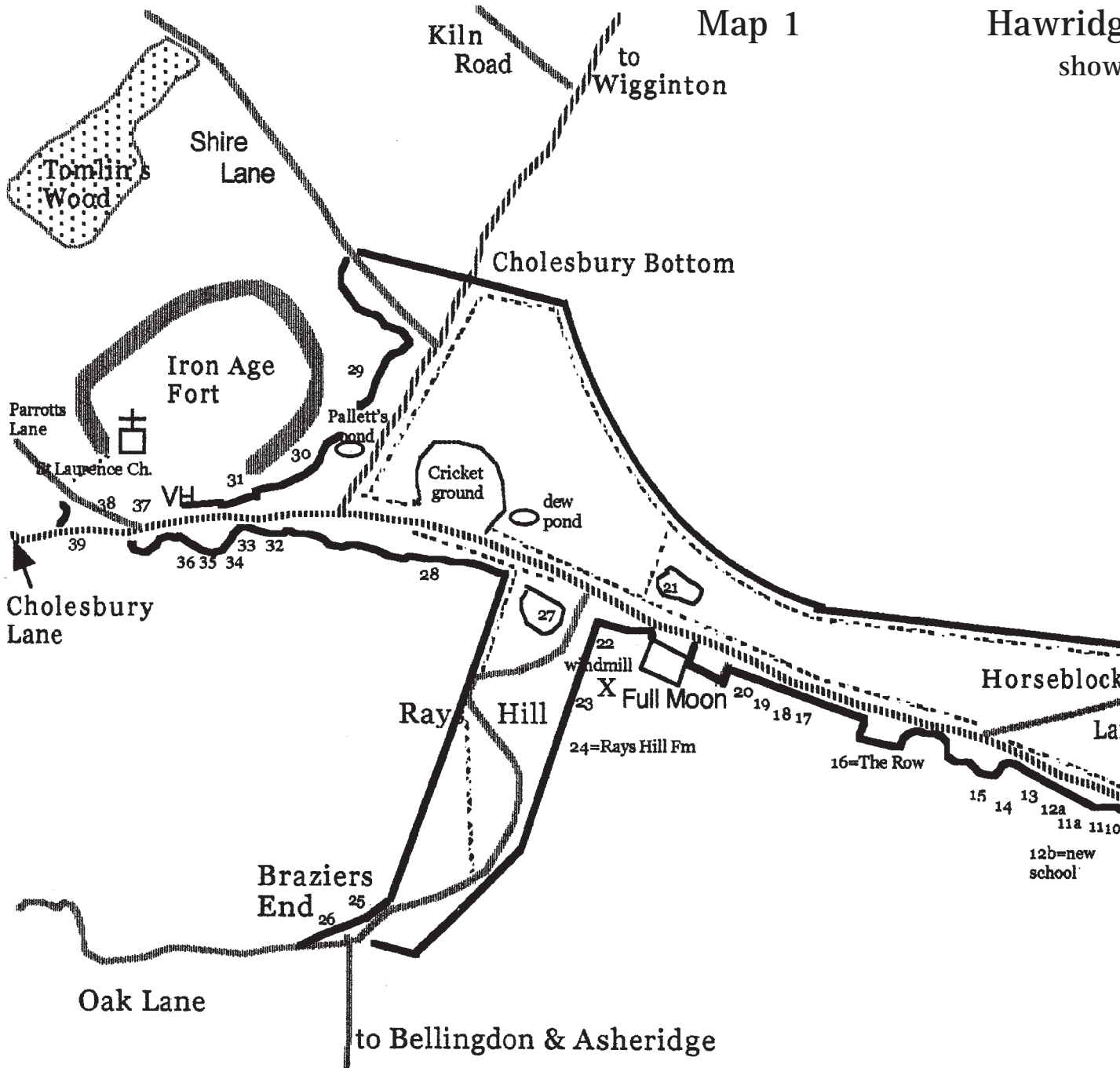


*Honeysuckle clambering*

Buckinghamshire County Council who, in January 1998, designated the Commons as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC, now known as a County Wildlife Site). To quote from the report from the County Museum:- “This fantastic length of common-land ... contains a superb mix of habitats. Much of the Common is semi-natural broad-leaved woodland of oak, beech and birch and a variety of other species. There are also several small ponds, rough grassland and a cricket pitch. Of particular interest are pill sedge and heath grass, both very unusual in Bucks because of the rarity of acid heath habitat. On Hawridge Common they grow abundantly in the same localised spot... Some areas are dominated by bracken although there have been valiant and successful efforts by local volunteers to control this invasive plant... In the woodland honeysuckle clammers across branches with occasional patches of bluebell and male fern... Of particular interest in the ponds are great crested newt and other amphibians. Other wildlife across the Commons includes willow warbler, blackcap, long-tailed tit and butterflies like the gatekeeper and brimstone.”

### Ancient Forts

The Commons lie between two ancient forts, one in the grounds of Hawridge Court (see Map 1 for locations of houses, public buildings and other landmarks), formerly the home of the more recent Lords of the Manor of both Hawridge and Cholesbury, and the other at the opposite end of the Commons behind Cholesbury Church. These hill forts were part of a network formed to protect the major trading route, the Icknield Way, which linked Salisbury Plain and East Anglia. Cholesbury was particularly important since its ponds provided a permanent water supply within the fort itself, probably the consequence of a locally perched water table, and so there was no need to dig for or to hoist up well water. This is unusual given the nature of the clay and being so



Houses  
designated by number on the map

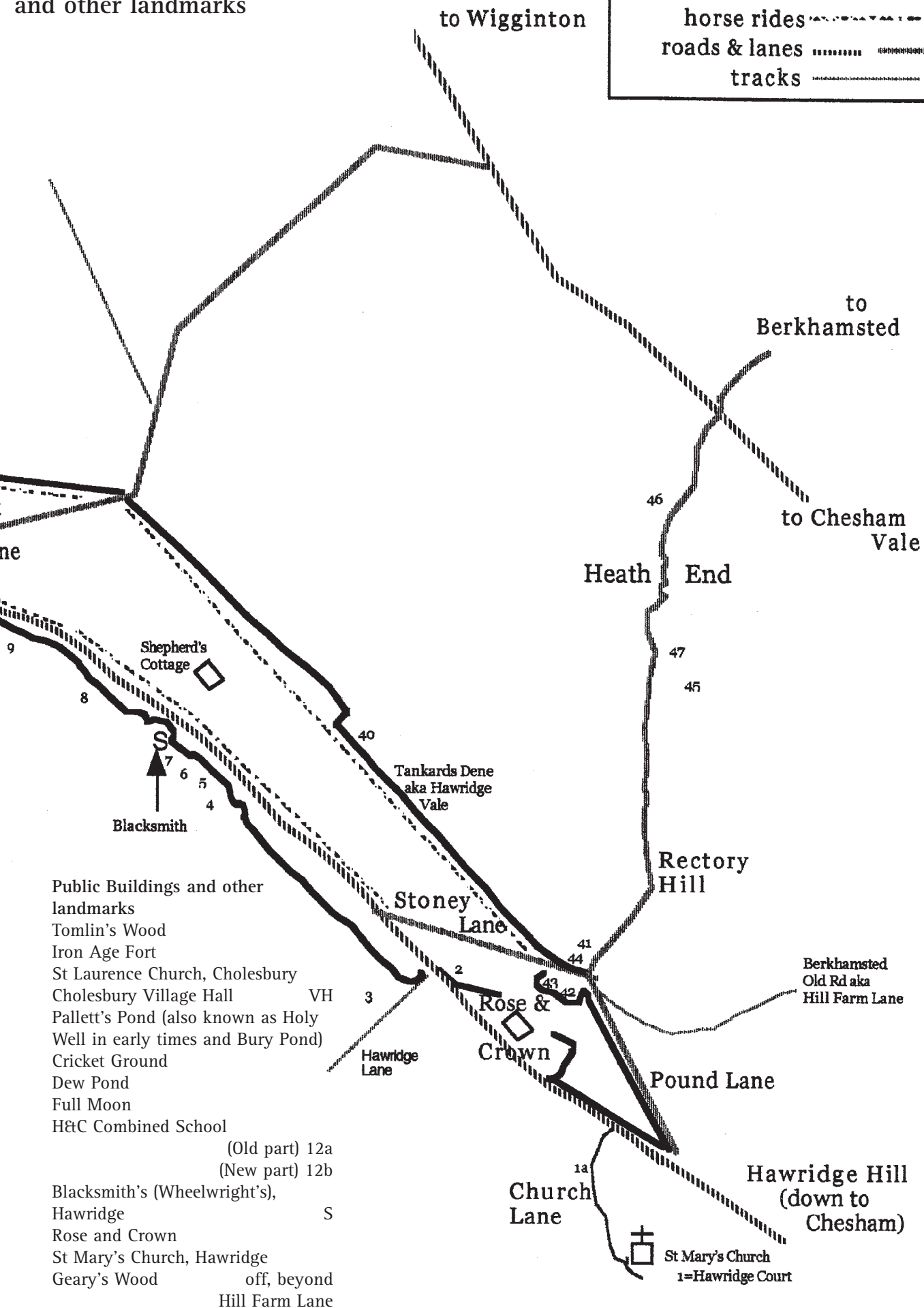
Baldwin's Farm	22	Glebe Farm	47	Milton Cottage	19
Barncroft	44	Glebe House	45	Old Forge, The, (Heath End)	46
Benton Potts	20	Hawridge Court	1	Old Mission Hall, The	9
Bowmore (Botchmore) Farm	18	Hawridge Court Farm	1a	Old Smithy	S
Box Tree Cottage	6	Hawridge Place	3	Old Vicarage, The	39
Bracken View	11a	Hayford Cottage	38	Overburnts	31
Braziers End Farm	26	High View	8	Parrott's Farm	off, Parrott's Lane
Braziers End House	25	Hillside, Sandpit Hill	off, Cho. Lane	Post Office Cottages	28
Bury, The	30	Hither Dennets	14	Quiet Corner	32
Cherry Orchards	29	Holly Cottage	17	Rays Hill Farm	24
Common Ley	27	Home Farm	35	Ridge Cottage	11
Cottage, The	10	Home Farm Cottage	36	Row, The	16
Flint Cottage	43	Home Paddock	33	Tankard's Dene	40
Four Acres	off, Cho. Lane	Ivy Cottage, Hawridge	13	Thresher's Barn	44
Fox Barn	34	Kingston Cottage	15	Tudor Cottage	4
Gateway Cottage	5	Laurels, The	2	Vale Cottages	42
		Manor House, Cholesbury	37	Vale Farm (Bottom Farm)	41
		Mermaid Cottage	21	Wayside Cottage	7
		Mill House	23	Windmill	named X

# Edge & Cholesbury Commons

showing houses, public buildings  
and other landmarks

# Houses & landmarks

edge of commons	—————
horse rides	- - - - -
roads & lanes	.....
tracks	.....



near to the edge of the plateau. (A perched water table occurs when some obstruction keeps the water level closer to the surface than at other places nearby.)

The Hays give a description of the fort as it might have been. It "covers about ten acres and lies north-east and south-west, in the form of a rectangle with rounded corners". The ditches behind Cholesbury Church are still about 20 feet deep but would have been much deeper when they were in use several thousand years ago. The fort is often known locally as the Danes' or Danish Camp and it was thought at one time to be of Saxon origin. However the vast majority of these hill forts were built in the Bronze Age in the second millennium BC or later in the Iron Age. Hay writes that the discovery of pygmy cups in the area suggest the period of about 1500 BC, however later sources say that between 400 to 100 BC is more likely. Chris Brown has collected further information about Cholesbury Fort which is found in Appendix II.

The fort at Hawridge Court also has a moat which is still very well defined. It is described by the County Archaeologist M E Farley in a letter to Mrs Money as "a ringwork, the equivalent of a Norman motte and bailey castle and probably of similar post-conquest date. There is no hint of anything earlier on the site. Obviously the site retained its significance as a manor throughout the mediaeval period, the reference to the discovery of human bones in item 2 perhaps hinting at an accompanying chapel."

## Geological Features

Geological features of interest include two large Puddingstones near to the cricket pitch. One has well-rounded pebbles typical of Hertfordshire Puddingstone. The second, larger stone has poorly rounded irregular flints and this type of stone is known as Bradenham Puddingstone or Pebblestone. There are many similar stones in other places in the Chilterns. At one time archaeologists believed that they were moved manually to their current positions in prehistoric or early historic times but Geoff Larminie says that most are actually in situ. One theory is that those at Cholesbury once marked the entrance to the fort, where the entrance to Cholesbury Church is now. Evelyn Money believes that Henry Turner, Lord of the Manors (1899-1929), had them removed to their present site since he felt that they were inappropriately placed, being a symbol of Pagan times. Whether the stones had any such significance can only be speculation.

## Manmade Hollows

Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons can provide interesting information about our forebears. For example, there are a number of manmade hollows in the Commons. The dewpond near the cricket pitch is believed by locals to be a manmade attempt to give water to cattle in an area where the drainage is so good that we can have flooding one minute and dry land

soon after. Julia Carey, a Countryside Wildlife Officer is unsure that this is actually a dewpond since they were expensive and labour intensive to build and therefore rare. However she is so far unable to come up with another more convincing theory. Apparently old Mr Pallett from The Bury used to drive through this pond to wet the wooden wheels of his cart to make them expand and help keep the metal tyres in place. One has also to remember that there were many people who passed through, droving animals (the many inns in the area provided for thirsty travellers) and the dewpond would also have provided for passing animals. There was reputed to be another dewpond near to Kingston Cottage. Fletcher Nicholson thinks that it may have been just outside his hedge on the roadside where there is a magnificent show of cuckoo-flowers each Spring.

Another hollow nearer to the Boundary Stone between Hawridge and Cholesbury opposite the Full Moon may have been the site of a post mill. This was a mill, which could be transported from place to place to serve a local community and then moved on to another. A further hollow in the ground behind Mermaid Cottage was the site of the bottle dump when it was an Inn between 1753 and 1801 and this proved popular with bottle collectors for a time. There was a public well at the bottom of Pound Lane opposite Vale Farm but it was filled in after a woman drowned herself in it. John Pople and Fred Baxter carried out an investigation of the well in the late 1980s but found nothing of significance.

Yet another hollow below the school and before Horseblock Lane was the site of the air raid shelter in World War II. The supports have long gone and so the roof has caved in but at one time up to 100 people could seek safety there. In a large number of places there were also slit trenches dug out during WWII by the Home Guard (referred to by Ron How in a taped interview available on the local web-site [www.Cholesbury.com](http://www.Cholesbury.com)). Some were also dug by the army on manoeuvres. Many of these have now been filled in to make it easier to mow the Common but there remain some examples in the woodland beside Pound Lane, beyond the Parson's Path from Vale cottages (see Map 2 for lanes and footpaths). According to Rod Griffin these trenches were clearly visible in the 1960s but are now no more than indistinct depressions in the ground. Some local residents say that these slit trenches were used by about 40 to 50 Home Guard who manned a searchlight near Hawridge Court which was apparently installed to provide protection for Bovingdon Airport.

Flint and Vale Cottages are located in a chalk pit which during the 18th C or earlier would have been used for production of lime for dressing the fields, flints for roads and building materials, and probably mortar for local house construction. There is discussion locally about another pit near to Tankard's Dene, which some residents think is a chalk pit but others believe to be the result either of a German Doodlebug (V1) or of a land mine in the war. In fact it is likely that the confusion is because



there are two hollows. One is certainly designated as a chalk pit in an 1899 map of the area. The other is less clear. There is some consensus that two V1s came down on consecutive days, dates unknown (a Wednesday at 4.55 p.m. and on the Thursday at 11.30a.m. according to Ron How). Edward Newmark believes it might have been late in 1944 or early 1945. The first was near to Glebe House. It did damage to that house, to the roofs of the barn which is now Barncroft, and of Flint Cottage, and to the ceilings of the Laurels across the valley. The second was on the hillside virtually opposite the school. It burst open the locked doors of Gateway Cottage, snapped a large beam in the bedroom "like a matchstick" and smashed the china in Box Tree Cottage next door. Barbara Clark believes that the second explosion was the result of a land mine rather than a V1. The event is firmly etched on the memory of school-children like Margaret Walton who were in class at the time although another pupil, Chris Plested is reputed to have commented "It's only a motorbike backfiring".

A doodlebug was an unmanned aircraft, using solid fuel with a relatively short range. As long as you could hear the engine as it passed overhead apparently you would be quite safe. If, however, the engine had stopped it would come down imminently and you were in trouble! Others came down in this area near to Drayton Beauchamp and Shooters Way. David Barnard explains that they were targeting London but, having no guidance system, they were just pointed in the right direction from the far side of the Channel and given an amount of fuel intended to run out over the city. It is little wonder that some missed. Ron How further explains that allied aircraft used to try to hit them off course where they could and so their original targets might have been some way away. Barbara Clark says that sometimes bombers who had missed their targets over London simply got rid of their bombs over this area with no particular target in mind.

## Pounds

Other sites of interest on the Commons are those of the local pounds where straying cattle were kept until the owner settled whatever fine was due. Cholesbury Vestry Records show that in 1848 the village surveyor was authorised to purchase an iron pound (at a cost of £6 10s), to be placed "on the Common as near to the Manor House as can be" and that a pound-keeper, one Thomas Thorn, was appointed in 1849. Part of it remained near to the village hall within living memory but was removed during World War II when there was a great need for metal for building armaments. Barry Tompson says that when the area outside the village hall was being mown to hold a fete there (possibly for the first time) the mower hit iron posts which were presumably then removed to make mowing easier in future. He and Margaret Walton think that it was about five yards east from the pathway to the village hall entrance and a few yards out from the existing fence. They believe that it was a round formation and about 10 feet across. An old

Ordnance Survey map owned by the Estate Agents Pretty and Ellis (scale 1:25,000) in the 1960s apparently showed this site. A similar pound made of wood was installed at the eastern end of the Common in Hawridge as we can infer from the name Pound Lane that leads from the Church down towards Hawridge Bottom. One of our older residents, Mr Charlie Collins tells of tending cattle on Hawridge Common in his school holidays in the late 1920s and early 30s for a family called Orchard, the residents of Hawridge Court (Now known as Hawridge Place). Charlie remembers the pound, already in a dilapidated state by that time, where the Chesham road now is on the land to the east of Church Lane. He also recalls having to ensure that the cattle did not stray onto Cholesbury Common since the Orchards only had rights on Hawridge Common.

## Archaeological Finds

Archaeological finds have also been made on the Common and nearby. Perhaps the most interesting was a Bronze Age sword found in Geary's Wood, now part of Rossway Estate but which was within Hawridge Manor until its sale in 1899, and Lipscomb, writing in 1847, states:- "A few years ago..... about half a mile from Hawridge, on the south-east, towards Chesham, some labourers found (according to the vernacular idiom of the place,) "a power of gold and silver," consisting of a quantity of ancient coins, apparently of various reigns; but not in such a perfect state of preservation as to enable, even those most conversant with such subjects, to fix their exact date. They were generally found scattered in various directions; but in weeding a piece of arable land, shortly afterwards, an earthen pot was discovered, containing silver coins. How they came to be deposited in the same receptacle, and at what period of time, can not be ascertained; but the account given of them, by the Rev. David Roderick, Minister of Choulsbury, who was well acquainted with such matters, was, that all the coins were of the reign of King Edward VI. and of Valentinian, the Roman Emperor. This account, however seems rather improbable; and the matter will no doubt ever remain in the greatest obscurity. The coins were principally disposed of at Chesham, by the labourers who found them". (Rev. David Roderick was Curate and Lecturer at Cholesbury from 1784 until 1840)

Several residents have found arrows made of flint and other flint tools. Branigan's "Archaeology of the Chilterns from the Ice Age to the Norman Conquest" gives good illustrations of these early tools and describes the "knapping" process used to make them.

A further reference to less peaceful times on the Commons may be reflected in the name of the lane, which crosses Hawridge Common opposite the school, Horseblock Lane. Local legend has it that, in the Civil War, a fierce battle was pitched there and either so many horses were killed that they blocked the lane, or dead horses were used to block the lane as a deliberate strategy to deter the enemy. Hay gives a somewhat less colourful view that Parliamentary soldiers were likely to

have been quartered in the villages in the 1640s when the battle of Aylesbury and subsequent skirmishes in Wendover and Chesham were fought. At one time archery was practised where the cricket pitch is now on Cholesbury Common. Whether this was for recreation or to practice fighting skills is unclear.

## Tracks

There is also evidence of ancient tracks on the Commons. For example the Drovers' Path which runs from Horseblock Lane to the main Chesham road was at one time part of the route from Aylesbury to Smithfield (see Map 2). An old cart track called Stoney Path runs across the Common from a point opposite High View to Horseblock Lane before the bottom corner. Other old tracks include the Parson's Path (also known as Church Path) joining Rectory Lane and Church Lane to form part of a direct route from the Glebe to Hawridge Church. Some lanes such as Horseblock Lane, Stoney Lane, Pound Lane in Hawridge and Rectory Lane, from Hawridge Bottom to Heath End have now been tarred, but they existed as tracks much earlier. The road to Chesham, now the main thoroughfare, was relatively recent. Before this the roads ran across the Commons rather than along it. Manorial Records show that the Chesham track was widened during Malcolm Stewart's time as LoM (1935-48). Not all of the locals approved of the new road. Milton Rosmer and his wife Irene Rooke, both Shakespearean actors, who were living in Box Tree Cottage at the time, were moved to complain to the Lord of the Manors. In his letter of reply, dated 19th March 1938, Malcolm Stewart states:

"I presume the last part of your letter refers to the recent road works on Hawridge Hill. I agree fully that these works do not beautify the district but I'm afraid that they are necessary. The people of Hawridge are largely dependent on the road in question and Vale Road to reach Chesham. The Vale Road was closed for several months last year owing to the floods and was again closed for a few weeks recently owing to sewerage works at the Chesham end. Last year also there was a big slip of earth on Hawridge Hill that completely blocked the road. These facts brought continued hardship to people at Hawridge who had many miles extra to get to Chesham by a different route. Pressure was therefore brought to bear on the road authorities to enlarge and improve the whole road from Hawridge to Chesham. A start was made on Hawridge Hill to prevent further falls of earth, and I understand that plans are already being got out for the drainage and widening of Chesham Vale Road. This is a difficult question but Hawridge cannot be off the map and at the same time accessible to traffic - including the "bus" from Chesham." Local residents who had to make similar detours for many months in 2001 when the road was closed due to the damage done by flooding, subsequent repair work and the installation of further drainage recognise the problems!

Bucks County Council have records of work done to

upgrade the surface in 1941 but it was not until the 1950s that the surface was tarred as it is today. Barry Tompson writes "the colour of the gravel road was so much more pleasing to the eye." He captures some of the excitement of the local children on the days on which the road was being resurfaced. "In those days it was re-covered with brown/yellow gravel poured onto fresh, hot tar with that searing smell of an old sooty chimney. The shrill whistle of the steamroller was an unusual and exciting sound. The great machine, green with red wheels and a tall black chimney belching smoke, and its driver and fireman, both unrecognisable under the grime of their smoky faces, was surrounded by a gang of fascinated kids."

## Memorials

In more recent times the Commons have provided site for a number of memorials. The Boundary or Jubilee Stone was erected to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Unfortunately we have found no record as to who was responsible for this initiative nor of the history of another stone at the bottom of the Common, marking the boundary between Hawridge and Cholesbury parishes.

After the Second World War, public fund raising events such as whist drives were held to finance the bus shelter, which was erected by the Parish. Gertie Brown, a Parish and District Councillor may have been the driving force behind this initiative. Its design as a hexagon was possibly to remember the six years of the Second World War (1939-1945). Internally it was in 3 sections to ensure that those waiting for the bus could do so without having to sit in the wind whichever direction it was driving. It



*Millennium tree planting*

was decided in 1999 that the now derelict shelter should be demolished and replaced by a hexagonal seat with funds from bicycle track initiatives. Opposite Ridge Cottage, Hawridge there is a wooden bench in memory of Edgar Taylor, a local architect and early member of the Commons Preservation Society and outside Cholesbury Village Hall is another bench in memory of Gill Goodchild, also a former committee member.

Several commemorative trees have been planted for local residents on the two Commons. These include a stand of

beech near the cricket ground in memory of Fred Penn in recognition of the work that he had done for the local community. A list of others is included in Appendix III. Memorial tree planting is a long established practice. For example a Golden Jubilee oak tree was planted in 1887. Its location is not known but Vestry Records show that it cost 2/6d (12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>p) for the tree and 3/6d (17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>p) for the surrounding railing. The beautiful horse chestnut tree near to the Cricket Pavilion was planted in 1937 for George VI's coronation and as recently as December 2001 three whitebeams were planted, two at Cholesbury near to the new bench by the Cricket Club and one at Hawridge opposite The Cottage. This event was organised by the Millennium Committee as part of the Bucks Millennium Tree Planting Project.

### Economic Uses of the Commons

The most important economic use of the Commons in former times was the right to graze animals upon them. Most of the surrounding farms were tenanted small-holdings for which this additional grazing would have been vital to their survival. According to Vestry minutes of 1850, people assessed for a rate of at least £4 were allowed to graze 1 head of cattle or 1 horse and 1 sow in addition for every £4 of their rate. In total the owners of these properties (the Commoners) were, and still are theoretically able to graze approximately 160 head of cattle. In some cases they could exchange horses for cows or 2 calves for a cow, and some could also have pigs (70 sows in total). In other cases the rights of herbage (another expression for right of pasture), turbary (the right to take peat or dig turf for fuel) and estover (the right to take timber from the Commons) are also included.

Bunton (Appendix IV) presents a summary of Rights of Common registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965, listing the rights of 23 existing properties in the villages and the places where these rights could be exercised. These reflect the historical contributions to the Poor Rates.

The owner of Overburnts is listed as having rights to graze 50 cows and 100 sheep, a right of estover and also of turbary on Cholesbury Common. This constitutes the greatest number of grazing rights of any property in Cholesbury. At first this seems anomalous since Overburnts is a relatively new house. The house was built by the Browns who owned the brickworks in Shire Lane, using over-cooked bricks. (Over-cooking does not impair their usefulness but makes them less desirable commercially.) Mrs Gertie Brown was also the owner of Cholesbury Manor House at the time of registration in the 1960s and she registered its rights in the name of her residence, Overburnts, rather than the Manor House which was rented out.

None of the rights of pasture is now exercised on either of the two Commons although occasionally local residents have grazed their animals by consent of the Lord of the Manors but without actual Commoner's rights. The right of estover is still sometimes practised by those with rights to do so.

### Poor Relief

The importance of the contributions levied to assist the poor must be stressed. The system of Poor Relief was based on legislation dating back to Elizabeth I (The Act of Elizabeth 1601) and updated in legislation from Speenhamland (1795) in which the Parish was the unit responsible for caring for the poor and for administering relief. The local vicar had responsibility to oversee this. There were many advantages in such a system since the recipients of relief were known to those responsible for issuing payments and judgements were made according to how well-deserving the recipients were seen to be. An example from Cholesbury Vestry Book states "Agreed that Joe Core be found work at the stone pit and that he be allowed 4d. a load for breaking stone sufficiently small to be applied on the roads. And that he be paid partly in bread and partly in money. He being a drunken and disorderly fellow."

Recipients who were able to work were required to do so, often in helping to maintain the local roads. There were many unemployed in Cholesbury where the farms were small and only provided work for the family, and the brickworks at Buckland Common only provided work in the summer months. Relief was also given to old men no longer able to work, widows and fatherless children. Relief was sometimes given in kind rather than cash. For example there are records of shoes, clothing, blankets, board and lodging and funeral expenses. Hay reports that when William Forster died the parish paid:

	£	s	d.
Bread and Cheese and Beer for Forster's funeral		2	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
Shroud for Forster		1	8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
Expences (sic) for doing for Forster		4	6
Parish Clerk for funeral expenses		6	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>

This did not include the cost of his coffin which would also have been met. In July 1833 Walter Carpenter was paid £2. 19. 0 for four coffins.

Those receiving relief were also often required to attend Church in order to qualify for their weekly payment. Hay cites the case of John Joiner (or Joyner) for whom the Hawridge Vestry made provision (1822) with the stipulation that he "attend some place of Worship every Sunday when his health permits. He being now 87 years of Age." John Joiner may have been treated leniently, for by 1833 the Vestry were less understanding and they resolved:-

"That all paupers that are found Drinking and Smoaking in Any Publick House or Alehouse be stopped one weeks pay," and that

"All paupers attend Divine Worship Either in the forenoon or Afternoon Every Sunday Except prevented

by illness. And then to Give Notice to the Overseer or be stopped one weeks pay.”

A major disadvantage of the system of the Parish having responsibility for the poor was unfortunately well illustrated at Cholesbury where the rate-payers with only one or two exceptions were living at a subsistence level themselves. The land is not prime farming land and the winters were harsh. The members of the Vestry, several of whom were tenant farmers, must have had a difficult time trying to reconcile the needs of the poor and the ability of the rate payers to pay.

In 1832 Cholesbury gained some notoriety nationally since the local rate-payers were unable to provide sufficient to keep the poor in the Parish. In an uncited document provided by Ann Knowles-Brown, “Cholesbury the parish that went bust by P J Moss” (Appendix V), the author explains that many farmers in the area abandoned their farms rather than pay the rates due. The Reverend H P Jeston, the local vicar went to great efforts to provide for the poor. “He provided bread and potatoes for fifty eight parishioners as well as suggesting, with the help of the local justices and MP, that an additional rate in aid amounting to fifty pounds be levied in the neighbouring parish of Drayton Beauchamp.” Needless to say the rate payers of Drayton Beauchamp were not keen to take on this extra responsibility but they produced about £50, and the parishes of Aston Abbots and Grove contributed £26 and £15 respectively. (There was a long association between Cholesbury and Drayton Beauchamp going back to Norman times, when they were both part of the same estate and the less fertile land around Cholesbury was used for summer grazing.)

The Rev Jeston also presented his case at petty sessions in Nov 1832 in a heart-rending account of his dilemma. “...Our rates are 30s in the pound and from this circumstance the land is nearly all abandoned. In fact not any more money can be collected, and we have not a person of wealth here but myself and my income is under £150 per annum and I have a wife and family to support. The poor have no support other than the bread and potatoes furnished to them by me but even this I cannot continue many days and when discontinued I must quit my house and parish for it is impossible to stay here and see the poor starve. The whole of the cultivated land in this parish is only 110 acres of which 87 are abandoned.” Appendix VI lists some extracts from the Cholesbury Poor Relief records of 1832-33 which clearly illustrate the crisis which Cholesbury faced.

Anxious that other parishes would not claim similar hardships, The Poor Law Commission Report of 1834 was unsympathetic to Cholesbury’s plight and took the view that the major problem was “intemperance and idleness”. A new centralised system replaced the parish responsibilities and relief for the poor was dispensed by Boards of Union through workhouses. This system was to survive until 1930.

## An End to Grazing

When George Brown, who lived at Hillside on Sandpit Hill, finally gave up grazing his cows on the Commons it marked the end of their use for economic purposes and was to prove a real turning point in their management. Bunton quotes this as 1963 but both Ann Knowles-Brown and Maureen Newall who came to live in the villages in



*View across the Common*

1964 remember seeing him after that and so the date must have been a little later (perhaps late 1964 or 1965). According to Ron How, George Brown had no rights of Pasture on the Common but in the absence of other Commoners exercising their rights, the Lord of the Manors appreciated the use of his 6 or 8 cattle in controlling the growth of scrub. Many of the locals have reminiscences of George sitting by the bus shelter all day, chatting to passers-by and watering his cows at Pallett’s Pond. Others like Charlie Collins tended cattle on the Commons themselves and during the 1950s Geoff Tompson who lived in the Manor House at Cholesbury also used to graze cattle on the Commons when his son Barry was available to look after them in the school holidays. Ron How refers to 2 young lads called Richens from Woodview Cottage, The Vale who used to bring two cows to the Commons on a daily basis after school. He believes that this might have been the last use made by a Commoner. The Richens family owned about 20 acres of farmland opposite Woodlands Farm.

Many of the long term residents remark on the difference to the Commons in the intervening years and talk of the open spaces with views across the valley to Heath End, “almost to Berkhamsted “ as one former resident said. Ron How laments the loss of views and points out that Bucks is a very beautiful county, well endowed with treed areas but few places with spectacular views. There were however, some stands of mature trees on the Commons, which from their uniform ages must have been planted by somebody. For example, opposite Box Tree Cottage, Hawridge, there remains a magnificent stand of mature beech trees which are at least 150 years old. It is possible that they were planted in Victorian times. According to the well-known naturalist Richard Mabey, many beech stands were planted at that time to enhance the beauty of

historical sites and ruins. Cholesbury Camp and Berkhamsted Castle have similar stands. Some of the existing trees and boundary hedgerows also show signs of the ways in which our ancestors used the Commons. At the south end of Hawridge Common, above Flint Cottage there are a number of large old hazel trees which have multiple stems. This is because they have been cut back (coppiced) many times to provide small wood which could be split for hurdle making or used for bean sticks and other uses around the garden. Nearby at the top of a bank and ditch which marks the boundary of the Common and the Waltons' field their hedge of hornbeams have tortured shapes recording the times in which they have been managed by laying. The hedges on the long north eastern boundary of the Commons are not so clearly defined - in some areas being a thicket some 20m wide, but the diversity of tree and shrub species which can be found may indicate an ancient origin. As a rule of thumb ecologists consider that, in some parts of the country, every individual species can indicate 100 years in the age of the hedge. However, Julia Carey points out that this does not necessarily apply in the Chilterns where there is a long history of human habitation. Here we can have ancient hedges with only one or two species and much more recent hedges with many species.

Other mature trees have fared less well. The ravages of the Dutch Elm disease of the 1970s took its toll of a stand of elms almost opposite the blacksmith's and of the other mature elms around the Commons. Mature ash trees opposite The Row have been landmarks for years but are now beginning to decay.

As well as grazing, the growth of gorse and bracken was kept under control by routine burning of the Commons, particularly in areas which were less accessible to cattle. For example the steep bank behind Flint Cottage, Hawridge was burned annually by the locals and areas of gorse at the northern end of Cholesbury Common were also burned until about the 1950s. The Waltons remember many parts of the Common being burned though not in any controlled way. They believe that it was often done on purpose but quite unofficially. The fire brigades from local towns would arrive and monitor the situation to ensure that it did not get out of hand but it was simply regarded as a normal occurrence by the local residents and it dealt with the bracken and scrub for another year. In fact, the current Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society management plan still includes the cutting and burning of gorse. This practice, though very effective, would no longer be permitted on a large scale because of clean air legislation and also because it would be very detrimental to wildlife.

## Recreational uses of the Commons

The Commons are used by a large number of people for their leisure. Today we see children flying their kites or building "houses" and "shops" with fallen branches, and families picnicking. Many of those who grew up in the area talk of the fun they had there, playing hide and

seek in the bracken, or informal games of cricket or football. Also popular was fishing on Pallett's pond with a hazel wand for a rod, a piece of black cotton for a line, a bent pin for a hook or a worm tied on without a hook. The sticklebacks were probably fairly safe! Then there was the time in the winter of 1947/48, when it was safe to skate on the pond. Again this brings happy memories for those involved. Barry Tompson remembers the pond being crystal clear until about 1956, when the Council made up the edge of the road and it became cloudy. Its condition further deteriorated when people, heedless of the pond's integrity, introduced bulrushes and other non-native plants and even at one point, it is believed, a terrapin.

Other activities enjoyed by adults in the past were bowls played at the Full Moon. Quoits were played against other local teams at Hawridge and a few years ago members of a working party came across a group playing a similar game with horseshoes. Dominoes and other games were also played in the local pubs and the local men played games, including billiards in Cholesbury Village Hall in the early days.

Special events such as the celebration of the Queen's Coronation have also been held on the Commons. Someone set fire to the first enormous bonfire built to celebrate the event, a week before the actual day and Barry Tompson writes of the frantic efforts by all of the villagers to build another in time. "Fred Penn organised the local lads to help, awarding a prize to the boy with the blackest face from retrieving charred timbers from the earlier fire. Alan Brown won the prize with Mick James a close second. For the next week the new bonfire was guarded day and night to ensure that it was not lit again. There are tales of some of the watch falling asleep on duty and waking with a start when their relief approached. Thinking that they were up to no good, the relief only just escaped being attacked by the watch."

Barry also recollects that, "on the actual day, the cricket pitch was the focus of activity with a fancy dress competition for everyone. The top prize was won by Fred Penn dressed up as an old lady being pushed around in a bath chair by Jack Arnold. There were also sports events for the hundred or so people taking part."

Another event, which takes place annually, is the combined Churches Fete. This is always on the August Bank Holiday Monday. It is organised by St. Laurence Church, Cholesbury one year and then St. Mary's Church, Hawridge the next and the proceeds divided between the two. It is always well supported and provides fun for all ages as well as the opportunity to dispose of and then to buy replacement home made cakes and preserves, knitwear, bric-a-brac and second hand books!

## Major User Groups

### Walkers

(David Barnard)

People walk on the Commons to exercise themselves or their dogs and children, to observe the flora and fauna, to enjoy the open countryside, or as part of longer expeditions with rucksack, map and compass. Everyone has the right to walk anywhere on the two Commons "for air and exercise" (as the by-laws on the three notice boards state), though in practice some areas are too overgrown for this. The cricket club would be very upset if people started walking on their central square; and the permissive horse rides are often too muddy for comfortable walking, as well as requiring care when encountering the occasional rider.

One can of course walk anywhere on the areas of grass or wood pasture but there are many well-trodden paths on the open Common and through the woodland. Some vary from year to year, but most are fairly well established though not necessarily easy to find or describe. Some seventeen of these paths are official rights of way, defined by being on the Definitive Map of Rights of Way (this was first established in the 1950s, using information from the Parish Council) held by the County Council. These are shown on the OS maps (green on the Explorer 1:25,000 series sheet 181, red on the Landranger 1:50,000 series sheet 165) and on the Chiltern Society 1:25,000 sheet 8 (Chartridge and Cholesbury) in solid black, with numbers attached. There is a legal requirement to ensure that these footpaths remain clear and the H&CCPS has given priority to keeping them open over the years. They are of particular importance to non-locals, walking their own route with a map and wishing to traverse the Commons to link paths on either side. It is quite easy to get lost on the Commons! These tracks would no doubt have had some historical significance. For example they may have been the regular routes used by a resident to his daily work or to visit family or friends. The residents of Flint Cottage have, for many years been asked by enthusiastic walkers to identify a path between Stoney Lane and the Rose and Crown pub. This has been a source of some amusement since the track in question was the route taken many years ago by people going to catch the bus. It was also used on a regular basis, by Walter Gomm and Dave Ford (and probably several others before from the nearby cottages) to get their evening pint. This footpath fell into disuse in about 1960 when the pub changed hands and the new owners actively discouraged the locals from using it by having the section which crosses their land blocked off. As a result many of the local people stopped frequenting the pub. Mr Gomm became too old and Mr Ford moved away and the path became disused and overgrown. In the 1980s another path a few yards away came into being because the Parsons walk their dogs there. "Their" track, though far more frequently used nowadays, is not on any map of the local area after some 15 years. This is because unofficial paths (paths other than those on

the definitive map) only get onto OS maps if they are clearly visible from the air and so noticed by the OS.

The great virtue of the Commons (as seen by this walker and jogger) is that one can travel in a more or less straight line between Shire Lane (fp 48r) and the top of Church Path (fp 48), two points 2.3 km apart. Here one makes only minimal contact with tarmac and meets no competition from cars. One hardly even hears them. But that's the lazy way (though the actual route, preferably taken about halfway up the slope, is a lot more than the 2.3 km aforementioned, and exceedingly slippery). If one chooses to zigzag up and down the valley side, it becomes a challenge to see how many ups and downs one can fit in between the two ends, and the distance expands accordingly. I guess a serious walker would always try to end such a walk at the top of footpath 48a, in the backyard of a convenient hostelry. A more leisurely walker might well carry field guides for tree, fungus, flower, and grass recognition. The Common hosts a great variety of all. But perhaps the most common type of walker eschews real exercise, leaving the dog to do the racing around while she or he dawdles, breathes the clean air, and occasionally whistles, whether for sheer delight or in hope of dog retrieval one cannot be sure.

### Horse-riders - A Personal Account

(Maureen Newall)

Having spent my childhood in and around the Chiltern Hills it was with great delight that we moved as a family to Cholesbury in November 1964, and in fact I still live in the same house.

When we arrived we had two very small children, Wendy (now Hutson) was 2 and a half and Andrew 9 months old. Our memories of the Commons are diverse. It was obviously very much more open and could (as any of the older residents state) be viewed clearly from Hawridge to Cholesbury or vice versa, depending on which way you faced. There were also many more Commons fires then.

We spent many happy hours on the Commons, totally unchecked, with children and pushchairs, picnics and dogs, and later with bicycles and ponies. It was wonderful to play cowboys and Indians in the bracken below the cricket pitch.

When my husband and I rode the Commons there were so few riders in the locality that it was scarcely noticeable where we went although obviously we avoided the well tended areas. At that time Mavis Hodder (now Brazil) ran a small riding school for children and ponies from Parrott's Farm and many of her groups of riders would again ride unchecked. She recalls making certain tracks with the ponies that exist for walkers only nowadays.

Times however change. The Commons are still beautiful but with the increase of leisure and transport they are used by so many more people and consequently are

much more regulated than when we first came here. I can hardly see old George Brown being allowed to graze his few head of cattle on the Common - the fear of mud and cowpats would be too great for some! He could always tell you, having sat in the old bus shelter, who had got on which bus (yes they did run regularly then) and who had returned home and at what time - a fund of village gossip! And he knew where you had been riding and so, if you fell off and lost your pony he could often pinpoint where it was, no doubt happily grazing until reclaimed.

Nothing stays the same, and as riders we have to acknowledge that we can no longer roam freely. However we are grateful for the co-operation of all concerned in making areas where we can still safely exercise our horses and enjoy the beauty and diversity of the Commons. The circular ride, which has been achieved by the permissive top ride along the Common is really welcome. Our roads are so fast and busy now that it is increasingly dangerous to ride on them. Another recent improvement from the equestrian point of view has been the opening up of the path from the bottom of Rays Hill to the Common. As a rider it is a terrifying scenario to be on a narrow country lane with high sides that your horse cannot side-step onto and knowing that the car driving up behind might not be able to stop in time and you cannot escape. Rays Hill is notoriously difficult and so the escape route is most welcome.

There was another area, many years ago, almost opposite the end of Shire Lane that was cleared for riders to be able to "school" safely and have a good canter in circles without disturbing others or spoiling other areas. This has since been taken over by gorse.

One of the strongest reasons for moving here originally was to be able to enjoy this outstanding area, walking and riding. Long may we all be able to enjoy those privileges.

#### **Hawridge and Cholesbury Cricket Club (Richard Wyatt)**

The Club was formed in 1885 and since then it has played on Cholesbury Common. In 1919, Henry Turner enclosed part of the Common for the cricket ground but for many years it had to contend with the hoof-prints of the cattle which grazed there and, in the 1960s, the local paper described the ground as "a bit of a nightmare". In the early years the Club played weekend friendly games until joining the local cricket league in 1911 which they won on a number of occasions. The teams were made up of local families whose names are still familiar today, such as Brown, Collins, James, Penn and Pledge and the Club owes its existence to the enthusiasm of the early players. For example Ernie Brown joined in 1920 and was a stalwart member for some fifty years, acting as Chairman, groundsman, secretary and playing an important part in the building of the pavilion. His son Alan, also an enthusiast, took on many of the chores to

keep the Club going, such as secretary, team captain, groundsman and umpire. Alan's son Matt, also proved a very capable player. Together, the family was a driving force in the Club for more than seventy years.

The Club has also been fortunate in having the support of another local family, the Matthews. Writing in 1985, Tim Matthews (President from 1982 until his death in 1996) wrote of his family's association with H&C Cricket Club for over seventy years. After his death, his widow Katherine became President and their son, Trafford recently became Vice-Chairman. Over the years the family have provided considerable financial and practical help which has been a major boost to the Club. In the early days the facilities were fairly primitive. In 1936, the Club was trying to negotiate the building of a clubhouse with Malcolm Stewart, LoM and they were proposing to run whist drives and concerts to raise the necessary money. In the event, it was not until 1970 that the Pavilion was built. Prior to that the clubs' players had to change in the bus shelter. An extension was put in place in 1981, which enabled the clubhouse to have its own bar and further remodelling was done to coincide with the Club's centenary. Teas had been provided at Albert Feasey's house behind Post Office Cottages for a number of years until 1959, when Albert resigned due to ill health and they were then taken in the Village Hall. Now the teams are able to enjoy facilities nearer at hand and afternoon tea is still a memorable occasion thanks to players' wives and a local volunteer, Ellie Redding.

In the 1960s the Club joined the Wycombe League where again success was achieved. Out of the Wycombe League was formed the Mid Bucks League which the Club left, after initial success, in 1979 to return to non-competitive cricket. In 1992 the club members had a change of heart and decided to re-enter the Mid Bucks League. They won their division at the first attempt and also had a fine run in the National Village Cup. Again in 1997 they did well in this competition to reach the County Final.

In 1996 the Club formed a second league XI which brought both cup and league success in 2000 by winning every game that season. In 2001, the second team was promoted two leagues and performed very well and the first team had its most successful season by finishing runners-up in their league.

In recent times, with the approval of the LoM, Christine Stott, the Club has secured its tenure on the Common and it has been able to improve the square as well as levelling and extending the playing surface. With the help of the Commons Preservation Society, hard standing has been provided close to the ground. This has proved useful, not only for the cricketers but for others visiting the Commons too.

The Club is keen to foster young talent and for many years Graham Lincoln was instrumental in training the Colts. Latterly, it has been supervised by Simon Knight

and we wait to see who the key stalwarts will be, keeping village cricket alive in the 21st Century. The Club is very proud of young players such as Paul Sawyer, who, after playing for several years at Cholesbury with his father Richard, has progressed to the ground staff at Lords and has been on a number of international tours.

Over the last twenty-five years the club membership has been drawn from a much wider area than the villages. The demography of the villages has changed. It is now much harder for the families of villagers to buy into the local area and young players tend to go off to study or to start up a life elsewhere. Residents of nearby towns and villages have come to fill the gap and they provide the local spectators with a good afternoon's cricket.

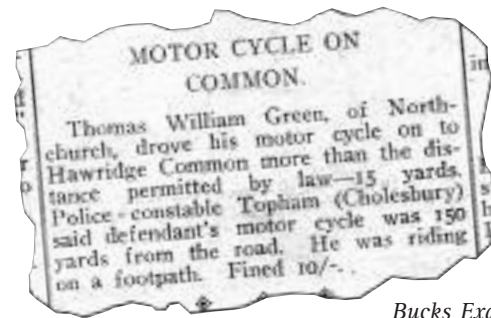
The new Club Chairman is John Caple from Cholesbury. Reg Lovett from Hawridge and Lindsey Penn from Cholesbury provide much needed assistance in ground keeping. The ground is looking immaculate at the beginning of the 2002 season and a far cry from the conditions of the early years.

### The Role of the Lord of the Manors

The role of the Lord of the Manors of Hawridge and Cholesbury has changed considerably over the years. Bunton lists early owners of the two manors (Appendix VII) and their holdings (Appendix I). It is clear that for much of the time they were each part of much larger estates. For example, from 1814 the Reverend John Jeffreys from Surrey inherited the joint manors and on his death left them to his nephew the Reverend H A Jeffreys, Rector of Hawkhurst in Kent, in 1862. When he died in 1899 his estate in this area alone comprised some 1,588 acres of "capital arable land". His estate included properties in St. Leonards; at Dundridge Farm; The Lee; Chartridge Farm; High Tree and Bottom Woods, as well as land at Ballinger Bottom; Great Pednor Farm with Bellows Wood; Little Pednor Farm; 70 acres of land around Chartridge and land in the parish of Ashley Green. His properties within Hawridge and Cholesbury were only a relatively minor part of his total holding. They included Geary's Wood; Vale Farm; Vale and Flint Cottages; two cottages and 17 acres at Heath End; the Wheelwright's (now the blacksmith's) premises among other houses in Hawridge and the Manor House, Cholesbury as well as the Lordship of the Manors of Hawridge and Cholesbury. The total sum realised from the sale was £39,074 when, for example, the Manor House and Lordships fetched £650.

The Lords of the Manor, as absentee Landlords, would have had little to do with the running of their manors here. This function was carried out by a local steward, latterly from 1860 John Francis, from 1881 Frederick How and from 1900 Christopher Francis. It would have been their job to ensure that the Commons were not over-grazed (this will be dealt with more fully in the section dealing with the management of the Commons) and that any infringements of Commons Rights were

appropriately dealt with. This was usually settled at the Manorial Court, normally held annually, at the Manor House in the case of Cholesbury and at the Full Moon for Hawridge. Here fines were meted out to the guilty



*Bucks Examiner  
9th October 1936*

parties. These could be quite harsh. For example Moses Wooster (1795) from Wigginton was fined twenty shillings for digging up a quantity of waste soil, about "a rood in measure." It is difficult to establish what a rood was at that time since it meant different amounts in different localities but it might have been as little as 1/160 of an acre up to a maximum of 1/4 of an acre. At other times locals got away with much more serious offences comparatively lightly. The number of encroachments along the main Chesham road in Hawridge alone would suggest that it was worth a try to take a bit of land here or there for building or other purposes. The Hays make the point that when the local communities were suffering hard conditions it was possibly a common sense tactic to ignore minor encroachments. Where the locals were making efforts to feed their families by using a piece of Common land as a garden this was considered better than having those same families fall on the responsibility of the Parish. At such times too locals poaching on the Commons might have got away with their activities. Certainly after WWII when the Commons were overrun with rabbits, some of the locals supplemented their meagre rations with rabbits from the Commons. After the outbreak of myxomatosis this was no longer an option.

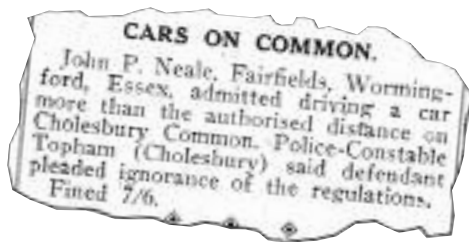
Henry Turner who lived at Braziers End House bought the Lordships of the Manors in 1899 and he became much more intimately involved with the running of the joint manors than his predecessors. Ann Knowles-Brown writes of Turner as a well-known figure with a glass eye, riding the Commons regularly on a large chestnut horse. He had a wholesale business in London, Spencer Turner and Boldero (possibly in Marylebone Road). Turner disliked Rays Hill for his horses and carriage and so had a carriage drive made straight across the fields from his home to Post Office Cottages. According to Ann this "was rolled once a day on weekdays and four times on Saturdays and not a single weed was allowed to grow on it. This was one man's full time employment". Turner was the first person to have a car in the villages and had to keep the petrol for it in 2-gallon cans in the Ice House at Braziers End for safety. Writing in 1975, Ann had met various servants



who had worked for the Turners and the older local people remembered him. He seems to have been hospitable, lavishly entertaining the hunt at home (when his wife was away!) and holding an annual bonfire for the villagers, but he brooked no infringements of the Rights of Common. Bunton quotes a letter to Earley Francis, solicitor, in which Turner writes "I bought the Manor for the purpose of preventing any outsider exercising extreme and vexatious measures to the detriment of myself or any other common-right owners.....I will allow nothing that I can possibly prevent in the shape of infringement or unfair exercise of the common rights...."

After his death in 1929 subsequent Lords of the Manor have lived here in the villages. The extent to which they have been involved with the running of the affairs of the Commons has varied with their own interests. However all would have been petitioned by local residents and organisations on a variety of matters relating, for example to disputes or to changes of use such as driveways as the car became a more common acquisition.

Letters to previous Lords of the Manors show the same concerns as those which the present incumbent receives,



*Bucks Examiner  
7th August 1936*

such as requests to put up signs, for permission to hold fetes, or for the hunt to meet, complaints about abuses of the Commons, and so on. Responding to a complaint from the Rosmers about riders on the Common, Malcolm Stewart writes on 19th March 1938:

"Dear Sir,

I am much obliged by your letter of the 16th inst. This question of riding across the Common has already been raised by other inhabitants, and I am fully in sympathy with your remarks. With regard to stopping the riding the matter is not quite so simple as it might appear and a number of legal points are involved. I am however taking legal advice on the whole question and you may rest assured that I will take any reasonable action that I can to stop the nuisance."

Many similar letters will have been written by his successors and each would also have had to deal with

matters which needed legal advice since the law relating to commons is complex.

Perhaps, from the point of view of the local inhabitants the most significant intervention on their behalf was enacted on 24th May 1939 when Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons were placed under the Law of Property Act 1925 - Section 193 by an Order of Parliament. This was at the instigation of Malcolm Stewart. The 1925 Act had made the use of Common Land for Air and Exercise a right for all on urban Commons but it was not conferred on rural ones. An application to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries had to be made in order to change the status of the local Commons. This action on Stewart's part was extremely generous and greatly benefited the general public since only those with Commoners' Rights were entitled to use them until then. Formal notices about this action must be posted in three designated places on the Commons to inform the public of the Regulations. These are listed in Appendix VIII.

A significant change in the responsibilities of the Lord of the Manors has occurred because of the change in grazing practices. Whereas the real problem for those managing the Commons when they were grazed regularly was from **overgrazing** the problem later was to become **the control of scrub**. The Lords of the Manors have ultimate responsibility for clearing the footpaths as designated on the definitive map (see the section on Walking) and for other work done on the Commons. Given that there is now no income derived from farming or forestry on the Commons this can be quite a financial burden. Elma Randall, LoM 1979-1982 investigated the possibility of taking a tree crop from the Commons but this was not found to be viable. There was therefore an increasing need either to seek help with the physical work necessary on the Commons or simply to let them become what Ron How describes as "impenetrable jungle". Successive LoMs have taken different approaches as their interests and resources permitted until the present incumbent Christine Stott. Her interest is in the active management of the Commons to conserve the various habitats, which are to be found on the Commons, and to conserve the flora and fauna. She has worked closely with the local community to achieve this and also with advisers from Conservation groups. In summing up the benefits she derives from her ownership of the Commons, Christine describes the pleasure of working with other like-minded people to make decisions, which will improve their conservation. She also enjoys meeting a wide cross-section of local people whom she might not otherwise have done, and welcomes the support that she has been given in her endeavours.



*Pallett's Pond*

# HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY COMMONS PRESERVATION SOCIETY



*Butterfly Walk*



*Dale Children*



*Working Party Bonfire*

# HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY COMMONS PRESERVATION SOCIETY

*The Commons Registration Act 1965 led to renewed local interest in various rights to the Commons. A local chartered Surveyor, Mr. Hugh Rolph, was aware of the new legislation requiring registration of Common land. He suggested that the owners of properties who had rights of Common should also be encouraged to register these, despite the fact that none of the residents of the villages now exercised their rights of pasture. In addition, it was felt that villagers who had no Commons rights should also be encouraged to register any uses they made by permission of the Lord of the Manors, such as access to properties or driveways.*

In the general discussion which ensued, interest in the preservation of the Commons was stimulated and in October 1967 the inaugural meeting of the Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society (H&CCPS) was held in Cholesbury Village Hall, chaired by Joan Walton, then Chairman of the Parish Council. The meeting was well attended and the establishment of the Society met with considerable approval. A committee of key people around the villages was elected to establish procedures for the running of the Society, its rules and aims. This was done and in December of the same year the first Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at which the guidelines were accepted and two additional committee members were elected.

## Founding Committee Members

**John Randall**,  
Lord of the Manors was appointed Honorary President.

The members of the original committee were:-

**Peter Knowles-Brown** Chairman,  
a landowner from Braziers End Farm who was also involved with the Vale of Aylesbury Hunt

**Jane Rolph** Secretary,  
a secretary with British Airways who lived in Tudor Cottage

**Thomas Haggerty** Treasurer,  
a local government officer in Parks and Gardens.

**Michael Harvey** who owned a small holding in Shire Lane and was involved with the riding community.

**Frederick Penn** who was a wood merchant and part of a long established Hawridge family, then living on Rays Hill.

**Ernest Brown** a member of a long established Cholesbury family with strong links to the Cricket Club, also of Rays Hill.

**Jean Bryan** who worked in Public Relations.

**Joan Walton** Chairman of the Parish Council, Production Department Manager at Amersham International and who has lived in Hawridge all of her life.

**Anthony Griffin** an artist who had grown up in Cholesbury and who had returned to Flint Cottage, Hawridge with his family in 1957, elected in December.

**Doreen (Tiny) Berry** who lived at Ridge Cottage and kept the village shop next door (now a private house, Bracken View), also elected in December.

This committee, calling as it did on a wide range of skills and interests of its members, worked effectively to institute the aims and guiding principles of the Society which remain largely unchanged throughout the 35 years of its history.

## Original Rules (with subsequent minor amendments)

- Full membership of the Society will be restricted to commoners and to those people living in Hawridge and Cholesbury or with land adjoining the Commons
- People living outside Hawridge and Cholesbury may become members but will not have the right to vote
- The annual subscription will be 10/- (fifty pence)
- The Annual General meeting will be held in October
- The Committee and Officers will be elected at the Annual General Meeting
- Only voting members may serve on the Committee
- The Committee will comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and not more than seven Committee members. If more than seven members are nominated there will be an election
- The Chairman will not hold office for more than three consecutive years

The principle of confining the voting rights to commoners, residents of the villages and those with land abutting the Commons still stands and is of particular importance given that so many of the Commons users do not fit into any of these three categories. A small number of non-villagers remain non-voting members (usually Commons users with an active interest in the Commons). The principle of keeping the subscription level low (currently £5 per person), but of actively encouraging those who can to contribute more, or to assist the committee in their efforts in some other way is still in place. The Annual General Meeting continues to be held towards the end of each year and remains the main forum for discussion of the work done and of the committee's proposed plans for the following year. Only one chairman stood for longer periods than 3 consecutive years. Peter Knowles-Brown stood for a further year to enable him to complete work already in place in his first term of office and again in 1981.

## Membership of the Society

Membership of the Society in its first year stood at 82 and they represented 51 families in the area. Of the original members in 1967/8 12 still remain members and of the original families who became members and who remained so in 2001, only 5 live at the same address as in 1967. In one case it is a different generation of the same family. There is some variation from year to year but there has been an upward trend overall as the figures for the last 16 years show. In 2000 Membership figures reached an all time high of 185 for the 2 villages and this number was further exceeded in 2002 to reach 189. In 2001 the number of households in the two villages stood at about 200 and the number of potential members at approximately 360.

Year	Chairman	Number of Subscriptions
1987	W Thomas	74
1988		125
1989		144
1990	O Parsons	157
1991		140
1992		129
1993	W Thomas	102
1994		105
1995		96
1996	R Griffin	136
1997		156
1998		164
1999	F Nicholson	160
2000		185
2001		175
2002	D Barnard	189

## Original Aims of the Society

- 1 To protect the Commons, keep the footpaths and rides clear and prevent the further growth of scrub
- 2 To enforce the law under the Road Traffic Act, 1960, that no vehicle is to park more than fifteen yards from the road
- 3 To apply to the appropriate authorities for information on the registration of Common Rights under the Commons Registration Act, 1965
- 4 To give the Society's views on any development which might detract from the natural beauty of the area
- 5 To nominate a member for election to Parish and District Councils
- 6 To arrange and organise an annual Social Occasion to enable members to get to know each other

7 To clear existing rubbish and prevent further accumulation

8 To preserve the Commons as a natural sanctuary for small wild animals and birds

All but two of these aims remain unchanged in 2002. Items 1, 4 and 8 represent the broad objectives of the management plans, which are discussed later. Items 2 and 7 are ongoing problems requiring attention from Committee members. The annual Summer Party is the current version of the Social Event required under item 6 whereas once it was an annual bonfire. Only Item 3 and Item 5 are no longer in operation. For at least the past 10 years the Society has not specifically nominated Council candidates (item 5). Item 3 dealing with the registration of Commons Rights was an issue only in the late 1960s when early members of the Society searched the County records to help establish what the Rights of Common were for individual properties. A letter from Peter Knowles-Brown dated April 1968 to Joan and Margaret Walton and others with Commons Rights lists the houses in the villages whose owners contributed to the Poor Rates in 1857. This document gives the owner, occupier and a description of the property as well as the amount paid in rates. From this information current owners were usually able to identify their own properties and to register their Rights though some remained unidentified and therefore unregistered (Appendix IX). In other cases such as Cherry Orchards, Mildmay and the Old Smithy the then owners of properties which were identified as having Rights of Common failed to register those rights and so lost their entitlement to them.

## Liaison with the Community

It has also been an implicit aim of the Society to maintain active communication with local residents about the Commons and their management because that is the best way of developing and keeping community support. Throughout the year newsletters are delivered to every household in the villages, to members and non-members alike, in an effort to keep local people informed of Commons concerns. The telephone numbers of the Chairman and committee members are included and opinions invited. Since its inception the Annual General Meeting has been a lively and sometimes heated forum for discussion. On some occasions guest speakers have been invited. For example, at the inaugural meeting of the Society Group Captain David Hay, author with his wife Joan, of "Hilltop Villages of the Chilterns", spoke of the importance of forming such a society to protect our heritage. Other guest speakers over the years have been Chris Woodley-Stewart from Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); Neil Jackson from the Chilterns Project; Wendy Gray, Sites of Importance for Nature and Julia Carey, Bucks Countryside Officer. Frank Sugden, who was a chairman, gave slide shows of plants found on the Commons. Another way in which members have been able to learn more about various aspects of the Commons has been on conducted walks, led by experts on such specialities as butterflies (Roger

Kemp) and grasses and other plants on the Commons (Wendy Gray). Clive Carey, who is a local fungus expert, led a walk in October 2002 to explore some of the fungi to be found here. Unfortunately, because of the long dry autumn there were insufficient fungi for the participants to sample some of the edible varieties at a barbecue. However, this walk was repeated after some rain when there were more specimens available.

Liaison with the local school is actively encouraged since it is in the hands of the children that we will eventually leave the stewardship of the Commons. The open space on the Common between Horseblock and the main Chesham road was used as the school playground until about 1970 when St Leonards school was closed and Hawridge School was enlarged to accommodate the extra pupils. At this time the field behind the school was put to use as the playground. Nature Study classes were still held on the Commons and in 1989/90 the children of the school compiled a list of butterflies which they had observed there. Their findings are included in the flora and fauna section. From time to time initiatives such as the 1989 competition to find a suitable logo for the Society have been used to encourage the children's interest in their environment. The competition was won by Edward Wright, then aged 7 and the logo is still used on Society letterheads today. More recently the Heritage Lottery Grant has provided an opportunity to develop a more active education programme for the local children and in 2002 they are helping to grow seeds for the heather regeneration project.

An introductory booklet has been prepared for newcomers to the villages by Amanda Houlihan and David Barnard. This forms another part of the HLF grant. It gives information about Commons in general and about our local Commons in particular; the workings of the Society; a local map; the rules and regulations which apply on the Commons; useful names and addresses as well as listing the annual events held on them.

It is hoped that this Local Heritage Study will itself serve to stimulate interest in our Commons and pride in the achievements of those who have been at pains to preserve them. The brief for this document was to write a history of the Commons and to promote their heritage value to the local people. As well as in book form it is intended to make the information available on the village web-site.

## **The Committee - a Communal Effort**

Over the 35 years of the Society's existence, the Committee has remained remarkably stable. Appendix X lists all the Committee members from its inception to the present. A total of 62 people have served in one capacity or another, 9 as Chairmen. The founding Chairman Peter Knowles-Brown filled this position for a total of 8 years. Others to serve more than one term were Ron How (6 years) and Windsor Thomas (6 years). Of the Founding Committee, Peter Knowles-Brown remained involved with the Society for 18 years until he

left the district to move to Scotland. Jane Rolph acted as secretary for 17 years and was a member for a further 3 years before leaving the village and Thomas Haggerty acted as Treasurer for a total of 18 years. Fred Penn was a member for 13 years and Joan Walton for 16.

Later members with long records of active involvement in the Committee are Ron How (27 years), Frank Sugden (15), David Barnard (23), Windsor Thomas (16) and Mike Fletcher 15 years as Treasurer. Family allegiance to the Society is also strong. For example, Tiny Berry and her brother-in-law Edgar Taylor served for a total of 9 years and later Edgar's son-in-law Roger Bierrum for a further 5 years. Paddy Thomas was a member for 5 years before her husband Windsor. Basil Newall and his daughter Wendy Hutson together served for 9 years, Tony Griffin and his son Rod, 13, Brenda Nicholson and her husband Fletcher 9, Oliver and Jenny Parsons 9.

Newcomers to the villages are encouraged to join the Society and they have brought fresh ideas and enthusiasm. One who made a significant contribution in the 1980s was George Bunton. George was a surgeon at one of the major London hospitals (believed to be University College Hospital). He and his wife Puck came to Hawridge in the late 1970s. They changed their house name to Hither Dennets since that was the old name of one of the fields behind the house. George joined the Committee in 1986 and immediately became treasurer for two years. In 1988 he published *Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons - A History*, on behalf of the Society. This is a useful document since it lists Lords of the Manors from the early days. It also gives a more recent history of the villages; lists public houses past and present; rights of Common; as well as listing plants and birds found on the Commons in a study completed in 1976/7. Brenda Nicholson revised the booklet in 1992 and this second version gives a list of herbaceous plants observed in 1988. Twenty-six fewer species were found then than in the original study in 1976/77. It is hoped that, over time, the Society will be able to build on the information on the flora and fauna lists and be responsive to its findings. George left the area in 1988 and died in 1997.

Other relative newcomers such as Amanda Houlihan and Chris Bristow ably took on the organisation of the major fund-raising event, the Summer Party from another highly successful partnership in Paddy Thomas and Wendy Hutson. Other recent arrivals, Liz Pitman and Isobel Clark have taken on the Education Pack, which forms another part of the Local Heritage Initiative Grant. As well as organising activities for children on the Commons, Liz has written some delightful stories about a Woodlouse Family. Isobel is also helping to organise the heather regeneration project. It remains rare for any elected member to stay on the committee for less than 3 or 4 years.

Sadly most members of the original Committee have now died but Jane Rolph and Joan Walton have been able to provide valuable information on the early years as have Ann and Andrew Knowles-Brown, Peter's widow

and son. Since Jane Rolph was a very capable Minutes Secretary we have a good record of the Committee and its practices in the early years. This is further amplified by the memories of other long-standing members such as Ron How. What emerges is evidence of many local inhabitants working together for the good of the Commons, with a willingness to make substantial commitments of time, effort, skills and resources. Committee members are allocated jobs on sub-committees and it requires much greater involvement than simply expressing views at committee meetings.

John Randall, the Lord of the Manors when the Society was formed, and its first President, took an interest in the Commons Preservation Society and its activities but he left management largely to the Committee. Subsequent Lords of the Manors took a similar passive approach until the arrival of the present incumbent Christine Stott. She became joint owner of the Commons with her then husband Michael Smith, on moving to Hawridge in 1987. In 1996 she assumed sole ownership and has worked closely with the Society in managing the affairs of the Commons. She has won recognition for her work from outside groups such as the Country Land and Business Association who awarded her with a CLA Wildlife Sites Award for "the excellent conservation work" on the Commons (August 2001).

Over the years the Society has been very fortunate to benefit from the expertise of many local inhabitants. For example in the early days Peter Knowles-Brown and Ron How had knowledge of farming methods and they brought with them equipment from their own farms which they were able to put to good use in the routine management of bracken control, grass mowing, scrub clearance and so on. Fred Penn had practical forestry skills to offer, as did others with tractor driving ability or experience with chainsaws. As the population changed and fewer people earned their livings from the land, it became less common for Committee members to bring such experience of land management or practical ecological principles (several Chairmen have talked of a very steep learning curve when they have taken over the position!). It is however possible to learn these things with professional help and, in the late 1980s the committee began to take advice from various people working for the County Council and other government authorities. In the late 1980s Jayne Northcott translated their advice into practical steps for the working parties and during the early 1990s Windsor Thomas devoted enormous amounts of time and effort to implementation of the Society's first formal management prescriptions. More recently the Management Plan Sub-committee of Rod Griffin, Christine Stott and Fletcher Nicholson have provided the expertise necessary to move this programme forward. (Rod left to become Professor of Plant Sciences at the University of Tasmania, Australia in 2002.)

Management of the Commons is the core activity for the Society but of course many other skills are needed to achieve its aims. The Committee requires officers such as Secretary and Treasurer, and it has been well served by

each incumbent of these positions. Other tasks include helping in practical ways at working parties; catering for functions such as the summer parties; keeping photographic records of all aspects of the Common and of the events which take place upon it; clearing rubbish during litter blitzes; making signs required for information; map making; illustration of newsletters and posters and providing scientific expertise. Here also, the Society has been lucky to find people, too numerous to mention individually, who have volunteered to help and who have done so with flair and enthusiasm.

Although the work of the Society is primarily carried out by local residents, it has on occasions had help from the wider community. For many years the Hemel Hempstead Conservation Volunteers have held an annual working party on the Commons doing a variety of jobs including hedge laying beside Thresher's Barn. The Chiltern Society Volunteers have also given assistance, and on occasions the South Bucks Bridleways Association. In the early days Peter Knowles-Brown organised and supervised work done by young offenders from The Mount, Bovingdon and consideration was given to reinstating this practice but it has not proved possible to provide the necessary supervision. In only a few instances in the early days were contractors such as Frank Brown or bodies such as the S.E. National Conservation Corps paid to undertake work. More recently, Jamie Jolliffe who grew up in the village and progressed from working volunteer to committee member, has for the last three years carried out contract work, undertaking major jobs that working parties could not possibly have carried out. Other local men who have taken on useful contract work have been Philip Matthews and Duncan Mitchell.

### The Chairmen and Recollections of their Terms of Office



*David Barnard and Rod Griffin, Chairmen (2002-present, 1996-98)*

#### **Peter Knowles-Brown 1967-71, 1978-81**

Peter Knowles-Brown was inaugural Chairman of the Commons Preservation Society 1967-1971 and again held the position for 1978-1981. His widow Ann has provided some notes on his terms of office and fellow

committee members and friends have helped to give a picture of his chairmanship.

Peter moved to Braziers End Farm in 1964 from London where the family had a jeweller's shop in Hampstead. At Braziers End the family kept a variety of animals including sheep, horses, bees, peafowl and other exotic birds, many dogs and later llamas. The farm, which they shared with their friends the Greenlees, comprising some 54 acres, had rights of Common to graze 29 head of cattle or horses and 20 sows but they did not exercise those rights. The family took an active interest in the local community and several of their extended family also came to live in the area. For many years Peter was Chairman of the Old Berkeley Riding Club which held a number of events locally. He was also on the committee of the Old Berkeley Hunt, which later amalgamated with the Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire Hunts to become the Vale of Aylesbury Hunt, which has met on Cholesbury Common on Boxing Day since 1983.

When the need for a Preservation Society was mooted, Peter was enthusiastic and brought to the new committee a capacity for hard work, practical experience and his own equipment. Peter was an innovative thinker and he initiated the scheme to have young boys on Community Service assist at Sunday morning working parties on the Common. This proved popular with the boys, possibly because Peter would take them to the Bull at Bellingdon afterwards and then home to Braziers End for Sunday roast. There they ate with the family which was no doubt memorable for them since it was the only hot meal of the week for some. Two of these boys continued to come to help for some time after their period of Probation was up. Peter referred to these lads as his "Naughty Boys" but they called themselves the "Chain Gang". It is a pity that we have lost contact with them. No doubt they would have had interesting stories to relate.

In the early part of the century Henry Turner then Lord of the Manors had been in the habit of having a bonfire on the Common on 5th November to commemorate Guy Fawkes Day, which was also his birthday. In November 1968 the Society reintroduced this celebration and it continued for a number of years, proving very popular with the local people. Fred Penn and Ron How were responsible for building the bonfires, Joan Walton and Jane Rolph organised the catering and the Society minutes record thanks to local residents such as Joan's mother, Mrs Walton and Jane Rolph for making large quantities of soup (a choice of tomato or ox-tail). There was also a barbecue on which hot dogs were cooked. Henry Brazil was responsible for the fireworks in the early years. These Bonfire Parties only stopped when the cost of fireworks became too prohibitive for the Society in 1979. In 1981 Mrs Elma Randall, who had become Lord of the Manors on her husband's death in 1979, held a party at her home at Hawridge Court and subsequently the Summer Party at Hawridge Court became the main annual fundraising and social event.

Throughout his terms of office Peter was ably assisted by an enthusiastic committee. Working parties were frequent and well attended. In the first year, however, their work was curtailed because of a Foot and Mouth outbreak. Later the Society bought a swipe to attach to his tractor and this meant that they were able to clear much larger areas than had been possible before. Because Peter was aware of the difficulties in containing scrub on the Commons without grazing, he was very keen to reintroduce cattle on the Commons. However this encountered some opposition since the cattle would have been untended and the onus would have been on the owners of local properties to keep their gates closed to prevent cattle straying into their gardens. He also costed grids for the individual houses on the Commons. The scheme was for commoners collectively to put 20 head of cattle on the Commons and later to increase this number to 40. It had the backing of a number of bodies including the Farmer's Weekly and the County Planning Department who were prepared to finance cattle grids on all the appropriate roads. Although the chairman was supposed to hold office for only 3 consecutive years Peter held the position for a further year in order to try to sort out the practicalities of the scheme. Ultimately it was considered to be unworkable when a referendum failed to get sufficient local support. When Peter stepped down and Alan Pallett was nominated for the position, Alan made it clear that he was opposed to grazing and that he would only accept the chairmanship if people understood his position. Alan was duly elected and the scheme was dropped.

In Peter's second term of office the main concerns were the continued clearance of scrub, opening up views and problems with maintenance of the Society's equipment. At this time too, the dispute referred to earlier over the posts outside Fox Barn began. It is doubtful if anyone could have foreseen what a protracted and unpleasant affair it was to become.

Both his 1978 and 1980 AGM reports refer to the increasing numbers of bird species and to the numbers of mammals seen especially at the Hawridge end of the Commons, both roe and muntjac deer, foxes, badgers and hundreds of voles.

#### **Alan Pallett 1972-74**

Alan Pallett lived in The Bury with his sister Ella where they had grown up and where Alan returned when he retired after living in London where he was Director of Metal Box. Their father had a general Carter's and Coal Merchants business and a James Pallett was the Licensee of the Bricklayers Arms (formerly The Maidenhead) from 1883. This was closed in 1924 when it became their private house with its subsequent name change. The Bury registered their Commoner's rights in 1968 as follows "The right to graze from 21st April to 25th December in any year, 2 head of cattle or 2 donkeys or 4 calves under 1 year old and in addition 2 sows without litter under 9 weeks old or 4 pigs under 6 months old over Cholesbury Common.....". Barry Tompson





*Pallett's Pond*

remembers old Mr Pallett (Alan's father and perhaps James Pallett's son) telling him, in the 1950s, how he used to travel to Covent Garden on a regular basis by horse and cart. Both Alan and Ella are now dead and the only records of his chairmanship are from the minutes or from his contemporaries around the villages.

From the minutes it is clear that the most traumatic part of Alan's chairmanship was the onset of Dutch Elm disease. Strenuous efforts were made to remove the infested trees in the hopes that others could be saved. Sadly, as we now know, it was not possible to stop the infestation and these beautiful trees were lost from the landscape. Many plant roots remain and suckers continue to grow to about 30 feet when the bark is rough enough to provide breeding sites for the beetle, which carries the lethal fungus. Then they too die back. Perhaps in time an effective method of overcoming this disease will be found and we will again enjoy fully matured elms in this country. This is the first time that mention is made in the minutes of supplying sacks of logs to the elderly in the villages, so putting to good use the abundant wood supply. This practice was continued until well into the 1990s thanks mainly to Windsor Thomas.

The minutes also reflect the difficulty in keeping up with the routine work required to maintain the Commons in good shape. There was a considerable extra burden on volunteers due to removal of the dead elms, much of which had to be done for safety reasons. Perhaps, as often happens in organisations, some of the initial enthusiasm may have worn off. There is also the perennial problem that willing helpers get older and less able to carry out the manual tasks involved and new blood is needed to keep up the good work.

Alan stood down from the position as chairman in 1974

but continued to serve on the committee for a further 5 years until his death in 1979.

#### Ron How 1975-77, 1982-84

Ron has given a taped interview, which provides a great deal of interesting information. This is available on [www.cholesbury.com](http://www.cholesbury.com) but a brief written report is included for continuity.

Ron How is a retired turkey farmer from Woodlands Farm in The Vale which his father had farmed with him. Later, his daughter Margaret and her husband, Henry Slator helped with the running of the farm until 1999 when Ron retired and they sold the property. His family came to Woodlands in 1943 and over the years acquired some land from Hawridge Court Farm. In 1968 they registered their Commoner's Rights to graze 15 head of cattle and/or horses and in addition 15 sows over Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons. The family did not exercise those rights.

As a farmer, Ron is well aware of the problems of trying to manage the Commons without grazing. He personally spent many hours trying to contain the burgeoning growth of scrub and bracken using his own equipment and also experimenting with the use of chemicals to control the spread of bracken. The character of the Commons was already changed and the minutes report various attempts to open views northward across them. Each year, a section of the Commons was selected and scrub and bracken cleared systematically to try to contain them in that particular area. In 1976, Berks, Bucks and Oxon Naturalists' Trust carried out a survey of birds, insects and flora. In his chairman's report at the AGM that year Ron reported that the results of the flora survey were disappointing and he hoped that more wildflowers would be encouraged to grow by dealing more effectively with the bracken. The bird population, mammals and insects appear to have fared better. This survey was of particular interest because it was the first attempt to provide a comprehensive view of the flora and fauna to be found on the Commons and it has become a benchmark for further investigations. These are documented in the sections dealing with flora and fauna where the decline in many of the plant species is shown to have continued. The bird species have changed somewhat over time but overall there is probably an increase in those recorded. To date, there is not sufficient data to discuss the mammals or invertebrates.

Another change which was occurring at that time was that the increasing numbers of riders were causing problems for the Society, especially in the wet winter months. Ron also refers to problems with the cricketers and a Chesham Rugby Club, which was sharing the Cricket Club facilities at that time. Much of the problem related to parking since members repeatedly drove across the Common to the clubhouse, churning up the surrounding area. This is the first mention of disputes with each of these groups which were to carry on for many years but which were largely resolved in the mid

1990s. These issues will be dealt with at greater length in subsequent chairmen's reports.

#### **Frank Sugden 1985-86**

Sadly Frank Sugden has also died and so we have to rely once more on family, friends, fellow committee members and the minutes for a record of his time as Chairman. In 1969, after his family had grown up, Frank moved to Holly Cottage, Hawridge from Bovingdon with his wife Betty who has since moved to Odiham. In 1971, he retired from John Dickinson's Apsley Mills where he was chief engineer. He had worked there from 1936 with the exception of a spell at the Admiralty Research Laboratories during World War II.

Both Frank and Betty took an active part in village life here, being involved in the Local History Group, the Parish Council and the Horticultural Society for which he did much of the production work on their village calendar. Frank was a keen gardener and for many years rented an allotment on the common for which Christine Stott still has records of payment of sixpence a year. His friends remember Frank very fondly and many refer to his shed, where he spent happy hours devising solutions to practical problems. His good friend, Bert Gomm also enjoyed these activities and used to maintain that Frank could be relied upon to have a suitable replacement part or to be able to devise some means of repairing anything from a broken umbrella spoke to all manner of other things.

Frank also played an important part on the Commons Preservation Society Committee, first becoming a member of the Committee in 1972. He was a keen photographer, particularly of plants and landscapes, and many local residents remember his slide shows after the AGM. He was thorough, systematic and clear thinking, and he encouraged the study and recording of plant and wildlife species on the Commons.

Over the period of his involvement with the Society, Frank saw many changes. For example horse-riding was much more popular and keeping the designated rides clear much more of a challenge. Frank was philosophical. Ron How remembers him saying that the times were changing and that the Society would have to change with them.

Frank stepped down as Chairman at age 80, feeling that it was time for a younger person to do the job, and he died in 1993.

#### **Windsor Thomas 1987-89, 1993-95**

##### **Introduction**

We came to live in these villages in February 1977, having known the Commons since moving into the area in 1973, where one could walk in a lovely example of natural unspoiled mixed habitat which, in its upkeep showed the hand of man very lightly. My wife Paddy and I joined the Commons Preservation Society soon after moving to Cholesbury. Paddy was invited to join

the Committee. I helped Peter Knowles-Brown (PKB as he was known) and his Committee with practical work on the Commons. Within a few years Paddy stepped down and I joined the Committee.

##### **Work on the Commons**

The Committee was both the core and main body of our regular working parties, headed by PKB or Ron How and later by Frank Sugden. I soon came to respect these men for their authority, knowledge and instinctive feel for what was right for management of the Commons. I learned most of my conservation work and much more from Ron How. The physical work of managing the Commons was pretty simple and straight-forward in those days, consisting of keeping the footpaths and horse-rides clear and using "natural" control measures to keep the majority of horse-riders from straying off the top and bottom rides and riding all over the Commons. Winter working parties concentrated on controlling encroaching scrub mainly along the bottom and top horse-rides but also in other open areas either side of Horseblock Lane. During the 1980s the western side was cleared of rampant overgrowth of silver birch, which had been neglected for some years. Re-growth was kept to a minimum by unobstructed bracken swiping in July/September. Another task was making safe storm-damaged, leaning or dangerous trees, and lopping branches over-hanging adjacent roads. As a matter of policy to fulfil one of its aims, the woodland areas were kept largely untouched, to provide cover and suitable habitat for wildlife, and for people's enjoyment. Winter working parties ended before spring nesting activities were too far advanced.

From April the Society's Massey Ferguson tractor and Wolseley Bushwhacker Swipe were used by the Chairman (with the help of Young Offenders from The Mount, Bovingdon) to swipe the footpaths through July, when the growth rate slowed markedly. The open grassland was cut in May/June and again in August after flowering. This provided short length open grassland where people could enjoy open space and have a family picnic, and for the convenience of those living behind the manorial waste. Grass cutting extended past Mermaid Cottage down to Horseblock Lane, ending at the open area opposite the school, and similarly up at the Cholesbury end. These areas were, and still are, used in alternate years for the Hawridge & Cholesbury Churches Joint Fete. The tractor and swipe really came into their own for bracken control, both at Cholesbury and at the Hawridge end either side of Horseblock Lane, from July to September, starting and trying to finish before the appearance of spores. The compact MF 135 tractor and swipe offered an ideal combination for working in open areas and also for controlling bracken growth under the woodland canopy. The annual tractor work meant that the footpaths and open grassed areas were kept clear for all to use, including children and parents walking to and from the school, without getting their clothes and shoes soaking wet in damp long grass.

The Chairman dealt with the intermittent conflicts,

which have arisen from time to time since the Society's formation in 1967 between different Commons users, most notably walkers and riders. He also dealt with matters arising under the Law of Property Act, 1925 - Section 193 and the Commons Registration Act of 1965 and with planning applications or other developments which may have an impact on the Commons. He dealt with local estate agents who would occasionally put up a house "For Sale" board illegally on the Commons rather than within the curtilage. He also organised the Spring Litter Clearance to keep the Commons tidy of rubbish plus the almost surreal catalogue of materials which has been dumped illegally from time to time over the years. In fact, the dumping of litter and builders' rubbish was one of the major spurs to the Society's formation in 1967. The Chairman was the principal conduit to the Lord of the Manors (John Randall, at the time, later succeeded by his wife Elma). Every Chairman I have known has had many of the same problems and pre-occupations as my own, particularly in relation to conflict resolution between different Commons users!

### Recollections

During my two terms of office, the Society followed the above Chairman's brief and essentially the same programme for Commons management. This remained largely unchanged over three decades from 1967 to 1999 because it was sound, well proven and entirely suitable. The local community provided all resources of equipment and volunteer effort and 100% of funding for the work programmes. About once every 5 years the Society used the services of such as Frank Brown, later succeeded by his son Stewart, to carry out specific tasks e.g. cutting back scrub growth either side of the bottom horse-ride. This was done to catch up with planned work the Society had been unable to accomplish. The Society's records show that for many years total annual expenditure was under £2000, paid out of membership fees, donations and profit from the annual Summer Party. The annual surplus was held in an equipment replacement fund.

Particular things I can recall during my time as Chairman are as follows:-

#### 1987/89

- Taking charge of the tractor and swipe in 1987 and putting them back into working order. I struggled for two years with the old tractor, which had been frost-damaged some years before and suffered from a cracked cylinder block, which caused over-heating. In November 1990, thanks to Ron How's help and advice, the Society was able to purchase a similar, newer 1976 MF 135 tractor for £2,750. Early in 1991, an old Howard Mower was bought for £250 to add true grass mowing capability. With vital help from Graham Hart and Mike Wallis, we maintained, operated and trained others to use this equipment safely.
- Purchasing a chainsaw and necessary safety clothing and equipment and getting myself professionally trained as an NPTC certified chainsaw operator and

tree feller. I was then able to use these skills and equipment to support the Winter working parties.

- The Society achieved most of its Summer & Winter work programmes.
- With the help of Jayne Northcott, Dr Chris Smith of MAFF provided free of charge an independently drawn-up formal management plan for the Commons. We learned that most of what we had been doing was sound, and the work programme was maintained with little change.
- Turning the annual Summer Party into a significant fund-raiser.
- Planting suitable specimen trees on the Commons.
- The Lord of the Manors re-established the Commons Regulation signs.

#### 1993/95

- Contretemps with the local Bridleways Association & Bucks County Council, over an application to turn the permissive horse-rides on the Commons into bridleways. This arose out of a dispute in 1993 over the rights of two different users of the Commons - riders and cricketers. The application was opposed resolutely by the Society, with full backing from the Lord of the Manors. Secretary Wendy Hutson and the Chairman put a lot of work into preparing a formal submission to Bucks County Council to back-up our strong opposition to the proposed new bridleways. We won in due course (during my successor Chairman's term of office). This was largely because the Society had good records and could demonstrate that it had consistently over many years been doing some crucial right things in its work of protecting and managing the Commons, on the Lord of the Manors' behalf. One result of this incident has been that the Society, on behalf of the Lord of the Manors, closes the permissive horse-rides once each year in March.
- A review was initiated of the Commons Management plan prepared in 1988 by Dr Chris Smith of MAFF. Rod Griffin, Vice Chairman was given delegated responsibility to co-ordinate work on the review and to report back to the Committee on his findings.
- The Society achieved most of its work programme at the Cholesbury end, but not at the Hawridge end.

#### Oliver Parsons 1990-92

I moved from Amersham to Hawridge in 1985, and the Commons became an immediate part of my life and my dogs'. We must have walked many miles in all weathers, and enjoyed every minute. Shortly after arriving in the village someone said that if you want to see village politics in the raw go to the Commons Preservation Society AGM! And so it was. Interests need to be reconciled; people in the villages care and rightly express their views. Opinions vary about what should be done to the Commons, and who should do it. There are walkers, cricketers, horse-riders, householders, the school, the village hall, the ponds, the road problem, the fauna and flora.

I joined the committee at the 1987 AGM, and became Chairman two years later. With an excellent committee, we followed objectives that we set ourselves, and these still appear on the back of the Membership Card: The Society's Members seek to:-

1. **Foster the ENJOYMENT of the Commons** – We held Spring walks conducted by an expert on some aspect of flora or fauna on the Common. The Summer Party has always been popular and well supported. Two years we held an Old English Fayre in conjunction with the Cricket Club. At the end of the summer we held picnics, appreciated by both adults and children. We had a talk or slide show on the AGM evening. This is a social village, and I hope that these social events centred on the Commons are enjoyed by all.
2. **Preserve the NATURAL CHARACTER of the Commons for years to come** – Of course 50 or more years ago the Commons were grazed and thus kept open. With our own Working Parties and with help of external voluntary groups, we kept some areas open and the view preserved and we worked to maintain and to reopen footpaths and horse-rides. Seeing the trees from the wood is a literal problem. With hindsight, our local activities were effective with the trees, but overall the problem remains, as the wood becomes a forest.
3. **Be RECEPTIVE to the views of interested people** – The AGM is the main exchange of views, and thereafter the running of the Commons is delegated to the Committee. Our illustrated newsletters sought to keep the members informed, and to solicit feedback. Individual local issues are discussed with those influenced. We maintained liaison with the Horse-riders, the Cricket Club and the School via their representatives who attended our committee meetings.
4. **Implement a PLAN for Management to enable objectives 1 and 2** – We took advice from Buckinghamshire County Council who have always been willing to put experts at our disposal. We set up a plan for the management of the Common. It needs a lot of “stickability”, and probably takes ten years plus to achieve a cohesive result. Our plan was embryonic, and has been greatly developed by other Committees in later years.
5. **Utilise their skills and knowledge for the BENEFIT and PROTECTION of the Commons** – My Committee and other villagers have provided their skills, their knowledge and their time. Organising and participating in Walks; Parties; Picnics; Talks; Illustrating Maps, Newsletters and Posters; Planning; Mowing; Working Parties; Liaison and Meetings takes many, many hours unstintingly given.

Did I enjoy being Chairman? - Yes I did.

Do I believe that I carried forward the Society? - Yes I do.

Would I do it again? - No I would not!

## Rod Griffin 1996-98

My grandparents lived in Shire Lane and one of my earliest memories is of picking blackberries on Cholesbury Common. My parents moved to Hawridge in 1957 and I lived there, at Flint Cottage, until I left for University in 1963. As a boy I can recall George Brown sitting on the old roller at the cricket ground minding his grazing cows, and as a very junior member of the Cricket Team complaining about the associated cow pats and hoof prints which did not make a fielder's job any easier. Later memories of the Common were of extensive areas of gorse and bracken, which were always associated with the grazed areas but which must have spread rapidly once the animals were removed. When I returned to Hawridge in 1991 it was to a Common on which scrub and woodland predominated and to an active Preservation Society which was doing its best to contain further encroachment on the remaining open space.

I was elected as Chairman in 1996 at a time when the physical management of the Commons was well under control, but the “people” aspects perhaps less so. Conservation of the flora and wildlife were, and remain, priority objectives but we have to be aware that there are many people who use the Common for different purposes and therefore have different views on what is important. I tried to start from the point that everyone's view had some legitimacy and therefore it was worth trying to seek negotiated solutions to problems rather than ruling “by decree”. I was greatly helped by the fact that from 1996 Christine Stott became the sole Lord of the Manors. She took the unusual step of announcing that she was actively interested in devoting time to matters of Commons Management (benign neglect was a more common approach in my earlier experience of previous incumbents!)

The most protracted and complicated policy issue we had to deal with actually started in March 1994. Then the Chesham Bridleways Association lodged an application with the County Council to have the permissive horse-rides on the Commons declared as Bridleways, with variations to routing which would have seriously disadvantaged other users. The Lord of the Manors, Commons Preservation Society, Cricket Club and many local residents objected but apparently to no avail. Fortunately (with hindsight) the Bucks County Council made a ruling during 1996, which satisfied nobody and this acted as a trigger for a much more constructive series of negotiations with the Chesham Bridleways Association. The final agreement involved re-routing of the horse-ride away from the cricket ground; opening of a new cross ride opposite the Full Moon; and most importantly the Lord of the Manors entering into a Covenant with the County Council not to unreasonably withdraw permission for the rides. For one day each year the rides are closed to demonstrate permissive status. The legal and other costs of this action came to over £2000 and were shared between the Lord of the Manors and Commons Preservation Society with significant contributions from the Chesham

Bridleways Association and the Hawridge and Cholesbury Cricket Club. The Covenant was signed in January 1998 so the whole process took nearly 4 years - a point worth pondering for those who tend to become impatient with the rate at which it is possible to effect Commons business!

During 1998 we began to review our approach to the physical management of the Commons. We had been working to an excellent plan prepared in 1988 in consultation Dr Chris Smith from the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group. This told us what to do with each existing vegetation type, but it did not really define our objectives for each area of the Common. A management sub-committee, consisting of Christine Stott, Fletcher Nicholson and myself, started by obtaining a new 1:1250 base map of the Commons.

We also commissioned an ecologist, Mrs Wendy Gray to update the 1988 vegetation survey so that we could understand changes which had occurred but more importantly, to enable us to begin to document changes we wished to effect in the future. We also established the principle that it was sensible to employ contractors on a more regular basis, to do work which was beyond the physical capabilities of the members, and that we should seek grant aid to supplement the money which the Society raised in the local community. The positive outcome of this initiative will be told by my successor as Chairman, Fletcher Nicholson.

On the social and fund raising side, the highlight of each year continued to be the Summer Party which survived the sale of Hawridge Court by Mike Smith and Christine Stott. The new owners Aubrey and Chris Bristow were easily persuaded of the importance of their beautiful garden to the well being of the Society and were as welcoming and generous as their predecessors had been.

During my last Chairman's Report at the AGM in December 1998 I reflected that just about every change in use of the Commons, with the exception of grazing pressure, could be ascribed in some way to the increased use of motor vehicles. Although the Commons are managed by local people they are no longer a purely local resource. People drive from all the surrounding towns to walk on the Commons and the road verges can be packed with cars on a sunny summer weekend. Unfortunately others drive here to fly tip and travellers who are much more mobile than they used to be, tend to enjoy "holidays" camped on the Commons. Off road vehicles need to be discouraged from using the horse-rides and it is difficult to entertain the idea of re-introducing grazing because straying animals and fast moving cars do not mix easily. This poses an ongoing dilemma for the Society. Should we make access as safe and convenient as possible for drivers by providing parking spaces or should we be discouraging them in the interests of users willing to come to the Commons on foot?

The car will not go away and more and more people will want to avail themselves of our beautiful open spaces. I am pretty sure that future Lords of the Manors and

Chairmen of the H&CCPS will have to become increasingly adept at managing the balance between human uses of the Commons and the conservation needs of the plant and animal communities with which we wish to co-exist.

People bemoan the breakdown of village community life as the pace of life increases and people move in and out of local properties more frequently than in the past. In Hawridge and Cholesbury my experience has been that the Commons, which are "there" in front of us every day as we travel to and from work or take our leisure at weekends, provide one community focus which is still very active. Anybody is welcome and indeed encouraged to join in the work of the Society from the day they arrive in the locality. I look back on my time as Chairman with some pleasure and in the knowledge that a society, which has fulfilled a useful community role for over 30 years, shows every sign of an indefinitely successful future.

#### Fletcher Nicholson 1999-2001

I am writing this a few days after the Society's AGM which marked the end of my three year spell as Chairman. The village hall was full again, with nearly a third of the membership present, and residents' strong feelings and passions about our Commons were once again fully displayed. Although people often have conflicting views about the Commons, which can make life difficult for a Chairman, it is a measure of the Society's success over some 35 years that residents feel so strongly about the Commons and are prepared to become involved.

The period of my chairmanship was one of considerable change in the way we managed the Commons. As a result there were some difficult times because of a few residents' reactions to the changes. I suspect my three years were as difficult and busy as any of those of my predecessors.

Although I did not join the committee until 1995, I had lived in Hawridge since 1975 and had helped at working parties for many years. Soon after I joined the committee Rod Griffin, the then Chairman, asked me to join a subcommittee to review the way we managed the Commons. Ron How had warned, at the 1982 AGM, that if we didn't do better managing the Commons, we would have what he called an "impenetrable jungle" by the year 2000. Fortunately, the Society's efforts since then had been successful in containing scrub and controlling bracken. However, this success had been largely due to the efforts of one person, Windsor Thomas, but the work he was able to do had depended on the amount of time he had available, the help he was offered, and whether the Society's tractor was operational or not.

Although the Commons always looked good, with paths and rides kept open and grass and bracken cut, it was felt by many on the committee that the time had come to review the work we were doing and perhaps develop

a more formal programme of conservation. Much of the scrub, which was encroaching when the Society was formed, had grown into woodland. Over the years other scrub had grown to obscure majestic oaks and beeches and views across the Commons had disappeared. We had made no attempt to claim any grants, although there were plenty available for conservation and other work. Support for a review came from Christine Stott, the Commons' owner.

The sub-committee took advice from a number of professional external sources including: -

- Wendy Gray, who, until she retired to look after her family, was responsible for Bucks Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs, now County Wildlife sites) of which the Commons form one. We asked Wendy to update Chris Smith's 1988 habitat map and to advise on management options.
- The West Chilterns Commons Project, which was a Heritage Lottery funded initiative set up by Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and others. Through the Project we obtained the services of Neil Jackson, a consultant working for Smallwood, a firm of countryside contractors. Neil completed an extensive report advising on the feasibility of Wendy's suggestions.
- The Chilterns Commons Network, which was set up by the Chilterns AONB and run by Chris Woodley-Stewart, its Countryside Officer. Chris took a keen interest in what we were doing, particularly as he regarded the Society as being one of the leaders in the Chilterns in demonstrating what could and should be done to conserve Commons in today's environment.
- Bucks CC, whose Countryside Officer, Julia Carey, was hugely encouraging and pushed us to make bold decisions. She also obtained for us a substantial grant towards the cost of our first project.

The sub-committee included Christine Stott, who has extensive practical experience of conservation. She has run her farm for many years with conservation as a major objective and receives MAFF grants for doing so. It also included Dr Rod Griffin, who is a qualified forester with 35 years practical experience. He grew up in the villages, so has a better understanding of their ethos than most of the other residents. It seemed to me that the Society, and the villages, were extremely fortunate in having available all this expertise and it was difficult to see how we could have obtained better advice.

We were therefore in a position to develop a management programme, which used best conservation practices and encouraged biodiversity on the Commons. We also had to balance the sometimes conflicting needs of people and wildlife, riders, walkers, families, and cricketers etc., and take account of how the Commons might look for future generations of residents and other Commons' users. The new programme obviously included essentials such as regular path and horseride

clearance, but differed from the previous one as it included:

- A policy of attempting to obtain grant money
- Some major clearance projects to be undertaken by contractors



*Scrub clearing in progress*



- A new grass-cutting programme designed to encourage wild flowers
- New methods of controlling bracken
- A formal programme to encourage heather regeneration
- A disciplined programme of ongoing maintenance which did not wholly depend on volunteers, and whether or not the Society's tractor was operational

The committee explained its proposals to residents in newsletters, at AGMs, and by personal calls to residents who lived close to where projects were planned. Human nature being as it is, most people either didn't really understand what we were proposing to do or didn't have time to investigate further, or were not very interested. Most of those who were interested trusted the committee, assumed that it knew what it was doing, and were prepared to go along with its plans. This was so even after completion of the initial project to reopen views, which included the clearance of an area of mainly silver birch and scrub oak opposite the Old Mission Hall. The work was undertaken in February 2000 and the site looked a mess after the contractor's equipment had left. A number of people expressed concern at what had been done but, after the site had been rolled, and grass and foxgloves appeared on the site in the spring, most people felt that the project had been worthwhile. By the

following summer nature had ensured that there was little evidence of major works and most people had forgotten about the mess and enjoyed the newly opened area and the views.

However, immediately this work was completed one or two residents attempted to drum up opposition to the new management plan. Dealing with this, and the misunderstandings (if this is the right word) that arose, was time consuming and sometimes unpleasant. I hope that no future chairman has to deal with such a situation; however, at all times I was strongly supported by the committee and at no time did I feel the majority of the residents were anything other than either supportive or neutral.

In order to finance this work we had applied for a Heritage Lottery Grant, helped by Chris Woodley-Stewart from the Chiltern Commons Network. Christine Stott and Rod Griffin did most of the work, completing the application whilst I was on holiday. The application was successful, and we were awarded up to £13,926, which represented 85% of total projected expenditure of about £16,400 over the two years to end June 2003. The expenditure projected (excluding VAT) was broadly for the following:-

Consultants' fees for a heritage survey	£1,450
Consultants' fees and materials for an educational programme	£1,450
Contractors' charges for Commons' management	£7,800
Chainsaw course for Chiltern Commons Network members	£1,600
Contingency - available if necessary - approx.	£1,600

The Society committed itself to a contribution, which was the remaining 15% of the projected expenditure (up to about £2,500), plus in-kind contributions which comprised time spent by volunteers. The aggregate of the volunteers' time to which we committed ourselves over the two years was 180 man days analysed as follows: -

Heritage survey - historical investigation	20 man days
Educational programme	9 man days
Working parties and other volunteers	100 man days
Tractor driving	20 man days
Heather regeneration	7 man days
Chainsaw course	24 man days

In February 2001, in the area below Box Tree Cottage, we carried out the second stage of the major clearance work to create an area of wood pasture. The understorey of thorn, elder and holly was cleared, and some of the younger oaks and ashes were felled to encourage the rest and expose the older and larger beeches and oaks. We spent a lot of time ensuring that people knew what we were proposing and the work has been generally appreciated.



Left: Clearing Understorey



Below: Wood Pasture after Clearing

Lindsay Griffin volunteered to start the heritage programme and is developing some innovative ideas (of which this

Chairman's recollection is one). I'm sure future generations will appreciate her efforts. Liz Pitman and Isobel Clark have formed a Commons Club for children and held their first meetings in the summer 2001. Liz has written for the younger children The Woodlouse Stories - about a family of woodlice and their adventures on the Commons, and there are proposals for a Nature Trail for older children and a Sensory Trail for the handicapped.

During my three years we spent a lot more on Commons conservation than ever before but, thanks to donations and grants, our funds increased. Membership, which was about 100 when Rod Griffin became Chairman six years ago, has climbed since then to about 175. The voluntary ethos, which I believe is so important for the Society, remains strong with good support for working parties. This is largely because I introduced a procedure whereby anyone who had indicated they would like to help was telephoned each month and told where the next two working parties were to be held. As a result we now average about 10 members at each working party, which is considerably more than in the previous few years.

The Foot and Mouth crisis meant we had to close the Commons from the end of February 2001 for about six weeks. The local Council automatically closed all of the footpaths but Christine took the decision that the whole of the Common should be closed. This was a trying period for everyone. For example, local dog walkers had to use the roads and whereas the dogs are usually free to roam on their walks they had to be kept on leads. I imagine that the Commons have never been closed before although, coincidentally, in its first year of operation the Society's working parties had to be curtailed because of Foot and Mouth disease. Unfortunately the crisis also meant that we could not have our annual summer party which in previous years had been held in the garden of Hawridge Court (more recently thanks to the generosity of Aubrey and Chris Bristow).

The bus shelter close to the cricket pavilion (sometimes described as a war time pillbox!) was demolished. It was built in about 1950 by Ernie Collier, its six sides possibly commemorated the six years of the Second World War. Chiltern District Council, which was creating a cycling

and walking route round the District as part of their millennium celebrations, installed on the site a six sided bench designed by Gillian Brent (a Sheffield based sculptor). The bench was one of 16 pieces of art - one for each parish and town in the District - which was placed along this route.



As our contribution to the Millennium celebrations we added a plaque to the Jubilee Stone which stands opposite the Full Moon since the original inscription is becoming illegible. The plaque reads "This stone was erected in 1897 to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It stands on the boundary between Hawridge and Cholesbury. The plaque was added in 1999 to mark the end of the millennium". The cricket outfield was dug up, levelled, and re-seeded in the autumn of 1999; at the same time a mound was built alongside the road which has stopped cars driving over the outfield. As a result of



legal advice, we started a routine of closing the permissive horse-rides annually on the first Monday in March to demonstrate that the Commons' owner could close them. This should ensure that we retain control over them, as the annual closure will make it difficult for someone in future to claim they are bridle paths.

I discovered there was no formal register of trees that had been planted on the Commons over the years to commemorate various people and events. David Barnard undertook some research and we now have this register. Oliver Parsons started a formal photo library of both old and new photos and continues to record the ongoing changes on the Commons. We also set up a new - as

yet untested - procedure to deal with gypsies. Bucks CC had dealt with them in the past but in summer 2001 they told us they had no money to continue doing so. We therefore spoke to the police, who agreed they did have powers to move gypsies on as they were in breach of our by-laws. However, such police work is low priority but if there were a lot of public pressure it would become high priority. Our new procedure should ensure there is this pressure.

During my period as Chairman the Society, with the help and encouragement of the owner of the Commons, Christine Stott, has changed considerably the way it manages the Commons. The changes have ensured that the Commons look as good as they ever have since I moved to Hawridge, and I believe they will benefit future generations and make the Commons even more interesting. There is now in place a sensible, grant-aided management plan, with the resources (income and volunteers) to undertake ongoing routine maintenance, and if required in the future the Society has the ability and reputation to obtain help from grants for larger projects.

David Barnard 2002-

As the new Chairman, though a long-standing committee member, I feel able to say only a little. I don't think that the Commons have changed drastically in the twenty four years since Joan and I came to live in Cholesbury in 1978, which is what I would hope for. However I know that this is the result of a great deal of work by the Commons Preservation Society Committee and its membership. As the Red Queen said, "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place". Since grazing ceased, the grass, bracken and tree seedlings would all have had things entirely their own way were it not for the Society's efforts. We could have dense woodland instead of the mixed Commons which we have at present.

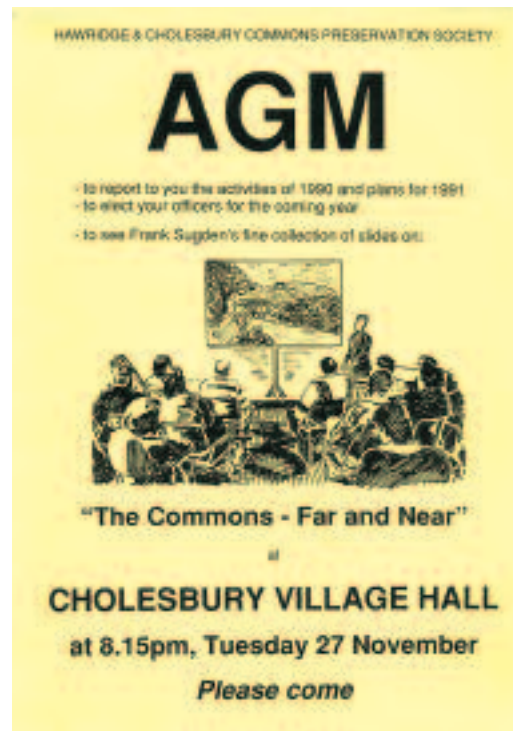
Obviously there have been changes, on a small scale, in my time here. One generation of trees grows up and gradually blocks off a view, a new lot of bramble blocks off a path, or a scattering of seeds grows into a birch copse. Then a working party comes along and opens a slightly different view, a fresh assault is made on the bracken or a tree falls and people make a new way around it.

I believe that our relations with the user groups have improved over time and I hope that we can continue to work with organisations such as the Chesham Bridleways Association and the Cricket Club to enable us all to deal harmoniously with each other. We need to persuade all users that it is in everyone's best interest to respect our environment. For example, it is disappointing to find a few selfish riders who persist in riding wherever they like, churning up the footpaths. **They need to understand that it is also dangerous for them.** An unsuspecting dog walker might be in their way and this could lead to problems for all concerned.



Similarly, although walkers are entitled to walk anywhere on the Commons they should be mindful of the dangers of doing so on the horse tracks. We also need to try to reconcile conflicting opinions such as whether to clear scrub so that parents can easily see their children at play or whether the scrub shields walkers and horses from cars. **Life is never dull in the country!** As they stand now, the Commons offer a mix of different environments from almost untouched wilderness to the manicured cricket ground and we are the richer for the different habitats.

Perhaps the biggest change in my time has been the successful application for grant money, enabling us to commission sizeable pieces of work, tasks which would have been impossible using our own members' time or financial resources. I believe that the result has been the improved state of the Commons. The work I see ahead is less dramatic, but steady progress in maintaining and improving the Commons both for us humans and for the other animals and plants which live here (with odd exceptions like the non-native and intrusive Japanese Knot-weed which we hope to eradicate).



*Poster for H&CCPS Annual General Meeting*



*Millennium Tree Planting*

# MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMONS



*Clearing by animals*



*Manual Clearing*



*Mechanical Clearing*

## MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMONS (Rod Griffin)

*As we have described, the Society came into existence because of concerns that the Commons were not being properly managed, and the Chairmen's Recollections contain many references to the management problems addressed during their time in office. Good management requires more than enthusiastic action. It needs to be planned with an understanding of the ways in which the lives of the plants and animals inhabiting the Commons interact with each other. Consideration must also be given to their response to the sorts of interventions, which we need to make in order to keep the land accessible for people, such as cutting and clearing. In the remaining sections we will describe the management plans, which have been developed in recent years, together with some more detailed information about the flora and fauna which we are seeking to conserve.*

**A**lthough management planning in the modern sense has only been adopted in the past 15 years, the Commons have always been managed according to unwritten, but no doubt very clearly understood conventions for the benefit of the Lord of the Manors and Commoners. The Commons were an important economic resource, and conservation was only an issue in the sense that it was important not to do anything that would have a lasting detrimental impact on economic value. Arnold Baines, the well-known local historian, gives a number of examples of 19th Century decisions of the Cholesbury Vestry (Records of Buckinghamshire 17:57-71) which very clearly indicate an understanding of the consequences of the intensity and timing of grazing on the well-being of the Common. For example, in 1832 notice was given to one Richard Deverell to keep his flock of sheep off the Common, since these were depriving cattle of feed. In 1864 the Vestry appointed a Hayward, paid by a 2 pence per head levy on the Commoners, to mind the way in which the Common was used. Duties included impounding cattle trespassing on the Common, proceeding against people taking cattle droppings, and appointing a person to look after the cattle, which were turned out. The period when the Commons were open for grazing was varied from year to year according to growing conditions. In 1856 the Cholesbury Vestry decreed that the Common was to be cleared of cattle from 25th March to 13th May, presumably to let the grass grow, but in 1883 grazing was permitted to commence on 21st April. Records of 1856 also indicate an interest in soil conservation "resolved that no pigs be turned on the Common until they have rings in their noses" to prevent damage to the Common.

Nowadays nobody's livelihood depends on Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons, but the community of users is actually much wider than ever before. Local people, who walk, ride or play cricket on the Commons are often outnumbered by those who have driven in from surrounding towns. We also have to recognise that, within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) we are custodians of an important County Wildlife Site. This diversity of interest groups presents the Lord of the Manors and the Society with many, often conflicting demands in terms of appropriate management actions. Since the late 1980s it has been

recognised that we need to move from an ad hoc "do what we can with limited resources" approach to management. This has led to the specification and implementation of a **Management Plan** based on sound ecological principles but also taking account of the fact that the Commons are for people. An attempt by Peter Knowles-Brown, during his first chairmanship, to revert to managing the Commons by putting cattle on them to graze met with insufficient support since they would have been untended and local people would have been responsible for keeping the cows out of their properties.

Until the mid-90s "what we could do" was limited by the time, skills and equipment of the active members of the Society. Once we accepted that it was efficient to supplement the efforts of our Working Parties by hire of contractors with appropriate machinery, we were able to be more ambitious and to address more fully "what needs to be done". The money needed to fund the work programme has come from Society income with supplementary grants from various sources. Bucks County Council, through its conservation officers has been generous with both grant aid and most particularly with advice. The HLF grant, which has stimulated production of this Review has allowed us to make important improvements to our management practices.

### Basic Principles of Conservation Management

In order to understand the basis for the plans it is helpful to consider the following principles:

1. THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS WHICH MAKE UP THE ECOSYSTEM ARE EVER CHANGING - WE HAVE TO RUN TO STAND STILL!

The natural succession in this area in the absence of grazing is from grass to scrub to woodland. If the Society had not started to **MANAGE** the Commons in 1967 by now we would have 100% woodland cover instead of the current estimated 75% - 80%. A wildwood is very nice for some kinds of plants and animals but would greatly reduce the biodiversity and also the range of activities which people are able to enjoy.

## 2. STRUCTURAL DIVERSITY ENCOURAGES BIODIVERSITY (AND ALSO EXPANDS OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUMAN USE)

Both for conservation and enjoyment we need to encourage DIVERSITY in both the structure of the vegetation and also the range of species of plants and animals within each habitat type (woodland, grassland etc.). By structural diversity we mean maintaining open spaces as well as areas of shrubs and trees of varying ages. The edges between these different vegetation types are important habitat for many birds and insects.

## 3. THE WAY SPECIFIC VEGETATION TYPES ARE MANAGED HAS A PROFOUND EFFECT ON DIVERSITY

Within vegetation types we can encourage DIVERSITY of plant species which in turn encourages more species of animals. For example thinning out the scrub in woodland areas will encourage herbs and grasses, including species such as bluebells and wood anemones. Discouraging the bracken will encourage heather and native grasses. A cut-and-collect regime which mimics grazing will encourage harebells and other wild flowers which in recent years have been out-competed by more vigorous introduced grasses. These grasses need a lot of nutrients to thrive, so they can be discouraged by removing the hay and so, over time, making the area less fertile.

## 4. WHEN YOU DO SOMETHING IS OFTEN AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU DO

Birds need peace and quiet in order to breed. Working Party activities should be finished by the end of March so as not to disturb them. Soil disturbance will be minimised if we carry out mechanised work in the autumn before the ground becomes saturated. Timing of cuts is critical in the grassland management - winter growth should be removed by end of March before the flowering plants have grown, then not mown any more until about the end of August when these plants have set seed.

Every management action we take should be consistent with these principles - although of course we may choose to vary the prescriptions for any particular area to take account of the needs of user groups. For example, while the major aim of the grassland management is to recover a more naturally biodiverse community, it is quite possible to agree that heavily used areas near to the road should be cut more often. For the network of paths on the Commons access is obviously the primary concern, so cutting should be carried out as often as necessary in order to keep them clear for pedestrians.

## Development of the Management Plans for the Commons

Under Windsor Thomas's chairmanship a management sub-committee consisting of Oliver Parsons, Jayne

Northcott and Ron How was set up in May 1988. They developed the Society's first formal Management Plan, produced in 1989, based on a habitat survey and associated advice provided by Dr Chris Smith from the Buckinghamshire Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group. Jayne Northcott took a leading role in liaising with Dr Smith and translating the advice into a simple statement of objectives, which are reproduced below. The Plan describes the principles on which each area was to be treated (See Map 2). It was never intended as a tree-by-tree prescription of what must be done, as this detail will change from year to year. It was explicitly intended to be reviewed in 1994 after 5 years of experience. Jayne also took a particular interest in the conservation of the pond and her guidelines for its management are sympathetic to the flora and fauna found in and around it.

## Management Plan for 1989-94

The management plan for 1989-94 states "Our Aim is to manage the Common in a way that will enable it to fulfil its public amenity role, retain its incredible diversity and keep its semi-wild character. We have looked at the requirements of the groups and interests using the Commons and the habitat survey carried out by Dr C Smith. We have drawn up a management plan, which we hope will meet these requirements.

- 1 **Walkers, joggers and horse riders:** Footpaths and rides kept clear and as free of mud as possible. Rides sign-posted to increase quality of footpaths.
- 2 **Families with young children:** A short grass area
- 3 **All users:** part of the pleasure of all users is derived from the natural character of the Commons. The particular character of our Commons comes to a great degree from their incredible diversity of habitats. We need to preserve this diversity for aesthetic and environmental reasons. This includes:
  - a) keeping views open
  - b) maintaining the several glades as grassland
  - c) maintaining the open areas at Cholesbury, along the top of the Common on both sides of the road. Maintaining the ride alongside the road as open grassland
  - d) maintaining the pond
  - e) bracken control in selected areas
  - f) minimal interference with scrubland and woodland areas. Paths must be maintained and/or created in these areas for accessibility."



# re & Cholesbury Commons

owing lanes, footpaths and  
vegetation distribution

The 1989-94 Plan document concludes with the following Calendar of Management

- January** Work on top ride
- February** Check paths and access areas for swiping
- March** Work on bottom ride. Remove any large growth in area 4 (downed trees/bushes) which would impede swipe.
- April** Train tractor drivers - cut paths when dry enough
- May** Train tractor drivers - cut paths when dry enough. Begin swiping programme in grassy areas 1 and 3. These areas must not be cut between July and October to protect species such as harebells which must be allowed to grow and seed. Please note position of heathers before cutting and lift swipe over or cut around them. We do not wish this area to be invaded by gorse so please cut this.  
Swipe area 2
- June** Cut bracken in control areas in last 2 weeks (maybe earlier depending on weather). Please try to note position of heathers and foxgloves before cutting and lift swipe over or cut around. Established gorse can be left as gorse, heather and foxgloves will prevent bracken growth.
- July** Finish cutting bracken in control areas in first 2 weeks
- August** Swipe area 4. Clear around planted trees
- September** Path cutting
- October** First and second weeks - Cut any re-growth of bracken in control areas  
Second week - clear pond. This must be cleared in autumn when water temperature is low. Clearing stirs up nutrients, which will result in an algal bloom (and make the water look scummy and dirty) if the water is warm. Try to clear no more than 1/3 of the area in any one year. This will keep the natural look and encourage animals to re-colonise the cleared areas. Please leave some areas of vegetation for dragonfly larvae etc.  
Third and fourth weeks - Swipe area 1  
Swipe area 5
- November** First and second weeks - Finish swiping area 1  
Marking of horse rides
- December** Open up any paths as necessary and enjoy Christmas!"

## Management Planning and implementation from 1994 - present

As described above by the then Chairmen Rod Griffin and Fletcher Nicholson, the approach to managing the Commons has changed significantly through the late

1990s. However the objectives and the core of the work programme is still very much as laid down in 1989. Once we decided to seek outside funding and to make regular use of contractors in addition to our own voluntary labour we were able to manage more intensively and also to work on a larger scale. The advantage of contractors is that they will do the work when we require it; they may have expertise and machinery which Society members do not possess and, most importantly, they are responsible for maintaining their equipment if it breaks down.

We have also developed a more systematic approach to record keeping. This involved dividing the Commons up into 14 map units, each of which can be conveniently copied at A4 size and so used on site for noting actions which are then transferred to a loose leaf file. It will thus be possible at any time in the future to check what was done when, to observe whether we have made the desired impact, and so improve the efficiency with which we manage in the future. There is as yet no "new" management plan document equivalent to that produced in 1989 so we will conclude this section with some notes on how current practices compare with those defined in the 1989-94 Plan reported above.

The statement of Aims remains unchanged.

Requirements of User Groups: There are only 2 significant differences from those stated in 1989. These are:-

Point 2. We have not explicitly addressed the issue of a "short grass area" for families with young children. Areas around the cricket ground and also opposite the school are mown more frequently than other grass and are presumably suitable for this purpose. One perennial problem is that dog owners also tend to use such spaces and do not clean up after their animals, so spoiling the enjoyment of others and certainly discouraging use by small children as well as creating a potential health hazard.

Point 3f. At least 80% of the Commons are covered by scrub and woodland in various stages of maturity. The value for both public use and for conservation will be enhanced when we achieve a more balanced proportion of vegetation types, so the view of the Committee and its professional advisors is that "minimal interference" is not the best management practice. As described by Fletcher Nicholson, in 2000 we started a programme of clearing understorey scrub from selected areas of woodland, to provide easier access for walkers and to encourage the diversity of ground flora. We are also prepared to clear selected areas completely so as to extend or link existing areas of grassland. The first area treated in this way is below the Mission Hall on Hawridge Common.

Annual Work Programme:- The following are now done rather differently from 1989.

1. Because we are using contractors there is not so much emphasis on work involving tractor driving.



2. The bracken control prescription has changed. The first cut at the end of June has now been replaced by rolling to crush and weaken the plant rhizomes. Ideally the second cut should also involve removal, but this has proved difficult for logistical reasons.
3. The grass cutting programme more effectively addresses the original objective of encouraging the flowering species. An initial cut in April removes winter growth; no further cutting is carried out (except in selected heavy use areas) until September, when the flowers have seeded. The grass cut at this time is removed.
4. Heather is actively encouraged to spread by disturbing the soil around existing patches and by breaking/pulling bracken fronds which shade the plants.
5. We have tended to keep the horse-rides rather wider in an effort to dry them out. For 1 day of the year these are closed so as to preserve their permissive status.
6. Work involving machinery access is scheduled to minimise soil disturbance. Ideally conversion to wood pasture should be done in late autumn, when birds have finished nesting, leaves are starting to drop, but the ground is still relatively firm. Next best is winter during a period of frost.
7. Where trees have been cut and we wish to control future growth by tractor we are employing a contractor to grind stumps to ground level.

Although we have not included an up to date vegetation map those readers familiar with the Commons will be able to make a comparison with the vegetation as it was in the 1989 map (Map 2) and see the very apparent changes over the intervening thirteen year period. For example the area that was designated as controlled bracken opposite Shire Lane, Cholesbury has now become scrub and emerging woodland.

## The Future

The amount of work carried out on the Commons will continue to depend on the time which members and other volunteers wish to donate, the money we are able to raise, and the cost and availability of local contractors. All of these things change over time and the Committee needs to adjust the plans accordingly. The next obvious time for a major review is in 2003 after the current Heritage Lottery Grant has terminated. It is important to continue the practice of seeking professional comment/advice in order to ensure that the considerable efforts of Society members have the desired effects in conserving our very special environment.

# FLORA AND FAUNA



*Fly Agaric*



*Jay*



*Harebell*

# FLORA

## Changes in the Plant Species over time (Anna Seton, Rod Griffin)

The following Tables show the plants which have been listed in four studies of the Commons carried out over the years. The studies were conducted in 1976 by R S R Fitter and in 1986 by Dave Webb and Jon Simons, both of Berks, Bucks and Oxon Naturalists' Trust (BBONT), now BBO Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). Further studies were carried out in 1988 by Dr C J Smith and in 1997 by Wendy Gray. The tables also include some individual sightings, which have been recorded in data supplied by the Bucks Environmental Records Centre. Early recordings were made by Walter le Quesne in 1961, 1978 and also in 1984.

The observations were mainly made in summer so some plants, which are more easily spotted at other times of the year, may be missing from the following records. Where local residents have recently observed species which have not been included in the 1997 study, they have been added with an asterisk to show that they were not on the original list. Some plants, which have become increasingly rare, are designated either as UK BAP or simply as BAP, which means that they are respectively, part of either a nation-wide or Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan for Conservation.

Since Pallett's Pond differs from the rest of the Commons, the species in and around it are listed

separately at the end of this table. The Table also includes species which are not native to the Commons but which have been planted, for example as memorial trees. We should not put too much weight on the presence or absence of individual species in any particular year as we do not know how much time the various observers were able to devote to the task. We hope that we have a picture of the sort of changes which have occurred over the 20-year period.

The information recorded in this section might be viewed simply as a set of lists which have little relevance to our enjoyment of the Commons as they exist now. However it should also be seen as a sketch of the changes which have occurred and are still occurring over time and which can deepen our understanding and help us manage them more effectively for future generations. It is hoped that readers who are not interested in the detail will at least read the accompanying text and conclusions. The detailed lists might be of interest only to the more avid enthusiasts or those with expertise in Natural History but the findings from these lists have significance for all of the people who use the Commons. The efforts of those who have taken time to record their observations will be well rewarded if those who manage the Commons reach a better understanding of the actions required to preserve the flora and fauna and if those who use the Commons understand why such actions are necessary.

## FERNS AND MOSSES

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
Dennstaedtiaceae						
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	•	•	•	•	
Dryopteridaceae						
Dryopteris dilatata	Broad Buckler-fern	•		•	•	
Dryopteris filix-mas	Male-fern	•	•		•	
Polytrichaceae						
Polytrichum sp.	a Hair Moss	•		•		

## SEDGES, RUSHES AND GRASSES

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Cyperaceae (Sedges)</b>						
<i>Carex pilulifera</i>	Pill Sedge				•	Uncommon in Bucks
<b>Juncaceae (Rushes)</b>						
<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>	Sharp-flowered Rush		•			Uncommon in Bucks
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Jointed Rush	•		•		
<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	Toad Rush		•		•	
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush	•	•	•	•	
<i>Luzula campestris</i>	Field Woodrush	•	•	•	•	
<i>Luzula multiflora</i>	Heath Woodrush	•		•		
<b>Poaceae (Grasses)</b>						
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	•	•	•		
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent	•	•	•		
<i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i>	Marsh Foxtail				•	
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail	•	•	•	•	
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome				•	
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass	•	•	•	•	
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass	•	•	•	•	
<i>Avena sativa</i>	Oat	•				Cultivation origin
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome	•		•		
<i>Bromopsis ramosa</i>	Hairy Brome	•		•		



*Sarah Clark with grasses*

## SEDGES, RUSHES AND GRASSES

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's Foot	•	•	•	•	
<i>Danthonia decumbens</i>	Heath-grass				•	Uncommon in Bucks
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted Hair-grass	•	•	•		
<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>	Wavy Hair-grass	•	•	•	•	
<i>Elymus caninus</i>	Bearded Couch		•			
<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	Common Couch		•			
<i>Festuca gigantea</i>	Giant Fescue		•			
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	•	•	•	•	
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	Floating Sweet-grass				•	
<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	Reed Sweet-grass	•		•		
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	•	•	•	•	
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	Creeping Soft-grass	•	•	•	•	
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	•	•	•	•	
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Wood Melick				•	
<i>Milium effusum</i>	Wood Millet	•		•	•	
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy	•	•	•		
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass	•	•	•	•	
<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Smooth Meadow-grass	•		•		
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	•	•	•	•	

# HERBS

\* Observed recently by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Adoxaceae</b>						
<i>Adoxa moschatellina</i>	Moschatel	•		•	*	Bucks BAP Uncommon in Bucks
<b>Alismataceae</b>						
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	Water Plantain	•		•		
<b>Apiaceae</b>						
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground Elder	•		•	*	
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	•	•	•	•	
<i>Chaerophyllum temulum</i>	Rough Chervil	•		•		
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut	•	•	•	•	
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	•	•	•	•	
<i>Torilis japonica</i>	Upright Hedge-parsley		•			
<b>Araceae</b>						
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-ladies	•	•	•	*	
<b>Asteraceae</b>						
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	•	•	•	•	
<i>Anthemis cotula</i>	Stinking Chamomile	•				
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Lesser Burdock	•		•		
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	•	•	•		
<i>Centaurea montana</i>	Perennial Cornflower	•		•		Garden escape
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	•	•	•		
<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>	Greater Knapweed		•			
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	•	•	•	•	
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	•	•	•	•	
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawk's-beard	•	•	•		
<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	Common Cudweed		•			Rare in Bucks
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Common Cat's-ear	•	•	•	•	
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort	•	•	•		
<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	Autumn Hawkbit				*	
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed	•	•			
<i>Mycelis muralis</i>	Wall Lettuce		•			
<i>Picris echioides</i>	Bristly Ox-tongue				*	
<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	Mouse ear Hawkweed				•	
<i>Senecio sylvaticus</i>	Heath Groundsel	•				
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel	•	•	•		
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle	•	•	•		

## HERBS

\* Observed recently by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth Sow-thistle	•	•	•		
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Colt's-foot	•	•	•	*	
<i>Taraxacum agg</i>	Dandelion	•	•	•		
<b>Balsaminaceae</b>						
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Indian Balsam		•			Alien Uncommon in Bucks
<b>Boraginaceae</b>						
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not		•			
<i>Myosotis ramosissima</i>	Early Forget-me-not	•		•		Uncommon in Bucks
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Green Alkanet	•				Naturalised/ Garden origin
<b>Brassicaceae</b>						
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	•	•	•	•	
<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	Hairy Bitter-cress	•				
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckooflower	•			•	
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's-purse	•	•	•		
<i>Lunaria annua</i>	Honesty					Escape noted in 1983
<b>Callitrichaceae</b>						
<i>Callitriche</i> sp.	a Water-starwort	•		•		
<b>Campanulaceae</b>						
<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Harebell	•	•		*	
<b>Caryophyllaceae</b>						
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	•	•	•		
<i>Moehringia trinervia</i>	Three-veined Sandwort				•	
<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder Campion	•		•		



*Harebells*

## HERBS

\* Observed recently by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort	•	•	•	•	
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort	•	•	•	•	
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	•	•	•	•	
<b>Ceratophyllaceae</b>						
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>	Rigid Hornwort					1976, Uncommon in Bucks
<b>Chenopodiaceae</b>						
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Fat-hen	•		•		
<i>Chenopodium bonus-henricus</i>	Good-King-Henry	•				Uncommon in Bucks
<i>Chenopodium rubrum</i>	Red Goose-foot	•				
<b>Clusiaceae</b>						
<i>Hypericum humifusum</i>	Trailing St John's-wort				•	
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St John's-wort		•			
<b>Convolvulaceae</b>						
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed	•	•	•	*	
<i>Calystegia silvatica</i>	Large Bindweed				*	
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed	•				
<b>Ericaceae</b>						
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Heather	•	•	•	•	Bucks BAP
<b>Euphorbiaceae</b>						
<i>Euphorbia exigua</i>	Dwarf Spurge	•				
<i>Euphorbia peplus</i>	Petty Spurge	•				
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Dog's Mercury	•		•		
<b>Fabaceae</b>						
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling		•			
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	•	•	•		
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick	•	•	•		
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	•	•	•		
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	•	•	•		
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common Vetch		•		•	
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush Vetch	•	•	•		
<b>Fumariaceae</b>						
<i>Fumaria officinalis</i>	Common Fumitory		•			
<b>Geraniaceae</b>						
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill		•			
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert		•		•	



## HERBS

\* Observed recently by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Hydrocharitaceae</b>						
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	Canadian Waterweed	•				
<b>Iridaceae</b>						
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Iris	•		•		
<i>Iris</i> sp.	a Blue Iris	•		•		Garden origin
<b>Lamiaceae</b>						
<i>Galeopsis tetrahit</i>	Common Hemp-nettle	•	•	•		
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground Ivy	•	•	•	*	
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle	•	•	•	•	
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	Spotted Dead-nettle	•		•		Garden origin
<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	Red Dead-nettle	•		•	*	
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint	•		•		
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Self-heal					
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort	•	•	•	•	
<b>Lemnaceae</b>						
<i>Lemna triscula</i>	Ivy-leaved Duckweed				•	
<b>Liliaceae</b>						
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	•	•	•	•	Bucks BAP
<i>Galanthus</i> sp.	a Snowdrop				*	Garden origin
<i>Narcissus</i> sp.	Daffodil				*	Garden origin
<b>Lythraceae</b>						
<i>Lythrum portula</i>	Water Purslane				*	Rare in Bucks
<b>Nymphaeaceae</b>						
<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	White Water Lily	•				Uncommon in Bucks
<b>Onagraceae</b>						
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb	•	•	•	•	
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's-nightshade		•			
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb				*	
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved Willowherb		•			
<i>Epilobium tetragonum</i>	Square-stalked Willowherb				*	

## HERBS

\* Observed recently by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Orchidaceae</b>						
<i>Listera ovata</i>	Common Twayblade		•			
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee Orchid					Noted in 1972 Uncommon in Bucks
<b>Papaveraceae</b>						
<i>Papaver dubium</i>	Long-headed Poppy	•				
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	•		•		
<b>Plantaginaceae</b>						
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	•	•	•		
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain	•	•	•	•	
<b>Polygonaceae</b>						
<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	Water-pepper		•			
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass	•	•	•		
<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>	Redshank	•	•	•		
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	•	•	•	•	
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheep's Sorrel	•	•	•	•	
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	•	•	•		
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	•	•	•	*	
<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Wood Dock				•	
<b>Primulaceae</b>						
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip				*	
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose		•		*	
<b>Ranunculaceae</b>						
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	•	•	•		
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup				•	
<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser Celandine	•		•		
<i>Ranunculus lingua</i>	Greater Spearwort	•		•		
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	•	•	•	•	
<b>Rosaceae</b>						
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony		•			
<i>Alchemilla</i> sp.	a Lady's-mantle	•		•		
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry		•		*	
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	•	•	•	•	
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed		•			
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	•	•	•	•	
<i>Potentilla sterilis</i>	Barren Strawberry		•			

# HERBS

\* Observed recently by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Rubiaceae</b>						
Galium aparine	Cleavers	•	•	•	•	
Galium mollugo	Hedge Bedstraw				•	
Galium saxatile	Heath Bedstraw	•	•	•	•	
Galium verum	Lady's Bedstraw	•				
<b>Scrophulariaceae</b>						
Digitalis purpurea	Foxglove	•	•	•	•	
Odontites vernus	Red Bartsia	•	•	•		
Verbascum thapsus	Great Mullein		•			
Veronica chamaedrys	Germander Speedwell	•	•	•	•	
Veronica filiformis	Slender Speedwell	•				
Veronica montana	Wood Speedwell	•		•		
<b>Solanaceae</b>						
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet	•	•			
Solanum nigrum	Black Nightshade	•				
<b>Sparganiaceae</b>						
Sparganium erectum	Branched Bur-reed	•		•		
<b>Typhaceae</b>						
Typha latifolia	Reedmace	•		•	*	Seen in 2002
<b>Urticaceae</b>						
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle	•	•	•	•	
<b>Violaceae</b>						
Viola odorata	Sweet Violet	•				
Viola riviniana	Common Dog-violet		•		•	



Foxgloves

## CLIMBERS

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Araliaceae</b>						
Hedera helix	Ivy	•	•	•	•	
<b>Cannabaceae</b>						
Humulus lupulus	Hop	•				
<b>Caprifoliaceae</b>						
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle	•	•	•	•	
<b>Dioscoreaceae</b>						
Tamus communis	Black Bryony		•			

## TREES AND SHRUBS

The following trees and shrubs can all be found on the Commons. Exactly where depends on the soil type, the age and type of associated vegetation, which in turn reflects past management. Some tend to grow together in large numbers while others more normally occur as scattered or solitary individuals. These differences can often be explained if one understands the way in which the seeds are distributed (by birds and other animals or by the wind). Other factors are the conditions needed for the seeds to germinate, and whether they must have open disturbed ground or are able to grow under the shade of other trees.

### Species which are native or naturalised on the Commons

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Aceraceae</b>						
Acer campestre	Field Maple	•	•	•	•	A hedgerow tree
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore	•	•	•	•	Introduced to GB in Roman times.
<b>Aquifoliaceae</b>						
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	•	•	•	•	A common understorey species in the oak wood
<b>Betulaceae</b>						
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	•	•	•	•	Pioneer species on the more acid soils. Fast growing but short lived
Betula pubescens	Downy Birch		•			
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam	•	•	•	•	A hedgerow tree
Corylus avellana	Hazel	•	•	•	•	Mainly at southern end of Hawridge Common. Formerly managed by coppicing

**TREES AND SHRUBS** (native or naturalised)

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Caprifoliaceae</b>						
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	•	•	•	•	Understorey/hedges
<b>Cornaceae</b>						
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	•	•	•	•	Minor species in the bottom hedge
<b>Fabaceae</b>						
<i>Cystisus scoparius</i>	Broom	•				
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	•	•	•	•	An important bird habitat species
<b>Fagaceae</b>						
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	•	•	•	•	Old trees planted - some natural regeneration
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	•	•	•	•	If left untended all Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons would finally mature to oak woodland
<b>Oleaceae</b>						
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	•	•	•	•	Planted and naturally regenerated in disturbed soil
<b>Rosaceae</b>						
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	•	•	•	•	The first scrub species to invade grassland, remains as understorey in woodland. Quite short lived. **See comments below
<i>Malus sp</i>	Apple	•	•	•	•	The apple trees on the Commons are probably all seedlings of horticultural varieties
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry or Gean	•	•	•	•	A beautiful tree when in flower. Has regenerated well in clumps - common at southern end of Hawridge
<i>Prunus domestica</i>	Wild Plum		•			
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn or Sloe	•	•	•	•	Main species in the bottom hedge - important animal habitat

## TREES AND SHRUBS (native or naturalised)

\* Observed by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
Ribes rubrum	Red Currant	•		•	*	
Rosa arvensis	Field Rose	•	•	•	*	
Rosa canina agg.	Dog Rose	•	•	•	*	
Rubus fruticosus agg.	Bramble	•	•	•	*	
Rubus idaeus	Raspberry	•	•	•	*	
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	•	•	•	*	The scattered trees of fastigiata form (steeply erect branches) below Horseblock were planted and are not the natural form.
Salicaceae						
Salix caprea	Goat Willow or Sallow	•		•	•	Odd trees in wetter areas
Taxaceae						
Taxus baccata	Yew	•			*	Odd trees - probably dispersed from churchyard trees by birds
Ulmaceae						
Ulmus glabra	Wych Elm		•			
Ulmus procera	English Elm	•		•	*	Occur in clumps where old trees stood before Dutch Elm disease. Do not get bigger than about 25cm diameter before they die but more shoots always come from suckers.



Dog Rose

\*\*Liz Pitman has been studying the hawthorns on the Commons and has found that the two species native to Britain are to be found here as well as their hybrid (*C.x media*). In addition to the common Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) there is also the rarer Midland Hawthorn (*C. laevigata*) which is found on the heavy clay soils in central and south eastern Britain. Found in both hedges and woodland, *C. laevigata* is an indicator species of ancient woodland (woodland present since the end of the last Ice Age, not planted.) The two species and their hybrid can be distinguished in various ways, for example by leaf shape, number of flowers/fruits and number of styles/seeds.

The origin of the various plants on the Common below The Row is unknown. It is probable that they have been seeded by birds, from nearby old woodland.

## TREES AND SHRUBS

### Trees which occur only as planted specimens on the Commons or escape shrubs

Many of the following have been planted as memorials to former residents, a list of whom is provided by David Barnard (Appendix III). Others were planted at various places in mid-80s as part of National Tree Week. The latter were supplied by Bucks CC, typically 150 to 200 cm high when planted.

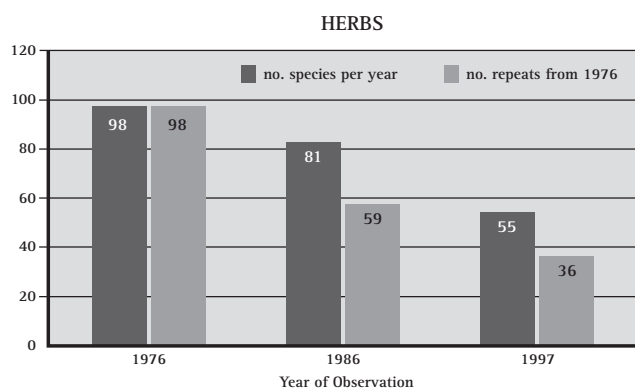
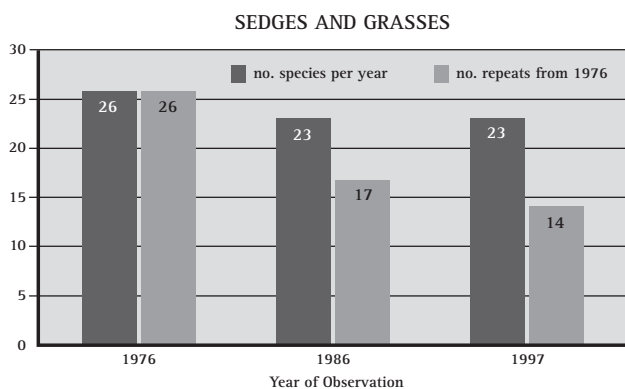
\* Observed by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident				Comments
		1976-77	Aug '86	'88	June '97	
<b>Fagaceae</b>						
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut	•		•	•	Native to Asia Minor. Introduced to this country "in very remote times"
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> var. <i>purpurea</i>	Copper Beech					Horticultural variety
<b>Hippocastanaceae</b>						
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Horse-chestnut	•	•	•	•	Native of Asia Minor. Introduced 16th Century
<b>Juglandaceae</b>						
<i>Juglans regia</i>	Walnut				*	Native to Asia Minor. Introduced 15th C?
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black Walnut				*	Native to USA
<b>Moraceae</b>						
<i>Morus nigra</i>	Black Mulberry				*	Native to Asia Minor
<b>Myrtaceae</b>						
<i>Eucalyptus gunnii</i>	Cider Gum				*	From Australia. 1 tree on Cholesbury Common. Can you find it?
<b>Pinaceae</b>						
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots Pine				*	Native to heathlands of GB but no old trees on Commons
<b>Rosaceae</b>						
<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>	Gooseberry	•			*	garden escape?
<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Whitebeam				*	Native to England but not the Commons
<b>Salicaceae</b>						
<i>Salix x sepulcralis</i>	Weeping Willow				*	Native to Asia Minor
<i>Populus</i> sp.	Poplar				*	Species not known
<b>Tiliaceae</b>						
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small-leaved Lime				*	

## Analysis

Although the individual records vary with the experience of the different observers and the amount of effort expended in the surveys, we can use two useful measures of change over time - the total number of species present on each occasion and the change in proportion of species observed at the first substantial survey in 1976 which were still present in later years.

The numbers of ferns and climbers are too small to show a pattern. The native tree and shrub species are very consistent over time, with only 1 of the 26 species present in 1976 (Broom) missing in 1997. This species was already missing by 1986 so it might actually have been a minor occurrence of a garden escape. It is in the sedge, rush, grass and herb components of the flora that we can detect the most change.



The actual number of species of sedges and grasses has remained fairly constant over the 20 years. (See the chart above.) However, the range of species has changed so that in 1997 only 14 of the 26 species seen in 1976 were recorded as still present. It may be that some of this variation is due to changes in botanical names - i.e. the same plant has a different name at different times - or that observers reached different conclusions when identifying a particular specimen. An expert in these plants could no doubt tell us whether the apparent changes are really a continuation of the effects of grazing reduction, which started in the 1960s and/or have been induced by the management practices which the Society has applied through this period. We need to know this in order to judge whether we are in fact

progressing towards our aim of restoring the more diverse natural grassland which existed in the past.

There are more herbs than any of the other plant groups and once again the same trend is apparent. A total of 98 species was observed in 1976. In the next 10 years there was only a modest reduction of diversity to 81 species, but these included only 59 (60%) of repeats. The species recorded in 1997 dropped to 55, which is certainly an under-estimate as the observations were made in a rather quick survey in June that year. 37% of these species were repeats from 1976.

Looking through the list of land plants it seems that one category of species which we have lost is those which are more commonly associated with disturbed ground and fields. Examples are *Chenopodium* species, poppies, field bindweed and pineappleweed. The real reduction in pond species is discussed in a later section.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

There is strong evidence that the diversity of plants on the Commons is changing and probably reducing. There is no reason to think that this process has finished and it would be good to take steps which will ensure that others can do a similar study in another 20 years with more confidence that they are working with a full and unbiased set of data. We propose the following course of action:

1. Take the complete list of species which have been observed at least once and, with reference to a Flora make a table listing the habitat type (grassland, pond, woodland, sun, shade etc.) where you would expect to find each species. Also note the season of the year when each is in flower.
2. Find each such habitat type on the Commons and designate people to look hard at the right time of year. If particular species are not found again then this is pretty good evidence that they have gone.
3. If resources are available take the revised list of species and score their frequency on a scale of - Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, Rare. (This would be particularly interesting in the acid grassland areas below Horseblock where we are trying to manage the heather.) Also note flowering seasons of each species, so that in future the survey could be repeated with observations timed appropriately.
4. Keep careful records of location of rarer plants.

A more active "experimental" approach to documenting change could be adopted for some of the areas where the Society is actively trying to modify the species mix, e.g. by a cutting and collecting regime on grassland; by rolling bracken areas; and by the creation of new wood pasture. It would be possible to mark out a number of plots (5?) of 1m x 1m and to score all of the plant species present throughout the year and their frequency. This would need to be repeated annually and changes noted.



Work of the magnitude described would require considerable effort and expertise. Roy Maycock, Bucks County Recorder for the Botanical Society of the British Isles is willing to assist in gathering some data but further help will no doubt be necessary. One obvious possibility would be to seek funding so that we could retain the services of a botanist at least to advise local volunteers, if not to carry out the survey work on our behalf.

## The Ponds

Since this is a special and increasingly rare type of habitat in Bucks we have brought together all the records we could find of the plants and animals which have been observed over the years. This has led to some duplication with the Flora record tables for the Commons as a whole.

In 1995 the Dewpond near to the road to Chesham at the east end of the cricket pitch was dug out in order to try to re-establish it as a working pond. It was hoped that some species, now rare in Bucks, would be encouraged to grow again. At the time it was thought that this was not entirely successful since the clay lining of the pond

is not intact and so water escapes. However, the county rare Water Purslane was still present in 2002 and Dan Merrett (BBOWT) observed that the dewpond should be properly surveyed since it “may be more interesting as far as wildlife is concerned, in its present state, than Pallett’s Pond”. In his report on the ponds (Appendix XI) he also points out the value of having ponds at different stages of development in the same locality to maximise the diversity of wildlife which inhabit them, and he believes that the dewpond and Pallett’s pond compliment each other well.

The following information about species found in or around Pallett’s Pond on the Cholesbury to Wigginton road has been supplied by Bucks Environmental Records Centre. Surveys were conducted in 1968 by Dr Challoner’s Grammar School, Amersham, 1976 by Betty Gomm, 1978 by Roy Maycock and Jill Royston, 1980 by Dr Alan Showler, 1985 by Dave Ferguson, 1986 by Dave Webb and Jon Simons of BBONT, 1988 by Chris Smith and in 1997 by Wendy Gray.

## POND FLORA

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident							Comments
		Pre 78	7 Aug 78	Jun-Aug 80	4 Sept 85	28 Jan Jun 86	'88	5 Jan 97	
<b>Ricciaceae</b>									
<i>Riccia fluitans</i>	a Liverwort		•						
<b>Juncaceae</b>									
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Jointed Rush		•		•		•		
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush	•	•		•		•	•	
<i>Luzula</i> sp.	a Woodrush			•			?	?	
<b>Poaceae</b>									
<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	Tufted Hair-grass						•		
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	Floating Sweet-grass		•		•			•	
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog		•		•		•	•	
<b>Alismataceae</b>									
<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	Water-plantain			•	•	•			

# POND FLORA

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident							Comments	
		Pre 78	7 Aug 78	Jun-Aug 80	4 Sept 85	28 Jan Jun 86	'88	5 Jan 97		
<b>Apiaceae</b>										
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed			•				•	•	
<i>Pimpinella saxifraga</i>	Burnet-saxifrage			•						
<b>Asteraceae</b>										
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow			•				•	•	
<i>Bidens tripartita</i>	Trifid Bur-marigold		•	•	•					
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed			•				•		
<i>Hieracium</i> sp.	a Hawkweed			•						
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed			•		•				
<b>Boraginaceae</b>										
<i>Myosotis laxa</i>	Tufted Forget-me-not				•					
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	Water Forget-me-not		•	•	•					
<b>Brassicaceae</b>										
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckooflower		•		•				•	
<b>Callitrichaceae</b>										
<i>Callitriche</i> sp.	a Water-starwort	•		•				•		
<b>Caryophyllaceae</b>										
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear			•				•		
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort			•				•	•	
<b>Ceratophyllaceae</b>										
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>	Rigid Hornwort	•	•							Uncommon in Bucks
<b>Characeae</b>										
<i>Nitella flexilis</i>	Smooth Stonewort		•							
<b>Crassulaceae</b>										
<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	New Zealand Pigmyweed		•		•					Uncommon in Bucks. Early record in the British Isles
<b>Fabaceae</b>										
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover			•				•		

## POND FLORA

\* Observed by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

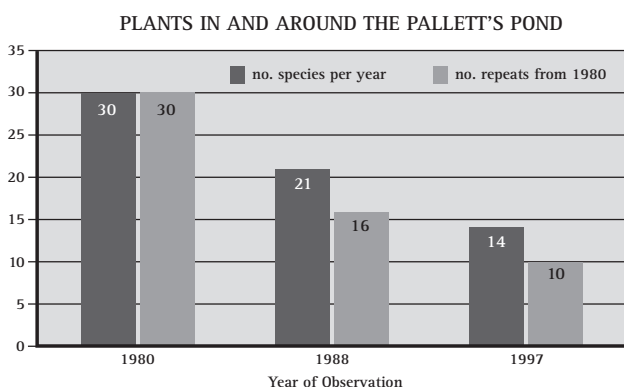
Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident							Comments
		Pre 78	7 Aug 78	Jun-Aug 80	4 Sept 85	28 Jan Jun 86	'88	5 Jan 97	
<b>Hydrocharitaceae</b>									
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	Canadian Waterweed	•	•	•	•				
<i>Lagarosiphon major</i>	Curly Waterweed		•		•				Rare in Bucks
<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>	Water-soldier			•	•	•			Nationally scarce, introduced in pond
<b>Iridaceae</b>									
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Iris	•		•	•		•	*	seen 2002
<b>Lamiaceae</b>									
<i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i>	Red Hemp-nettle			•					Uncommon in Bucks
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint		•		•	•		*	seen 2002
<b>Lemnaceae</b>									
<i>Lemna minor</i>	Common Duckweed	•							
<i>Lemna triscula</i>	Ivy-leaved Duckweed	•			•			•	
<b>Onagraceae</b>									
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb			•			•	•	
<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	American Willowherb		•	•	•				
<b>Nymphaeaceae</b>									
<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	White Water-lily	•		•	•				Uncommon in Bucks
<b>Plantaginaceae</b>									
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain			•			•		
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain			•			•	•	
<b>Polygonaceae</b>									
<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	Water-pepper		•		•	•			
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	a Dock			•			?	?	
<b>Potamogetonaceae</b>									
<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>	Curled Pondweed			•					
<b>Ranunculaceae</b>									
<i>Ranunculus (aquatica sp.)</i>	a Water-crowfoot			•					
<i>Ranunculus lingua</i>	Greater Spearwort			•		•	•		Rare in Bucks Introduced in pond
<i>Ranunculus peltatus</i>	Pond-water Crowfoot	•							Uncommon in Bucks

## POND FLORA

\* Observed by local residents. Not noted in the 1997 survey

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incident							Comments
		Pre 78	7 Aug 78	Jun-Aug 80	4 Sept 85	28 Jan Jun 86	'88	5 Jan 97	
Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup			•			•	•	
Solanaceae									
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet	•	•	•	•				
Typhaceae									
Typha latifolia	Reedmace	•	•		•		•	*	seen 2002
Urticaceae									
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle			•			•	•	

The pond flora data suggest an even more dramatic decline in species diversity than we have seen in the grasses and herbs across the rest of the Commons, as can be seen from the chart below. In June 1980 there were 31 species recorded. In 1988 the number was 21, with significant plants such as the White Water-lily gone, only half of those present in 1980 were found again. By 1997 the number was 14 and the repeats from 1980 reduced to 1/3.



(NB Although three further species were noted after 1997 only one was a repeat from 1980 and so the chart is still substantially correct.)

Possible reasons for the decline in plant species are:

- increased water pollution and turbidity which has affected the water dwelling plants.
- changes in the pond margins making them less suitable as a seedbed for some plants, because cattle and horses no longer visit to drink. When cattle did visit they trampled larger perennial plants and so kept down their growth and, by disturbing the soil, helped to cultivate it for smaller herbs.

- reduction in the extent of the seasonally disturbed and dry pond margin (an important habitat for some plants) brought about by the growth of larger plants by the water's edge.
- damage and pollution from the periodic maintenance of the adjacent road (e.g. salting in winter)
- possible unwitting damage to plants through the periodic pond clearing exercises carried out by the Society or other well-meaning but perhaps misguided individuals who have, for example, added non native plants or animals to the pond.
- leakage of water since the water level in autumn 2002 was unusually low.

Whatever the reasons, there is clearly a reduction in the number of plant species which were once able to grow and reproduce quite happily in and around this pond. Once again it would be useful to carry out a detailed seasonal observation of the species so that we can confirm the reality of the above conclusions.

In October 2002 the Society sought advice from Dan Merrett of BBOWT on the future management of the ponds and he made a number of observations on possible reasons for the changing nature of Pallett's pond and his recommendations (Appendix XI) should be included in future management plans.

## FUNGI (Clive Carey)

The following 50+ fungi listed represent some of the common species to be found regularly on Cholesbury and Hawridge Commons over the last few years. I have been collecting, and eating wild fungi, for about twelve years. As my primary interest is in the edible varieties, I tend to ignore the smaller fungi and so there will be many that I have not yet identified.

The information on the listed fungi came mainly from Roger Phillips' excellent book "Mushrooms and other fungi of Great Britain and Europe" with some input from "Field Guide to the mushrooms and toadstools of Britain and Europe" by David Pegler, the Head of Mycology at Kew. I use any of eight books on fungi to cross-reference new finds and have only poisoned my wife and myself once!

If anyone finds a specimen and would like to know what it might be, by all means bring it along and I'll see if I can identify it.



*Velvet Shanks*

Taxonomic Name	Common Name
<i>Agaricus arvensis</i>	Horse Mushroom
<i>Agaricus campestris</i>	Field Mushroom
<i>Agaricus silvicola</i>	Wood Mushroom
<i>Amanita citrina</i>	False Death Cap
<i>Amanita fulva</i>	Tawny Grisette
<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	Fly Agaric
<i>Amanita rubescens</i>	The Blusher
<i>Amanita virosa</i>	Destroying Angel
<i>Armillaria mellea</i>	Honey Fungus
<i>Auricularia auricula-judae</i>	Jew's-ear Fungus
<i>Boletus badius</i>	Bay Boletus
<i>Boletus chrysenteron</i>	Red-cracked Boletus
<i>Boletus edulis</i>	Cep, Penny Bun
<i>Calocybe gambosum</i>	St. George's Mushroom
<i>Calvatia giganteus</i>	Giant Polypore
<i>Cantharellus cornucopioides</i>	Horn of Plenty
<i>Cantharellus infundibuliformis</i>	Winter Chanterelle
<i>Clavulina cristata</i>	White Coral Fungus
<i>Clitocybe infundibuliformis</i>	Common Funnel Cap
<i>Clitocybe nebularis</i>	Clouded Agaric
<i>Clitocybe odora</i>	Aniseed Toadstool
<i>Collybia butyracea</i>	Butter Cap
<i>Collybia fusipes</i>	Spindle-shank
<i>Coprinus atramentarius</i>	Common Ink-cap
<i>Coprinus comatus</i>	Shaggy Ink-cap

Taxonomic Name	Common Name
<i>Coprinus disseminatus</i>	Fairies' Bonnets
<i>Coprinus plicatilis</i>	Little Umbrella
<i>Coriolus versicolor</i>	Many-zoned Polypore
<i>Crepidotus variabilis</i>	
<i>Flammulina velutipes</i>	Velvet Shank
<i>Helvella crispa</i>	Common White Helvella
<i>Helvella lacunosa</i>	Black Helvella
<i>Hygrocybe nivea</i>	Snowy Wax Cap
<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	Sulphur Tuft
<i>Laccaria amethystina</i>	Amethyst Deceiver
<i>Laccaria laccata</i>	Deceiver
<i>Lactarius deliciosus</i>	Saffron Milk-cap
<i>Lactarius piperatus</i>	Peppery Milk-cap
<i>Lactarius quietus</i>	Oak Milk-cap
<i>Leccinum versipelle</i>	Orange Birch Boletus
<i>Lepiota procera</i>	Parasol Mushroom
<i>Lepiota rhacodes</i>	Shaggy Parasol
<i>Lepista nuda</i>	Wood Blewit
<i>Lepista saeva</i>	Field Blewit
<i>Lycoperdon perlatum</i>	Common Puff-ball
<i>Marasmius oreades</i>	Fairy-ring Champignon
<i>Mutinus caninus</i>	Dog Stinkhorn
<i>Mycena pura</i>	
<i>Phallus impudicus</i>	Stinkhorn
<i>Pholiota squarrosa</i>	Shaggy Pholiota
<i>Piptoporus betulinus</i>	Birch Polypore
<i>Pleurotus ostreatus</i>	Oyster Mushroom
<i>Polyporus squamosus</i>	Dryad's Saddle
<i>Rhodotus palmatus</i>	Rhodotus
<i>Russula ochroleuca</i>	Common Yellow Russula
<i>Scleroderma citrinum</i>	Common Earth-ball
<i>Tremella mesenterica</i>	Yellow Brain Fungus
<i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>	Candle-snuff
<i>Xylaria polymorpha</i>	Dead Man's Fingers



*Fly Agaric*

# FAUNA

## MAMMALS

It has not been possible to conduct a systematic study of the mammals which live on the Commons but the following table shows animals which have been seen by local residents over recent years. A more thorough study is necessary to tell us about them and other

species which are more elusive. As with the plants and birds there have been records of escapes on the Commons. Cats, whether strays or deliberately dumped have sometimes made their homes there. Apparently the Rothschilds once spotted Kangaroos!

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	Roe-deer	
<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Hedgehog	
<i>Glis glis</i>	Edible Dormouse	
<i>Lepus capensis</i>	Brown Hare	
<i>Meles meles</i>	Badger	
<i>Microtus agrestis</i>	Field-vole	
<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>	Muntjac	
<i>Mustela erminea</i>	Stoat	
<i>Mustela nivalis</i>	Weasel	
<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Rabbit	
<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	Grey Squirrel	
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Fox	
	Bat <sup>†</sup>	
	Mouse <sup>†</sup>	
	Shrew <sup>†</sup>	
	Rat <sup>†</sup>	

<sup>†</sup>Animals known to live on the Commons, exact species unknown.

Julia Carey has observed Pipistrelle bats and others which she believes to have been Brown Long-eared bats on the Commons. She suggests that a worthwhile summer's evening activity could involve interested locals going out with a bat expert and bat detectors to try to establish which species are to be found.

## BIRDS

In his study of Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons George Bunton lists the findings of the Common Bird Census conducted from 1977-1981 inclusive, by Mr Michael Rossor of Amersham and District Ornithological Society (ADOS), helped by Mr Kent, Secretary of ADOS and Mr Feeny-Brown. Species marked with Δ indicate those proven or believed to have bred on or around the Commons during the five-year census, which was carried out in the breeding season.

It has not been possible to carry out such a study for this document, but we are fortunate in having keen bird watchers in the area. Linden Bevan-Pritchard and Sue Fletcher have systematically observed the birds in their gardens as part of a British Trust for Ornithology Survey (from 1995 and 1996 respectively to the present). Since each lives on the edge of the Commons we might assume that the birds that they have spotted in their gardens could also be seen on the Commons as well. Jenny Parsons and Diana Griffin are keen walkers and have also noted birds on the Commons over a number of years and Diana, as a resident since 1956, has been able to note changes over almost 50 years. No systematic study of nesting on the Commons has been made since the 1977-81 census.

Bucks Environmental Records Centre has also supplied data for specific sightings. Dates and comments relating to some of the rarer species have been included. Again BAP refers to either a national or county Biodiversity Action Plan, and it is encouraging to note that, in a few cases, some species which are in decline are still represented on the Commons.

From the table it is clear that some species observed in the 1977-81 census have not been seen over the six-year period from 1995-2001. This sometimes reflects a national drop in their numbers or the changes to the Commons from their preferred habitat.

There are also some species which have been seen recently, but were not recorded in the 1977-81 census. These generally represent species which have shown a county or nation-wide increase in population. Information about fluctuations in the populations of species has been taken from Lack P. and Ferguson D (Editors) 1993 *The Birds of Buckinghamshire* published by The Buckinghamshire Bird Club.

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence		Comments
		1977-81	1995-2002	
<b>Accipitridae</b>				
<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Sparrowhawk	•	•	
<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Buzzard		•	Very rare vagrant
<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Red Kite		•	Seen flying high overhead
<b>Anatidae</b>				
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	•	•	
<b>Apodidae</b>				
<i>Apus apus</i>	Swift	•	•	Seen above the Commons
<b>Ardeidae</b>				
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Grey Heron	•	•	
<b>Certhiidae</b>				
<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Treecreeper	Δ	•	
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren	Δ	•	
<b>Charadriidae</b>				
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing	•		Declined in Bucks throughout 20th century
<b>Columbidae</b>				
<i>Columba oenas</i>	Stock Dove	Δ	•	
<i>Columba palambus</i>	Woodpigeon	Δ	•	



## BIRDS

<sup>Δ</sup>Known or believed to have bred on the Commons.

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence		Comments
		1977-81	1995-2002	
<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Collared Dove		•	Steady increase in Bucks since 1970s
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Turtle Dove	•	•	Decreasing in Bucks
<b>Corvidae</b>				
<i>Corvus corone</i>	Carrion Crow	Δ	•	
<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Jackdaw		•	Steady increase from 1970s
<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Rook	Δ	•	
<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Jay	Δ	•	
<i>Pica pica</i>	Magpie	Δ	•	
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Golden Oriole	•		Rare vagrant. Sighted in Cholesbury 1989
<b>Cuculidae</b>				
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Cuckoo	Δ	•	
<b>Falconidae</b>				
<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Hobby		•	Uncommon breeding summer visitor
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Kestrel	Δ	•	
<b>Fringillidae</b>				
<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	Redpoll	Δ	•	
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Goldfinch	•	•	
<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Linnet	Δ	•	Priority UK BAP RSPB red list
<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Greenfinch	Δ	•	
<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Siskin	•	•	
<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Yellowhammer	Δ	•	UK BAP; Species of Conservation Concern RSPB
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Reed Bunting	Δ	•	
<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Chaffinch	Δ	•	
<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Brambling	•	•	
<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Bullfinch	Δ	•	
<b>Hirundinidae</b>				
<i>Delichon urbica</i>	House Martin	Δ	•	
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Swallow	Δ	•	
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Sand Martin	•		Population fluctuates but considerable decline from 1969 onwards
<b>Muscicapidae</b>				
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Robin	Δ	•	
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Spotted Flycatcher	Δ		Nationally declining

## BIRDS

△Known or believed to have bred on the Commons.

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence		Comments
		1977-81	1995-2002	
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Wheatear	△		Declining in south inland England due to loss of open short grassy areas
<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Whinchat	●		Overall decline. No longer breeds in Bucks
<i>Turdus merula</i>	Blackbird	●	●	
<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Redwing	●	●	
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song Thrush	△	●	
<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Fieldfare	●	●	
<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Mistle Thrush	△	●	
<b>Paridae</b>				
<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Long-tailed Tit	△	●	
<i>Parus ater</i>	Coal Tit		●	Widespread in woodland in South Bucks
<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	Blue Tit	△	●	
<i>Parus montanus</i>	Willow Tit	△	●	
<i>Parus major</i>	Great Tit	△	●	
<i>Parus palustris</i>	Marsh Tit	△	?	UK BAP; Species of Conservation Concern RSPB
<b>Passeridae</b>				
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	△	●	
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow Pipit	△		Countrywide common but scarce in Bucks. Prefers open country.
<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Tree Pipit	△	?	UK BAP; Species of Conservation Concern RSPB
<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Pied Wagtail	△	●	
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Yellow Wagtail	●	●	
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	△	●	
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Tree Sparrow	△		Major decline locally and nationally since mid 1970.
<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Hedge Sparrow	●	●	
<b>Phasianidae</b>				
<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	Red-legged Partridge	●	●	
<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Pheasant	△	●	
<b>Picidae</b>				
<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Great Spotted Woodpecker	△	●	
<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	△		
<i>Picus viridis</i>	Green Woodpecker	△	●	UK BAP; Species of Conservation Concern RSPB

## BIRDS

△Known or believed to have bred on the Commons.

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence		Comments
		1977-81	1995-2002	
<b>Rallidae</b>				
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Moorhen	△	•	
<b>Regulidae</b>				
<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Goldcrest	△	•	
<b>Sittidae</b>				
<i>Sitta europaea</i>	Nuthatch	△	•	
<b>Strigidae</b>				
<i>Athene noctua</i>	Little Owl	•	•	heard
<i>Strix aluco</i>	Tawny Owl	•	•	
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl		•	Marked decrease in population nationally. Felling of diseased elms has reduced nesting sites.
<b>Sturnidae</b>				
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling	△	•	
<b>Sylviidae</b>				
<i>Locustella naevia</i>	Grasshopper Warbler		•	Perhaps an increase in population in 1980s
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Willow Warbler	△	•	UK BAP; Species of Conservation Concern RSPB
<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Chiffchaff	△	•	
<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	Blackcap	△	•	
<i>Sylvia borin</i>	Garden Warbler	△		Tends to be under-recorded but declining
<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Whitethroat	•	•	UK BAP; Species of Conservation Concern RSPB
<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	Lesser Whitethroat	△	•	



*Whitethroat*

The following species were recorded before the 1977-81 survey and have now disappeared from the Commons

Caprimulgus europaeus	Nightjar	Seen 1950s	Rare summer visitor prefers heathland
Circus cyaneus	Hen Harrier	May '77	UK BAP; Species of Conservation Concern RSPB
Lanius collurio	Red-backed Shrike	Last seen 1973	Now extinct
Luscinia megarhynchos	Nightingale	Heard in the 1950-1960s	Scarce. Now only a migrant in the Chilterns
Scolopax rusticola	Woodcock	Seen 1960s	

Other species which have been spotted on the Commons, but which were undoubtedly escapes, include White Doves, Guinea Fowl, an Emu, Peacocks and a Cockatiel. The Emu was of particular interest because, having made its bid for freedom from its owners at the top of Horseblock, it was most reluctant to be recaptured and provided an exciting time for the residents of Hawridge Bottom who were trying to recover it! Other species seen, which were presumably in transit, have been Seagulls (species unidentified), Swan, Muscovy Duck, a Skein of Canada Geese, Nutcracker and Grey Wagtails. Grey Wagtails have now been seen 2 or 3 times since September 2002 and so it is possible that they may have become resident. Quails have been heard.

The prevalence of species varies considerably within a short distance. Starlings, once frequent are now rare at Hawridge Bottom but often spotted at the Old Smithy. Collared Doves, now rarely seen at Tankards Dene, are seen quite regularly at the other end of the lane.



*Mistle Thrush*



*Pheasant*



*Wheatear*

## INVERTEBRATES

The Bucks Environmental Records Centre holds various data relating to insects observed on Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons. We have summarised the observations on moths and butterflies separately, with a combined table for other miscellaneous taxa. The final table reports a variety of invertebrates observed in and around Pallett's Pond between 1968 and 1980.

### Lepidoptera (Moths and Butterflies)

The following sightings of Moths were recorded by Martin Albertini, Bucks County Moth Recorder and Peter Hall. There are very few data other than their 1995 study. The data on Butterfly species were supplied by

Bucks Environmental Records Centre for 1986 from observations by K Melliush, the 1989-90 study by the children of Hawridge School and by Martin Albertini and Peter Hall for any later recordings.

### MICROMOTHS

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence	Comments
		1995	
<b>Blastobasidae</b>			
Blastobasis lignea		•	
<b>Coleophoridae</b>			
Coleophora mayrella		•	
<b>Momphidae</b>			
Batrachedra praeangusta		•	
Mompha ochraceella		•	
<b>Ocophoridae</b>			
Carcina quercana		•	
<b>Pterophoridae</b>			
Pterophorus pentadactyla	White Plume-moth	•	
<b>Pyralidae</b>			
Acentria ephemerella	Water Veneer	•	
Agriphila geniculea		•	
Agriphila straminella		•	
Agriphila tristella		•	
Aphomia sociella	Bee Moth	•	
Chrysoteuchia culmella		•	
Crambus pascuella		•	
Crambus perlella		•	
Evergestis forficalis	Garden Pebble	•	
Hypsopygia costalis	Gold Triangle	•	
Phycita roborella		•	
Pleuroptya ruralis	Mother of Pearl	•	
Scoparia subfusca		•	
Udea olivalis		•	

## MICROMOTHS

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence	Comments
		1995	
<b>Tortricidae</b>			
Acleris laterana		•	
Acleris rhombana	Rhomboid Tortrix	•	
Celypha lacunana		•	
Epiblema uddmanniana	Bramble Shoot Moth	•	
Epinotia ramella		•	
Pandemis cerasana	Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix	•	
Pandemis corylana	Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix	•	
Tortrix viridana	Green Oak Tortrix	•	
<b>Yponomeulidae</b>			
Argyresthia brockeella		•	
Argyresthia goedartella		•	
Argyresthia retinella		•	
Plutella xylostella	Diamond-back Moth	•	
Ypsolopha parenthesesella		•	

## MACROMOTHS

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence	Comments
		1995	
<b>Arctiidae</b>			
Eilema complana	Scarce Footman	•	
Eilema lurideola	Common Footman	•	
Phragmatobia fuliginosa	Ruby Tiger	•	
<b>Geometridae</b>			
Biston betularia	Peppered Moth	•	
Cabera pusaria	Common White Wave	•	
Campaea margaritata	Light Emerald	•	
Chloroclysta citrata	Dark Marbled Carpet	•	
Chloroclystis rectangulata	Green Pug	•	
Cidaria fulvata	Barred Yellow	•	
Colostygia pectinataria	Green Carpet	•	
Cosmorhoe ocellata	Purple Bar	•	
Ecliptopera silaceata	Small Phoenix	•	
Ennomos fuscantaria	Dusky Thorn	•	

## MACROMOTHS

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence	Comments
		1995	
<i>Epirrhoe alternata</i>	Common Carpet	•	
<i>Eulithis pyraliata</i>	Barred Straw	•	
<i>Euphyia unangulata</i>	Sharp Angled Carpet	•	Local, scarce in Bucks
<i>Eupithecia tenuiata</i>	Slender Pug	•	
<i>Hemithea aestivaria</i>	Common Emerald	•	
<i>Hydriomena furcata</i>	July Highflyer	•	
<i>Hylaea fasciaria</i>	Barred Red	•	
<i>Idaea aversata</i>	Riband Wave	•	
<i>Lomaspilis marginata</i>	Clouded Border	•	
<i>Lomographa temerata</i>	Clouded Silver	•	
<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	Brimstone Moth	•	
<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>	Willow Beauty	•	
<i>Perizoma alchemillata</i>	Small Rivulet	•	
<i>Xanthorhoe montanata</i>	Silver-ground Carpet	•	
<b>Hepialidae</b>			
<i>Hepialus humuli</i>	Ghost Moth		Seen 1990
<i>Hepialus sylvina</i>	Orange Swift	•	
<b>Lasiocampidae</b>			
<i>Philoduria potatoria</i>	Drinker	•	
<b>Noctuidae</b>			
<i>Abrostola triplasia</i>	Spectacle	•	
<i>Acronicta aceris</i>	Sycamore	•	
<i>Acronicta leporina</i>	Miller	•	
<i>Acronicta psi</i>	Grey Dagger	•	
<i>Acronicta tridens</i>	Dark Dagger	•	
<i>Agrotis clavis</i>	Heart and Club	•	
<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	Heart and Dart	•	
<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	Dark Sword-grass	•	
<i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>	Mouse Moth	•	
<i>Apamea anceps</i>	Large Nutmeg	•	
<i>Apamea crenata</i>	Clouded-bordered Brindle	•	
<i>Apamea lithoxyloa</i>	Light Arches	•	
<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	Dark Arches	•	
<i>Apamea remissa</i>	Dusky Brocade	•	
<i>Atethmia centrigo</i>	Centre-barred Sallow	•	
<i>Autographa jota</i>	Plain Golden Y	•	
<i>Autographa pulchrina</i>	Beautiful Golden Y	•	

## MACROMOTHS

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence	Comments
		1995	
<i>Axylia putris</i>	Flame	•	
<i>Caradrina morpheus</i>	Mottled Rustic	•	
<i>Cosmia trapezina</i>	Dun-bar	•	
<i>Cucullia umbratica</i>	Shark	•	
<i>Diachrysia chrysitis</i>	Burnished Brass	•	
<i>Diarsia brunnea</i>	Purple Clay	•	Local, uncommon in Bucks
<i>Diarsia mendica</i>	Ingrailed Clay	•	
<i>Diarsia rubi</i>	Small Square-spot	•	
<i>Euplexia lucipara</i>	Small Angle Shades	•	
<i>Herminia grisealis</i>	Small Fan-foot	•	
<i>Herminia tarsipennalis</i>	Fan-foot	•	
<i>Hoplodrina alsines</i>	Uncertain	•	
<i>Hypena proboscidalis</i>	Snout	•	
<i>Lacanobia oleracea</i>	Bright-line Brown-eye	•	
<i>Lacanobia thalassina</i>	Pale-shouldered Brocade	•	
<i>Laspeyria flexula</i>	Beautiful Hook-tip	•	
<i>Luperina testacea</i>	Flounced Rustic	•	
<i>Melanchra persicariae</i>	Dot Moth	•	
<i>Mesapamea secalis</i>	Common Rustic	•	Also recorded in 1990
<i>Mythimna comma</i>	Shoulder-striped Wainscot	•	
<i>Mythimna ferrago</i>	Clay	•	
<i>Mythimna impura</i>	Smoky Wainscot	•	
<i>Mythimna pallens</i>	Common Wainscot	•	
<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	Large Yellow Underwing	•	
<i>Noctua comes</i>	Lesser Yellow Underwing		Seen 1990
<i>Noctua janthe</i>	Lesser Broad Border	•	
<i>Noctua interjecta</i>	Least Yellow Underwing	•	
<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>	Flame Shoulder	•	
<i>Oligia latruncula</i>	Tawny Marbled Minor	•	
<i>Oligia strigilis</i>	Marbled Minor	•	
<i>Phlogophora meticulosa</i>	Angle Shades	•	
<i>Photedes minima</i>	Small Dotted Buff	•	
<i>Polia nebulosa</i>	Grey Arches	•	
<i>Rivula sericealis</i>	Straw Dot	•	
<i>Rusina ferruginea</i>	Brown Rustic	•	
<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character	•	
<i>Xestia ditrapezium</i>	Triple-spotted Clay	•	Local, scarce in Bucks



## MACROMOTHS

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence	Comments
		1995	
<i>Xestia triangulum</i>	Double Square-spot	•	
<i>Xestia sexstrigata</i>	Six-striped Rustic	•	
<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	Square-spot Rustic	•	
<b>Nolidae</b>			
<i>Nola cucullatella</i>	Short-cloaked Moth	•	
<b>Notodontidae</b>			
<i>Pheosia gnoma</i>	Lesser Swallow Prominent	•	
<i>Stauropus fagi</i>	Lobster	•	
<b>Sphingidae</b>			
<i>Deilephila elpenor</i>	Elephant Hawk-moth	•	
<i>Laothoe populi</i>	Poplar Hawk-moth		Seen 1993
<b>Thyatiridae</b>			
<i>Habrosyne pyritoides</i>	Buff Arches	•	
<i>Tethea ocularis</i>	Figure of Eighty	•	
<i>Thyatira batis</i>	Peach Blossom	•	
<b>Zygaenidae</b>			
<i>Zygaena trifolii</i>	Five Spot Burnet		Seen 1986

## BUTTERFLIES

Taxonomical Name	Common Name	Incident			Comments
		Jul-Aug 86	89-90	1998-	
<b>Hesperiidae</b>					
<i>Ochlodes venata</i>	Large Skipper	•	•		
<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	Small Skipper	•	•	•	
<b>Lycaenidae</b>					
<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	Holly Blue			•	
<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	Small Copper	•	•		
<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	Common Blue		•		
<i>Satyrion w-album</i>	White-letter Hairstreak	•			
<b>Nymphalidae</b>					
<i>Argynnis aglaja</i>	Dark Green Fritillary	•			
<i>Aglais urticae</i>	Small Tortoiseshell		•		
<i>Cynthia cardui</i>	Painted Lady		•		
<i>Inachis io</i>	Peacock		•		
<i>Ladoga camilla</i>	White Admiral		•		
<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	Comma			•	
<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	Red Admiral		•		
<b>Pieridae</b>					
<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	Orange Tip		•		
<i>Colias croceus</i>	Clouded Yellow		•		
<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	Brimstone		•		
<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	Large White	•	•		
<i>Pieris napi</i>	Green-veined White	•			
<i>Pieris rapae</i>	Small White	•	•		
<b>Satyridae</b>					
<i>Aphantopus hypernatus</i>	Ringlet	•	•		
<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Wall			•	
<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	Meadow Brown	•	•	•	
<i>Melanargia galathea</i>	Marbled White			•	
<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	Speckled Wood		•		
<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	Gatekeeper	•		•	

Since butterflies are attractive insects which are relatively easy to observe and identify, they are good candidates for a more comprehensive survey which would help us follow change over time.

The children of Hawridge School observed seventeen species in 1989/90. Perhaps the current school children or other local inhabitants could see whether they are all still found on the Commons. There are well-defined procedures for carrying out "Butterfly Transects" which could be taught to local volunteers.

## MISCELLANEOUS INSECTS (mainly Bugs, Hoppers, Aphids)

From data supplied by the Bucks Environmental Records Centre from surveys by Walter J le Quesne, Chesham and District Natural History Society (CDNHS) and Martin Albertini.

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence					Comments
		23 Jun 61	70-71	22 Jul 78	Sep 84	95	
<b>Coleoptera</b>							
Acupalpus sp.					Feb '80		
Aphodius rufipes						•	
Halyzia 16-guttata	Orange Ladybird					•	
Lampyris noctiluca	Glow Worm		CDNHS one			•	1995 one male
Necrodes littoralis						•	
Serica brunnea						•	
<b>Hemiptera</b>							
Delphacinus mesomelas		•					
Ditropis pteridis		•	•				
Elasmostethus interstinctus	Birch Shield Bug				•		
Kosswigianella exigua		•					
Neophilaenus exclamationis		•					
Neophilaenus lineatus		•	•	•			
Pentatoma rufipes	Forest Shield Bug					•	
<b>Heteroptera</b>							
Acetropis gimmerthali			•				
Amblytylus nasutus		•	•				
Anthocoris confusus					•		
Anthocoris nemoralis					•		
Anthocoris nemorum	Common Flower Bug				•		
Aphrophora alni					•		
Aphrophora costalis					•		
Blepharidopterus angulatus	Black-Kneed Apple Capsid				•		
Iassus lanio					•		
Idiocerus stigmatalis					•		
Kleidocerys resedae					•		
Lygocoris contaminatus				•	•		
Lygocoris pabulinus	Common Green Capsid				•		
Monalocoris filicis	Bracken Bug		•				
Orthocephalus coriaceus			•				

**MISCELLANEOUS INSECTS**  
**(mainly bugs, hoppers, aphids)**

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Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence					Comments
		23 Jun 61	70-71	22 Jul 78	Sep 84	95	
<i>Orthops cervinus</i>					•		
<i>Peritrechus geniculatus</i>		•					
<i>Phytocoris dimidiatus</i>				•			
<i>Psallus falleni</i>					•		
<i>Trigonotylus ruficornis</i>		•					
<b>Homoptera</b>							
<i>Agallia ribauti</i>		9/4/56					
<i>Alebra albostriella</i>					•		
<i>Alebra coryli</i>					•		
<i>Allygus mixtus</i>					•		
<i>Allygus modestus</i>					•		
<i>Balclutha punctata</i>					•		
<i>Dicranotropis hamata</i>		•					
<i>Elymana sulphurella</i>					•		
<i>Empoasca decipiens</i>					•		
<i>Empoasca vitis</i>					•		
<i>Hyledelphax elegantulus</i>		29/4/56					
<i>Kybos betulicola</i>					•		
<i>Kybos calyculus</i>					•		
<i>Lamprotettix nitidulus</i>					•		
<b>Neuroptera</b>							
<i>Chrysoperla carnea</i> agg.	Lacewing					•	

Many of the inhabitants of the local villages have referred to the abundance of Glow Worms (Fire-flies) on the Commons until the early 1960s, and it was encouraging to see that one male was spotted in 1995. It would be interesting to know if they are still here and if anything can be done to encourage their numbers.

## INVERTEBRATES observed in and around Pallett's Pond

The following invertebrates were recorded in or around Pallett's pond between 1968-80, according to data held by the Bucks Environmental Records Centre. There is a real need to repeat the surveys and to describe what has happened in the past two decades.

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence				Comments
		17 Nov 68	May-Aug 76	7 Aug 78	Jun - Aug 80	
<b>Platyhelminthes - Tricladida</b>						
<i>Polycelis nigra</i>	a Flatworm	•		•		
<b>Annelida</b>						
<i>Tubificidae</i> sp.	a Tubificid Worm			•		
<b>Mollusca</b>						
<i>Lymnaea peregra</i>	Wandering Snail			•		
<i>Lymnaea</i> sp.	a Pond Snail	•				
<i>Lymnaea stagnalis</i>	Great Pond Snail			•		
<i>Pisidium</i> sp.	a Pea Shell			•		
<i>Planorbarius corneus</i>	Great Rams-horn Snail			•		
<i>Planorbis</i> sp.	a Ram's horn	•			•	
<i>Sphaerium corneum</i>	Horny Orb Mussel			•		
<i>Sphaerium</i> sp.	an Orb Mussel				•	
<b>Arthropoda-Crustacea</b>						
<i>Asellus</i> sp.	a Waterlouse			•	•	
<i>Copepoda</i> spp.	Cyclopid Waterfleas	•				
<i>Daphnia</i> sp.	a Waterflea	•				
<i>Gammarus</i> sp.	a Freshwater Shrimp			•		
<i>Ostracoda</i> spp.	Mussel Shrimps	•				
<b>Arthropoda-Insecta</b>						
<i>Agabus</i> sp.	a Water Beetle			•		
<i>Ceratopogonidae</i> spp.	Biting Midges	•				
<i>Chironomidae</i> spp.	Non-biting Midges	•				
<i>Cloeon dipterum</i>	Mayfly	•				
<i>Cloeon simile</i>	Mayfly	•				
<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	Azure Damselfly	•				
<i>Corixidae</i> sp.	Lesser Water-boatman	•		•		
<i>Dixidae</i> spp.	Meniscus Midges	•				
<i>Dytiscidae</i> spp.	Water Beetles	•	•			
<i>Ephemeroptera</i> spp.	Mayflies				•	
<i>Gerris</i> sp.	a Pond Skater				•	
<i>Hygrobia hermanni</i>	Screech Beetle, Squeak Beetle				•	

## INVERTEBRATES observed in and around Pallett's Pond

Taxonomic Name	Common Name	Incidence				Comments
		17 Nov 68	May-Aug 76	7 Aug 78	Jun - Aug 80	
<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	Meadow Brown				•	
Notonectidae	Backswimmers			•	•	
<i>Notonecta glauca</i>	Common Water-boatman	•				
<i>Pieris rapae</i>	Small White				•	
<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	Small Skipper				•	
Trichoptera spp.	Caddis Flies			•		

Some of the invertebrate data pre-date the plant observations reported earlier. Although they are very sketchy and diverse, they offer some support for the conclusion that there was already a decline in the number of taxa by 1980. Several vertebrates were also recorded as living in the pond up to the early 1980s. The Smooth Newt (*Triturus vulgaris*) was last recorded in

1984 while the Common frog (*Rana temporaria*) was observed in 1980 and 1984. Frogs are still occasionally seen on other parts of the Commons but these are probably from breeding in garden ponds. In the 1950s Rod Griffin and Barry Tompson recall that they were able to catch sticklebacks (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*) in Pallett's pond.

## CONCLUSIONS

Those people who live near to the Commons and the many more who use them for their recreation have reason to be grateful to the people, named and anonymous, who have taken the trouble to document the species they have seen over the past 40 years. Their findings are important. If species are being lost the Lord of the Manors and the Commons Preservation Society need to know so that something can be done before it is too late. It is sad that, for example,

nobody has seen a Bee Orchid on the Commons since 1972. If plants and animals do not survive in refuges such as the Commons they may well be completely lost to the countryside. "Extinction is for ever".

It is to be hoped that this study will stimulate renewed interest in looking for, seeing and recording the flora and fauna which exist here and which in their diversity give pleasure to so many.

## OUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

As has already been stated there are many views on how the Commons should be. Many residents would like to keep them as they first saw them however they perceived them. Some would prefer the open land of the past. Some would just let nature take its course and let them become wilderness. As things are at present there is a mix of all of this and there are benefits to humans, flora and fauna from the diverse types of habitat.

The Commons are clearly an important resource and under the current approach of teamwork between the LoM and the Society, there is a successful integration of conservation objectives and the needs of Commons users. Realistically, it is not possible to please all of the people all of the time and there must always be compromise. At present however, there is considerable consideration given to trying to do what is in the best interests of the Commons and their diverse users. It could be different if the Commons changed hands and a more commercially minded LoM were to take over. This could, for example, involve the break up and sale of the Commons into many small portions, which would make their management as a unit difficult, if not impossible. There might also be the danger of paralysis if too

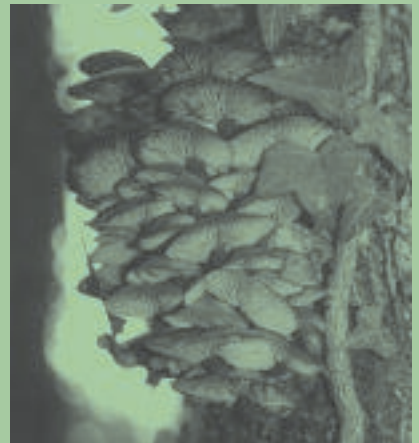
many interested parties were to be involved. In 2001 Chiltern District Council were presented with a wonderful opportunity to help the community to acquire the Commons in Trust from the current LoM but unfortunately they failed to grasp the opportunity. Hopefully any future LoMs will deal sympathetically with the Commons and continue to respect and maintain their diverse nature.

The current Lord of the Manors is actively interested in the welfare of the Commons and she is supported by a number of enthusiastic volunteers who are willing to expend time and energy to maintaining them. It is vital to sustain community interest. However, should there be a need for more resources than the locals can provide, it is hoped that funding bodies in the future will recognise that the Commons represent a much more valuable resource than just a local amenity. They form an entity which is well worth preserving. The added bonus of grant money from the Heritage Lottery Fund has enabled the local community to accomplish much more than would have been feasible using only local resources. It is to be hoped that such an injection of funds could provide a similar boost in the future if or when it becomes necessary.



*Horse-riders with view to Overburnts*

## SOURCES OF REFERENCE, FURTHER READING AND APPENDICES



*Velvet Shanks*



*Honeysuckle*



*Foxgloves*



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## Appendix I Early history of Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons and their ownership: Bunton (pages 6-8)

The Common of Hawridge and Cholesbury has a very long history, and what might now seem to be a few modest acres of Buckinghamshire countryside has been many centuries in the making. Indeed for most of its early periods the two were quite separate, belonging to different manors and landowners. For those interested in the history of the "Hill Villages" themselves, the main historical works of Lipscomb, the Victoria County History and the Records of Buckinghamshire are available locally, as is the informative and delightfully parochial account of the Hilltop Villages of the Chilterns by David and Joan Hay, which gives a catholic range of source and bibliography.

The Buckinghamshire Department of Architecture and Planning in 1970, implementing the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, defined the area of Cholesbury and Hawridge as a conservation area. They stated that the two villages both had evidence of ancient settlements over 2,000 years old. Cholesbury, which has a better documented history than Hawridge, may have started as Ceowald's Burgh, which suggests occupation of the hill fort by "Ceolwald" sometime in the 600s.

It becomes variously Chelwerdenbir - Chelewoldsburie - Chelwoldesbury - Chollesbury - Choulsbury and finally Cholesbury. It was originally part of the parish of Drayton Beauchamp, within the hundred of Cotteslow, and was distinguished by a "copious spring or reservoir" called the Holy Well "three perches from the Churchyard", also known as the Berry or Bury Pond. It is still there, inside the old campsite, and Lipscomb (1847) says that it was never known to fail even in the greatest drought.

Earliest records have the manor in the estate of Aluric, King Edward's thane, and valued at 100 shillings. Cholesbury is not mentioned by name in Domesday, but with Drayton Beauchamp was in possession of Magno le Breton and held by a sub-feudal tenant, Helgist. The le Bretons appear to have hived off Cholesbury in 1248 as a separate portion of the estate, as its own manor. It was said to have been in gift to the Knights Templar in 1101, but as they were not established before 1118 it is more credible that this gift occurred at the end of the reign of Henry I.

Drayton Estate, of which Cholesbury was a part, passed to the Beauchamp family in 1200 - William de Beauchamp certainly held the estate in 1221. In 1291 Drayton becomes denominated as Drayton Beauchamp, but Cholesbury is not mentioned further until 1330 when a Thomas Perot was "seised of lands and tenements in Childwoldesburye" (perhaps the origin of Parrott's Lane Farm). On his death they passed to John de Grumbewell, but by 1362 "Chilwoldesbury" appears in the ownership of Mary, Countess of Norfolk and relict of Sir Ralph Cobham; the parish being part of the

Barony of Wolventon. Her son John de Cobham made the King his heir in consequence of "the great affection" which he bore towards Prince Edward, the King's son, and on his death it was represented by petition "that the said John Cobham had given to the said King Edward, since deceased, the reversion, inter alia, of this Manor of Chelwoldesbury to have and to hold to the said King and his Heirs" and that he had "given seisin by the delivery of a ring of gold" at Thorne near Sandwich in Kent when the King was about to pass over into France.

However on 15th October 1364 the King granted the estate under the title of the Hamlet of Chelwardesbury by writ of Privy Seat to Thomas Cheyne, who was called "Dilecto Scutifero nostro" our beloved Shield-Bearer. He was also in 1365 appointed Constable of the Royal Castle of Windsor and Ranger of the Royal Forest of Windsor.

The Cheynes continued to hold "Choulesbury" (as part of Drayton Beauchamp) until the reign of Henry VIII, when around 1541 it was vested in the Baldwins, who were big landowners in Aylesbury and acquired it by purchase or grant of the possessions of religious foundations seized by the Crown on the dissolution of the monasteries. From then on "Choulesbury" became a separate and distinct Parish.

In 1571 a fine passed between the Baldwins of a "messuage, orchard, garden and 20 acres of pasture in Choulesbury and Buckland" to Robert Maldred, but in 1607 we find the Queen demising to Ralph and John Clark 100 acres of land, five acres of pasture and 20s rents in Choulesbury, and in a further patent of 1603 she grants to Francis Cheyne and his heirs "for ever" the Manor and Advowson of Drayton Beauchamp "parcel of the possessions of John De Cobham, the son of Mary formerly wife of the Earl Marshall" with the exception of the messuage 185 acres and rents in Choulesbury. This manor was subsequently sold by the Baldwins to the Seare family of Marsworth in 1650 and it was they who also acquired the neighbouring Manor of Hawridge, so that from this time Cholesbury and Hawridge became one.

Richard Seare lived at Hawridge Court for a while and then moved to Great Missenden. He was Sheriff of Buckinghamshire. He died in 1714 and was buried at Hawridge.

In 1748 Robert Dayrell (Darell) of Richmond in Surrey bought the combined Manor from John Seare but he died the same year, when his eldest son Edward took over. He was a distinguished figure in the City, becoming a Director of the Bank of England. On his death in 1814 he bequeathed the estate to the Reverend John Jeffreys (his nephew), rector of nearby Barnes.

Hoquerug - Hauerugge - Hauregge - Hawryg - Harridge - Hareidge - Horeridge - Horridge and finally Hawridge was always a much smaller entity than Cholesbury. Indeed at the beginning of the eighteenth century the parish contained only 12 families and between 1702 and

1709 there were but 21 births and 14 burials. Hawridge is presumed to have been included with Drayton Beauchamp in the Domesday Survey, and certainly the Manor belonged to the Beauchamps during Henry III's reign. In 1253 a fine was levied of messuage and lands in Hawridge to the use of the Lawrences and the manor passed by the marriage of John Beauchamp's daughter Isobel to Willian Mauduit. He was succeeded by his son, Sir William, who became Earl of Warwick. He however died without issue and in 1268 his estate went to his nephew and heir as "mesne" lord. This intermediary lordship was last held by his son and heir Guy in 1300. The holder of the Manor "in fee" was John Beauchamp, the 9th Earl of Warwick's brother. He died in 1316 to be succeeded by his son Richard and his grandson John who held Hawridge in 1346. By the 1350's the estate had been mortgaged to the Burgesses of Berkhamsted, and in particular to one of them, Edward (or Edmund) Cook who died in financial straits "seised of Hawridge Manor - one messuage with a garden, 4 acres of meadow, 5 of underwood together with 34 acres of arable in Aston Clinton".

The descent of the Manor at this stage becomes confused, but it reappears in the early 1400s; one of the Beauchamps - another Isobel - who was a widow, married a Sir Thomas Penyston and through reversion by her the Penystons continued to hold the estate until 1572 when Thomas Penyston the then heir, at the age of 18, sold it to Thomas Tasburgh. His son sold it in turn to the Blackwells, from whom it was purchased by Edmund Wright and then by the Seares in 1650 and this, as we have seen, united the two estates into the Manor of Cholesbury and Hawridge.

The Reverend H A Jeffreys, rector of Hawkhurst in Kent, inherited the combined Manors in 1862 and when he died in 1899 the Lordship was bought by Henry Turner JP, who lived at Braziers End House.

## Appendix II Cholesbury Fort and the history of early settlement in the village: Chris Brown

Cholesbury Fort (mistakenly called in the c19th "The Danish Camp" but locally known as the Camp) is a large 'multivallate' hill-fort on the borders of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.

A multivallate hill-fort is defined as a fortified enclosure located on a hill and with two or more lines of concentric earthworks set at intervals. Such hill-forts date to the Iron Age period, mostly constructed and used between the 6th century BC and the mid-first century AD. In some cases they were on the site of earlier Bronze Age settlements from around 1000 BC or earlier. No evidence though has been found to confirm this in the case of Cholesbury Fort although there are numerous Bronze Age finds in the surrounding area. During Iron Age times they were mainly used as centres of permanent occupation, and could be defended in response to increasing warfare.

### Description of the site

In common with other similar earthworks it consists of a double rampart (or vallum) enclosing a ditch, with access today provided by several entrances. Two banks (internal and external) enclose the large ditch, which is the only defensive boundary to the north-east and north-west, but there are further banks and ditches to the west and south-east. During the period of occupation there would have been wooden posts along the whole circumference of the inner bank. The ditch would have been well maintained and the sides supported by felled tree trunks. Entrances (probably two) would have been heavily fortified with a palisade of staves. A vast area of oak or elm woodland would have been cleared (estimated from other sources to be between 10,000 and 15,000 trees) to supply the wood.

The earthen ramparts are now crowned by a belt of magnificent beech trees which encircle all but the southern quarter, where the banks and ditches have been removed for houses and gardens. Of the present four main entrances to the site, only one (to the north-west) is thought to be original.

The site is approximately oval in plan, enclosing an area of 4 hectares and being over 6 hectares including the earthworks. It measures approximately 310 metres north-east to south-west by 230 metres north-west to south-east, with a level interior. It is estimated that the ditches, which are now 2.5 to 3m deep, were originally much deeper, probably up to 4m below ground. The inner bank is on average 8m in width and 1m above the interior ground level. The outer banks are of similar width but lower in height.

### Early Occupation

There has been speculation that Cholesbury may have originally been an important Bronze Age settlement established like other forts on the escarpment of the

Chilterns adjacent to an important trading route between Salisbury and East Anglia. The site itself may have been chosen as it could be easily defended and contained a reliable supply of water. (Two ponds exist within its boundaries).

Originally, for security, settlers would have had dwellings inside the fortified area. Later during periods of peaceful occupation, displaced by cattle herds, smallholdings would have spread outside the boundary of the fort. Eventually (in the Middle Ages) they would have developed into permanent farmsteads and grazing; to the North where Parrott's Farm is today (Perot's Farm c1330); to the South where Home Farm is; and to the open land along which the Common spreads now. Craftsmen smelting iron would have remained inside the fort, but close to the entrance to benefit from passing trade.

### Iron Age Industry

Excavations in the early 1930's by Kimball, of the interior of the hill-fort uncovered well-preserved remains of Iron Age occupation including seven hearths or fire-sites, and the remains of a clay-lined oven. Three of the hearths showed evidence of iron smelting, and one was associated with fragments of pottery forming part of a single jar which was reconstructed, and dated from the Late Iron Age (50 BC to 50 AD). There were also numerous pottery shards from this period and from the Middle Iron Age (c. 300-100 BC). However, from the excavation evidence, it appears that Cholesbury was a sparse and possibly intermittent settlement, and possibly fully occupied in times of great danger.

In 1952 a Belgic Gold Quarter Stater dated around 40 - 30 BC was found within the Camp.

### Possible Saxon Occupation

Conclusions drawn from the 1932 excavation were that there was no evidence to indicate Saxon occupation. The absence of post holes or storage pits suggested the site may have been abandoned during the period immediately following the time of the second Roman conquest in the mid-first century AD (but see further research below).

### Evidence from more recent investigations

Subsequent observations in 1992 and 1997 during building works on houses on the perimeter of the site found no examples of the early medieval period. Quantities of medieval tile and pottery probably of later origin were found in the topsoil of the middle section of the hill fort. These are believed to indicate the manuring of fields within the interior, using domestic waste from the settlement outside the hill-fort served by the 13th and 14th century church. (The present church was extensively renovated during the 1870's.) Incidentally the 1997 inspection of the camp also revealed a possible iron-smelting site similar to that found by Kimball.

In 2000 a Geophysical Survey was carried out by John Gover as part of an MSc research project.

Magnetometry readings confirmed that the site had seen multiple occupations. There was no evidence suggesting the presence of Saxon round houses but rectangular features, possibly of medieval origin, were found to the north of the church. Gover speculates that this may indicate the presence of habitation again, but later than the Saxon period. Evidence elsewhere has confirmed that Saxon influence in the Chilterns arrived much later after that of the surrounding lowlands, not before 571 AD and probably not until the 7th century (when the term Chilterns was coined), or even later. More likely it is thought that the remaining British enclave in the remote Chilterns slowly integrated with the separate Saxons groups steadily advancing from North, South and East. Christianity would have arrived late to these parts. Gover noted that dressed stones in the Church possibly indicated an earlier building on the site. This he tentatively suggests may indicate the later development into a medieval settlement complex such as a manor house and outbuildings, in use between the 12th and 15th centuries and connected to the church and a possible presence of a nucleated village.

### Access for visitors

Cholesbury Camp is one of the most visually impressive prehistoric settlements of the Chilterns. There are other Chiltern Hill sites at Boddington Hill (Wendover), Whelpley Hill (Chesham) and Ivinghoe Beacon - all established during the late Bronze Age and Iron Age.

The site can be visited all year round and is best accessed from the footpath immediately to the west of Cholesbury Village Hall. Interpretation Boards provide visitors with additional information about the site.

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## Appendix III Commemorative Trees and Benches: David Barnard

### Trees

**George VI's coronation in 1937:** a horse chestnut W of hexagonal bench which replaced former bus shelter (near notice board and map). Originally protected by iron railings, which D Barnard removed in early 1980s because the bands were cutting into the trunk. Part of iron base still visible in 2001.

**Fred Penn** (founder member of H&CCPS): a stand of beech. In 1982 a hundred beech whips, about 60 cm tall, were planted (without supports) north of the cricket outfield (roughly opposite Post Office Cottages, but set back 10 or 20 m from the open grass). In 2001 about 20 survive. See minutes for 5th January 1982. Fred's son, Dave now lives on Sandpit Hill.

**Dave Ford:** a beech, 4 m in 2001, and a few metres above the footpath sign at the foot of Church Path by Vale Farm (950062). He lived alongside Les Gomm in one of Vale Cottages. His son Sonny runs Ford and Ellis Motorcycles in Chesham.

**Tom Haggerty** (founder member of H&CCPS, Treasurer for 18 years): a weeping willow by the duck pond on Cholesbury Rd (Pallett's Pond). David Barnard failed to locate it in May 2001, although there is a younger weeping willow which is visible SW side of the pond.

**Doris and Tom Haggerty's 50th wedding anniversary, 1981:** a copper beech, 6 m, ESE from pavilion, next to beech whip plantation. They lived in Shire Lane. See H&CCPS minutes for 5th January 1982. Pat Gregory, their daughter now lives in Ley Hill.

**WI** (the afternoon WI which no longer exists, as opposed to the evening branch which continues): planted a weeping willow by Pallett's Pond on Cholesbury Road on 27th November 1973, which was noted as surviving in minutes for 17th January 1985. David Barnard failed to locate it in May 2001.

**Tony Griffin** (founder member of H&CCPS): a hornbeam, 5 or 6 m tall in 2001 (949062), about 15 m in from the road and immediately to the NW of Flint Cottage, planted Jan 1990 (not to be confused with a younger chestnut closer to the road).

**Basil Newall** (Committee member 1991): a walnut, 3 m tall in 2001 (933072), due E and in sight of Cherry Orchards, stake alongside, S-kink in the trunk 140 cm up. Maureen, Basil's widow has lived at Four Acres on Cholesbury Lane since 1964. Their daughter, Wendy (now Hutson) served as secretary and summer party organiser.

**Brenda How:** a Spanish chestnut, 5 m tall in 2001 (935072), 5 equal stems by parallel path 5 m above bottom ride, opposite young oak NNW of the Full Moon. Planted Feb 1990. Brenda's husband Ron was a

H&CCPS committee member from 1971-1998 and twice Chairman 1975-77, 1982-84.

**Frank Sugden** (Committee member from 1972-1987, Chairman 1985-1986): a black walnut, opposite Mike Wallis (The Row); nominated after planting.

**Millennium Trees:** 2 whitebeams planted near to the Millennium Bench, Cholesbury and 1 whitebeam opposite The Cottage, Hawridge (Dec 2001). This event was organised by the Millennium Committee and a number of local dignitaries attended, as did a study group from Macedonia who had read about our community's activities on the internet.

### Benches

**Gill Goodchild** (Committee member 1987-90): a bench with back, with cast-iron frame, outside Cholesbury Village Hall. Gill lived at 9 Sandpit Hill.

**Edgar Taylor** (Committee member 1969-73): wooden bench, with no back, opposite Ridge Cottage. Edgar lived for many years in Milton Cottage, Hawridge. As an architect his contributions to the local scene include designs for Glebe House, the Cricket Pavilion and an extension to Quiet Corner for Marlyn Davis.

**Millennium (Hexagonal) Bench** (replacing former "pill-box" bus shelter), erected 2001, E of junction of Cholesbury Road with Cholesbury Lane.

**Appendix IV Summary of registration of Rights of Common registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965. Exercisable over the whole or any part of the land described in the land section of the register unit (Bucks County Council Unit No. CL21): Bunton (Pages 18-20)**

Box Tree Cottage (Reg. July 1968) To graze 6 animals over that part of the land lying east of the line A-B on the Register map.

Gateway (Reg. July 1968) To graze 6 animals on that part of the land lying east of the line A-B on the Register map.

Wayside (formerly Alta Cottage. Reg. July 1968) To graze 6 animals on that part of the land lying east of the line A-B on the Register map.

Tudor Cottage (Reg. July 1968) To graze 1 cow and 1 pig or the equivalent and to take timber for the roof repairs over Hawridge Common being the part of the land lying east of the line A-B on the Register map.

Cottages known as 1 & 2 the Row, Hawridge Common (Reg. 1968) A right to graze 4 horses or head of cattle and 4 sows over Hawridge Common being the part of the land comprised in the Register lying east of the line A-B on the Register map.

The Cottage (formerly three cottages known as Heatherside) now known as Mermaid Cottage (Reg. September 1968) To graze 3 head of cattle or 3 horses (together with 3 sows) over Hawridge Common, being the part of the land comprised in this Register lying east of the line A-B on the map.

The Laurels (Reg. September 1968) To graze 2 head of cattle or 2 horses and 1 sow in addition over Hawridge Common being the part of the land comprised in this Register lying east of the line A-B on the map.

Woodlands Farm (Reg. September 1968) To graze 15 head of cattle and/or horses and in addition 15 sows over Hawridge & Cholesbury Common being the whole of the land comprised in this Register Unit.

Bowmore (Botchmore) Farm (Reg. September 1968) To graze 6 head of cattle or horses and 6 sows on Cholesbury and Hawridge Common being the whole of the land comprised in the Register Unit.

Ivy Cottage, Hawridge (Reg. May 1969) A right to take herbage, a right to take tree loppings or gorse or furze, bushes or underwood. A right to take turf or peat over Hawridge Common being the part of the land comprised in this Register unit lying east of the line A-B on the Register map.

The Rose & Crown (Reg. 1970) To graze 1 head of cattle or 1 horse and 1 sow in addition for every £4 of the rate (the premises were assessed to Poor Rate at £11.10 0 per

annum) over the whole of the land comprised in this Register unit.

The Old Forge, Heath End (Reg. July 1968) A right to herbage. A right of estovers. A right of turbarry.

Glebe Farm, Heath End (Reg. July 1968) A right of common of pasture for 5 cows and 5 sows on Hawridge Common being the part of the land comprised in this Register unit lying east of the line A-B on the Register map.

Braziers End Farm (Reg. September 1968) To graze 29 head of cattle or horses and 20 sows on Cholesbury & Hawridge Common being the whole of the land comprised in the Register unit.

Rays Hill Farm (Reg. December 1964) To graze 4 head of cattle or horses over the whole of the land comprised in this Register unit.

The Old Vicarage and cottage Hayford (Reg. July 1968) A right of herbage.

The Bury (Reg. September 1968) The right to graze from the 21st April to 25th December in any year, 2 head of cattle or 2 donkeys or 4 calves under 1 year old and in addition 2 sows without litter or with litter under 9 weeks old or 4 pigs under 6 months old over Cholesbury Common being the part of the land lying west of the line A-B on the Register map.

Baldwin's Farm, Rays Hill (Reg. September 1968) To graze 5 head of cattle at all times of the year over Cholesbury & Hawridge Common being the whole of the land comprised in this Register unit.

Home Farm (formerly Ships Timbers) (Reg. September 1968) To graze 1 head of cattle or 1 horse and 1 sow in addition over Cholesbury Common being the part of the land lying west of the line A-B on the Register map.

Home Farm Cottage (Reg. September 1968) To graze 1 head of cattle or 1 horse and 1 sow in addition on Cholesbury Common being the part of the land comprised in this Register unit lying west of the line A-B on the Register map.

Home Paddock (Reg. September 1968) To graze 1 horse or cow and a right of estovers on Cholesbury Common being the part of the land comprised in this Register unit lying west of the line A-B on the Register map.

Overburnts, Danish Camp A right to graze 50 cows, 100 sheep. A right of estovers. A right of turbarry. In the case of all rights over Cholesbury common being the part of the land comprised in this Register unit lying west of the line A-B on the Register map.

Common Ley (Reg. April 1970) The right to graze 12 head of cattle over the whole of the land comprised in this Register unit.

## Appendix V Cholesbury – the parish that went bust: an uncited newspaper article by P J Moss

A life of poverty in Cholesbury in the early nineteenth century thankfully bears little resemblance to its equivalent these days. However, can the same be said about the change in attitude towards the poor after 1834?

Unemployment is a common word again these days. For the pessimist, putting this depression into an historical perspective, however, shows that nothing is new. On the other hand, the efforts of certain parish officers in the nineteenth century to combat local poverty present an interesting aspect of Buckinghamshire's long social history.

A good example is the parish of Cholesbury in Cottesloe Hundred. In the year 1832, the unemployed of that parish created such a demand for out-door relief that many of the farmers of the area preferred to abandon their farms rather than face the ever increasing demand for "poor rate". Two entries in the vestry book bear witness to this problem: The first reads: "This rate could not be collected except only a small portion of it. The land in the parish being almost all abandoned." The second inset is scribbled underneath the vestry report for October 10, 1832. "Only a part of the fourth rate of 4s. in the £ could be collected this year - Braziers End Estate been unoccupied."

Failure on the part of the overseers to make up the deficit caused by these abandonments was to bring the parish out of the local headlines and into the national ones.

The incumbent of the parish at that time, the Rev. H P Jeston, certainly deserves mentioning for his role in safeguarding the interests of the poor. He provided bread and potatoes for fifty-eight of his less fortunate parishioners as well as suggesting, with the help of the local justices and MP, that an additional rate in aid amounting to fifty pounds be levied in the neighbouring parish of Drayton Beauchamp. However unpopular this might have been with the parishioners of Drayton Beauchamp, it seems that the Rev. Jeston was leaving nothing to chance and went as far as presenting his case at the petty sessions in November 1832. In a letter to Sir Thomas Freemantle, dated the third of that month, the Rev. Jeston revealed his genuine concern for the declining state of his parish.

"Our rates are 30s. in the pound and from this circumstance the land is nearly all abandoned. In fact not any more money can be collected, and we have not a person of any wealth here but myself and my income is under £150 p.a. and I have a wife and family. The poor have no support other than the potatoes and bread furnished to them by me but even this I cannot continue many days and when discontinued I must quit my house and parish for it is impossible to stay here and see the poor starve. The whole of the cultivated land in this parish is only 110 acres of which 87 are abandoned."

However the Rev. Jeston was not acting totally on his own initiative. The levying of a rate in aid on a neighbouring parish was a course of action set down not only by the Elizabethan poor law (Act of Elizabeth, 1601) but also, more recently, by the magistrates at Speenhamland, Berkshire, in 1795. Both of these systems of relieving poverty were based upon the parish unit which encouraged a close relationship between the pauper and the overseer. The incumbent of the parish, its spiritual leader, was heavily involved in the maintenance of the poor. Jeston's letters to Freemantle show this. His fear of watching the poor starve not only shows his genuine distress but also smacks of a fear of personal inadequacy.

The vestry book of Cholesbury illustrates to what extent each pauper was dealt with as an individual. As the claimant was almost certainly known to one of the vestry officials, errors in assessment were cut to a minimum. Knowledge of personal circumstances made it easier to decide who was eligible for "indoor" or "outdoor" relief. It appears that no facilities for indoor relief were available in Cholesbury and those who could not be "set on work" were given either money or flour to supplement their living. The payment of relief in kind was to guarantee that it improved the diet of the recipient rather than enhance his social life.

"Agreed that Joe Core be found work at the stone pit and that he be allowed 4d. a load for breaking stone sufficiently small to be applied on the roads. And that he be paid partly in bread and partly in money. He being a drunken and disorderly fellow."

The personal aspect of the system also gratified the social consciences of the more affluent members of the parish. However, it also brought about a good deal of humbug. It is hard to believe that every member of the vestry was a confirmed teetotaler. On the other hand, personal knowledge of the parish paupers would prevent such humbug from growing out of all proportion - a defence which is hard to apply to the later Poor Law guardians.

By 1833 the observable temper of the times appeared to be turning its back on the system of "personal poor relief". Sadly, the efforts of the Rev. Jeston were in vain. The Poor Law Commission Report of 1834 used the parish of Cholesbury as its main example of how the excesses of the Old Poor Law were attacking the roots of English rural society. Joe Core's occasional "one over the limit" was stigmatised by the Poor Law Commissioners as the innate sins of "intemperance and idleness".

The commission that drew up the New Poor Law in 1834 chose to see Cholesbury as the thin end of the wedge. The adaptability and elasticity of the old system was seen by those upright Victorian gentlemen as the encouragement and support of sin. The now centralised system was to replace an old patchwork of parish duties that, although untidy, had for a considerable time looked after the interests of the poor. From now on, in almost

every case, relief was to be dispensed through the new network of workhouses which survived up until 1930.

Despite the example of Cholesbury's collapse, the actions of the Rev. Jeston prove his interest in the wellbeing of his parishioners. A major criticism of the New Poor Law was that it seemed more interested in the cost of relief than in its effect. Cholesbury was the only case of near total breakdown out of 15,000 or so parishes examined by the commission. However, the hint that many parishes would embark upon a similar decline scared the country and Parliament into consent. The stark and impersonal remnants of the New Poor Law are still with us. The building that now houses Tindal Hospital in Aylesbury was once called the Union Workhouse.

## Appendix VI Extracts from Cholesbury Poor Relief records 1832-33 (from the Local History Group Archive). Original spellings are retained

DATE 1832 Accounts of Money Paid to the Poor in the Parish of Cholesbury in the County of Bucks.

		£	s	d
Dec 1st.	Charles Batchelor	1 week	3	0
	Wm Forster	1 week	3	0
	Widow Batchelor and Child	1 week	3	0
	Widow Norris	1 week	3	0
	Ann Batchelor	1 Do (ditto)	3	0
	Edmund Gurney	1 week	4	0
	Richard Cox Cripple		2	0
	Mary Gates	1 week	2	0
	Patience Garner	1 week	1	6
	Mary Ann Gardner		1	3
	Jane Corbet	1 week	1	6
	Rhoda Gates	1 week	1	6
	John Norris	4 days work of 3/4	6	4
	Richard Cox	Do	6	4
	Wm Spittle	1 week	8	0
	Widow Carpenter	1 week	1	6
	John Garner	1 week	1	6
	Joseph Cox for stone Breaking		0	8
	Paid to D Newton Child		2	0
	Widow Sills	1 week	3	0
	1 weeks disbursement		2	18 1

The archive contains almost seventy pages of similar accounts and they provide interesting information about the daily lives of our predecessors. For example in the second week in December 1832 the Parish accounts show 6 shillings for a shift and a pair of shoes for Ellen Cox as well as 2 shillings for a gown and stockings for her. There was also an account of 1/9d for a shroud for Newton's child and 2/9 for cheese, bread and beer for the funeral as well as 3/6 for "Expenses for Newton's Child". Expenses for Edmund Gurney included 4/10 for a Smock Frock and a Rug and a Blanket 7/6 and a further 8/- got him shoes.

The names of other recipients of Poor Relief were soon added to the original list. For example on 15th December. Joseph, Wm, John and another Wm Thorne, John Cox and Thomas Griffin appear, thus adding to the burden of providing for those in need. From the comparatively large sums of money paid to them it would appear that they were able-bodied and were presumably being paid to carry out work of value to the Parish. However the sums paid varied considerably over the weeks. For example Thomas Griffin was given 10/- in the first few weeks but, by 19th January, he received only 1/8. It must have been a matter of real concern to have had so



many relatives of the Thornes, possibly all of the same family, dependent on the Parish at the same time.

On 22nd December the Vestry agreed to pay expenses of George Sills the Church Warden and Wm Mayo Overseer for their journeys (16/- and £1 respectively). On 17th December. 19 shillings and fourpence halfpenny was paid for the clothing of the "Richard Cox Children that are gone to the silkmill" (presumably in Tring, to work, although later accounts were paid for their board and lodging). A further funeral expense for the Newton's Child of 6/- to the Clerk was also paid.

The accounts are in the handwriting of a number of different people and show varying degrees of education. Wm Mayo, the Overseer and his successor Edward Wright were unable to sign their names and marked documents with a cross. There are some errors in the totting up of accounts and those of us who used £ s d might appreciate their difficulties in accounting compared to the present decimal system.

The accounts of 29th March 1833 show just how difficult the Parish situation had become.

	£	s	d
Collected (their spelling) of Rates in Cholesbury	6	13	8
Recd. Of Drayton Beaucham in Aid	49	18	0
Borrowed of Mr Jeston	6	0	0
Recd. Of Aston Abbots in Aid	26	0	0
Do. Of Grove in Aid	7	10	0
Recd. In all	96	1	8
Disburst in all	91	16	1
In Hand	4	6	7

	£	s	d
The following accounts were added			
Received further of Grove in Aid	7	10	0
Total in hand	11	16	7

Accounts for the first half of the year showed:-

Collected by Rates First Half Year	85	9	4 1/2
Expenditure	88	17	1
Out of pocket	3	7	8 1/2

Accounts for the whole year:-

Collected in the whole year	181	12	1 1/2
Disburst in the whole year	180	13	2
In Hand	18	11	1 1/2

Over the next few months a total of £57 in all was received from Mr Horner of Marsworth in donations on a regular basis, and other donations came from Slapton Parish. Relief was still being paid to board David and Phoebe Cox in Tring. Widow Sills and Ann Batchelor died, Walter Carpenter was paid £2 19 0 for four coffins and Wm Hanscomb, of Stukely agreed to take Jane Corbet at 1/6 per week until March (presumably as a servant).

## Appendix VII List of all known Lords of the Manors: Bunton (page 21)

### Lords of the Manor

In the early years the Lordships are confused and dates may not be completely accurate.

Cholesbury		Hawridge (with Marsworth)	
?	Aluric	?	Brichtic
1088	Magno le Breton	?	Robert d'Oilly
1221	William de Beauchamp	?	Beauchamp family
1248	William le Breton	1227	William Mauduit
1284	Hugh le Breton	1253	William Earl of Warwick
1330	Thomas Perot	1330	Guy Earl of Warwick
1362	Countess of Norfolk	1316	Richard Beauchamp
1384	Thomas Cheyne and the Cheyne family	1346	John Beauchamp
1541	Lord Justice Baldwin	1350	Edmund Cook (separate from Marsworth)
1564	John Baldwin	1400	Sir Thomas Penyston
1571	Robert Maldred	1572	Thomas Tasburgh
1601	Ralph & John Clarke	1600	Blackwells
1650	Richard Seare	1650	Richard Seare

### Joint Manors

1714	John Seare
1748	Robert Dayrell (Darell)
1749	Edward Dayrell
1814	John Jeffreys
1862	Richard Jeffreys
1899	Henry Turner
1935	Malcolm Stewart
1948	Henry Moore
1953	John Randall
1979	Mrs Elma Randall
1982	Dennis Smith
1987	{ Michael Smith Christine Stott
1996	Christine Stott

## Appendix VIII

### HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY COMMONS, LAW OF PROPERTY ACT 1925 SECTION 193

#### SCHEDULE

1. Otherwise than in the lawful exercise by the persons entitled to the soil of the land their licensees and tenants of their respective rights or by a person or persons entitled to commonable rights of a right of common no person shall commit any of the following acts:-

- a) Injure or remove trees, shrubs, gorse, bracken, heather, plants or turf on or from the land.
- b) Remove gravel, sand or soil from the land.
- c) Take or attempt to take fish from any water comprised in the land.
- d) Discharge firearms or throw or discharge missiles on the land.
- e) Shoot or wilfully disturb, chase, or take game or other birds or animals on the land.
- f) Permit dogs to chase game or other birds or animals or otherwise fail to keep dogs under proper control on the land.
- g) Remove or attempt to remove birds' eggs or nests on the land.
- h) Set traps, nets, or snares for birds or animals on the land.
- i) Permit horses, cattle, sheep, or other animals to graze or stray on the land.
- j) Bathe in any pond or stream comprised in the land.
- k) Post or paint bills, advertisements, placards, or notices on the land.
- l) Injure notice boards, seats or receptacles for rubbish on the land.
- m) Place or deposit and leave any glass, china, earthenware, tin, carton, paper, or other rubbish so as to create or tend to create a litter on the land.
- n) Injure or disfigure any ancient monument or earthwork or object of historical, scientific, or antiquarian interest on the land.
- o) Break in horses by grooms or others on the land.
- p) Hold any show, exhibition or fair or place any swing, roundabout, or other like thing on the land.
- q) Erect or place any building, tent, booth, stall, fence, post, railing or other similar structure for any purpose on the land.
- r) Create any nuisance or disturbance, use obscene language on the land, or behave thereon in an indecent or disorderly manner to the annoyance of any person.
- s) Generally injure or disfigure the land or interfere with the use thereof by the public for the purpose of air and exercise.

2. The rights of access of members of the public to land for air and exercise shall NOT extend to:-

- a) The riding of horses or other animals EXCEPT on the highways and the following permissive rides.
  - i) On land on the north-east side of the Hawridge-Cholesbury road and within ten yards thereof, excepting across the outfield of the cricket ground; and on the south-west side of the Hawridge-Cholesbury road and within ten yards thereof; and on the eastern side of the Cholesbury-Wigginton road and within ten yards thereof.
  - ii) On the land at the bottom of the Commons and within ten yards of the Northeast boundaries thereof.
  - iii) On the cross connecting ride commencing at the top horse-ride opposite the Full Moon public house and ten yards west of the boundary of Mermaid Cottage, proceeding in a northerly direction to join the bottom horse ride.
- b) The riding of pedal or motor bicycles and tricycles except on the highways.

3. If done on the Commons, it is an offence for anyone exercising rights of access to the Commons, without lawful authority:-

- a) To draw or drive any carriage, cart, caravan, truck or other vehicle otherwise than on a public highway.
- b) To camp.
- c) To light fires.

The maps on the notice boards also say: "Horses may only be ridden on the Common along the Track designated thus:- --- on the plan above. Motor Vehicles may not be driven on the Common but may be parked on it within 15 yards of the Road."

This document was transcribed (20/3/98) by David Barnard from the notice board near to the bus shelter (now the hexagonal bench).

## Appendix IX Letter to Joan and Margaret Walton from Peter Knowles-Brown giving details of properties contributing to the Poor Rates 1857

Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society  
Braziers End Farm,  
Braziers End  
30th April, 1968

Dear Miss J. Walton & Miss M. Walton,

I have much pleasure in enclosing a list of houses in Hawridge and Cholesbury which had Rates to the Poor over £4 in 1857. According to the Vestry Minutes of St. Mary's Hawridge and St Lawrence, Cholesbury, people who were assessed for a Poor Rate of £4 or more, were allowed to graze on the Commons one head of cattle, or one horse and one sow in addition for every £4 of their rate.

We searched the County Records for 1857 and these gave us a list of people with Rates to the Poor of over £4, and as far as we can tell the properties concerned are the ones shown on the attached lists.

The foregoing information was confirmed by Arnold Baines, the well-known local historian, and if you would like to check against your deeds the details we have been able to obtain and they prove correct, it is Mr Baines' opinion that you would then have sufficient proof to make application for the registration of a right of common under the Commons Registration Act, 1965. A copy of the appropriate application form is enclosed for your convenience. This form should be sent to the Clerk to the County of Buckingham by the end of June 1968, to avoid paying a Registration fee. I should perhaps add that you do not have to graze cattle, but my Committee feels that it is in the best interests of the Villages that these rights are claimed even though they are not used.

As you may have noticed there are some gaps in the list of properties and the members of my Committee are trying to trace these houses. If any member can be of help in this connection I should be most grateful.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed )Peter Knowles-Brown (Chairman H&CCPS)

### Houses in Cholesbury with Poor Rates over £4 in 1857

Occupier	Owner	Description	Rate to poor			Name of Property 1968
			£	s.	d.	
Daniel Bishop	Thomas Butcher	House and land	11	15	0	
	“ “	Woodland	7	10	0	Tomlin's Wood
Wm Collier	Executors	House and land	11	10	0	
Geo Gomm	John Newman	“ “ “	15	0	0	
Rev Jeston		House and land	52	5	0	Old Vicarage
Wm Keen	Thomas Butcher	House and land	6	15	0	
Jas Newton	Northchurch Poor	House and gardens	5	5	0	
J B Parkinson		Mansion and land	116	0	0	Braziers End
Geo Philby	John Dell	Public House	6	5	0	The Bury
Geo Sills	Thomas Butcher	House and land	29	15	0	
Geo Sills	Rev Jeston	Land	4	6	0	The Glebe
Job Thorn	J B Parkinson	House and garden	4	0	0	Home Farm Cottage
E Wright		House and garden	5	0	0	Ships Timbers

Houses in Hawridge with Poor Rates over £4 in 1857

Occupier	Owner	Description	Rate to poor			Name of Property 1968
			£	s.	d.	
Ed Pocock		House, garden, smithy	11	0	0	Old Forge, Heath End
Obadiah Wright	Matt Carpenter	13 cottages and gardens	39	11	8	7 cottages, The Row, 3 " Benton Potts 3 " The Cottage
Dunton & Paisley	Josh Brackley	2 cottages	7	0	0	The Laurels
Joshua Paisley	Chas Jeffreys	Cottage	6	5	0	
James Jaques		Windmill	16	0	0	Windmill, Mill House
Sas. Bishop	Sutton Wadham Lock	Farm	95	5	0	Hill Farm, Heath End
Ed Bishop	Charlotte Jeffreys	Land	10	16	0	Titwillow and land, Hawridge Vale
Wm Field	" "	Farm	186	10	0	Hawridge Court
Wm King	" "	House, Shop and Orchard	9	5	0	Tomlins
Thos Weedon	" "	Farm	95	10	0	Vale Farm
Alfred Hitchings	Rev. Codd	Rent charge	97	15	6	
" "	" "	Glebe House	9	10	0	Glebe House
Joshua Pitkin	" "	Farm buildings and land	20	10	0	Miss Russell's farm
Thos Little		Farm house and land	26	4	0	Bowmore Farm
Harry Philby	Thos Little	Cottage and gardens	4	5	0	Ivy Cottage
Joshua Pitkin	Messrs. Healey	Public house, land and garden	11	10	0	Rose and Crown
James Redding	Thos Wethered	Public house, land and garden	11	0	0	Full Moon
Edward Wright		Land	8	13	4	Limes Nursery
John Wright		House and garden	5	10	0	
George Dwight	John Wright	Farm house and land	19	3	4	
Gower, Garner & Pocock	John Garrett	3 cottages and gardens	12	0	0	Heatherside
Charles Badrick	John Staple	Cottage and garden	9	10	0	Ridge Cottage
James Batchelor	Robert Sutton	8 cottages	25	6	0	Mildmay 3 Boxtree 2 Tudor Cottage 3

Note: Ships Timbers is now Home Farm; Titwillow is Willow Tree Cottage; Tomlins is the Old Smithy and Barns including the Blacksmith's premises; Miss Russell's Farm is Glebe Farm and Heatherside is Mermaid Cottage. Where there were once two or more cottages, these have mostly been converted into one dwelling.



## Appendix XI Report on and recommendations for the maintenance of Pallett's Pond and the Dewpond (Dan Merrett)

BBOWT

28.10.2002

Thank you for inviting me to look at Pallett's pond on Cholesbury Common the week before last. I have made the following notes based upon matters we discussed.

The pond appeared to be in pretty good health when I visited, helped somewhat by the turn in the weather that had suddenly started filling the pond again. This late summer of 2002 has led to a greater than usual drop in water level in ponds across the county with many drying out. I wouldn't therefore worry unduly about Pallett's pond, though it would be worth keeping a record of when it dries out to see if there is a pattern of it losing water that cannot be simply blamed on the weather. As far as wildlife is concerned the seasonal variance in water level and occasional drying out is often no bad thing as most plants and animals are able to adapt to the conditions. Amphibians and many invertebrates for instance either migrate to other water bodies or else burrow into the wet mud where they can happily survive. Fish on the other hand are unable to cope and die out, which is of benefit to many of the other creatures as, being top predator, fish have a huge impact on smaller animals, for which reason they should never be introduced into the pond. Another spin off benefit of the water level dropping is that damp soil is exposed to allow plants to set seed. It was mentioned that in the past the pond had occasionally been topped up using a hosepipe and this may have disguised the fact that the pond has a tendency to dry out in summer. As I mentioned on the day topping up with tap water is not ideal due to nutrients and chemicals such as chlorine in tap water, however I wouldn't imagine that the amount added to a pond of that size would have had any great impact on water quality. It would however be best avoided in future.

Looking at the records you sent me there did seem to be a notable drop in botanical diversity in the pond over the last twenty-five years. Some of this could be down to inconsistencies in recording (through different recorders, area covered, time of year recorded, proximity in time to clearing work etc) and certainly there were plants such as yellow iris and water mint, which were apparent this year that are not recorded in 88 and/or 97. The disappearance of submerged plants such as starworts, stoneworts and waterweeds however may point to a change for the worse in water quality conditions in recent years. Such submerged plants can often be quite sensitive to changes in water quality and it may be that there was either a particular pollution incident in the past or that there has been a gradual decline in water quality. Strong candidates as the cause of such a decline would be the run off from the road, recent road works done and the inflow pipe at the rear

of the pond that comes from the direction of the neighbouring stables. It would be interesting to see what submerged vegetation is present next year. I suspect that the proximity to the road will mean that there is always a low level input of pollutants to the pond with occasional hiccups caused by salt washing off the road. Either way the water quality is still presumably pretty good if you aren't having problems with excessive algal blooms, duckweed, off colour water etc. Obviously with there being no standing water other than that which had just appeared when I visited I was unable to judge if there were any signs of such problems. It would be worth ascertaining whether the inflow pipe at the rear of the pond does indeed feed direct from the open drain in the neighbouring stable. A bucket of water poured down that drain on a dry day should be sufficient to check. If it does then the stable owners should be made aware of the fact and the devastation that could happen to the pond if any chemicals or sewage were to enter the drain. It may well be, however, that the pipe is instead the end of a land drain feeding off nearby fields that happens to run beneath the neighbouring stable.

I certainly wouldn't advise that you introduce any plants to the pond. Most pond plants are quite capable of colonising nearby sites and introductions mask the natural state of a pond and can lead to brought-in plants dominating at the expense of the natural flora. Similarly avoid introducing any animals such as fish, ducks or, God forbid, another terrapin. There is often a temptation amongst communities to introduce fish to local ponds but they really can decimate other animal life and lead to problems such as cloudy water and depletion of submerged vegetation. Hopefully the terrapin you reported that had been spotted in the past but not recently has reached the end of its natural life. Again they are a particularly voracious predator, and one that British pond life is ill equipped to cope with. Ducks also impact upon invertebrate and amphibian numbers in ponds as well as young vegetation in and around the water. Their faeces can also be highly polluting when they reach excessive numbers. When I visited there were two mallard on Pallett's pond and I certainly wouldn't advise that you try to get rid of them (or worry about their ducklings), but just avoid adding or encouraging more. Sometimes where you get ducks in these situations there can be problems with people over-feeding them and the uneaten bread or whatever rotting down and adding further excess nutrients to the pond. Again however I wouldn't suggest that you try and stop anyone feeding them if they so wish (it's often one of the first ways we come into contact with nature as children) but do keep an eye out for any regular piles of uneaten food being left.

As far as maintenance work on the pond, first off I would say that there is no need to currently consider dredging the pond. Dredging often has a catastrophic effect on pond plants and animals and should only be done when necessary. As for clearing back of some of the surrounding vegetation it is really a case of gently

does it. From a wildlife perspective a pond 'choked' with vegetation is often better than what we would consider the archetypal healthy village pond. On the other side of the balance is the value of the pond to local residents and its aesthetic appeal. In a situation such as yours it is not difficult to reach a happy medium between these two perspectives.

With the rear of the pond inaccessible due to its border with the neighbouring house to the west and the eastern side abutting the road it is obvious where to concentrate views over open water and where can be allowed to remain wilder. There is currently a great deal of open water with an expanse stretching from the eastern roadside border, covering the central heart of the pond and abutting the tree lined bank on the northern edge. The majority of established vegetation is located on the southern and western sides of the pond and is currently confined to the edges. If this were a pond on a nature reserve we would not consider removing any vegetation at this stage. However you reported that the fringe of vegetation on the southern side had expanded rapidly in the last couple of years and so in order to retain the current amount of open water this southern fringe will require a programme of occasional clearance. The main large species found in the southern fringe are reedmace (*Typha latifolia*), yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), sweet-grass (*Glyceria*), bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*) and water mint (*Mentha aquatica*). These are a pretty tough bunch and will spread quite effectively if given the chance. The reedmace in particular can spread rapidly by sending out tubers to form new plants and also by seeding from its bulrush heads. The plants are however all of value for wildlife. The flower heads of reedmace for example provide a home for the bulrush bug (*Chilacis typha*), while the sediment around its roots is a favoured spot for ruddy darter dragonfly larvae (*Sympetrum sanguineum*). It is important therefore that any management programme hinges on the aim of controlling the spread of the vegetation whilst minimising the impact on wildlife rather than blitzing it.

In order to minimise the impact upon other wildlife vegetation clearance work should be limited and also avoid times of the year when certain creature are particularly vulnerable. It is better to do a small amount of vegetation clearance every year or two as needed rather than blitz the pond every ten years. The use of herbicide should always be avoided in and around the pond. The best time of year to remove vegetation is generally considered to be in the autumn as, at this time, there are fewer young creatures in the water and disturbed wildlife does not have to face the harsh mid-winter weather.

When clearing vegetation make sure that you do not wipe out entire stands of species and try to retain the diversity in both density of stands and also their depth in the water. The temptation is often to work to an imaginary line in the water a certain distance from the bank and clear everything to one side of that line. This often leads to a paucity of vegetation below the water

level, particularly in slightly deeper water, and it is this below-water part of the vegetation that is of most value to pond dwelling creatures. A better alternative then is to be more discerning and retain some plants that have spread to deeper water as well working to a more varied edge to the denser fringing vegetation. Such management generally results in a better aesthetic appearance to the pond with bays created within the fringes and occasional promontories of plant stands adding to the visual interest. This year the furthest I would suggest that you work back into the southern fringe of plants would be around 1 to 1.5m and I would vary the edge of dense vegetation between its current position and this 1 to 1.5 metre back line, creating either bays or a sinusoidal edge with occasional solitary plants retained within the open water. The vegetation along the rear western edge appeared to require no clearance this year. However we did talk of the appeal of having a spur of open water that curved out of sight at the rear of the pond and this would be a feature worth retaining by selective clearance in future years as necessary. When you are removing plants it is worth giving the roots a quick swill in the water to wash off any little creatures and also leaving the plants on the bank by the pond for a couple of days to allow mobile creatures to migrate back to the water. After a couple of days however the cleared vegetation should be taken away (it can make good compost) to prevent it rotting down and the nutrients thereby released leaching back into the water.

The fallen willow currently lying in the centre of the pond is unpopular for its impact upon the visual appeal of the pond and is in danger of putting down roots from the submerged branches and so causing potential future headaches in keeping the pond clear. I would therefore advise that the branches are cut back to the stump and as many of the cut branches removed as possible. The stump and its roots provide a valuable habitat for invertebrates and amphibians giving cover in an otherwise open environment and so should be retained. There may be occasional shooting of new growth from this stump in future years but provided the shoots are cut back every few years this shouldn't prove to make too much work and certainly wouldn't be an excuse for removing the stump. In any case the removal of the stump and its roots could lead to problems with disturbing the lining of the pond. Where dead and dying branches have fallen into the water they should be kept as they also provide favoured habitat and additionally the rotting bark of trees, and especially willow, is now thought to have an inhibiting effect on the growth of algae.

The trees on the northern edge of the pond cast some useful shade across this corner of the water and so should be retained. Shady areas are favoured by certain pond creatures and also have the effect of inhibiting the growth of plants such as duckweed, which can otherwise cover entire bodies of water. The current size of the trees is such that they do not cover an excessive amount of the pond. However, if in future years they reach problem proportions then you could consider chopping

them back (as has evidently been done in the past) as they will happily shoot afresh. Avoid cutting all the trees at one time however, else it will cause a sudden change to the amount of light reaching the pond in that area and that could have an effect on plants and animals that have found the existing conditions to their liking. Where branches are growing over the water and starting to dip towards the pond floor you could consider chopping them off before they run the risk of rooting if you so wish.

On the eastern roadside boundary of the pond there is presently little established vegetation due to recent work on the road edge. This means that any polluted run off from the road can run directly into the pond water filtered only by the coarse stone underlying the path between the road and pond. Obviously you wouldn't wish to lose the view of the pond from the road. However it would be worth allowing some lower growing vegetation to establish along this edge to hopefully provide some kind of buffer between the road and pond, however limited. There are some schemes that use wetland vegetation to filter road run off before it enters water courses however these are rather grander affairs generally involving beds of reeds or similar. In your situation I would suggest that you simply allow plants such as water mint, soft rush and any other relatively small species to spread along the eastern boundary from the southern and northern sides where they are already present.

You also mentioned about the past presence of newts in the pond and asked how to create favourable conditions for them and other amphibians. The shallow water of Pallett's pond should make it a good site for amphibians (shallow water = greater light penetration = warmer) as should the pond's location and mix of vegetation. It may be that in the past amphibians have been heavily predated either by the reputed terrapin or else by small fish, and that with this year's drying out of the pond and the disappearance of the terrapin, amphibians may soon make a comeback. I would avoid introducing frogspawn from other ponds as, if amphibians are in the area, then they should find the pond themselves quite capably. As mentioned previously, the vegetation around and within the water is a major habitat feature for amphibians as well as for pond creatures such as dragonflies and other invertebrates. For newts the presence of submerged leaves is of importance for their egg laying and research of Great Crested Newts has shown that preferred egg laying plants for this species include plants that have been recorded in Pallett's pond such as water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*), tufted forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*), floating sweet-grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*) and water mint (*Mentha aquatica*).

The surroundings of a pond are also of importance for wildlife, and nearby features such as the trees, and the patch of bramble on the southern side are of value and should be retained. Trees near ponds are popular sites for many dragonflies for basking, shelter and hawking.

The fallen wood and leaf litter beneath them also provides refuges for newts and other amphibians. The flowers and fruit of bramble are an attraction for many creatures and the cover it provides will allow small mammals and the like to approach the water in relative safety. I would therefore advise that you retain the trees in the southwest corner and the majority of the bramble to the south. You did however mention that the bramble had spread somewhat in recent years and where it has overgrown a previous access/view point to the water you could open this up again with some minor clearance work. Where the bramble is advancing outwards you could keep it in check if you so wish by cutting it back every year or two (in the autumn or winter to avoid the bird nesting season) but I would suggest that you cut it back to around its present size rather than decreasing it further. To maximise its benefit you could cut a scalloped edge to it rather than a straight line and thereby create sheltered bays, which should be popular with butterflies, dragonflies and blackberry pickers.

We also looked briefly at the pond close to the road to Chesham (Dewpond) which was a rather different affair and perhaps lacked the aesthetic appeal of Pallett's pond. From a conservation point of view however this pond is arguably of greater interest especially as water purslane grows there in profusion, a plant that is rare across the county. The temptation with ponds is often to develop them all into the idealised image of a typical healthy village pond. However recent research by the Ponds Conservation Trust has found that many ponds that are overgrown or are little more than damp depressions can harbour unusual plants and invertebrates and are therefore of particular value. Current thinking is that the ideal is to have ponds in a variety of states within a given area to maximise the diversity of conditions available to local wildlife. I would therefore advise against attempts to 'cure' this pond and make it hold water through the year, but rather inform people of its value in the current state. There would however be an argument for the value of future work in carefully controlling the rushes that currently dominate the pond (a suggestion that BSBI County Recorder Roy Maycock made) and to keep on top of any shrubs or trees that start to invade the site as in time these would both perhaps threaten the water purslane if they became too dominant. It is often the invertebrates that are of greatest interest in unusual damp sites such as this and if there were a pressing movement from the local community to develop the pond I would advise that you get a specialist out to assess the pond before proceeding. From my own point of view the Dewpond provides an ideal companion to Pallett's pond and both should be managed to play to their strengths rather than with an identical aim.

Dan Merrett

BBOWT Buckinghamshire People and Wildlife Officer





*Drovers' Path*

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*Mistle Thrush*



*Pheasant*



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Hawridge & Cholesbury Cricket Club  
Bellingdon  
Chesham.

Malcolm Stewart Esq  
Hawridge Court Farm

31st April 1936.



Dear Sir

Re your letter a short time  
I have presented your proposals to the committee  
& they wish me to thank you for the  
kindness you have shown to the club.  
It has been proposed that the work be  
over until next winter so that we can raise  
money for carrying this work out.

I have put this down at about £150 & I  
hope to see you in person to discuss the details.

The Manor, The General Court Baron  
of the Reverend John Jeffrey - ground  
of the said Manor being the Little Manor  
within the Parish of St. Andrew & St. Mary  
Monday the first day of October in the year of  
our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty five  
before Thomas & Marshall Justices of the said Manor

The Homage  
Thomas Jones  
Benjamin Babbitt  
William Wright } sworn

At this Court  
Cath. present and the Homage approved  
and made by them  
the said Thomas & Marshall Justices

28th, March 1936.

Mrs. Rosner,  
Box Tree,  
Hawridge,  
St. CEPHAM.

Dear Mrs. Rosner,

Manors of Hawridge and Cholesbury.

Many thanks for your letter of the  
23rd inst. I see no reason why you should not burn  
your hedge trimmings on the Common provided of course  
that it is done in a reasonable manner and does not  
become a nuisance, or upset anyone locally.

No doubt with the new scheme of  
Refuse Collecting that comes into force next month  
the contractor might be persuaded to take away such  
garden rubbish.

Yours truly,

Dated 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 1953

Henry Roderick  
Moore Esq

John William  
Randall Esq

**This Conveyance**  
We the undersigned the King's High Sheriff of the County of Buckingham  
do hereby certify that the above named Henry Roderick Moore Esq  
(hereinafter called "the vendor") of the first part and John William  
Randall Esq (hereinafter called "the purchaser") of the second part  
of the County of London (hereinafter called "the purchaser") of the second part  
of the County of Buckingham (hereinafter called "the purchaser") of the second part  
of the County of Buckingham (hereinafter called "the purchaser") of the second part  
of the County of Buckingham (hereinafter called "the purchaser") of the second part  
(1) The Vendor in respect of the property hereinafter mentioned do  
voluntarily in the single in possession subject only as hereinafter  
mentioned and to the legal charge hereinafter recited,  
(2) By a legal charge (hereinafter called "the legal charge") dated  
the fourth day of February one thousand nine hundred and thirty five  
between the Vendor of the one part and the Purchaser of the  
other part (hereinafter called "the mortgage") the said legal charge  
property was charged by way of legal mortgage in manner first above  
recited to the benefit of the Vendor of the one part and the Purchaser of the  
second part.

**The Manor of Hawridge**  
21<sup>st</sup> March 1854  
Whereas on the twelfth day of January one thousand  
eight hundred and forty four a certain conditional  
conveyance was taken out of Court by the Steward of the  
Manor in the words and figures or to the purport and  
effect following (that is to say) The Manor of Hawridge  
in the County of Buckingham be it remembered that on the  
twelfth day of January one thousand eight hundred and  
forty four John Frost of Otton in the County of Southampton  
Esquire one of the borough or customary tenants of the said  
Manor came before William Holloway Marshall Steward  
of the Manor aforesaid and in consideration of the sum of  
three thousand pounds of lawful money of Great Britain  
to the said John Frost in hand well and truly paid by  
William Tomlin of Berkhamsted Bucks Esquire in the County  
of Bedford Esquire (which said sum of three thousand  
pounds is the same sum that is mentioned and expressed  
to be lent and advanced to the said John Frost by the said  
William Tomlin in and by a certain indenture of  
conveyance now in hand and made or expressed to be made  
between the said John Frost of the one part and the said William  
Tomlin of the other part on the security not only of the  
said hereditaments and premises hereinafter mentioned



