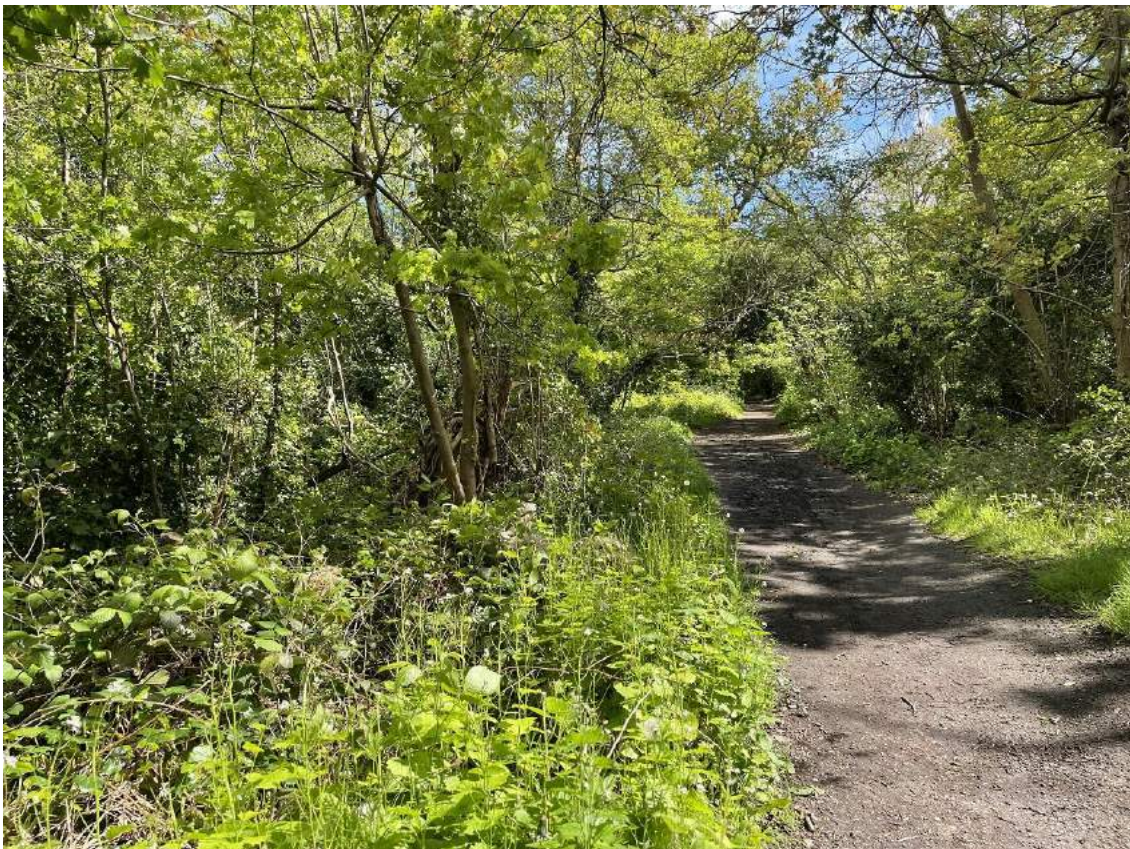




May 2024



Let's celebrate the Merry Month of May!

This is the month when we feel the force of nature all around us, its energy and vitality, as plants come into flower, birds hatch their young, buds open on trees, and bees and butterflies fly along woodland margins and over grasslands.

Bird Life



Our bird boxes are proving popular.

This picture was taken using an approved method which is unobtrusive and doesn't distress the birds, but provides valuable information. This is a clutch of 12 blue tit eggs.

Flowers Everywhere!



“April showers bring May flowers” as the old saying goes, and this year it has certainly proved to be true here on Chislehurst Common.

In the woodlands, along the verges, and on the grasslands, flowers are blooming in abundance.

It’s a great time to go out for a walk!

The photo above shows the grassland at the Ramblers Rest bright with bulbous buttercups. This is one of the experimental areas that was mown in March and will be mown again in July and September. Cuttings are removed to deprive the soil of nutrients, and we hope to see more flowers typical of acid grasslands appearing through the year.







Bluebells and wild garlic can be found in the dappled shade of the spring woodlands along Prince Imperial Road, Fallowfield and near Holbrook House on St. Paul's Cray Common. They are indicators of older woodland areas and, as our woodlands age, they are beginning to appear elsewhere. The yellow, star-like lesser celandine comes earlier in spring, but, as shown in the photo, some still linger.



While some plants prefer the shelter of wooded areas, others thrive in places like the verge along Watts Lane, the grassy area opposite the Bull, woodland margins and the edges of footpaths.

Herb Robert is a type of crane's-bill. You can see it in a variety of settings on the commons from April to September.



This is cuckoo flower, or lady's smock, known also in some parts of the country as mayflower. Although it is a common plant, found along road verges in the Kent countryside, it has only been found in one site on the Common so far.



Greater celandine is not related to the star-shaped lesser celandine mentioned earlier, although both are bright yellow. It is a member of the poppy family and grows up to 90 cm tall.



Not only do they brighten our daily lives, but each of these flowering plants plays a vital role in the natural food chain, providing food for insects and other creatures.

They also attract pollinators like this brimstone butterfly.

Their presence illustrates the importance of managing and maintaining every part of the 180 acres of common land in Chislehurst, to preserve and enhance biodiversity.

Flowering Trees

May brings the sight of trees heavy with blossom. This is the start of the cycle that brings berries in the autumn, which support our resident bird population

and attract visitors like the redwings that migrate from Scandinavia.



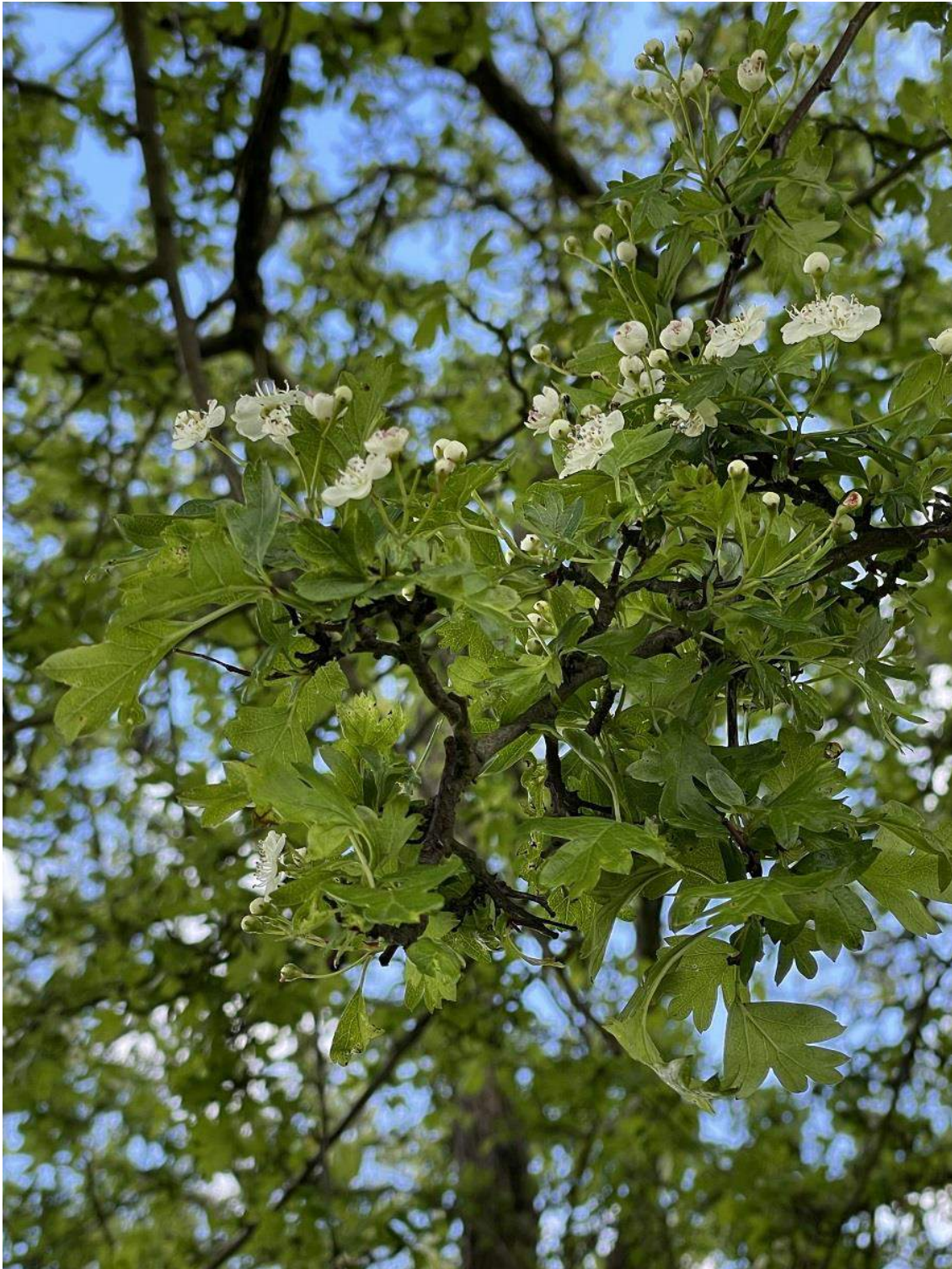
This is the rowan at the top of the High Street, and there are others in the woodlands.



Holly



Horse chestnut



The heavy scent of hawthorn blossom is a sure sign that summer is on its way. It is also known as the May tree and provides a valuable habitat for many species of wildlife.

Signs of New Growth

In recent newsletters we have reported on work to enhance the biodiversity of our woodlands by coppicing some of the trees and planting whips and saplings. Coppicing is a traditional woodland management technique where trees are cut down at the base to allow new shoots to grow. These then form an understorey which will provide food and shelter for birds, invertebrates and small mammals.



New shoots are already growing from the base of this tree cut in December.



The wet weather this spring has given the whips and saplings planted in February a good start. This is a spindle tree.

Three Exciting Events This May

May 4th – May 18th in Chislehurst Library

Exhibition “The Biodiversity of Chislehurst Commons”



Sunday 12th May

Chislehurst Car Show in Chislehurst High Street

organised by Visit Chislehurst.

We will be exhibiting our (newish) truck, and we will have a stall
and a display.

**CHISLEHURST
LIBRARY COFFEE
MORNING TALK**
Tuesday 14th May 2024
at 10.30-11.30am
With Mary Wheeler
from
Chislehurst Commons

The 180 acres of common land in Chislehurst contain some valuable and diverse habitats - woodland, grassland, heathland and ponds and wetlands - all with their own ecosystems. Come and hear how the landscape has developed over hundreds of years and find out about some of the amazing wildlife that makes its home here.



Peter Edwards



Kevin Jennings

No booking required.

**For more information please speak to
a member of staff or call 020 8467 1318.**

We provide tea, coffee and biscuits on the day.



A Request on Behalf of Hedgehogs!

Once a common sight, hedgehogs are now a rarity, and it is years since one was recorded on the commons.

The poster below was issued by Bromley Biodiversity Partnership to highlight the issue, and to try to collect data for the Bromley area.


There is an address on the poster where you can report any sightings.

If you see one on the commons, we would be very grateful if you could let us know via info@chislehurstcommons.uk

Thank you!

HELP OUR HEDGEHOGS!

Since 2000 hedgehog numbers in England have dropped by 30-75% in rural areas, up to 30% in urban areas where numbers were improving slightly. They become dehydrated easily so hot, dry summers may affect them badly. They live in scrubby areas & gardens, rough grassland & under hedgerows where there is plenty of insect prey and travel 1-2 kms/night looking food & mates. They hibernate in deep leaf litter beneath hedges & scrub.
Please let us know if you see one!



How to Help Hedgehogs

- Leave out water in hot or dry weather.
- Have a wild area in your garden or park.
- Check for hedgehogs before strimming, mowing or bonfires.
- Have 13 x 13cm holes at fence bases so hedgehogs can pass through.
- Don't use pesticides.
- Ensure your pond has a sloping side so if they fall in they can escape.
- Wire or netting must be secure or 15cm above ground.

Please send the date, postcode or grid reference of sighting, number seen & any other information to Bromley Biodiversity Partnership at bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com The records help local habitat improvements to be made. For more information see <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org>

If you see a sick or injured hedgehog or a hedgehog in daylight (sometimes, but not always, a sign of distress), please contact Mavis Righini on 02084621168 or Willow Wildlife Rescue on 07858227337 (<https://www.willowwildlife.co.uk/>) for advice.

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

For a pdf version of this [click here](#)

We are privileged here in Chislehurst to have such a precious resource as the Commons right on our doorstep.

The Act of Parliament that protects the 180 acres provides no funding, and we are dependent on the generosity of local people.

Can you help?



We have two full-time Keepers, whose knowledge and

dedication are invaluable. Everyone else who works to preserve and maintain the area does so voluntarily.

If you would like to support our work,

you can donate via our website

www.chislehurstcommons.uk

or via PayPal Giving

Thank you!

Our Wonderful Keepers and Volunteers



Some of the whips provided by "[I Dig Trees](#)" were reserved for the area around Prickend Pond and Centre Common. These have now been planted out by a group of volunteers, together with some larger saplings.

Many thanks to Sheila Poole who nurtured the whips after delivery and oversaw the planting.



Meanwhile the regular maintenance work of clearing ditches and cutting back foliage from pavements has continued. Here the volunteers are working along St. Paul's Cray Road.

News from the Ponds



This lone herring gull spent the winter at Prickend Pond, together with a large flock of black-headed gulls.

At the bird count in January 116 gulls were recorded, but all except this one had flown by March.

The black-headed gulls leave us to nest, perhaps around the Thames estuary. This herring gull is probably a third winter juvenile and not yet sexually mature, so will not breed until next year.



There are now families of coots, Egyptian geese and mallards at the ponds.

This is a family of 8 mallard ducklings at Prickend Pond, nestling at the water's

edge with a parent on watch.

Our beautiful Commons help to mitigate climate change, give us a space for rest and relaxation, provide a haven for wildlife, and show us at first hand the vitality of the natural world as the seasons change.

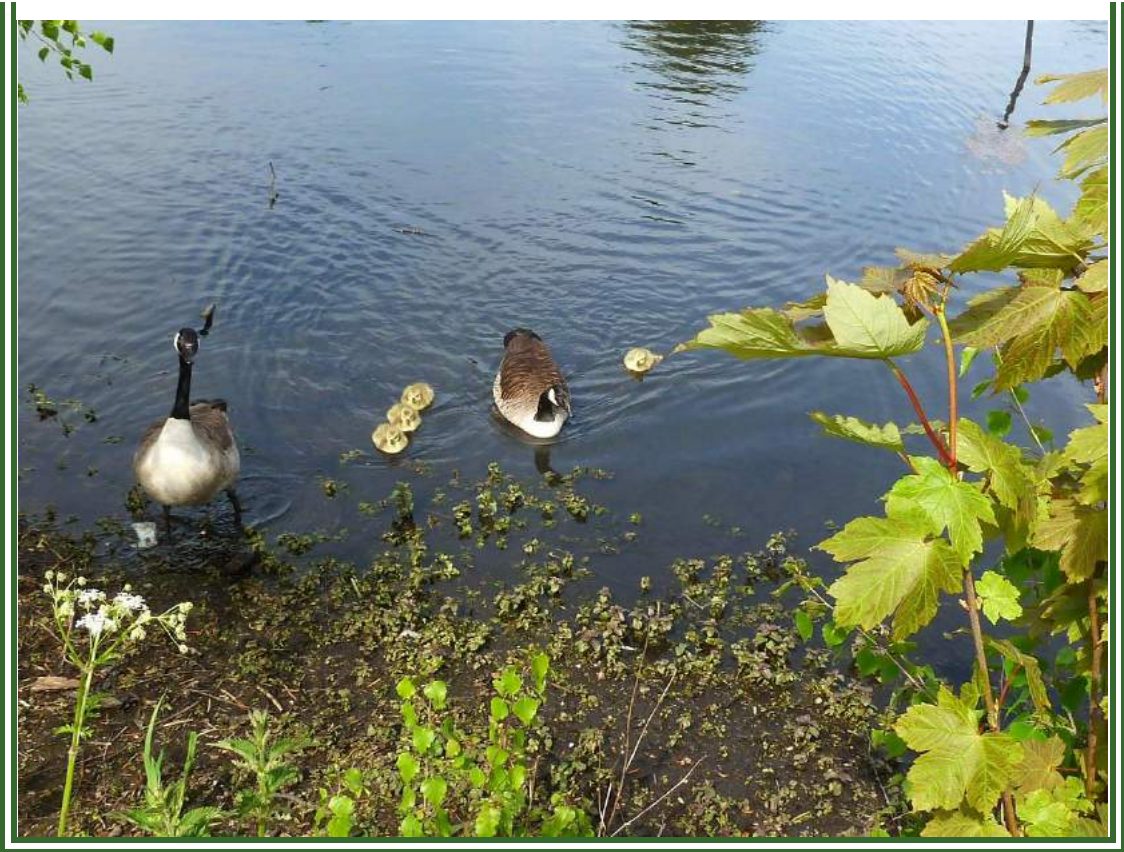
We will continue to do our best to preserve and enhance them for current and future generations.

Get your bird seed at Champion Wines.

We are grateful to Champion Wines for stocking packets of seed on our behalf. This food is healthier for the birds than bread or products made from flour.

All proceeds go to Chislehurst Commons.

**When the birds stop eating, please stop feeding!
Food left on the ground or floating on the water will
attract rats!**



You can now Support Us when You Shop Online

We are now registered with [easyfundraising](#) which means you can support us when you shop online.

Over 7,000 retailers and services will donate to us when you connect to their websites via [easyfundraising](#) to shop with them – at no extra cost to you, and you earn all your normal loyalty benefits!

All you need to do is sign up and remember to use [easyfundraising](#) to select your shopping site of choice.

It's easy to use and these donations really mount up, so please sign up to support us by clicking [here](#)

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You can also support us by using the easyfundraising app available below

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**Thanks for this month's photos to – Peter Edwards,
Jonathan Harvie, Kevin Jennings, Ross Wearn, Evie
Wheeler and Mary Wheeler**

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



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

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