



Commons Link

Newsletter for the Friends of Ludshott and Passfield Commons

 THE NATIONAL TRUST

Issue 6 - October 2008

100 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL TRUST AT LUDSHOTT COMMON

Congratulations from the Director General of the National Trust

“On behalf of the whole of the National Trust, we join with you in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the acquisition of Ludshott Common for the Trust.

Following the establishment in 1906 of the Ludshott Preservation Committee, Sir Robert Hunter aided by other visionary local people put the ownership of the Commons in the hands of the National Trust in 1908 ensuring its protection in perpetuity for future generations to enjoy. It is a fitting tribute to those early pioneers that you and many other local residents over the past 100 years have carried on that work and worked with the National Trust to ensure that these special places are loved and cared for.

The committee has been generous over the years in providing extra funds, and even more importantly, moral and practical support to the staff on the ground, and this is much appreciated.

I hope that this special partnership between the National Trust and the Ludshott Committee will continue to thrive for many years to come.”

Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE
Director General
The National Trust



Valerie Humphrey cutting the
Centenary cake



Centenary Celebrations

A commemorative plaque has been placed at the Wishing Well, at Waggoners Wells, inscribed with the poem Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote at this spot in 1863. Valerie Humphrey, a member of the National Trust Council, unveiled the plaque on 18th June 2008, this was followed by champagne and eats in a marquee at Dunelm where Valerie cut a beautiful centenary cake.

On July 27th, the hottest day of the year, local historian, Jo Smith, as Sir Robert Hunter, led a dramatised, historical walk featuring characters and events associated with Ludshott Common and the Wells.

Commemorative plaque unveiling at Wishing Well



Susan Salter (Chairman of the local NT Committee) welcomes guests at the Wishing Well.



Head Warden, Chris Webb, talks about the history and ecology of the Waggoners Wells area.



A pause by one of the lakes.



Our Wardens and volunteer workers.



Janet Crossman and her helpers.



Our hostess, Jane Durham.

A flavour of the Dramatised Walk



Sir Robert Hunter with the broom squire.



World War I veteran, now a tinker, cooking his breakfast.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and George Bernard Shaw.



Sir Robert Hunter and Flora Thompson.



Disgruntled commoners.

Selborne Celebrations

Selborne Commons Committee celebrated their 75th Anniversary with the National Trust with a "Hog roast and Fizz" on 24th August at Beech Hanger.

The day started with pouring rain, which cleared just in time for the 12 o'clock start. The event was well supported by the village community, who enjoyed an excellent lunch in the sun while listening to the blues band Red Jackson.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

It has been a rather busy few months for the Team of Wardens with work in support of the events to commemorate the Centenary of the acquisition coming in addition to the 'normal' work load.

We made use of a Working Holiday, and other volunteers, to resurface the path by the Wishing Well at **Waggoners Wells** in anticipation of the plaque unveiling and dramatised walk. The material used has generally formed a good surface but the very heavy downpours of rain that we are increasingly experiencing has posed some problems, requiring additional measures to cope with the run-off to help retain the path in good condition. The Notice Board near the Car Park has been replaced and re-sited and the potholes in Superior Road have been patched.

As mentioned in the March newsletter the highways authority had agreed to the closure of the pull-ins on the Headley Road. The pull-ins attracted a lot of littering from thoughtless 'snackers' requiring frequent visits to tidy away their rubbish and posed a fire risk from discarded cigarettes.

Children are believed to have been responsible for setting fire to **Ludshott Common**, near **Seymour Road**. Although the summer has been rather wet the Gorse burnt fiercely and only the very timely response of the Fire Service contained and extinguished the blaze limiting the destruction to about half an acre. We have been out with our tractors cutting fire-breaks across the Common and ensuring that tracks are passable to fire engines as part of our routine work but arson, or careless smokers, can cause a great deal of damage.

The wet Summer has been disastrous for many creatures and butterflies have been badly affected. We have had difficulty

monitoring the formal Butterfly Transect on Ludshott Common on a regular basis but observation indicated that Silver Studded Blue Butterflies, for example, were much less abundant although a small population has been recorded in an area of the Common where they had not been seen before. Heather Beetle damage has been observed in many locations on Ludshott Common. The beetle responsible for the damage is the prey of a parasitic wasp, but it takes time for this 'natural' control to take effect as the abundance of the wasp

Christmas trees

On Saturday 6 December we plan to cut Christmas trees to be sold on Saturday 13 December at Dunelm car park between 9:30 and 12:30.

lags about a year behind the surge in beetle numbers. As we are not allowed (and would not want) to use pesticides we must wait for nature to take its course. Whilst the dead patches of heather are unsightly in the short term, the heather will regenerate in time.

Guided walks and Volunteer days

Look for posters on the Commons and in the press for details or contact Jim Avenell, the Countryside Warden, on 01428 751563.

Volunteers helped the team position a new bench at the western side of Ludshott Common. The bench was constructed with Oak from a tree, from Waggoner's Wells Road, that we had to cut down as it had been identified as unsafe in the course of last winter's tree inspection work.

Our Working Holidays have been very well supported this year. The Bio-survey

Holiday in July again collected data on the flora on Conford Moor where the Fragrant Marsh Orchid was identified. This area of rare wet fen appears to be recovering well since the clearing of the Scots Pine plantation some years ago but might be threatened if over abstraction of water elsewhere impedes the source of the springs. The data is now being collated. Later Holidays helped finishing off the clearing of a patch of leggy gorse that had been started by one of our Volunteer days two years ago, opening an excellent view on Ludshott Common. Notwithstanding rather heavy rain, another Holiday helped us in Gentles Copse where we cleared away the by-product of recent coppicing work enabling us to recover a lot of Sweet Chestnut which we will use for fencing and other works. Getting the Sweet Chestnut stools into rotation provides us with a sustainable and very local source of material.

Indeed using materials from sustainable and local sources has been much on our minds of late. We have at last acquired land on which to build our **new Work Base** and now the detailed planning and project management work is in full swing. Our aim is to be as 'green' as we can and Jim Avenell has been doing a lot of research into current best practice to see what we can do to minimise our Carbon footprint. We are intending to source materials needed as locally as possible and at all stages of the project we will be aiming to draw upon our volunteer supporters whenever feasible.

Since the last issue of the Newsletter Dirk Schiphorst finished his extended period as our Contract Warden, and the Team has welcomed our new Contract Warden Mandy Phyfferoen. Mandy had worked with us for a year first as a Volunteer and then as her Work Placement whilst studying Habitat Management at Merrist Wood.

**If you enjoy
reading this newsletter,
please pass it on!**

Become a Friend

You will receive your own personal copy of the newsletter, and you will be helping valuable conservation work to ensure the survival of our precious landscape and habitat - 'Forever for Everyone'.

Becoming a Friend costs only £5.00 for a year. Contact the Membership Secretary, Colin Brash on 01428 713256.

Centenary Photographic Competition

One of the events to celebrate the Centenary is a photographic competition which has been held over the last year, recording the changing seasons of our beautiful commons.

The winners to "**The Commons through the Year**" will be announced and the entries displayed at our

Coffee Morning on Saturday 8 November 2008

at 10:30am

At Grayshott Village Hall