

Friends of Naphill Common

Looking back.
So far 2013 has been a better year than 2012, chiefly because

the weather has generally smiled on our events – with the exception of the village fete. The 'lost Pubs of Naphill' walk attracted a good crowd and it might be worth doing something similar again. The min-beast safari competed with the Wimbledon final but was still well attended. A band of us went in search of the elusive Purple Emperor butterfly but it proved only too elusive. Our bat walk benefited from a fairly fine evening. We wandered as far as Dew Pond and detected many bats but confined to Pipistrelles, both Common and Soprano. The detectors gave us a questionable signal from another species but not sufficient to be certain. The 'Draw and Walk' event, organised by Roni and Keith Wilkins looked like being washed out and this deterred some prospective participants, but those who went enjoyed themselves and learned a lot. Roni and Keith may organise more of these.

Our year-long pond survey by Tony Marshall is progressing well and we will have a report at the end of the year. He is looking at all seven of the larger ponds but concentrating mainly on Dew, Daisy, Lady

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Horse and Willow Ponds. Neil Fletcher has organised several moth trapping evenings and these have turned up a few rarities and uncommon species. It is surprisingly exciting watching the moths come into the lights and thumbing through reference books to try to identify them. Unfortunately we can't advertise these events in advance because they are organ-

established for some time but, at first, the short walks struggled to recruit. Both are now amongst the most popular things we do. Next year the long walks will gather at 9.25 am and move off at 9.30 am, but the 9.55 am start remains at present. Earlier in the year Peter Davis took over the organisation of the working parties and this has been an improvement. You may have noticed the huge amount of path clearing and widening they have achieved.



ised at the last minute to suite the weather.

One of the most pleasing developments has been the success of the short walks led by Chris Miller. Ron Collins' longer walks have been well

Looking forward.

We still have the fungus foray to look forward to. It generally attracts a good number including several families with children. This year it starts from the Common end of Forge

Road at 10am on Sunday 13th October. Experts from the Bucks Fungus Group will be there to help identify our finds.

Our Open Meeting and AGM will be on Friday 7th February – a little later than usual to avoid a clash with Burns' Night celebrations. We are lucky to have the local historian Frances Kerner as our speaker. She knows the area well and I am sure that she will help to launch a drive amongst FONC members to investigate the history of our village and its common.

Our project to return the Clumps to something like their original form will continue in the coming months. The National Trust intends to do some more felling of the small trees that have engulfed the circles. We have helped design an information board which will soon be in position to explain what is being done and illustrate what we hope to achieve. It will include

a reproduction of a painting by Philip Hussey showing what we hope the Clumps will look like in a year or two's time.

We have heard that the West Wycombe Estate is not going to start felling on the Common this autumn as originally intended. This gives us more time to complete the survey of all the significant trees and to label them so that they will not be touched. If and when the felling takes place it will be limited and controlled. We hope and expect that the SSSI status of the Common will ensure that no significant damage is done. In fact the felling could produce improvements if it opens up some of the glades, paths and ponds, and if it involves clearing some of the ever spreading holly.

The cuttings taken from our few remaining Junipers have been returned from the nursery in Scotland and will soon be ready to plant out.

They will require an open area because it is the over-shadowing by trees that killed off the forest of Juniper we once had. The open area could be achieved either by the felling or by using an area of meadow near the Clumps.

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Any ideas?

FONC exists to conserve and improve the Common, but also to encourage and facilitate people's enjoyment of it. The group began with a guided tour of the Common and we have tried many things since, including a Rogation Day walk around its boundary, mid-summer picnics, games for children and so on. We would especially like to see more families and children enjoying themselves, in what is a huge adventure playground. Have you got any ideas for future events and activities?

