

TB Hussey.
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PRELIMINARY FIELD SURVEY
OF
NAPHILL COMMON
AND
PART OF DOWNLEY COMMON



THE WEST WYCOMBE ESTATE

in association with

**NAPHILL COMMON COMMITTEE
DOWNLEY COMMON PRESERVATION SOCIETY
and
ENGLISH NATURE**

**A
PRELIMINARY FIELD SURVEY
AND
PROPOSALS FOR THE CONTINUING MANAGEMENT
OF
NAPHILL COMMON
AND PART OF
DOWNLEY COMMON
FOR THE PERIOD
1997 - 2007**

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Farm & Countryside Liaison Services



OCTOBER 1995

"How we revelled... in the smell of bedstraw... watched the hordes of honey-bees at heather, marvelled at the pure, fragile beauty of harebells - I marvel still.

"Parts of the Common are much changed. What are now oak glades were then vast areas of gorse, golden in the early spring sunshine, resounding with the miniature explosions of bursting seed-pods in the hot summer sun. Some parts were covered with natural juniper forests, many so closely growing that it would be difficult to force a way through, many beautifully symmetrical columns of verdure 15 or 20ft high. Alas! Both gorse and juniper were the natural prey of the fire-raising vandal and have almost disappeared.

"One... area was famous for its spotted orchis; another for the lesser butterfly orchis we always found there. This same area was much favoured for the nightjar: nothing can efface the joy of discovering its two white-mottled eggs."

Wilfrid Smith, writing in 1948 about Naphill and Downley Commons at the turn of the century. He also referred to truffles "all about the Common", and to great grey shrike nesting at Downley.

RATIONALE AND SYNOPSIS

Naphill and Downley Commons together represent a superb rural resource: a substantial tract of unspoiled and naturally regenerating wooded countryside on the northern fringe of High Wycombe. The area retains, moreover, a comprehensive mosaic of rides, tracks and glades, these in turn linking up with more extensive open areas where remnants of the old heathy grasslands survive, as well as a number of ponds - all reminiscent of an earlier phase in the fascinating history of the West Wycombe Estate of which both commons are a part.

Long regarded as a place of great aesthetic attraction, and harbouring a pleasing range of wildlife habitats characteristic of the Chiltern Plateau - Naphill Common was scheduled as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the then Nature Conservancy (now English Nature) as long ago as 1951 - the two commons together have reached a critical stage in their ecological development. A concerted effort is now required to restore traditional methods of day-to-day management, so as to ensure the perpetuation of the classic "wood pasture" structure, and the benefits to silviculture, nature conservation and amenity that such measures can bring.

A start has indeed already been made. An early initiative was to clear and restore Mannings Pond on Downley Common, and this led to work on other ponds. Now work is in progress to open up the main rides, to clear around the ancient oak and beech standards and pollards, and to remove invading birch - the result of a joint agreement between the Estate and English Nature, work being undertaken by Tilhill Economic Forestry and funded as a five-year "Special Management" Plan through the Forestry Authority's Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS).

The purpose of this present exercise is to undertake a detailed survey of the area concerned, and to examine the wider implications of these renewed management initiatives. Longer-term issues are also considered, including how best to cater for the rarer plants and animals, and how local people might become more involved in some of these more specialised aspects of management. Certain options may require a more radical approach, and these are the subject of a more detailed feasibility study.

This report targets the ten-year period beginning September 1st 1997, thus allowing ample time for detailed discussion among the interested parties before inaugurating such recommendations as are deemed appropriate. Ideally, therefore, the Management Plan proposed here should serve to complement and extend the WGS Plan.

This project has been made possible by generous grants from Rural Action (administered by the Bucks Council for Voluntary Services on behalf of English Nature) and Wycombe District Council.

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PART 1

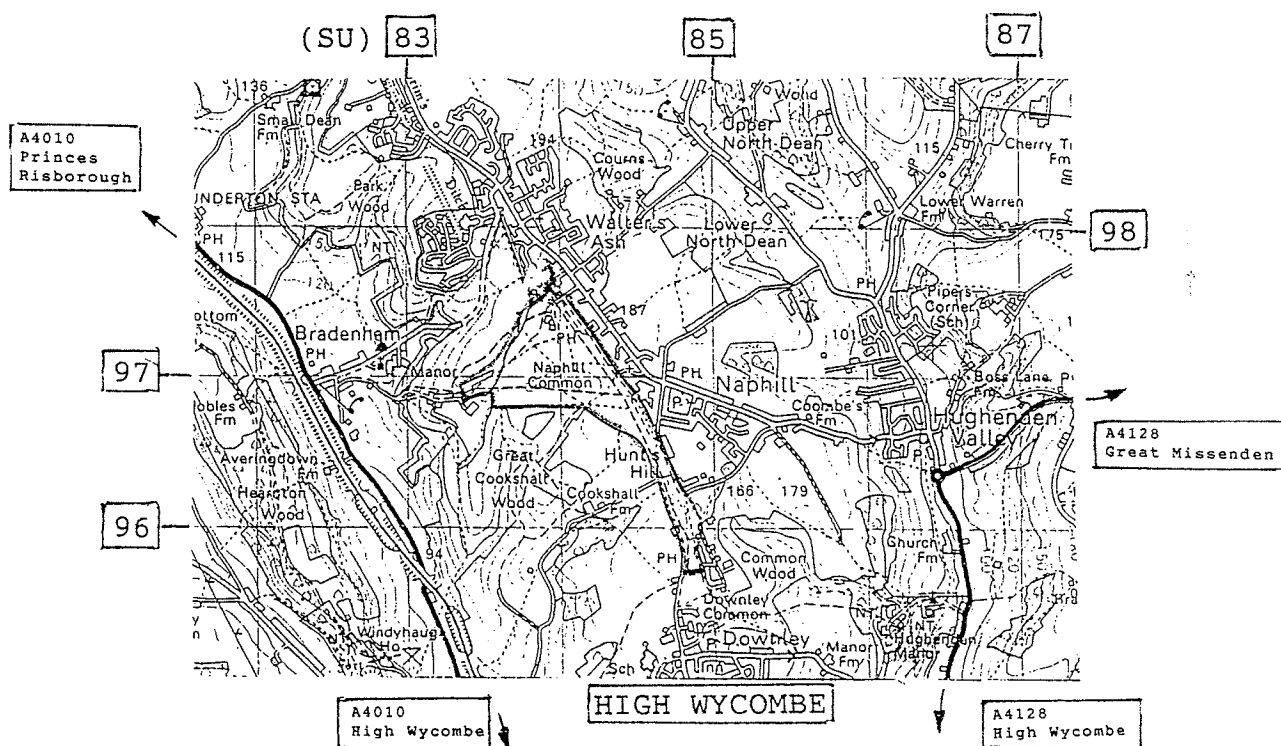
NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
AND
PRELIMINARY FIELD SURVEY

PLAN A

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

LOCATION MAP



Scale 1:50 000

1.1. METHODOLOGY

Background information on the Commons has been assembled from two main sources: (1) my own experience of the site as a local resident from 1953, as well as that of friends and contacts who know the area - or particular aspects of its history or ecology - better than I do; and (2) various maps and plans such as those of the Geological and Ordnance Surveys, together with aerial photographs and biological records held by English Nature and the Buckinghamshire County Environmental Records Centre, not to mention the West Wycombe Estate itself. Recent aerial photographic coverage by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of December 1993 was also referred to. All these sources are acknowledged at appropriate points in the text, figures or appendices.

Field operations included much ground work, initially to renew my acquaintance with the old haunts and their fickle ways of disorientating even the most regular user. The main paths were followed through, referring to the current OS 1:2500 cover, which proved to be sufficiently accurate to permit such changes as had occurred to be easily spotted and corrected. Key landmarks were discerned, these including the more obvious specimen oaks and beeches¹. It was also useful to note the arrangement of individual trees at the major junctions.

Next came the task of describing the main plant communities - woodland, scrub, grassland and the vegetation of the ponds - and their botanical composition. The whereabouts were also recorded of species regarded as of special significance, such as harebell, heather, juniper and sessile oak. August 1995, with its continuing scorching drought in what was already the driest summer since 1727, was not an ideal time for this, but the list seems reasonably representative (see Appendix I), and this is not at all a botanically rich location. Further surveys are suggested for Spring 1996 to help make good any gaps, and of course regular recording will be a crucial part of the continuing project.

In addition to these purely descriptive methods, some of the woodland areas were assessed for stand structure by marking out 10-metre square sampling areas, while 1m² quadrats were used to measure the percentage frequency of the component species in some of the grasslands. These more detailed observations were used for a preliminary assessment of possible National Vegetation Classification (NVC) categories (Appendix I).

¹Common names of plants and animals are used throughout this text for ease of reading. See Appendix I for scientific names.

Notes were made of sightings and signs of animal life, including birds and invertebrates. These, too, are listed in Appendix I.

Photographs were taken during all these stages of the survey, and a selection of these is included in Appendix V.

I was glad to have the company and assistance of various people at different times during these operations. They are acknowledged in Section 4.2.

1.2. LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

Naphill and Downley Commons lie in the heart of the Buckinghamshire Chilterns, and are centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 840970 (see Plan A). As will be apparent, not all of Downley Common is covered in this report, but to make for easier reading, the expression "Naphill and Downley Commons" is taken to mean "Naphill Common and that part of Downley Common included in this survey".

The Commons form the easternmost extent of the West Wycombe Estate, adjoining the villages of Downley, Naphill and Walters Ash, which themselves lie along the ridge of the Chiltern dip-slope extending northwards from High Wycombe towards the escarpment. It is along this dimension that the curiously-shaped parcel (Plan B) has by far its longest boundary of just over 2km (about 1¼ mile). Along the other two sides of its essentially triangular shape, the southern part borders the Estate's own Cookshall Farm, and the northern part, as well as the western extremity, the National Trust's Bradenham Estate (Plan C and see also Section 1.8). Parish boundaries play an important part in delimiting the borders of both Naphill and Downley Commons (see Section 1.4).

The total area of the two commons is given in the Woodland Grant Scheme application as 70.90ha (175ac), of which much the largest part (more than 60ha or 150ac) is accounted for by Naphill Common. That part of Downley Common we are concerned with here contains several parcels on the current OS 1:2500 cover, of which the main ones are 7700, 8779, 8085 and 8200, although the last is also shown as 8500 where it passes onto an adjoining sheet. Mannings Pond carries a separate parcel number: 7317. Almost the whole of Naphill Common, by contrast, falls within one large unit, 0004, a few additional very small parcels being accounted for by undulations in the Hughenden/Bradenham parish boundary. A small area of private housing (parcel 9339) occurs at the northern end of Naphill Common, and is excluded from this report.

1.3. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

In keeping with its position on the Chiltern dipslope, the study area, though not dead level, appears virtually so for much of its extent. The highest point (190m or 623ft OD) occurs at the extreme northern tip of Naphill Common, this falling to 182m/597ft near the Clumps (opposite Bradenham Hill Farm), 179m/587ft at Hunts Hill, 177m/581ft at the Le De Spencers Arms

N

PLAN B

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

BOUNDARY OF STUDY AREA

Private property:
excluded from Plan

(SU) 84

WALTERS ASH

Naphill Common

NAPHILL

97

BRADENHAM

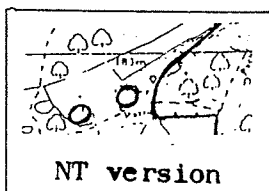
HUNTS
HILL

Downley Common (part)

96

DOWNLEY

NB: The westernmost boundary with NT land, and its relationship to the two "Clumps" or "Rings", is shown here as portrayed on the WGS application map. It is shown differently on NT records as indicated below, and differs yet again on EN's SSSI & Management Agreement maps (see Plans F and O). This boundary is entirely notional on the ground. The matter needs clarifying.



Continuation of
Downley Common

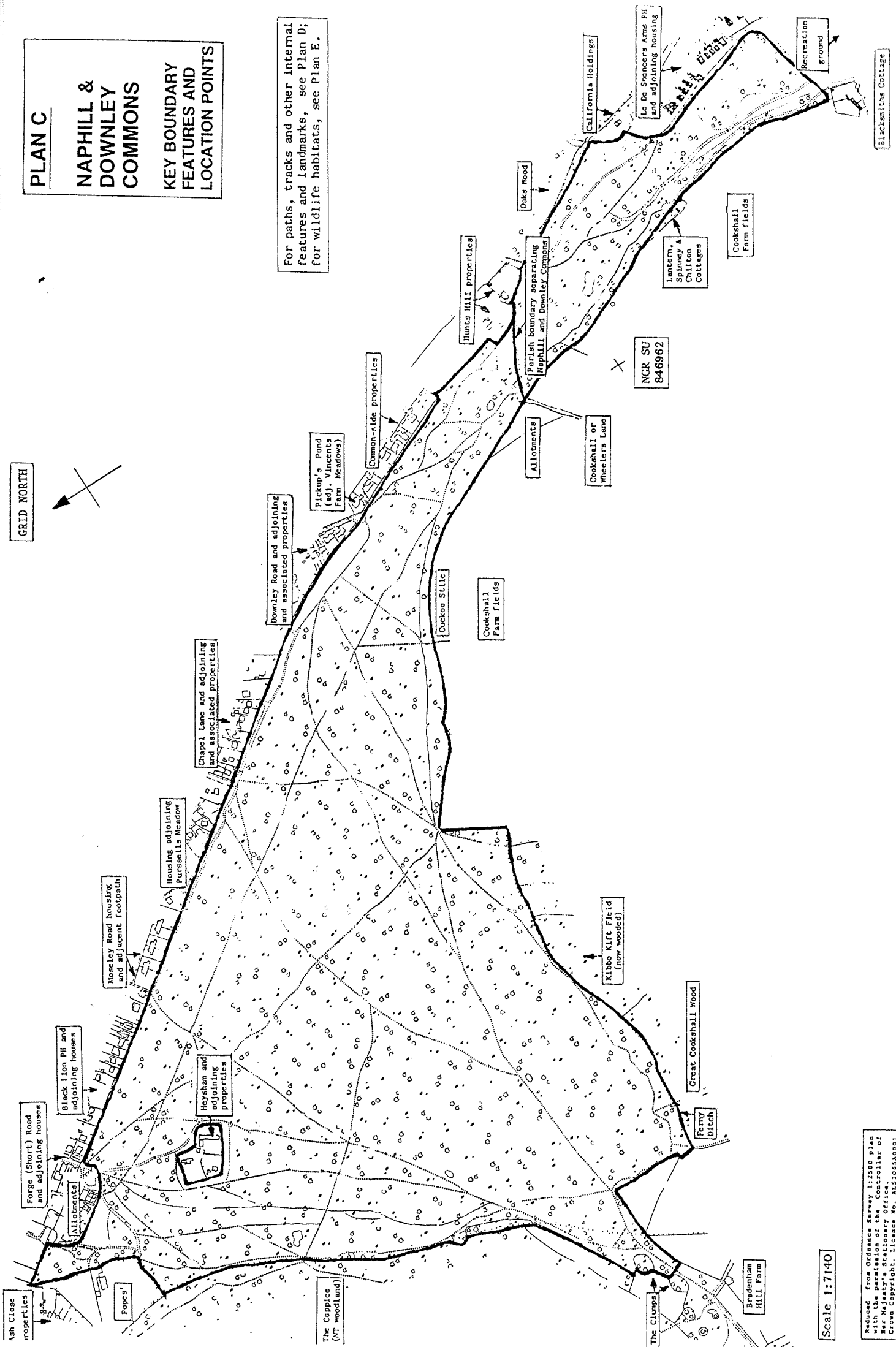
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PLAN C NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS KEY BOUNDARY FEATURES AND LOCATION POINTS

For paths, tracks and other internal features and landmarks, see Plan D; for wildlife habitats, see Plan E.



Scale 1:7140

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public house on Downley Common, and 175m (574ft) just south of this. It is along the central-southern and south-west boundary of Naphill Common where altitude begins to drop away more noticeably, for here the twin heads of the dry valley running down through Great Cookshall Wood are encountered, though even here the level on the common hardly falls below 170m/558ft.

Geologically, superficial deposits of Clay-with-Flints, Plateau Drift and loessal silt mask the underlying Chalk, which nowhere appears at the surface. Brown earth soils are characteristic throughout, therefore, and encompass the Winchester, Berkhamsted and Batcombe series (Avery, 1964²). These are all free-draining and mildly to more strongly acid in reaction, and compared with chalk retain a relatively small reserve of available water - a fact which enhances their summer drought susceptibility, even in "normal" years (Smith, 1976). Certain variants of these soils puddle well enough, however: the water-holding capacity of the Commons' several ponds testifies to this, as does the rapidity with which parts of the footpaths and bridleways turn into quagmires in a wet winter.

1.4. ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Being on the Chiltern Plateau, Naphill and Downley Commons experienced no early prehistoric settlement, although the medieval (or post-medieval) enclosure marked by the earthworks adjoining Lady Horse Pond (see item 5D in Appendix II), may date originally from Romano-British times, as indeed may the pond itself. This settlement is County Archaeological Site (CAS) 1790. A Roman coin was found "in a field near Downley Common" in 1904 (CAS 0619).

The parish boundaries, of course, are important historic features. Naphill Common lies within Hughenden Parish, but Downley Common is in that detached northern part of West Wycombe Parish, and it is this boundary which separates Naphill Common from Downley Common, and from Cookshall Farm and its woodlands (see 1Z, 5A and 5F in Appendix II). The boundary between Hughenden and Bradenham Parishes forms most of Naphill Common's north and north-west border (3L, 3M, 4L - where there are signs of a post-medieval park pale - CAS 2435), though the two features do not entirely coincide here: note, for example, how the parish boundary cuts across at 4E just west of the Clumps towards Bradenham Hill Farm. Indeed, it is this line which the National Trust recognises as the property boundary at this point (see inset to Plan B). Strictly speaking, the Clumps themselves (which possibly mark a post-medieval charcoal-burning site - CAS 4474), should be thought of as lying within "Bradenham Common" (see Section 1.8).

1.5. AMENITY AND ACCESS

Although it does not automatically follow that common land is open to free public access, the West Wycombe Estate has always

²For References, see Appendix VI.

GRID NORTH

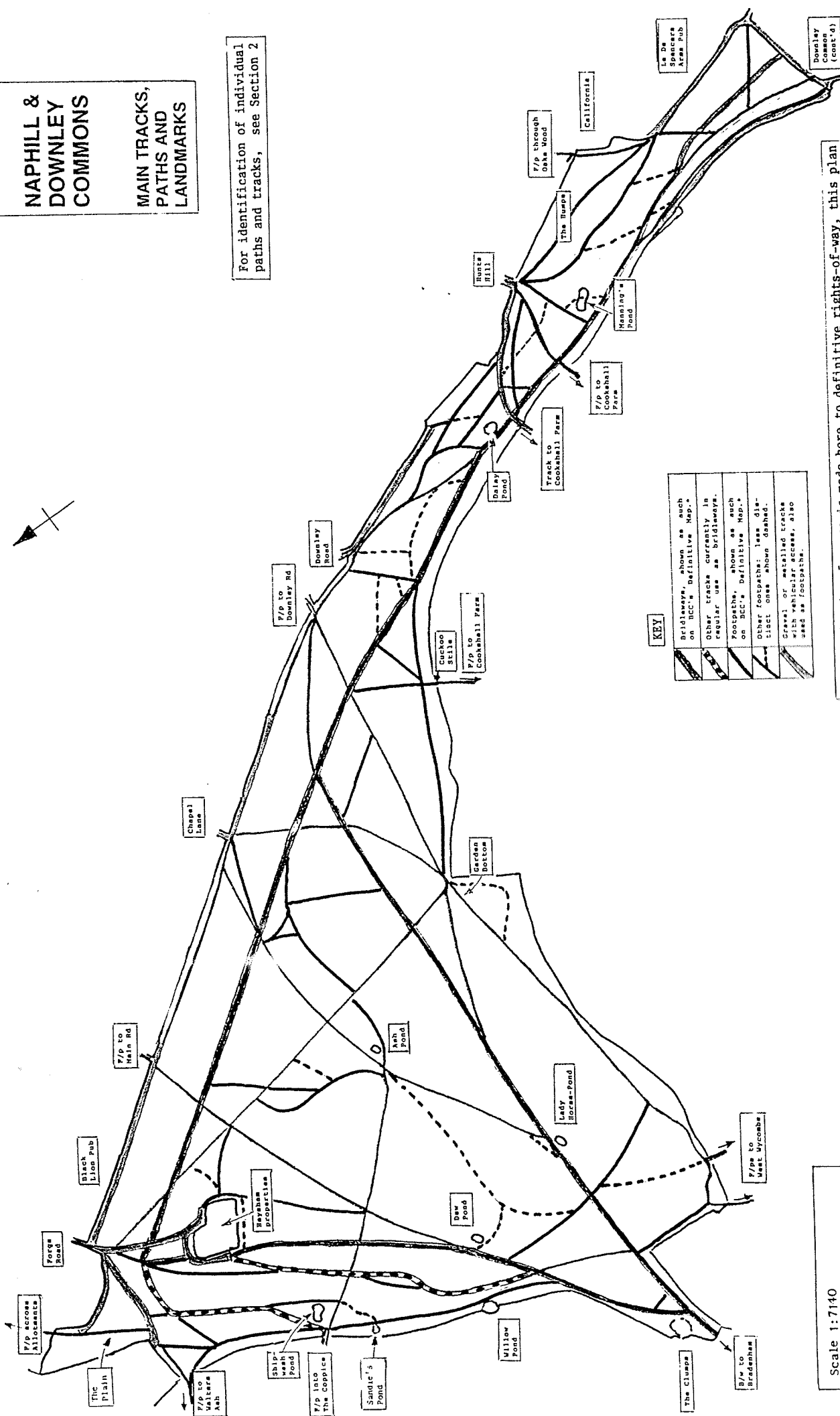


PLAN D

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

MAIN TRACKS, PATHS AND LANDMARKS

For identification of individual
paths and tracks, see Section 2



KEY

	Bridleways, shown as such on BCC's Definitive Map.
	Other tracks currently in regular use as bridleways.
	Footpaths, shown as such on BCC's Definitive Map.
	Other footpaths: less distinct ones shown dashed.
	Gravel or metalled tracks which are footpaths, also used as footpaths.

*NB: Although reference is made here to definitive rights-of-way, this plan is not itself intended to be legally definitive: paths and tracks are shown in good faith as a first approximation, resulting from preliminary map and ground-work, and a major objective of this Management Plan will be to progressively improve and refine the accuracy of the mapping of the network.

Scale 1:7140

Reduced from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

decreed that this apply to Naphill and Downley Commons. The network of footpaths (and bridleways) and local names for so many features (Plan D) are testimony to the part the two commons have played in the recreational life of local people. A walk, or ride, "on the common" was - and still is - one of life's simple pleasures, whatever the weather or time of year, and despite what the dour Massingham (1940) may have said to the contrary. Wilfrid Smith's (1948) haunting account of how things appeared at the turn of the century has already been quoted in the Preface.

In their turn, of course, the common-side householders, whether or not they are registered commoners (Section 1.7), have at their disposal the ultimate communal back garden, and the extent to which these residents should or should not "manage" or "tidy up" their adjoining bit of common is a fundamental element in the recommendations for continuing management.

The network of paths shown on Plan D is, as already noted, based on a combination of existing information on the current 1:2500 OS cover, with modifications prompted by recent field work. This provides the ideal framework for compartmentalising the commons, as will be evident from Section 2. Further refinement to improve the accuracy of this plan will, of course, be of great benefit in any continuing recording and monitoring, and the co-option of a practising orienteer onto one or other of the Commons Committees would be a valuable step!

1.6. ECOLOGICAL INTEREST

1.6.1. Wildlife habitats: succession and change

A first attempt to comprehensively map the wildlife habitats of Naphill and Downley Commons is shown in Plan E. This confirms the obvious fact that the area is now overwhelmingly one of woodland - the result of natural succession as earlier phases of management favouring the maintenance of open greens and wood-pasture have progressively lapsed (Hepple & Doggett, 1994).

This woodland cover varies subtly, of course, from place to place in its species composition, canopy structure and ground flora, according to soil variations and to how long it has been developing. Then there are the ancient spreading oaks and beeches which occur throughout the area, many having been pollarded at some stage, and all in varying states of health. Some are dead, though of no less interest for this.

A number of open areas still occur, as turf- or moss-lined tracks and glades amidst the woodlands proper, or as more extensive grassy areas on their fringes, where knapweed, harebell and even heather may still be found. In some of these situations, however, and especially on Naphill Common, bracken tends to predominate. The ponds add further diversity and interest, and it is a mark of the skill with which the main ones were restored in recent years that there are still such substantial reserves of water this late into so exceptional a summer.

GRID NORTH

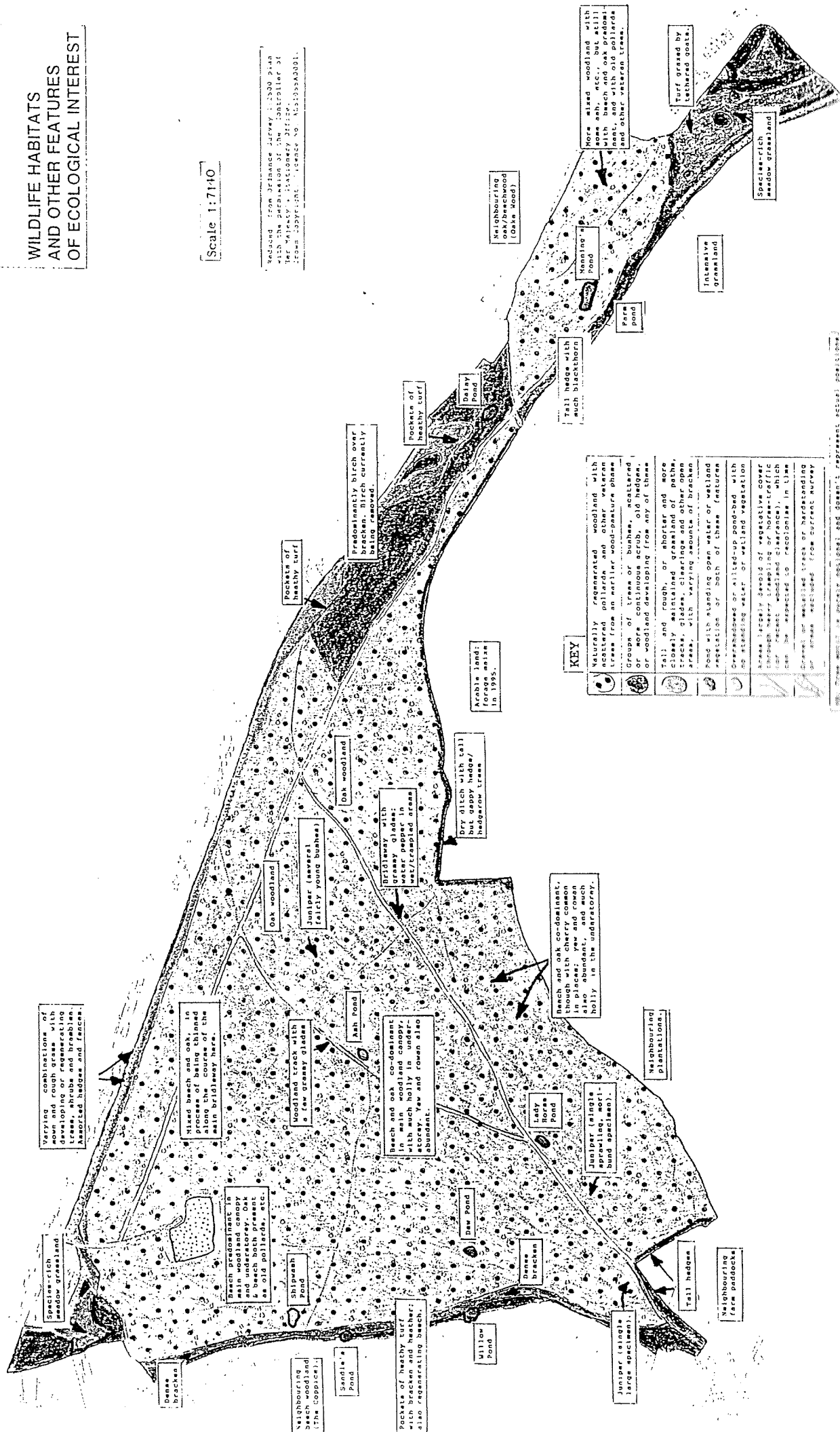
PLAN E

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

WILDLIFE HABITATS AND OTHER FEATURES OF ECOLOGICAL INTEREST

Scale 1:7140

Worked from Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 plan
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KEY

	Naturally regenerated woodland with some ash, etc., but still with beech and oak broadleaved canopy
	Groups of trees or bushes, scattered or more continuous scrub, old hedges, or woodland developing from any of these
	Tall and rough, or shorter and more closely maintained grassland of paths, tracks, glades, clearings and other open areas, with varying amounts of bracken
	Pond with standing open water or wetland vegetation or both of these (nature)
	Overgrown or silted-up pond-bed with no standing water or wetland vegetation
	Areas largely devoid of vegetative cover through heavy trampling or horse-traffic (or recent woodland clearance), which can be expected to recolonise in time
	Gravel or washed track or hardstanding or areas reclaimed from current survey

100. These symbols are purely notional and doesn't represent actual positions.
101. Some habitats are exaggerated in scale slightly for clarity.

In the following sections, these habitats, and their characteristic species, are described in greater detail. Prescriptions for maintaining their well-being are set out in Part 2 of this report, which focuses on management.

1.6.2. Woodlands

Three species reign supreme within the woodland stands of Naphill and Downley Commons: oak, beech and holly. The other main components are birch, rowan, yew and wild cherry, with generally much smaller quantities of other trees and shrubs.

Mixed beech and oakwood predominates throughout much the greater part of the wooded commons, the latter seemingly represented exclusively by common (pedunculate) oak, despite the long-established rumour that sessile oak is also to be found (Ratcliffe, 1977). In parts, especially south of the Heysham complex, beech is the dominant - even the only - species, occurring both in the main canopy and as a densely regenerating understorey. Likewise, pockets of almost pure oakwood prevail in places, particularly along the eastern fringe of Naphill Common. In the main, however, beech and oak tend to be co-dominant, some as splendid high-forest giants. Both occur as pollards, of course, as already noted: these are described in the next section.

Holly is an abundant and at times all-encompassing element in the woodland understorey over the entire extent of both commons. Birch, represented by the common or "warty" silver birch, is an occasional associate of both beech and oak, but in places forms pure stands, typically over dense bracken, best seen along the eastern edge of Naphill Common which has most recently reverted from grassland and heath (and where the odd Scots pine and Norway spruce have also appeared). Rowan and yew also occur throughout the commons, mainly as understorey species, but with the former occasionally reaching the main canopy, and fruiting profusely in 1995. Cherry occurs as a significant tree in more localised pockets, but is more generally prevalent in the south-western part of Naphill Common.

Other trees and shrubs which in fact are quite scarce, at least on Naphill Common, are ash (best seen there along the southern margin), whitebeam, hornbeam and hazel. Even elder, ivy, bramble and briar are surprisingly infrequent. All these, together with field maple, crab apple, hawthorn, blackthorn and honeysuckle, occur more commonly, and in a more uniform mix, in the Downley Common woods, where the occasional sycamore is also to be found.

A striking feature of these woodlands is the fullness of their canopy, which is typically "fully clothed", so to speak, right to ground level. Admittedly, the understorey is often pure holly, but there are many impressive and promising areas of continuing high-forest regeneration, not least of beech, and despite the presence of the accursed grey squirrel. There is also an abundance of both standing and fallen dead and decaying wood - another great ecological asset.

Herbaceous woodland species are represented mainly by grasses, these sometimes occurring as natural lawns, where they are presumably maintained by deer. Typical components are Yorkshire fog, creeping soft-grass, common and creeping bents, wood millet, bearded couch, tufted and wavy hair-grasses, hairy woodrush and remote sedge. Tufted hair-grass and the sedge sometimes mark transitions to damper ground, while common bent and wavy hair-grass are more typical of the drier spots, where "juniper moss", and of course bracken, may also occur. Among the herbs, foxglove typically marks recent openings in the canopy, as does rose-bay willow-herb. Bluebell and wood sorrel are less transient species.

Fungi have been surveyed in the past and both commons appear to be quite rich in species. On this occasion, even the most drought-tolerant had been held in check by the severity of the heat and dryness, though the occasional whiff of stinkhorn fungus was detected, and towards the end of the survey the spectacular sulphur polypore fungus ("chicken-in-the-woods") appeared on two old oaks in contrasting forms. Data from surveys of a few years ago are referred to in Appendix I.

Regarding animal life, muntjac were seen at one or two points, and their slots were plentiful both in pond-side mud and in the dust of the main tracks. Fox-droppings were noted, all full of cherry stones. A dug-out wasp's nest may have been the work of a badger, of which there were other signs too.

Bird activity in the canopy was dominated by the ever-present wood pigeon, but collared dove was also noted (a favoured prey of the resident sparrowhawk), and there was much small-bird activity up above, involving blue-, coal- and long-tailed tits as well as robin, wren, nuthatch and tree-creeper. Blackbirds had at last ceased singing for the season (it seemed at one stage they were set to continue right through August), but were busy feeding among the leaf litter of the woodland floor. A green woodpecker seemed to be following me about at times, and on one hot afternoon its shrill cackles set a tawny owl hooting! An egg-shell of the latter was found at one point, and an adult seen later drinking at Lady Horse Pond.

Woodland butterflies were represented by the ubiquitous speckled wood, but a surprise was purple hairstreak which I had not seen before on either of the commons, even though its caterpillars feed on oak. The one I found was a male, and on its last legs. Some of the denser bracken patches harboured swarms of the small black fly Sepsis fulgens, and also for some reason hoards of bluebottles.

A first attempt to indicate the overall distribution of the main woodland types has been made in Plan E, though this is something which will warrant further attention as the project gets under way. The same goes for allocating stands to National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities, to which further reference is briefly made in Appendix I.

1.6.3. Veteran trees

As already noted, the ancient pollarded beeches and oaks represent the Commons' earlier wood-pasture phase. The occasional birch and wild cherry can sometimes reach huge proportions as well, though these are unlikely to be nearly as old as the oldest beeches or oaks. As well as their obvious historic and aesthetic interests, these old trees can harbour within both the living and dead tissues of their great limbs and trunks all manner of microhabitats and specialist organisms (including the fungi already mentioned), some of which are very rare.

The approximate locations of a number these trees are shown on Plans H-M in Appendix II, though a more detailed cataloguing is seen as a crucial part of this project, to be pursued as a matter of urgency.

1.6.4. Scrub (including hedgerows)

Obviously hedges do not occur within the body of either of the commons, but they do border them in places. A good example is the tall hedge of hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and field maple separating Naphill Common from the paddocks of Bradenham Hill Farm, and it is in this hedge that a single tree of Portugal laurel occurs.

More uneven is the hedgerow skirting the Cookshall Farm land. On Naphill Common, where this feature accompanies the parish boundary ditch and bank, the component shrubs and trees are mainly hazel and holly, with occasional ash, cherry, hawthorn and blackthorn. There is more of the latter where the farm land borders Downley Common. No signs of the old hedgerow hornbeams so characteristic of the parish boundary nearer to Bradenham (see Section 1.8) were noted on either Naphill or Downley Commons.

An assortment of hedges and hedgerow trees marks many of the garden boundaries of the commonside properties at Naphill and Walters Ash.

Scrub as such is well represented by the bushy thickets which have developed along the eastern edge of Naphill Common between Chapel Lane and Downley Road, and beyond towards Hunts Hill, as well as at the far northern end of Naphill Common (the Plain) and parts of Downley Common, for example opposite the Le De Spencer Arms. These stands are dominated by hawthorn, with varying amounts of hazel, willow, blackthorn, gorse, elder and holly, the latter (where represented by female plants) fruiting far more commonly than it does as a woodland understorey component. The proximity of these areas of scrub to neighbouring gardens has resulted in the odd garden escape (or deliberate planting) of species such as buddleia, laburnum, sumach and rhododendron, though mercifully the latter has not spread at all.

Other tracts and pockets of scrub occur as marginal or transitional features associated with the main woodland stands, for example where little-used footpaths have grown over. Here brambles, as well as occasional raspberry - not to mention the

all-pervading bracken - may predominate, and it is in this situation that Naphill Common's isolated and dwindling junipers occur.

Herbaceous species associated specifically with hedges and scrub found during this survey included ground ivy, bush vetch and garlic mustard. The latter, also known as Jack-by-the-hedge, is a key larval foodplant for the orange-tip butterfly.

1.6.5. Grasslands (including bracken)

As already noted, "lawns" of essentially woodland grasses occur in many of the gaps and glades, and along the tracks, in the wooded parts of the commons. Here, too, bracken is usually in evidence, and in places may form pure stands.

More species-rich grasslands akin to meadows or grass-heath are best seen in the more open areas of both commons. The most extensive stands occur on Downley Common, where grazing by horses and goats has been maintained until recent times: indeed, goats are still kept there. A similar area survives as the Plain at the far northern end of Naphill Common, but this has been maintained by occasional mowing.

These pastures contain quite an assortment of grasses, such as cocksfoot, crested dogstail, sweet vernal, meadow foxtail, red fescue, lesser timothy, Yorkshire fog and creeping bent, with herbs such as red and white clovers, bird's-foot trefoil, meadow vetchling, common St John's-wort, lesser knapweed, yarrow, cat's-ear, autumn hawkbit, ragwort and goatsbeard, as well as the semi-parasitic red bartsia.

Where treading is concentrated, as along the tracks, perennial ryegrass and greater plantain are more in evidence, while coarser stands dominated by tall oat-grass, with hogweed, couch and greater bindweed, occupy the fringes. Here more invasive species have also appeared, such as creeping thistle, broad-leaved dock, the inevitable bracken, and even horseradish. Damper spots attract tufted hair-grass and soft rush.

On parts of Naphill Common, remnants of a more heathy type of grassland can be found, marked by wavy hair-grass, heath bedstraw and harebell, and this is where any remaining patches of heather are likely to be found. This community is now mainly confined to the path fringing the Coppice, where the main electricity line runs.

In their turn, the grasslands support a diverse invertebrate fauna. Bumble bees and meadow brown butterflies were feeding at knapweed flowers, and, belying the August heat and dust, a sparkling male common blue on Downley Common could well have recently emerged from a "home-grown" pupa, since the bird's-foot trefoil growing there is its favoured larval food-plant. Many day-flying micro-moths were braving the heat. The taller swards were sizzling and ticking with grasshoppers of at least two species, and a number of spiders and harvestmen were seen.

In fact, all these grassland communities are under threat for one reason or another. Only in a very few areas is deliberate cutting or grazing practised. The loss of botanical diversity through shading is clearly in evidence along many of the paths, and where trampling or horse-traffic is at its heaviest, the sward may be destroyed altogether (see also under wet flushes in the next section).

Ironically, the habit of many householders of mowing their adjoining fringe of common has had the effect of conserving this dwindling resource in some instances, by maintaining a short turf which may be quite rich in flowers. Many a butterfly or bumblebee was seen feeding at catsear and hawkbit flowers during the heat of the day in these little nectar-rich oases. Much depends, of course, on frequency of mowing - and where the grass-box gets emptied!

1.6.6. Ponds and wet flushes

As any regular walker on either of the commons knows, many of the paths, and especially the bridleways, quickly become waterlogged in wet weather, and in the most heavily compacted patches may even develop temporary (and not-so-temporary) wetland communities, with soft rush, water pepper and even water starwort.

The main interest here, however, is in the ponds, and it was truly remarkable when, following the early moves by Downley Common Preservation Society to open up Mannings Pond, the now justly celebrated starfruit reappeared, only to follow in even greater quantities when the exercise was repeated at Daisy Pond. In fact, in 1995, populations are well down again, and the pond vegetation is represented by those much more "ordinary" components such as sweet- or flote-grass, soft rush and duckweed, with occasional lesser spearwort. Nevertheless, the very persistence of these water bodies through such ferocious weather conditions has proved of huge benefit to their inhabitants. It is unfortunate that an unpleasant-looking scummy deposit appeared at times on the surface of all these ponds, but this seems unavoidable.

Animal life in evidence has included the southern hawker and common darter dragonflies and common blue damselfly, as well as frogs and newts. Queueing up for a drink at one time or another were such visitors as muntjac, pheasant and the aforementioned tawny owl, as well as wasps and a comma butterfly, this last perched on a raft of duckweed.

Other old pond sites still occur as shallow dips in shaded hollows filled with accumulated leafy sludge. These may well receive attention in due course, though their wildlife value even as they are should not be underestimated (Biggs et al, 1994).

1.7. DESIGNATIONS AND WAYLEAVES

Naphill and Downley Commons lie within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and in the recently launched Draft Management Plan (EAU Woollerton Truscott, 1994), form part of Valley Landscape Zone V1 (the Saunderton Valley). In that document, Naphill Common is mistakenly assigned to National Trust ownership - a point which will no doubt be corrected in later drafts. Downley Common is scheduled by Wycombe District Council as a Conservation Area. Naphill Common and that part of Downley Common included in this study are catalogued as sites 0970 and 0326, respectively, by the County Environmental Records Centre.

Naphill Common was an early candidate for designation (in 1951) as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949, and it was included, with the adjoining Bradenham Woods, as part of the Nature Conservation Review Site W22 (Ratcliffe, 1977). Following the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, Naphill Common was renotified (in 1984) in its own right, and its revised boundary and citation are shown in Plan F. The exact basis for notification and renotification (see NCC, 1989), has fuelled considerable debate among the Naphill and Downley watchdog groups regarding the appropriateness (or otherwise) of introducing woodland management at all.

In the meantime, English Nature (successor to the Nature Conservancy and NCC) has responded to the Rio directives by promoting Naphill Common as a Prime Biodiversity Site within the Chilterns Natural Area (English Nature, 1993), while under European legislation the site is now recognised as a Special Area for Conservation (SAC).

Downley Common Preservation Society has an ongoing agreement with the West Wycombe Estate to undertake work (for example pond and grassland maintenance and scrub clearance) on Downley Common as a whole. Management agreements between the Estate and both the Forestry Authority and English Nature covering the woodlands as well as broader interests of the Commons have been inaugurated during the past year (prompting in turn, as already explained, the commissioning of this Report): all these are summarised in Appendix III, and considered in more detail in Section 2.

Naphill and Downley Commons are registered commonland, and their respective commoners enjoy rights of estovers, grazing and firebote (Hoskins & Stamp, 1963). There are rights of vehicular access to some, though not all, commonside properties. Certain aspects warrant clarification, such as the exact status of the "dry weather" tracks between Cookshall ("Wheeler's") Lane and both Hunts Hill and Downley Road.

Public (and permissive) rights-of-way are indicated in Plan C, though this is not to be regarded as definitive in itself - merely a guide to the existing situation which includes a few anomalies. This topic is returned to, particularly with regard to the bridleways, in Section 2.4.8.

COUNTY: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SITE NAME: NAPHILL COMMON

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authorities: Wycombe District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council

National Grid Reference: SU 840972

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 165

1:10,000: SU 89 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1951

Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988

Date of Last Revision:

Area: 71.1 ha 175.7 ac

Other information: Described in "A Nature Conservation Review" (site W.22). Formerly part of Bradenham Woods SSSI, now notified separately. The site is within the Chilterns AONB. It is a registered common with commoner's rights of estovers, grazing and firebote.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The structure and composition of this oak-beech woodland are believed to be more natural in character than any other Chiltern woodland. Unlike most Chiltern woods, the number of tree and shrub species is large. There is a scattering of old pollards, a mixed canopy and an extensive and varied understorey. There are patches of acid heathland in the more open areas of the common and diversity is further increased by wet rides and ponds. In the 1890's most of the site was open woodland pasture with gorse scrub and juniper 4.5-6m high.

The site is situated on the clayey soils of the Batcombe series and lies on an acid plateau which falls away to the west into a chalk escarpment.

The woodland contains many large ancient oak and beech pollards, survivors from the period when the common was more open and grazed by stock. The pollards are surrounded by younger woodland which originated with the cessation of grazing at the beginning of this century. In places oak dominates the stand, often in the absence of beech. The site includes some sessile oak, a tree with a very limited distribution in Buckinghamshire. Elsewhere, birch and wild cherry are locally abundant with frequent rowan and occasional whitebeam, crab apple and ash. The understorey contains much holly, including some large specimens, while hawthorn and hazel are less common and yew, field maple and blackthorn occur locally on the southern margin. The ground flora contains a number of species which are typically associated with ancient woodland; most noteworthy being the rare wood barley (*Hordeolymus europaeus*). Other species include enchanter's nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), pignut (*Conopodium majus*), wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), remote sedge (*Carex remota*), hairy wood rush (*Luzula pilosa*) and the grasses 'wood melick' (*Malica uniflora*), wood millet (*Milium effusum*) and giant fescue (*Festuca gigantea*). The absence of many other species typical of ancient woodland in the Chilterns is presumed to reflect the history of grazing followed by natural succession to dense woodland.

The woodland has a very unusual structure and composition because there has been little or no silvicultural management since the cessation of grazing. The site is therefore of value to woodland ecologists as a control in which the fate of native tree species, and the associated flora and fauna, can be monitored and compared with more managed stands.

Little of the once extensive heathland remains, but in scattered clearings many characteristic species which are now uncommon in the county still persist. These include heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), pill sedge (*Carex pilulifera*) and wavy hair grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*).

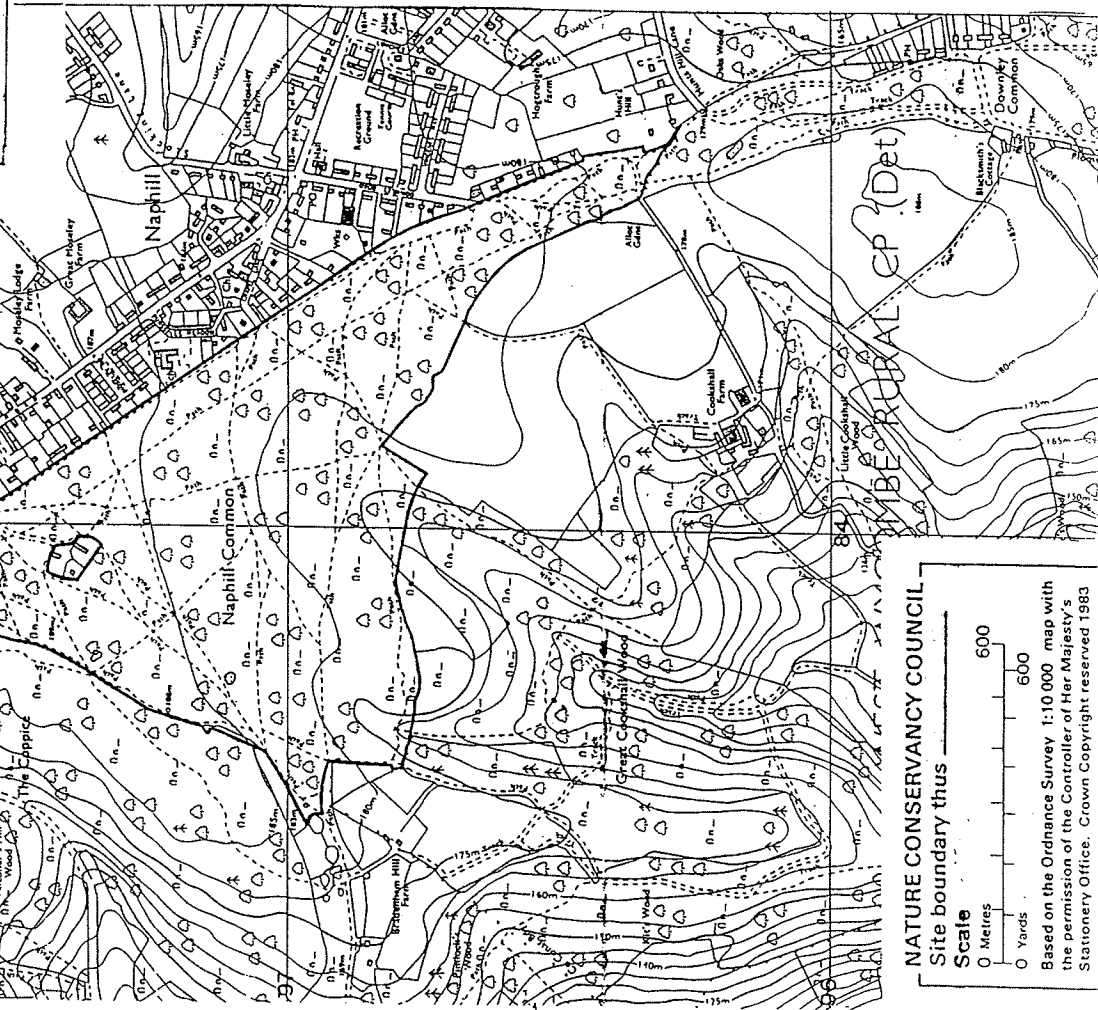
Further diversity of habitat is provided by wet rides which support water starwort (*Callitriche stagnalis*), water-pepper (*Polygonum hydropiper*) and marsh cudweed (*Gnaphalium uliginosum*), and ponds containing floating sweet grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), lesser spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) and a population of smooth newt (*Triturus vulgaris*).

Large ancient and decaying pollards are important habitats for a range of invertebrates and epiphytic lichens.

PLAN F

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

SSSI MAP AND CITATION



NATURE CONSERVANCY COUNCIL

Site boundary thus

Scale

0 Metres 600

0 Yards 600

Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright reserved 1983

Overhead powerlines of (?)11kV serving Cookshall and Bradenham Hill Farms cross Naphill Common, and have obvious relevance to woodland management. Other services include both overhead and underground power supplies of lower voltage, and, skirting Naphill Common, piped water and sewerage facilities. The Estate will have details of these services and wayleaves.

1.8. NEIGHBOURING LAND

Neighbouring land of complementary ecological interest includes other parts of the West Wycombe Estate, as well as property in different ownership. Other Estate land includes:

(1) the remaining part of Downley Common immediately to the south of the study area;

(2) Cookshall Farm land adjoining Naphill and Downley Commons, primarily with regard to the hedges, but including also the small pond catalogued as item 6Z in Appendix II, and

(3) Plantation land incorporating the old Kibbo Kift field³, now part of the Estate Shoot, but including some ancient hazel coppice - a habitat absent from either of the commons.

Neighbouring land in other ownership includes:

(4) Pickup's Pond and Vincents Farm Meadows, an open space leading off from the end of Downley Road where this joins Naphill Common, and owned by Hughenden Parish Council;

(5) Oaks Wood, privately owned woodland immediately east of Hunts Hill, which in turn borders the National Trust's Hughenden Estate, and

(6) the National Trust's Bradenham Estate, which includes not only the beech woodland of the Coppice (part of Bradenham Woods SSSI) and the land of Bradenham Hill Farm, both of which have already received mention, but an important additional wedge of Naphill Common (perhaps strictly "Bradenham Common" - see Section 1.4), extending down towards Bradenham Manor. As already noted (see Plan B), there is some uncertainty about the correct boundary at this latter location.

³According to my father, this was the name of a left-wing "alternative scouts" group which used to camp here in the 1930s.

PART 2

NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS
AND
PRESCRIPTIONS

2.1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1.1. Overall aims

The overall aims for the continuing management of Naphill and Downley Commons relate to (1) forestry, (2) landscape, (3) ecology, (4) access and (5) co-ordination of effort, and can be expressed more explicitly as follows:

- (1) To undertake such silvicultural management of the main woodland areas as to promote their continuing spontaneous development, taking full advantage of their capacity for natural regeneration, extracting any timber strictly on a traditional and sustainable basis, and leaving selected areas undisturbed.
- (2) To safeguard the attractive appearance of the landscape, bearing in mind its inclusion in the Chiltern Hills AONB, taking steps to protect those features of known historic interest and to restore to their former more open character those parts of the commons most recently invaded by scrub.
- (3) To promote optimum biodiversity throughout the property by appropriate management of all its wildlife habitats, with special attention to the needs of individual plant and animal species of particular significance, connected, for example, with Naphill Common's status as an SSSI.
- (4) To cater for the continuing use of the commons as an amenity for informal countryside recreation and environmental education, particularly by local inhabitants, and to encourage their taking an active and informed interest in all aspects of management.
- (5) To regard all of these proposals as part of an overall strategy, to be implemented, maintained and monitored as set out in this guiding Management Plan, which in turn should be reviewed at intervals and where necessary revised or updated - all this to be achieved by regular liaison among interested parties via the respective committees and their associated networks.

2.1.2. Specific objectives

The five main aims outlined above can each be addressed through a series of specific objectives. Twenty-five such objectives are proposed here, of which 1-5 relate to forestry and woodland management, 6-8 to landscape and historic interests, 9-15 to ecology and wildlife management, 16-20 to amenity matters, and 21-25 to co-ordination, liaison and recording. Inevitably these categories overlap and interact to some degree, but the system

nevertheless provides a useful foundation both for day-to-day management, and for the formulation of individual projects. The objectives are as follows.

Objective 1. Maintain the native broadleaved woodland cover over the Commons as a whole by traditional, non-intensive silvicultural methods (and including non-intervention areas), according to the spirit of the management agreements already in place (see Appendix III), which in turn reflect the SSSI status of Naphill Common. ✓

Objective 2. Encourage a diverse age range and canopy structure within the woodland by retaining a proportion of trees beyond maturity, and relying on natural regeneration for the recruitment of new stock. ✓

Objective 3. Control invasive or potentially damaging woodland plants and animals, notably sycamore, holly (where this is a problem) and grey squirrel. ✓

Objective 4. Protect and maintain the veteran pollards and other ancient or otherwise significant trees, and initiate pollarding anew to ensure a continuity of individuals. ✓

Objective 5. Fine-tune woodland management so as to favour microhabitats and/or plant and animal species of particular significance. ✓

Objective 6. Have an eye for the well-being of the overall landscape of the commons, avoiding or modifying wherever possible any operations which are likely to be visually intrusive. ✓

Objective 7. Safeguard known locations of archaeological or historic interest on the commons, and always be on the lookout for previously undiscovered features or artefacts. ✓

Objective 8. Endeavour to restore those areas of the commons known to have been of a more open character during recent historic times. ✓ Defend an area.

Objective 9. Maintain or encourage scrub either as a habitat in its own right, or to complement adjoining habitats such as woodland and grassland where this does not conflict with other interests. ✓ agree areas.
see 3411 (clash)

Objective 10. Continue to manage the farm hedges bordering the commons in a manner inkeeping with their ecological and historic interest, rehabilitating these as necessary by coppicing and/or laying, and adopting an appropriate field-margin strategy to facilitate the continuing maintenance of this regime. ✓ clarify where hedge is not required with farmers.

Objective 11. Maintain existing grassland and heathland habitats by a suitable combination of cutting and grazing, and encourage their extension by clearance and control of invasive bracken, birch and unwanted scrub (see also Objective 8). ✓ Geof. - Parkland as priority

Objective 12. Continue to maintain, and where appropriate to reclaim, the ponds and other wetland features of the commons. ✓

NCL
Wages
Sundries
✓ Objective 13. Investigate and provide for the specific needs of particular plants and animals where this is likely to complement and enhance efforts at habitat manipulation; follow strict codes of practice where the deliberate re-introduction of plant or invertebrate species is contemplated.

✓ Objective 14. Consider more ambitious moves to restore or enhance ecological diversity on the commons, including the possible use of grazing cattle and the reintroduction of selected plants and invertebrates.

✓ Objective 15. Take into account the desirability of co-operating with neighbouring owners regarding the sympathetic management of adjoining land.

✓ Objective 16. Maintain the existing network of definitive and permissive paths, and of definitive bridleways, ensuring these are free from obstruction, and appropriately surfaced and waymarked.

✓ Objective 17. Ensure that due care is taken to warn the public of any hazardous work in progress, particularly regarding forestry operations.

✓ Objective 18. Consolidate existing measures to control vehicular access to the commons without jeopardising the genuine needs of local residents.

✓ Objective 19. Clarify and maintain a code of practice regarding the rights and responsibilities of registered commoners and other residents, particularly concerning management of commonside land.

✓ Objective 20. Strive to minimise the leaving of litter, garden refuse and other rubbish on the commons.

✓ Objective 21. Honour all statutory obligations regarding the registered commonland and SSSI status of the property, planning legislation, rights-of-way and existing wayleaves. - permitted paths

✓ Objective 22. Retain the current mechanism for comprehensive liaison and consultation between interested parties over the continuing management of the commons.

✓ Objective 23. Adhere to such aspects of this Management Plan as are adopted, with the proviso that certain elements may come up for review according to the nature of the work involved, and the degree of progress made. - i.e. Do what you intend to do unless you intend to do otherwise

✓ Objective 24. Keep comprehensive photographic and biological records of the property, extend and consolidate the ecological survey, and monitor the effects of specific management recommendations and projects.

✓ Objective 25. Aim to undertake a full environmental audit towards the end of the ten-year period covered by this Plan, in anticipation of the formulation of continuing and longer-term proposals.

Some of these objectives are already being at least partially met, implicitly if not explicitly, and will - or should - automatically form a part of any continuing management: examples are 6, 7, 16, 18, 19, 20 and 21. Others have come up, again in a generally rather vague and ad hoc sort of way, during the recent developments on the commons in which the ponds were cleared out and the woodland work inaugurated: here, examples are 1, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 17 and 22. Others again (2, 3, 9, 10, 14, 15 and 23-25) represent topics which have only recently been given more than passing attention. Even now the list may not be wholly comprehensive, but 25 objectives are more than enough for the average mortal to take on board, and they do seem to provide for all eventualities!

2.2. A FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

2.2.1. Compartmentalisation of Naphill and Downley Commons

Suggestions for continuing management are made in the next section, following once again the sequence of subject areas first proposed in Section 2.1.1 under the heading of overall aims. Firstly, however, we need to take a closer look at the exact layout of Naphill and Downley Commons, at how they might conveniently be parcelled up, or compartmentalised, for management purposes, and at the main features of significance in each compartment in greatest need of attention.

The area concerned has, in fact, already been skilfully divided into six compartments of more-or-less equal area by Stephen Smith of Tillhill Economic Forestry (TEF), as part of the Woodland Plan (see Section 2.4.2). These compartments are readily identifiable on the ground, and it would be pointless and confusing to do other than adopt the TEF layout for this more comprehensive plan, and this I have done in Plan G. I am suggesting, moreover, that these compartments are named, and that Cpt 1 is called Naphill Common East, Cpt 2 Naphill Common Central, Cpt 3 Naphill Common North, Cpt 4 Naphill Common West, Cpt 5 Naphill Common South, and Cpt 6 Downley Common North. Authors of future amendments to this document may prefer to substitute more colourful or romantic names, but for the moment I am sticking to this safe - if functional - scheme.

A more detailed description of these compartments has made it necessary to take a closer look at their exact boundaries, and for this purpose it has been useful to take pains to trace, identify and map the complete network of footpaths, bridleways and other tracks shown in outline on Plan D. Thus, definitive footpaths and bridleways (DFPs and DBWs) are identified by their parish numbers (e.g. footpath 21, bridleway 84), non-definitive paths and tracks by a three digit figure of which the first is the compartment number, e.g. path 102 in Cpt I, which continues into Cpt 3 as 302. The layout and juxtaposition of these paths and tracks is shown, compartment by compartment, in Appendix II.

PLAN G

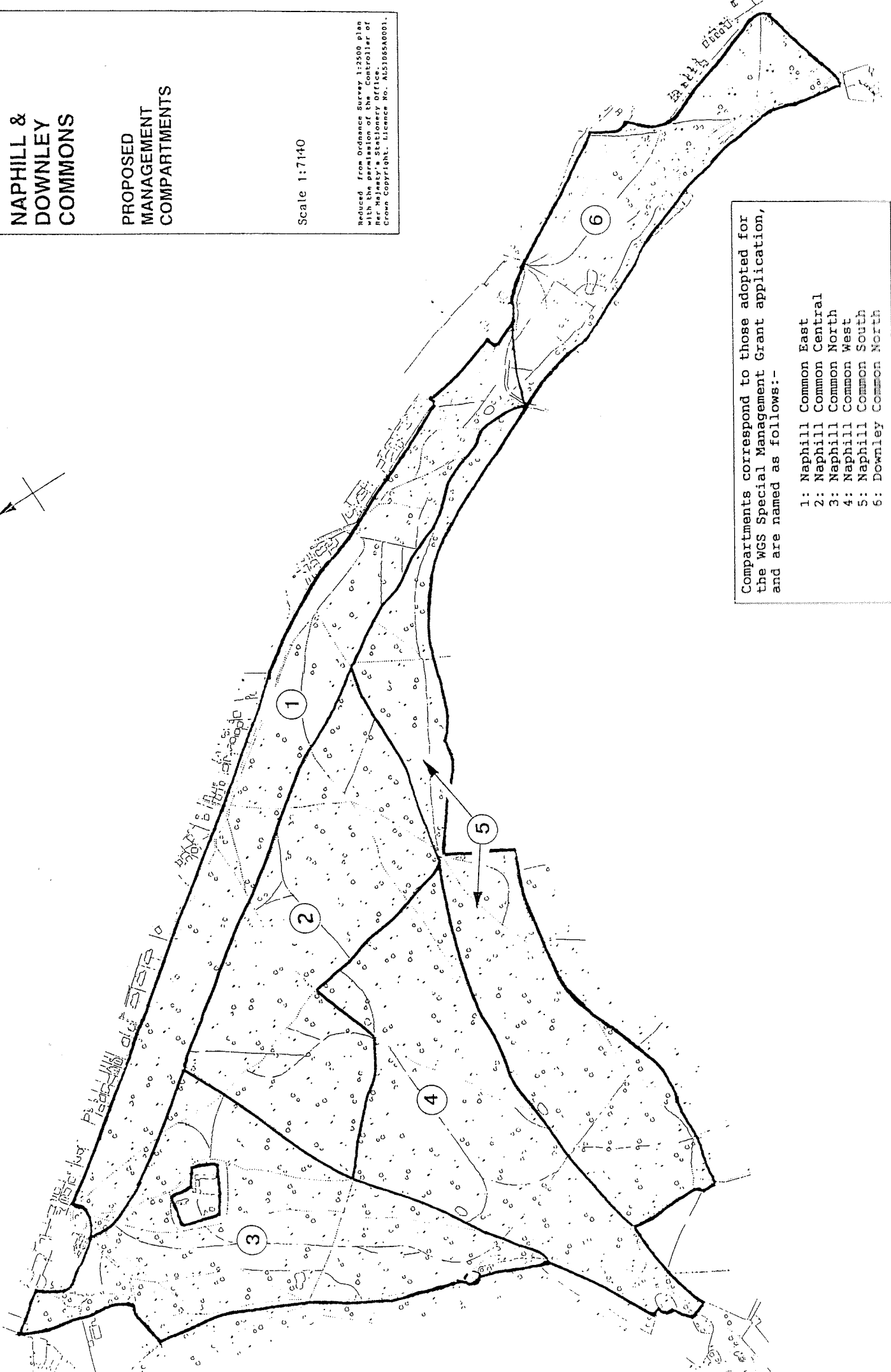
NAPHILL &
DOWNLEY
COMMONS

PROPOSED
MANAGEMENT
COMPARTMENTS

Scale 1:7140

Reduced from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan
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GRID N



Compartments correspond to those adopted for
the WGS Special Management Grant application,
and are named as follows:-

- 1: Naphill Common East
- 2: Naphill Common Central
- 3: Naphill Common North
- 4: Naphill Common West
- 5: Naphill Common South
- 6: Downley Common North

2.2.2. Locating and identifying features of significance

The next step was to locate and identify individual features of key significance to the management of the commons, and for this purpose each compartment has been divided into three, four or five subcompartments, as shown on a slightly larger scale in Plans H, I, J, K, L and M (see Appendix II). Each feature is pinpointed by a code made up of the compartment number followed by a letter. For example, in Sub-Cpt 1/2, the section of bridleway 84 being opened out under the Woodland Plan is shown as 1D, and the timber-storage area near Forge Road as 1F; the juniper in Sub-Cpt 4/3 is 4J; Manning's Pond in Sub-Cpt 6/1 is identified as 6C, and so on. The system is slightly modified for veteran trees, which are all given the letter V, but followed by a number corresponding to the individual tree: thus, the great beech pollard in Sub-Cpt 4/1 by bridleway 85 where this climbs westwards out of Garden Bottom is 4V1, the fungus-bearing oak near the junction of bridelways 84 and 85 in Sub-Cpt 2/4 is 2V3.

A complete catalogue of features identified during the preliminary phase of this survey is included in Appendix II, which also contains additional information about each item, and its place in the management plan. Reference to any of the Plans H to M will show that by no means all features have been catalogued as yet: time simply did not permit this. However, this is all seen as a crucial early project for the Naphill and Downley Commons' recording teams, and my system has the advantage that it can be expanded on indefinitely.

2.3. WORK IN PROGRESS OR ALREADY COMPLETED

Low-key path and habitat maintenance work by DCPS has long been in progress on Downley Common, as already noted. But it was the initiation of larger-scale operations by the Estate to clear out ponds and tackle some of the woodlands which triggered the commissioning of this more comprehensive report. The pond work was, in fact, a truly heroic undertaking on the part of the Estate, and whatever concern there may have been at the time about the wider ecological implications, there is no doubt that the whole operation was a huge success.

The woodland work has been inaugurated more recently. Reference has been made several times to the "Woodland Plan": this has been drawn up by TEF on behalf of the West Wycombe Estate under the auspices of the Forestry Authority, who are grant-aiding it under the terms of the Special Management option of their Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS), which targets woodland of particular environmental sensitivity. This WGS Plan encompasses the whole of the area of Naphill and Downley Commons included in this report. Other initiatives (on Naphill Common SSSI only) form part of a separate agreement between the Estate and English Nature, hereafter referred to as the EN Plan. The crucial point about both schemes, which are explained in Appendix III, is that they not only favour environmentally sympathetic silvicultural management of the woodlands themselves, but cater also for the accompanying non-woodland habitats.

Three categories of work are under way under the WGS Plan:

(1) thinning and clearing trees, shrubs and undergrowth growing up along the course of formerly quite wide, grassy tracks, which in the meantime have come to be used, and recognised legally, as bridleways;

(2) clearing back similar secondary growth from around key pollards and other ancient trees; and

(3) clearing birch where this has invaded previously more grassy or heathy areas.

The EN agreement adds certain safeguards to these proposals where the SSSI status of Naphill Common is concerned, as well as providing for further measures affecting other communities and species.

All these operations are referred to in more detail in the following sections which deal with continuing management, habitat by habitat.

2.4. CONTINUING MANAGEMENT: OPTIONS AND PRIORITIES

2.4.1. Further survey work

Obviously, the survey work undertaken as a preliminary to this current report barely scratched at the surface of what needs to be done. A much more intensive assessment of the flora and fauna (and not least of the veteran trees) of the Commons is needed, although there should be no difficulties over this, bearing in mind the expertise and enthusiasm of the two Commons groups. The framework laid down in this report should facilitate the organisation and collation of additional field data. It should also have demonstrated the value of photographic records, especially for monitoring the outcome of specific operations.

These aspects, which reflect Objectives 24 and 25, are seen as a crucial basis for all aspects of continuing management, and are proposed as Project I in the recommendations which conclude this report.

2.4.2. Woodland management

The WGS Plan is now well under way, as already noted, though so far operations have been concentrated on maintaining ancillary interests (explained in Section 2.3 and all dealt with in more detail under their own separate headings in the sections which follow), rather than undertaking forestry operations for their own sake. What of woodland management in itself, and Objectives 1 - 3 which take account of this?

Three scenarios can be envisaged within the constraints of traditional broadleaved silviculture: firstly, rehabilitation of the woodland stands on the commons so as to encourage good quality stock of native hardwoods which would be highly

marketable; secondly, a policy of complete non-intervention, allowing nature to take its course and for a completely natural woodland ecosystem to continue to develop for wildlife, amenity and ecological study; and, thirdly, an approach mid-way between these two extremes.

The first of these is untenable: Naphill Common's SSSI status precludes such an intensity of management, and this leaves the non-SSSI area of Downley Common as too small a unit to be viable in itself. The third has an attractive ring about it, and personally I would like to see quite a substantial part of Naphill Common left absolutely intact - certainly within Sub-Cpt 4/2, for example.

This leaves the third option for the remaining areas, where a gentle management regime could harvest the odd oak, beech, cherry or yew of marketable quality, free off some of the more promising trees from competition within the canopy as a future timber resource, and thin dense and spindly stands of naturally regenerating beech to encourage some good followers. The control of holly and of the grey squirrel would be essential elements in such management, the latter measure benefitting neighbouring woodlands as well.

I recommend that this matter be considered further, as Project II, by the interested parties, as and when the woodland compartments have been surveyed, both ecologically and silviculturally, in more detail. English Nature will need to clarify the precise significance of the SSSI designation in this context.

2.4.3. Veteran trees

There are six main facets to the conservation of pollards and other veteran trees: (1) definition, (2) location, (3) release from competition or overshadowing, (4) arboricultural aspects, (5) follow-up and (6) the selection of a new generation of veterans-to-be.

Firstly definition: not all veteran trees are necessarily pollards. Some may simply be large old maiden or high-forest trees. All, nonetheless, are likely to be of great historic, ecological and aesthetic interest. Regarding location, it will be of huge benefit to get all the key trees mapped on the basis suggested in the pilot exercise carried out as a preliminary to this report.

As already recognised in the initial WGS work, many veterans are in danger of being "lost" in the secondary woodland canopy, and need to be freed from competition. Bear in mind, however, that old trees may actually benefit from shelter from strong winds in these situations.

While some trees are healthy and stable (or dead and stable, including those lying down!), others may have unstable branches or indeed whole crowns, or be about to fall in their entirety, and this is where the arboriculturalist comes in. Apart from the

desire to maintain as many of these trees in the living state as possible, public access to the commons brings with it responsibility for people's safety. Pollarding and associated tree-surgery involves dangerous and highly skilled work, which will have to be planned and budgeted for. The same applies to follow-up work, for we know now (see Read, 1991) that pollarding needs to be done in carefully separated stages, not just in one blitz, and any tree receiving treatment has to be regarded as a patient under convalescence until it is seen to be fully recovered.

All these aspects address Objective 4, and come into Project III.

2.4.4. Scrub and hedgerows

Scrub is an important habitat in its own right, and not particularly abundant on the two commons. Consisting mainly of hawthorn, with smaller amounts of blackthorn, hazel and holly, it occurs, as noted in Section 1, "mainly on the Plain" (Cpt 3/1), along the eastern edge of Naphill Common near Downley Road (Cpt 1/5 - where occasional gorse is another component), and at the southern end of Downley Common (Cpt 6/3). Although technically a scrub species, the few locations on Naphill Common for juniper are all within woodland understorey situations rather than scrub as such.

It is easy to take it for granted that scrub will look after itself, but to maintain it in peak condition as an ecological resource, it does need to be coppiced in order to prevent it simply growing on into pioneer woodland. With our concern for juniper always uppermost, it is easy to overlook the importance of gorse, which has also declined considerably in the Chilterns. Objective 9 recognises these facts, and proposals for possible scrub management are included in Project IV.

Hedges are another important feature, and border the Cookshall Farm land along the outer edges of Cpts 5 and 6, as well as the paddocks of Bradenham Hill Farm where these adjoin Cpts 4 and 5. Both tracts of hedge include tall and well-grown stretches, which would benefit from laying (some seems to have been partially laid at Bradenham Hill Farm), but the Cookshall Farm hedge running north and west from "Wheeler's Lane" past the Cuckoo Stile is much in need of attention, and ought to be coppiced and gapped up.

These needs are recognised in Objective 10, as is the desirability of combining any such farm hedge work with enlightened field-margin management, as recommended by FWAG (1991). Suggestions for some initiatives along these lines are contained in Project V.

2.4.5. Grassland and heath

The best areas of grassland on Naphill and Downley Commons tend to correspond with the areas of scrub mentioned in the previous section. Indeed, one of the disadvantages of scrub is that it

readily invades and shades out grassland swards, so its control is of paramount importance to the conservation of species-rich turf, as, of course, is the containment of bracken. The same goes for heather and the heathland habitat it represents, with the long ride along the western edge of Cpts 3 and 4 of Naphill Common marking the best location for this habitat. Clearing the birch from Sub-Cpt 1/5 as part of the WGS plan is being done with the reclamation of heathy habitat in mind.

Grazing by goats on Downley Common, and mowing on parts of Naphill Common, have been helping to maintain some of the better mosaics of grassland. Areas grazed more intermittently develop an interest of their own, and are especially good for insects, but again it can be a short step to invasion by coarser grasses and herbs, before scrub makes its inevitable entrance.

Foot- and to some extent horse-traffic along paths and bridleways can help maintain grassland, and indeed this, too, is one of the main aims of the bridleway widening initiated as part of the WGS Plan, though here trampling and poaching can quickly destroy the turf, or at least reduce its botanical interest: as already noted, the wettest areas are sometimes taken over by water pepper.

Grassland management comes within the domain of Objective 11, and is considered on this relatively modest scale as part of Project VI. More ambitious ideas for the reclamation of grass and heathland habitats are taken up in Part 3.

2.4.6. The ponds

It was the excitement surrounding the re-appearance of starfruit at Manning's Pond on Downley Common which spurred the Estate to initiate the larger-scale clearance and reinstatement of three of Naphill Common's ponds: Daisy Pond, Lady Horse-Pond and Dew Pond, in Cpts 1, 5 and 4, respectively, and as already noted several times, this proved spectacularly successful. The two ponds along the border between Cpt 3 and the Coppice (Willow Pond and "Sandie's Pond"⁴), as yet unmanaged, retain their water and their modest ecological interest. Others (notably Ash and Shipwash Ponds, also in Cpt 3, remain as overshadowed, dry and silted-up dells.

Objective 12 covers ponds, and work envisaged (as part of Project VII) will be to watch over the ones which either have been cleared or are regarded as not needing it, and to initiate further reinstatement work, though bearing in mind that even the most temporary of ponds can harbour their own suite of species, and that interference in the interest of so-called ecological management is not necessarily a good thing (Biggs et al, 1994; Hine, 1994).

⁴In view of the apparent absence of any existing name for this pond, I have named it after my eldest daughter, who spent much time in its vicinity and on one memorable occasion fell in!

Although outside the remit of this report, attention is drawn to the small farm pond on the Cookshall Farm side of the hedge skirting Downley Common's Sub-Cpt 6/1 (feature 6Z in the catalogue). This has growing in it an abundance of floating pondweed, and among the usual common duckweed is the much rarer large-leaved species. The pond has been poached by cattle (possibly not necessarily a bad thing), and has held its water through day after day of blazing heat and sun, but it has become very enclosed by the hedge and adjoining scrub, and may (or may not!) warrant some attention.

2.4.7. The conservation of individual species

Ideally, the conservation of an individual species is automatically taken care of by attention to its habitat, as specified, for example, in Objectives 5, 11 and 12. However, in certain cases it is worth taking additional measures to find out more about the ecology of a particular plant or animal (Objective 13), so as to increase the chances of its survival and spread. Such is the case with juniper and starfruit, and Project VIII has been devised with these (and others) in mind.

The introduction (or re-introduction) of species not currently known to be present represents a bolder and potentially more controversial move, and is considered separately in Part 3.

2.4.8. Footpaths and bridleways

Until now, the footpath and bridleway network on the commons has essentially looked after itself, with the Chiltern Society waymarking the footpaths with their neat white arrows, and the County Council assisting with the installation of stiles and guide-posts.

A number of practical problems have arisen with the introduction of the definitive bridleways, however, and these include (1) the need to improve the surface of certain stretches prone to waterlogging and poaching (and to deter people from dumping hardcore which can pose a serious hazard to horses and riders), (2) the correction of erroneous sign-posting at the north end of Cpt 1, and (3) the resolution of the mix-up surrounding the correct route for Bridleway 18 running the length of Cpts 3 and 4 on Naphill Common.

Inevitably there are pressures from riding interests to extend the bridleway system on Naphill Common, for example by linking up the main triangle of routes to the National Trust's network in the Coppice, and to road access points as at Hunts Hill, Downley Road and Chapel Lane. Such moves should be resisted, however, for a substantial increase in equestrian traffic would inevitably follow, and could only adversely affect both the ecology of the common, and the provision for walkers.

All these points are covered by Objective 16, and Project IX is proposed to deal with them.

2.5. IDEAS INTO ACTION

2.5.1. Management projects

The projects referred to in the foregoing sections represent an honest attempt to turn ideals into reality. They stand or fall on the strength of their practicability, and this in turn rests on the availability of human, technical and financial resources, and of spreading operations over a period of time so as not to make too great a demand on any of these resources at any one moment.

The suggested work programme is summarised diagrammatically in Plan P. More details, including logistics and possible timing, are contained in Appendix IV. Note that this scheme includes three further major projects (Projects X, XI and XII), covering more ambitious aspects. These are briefly mentioned in Section 2.5.3 below, and elaborated on in a more detailed feasibility study in Part 3.

2.5.2. Getting things done

There are limits to what can be achieved by volunteers, and we have all learned the hard way how this form of help and involvement can soon dry up where overambitious projects are initiated based on enthusiasm alone. Although there will certainly continue to be a substantial voluntary input into these proposals for Naphill and Downley Commons, this will have to be on the basis of co-ordination, recording and fine-tuning of operations which must be primarily carried out by the Estate or its contractees.

By the same token, any continuing work will need to be supported by adequate funds. For the earlier initiatives, grant-aid has been forthcoming from the Forestry Authority and English Nature (with this project supported in turn by Rural Action and Wycombe District Council). It is to be fervently hoped that such provision will continue to be available from or through central government or local authorities. However, the whole structure of environmental grants, which has become very complex, is currently under review (MAFF, 1995), and it remains a matter of speculation as to how things will continue post-1996.

2.5.3. More ambitious projects

Three areas of management involve an altogether more innovative approach to conservation on Naphill and Downley Commons. These have been identified in Plan P as (1) taking more elaborate steps to push back the woodland boundaries in the interest of grassland and heathland habitats, including the possible use of cattle (Project X); (2) the deliberate re-introduction of plant and/or animal species known (or likely) to have occurred in earlier times on either of the commons, or at least in the general area (Project XI); and (3) the possibility of employing a countryside warden or ranger to oversee the continuing application of these

PLAN P

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

MANAGEMENT PROJECTS 1997-2007

FOR MORE DETAILS AND POSSIBLE TIMING, SEE APPENDIX IV.



Objectives 24, 25.

I. CONTINUING SURVEY

Further biological recording, ecological survey and monitoring, including fixed-point photography; environmental audits.



Objectives 1, 2, 3, 5.

II. WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

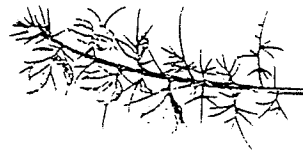
Promote and safeguard naturally regenerating woodland; include provision for non-interference or "wilderness" study areas.



Objective 10.

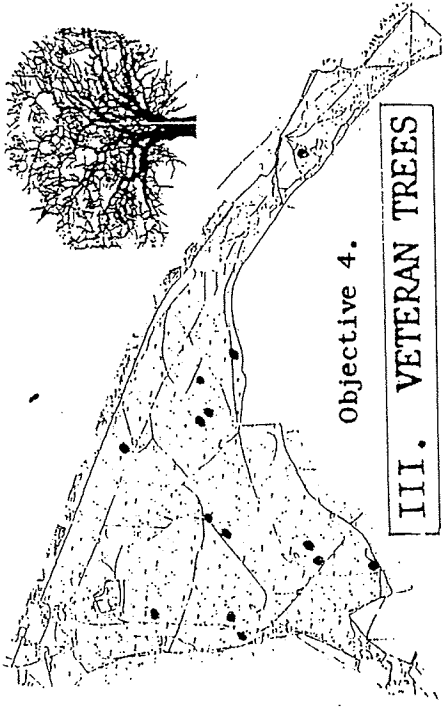
V. HEDGES

Rehabilitate and maintain, by coppicing and/or laying as necessary, hedges which border farm land.



Objective 9.

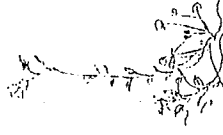
IV. SCRUB



Objective 4.

III. VETERAN TREES

Locate, map, assess, tend and protect all pollards and other veteran trees; inaugurate new cycle of pollarding.

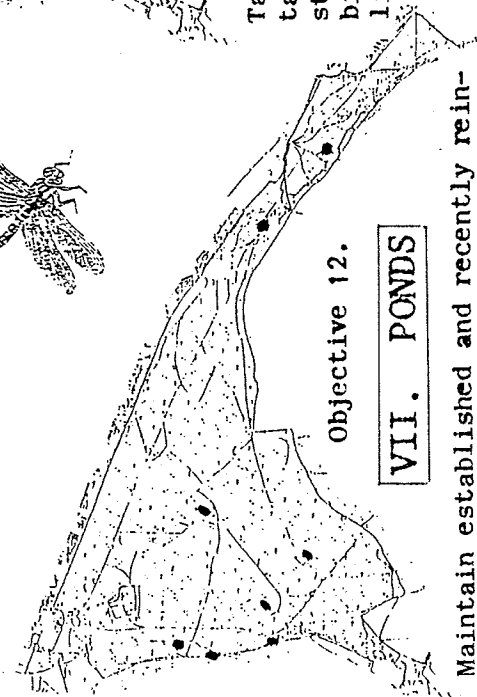


Objective 11.

VI. GRASSLAND AND HEATH

Maintain and/or reclaim existing and recently overgrown areas of grassland and heath, initially by cutting and topping, with approved herbicide use as required, as for bracken control: see also Proj. X.



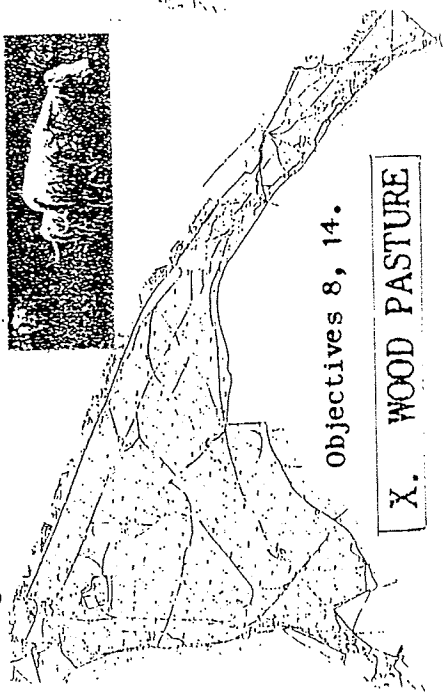


Objective 12.

VII. PONDS

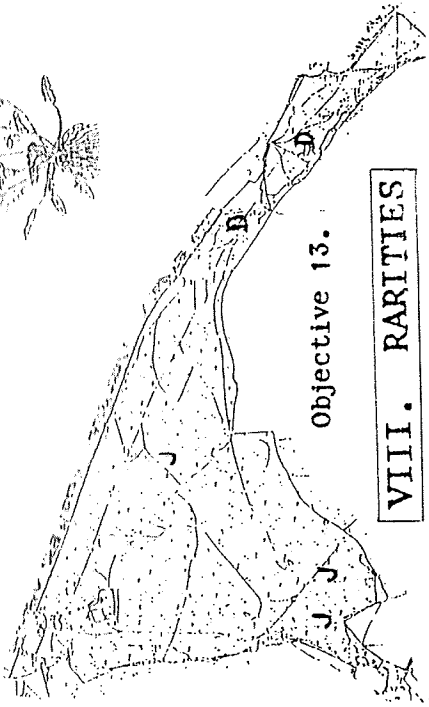
Maintain established and recently reinstated ponds and rehabilitate remaining examples.

Reclaim formerly more extensive areas of wood-pasture grassland and heath, ideally through the re-introduction of grazing.



Objectives 8, 14.

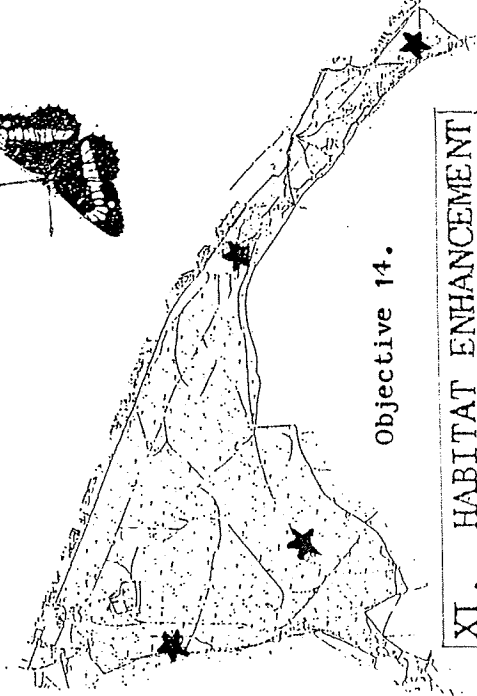
X. WOOD PASTURE



Objective 13.

VIII. RARITIES

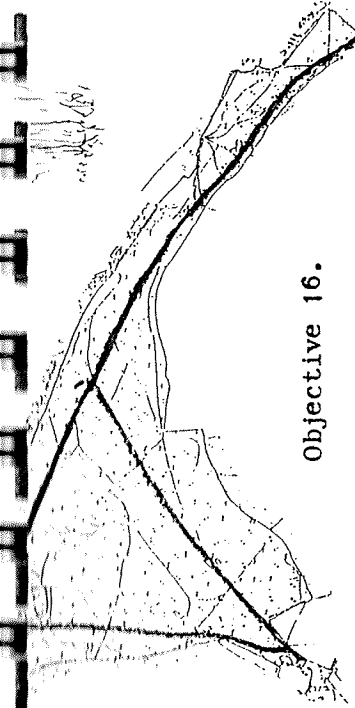
Take special measures to conserve the habitats of rare or threatened species such as starfruit (D on map), juniper (J on map), birds (such as nightjar) and other animal life.



Objective 14.

XI. HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

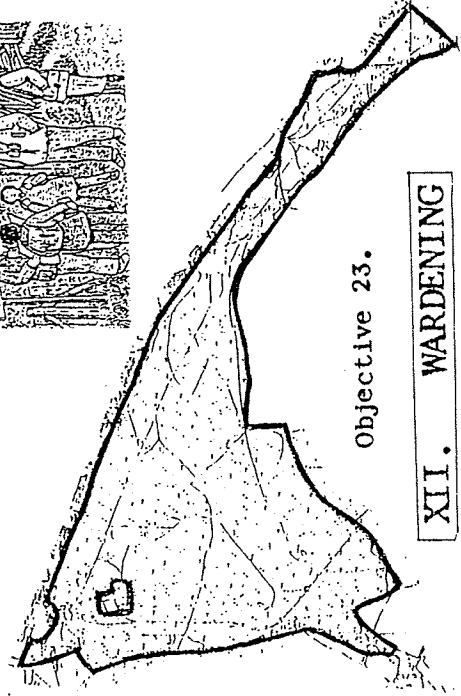
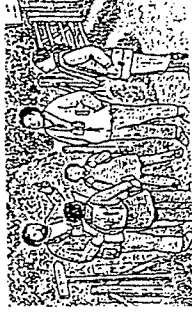
Fine-tune specific habitats to favour further ecological enhancement, and consider the feasibility of species introductions (following on from Project VIII).



Objective 16.

IX. FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

Maintain definitive and agreed permissive footpaths and bridleways (including suitable surfacing of latter where necessary), tying in wherever possible with Projects II, VI and X.



Objective 23.

XII. WARDENING

Appoint warden/ranger to undertake day-to-day management and to cater for educational and interpretative aspects.

management proposals, and the associated day-to-day operations (Project XII).

These three topics are considered in more detail in Part 3.

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PART 3

NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

BEYOND 2007:
SOME THOUGHTS ON LONGER-TERM
MANAGEMENT

3.1. INTO THE NEW MILLENIUM

As the proposals included in the foregoing sections get under way, Naphill and Downley Commons will, ideally, begin to regain their appearance of former years. Picture how it might look as the new millenium unfolds. Take an imaginary stroll on, say, Midsummer's Day, 2007.

The scene will still be one essentially of woodland - it would be unthinkable, and in any case impractical (not to mention illegal), to have things otherwise. But the grassland and heathy areas, with their knapweeds and harebells, sizzling grasshoppers and dancing blue butterflies, will have extended, including here and there pockets of heather, and with the summer gorse-pods popping once again as Wilfrid Smith recalled with such delight.

Shipwash and Ash Ponds will have been reinstated by then, and who knows what aquatic plants and insects might be catching the first direct sun to beam down on these spots for over half a century? Over the commons as a whole, bracken and scrub will be reduced to an acceptable level to provide pleasing fringes of complimentary habitats, with the bordering farm hedges again being maintained by the tradtional practices of coppicing and laying.

The woods themselves will still retain their beauty, character, interest and atmosphere, parts indeed remaining as true Chiltern wilderness. Other areas will have been freed of their more intrusive undergrowth (including the all-pervading holly), to bring light and air to the more promising oaks, beeches and other forest trees, from tiny sapling to forest giant, and of course to those wonderful old pollards. Many of these veterans will be enjoying a new lease of life through being brought back into the age-old system of pollarding, with younger, "apprentice" beeches and oaks being coaxed into following suit. Many, too, will now be seen once again in a pleasing, grassy "wood-pasture" setting rather than overshadowed by dense thickets of holly and yew.

Rides and glades will penetrate and intersperse the woodland compartments, much as they do now, but they will be wider and sunnier, and harbour their own displays of characteristic wildlife. Orange-tip butterflies will flit among the spring displays of bluebell and wood sorrel, with perhaps the first nightjar looking on with a view to trying out the habitat. Speckled wood and foxglove will provide corresponding attractions in the glades of high summer, while the tints and hues of the autumn foliage will be seen to better advantage than for many a year.

An idea of the possible juxtaposition of woodland, wood-pasture, grassland, heath and ponds on Naphill and Downley Commons by the end of the ten-year period covered by these proposals can be gauged from comparing the two maps in Plan Q, though at this stage it has to be very much a matter of speculation regarding the extent to which this state of affairs can be achieved, and how ecologically diverse these habitats prove to be. This is where the last three, much more ambitious, projects come in, which tackle the following points:-

(1) Assuming it is feasible (and generally acceptable) to create this network of more open habitats, how are they to be maintained? How feasible is it to consider introducing grazing livestock throughout the commons?

(2) To what extent should Nature be helped along, in terms of deliberately introducing plant and animal species which are reluctant to come back of their own accord?

(3) Who is going to carry out or oversee the day-to-day management of these diverse and demanding requirements?

These questions, which as already explained form the subjects of Projects X to XII, respectively, are addressed in the next three sections.

3.2. GRAZED WOOD-PASTURE

3.2.1. Precedents and advantages

Mention of wood-pasture brings to mind to many people scenes of great oaks and beeches, interspersed with mosaics of flowery turf and heath, as in the New Forest, or, closer to home, Burnham Beeches. Yet, Naphill and Downley Commons have long been known in this capacity too, even if to a smaller number of people. Both were regularly grazed with cattle from neighbouring farms, at least until the 1920s (Piercy, 1968, 1995), and, as already noted, tethered goats still graze parts of Downley Common (see Photo 13 in Appendix V).

Such grazing, particularly by ponies, continues as traditional practice in the New Forest, while cattle - and even pigs - have recently been re-introduced to East Burnham Common and other parts of Burnham Beeches (Tubbs, 1968, 1986; Corporation of London, 1994). A similar venture has been successfully set in train by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Naturalists' Trust (BBONT) at Inkpen Common, in West Berkshire. How successful have these initiatives been, and how feasible is it to emulate them on Naphill and Downley Commons?

There are three main yardsticks for assessing the success or otherwise of ventures such as these: (1) how stock take to a situation which rather diverges from their familiar farm environment, partly resembling the wildwood and partly a zoo park; (2) how effective the grazing is; and (3) how the public cope with potentially lively animals suddenly arriving on "their" patch. At Burnham and Inkpen, cattle (a suckler herd of British

PLAN Q

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

ANTICIPATED SPREAD OF WOOD-
PASTURE, HEATH AND GRASSLAND
HABITATS BY THE SUMMER OF 2007.

NOW

KEY

	Woodland with pollards and other veteran trees.
	Other woodland, scrub etc.
	Wood pasture.
	Grassland and heath.
	Ponds.

2007

NB: Woodland in top category will also include small glades along paths & tracks and around veteran trees, too small to be shown on this scale. Likewise, grassland and heath will also contain trees and shrubs as individuals and in groups, for a pleasing aesthetic effect, and for habitat diversity. Note that most of the southernmost boundary will be hedged. For significance of grey vs blue ponds, see key to Plan E.

Scale 1:9750 approx.

Reduced from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
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Whites, and a group of young Friesian x Hereford bullocks, respectively) settled down in their new environment with absolutely no difficulty, and have proved exceptionally effective at reclaiming grassland and heathland habitats and at controlling regeneration of unwanted woody species - holly at Burnham and birch at Inkpen (see Photos 26 and 32 in Appendix V). Inevitably some people are wary of cattle, but on both sites the animals have at least been accepted, and at best welcomed. The Burnham cattle are undoubtedly now a positive attraction for visitors, and have become very tame.

Inevitably, there are several considerations to be made before any such practices can be adopted at Naphill and Downley. These include (1) legal, (2) financial, (3) practical and (4) social aspects. Anticipated problems and possible solutions are elaborated on in the paragraphs which follow.

3.2.2. Legal aspects

Firstly it is illegal to erect permanent fencing across registered commonland (Hoskins & Stamp, 1963). A stock-proof ring-fence might be erected around the property as a whole, though there would still be the open roadside stretch at the southernmost end (Sub-Cpt 6/3) of the study area to contend with, where Downley Common continues southwards on to the recreation ground and beyond (Plan B). Temporary fencing may be permissible in certain circumstances, though this still has social implications as noted in Section 3.2.5, below. Fenceless enclosure of stock, employing special collars and buried cables, is one "state-of-the-art" method which might be considered, though pioneer trials of this system suggest that once animals escape across their invisible barrier, there is no identifiable gateway or paddock to direct them back through or into, and chaos reigns! There may still be legal implications moreover.

3.2.3. Financial aspects

Permanent fencing is extremely expensive, and the erection of cattle-proof post-and-wire fencing around the 6km of perimeter of the study area alone (apart from any possible need to fence off the bridleways or protect individual trees) would essentially dwarf any other expenditure on this aspect of the project (see Table 1). There would, too, be a need for holding pens, water supply and (where vehicular access is required) cattle grids.

Under current arrangements, grant-aid for this ought to be forthcoming from EN, and possibly the Countryside Commission and/or MAFF as well (Countryside Commission, 1995), though exactly how this is to operate during the period under consideration is not known (see Section 2.5.2).

3.2.4. Practical aspects

There is nothing novel or untried about the installation of these fencing and other requirements, which various local contractors

TABLE 1

AN INDICATION OF POSSIBLE COSTS INVOLVED IN INTRODUCING CATTLE-GRAZING TO NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS AS A WHOLE.⁵

Note. These figures are approximate only, and do not include provision for acquiring or maintaining stock. Higher costs could accrue through going for high specifications (e.g. high-tensile fencing wire), or if it proved necessary to fence off bridleways (not budgeted for here). On the other hand, substantial savings could be made by tendering the whole package to one suitably competent contractor. The idea here is simply to give an idea of the order of magnitude of possible costs.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Unit cost</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Total cost</u>
Perimeter fencing (post-and-wire)	£1.20-£1.85/m	6km	£7200-£11100
Holding pens (post-and-rail)	£250-£350 ea.	4	£1000- £1400
Field gates (including posts)	£150-£200 ea.	10	£1500- £2000
Cattle grids	£1000-1200 ea.	6	£6000- £7200
Hunting gates	£150-200 ea.	20	£3000- £4000
Water troughs	£50-60 ea.	10	£500- £600
Water supply	£2.00/m	?250m	?£500
Connection to mains			?£500

Possible range of overall costs:	£20200-£27300
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⁵Based on information in MAFF (1992) and Nix (1994), as well as discussions with various people involved in countryside management work.

(if not the Estate itself) would be able to take in their stride, although the sheer scale of the operation would justify spreading the work over two or three seasons. However, the practicalities of confining and maintaining stock remains an open question, and is one which really will need further deliberation when (and if) the basic idea is agreed in principle. The deciding factor may even turn out to be the abundance throughout the Commons of yew (whose foliage and seeds are extremely poisonous to domestic livestock), and the feasibility or otherwise of circumventing this problem.

3.2.5. Social aspects

Many people are understandably wary of cattle, which often like to chase dogs if not their owners! The deliberate choice of docile and even-tempered beasts would help in this regard, and indeed the great majority of visitors both to Burnham Beeches and Inkpen Common (see Photos 26-32 in Appendix V) have really taken to the animals.

There may be difficulties where the bridleways are concerned, however, regarding both the interaction of horses and cattle, and the possible straying of horseriders off the agreed routes on to the open commons. Here is where a Warden or Ranger would be invaluable (Section 3.4).

3.2.6. Conclusions regarding grazing

There is no question but that grazing would be very much in the interests of restoring both the historic landscape and ecological diversity of Naphill and Downley Commons.

This need can be satisfied, at least in the shorter-term, with a combination of tethered goats and ponies, and by mowing, topping or strimming those areas less readily accessible to these animals.

The extension of this practice over the commons as a whole, however, plainly involves a complex of factors, among which the most crucial is cost, and the ability to rely on realistic and guaranteed grant-aid.

3.3. HABITAT MANIPULATION AND SPECIES INTRODUCTION

3.3.1. Definitions

Management on Naphill and Downley Commons aims to reclaim habitats rather than re-create them from scratch, so amounting essentially to a programme of restoration. Nevertheless, it is one thing to undertake the rehabilitation of grassland, heath and other habitats by skilful manipulation: whether or not all the "right" animals and plants recolonise these sites is another matter.

3.3.2. Recolonisation by plants

Starfruit was a spectacular example of a local plant species, and a very rare one at that, making a comeback of its own accord from dormant seed (the "seed-bank"), once conditions were made favourable for it. Among the shrubs, heather can be expected to reappear, for example in Sub-Cpt 1/5, once the birch and bracken are effectively reduced, for this, too, can lie dormant as seed, though the one sure way of breaking this dormancy - by fire - may or may not be practicable. Juniper is hanging on by an even more delicate thread, but the ecology of this species is such that its chances of recovery without our help is very slim. Here the answer may be to take cuttings from the bushes, root these under nursery conditions, and return them to the wild once well-grown, as was successfully done during the early 1970s when the M40 motorway was extended beyond the Chiltern scarp at Lewknor (Smith, 1980).

3.3.3. Recolonisation by animal species

Animals generally have a greater mobility than plants and are more likely to come in of their own accord on this basis alone (Elton, 1966). Mallard soon "found" Manning's, Daisy and the other ponds of the Commons when these were first restored, as did the dragonflies, not to mention the frogs and newts. Nightjars have returned to Black Park near Slough, following restoration of heathy woodland glades there (EN, 1995): so they might to Naphill Common.

Butterflies such as orange-tip, meadow brown and speckled wood, as well as the recently discovered purple hairstreak, are bound to find their way along the woodland tracks as these are opened up, since they are in the vicinity already. Among more local species, the white admiral (never yet seen at Naphill or Downley) is on the increase across England generally (Dunbar, 1993), and, feeding as it does on honeysuckle, might move in of its own accord given time. And any further diversification of habitat is bound to favour a wider range of invertebrates generally (Fry & Lonsdale, 1991).

3.3.4. The deliberate introduction of plants and animals

Here we enter a highly controversial field. Should any plants or animals be deliberately introduced? It has to be said that if the Clay-with-Flints is typically associated with a limited range of species, so be it. This is ecologically as natural as the far greater diversity of, say, chalk grassland, and should not be interfered with, least of all on an NCR site and SSSI. However, if it is felt justified to "help nature along", there are strict codes of practice which need to be applied: a good example is that for invertebrates recently updated and consolidated by Matthew Oates and Martin Warren for Butterfly Conservation (1995), and based on terminology and definitions established by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Paraphrasing, general procedure should be as follows. First set in motion agreed measures to improve and diversify habitats, and wait and see which species re-establish themselves spontaneously by whatever means available to them. Here the value of careful recording and monitoring is obvious. When, and only when, it seems that a species which might reasonably have been expected to appear has not done so, should the possibility of its artificial re-establishment be considered. A suitable donor population then has to be found, the translocation undertaken by authorised specialists, and the County Environmental Records Office (as well as EN where the SSSI is affected) informed.

For Naphill and Downley Commons, let's see how things are coming along in, say, 2002, and decide then what steps might be worth taking.

3.4. A WARDEN FOR THE COMMONS?

Here we face up to the question, which has arisen repeatedly throughout these considerations of future management, namely who is (or are) to carry out, or at least co-ordinate and supervise, these more detailed and time-consuming tasks and activities, which are considered to be in the best interests of Naphill and Downley Commons?

There is really only one answer to this, and that is to appoint a Countryside Warden or Ranger, as is now established practice within EN, the Forest Enterprise, local authorities, the National Trust and many private estates (such as the Englefield Estate on the Berks/Hampshire border). The right choice of man or woman for this testing but rewarding job can be the best insurance that management objectives are achieved. All interests are brought together, and day-to-day problems addressed (if not solved on the spot). Guided walks, arrangements for visiting school groups, and other interpretative activities are made possible. Above all, there is someone "there". All this is meat and drink to the experienced Warden (Countryside Commission, 1978).

Plainly this carries with it a further substantial financial outlay, but one that is likely to attract realistic grant-aid provided a good case can be made. The first point of contact (as things stand at present) would be the Regional Officer of the Countryside Commission (see Appendix VI). This is something else which is probably best considered at a suitable mid-point of the Plan (say 2002 again), though on the other hand there could be great advantages in inaugurating Plan and Warden simultaneously!

PART 4

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

4.1. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

People understandably get worried when a favourite bit of their local countryside suddenly sprouts agents with maps and clipboards and the air resounds to chainsaws and diesel engines, even when such activities are declared to be part of a conservation initiative.

If initial developments at Naphill and Downley Commons can be said to have been inaugurated between English Nature and the West Wycombe Estate without sufficient publicity or consultation with other interested parties, no such accusations can reasonably be made regarding more recent developments, which have culminated in the commissioning of this Report.

This is not to say that everyone is either happy or convinced that moves to "manage" the commons are in their best interests, but at least the debate is now better informed, and a mechanism for feedback and even involvement in place.

Undoubtedly the hardest thing for many people to accept is that the initial jumble of felled trees, rutted rides and mangled holly can possibly result in these mythical rejuvenated pollards amidst golden gorse and bee-covered heather, with "dancing blue butterflies" and the nocturnal churrings of breeding nightjars, as Wilfrid Smith (or for that matter Bert Hussey) would have known it.

But there is no reason why this should not come about, as hinted in Section 3.1, and with other delights too. Our celebrated red kites have now been seen over Cookshall Farm: these could certainly be expected to "find" Naphill and Downley Commons. And if white admiral butterflies can be tempted in, why not purple emperor or even the elusive high brown fritillary which used to haunt the tree-tops of Bradenham Woods? These should find the still-predominantly wooded areas of the Commons to their liking.

Think of how those ponds were before they were brought back to life, and if the opportunity arises, go and see the resurrected heaths, bogs and swards of Black Park or Burnham Beeches, and look at the displays of how they were both before and during the restoration work!

Such subtle transformations are perfectly feasible at Naphill and Downley, provided the West Wycombe Estate, and those who work both for and with them on this venture, are given proper support, not least by English Nature - or whatever organisation might follow it in these ever-changing times.

It has been a great pleasure to work with Paul Lindon of the West Wycombe Estate, Stephen Smith and Jim Crawford of Tilhill Economic Forestry, and members of both the Naphill and Downley Common groups and their associates during the preparation of this Report. I am especially grateful to Philip and Trevor Hussey, John Willson, Grant Woodruff, Geoff Pilkington and Dr Alan Showler for their observations, comments and assistance over points of detail. Welcome hospitality during field work was provided by Alf and Jean Ward, John and Nesta Daley, and Tony and Marion Lovell. My wife, Dot, helped with proof-reading and collating copies.

I should also like to express my thanks to Kate Hawkins and Neil Davidson at the County Environmental Records Centre, Halton, for access to existing biological records; Mrs June Pearton of the British Naturalists' Association, regarding Wilfrid Smith's celebrated article about Naphill Common; Martyn Howat and Ted Green of English Nature for their respective guidance on costings and on identifying fungi; Dr Martin Warren of Butterfly Conservation for advice on butterfly ecology; and, for informative tours of comparable projects, Mark Frater and Dr Helen Read (Burnham Beeches) and Mike Stabler (Inkpen Common). Assistance with some of the reprographic work was generously provided free of charge by David Lakey of Culver Graphics, Lane End, and Paul Dixon of Batchelor's Stores, Naphill.

As noted in the Synopsis, the preparation of this survey and management plan has kindly been grant-aided by Rural Action (administered by the Bucks Council for Voluntary Services on behalf of English Nature) and by Wycombe District Council.

4.3. DEDICATION

I dedicate this Report to my father, Geoff Smith, with whom I made all my early explorations on Naphill and Downley Commons, even before the family first moved from Hughenden to "Waldens" in December 1953. No-one I ever knew could spot a bird's nest with a quicker or surer eye, and it was thanks to him that I learned to identify birds from their songs at a very early age. He was always my ultimate counsellor. He left an awful gap - and not just for me - when he died, a lively 80-year old, in 1990. I certainly felt his presence, and half expected to meet him, during these recent extended forays on the Commons.

C.J. SMITH

October 31 1995

Appendices follow

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APPENDIX I

NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

FLORA AND FAUNA NOTED, AUGUST 1995

APPENDIX I

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

FLORA AND FAUNA NOTED, AUGUST 1995

A preliminary subjective assessment of species abundance on Naphill and Downley Commons is shown for plants as follows: +++++ abundant, ++++ common, +++ intermediate, ++ occasional, + infrequent. Association with specific habitats is indicated thus: W woodland, S scrub (including hedgerows), G grassland, R rough ground and trampled areas (including paths and tracks), P ponds and wet flushes. Numbers refer to footnotes.

LOWER PLANTS

	W	S	G	R	P	F/N
+ <i>Laetiporus sulphureus</i> - sulphur polypore	W					1
+ <i>Phallus impudicus</i> - stinkhorn fungus	W					2
+ (?) <i>Parmelia</i> sp. - lichen	W					3
++ <i>Fissidens</i> sp. - moss	W					
+++ <i>Polytrichum</i> sp. - moss	W					
+ <i>Dryopteris</i> sp. - buckler fern	W					
+++ <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - bracken	W		G			

GRASSES, RUSHES AND SEDGES

++ <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> - common bent			G			
+ <i>A. gigantea</i> - black bent				R		
++++ <i>A. stolonifera</i> - creeping bent			S	G	R	P
+ <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> - meadow foxtail			G			
+ <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> - sweet vernal-grass			G			
+++ <i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i> - tall oat-grass			S	G	R	
++ <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i> - wood false-brome	W					
+ <i>Bromus sterilis</i> - sterile brome				R		
+ <i>Carex acutiformis</i> - lesser pond-sedge					P	
++ <i>C. remota</i> - remote sedge	W					
+ <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> - crested dogstail			G			
+++ <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> - cocksfoot			S	G	R	
+++ <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> - tufted hair-grass	W				P	
++ <i>D. flexuosa</i> - wavy hair-grass	W		G			
+ <i>Elymus caninus</i> - bearded couch	W					
+ <i>E. repens</i> - common couch				R		
+ <i>Festuca arundinacea</i> - tall fescue			G			
+ <i>F. gigantea</i> - giant fescue	W					
+ <i>F. rubra</i> - red fescue			G			
+ <i>Glyceria declinata</i> - small sweet-grass					P	4
+++ <i>G. fluitans</i> - floating sweet-grass					P	
+++++ <i>Holcus lanatus</i> - Yorkshire fog	W		G	R	P	

GRASSES, RUSHES AND SEDGES (continued)

+++	<i>H. mollis</i> - creeping soft-grass	W				
+	<i>Juncus bufonis</i> - toad rush				R	P
+++	<i>J. effusus</i> - smooth rush					P
+++	<i>Lolium perenne</i> - perennial ryegrass				G	R
+	<i>Luzula pilosa</i> - hairy woodrush	W				
++	<i>Milium effusum</i> - wood millet	W				
+	<i>Phleum bertolonii</i> - lesser timothy				G	
+	<i>P. pratense</i> - timothy				G	R
+++	<i>Poa trivialis</i> - rough-stalked					
	meadow-grass	W	S	G	R	P

HERBS

++	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> - yarrow		G		
+	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i> - ground elder			R	
+	<i>Aethusa cynapium</i> - fool's parsley			R	
+	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i> - garlic mustard	W			5
++	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> - cow parsley	W	S		
+	<i>Armoracia rusticana</i> - horseradish			R	
+	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> - mugwort			R	
+	<i>Arum maculatum</i> - lords-and-ladies		S		
+	<i>Atriplex patula</i> - common orache			R	
+	<i>Callitriche stagnalis</i> - water starwort				P
+	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> - heather		S	G	6
++	<i>Calystegia sepium</i> - greater bindweed		S	R	
+	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i> - harebell			G	
+	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i> - shepherd's purse			R	
++	<i>Centaurea nigra</i> - lesser knapweed		G		7
++	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i> - common mouse-ear		G		
+++	<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i> - rose-bay willow-herb	W	S	R	
+	<i>Chenopodium album</i> - fat hen			R	
+	<i>Chrysanthemum parthenium</i> - feverfew			R	8
++	<i>Cirsium arvense</i> - creeping thistle		G	R	
+	<i>C. vulgare</i> - spear thistle			R	
+	<i>Conopodium majus</i> - pignut		G		9
+	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i> - field bindweed		G		
+	<i>Crocasmia x crocosmifolia</i> - montbretia			R	8
+	<i>Damasonium alisma</i> - starfruit				P 10
+	<i>Daucus carota</i> ssp. <i>carota</i> - wild carrot			G	
+++	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i> - foxglove	W			
+	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i> - greater hairy willow-herb			R	
+	<i>Fallopia japonica</i> - japanese knot-weed			R	8, 11
+	<i>Filago germanica</i> - cudweed			R	
+	<i>Galeopsis tetrahit</i> - hemp nettle	W			
+	<i>Galium aparine</i> - cleavers			R	
+	<i>G. saxatile</i> - heath bedstraw		G		6
+	<i>Geranium sanguineum</i> - bloody cranesbill			R	8

HERBS (continued)

+ <i>Glechoma hederacea</i> - ground ivy	S			
++ <i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> - hogweed	S	G	R	
+++ <i>Hyacinthoides non-scriptus</i> - bluebell	W			
+ <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> - 				

WOODY SPECIES

++	<i>Acer campestre</i> - field maple	W S	
+	<i>A. pseudoplatanus</i> - sycamore	W S	11
++++	<i>Betula pendula</i> - silver birch	W S	
+	<i>Buddleja davidii</i> - buddleia	S	8
+	<i>Carpinus betulus</i> - hornbeam	S	
+	<i>Clematis vitalba</i> - old-man's-beard	S	
+++	<i>Corylus avellana</i> - hazel	W S	
++	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i> - hawthorn	W S	
+++++	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - beech	W	
+	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - ash	W S	
++	<i>Hedera helix</i> - ivy	W S	
+++++	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> - holly	W S	14
+	<i>Juniperus communis</i> - juniper	W S	15
+	<i>Laburnum anagyroides</i> - laburnum	S	8
+++	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i> - honeysuckle	W S	
+	<i>Malus sylvestris</i> - crab apple	S	
++++	<i>Prunus avium</i> - wild cherry or gean	W S	
+	<i>P. lusitanica</i> - Portugal laurel	S	16
+++	<i>P. spinosa</i> - blackthorn or sloe	W S	
+++++	<i>Quercus robur</i> - common or		
	pedunculate oak	W S	17
+	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> - rhododendron	S	8, 11
+	<i>Rhus</i> sp. - sumach	S	8
+	<i>Rosa</i> sp. - briar	S	
+++	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> - bramble	W S	
+	<i>R. idaeus</i> - wild raspberry	S	
+	<i>Salix capraea/cinerea</i> -		
	goat willow/sallow	S	P
+++	<i>Sambucus nigra</i> - elder	W S	
+	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i> - woody nightshade	S	P
+	<i>Sorbus aria</i> - whitebeam	W S	
++++	<i>S. aucuparia</i> - rowan	W S	
+	<i>Tamus communis</i> - black bryony	S	
++++	<i>Taxus baccata</i> - yew	W S	18
+	<i>Tilia x europaea</i> - common lime	W	19
++	<i>Ulex europaeus</i> - gorse	S	20
+	<i>Ulmus procera</i> - English elm	W	19

Appendix continued...

THE NATIONAL VEGETATION CLASSIFICATION (NVC)

The National Vegetation Classification (NVC) is now well established as the standard scheme for describing and classifying plant communities in Great Britain (Rodwell, 1991, 1992, 1995). Although data were not gathered here in sufficiently concentrated or systematic fashion to permit formal assessment of NVC communities, it was nevertheless possible to propose a tentative list of those thought to have been encountered.

The most extensive beech-oak woodland communities appear to correspond to W14, with more "oaky" stands representing W10. The birch-dominated parts of the eastern fringe of Naphill Common could be W15, and the beech regenerating among the heather along the western edge W16. All the scrub (including juniper) comes into the still rather broadly based community W21.

The meadowy grasslands on Downley Common and the Plain are clearly of the MG5 type, with the coarser stands dominated by tall oat-grass falling into MG1. The ryegrass and plantain elements on the paths represent MG7. The heathy grasslands of Naphill Common are U2, and the areas of essentially pure bracken U20.

The wetland vegetation found in the main ponds, in which the dominant species are sweet-grass and duckweed, is aquatic community S22.

ANIMAL LIFE

Grey squirrel and muntjac seen, also frog (as well as cats, dogs and goat!); newts reported by Alan Showler; droppings of fox (with masses of cherry stones in); badger diggings (see also wasp's nest, below).

Birds seen and/or heard included house sparrow, coal, blue and marsh tits, chaffinch, bullfinch, robin, blackbird, wren, nuthatch, willow warbler, green and great-spotted woodpeckers, wood pigeon (numerous), stock dove, tawny owl, jay, magpie, carrion crow, pheasant. Geoff Pilkington adds sparrowhawk (regularly taking collared doves), long-tailed tit, tree-creeper and lesser-spotted woodpecker.

Invertebrates included small and large white, comma, meadow brown, speckled wood and purple hairstreak butterflies; noctuid and micro-moths; hoverflies, face-flies (too numerous), crane-fly, flesh-fly and bluebottle (the latter especially on bracken); swarms of the small black fly *Sepsis fulgens* also on bracken; bumble-bees and social wasps (one nest of latter recently dug out, probably by badger); southern hawker dragonfly, common darter, common blue damselfly; seven-spot ladybird; at least two different kinds of grasshopper (making different noises!); green lacewing; shield bug; felted beech coccus; various spiders.

FOOTNOTES

(1) On old oak pollards: two distinctly different forms present; also known as chicken-in-the-woods. (2) Smelled only! Note that lists of fungi recorded in the 1980s from Naphill and Downley Commons are on file at the County Environmental Records Centre. (3) On tree-trunks: various others noted, but not identified. (4) In "Sandie's Pond". (5) Key larval foodplants for butterflies: *Alliaria* for orange-tip, *Lotus* for common blue, sorrel for small copper. (6) Under power-lines near border with the Coppice. (7) Particularly valuable nectar-source for insects. (8) Garden escape. (9) Known to be present in 1995, but missed by CJS! (10) Naphill and Downley Commons' celebrated rarity, though numbers down in 1995, and not seen at all by CJS. (11) Non-native and potentially invasive species, though still very localised: sycamore and *Fallopia* in small quantities on Downley Common (the latter in one small patch only), *Rhododendron* only where it has been for many years, by the old Blacksmiths on the edge of Naphill Common. (12) The rare large-leaved duckweed (*Lemna polyrhiza*) occurs in the Cookshall Farm pond (6Z). (13) Dominating the wet flushes on the shadier rides. (14) Though native (and a natural component of these woodlands) holly is abundant to excess in many places. (15) Rare and declining: requiring special efforts to conserve. (16) In hedge alongside Bradenham Hill Farm. (17) No signs seen of *Quercus petraea*. (18) Abundant throughout Naphill and Downley Commons, and a major limitation to the reintroduction of grazing on a large scale. (19) Within the "inner" Clump (horse chestnut on the "outer" one). (20) Now quite scarce in the Chilterns, and warranting special protection.

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APPENDIX II

NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

CATALOGUE OF FEATURES
OF
RELEVANCE
TO THE
MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPENDIX II

NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

CATALOGUE OF FEATURES OF RELEVANCE TO THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The layout of the compartment system is shown in Plan G, and the individual compartments 1 - 6 indicated in Plans H-M. These compartments have then been subdivided (1/1, 1/2 etc.) on what at present seems to be a realistic basis, though various modifications may be necessary in due course.

Definitive footpaths (DFPs) and bridleways (DBWs) are identified by their parish number, others by numbers in the series 101, 201, etc., the first digit coinciding with the main compartment number. Where a non-definitive path crosses from one compartment to another it retains the same last two digits to signify continuity (e.g. 102 in Cpt 1 continues into Cpt 3 as 302).

Most compartments and subcompartments have paths and tracks as boundaries. These are normally shown on the maps as coinciding exactly, but for management purposes it makes sense to regard boundary paths as lying within (i.e. "belonging to") one compartment or the other, as indicated on the respective plans by a red OS-type ~ symbol.

Individual items such as ponds, archaeological features, areas of grassland, veteran trees, junipers etc. are then identified by a target or pinpoint number, such as 1A, 3B, etc., again corresponding to the main compartment in which they occur. Colours are used to clarify the exact extent of a given feature where this helps.

This may all seem rather daunting or footling, depending on your point of view, but it does make sense to be able to locate and pinpoint items of specific interest or importance. By no means all possible items have been catalogued yet, but this system has the advantage that it can be extended indefinitely.

COMPARTMENT 1 (NAPHILL COMMON EAST): see PLAN H.

Working clockwise from Forge Road, the boundary of this compartment runs southwards down the whole of the eastern boundary of Naphill Common as far as the parish boundary at Hunts Hill (actually somewhat notional at the moment); westwards along (and including) this boundary to Cookshall ("Wheeler's") Lane; then northwards along (and including) the full extent of DBW 84 (which is also DFP 12); at its northern tip it is bounded by a complicated succession involving FP 101 and Popes' track, which in turn harbours part of DFP 5.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 1/1

Area north of (and including) gravel track to Heysham complex (106), and crossed by DBW 18 and FP 102. Beech/oak woodland (including veteran pollards), with rough grassland fringe.

1A	Grassland fringe: tall oat-grass, hogweed etc.	Part of The Plain. Currently unmown.
1B	Woodland.	To be included in Project VI.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 1/2

Area to south of 1/1 as far as (and including) DFP 1, crossed by DFP 5 and skirted alongside properties by gravel access track (FP 105). Beech/oak woodland (including veteran pollards) with rough grassland/scrub along track-side, especially where cleared of woodland. Includes timber storage area.

1C	Main woodland strip.	
1D	Course of bridleway.	Currently being thinned to create broader ride. Projects II & IX.
1E	Strip adjacent to properties and access track.	Currently being thinned to create grassy fringe; some regen., e.g. willow, bramble. Project II.
1F	Main area for storing extracted timber.	Rutted; thistles, docks etc.; complaints from some residents. Restore. Project II.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 1/3

Area to south of 1/2 as far as (and including) FP 103. Crossed by DFP 21 and skirted by continuation of FP 105. Primarily oakwood (including veterans), with rowan and yew, but also scattered beech. Hornbeam and cherry on E margin.

1G	Main woodland strip (continuation of 1C).	
1H	Course of bridleway.	Currently being thinned to create broader ride, as for 1D. Projects II & IX.
1I	Strip adjacent to common edge.	To be thinned as for 1E. Project II.
1J	Further area for timber storage.	Project II.
1V1*	Veteran tree.	The celebrated "scouts' oak"!

*NB: Further trees can be added in this Cpt as 1V2, 1V3 etc., as they are located and catalogued. The same principle applies to other Cpts.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 1/4

Area to south of 1/3 as far as (and including) DFP 22. Crossed by DFPs 2 and 3, and skirted by continuation of FP 105, this surfaced where it serves properties along here. Woodland predominantly oak, with yew and rowan, but also beech, cherry and holly; some fine specimen trees (e.g. of ash) along edge, though some birches dying from the drought. Grassy margin, some mown.

1L	Main woodland strip (continuation of 1C/1G).	
1M	Course of bridleway.	Currently being thinned to create broader ride, as for 1D/1H. Project II.
1N	Strip adjacent to common-side properties. Woodland with grassy fringe, some of this kept mown.	Woodland to be thinned as in areas 1E/1I. Mown areas quite flower-rich in parts.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 1/5

Area to south of 1/4 as far as (and including) FP 104, and skirted by DFP 2, which represents a continuation of FP 105. Mainly birch (with odd Scots pine and Norway spruce) over bracken, though fringed by mixed scrub with occasional gorse, and by both rough and mown grassland. Birch being cleared.

1O	Area dominated by birch, over dense bracken.	Birch currently being felled and cleared, as a prelude to restoring grassland and heath. Projects II & VI.
1P	Border of mixed scrub, with mown grass.	Important scrub habitat. Grassland has flower-rich areas. Projects IV & VI.
1Q	Course of bridleway.	To be widened as 1D/H/M. Projects II/IX.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 1/6

Southernmost subcompartment. Crossed by continuation of DFP 2, and skirted by continuation of FP 105 which follows the metalled extension to Downley Road serving properties along here. There is a network of additional minor footpaths, and vehicles are still occasionally driven between Cookshall Lane and Downley Road across here in dry weather. Developing oakwood over dense holly, with mosaics of mixed scrub, bracken and mown grassland, the latter including harebell. This Sub-Cpt also includes the reclaimed Daisy Pond.

1R	Developing oak woodland over dense holly, fringed by mixed scrub.	Thin holly and retain best of scrub, particularly gorse. Projects II & IV.
1S	Course of bridleway.	To be thinned and widened as in 1D/H/M/Q. Projects II & IX.
1T	Areas of mown grassland, some quite flower-rich.	Project VI.
1U	Dense blackthorn scrub.	Retain. Project IV.
1W	Developing oak woodland.	
1X	Daisy Pond.	Reinstated by Estate. Crucial location for starfruit, though none seen in 1995. Clear, or at least stir up, every two or three years. Projects VII & VIII.
1Y	Link between Hunts Hill and Cookshall/"Wheeler's" Lane.	Accessible to vehicles in dry weather, but status needs clarifying, as does the access to Downley Road referred to above.
1Z	Parish boundary.	Hughenden (on Naphill side), West Wycombe (detached) on Downley side. Course is at present obscure.

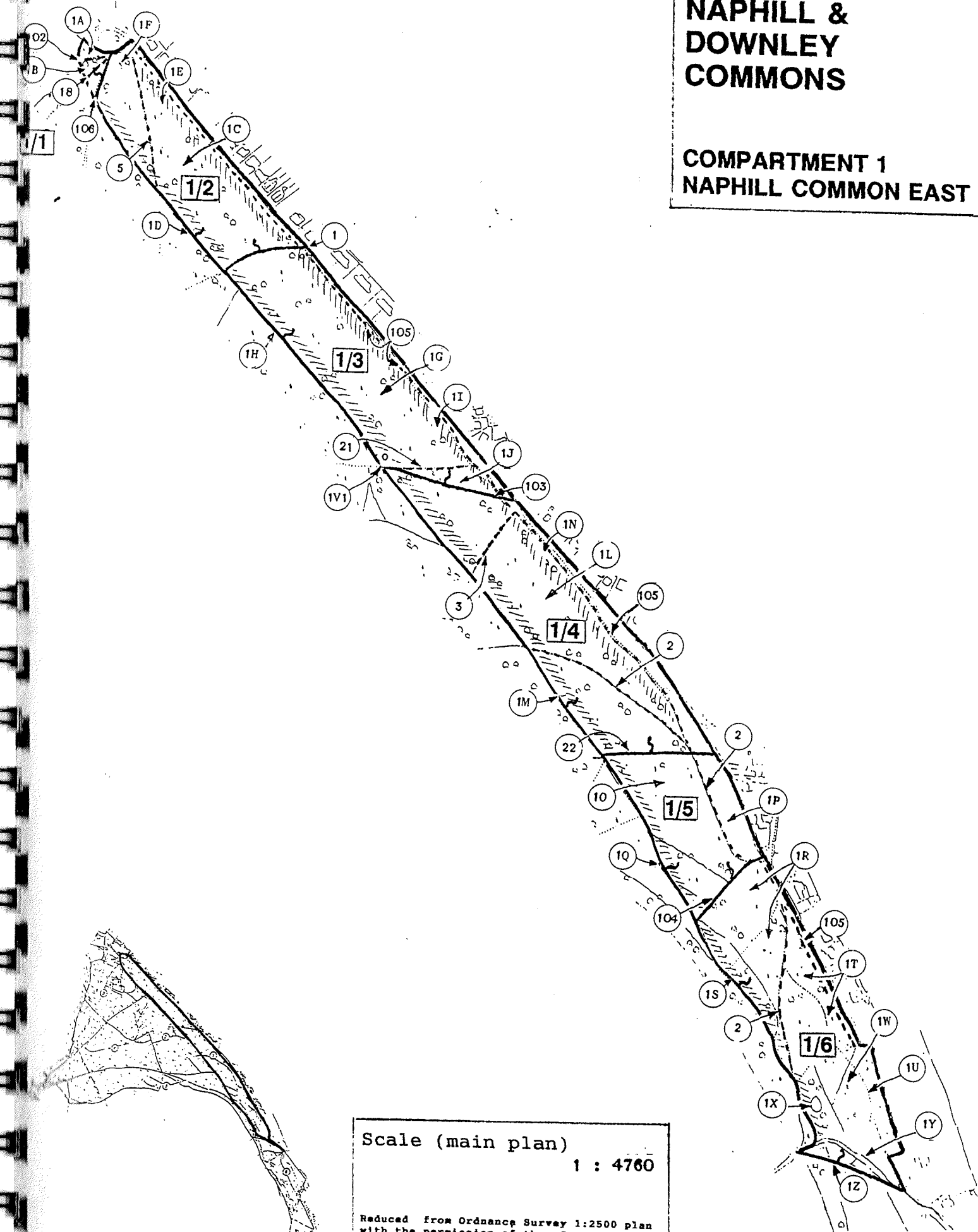
NB: Catalogue for Cpt 1 can be extended by numbering additional features as 1AA, 1AB etc.

GRID NORTH

PLAN H

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

COMPARTMENT 1 NAPHILL COMMON EAST



Scale (main plan)

1 : 4760

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COMPARTMENT 2 (NAPHILL COMMON CENTRAL): see PLAN I.

Going in a clockwise direction, the northern boundary follows (and includes) the course of footpath DFP 1 from its junction with DBW 18/DFP 19, then turns south alongside Cpt 1 as far as DFP 22, which it then follows (and includes) westwards as far as its junction with DFP 5. It then follows (and includes) this footpath (DFP 5) northwards, briefly left onto DFP 21 (which it does not include), then west again along DFP 19 (which it does include), back to the starting point.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 2/1

West of DFP 5 (excluded), crossed by FPs 201, 205 and other minor path. Mixed beech/oak woodland (including wood-pasture veterans), with varying amounts of yew, cherry, rowan, holly etc. Much beech regeneration.

2V1	Veteran beech.	Project III.
-----	----------------	--------------

SUBCOMPARTMENT 2/2

East of DFP 5 (included), as far south as FP 202 (included). Crossed by DFP 21 and FP 205. Mixed beech/oak woodland (including wood-pasture veterans), with oak predominating towards east side, where birch and bracken are also more abundant in places. Varying amounts of cherry, holly, rowan and yew. Area includes dry dell.

2A	Strip adjoining DBW 84 in Cpt 1.	Likely to be affected by widening bridleway - see 1H/1M. Project II.
2D	Dell in SW corner, with huge beeches adjacent.	Possible future pond site. Trees will need cataloguing individually (Proj. III).
2G	Attractive "New Forest" glade with large beeches.	Catalogue trees (Project III).
2V2	Dead oak hulk.	

SUBCOMPARTMENT 2/3

South of Sub-Cpt 2/2 as far as (and including) DBW 85. Crossed by DFP 3 and FP 204. Vegetation as for 2/2, but also including important juniper location.

2B	Adjoins DBW 84 (Cpt 1).	As for 2A - see 1M (Projects II/IX).
2E	Course of DBW 85.	For silvicultural thinning and widening of bridleway as part of WGS Special Management Plan (Projects II/IX).
2J	Location of group of junipers.	Clear round known bushes. Look for more. Propagate if possible. Project VIII.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 2/4

Southernmost block from 2/3 to compartment boundary. Crossed by DFP 3 and FP 203. Mixed beech/oak woodland with cherry, including wood-pasture veterans, and also some fine high-forest specimen trees. Other species include yew, rowan, birch and abundant holly.

2C	Adjoins DBW 84 (Cpt 1).	As for 2A - see 1M (Projects II/IX).
2F	Adjoins DBW 85 (Sub-Cpt 2/3).	Likely to be affected by widening of bridleway - see 2E (Projects II/IX).
2V3	Ancient oak hulk. See Photo 6A in Appendix V.	Producing spectacular growth-form of sulphur polypore fungus in 1995.

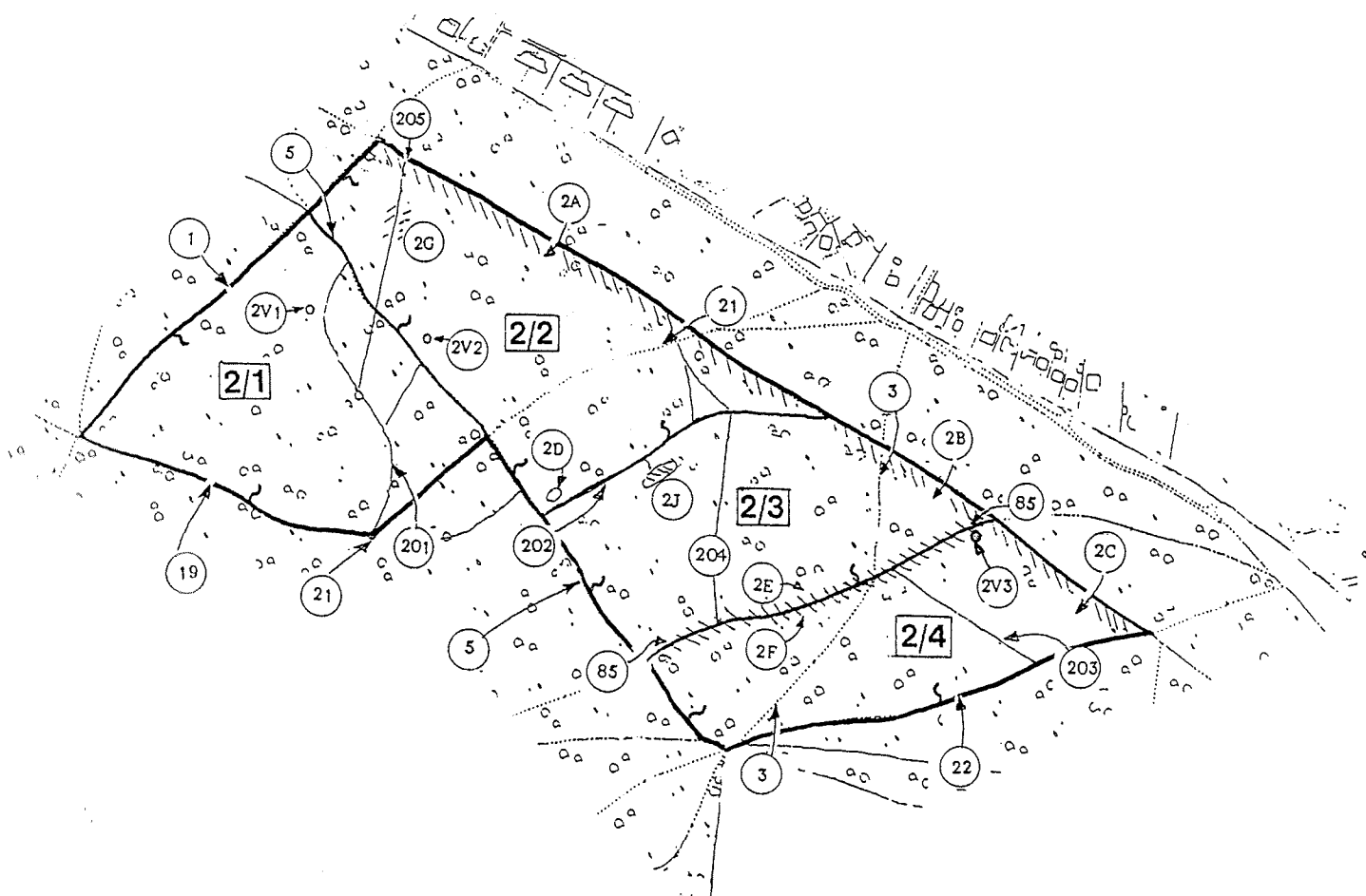
GRID NORTH



PLAN I

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

COMPARTMENT 2 NAPHILL COMMON CENTRAL



Scale (main plan)

1 : 4760

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COMPARTMENT 3 (NAPHILL COMMON NORTH): see PLAN J.

From the northernmost point of Naphill Common adjacent to the Walters Ash Allotments, and working clockwise, the boundary of this compartment follows the edge of the Common round past Jubilee Cottages and environs (actually the continuation of DFP 5), and skirts the border with Cpt 1 southwards as far as DFP 1. It then turns west along this path, and continues on where it joins DBW 18 (but excluding both these paths), as far as the westernmost point of OS parcel 6009, where it turns back northwards and follows the property boundary (with National Trust land) before skirting Popes' land and coming back to the starting point. The land including Heysham, Little Heysham and the White House (referred to collectively as the Heysham properties) is excluded.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 3/1

The whole of the northern spur, including the access track from Forge Road to Popes, and the path (FP 301) from this to the gate into the allotments. Part wooded (with an abundance of cherry); the rest (the Plain) a mosaic of mixed scrub and rough but species-rich grassland, this mown occasionally.

3A	Woodland in N-most area.	For thinning/clearing under WGS Special Management Plan. Project II.
3B	The Plain: species-rich grassland, with areas of scrub.	Grassland mown on a hay-making basis. Continue with this, and extend to include rough area of bracken and brambles alongside path 301. Projects IV & VI.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 3/2

The land east of, and including, DBW 18, as far south as DFP 19, which is excluded. Crossed by DFP 5, FPs 304 and 305, the continuation of the gravel track from Forge Road to the Heysham complex (306) and various minor paths. Mixed beech-oak woodland with wood-pasture veterans, and varying amounts of yew, birch and cherry. Dense beech regeneration in places.

3C	Bridleway for silvicultural thinning/widening work.	Scheduled as part of WGS Special Management Plan, but note confusion between this and parallel track in Sub-Cpt 3/3 (see 3D).
3V1	Veteran beech pollard.	A spectacular specimen, though there are others here and of oak as well. Proj. III.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 3/3

Land to the west of Sub-Cpt 3/2 and south of 3/1, as far south as DFP 19, which again is excluded. Incorporates several heavily-used non-definitive paths, including FPs 302, 303, 307, 308 and 309, of which the last two are being used as bridleways. Mixed beech/oak woodland, with wood pasture veterans, though with a predominance of beech in the western half. The dried-out Shipwash Pond occurs in this Sub-Cpt. The open strip under the power-lines along the western edge has heather and other heathy species such as wavy hair-grass and heath bedstraw, as well as bracken and regenerating beech.

3D	Track used as bridleway, though not shown thus on BCC's Definitive map.	Shown coloured blue on Plan J for clarity. Resolve this anomaly as part of Project IX. See also 3E, below, and 3H in Sub-Cpt 3/4.
3E	Track also being used as unofficial bridleway.	Also shown coloured blue on Plan J. Sort this out as for 3D. Project IX.
3F	This important westernmost ride (not used as a bridleway until it gets	A crucial location for the Common's main surviving heather community, and recognised as such (though marked on the map

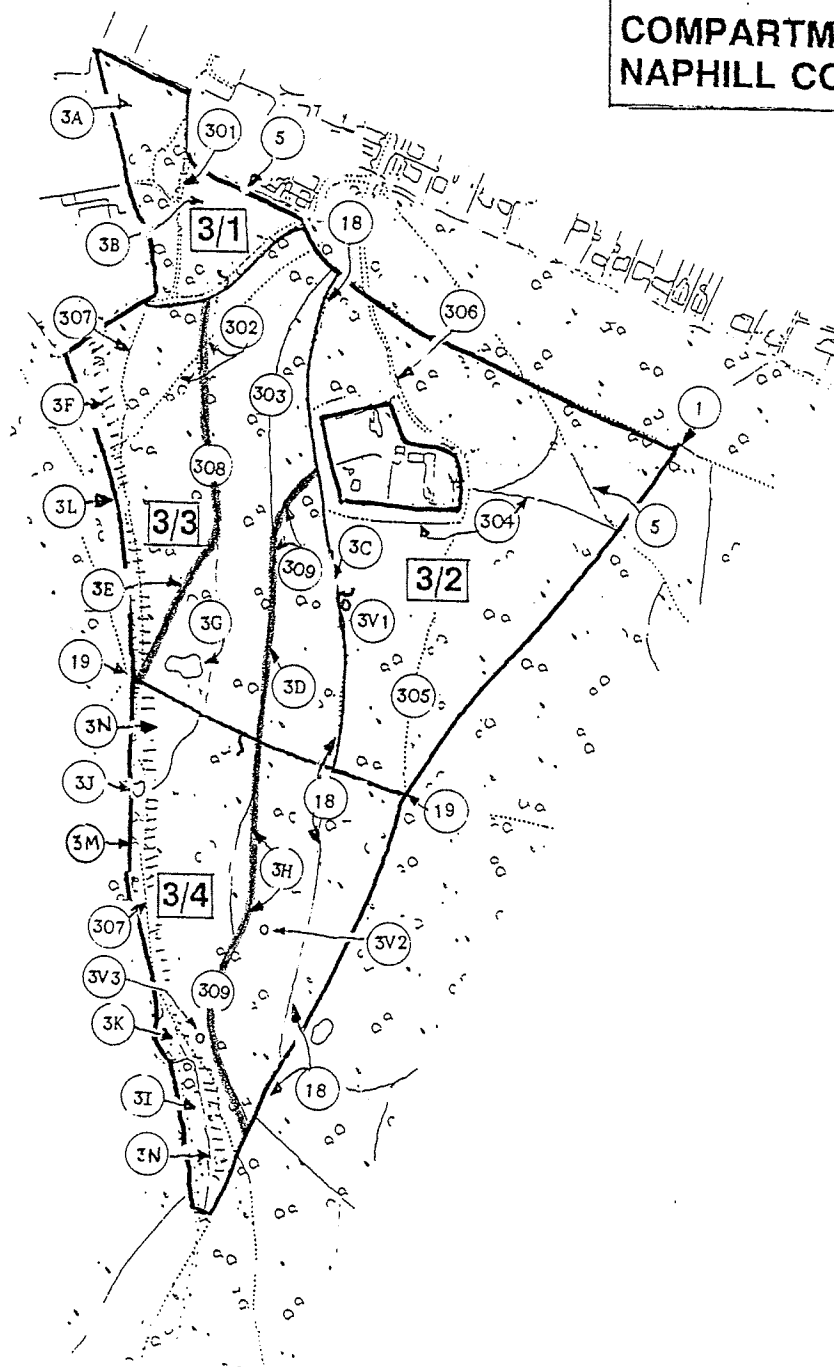
GRID NORTH



PLAN J

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

COMPARTMENT 3 NAPHILL COMMON NORTH



Scale (main plan)
1 : 4760

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	into Cpt 4) is used as a footpath and kept clear of tall tree growth for the sake of the overhead power-lines, which run along here.	somewhat notionally) in the EN agreement. Other heathland species include wavy hair-grass and heath bedstraw (as well as abundant bracken), and there are signs that this is a fragment of acid beechwood of the NVC W15 community. Project VI. Continues through Sub-Cpt 3/4 as 3N.
3G	Shipwash Pond.	Dry bed only. A strong candidate for future restoration. Project VII.
3L	Parish boundary.	Hughenden/Bradenham. See Section 1.4. Continues through Sub-Cpt 3/4 as 3M.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 3/4

Land to the south of, and including DFP 19, and incorporating the continuation of DBW 18 and FP 309. Mixed beech/oak woodland, with wood-pasture veterans of both species. There is again a predominance of beech in the western half. The acid grassland/heath strip continues down the western edge, where there are also two more ponds and the remains of an old hedged enclosure.

3H	Continuation of alternative bridleway along FP 309 (see also 3D).	Shown coloured blue on Plan J for clarity. Resolve as for 3D in Sub-Cpt 3/3. Project IX.
3I	Narrow parcel (OS 6009) partly within Bradenham parish.	Old paddock. Remnants of old hedge, including hazel, hawthorn and field maple are of additional interest.
3J	"Sandie's Pond".	Small feature, almost dried out by end of the 1995 drought but still well vegetated: lesser spearwort and the common floating sweet-grass dominant, but lesser sweet-grass also noted here. Project VII.
3K	Willow Pond.	A large and attractive woodland pond with a sarsen stone in its north bank. Water level maintained in drought, but scummy at times. OS parcel 6115.
3M	Parish boundary.	Continuation of 3L (see Sub-Cpt 3/3).
3N	Area under powerlines.	Continuation of 3F (see Sub-Cpt 3/3).
3V2	Large veteran oak pollard.	In urgent need of freeing from overshadowing secondary woodland. Proj. III.
3V3	Smaller veteran oak.	Should benefit from widening 3N. Projects III/VI.

COMPARTMENT 4 (NAPHILL COMMON WEST): see PLAN K.

Starting at the clumps and working clockwise, this compartment follows the NT boundary as far as OS parcel 6009, skirts Cpt 3 as far as the western corner of Cpt 2, and then follows the boundary of the latter as far as the intersection of DFPs 5 and 22 near Garden Bottom; it then returns to the starting point via DBW 85 and the Bradenham Hill Farm hedge where the bridleway turns inwards slightly. DFB 85, and the short stretch of DFP 21 which forms a common boundary with Cpt 2, are included in Cpt 3, but all other footpaths along the boundary "belong" to adjoining Cpts.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 4/1

The triangular wedge of land separated from the rest of Cpt 4 by DFP 21, which is included. This Sub-Cpt also contains a stretch of DBW 85, as well as the minor path 401. Mixed beech/oak woodland, with veterans of both species, and with yew, cherry and abundant holly; also the overshadowed and dried-out bed of Ash Pond.

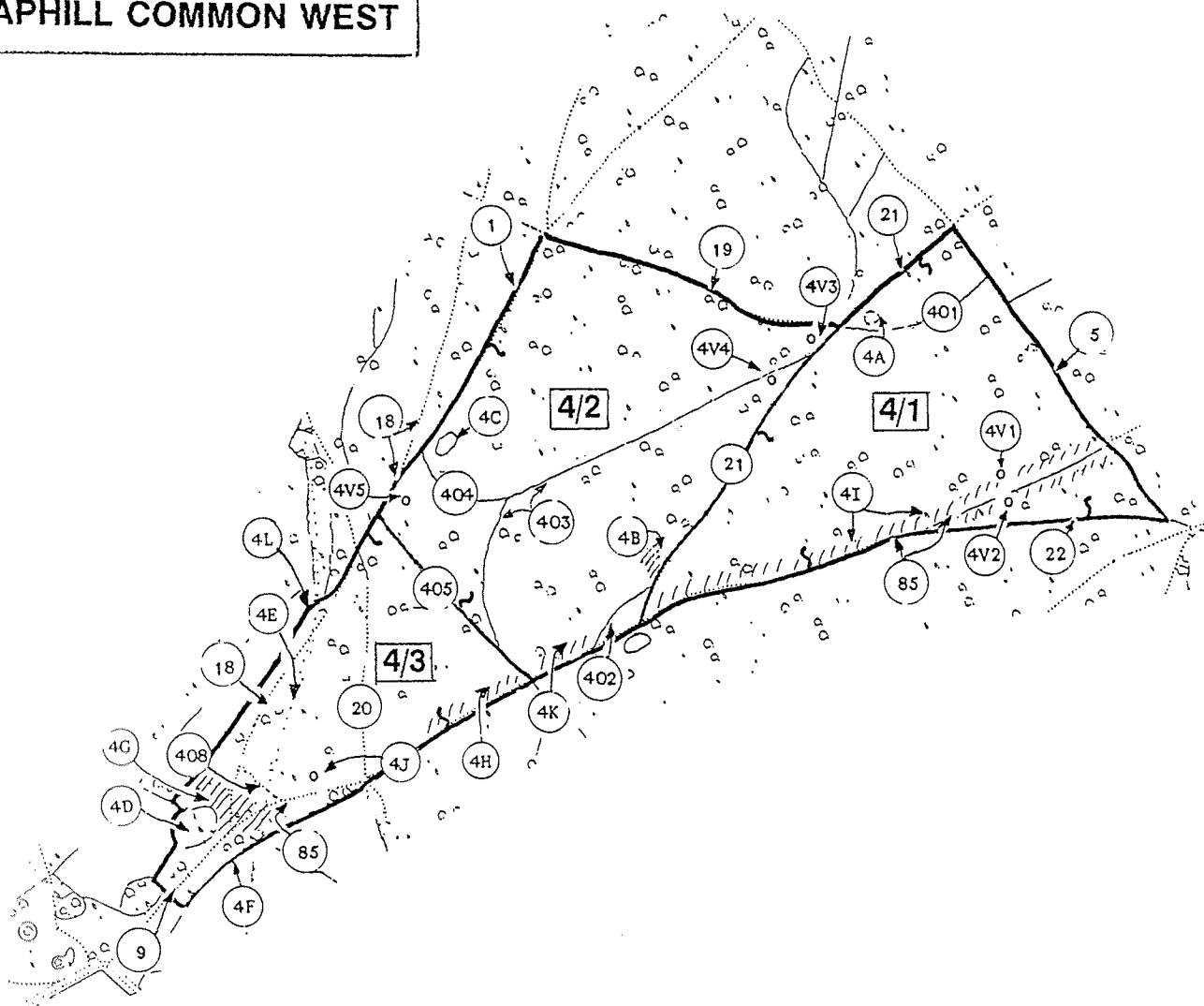
4A	Ash Pond.	Dry bed, overhung by beech. A possible candidate for future restoration as part
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PLAN K

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

COMPARTMENT 4 NAPHILL COMMON WEST

GRID NORTH



Scale (main plan)

1 : 4760

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		of Project VII.
4I	Course of DBW 85, to be widened as part of the WGS Plan.	See Projects II & IX.
4V1	Veteran beech pollard on north side of DBW 85. See Photo 7 in Appendix V.	Widely spreading branches, at least one of which has broken off. An urgent candidate for re-pollarding in view of its obviously unstable condition. Project III.
4V2	Veteran beech on opposite side of DBW 85 to 4V1.	This one has fallen, though its prostrate hulk will continue to provide an important range of habitats.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 4/2

The rectangular block of land occupying the centre section of Cpt 4, contained on its southern side by (but not including) DFP 21, and on its western side by FP 405, which is included. Perhaps the remotest part of the whole of Naphill Common, crossed by a path (403) originating from DFP 21, though now very indistinct, eventually reaching either FP 405, or, via another faint spur (404) the Cpt boundary near Dew Pond. There is a more regularly used spur (402) between DFP 21 and DBW 85 opposite Lady Horse Pond (which is in Cpt 5). Mixed beech/oak woodland with veterans of both species, and many wind-thrown beeches. Varying amounts of yew, cherry, rowan and birch, and a characteristic abundance of holly. This Sub-Cpt also includes Dew Pond.

4B	Grassy glade with a cluster of wind-thrown beech.	Remote sedge abundant in the herbaceous vegetation; also foxglove.
4C	Dew Pond.	Reinstated during the first phase of pond restoration work. Continue to maintain as part of Project VII.
4K	Another stretch of DBW 85 scheduled for widening.	See also 4I in Cpt 4/1: part of Projects II and IX.
4V3	Veteran oak with abundant epicormic shoots on its broad trunk.	This tree stands opposite Lady Horse Pond (5C), and should benefit from the bridleway widening at 4K. Projects II/III/IX.
4V4	Veteran oak with a good display of sulphur polypore fungus in 1995.	This is the less spectacular form of the fungus than that seen on tree 2V3 (qv). Should benefit as for 4V3 from bridleway widening. Projects II/III/IX.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 4/3

A truncated-cone shaped wedge of land with its narrow end adjoining the Clumps and Bradenham Hill Farm, and its wider end bounded by (but not including) FP 405. It includes both DBW 18 (here used as intended as a bridleway) and DBW 85, these two meeting up to leave the Cpt for Bradenham as DBW 9. In fact, this last is a Bradenham parish number, and strictly speaking extends back along both arms of the aforementioned bridleways as far as the parish boundary. The SSSI boundary is actually shown as following DBW 9/85 rather than the property boundary here (see Plans F and O), although this almost certainly arose through a cartographic error on English Nature's part. Sub-Cpt 4/3 is crossed by DFP 20, and there is another short spur near, though not coinciding with, the parish boundary, where the powerlines turn towards Bradenham Hill Farm: this is shown as FP 408. The vegetation of this Sub-Cpt consists of mixed beech/oak woodland (with wood-pasture veterans of both species), and with the usual abundant holly and varying amounts of yew, rowan and cherry, though there is much birch and some willow, and dense bracken in places, towards the Clumps, as well as a lone juniper. Elm and lime occur within the inner Clump, and Portugal laurel in the farm hedge.

4D	The innermost Clump.	See Plan B for the anomaly over the true boundary here. A length of barbed wire probably dates from the time when the paddock beyond was grazed and almost certainly has no significance in this regard. The "outer", i.e. westernmost, Clump is definitely within NT ownership: the one horse-chestnut noticed grows here.
4E	The parish boundary.	The Hughenden-Bradenham boundary.

4F	Farm hedge.	Includes the aforementioned Portuguese laurel. Liaise with NT re-hedge coppicing and/or laying. Project V.
4G	Area of younger woodland with oak, birch and dense bracken, to be opened up as part of the WGS Plan.	Projects II/VI.
4H	Course of DBW 85/9, to be opened up as part of WGS plan.	Projects II/IX.
4J	Key juniper bush.	The most vigorous individual on record on the common, though sex not known. Needs freeing from overhanging trees as part of Project VIII.
4L	Parish boundary.	Continuation of 3L from Cpt. 3. See also 4E, above.

COMPARTMENT 5 (NAPHILL COMMON SOUTH): see PLAN L.

This southernmost compartment of Naphill Common consists of a long and relatively narrow piece of land, nipped in to a still narrower "waist" at its mid-point. The whole of the northern and eastern boundaries are accounted for by those of Cpts 4, 2 and 1. The ultra-short southern end is marked strictly by the boundary with Downley Common, but in practice by the track (Cookshall or "Wheeler's" Lane) which enters here from Cookshall Farm. The boundary then turns north and then gradually westwards, following the parish boundary and ditch marked by the tall hedge which separates off the farm land and then (after a sharp left and right turn), plantation woodland. Here, the land undulates in places (the first dip coincides with Garden Bottom), as it encounters the heads of the Cookshall Wood valleys (see Section 1). The border finally turns north-east along the edge of Bradenham Hill Farm, to meet DBW 85.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 5/1

The southernmost part of the western half of Cpt 5, contained by, and including, DFP 3, this feeding onto DFPs 9 and 14 to West Wycombe. Another footpath (501) leads off south-westwards from DFP 3, but forms only a short and rather vague loop in the dip here. Mixed beech/oak woodland with veterans and specimen high-forest trees of both species. Cherry and yew especially abundant in places. The dip at the Garden Bottom end is a location for wood barley: this was not spotted in 1995, although there was plenty of wood millet. The parish boundary and "Ferry Ditch" are important features along here.

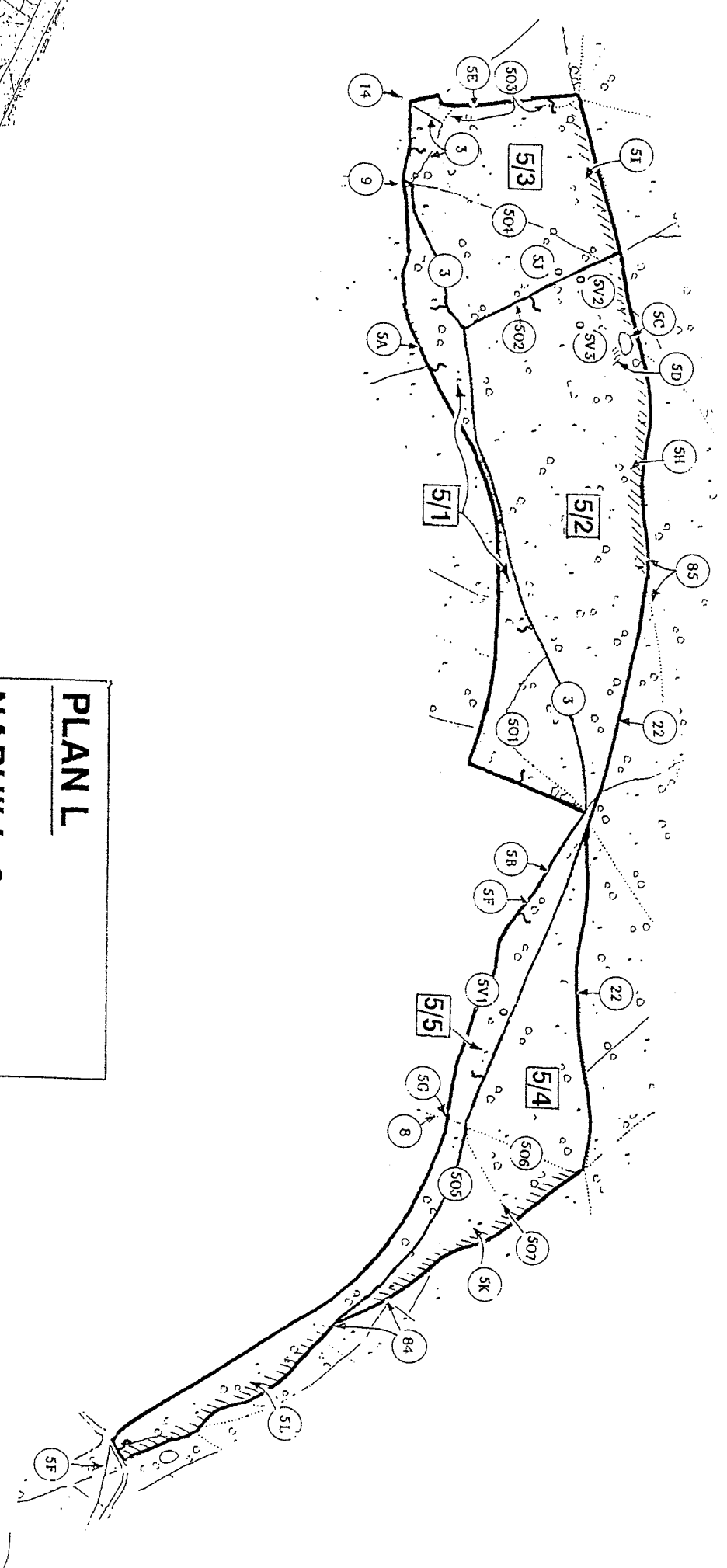
5A	The parish boundary.	Here the Hughenden/West Wycombe boundary once again, harbouring the "Ferry Ditch". Good adjoining habitat with hazel coppice.
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SUBCOMPARTMENT 5/2

Although skirted on its northern side by DBW 85, and containing the important Lady Horse Pond, this Sub-Cpt as a whole represents another rather remote part of Naphill Common. It is bounded at its western end by the now rather faint path 502. Mixed beech/oak woodland with veterans of both species, and abundant cherry and yew in places, especially towards the western end, where another (very moribund) juniper persists.

5C	Lady Horse Pond.	Reinstated and requiring continuing attention as for Dew Pond (4C). Project VII.
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PLAN L

**NAPHILL &
DOWNLEY
COMMONS**

**COMPARTMENT 5
NAPHILL COMMON SOUTH**

5D	Earthworks of archaeological interest.	See Section 1.4. Liaise with Bucks County Museum for further information and guidelines on management or interpretation.
5H	Border adj. Cpt 4.	Likely to be affected by bridleway widening along DBW 85 under WGS Plan (see also 4I/4K). Projects II/IX.
5J	Juniper.	A sprawling and moribund individual (see Photo 8 in Appendix V).

SUBCOMPARTMENT 5/3

The westernmost part of Cpt 5 - another somewhat deserted part of Naphill Common, lying west of (and excluding) FP 502, skirted at its western end by the tall hedge bordering Bradenham Hill Farm and the (non-definitive) footpath (503) which runs just inside it linking DFP 14 with DBW 85. A very faint track (504) crosses the Sub-Cpt from 502 to the stile for DFP 9. Mixed beech/oak woodland (with veterans of both), with abundant cherry, yew and holly, and occasional birch and whitebeam. Tall hedge at western end with holly again, and also hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and field maple.

5E	Farm hedge.	Liaise with NT over possible laying and/or coppicing. Part of Project V.
5I	Border adj. Cpt 4.	Likely to be affected by bridleway widening along DBW 85 under WGS Plan (see 4H). Projects II/IX.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 5/4

The main part of the eastern half of Cpt 5, bordered by Cpt 2 to the north and 1 to the east, and marked off along its southern edge by non-definitive but well used FP 505 (which is not included in this Sub-Cpt). Two other paths are 506 (from the Cuckoo Stile - see Sub-Cpt 5/5), and 507 (which branches off from this). There are other minor paths, spurs and loops which are not recorded here. Mixed beech/oak woodland (the latter more predominant eastwards), with wood-pasture veterans of both species; also yew, birch, cherry, rowan and abundant holly.

5K	Border Adj. Cpt 1.	Likely to be affected by bridleway widening along DBW 84 under WGS Plan (see 1Q/1S). Projects II/IX.
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SUBCOMPARTMENT 5/5

The narrow belt of mixed woodland, with abundant cherry and a mass of bluebells, between path 505 (which is included here) and the edge of the Common, crossed by FP 506. The farm hedge provides further interest.

5B	Hedge bordering Cookshall Farm land.	Species include hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, ash and field maple. Liaise with Cookshall Farm tenant over possible hedge rehabilitation work, possibly tying this in with an arable field-margin management project. Project V.
5F	The parish boundary.	The Hughenden/West Wycombe boundary. Coincides here with 5B.
5G	Cuckoo stile.	Definitive path DFP 8 from Cookshall Farm stops at stile (i.e. is not definitive on the Hughenden side of the parish boundary) - hence my own number, 506. Path continues as non-definitive 506. Possibly pursue within Project IX.
5L	Border Adj. Cpt 1.	Likely to be affected by bridleway widening along DBW 84 under WGS Plan (see 1S). Projects II & IX.
5V1	Veteran tree.	A huge and spectacular beech pollard. Include in Project III.

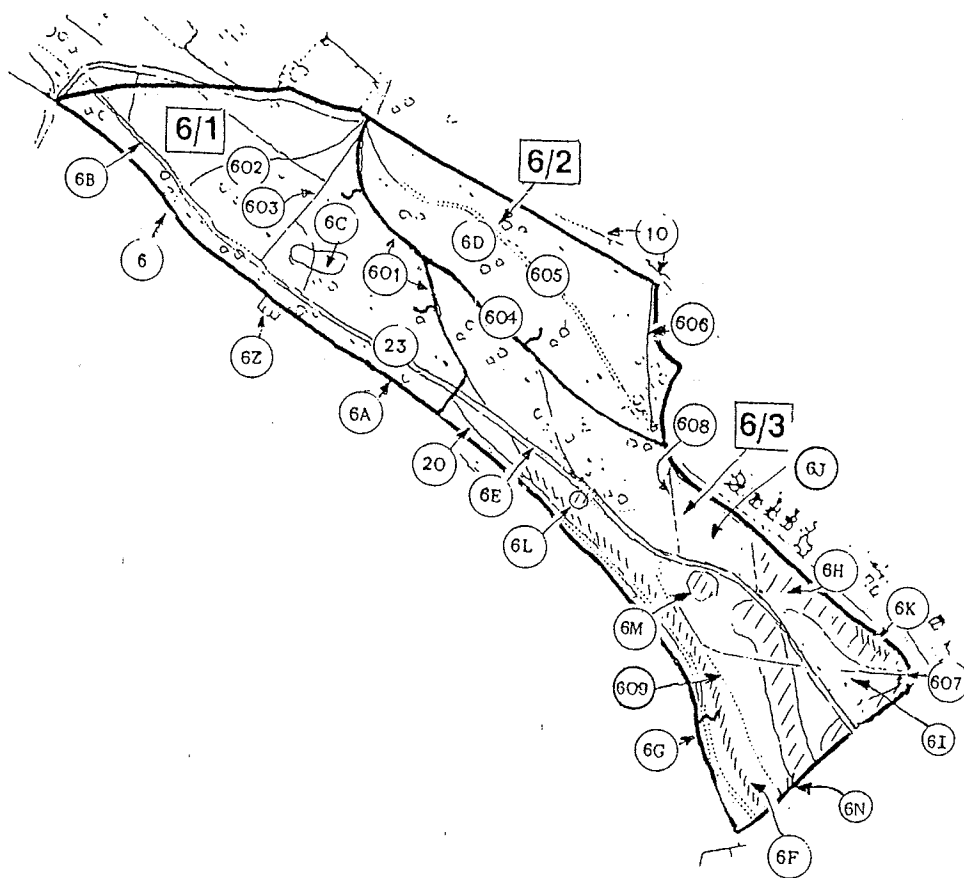
GRID NORTH



PLAN M

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

COMPARTMENT 6
DOWNLEY COMMON NORTH



Scale (main plan)

1 : 4760

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The northern edge is the (notional) parish boundary abutting the southern end of Naphill Common. Continuing clockwise, the Cpt boundary skirts Rose Cottage and Three Pigeons, cuts across the end of Hunts Hill Lane, runs along the edge of Oaks Wood as far as California Holdings, and then follows the edge of these properties round to the Le De Spencers Arms track (which is excluded). The metalled road dividing off the rest of Downley Common forms the southernmost boundary (also excluded). The western boundary is the hedge separating off the Common from Cookshall Farm land.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 6/1

The northernmost part of Cpt 6, bounded by the course of the old track which used to link Downley with Hunts Hill (601), and an arbitrary line across the narrow strip just north of the farm cottages at the point where DFP 20 diverges from DBW 23. The Sub-Cpt includes this bridleway, as well as the path (602) linking up with DFP 6, another path passing close to Manning's Pond (603), and several more paths which need to be properly mapped. The woodland areas include mixed oak/beech woodland, with veterans of both species, and the usual abundance of yew, cherry and holly, but there is a greater range of other species than tends to be found on Naphill Common, including ash, field maple, sycamore and crab apple. There is also the now more grassy course of the bridleway, flanked by the thick blackthorn-dominated Cookshall farm hedge, to complement the woodland, as well as the now celebrated Manning's Pond.

6A	Farm hedge.	Manage as for 5B: the intensive grassland might also yield a marginal strip free of slurry and other inputs to complement any hedge work. Project V. (See also 6Z).
6B	Course of bridleway.	Widening work as part of WGS Plan, and included in Projects II and IX. Any further widening should be on hedge side: see 6A.
6C	Manning's Pond.	The pond in which starfruit first re-appeared following initial clearance work by Downley Common Preservation Society. It has since received further attention, and although no starfruit has been seen in 1995, it has held its water level and has harboured an attractive range of wetland plants and invertebrates. Continue to maintain as part of Projects VII and VIII, as for Daisy Pond (1X - qv).
6Z	Farm pond.	Outside boundary of common, but a feature worth maintaining: might be tied in with work on 6A, above, as part of Project VII.

SUBCOMPARTMENT 6/2

The eastern part of the Cpt, containing the celebrated Dells. Bounded partly by track 601 (included with Cpt 6/1) and partly by the main path leading back to the Le De Spencers Arms road (604). Includes also the path skirting the east side of the Dells (605), and another (606) leading round to Oaks Wood at the California stile where it links up with DFP 10. Mixed beech/oak woodland with an assortment of veterans, as well as yew, cherry, holly, blackthorn and others. Much is heavily used, especially in and around the Dells, where compaction is precluding any regeneration.

6D	The Dells.	A favourite gathering place for local youngsters: see Photo 17 in Appendix V.
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SUBCOMPARTMENT 6/3

The southernmost part of Cpt 6, bounded by the two previous Sub-Cpts, and including the continuation of DBW 23, as well as DFP 20 which for part of its length follows the gravel track serving the farm cottages. This Sub-Cpt is noteworthy for its open, quite species-rich grassy areas, across which three further paths (607, 608 and 609) have been mapped, although there are other paths. The grassland is complemented by strips of advanced scrub and woodland, as well as the continuation of the Cookshall Farm hedge. This Sub-Cpt almost corresponds with DCPS's Area 9 on their own Plan.

6E	The main bridleway (DBW 23).	Widening work proposed as part of the WGS Plan (Projects II/IX): liaise with DCPS over this.
6F	Tall hedge cum tree-belt adj. track to cottages.	Includes ash, oak, field maple, cherry, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, ivy, elder, bramble and briar, most of these having flowered/fruited profusely during 1995, as evident from Photo 4 in Appendix IV. May warrant coppicing to maintain this structure and diversity (Projects IV/V).
6G	Farm hedge.	Manage as for 6A (Project V).
6H	Strip of woodland with adjoining areas of scrub and grassland habitats.	Shown as due to be thinned or cleared as part of WGS Plan (Project II). Liaise with DCPS over this as they are already managing this area: the same goes for 6I-6N below.
6I	Enclave of quite species-rich grassland.	Maintain by grazing if possible. Prevent further invasion by scrub. Project VI.
6J	Main area for species-rich grassland, of which parts are grazed by goats.	As for 6I. Project VI.
6K	Coarse ruderal vegetation alongside track.	Aim to convert back to ecologically more diverse grassland, initially by cutting and clearing. Special precautions should be taken over controlling Japanese knotweed (by approved herbicide if needs be): this invasive alien species occurs here in (so far) very limited quantities. Regard as part of Project VI.
6L	Group of field maples.	A pleasing feature of this part of Downley Common: retain.
6M	Group of oaks.	As for 6L.
6N	Thin grass cover over reinforced concrete.	Continues on opposite side of road here. The old Broom & Wade's tank crossing of historic as well as ecological interest: kept topped by DCPS. Regard as part of Project VI.

APPENDIX III

NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

EXISTING MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

Naphill Comm

N



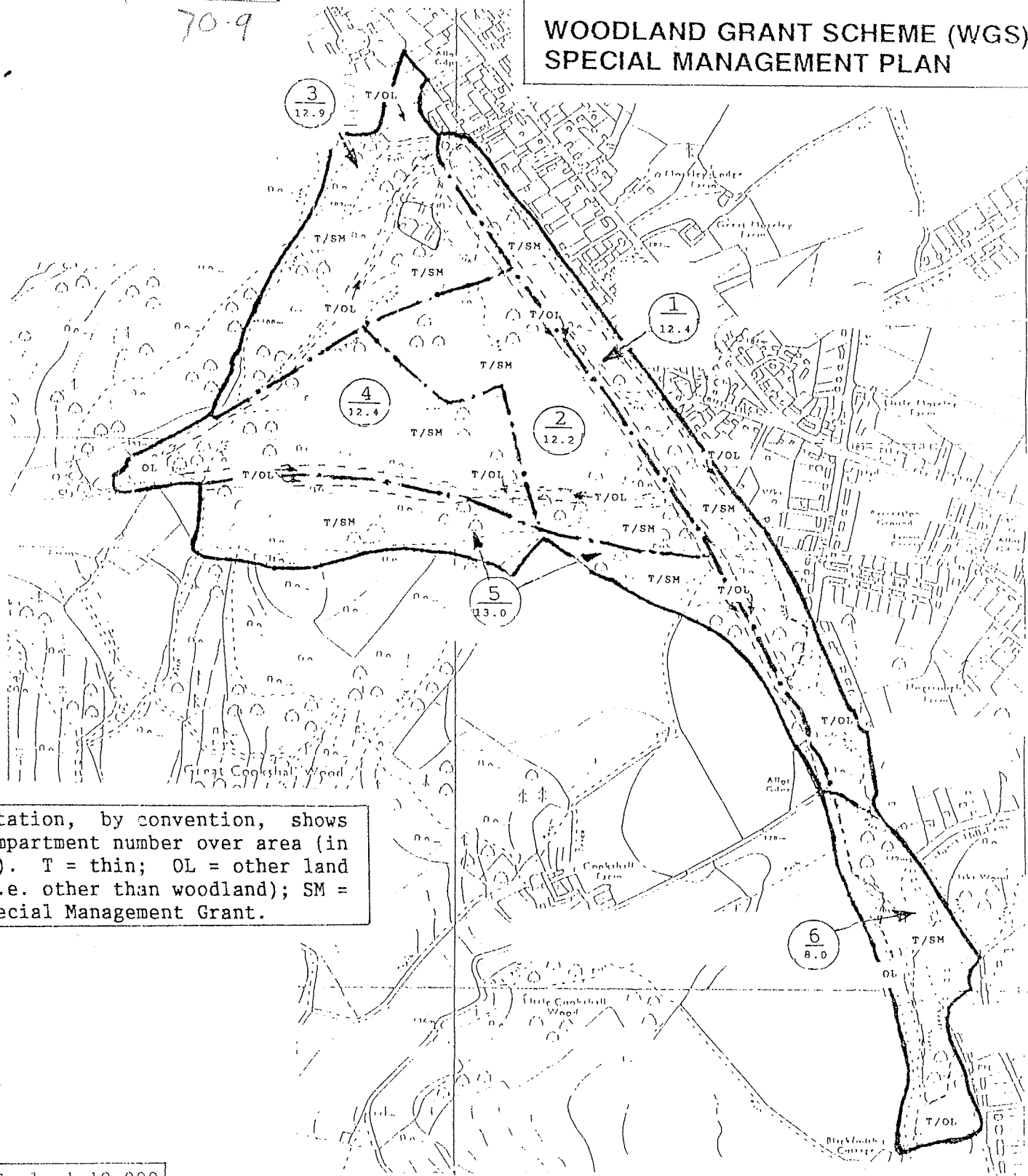
Darby

12.9
12.4
12.2
13.0
12.4
62.9
8.0
70.9

PLAN N

NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

WOODLAND GRANT SCHEME (WGS) SPECIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Notation, by convention, shows compartment number over area (in ha). T = thin; OL = other land (i.e. other than woodland); SM = Special Management Grant.

Scale 1:10 000

(SU) 84

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General Details of Work

NAPHILL COMMON IS A SSSI AND WILL BE MANAGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ENGLISH NATURE'S REQUIREMENTS. THE AREA IS OPEN TO FREE PUBLIC ACCESS, ALTHOUGH THIS WILL BE CHANNELLED WHERE POSSIBLE ALONG PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY. THE MAIN RIDES SHOWN ON THE MAP SCHEDULE 3 HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE SPECIAL MANAGEMENT GRANT AS WORK IN THESE AREAS IS TO BE GRANT AIDED BY ENGLISH NATURE.

ALL THINNING WILL BE CARRIED OUT TO THE FOLLOWING INTENSITY DURING THIS PLAN PERIOD:

- CROPS OF AGE 15-50 - A MAXIMUM OF 33% OF STEMS WILL BE REMOVED.
- CROPS OF AGE 50+ - A MAXIMUM OF 20% OF STEMS WILL BE REMOVED.
- CROPS ADJACENT TO BRIDLEWAYS - A MAXIMUM OF 80% OF STEMS WILL BE REMOVED.

SQUIRREL CONTROL WILL BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE MOST APPROPRIATE WAY SO AS TO ENSURE THAT DAMAGE LEVELS WILL NOT EXCEED THE FOLLOWING:
DAMAGE LEVELS WILL BE CONSIDERED UNACCEPTABLE IF MORE THAN 20% OF THOSE TREES, LESS THAN 40 YEARS OF AGE, WHICH FORM THE MIDDLE AND UPPER CANOPIES WITHIN THE WOODLAND EXHIBIT DEBARKING WHICH RESULTS IN THE TREE FAILING TO MAINTAIN ITS VIGOUR AND POTENTIAL WITHIN THE WOODLAND.

ACCEPTABLE LEVELS WILL BE ASSESSED BY AN INSPECTION AT THE END OF THE PLAN PERIOD TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE SPIRIT OF THE CONTRACT HAS BEEN UPHELD.

RIDE/GLADE MANAGEMENT: ALL RIDES AND GLADES WILL BE MANAGED BY ANNUAL CUTTING IN LATE SUMMER OR AS AGREED BY ENGLISH NATURE.

0: 0001 TO 0006 70.90ha

PROPOSED WORK

Proposed Work	P-Year	Species Planted	Area (Ha)	Grant %	Supplement
T	1945 *	MB	70.90		
SM		MB	50.00	100	
OL		OG	20.90	100	

DETAILS OF WORK:

SELECTIVE THINNING TO BE CARRIED OUT OVER THE PLAN PERIOD. TREES TO BE MARKED BY AGENT IN ADVANCE OF FELLING.

THINNING SPECIFICATION TO INCLUDE:

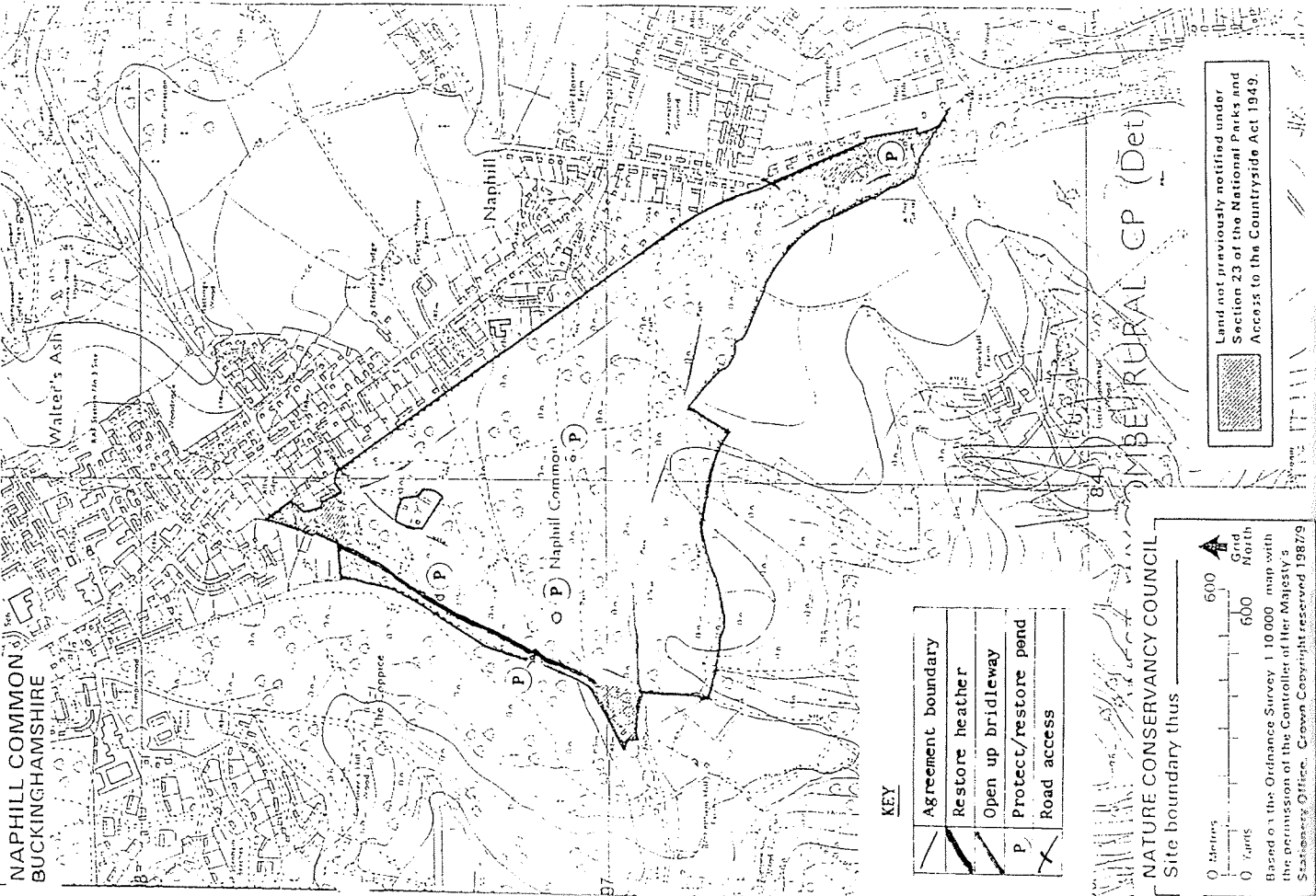
1. FREE ANCIENT OAK STANDARDS. RETAIN DEAD OR HOLLOW TREES IN A CONDITION WHERE THEY DO NOT REPRESENT A PUBLIC DANGER.
2. OPEN OUT AROUND PONDS TO A DISTANCE EQUIVALENT TO THE HEIGHT OF RETAINED TREES.
3. SELECTIVELY THIN SECONDARY GROWTH TO FAVOUR AND SPACE TREES OF GOOD TIMBER POTENTIAL.
4. SELECTIVELY THIN AREAS OF TIMBER QUALITY OAK, BIRCH AND WILD CHERRY.
5. CLEAR VEGETATION ALONG PUBLIC FOOTPATHS TO A WIDTH OF BETWEEN 2.0 AND 6.0 METRES.
6. CREATE GLADES AT RIDE/PATH INTERSECTIONS.
7. RETENTION OF LESS COMMON TREE AND SHRUB SPECIES.
8. OPEN OUT AROUND ANY TREES, SHRUBS OR OTHER FEATURES OF ECOLOGICAL OR HISTORICAL INTEREST IDENTIFIED DURING MARKING IN AGREEMENT WITH ENGLISH NATURE.
9. BRIDLEWAY TO BE WIDENED TO A WIDTH OF 12 - 18 METRES.

DESIGNATIONS: AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
WAY LEAVES, POWER LINES, PIPELINES ETC

PLAN O NAPHILL & DOWNLEY COMMONS

EN AGREEMENT

Scale 1:13700



ITEMS REQUIRING CORRECTION OR CLARIFICATION

- 1: Bridleways converge as shown here, not as shown on the EN map.
- 2: Correct course of bridlway: the EN map shows it following Foot-path 22.
- 3: This bridlway goes straight across to Downley Common: there is no hook or curve as shown on the EN map.
- 4: This is the correct route for Definitive Bridlway 18, but it is not the course being used by horse-riders (see Section 2.4.8 and Items 3D and 3H on Plan J in Appendix 11).
- 5: These two key ponds have been omitted from the EN map.
- 6: Should there not be an access mark for Chapel Lane, as there is for Forge Road and Downley Road? Certainly, timber is currently being stacked at the end of Chapel Lane.

AGREED MANAGEMENT POLICY

NAPHILL COMMON

Extract from (undated) agreement between EN and West Wycombe Estate

1. Nature Conservation Interest in the Land

The woodland contains many large ancient oak and beech pollards, survivors from the period when the common was more open and grazed by stock. The pollards are surrounded by younger woodland which originated with the cessation of grazing at the beginning of this century. In places oak dominates the stand, often in the absence of beech. The site includes some sessile oak, a tree with a very limited distribution in Buckinghamshire. Elsewhere, birch and wild cherry are locally abundant with frequent rowan and occasional whitebeam, crab apple and ash. The understorey contains much holly including some large specimens, while hawthorn and hazel are less common, and yew, field maple and blackthorn occur locally on the southern margin. The ground flora contains a number of species which are typically associated with ancient woodland, most noteworthy being the rare wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*. Other species include enchanter's nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, remote sedge *Carex remota*, hairy wood rush *Luzula pilosa*, and the grasses wood melick *melica uniflora*, wood millet *Milium effusum* and giant fescue *Festuca gigantea*. The absence of many other species typical of ancient woodland in the Chilterns is presumed to reflect the history of grazing followed by natural succession to dense woodland.

2. Management Objectives

As from the commencement of the Agreement the land shall be managed with a view to safeguarding and enhancing the features of nature conservation interest. In particular:

To restore or maintain the features characteristic of the old common including ponds, open grazed grassland, relic heath and open rides within a matrix of mature native broadleaved oak and beech woodland.

3. Management of the Site and Consented Operations

The Council hereby gives the Owner consent to manage the land as follows:

A. Ride Management

Bridlepaths

- (i) As shown marked blue on the plan and shall be managed with the aim of opening up the bridlepaths to provide a warm and sunny environment.
- (ii) Trees and scrub shall be cleared back from rides to a distance of 10 metres either side and also fallen trees shall be cleared from the rides with public access and left as dead wood on the ride side.
- (iii) Retain ancient oaks and beeches, hollow trees and standing deadwood where it does not pose a safety risk. Where safety is at risk then the deadwood should be lopped and left lying close to its original location.
- (iv) Where there are areas of trees with low conservation value it may be appropriate to retain groves of scrub to provide a varied ride edge.
- (v) Cleared material shall be chipped and blown back on to the ride to assist in surface reconstruction.

Wayleave

- (i) As shown marked red on the plan and shall be managed with the aim of restoring the heather.
- (ii) Trees and scrub shall be cut to form a swathe of between 10 and 30 metres wide.
- (iii) If at all possible the ground should be disturbed so as to free any heather seeds which are undoubtedly lying dormant in the soil.

B. Ponds

- (i) These are identified on the plan by a letter P and shall be managed to provide ideal conditions for Starfruit *Damasonium alisma*.
- (ii) Trees and scrub shall be cleared from around the edge. With trees of high nature conservation value it may be necessary to pollard as opposed to felling.

C. Woodland Management

The Owner has completed a Woodland Grant Scheme application in consultation with English Nature and this will form the basis of the first five year plan of woodland operations.

4. Potentially Damaging Operations

This Policy does not authorise the carrying out of any of the following operations except as set out in Clause 3 **Management of the Site and Consented Operations** or as may be agreed from time to time between the parties and recorded by way of addenda:

Standard

Ref No Type of Operation

- 1 Cultivation, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing and re-seeding.
- 2 The introduction of or changes in the grazing regime (including type of stock, intensity or seasonal pattern of grazing and cessation of grazing).
- 3 The introduction of or changes in stock feeding practice.
- 4 The introduction of mowing or changes in the mowing or cutting regime (including hay making to silage and cessation).
- 5 Application of manure, fertilisers and lime.
- 6 Application of pesticides, including herbicides (weedkillers).
- 7 Dumping, spreading or discharge of any materials.
- 8 Burning.
- 9 The release into the site of any wild, feral or domestic mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate, or any plant or seed.
- 10 The killing or removal of any wild mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate, excluding pest control.
- 11 The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant or plant remains, including tree, shrub, herb, hedge, dead or decaying wood, moss, lichen, fungus, leaf-mould or turf.

- 12 The introduction of or changes in tree or woodland management including afforestation, planting, clear and selective felling, thinning, coppicing, modification of the stand or underwood, changes in species composition, cessation of management).
- 13a Drainage (including the use of mole, tile, tunnel or other artificial drains).
- 13b The changing of water levels and tables and water utilisation including irrigation, storage and abstraction from existing water bodies and through boreholes.
- 15 Infilling of ditches, drains, ponds, pools, marshes or pits.
- 16a The introduction of or changes in freshwater fishery production and management including sporting fishing and angling.
- 20 Extraction of minerals, including peat, shingle, sand and gravel, topsoil, sub-soil, chalk, lime and spoil.
- 21 Construction, removal or destruction of roads, tracks, walls, fences, hardstands, banks, ditches or other earthworks, or the laying, maintenance or removal of pipelines and cables, above or below ground.
- 22 Storage of materials.
- 23 Erection of permanent or temporary structures, or the undertaking of engineering works, including drilling.
- 26 Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb features of interest.
- 27 Recreational or other activities likely to damage features of interest.
- 28 The introduction of or changes in game and hunting practice.

5. Work by Statutory Undertakers and Other Bodies

Where works by statutory undertakers or other outside agencies prove necessary the owner will make with such agencies such arrangements as may be agreed by the Council.

6. Scientific Work

The Council shall give advance notification to the Owner of any projected scientific work which may affect the estate management or other of the Owner's interests in the land and shall also inform the Owner of any scientific finding relevant to the above interests.

7. Enhancement of Nature Conservation Interest

The annual payment is a contribution to the management and enhancement of Naphill to restore the features of interest of the old Common.

8. Amendments to Agreed Management Policy

Any agreed variation or amendment shall be recorded by way of addenda at the foot hereof which shall be signed on behalf of the parties and deemed to form part hereof.

DOWNLEY COMMON PRESERVATION SOCIETY

PLAN OF MANAGEMENT FOR DOWNLEY COMMON

This agreement with the West Wycombe Estate is "an initial attempt to tackle those areas that require relatively simple, but possibly time consuming, attention".

Work includes grass cutting, flailing, scrub control, pond maintenance and general tidying, and covers eleven designated areas across Downley Common as a whole, of which three come within Cpt 6 (Downley Common North) of the Naphill and Downley Commons Management Plan.

The areas are:-

Area 9 (see map). The area local to the Chilton Cottages.

The bridle path will not be widened but some overhanging branches will be cut back. Efforts will be made to stop illegal car access to the path and the common in general, particularly from the track leading to Chilton Cottages. [Recent work has included grassland maintenance, scrub clearance and tending the oaks and other trees.]

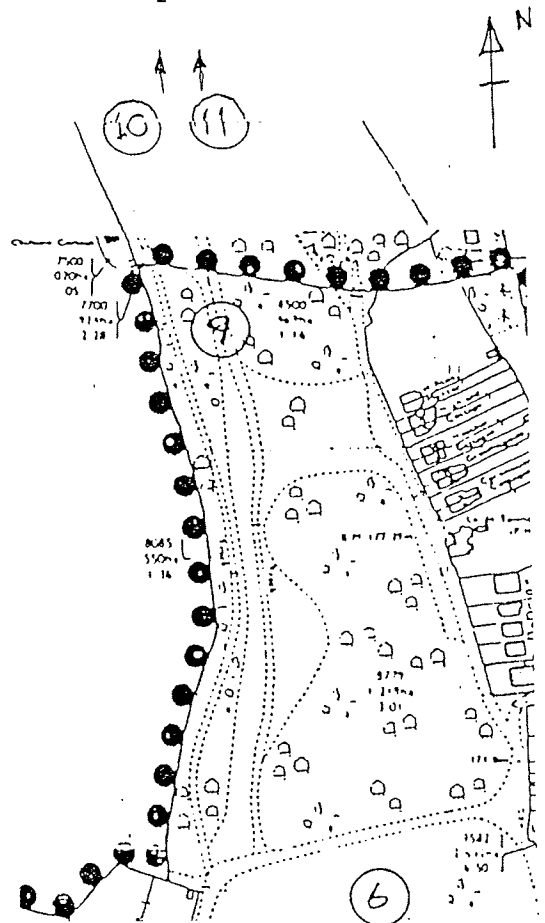
Area 10. Mannings Pond.

Drive Force will be asked to clear the pond and restore the area to an attractive environment that would encourage the return of suitable pond life. Local thinning of surrounding trees will be done so that more light can reach the area. Suitable guidance and assistance will be given by the Society. [It was earlier work here by DCPS which resulted in the original reappearance of the rare starfruit.]

Area 11. The area to the north of Mannings Pond and bordering onto Naphill Common.

The exact boundaries of this lesser used area will be determined and suitably marked.

Liasion will be necessary between Tilhill Forestry and DCPS once initial work under the WGS Scheme reaches Downley Common.



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APPENDIX IV

NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

POSSIBLE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

Milner Project
BCC
CJNA
Buck EC
Wilton St

APPENDIX IV

POSSIBLE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

See also Section 2.4 and Plan Q in the main Report. Timing relates to the year beginning September 1st, so 1998/99 = Sept 1 1998 - Aug 31 1999.

Abbreviations are as follows: BCCC = Bucks County Council (Countryside Management); BCCH = Bucks County Council (Highways); BTCV = British Trust for Conservation Volunteers; DCPS = Downley Common Preservation Society; EN = English Nature; FA = Forestry Authority; FWAG = Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group; NCC = Naphill Common Committee; NT = National Trust; RSPB = Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; TEF = Tilhill Economic Forestry; WGS = Woodland Grant Scheme; WWE = West Wycombe Estate.

Note that regular liaison will be needed with EN where the SSSI is affected, although their acceptance at the outset of this Plan should keep such requirements to a minimum.

NVC national vegetation
classification. Appendix 1

PROJECT I. CONTINUING SURVEY (Objectives 24, 25).

Consolidate survey of habitats using the same format as this Report. Build up species lists, ideally Sub-Cpt by Sub-Cpt. Relate plant records to NVC communities where possible. Monitor effects of management by biological recording and fixed-point photography. Keep County Environmental Records Centre up-to-date. Provide the basis for more comprehensive environmental audits in due course.

Location: All Cpts. Timing: Commence ASAP and continue throughout duration of Plan. Action: NCC/DCPS, co-opting suitably experienced volunteers, and more specialist input when required.

PROJECT II. WOODLAND MANAGEMENT (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 5).

Continue to promote and safeguard the perpetuation of naturally regenerating woodland by suitable low-key, traditional silvicultural practice. Aim to reduce dominance of holly where this is feasible, initially through regular cutting and topping. Shred excess lop-and-top. Provide for non-interference or wilderness areas for scientific study and environmental education.

Location: All Cpts. Timing: Already started as agreed within the WGS Plan, and to be spread over the five years 1994/95 to 1998/99. Action: WWE/TEF.

Note that woodland thinning and clearance to favour veteran trees, reclaim grass and heathland habitats, and open up bridelways, is considered separately in Projects III, VI and IX, respectively.

PROJECT III. VETERAN TREES (Objective 4).

Continue to locate and map pollards and other key veteran trees as already commenced in this Report. Assess their status and any need for clearing round or for tree surgery, and carry out these treatments as necessary. Monitor response. Inaugurate new cycle of pollarding by selecting and treating younger maiden trees.

Location: All Cpts. Timing: Mapping and clearance (within WGS Plan) already started. Aim to complete survey by 1997/98. Treat individual trees according to urgency of need. Action: NCC/DCPS (survey and mapping, with help from local

volunteers including orienteering groups); WWE/TEF/subcontracted skilled arboriculturalists (tree work).

PROJECT IV. SCRUB (Objective 9).

Protect, maintain and conserve (by coppicing on a 10-15 year rotation where necessary) key areas of scrub, especially where these are of particular interest in themselves (e.g. by providing good habitat for breeding and overwintering birds or through containing gorse), or else where they complement adjoining grass, heath or woodland habitats.

Management
agent.

Location: Sub-Cpts 1/5, 1/6, 3/1, 6/3. Timing: Winter work. Aim to treat these four Sub-Cpts in succession, say in 1998/99, 2000/01, 2002/03, 2004/05, respectively. Action: WWE/TEF/experienced subcontractor (e.g. BCCC, BTCV).

Note that juniper is treated separately under Project VIII.

PROJECT V. HEDGES (Objective 10).

Rehabilitate and maintain hedges and hedgerow trees by selective coppicing and/or laying along Cookshall and Bradenham Hill Farm boundaries. Plant up gaps with appropriate species where warranted. Subsequent management should aim for alternate-year (or less frequent) trimming in late winter only. This project will require liaison with Cookshall Farm tenant and NT, and could possibly be linked with the adoption of innovative field-margin management.

Management
agent.

Can
NCC

Get as
early as
possible

Location: Sub-Cpts 4/3, 5/1, 5/5, 6/1, 6/3. Timing: Winter work. Commence 1997/98, and apportion as necessary throughout remaining period covered by Plan. Action: WWE/BCCC/FWAG/subcontractor e.g. BTCV.

Note that part of this project might be offered to Bucks County Council as a site for their annual hedge-laying competition and demonstration.

PROJECT VI. GRASSLAND AND HEATH (Objective 11).

Maintain and/or reclaim existing and recently overgrown areas of grassland and heath, either by cutting and topping, or (where the practice is established or can be readily reintroduced) by grazing, for example with tethered goats or ponies. Adopt a hay-type regime (or suitably timed grazing) where botanical interest is greatest. Mow shortest grass at 2-3 week intervals, longer swards 1-4 times/year, but always with the aim of encouraging flowering and seed-set of favourable species. Control invasive species, notably bracken and unwanted scrub, by a suitable combination of mechanical and approved chemical treatment.

Management
agent.

Who can
make?
(Bucks County)

Location: Sub-Cpts 1/1, 1/2, 1/5, 1/6, 3/1, 3/3, 3/4, 4/3, 6/3. Timing: Continue with existing practices where appropriate; introduce anew from the outset. Action: WWE/TEF/subcontractor, as well as commonside householders where their own mowing efforts are acceptable or can be made so.

See also Project VIII with regard to heather, IX re-grassland along footpaths and bridleways and X regarding larger-scale wood-pasture reclamation.

PROJECT VII. PONDS (Objective 12).

Maintain existing and recently reinstated ponds by clearance of surface vegetation (particularly sweet-grass) where this begins to significantly encroach on open water. Stir up muddy margins where starfruit is known or

suspected to occur (see also Project VIII). Restore dried-out ponds.

Location: Maintenance - 1X, 3J, 3K, 4C, 5C, 6C (also 6Z if agreed by Cookshall Farm); restoration - 4A, 3G (possibly 2D). Timing: Maintenance work should be aimed to cover each pond in sequence according to most urgent need, at least once during the period of the Plan. Ponds 3G and 4A could be restored at the same time to permit more economic use of specialised machinery, perhaps as a millenium project, though with initial preparations (primarily tree-felling) commenced at least a year beforehand. Action: WWE/TEF, NCC/DCPS to co-ordinate and organise smaller-scale work.

See also next Project regarding starfruit.

PROJECT VIII. RARITIES (Objective 13).

Take special measures to conserve the habitats of rare or threatened species on the Commons, notably heather (mowing/surface scarification), juniper (clear back competing vegetation and possibly take cuttings) and starfruit (stir up mud in relevant pond-margins), and to increase the chance of encouraging back former ornithological residents such as breeding nightjar (mowing/topping suitable heathy wood-edge habitats).

Location: Sub-Cpts 3/3, 3/4, 4/3 (heather); 2J, 4J, 5J (juniper), 1X, 6C (starfruit), plus other locations for these should they be discovered during the course of Project I. Sub-Cpt 1/5 (nightjar). Timing: Commence ASAP. Action: WWE/TEF/NCC/DCC in collaboration with EN and RSPB.

See also Project XI for expansion of these initiatives.

PROJECT IX. FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS (Objective 16).

Resolve anomalies over routes of definitive and agreed permissive footpaths and bridleways, and waymark as necessary. Maintain by topping grassland and siding-up overhanging shrub and tree growth. Drain and surface with acceptable clean scalplings or similar non-chalky materials where justified, though otherwise rely on wood-chippings from woodland thinnings for such improvements. Re-seed with fine-grass mix (Countryside Stewardship specification) where regeneration is slow or weedy.

Location: All compartments. Timing: Resolve correct routes and designation ASAP. Attend to surfacing and re-seeding as urgency dictates. Otherwise adopt an annual routine for maintenance along the lines specified in Project VI. Action: NCC/DCPS/TEF/BCCH.

PROJECT X. EXTENSION OF WOOD-PASTURE (Objectives 8, 14).

See Section 3.2. p37

PROJECT XI. HABITAT ENHANCEMENT (Objective 14).

See Section 3.3. p41

PROJECT XII. WARDENING (Objective 23).

See Section 3.4. p43

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APPENDIX V

NAPHILL AND DOWNLEY COMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHS, JULY/AUGUST 1995

PHOTO 1

Classic woodland scene within the depths of Naphill Common, towards the eastern end of Cpt 4. The woodland canopy consists of a mixture of beech and oak, the former also dominating much of the understorey, though with other components here including rowan and yew, as well as the inevitable holly. Scattered bracken and brambles can be seen in the mid-foreground, where there is a substantial accumulation of leaf litter. The verdant grassy glade is mainly creeping bent and rough-stalked meadow-grass, and hadn't many more days to go before the continuing drought finally turned it brown! The ever-present wood pigeons were calling amongst the tree-tops, and blackbirds scuffling about for food among the leaves. Ecology apart, the importance of the Common for this simple beauty and tranquillity, and its restorative effect on those who walk it, cannot be overstated.

Photo CJS: Ref 11176

PHOTO 2

Another idyllic woodland setting, this time in Cpt 3, where in places beech completely dominates both canopy and understorey. There looks to be ample regeneration here to ensure natural restocking and perpetuation of the stand, though how successful this proves to be depends absolutely on the effective control of the destructive grey squirrel.

Photo CJS: Ref 11217



PHOTO 3

Oak woodland towards the south-east corner of Cpt 2. Though of poor conformation, these trees are nonetheless of great ecological value and aesthetic attraction, and the woodland community of which they are a part is ecologically one of our richest. Great spotted woodpecker could be heard both calling and pecking about among the upper branches.

Photo CJS: Ref 11168

PHOTO 4

By contrast, here and there, trees of extremely high silvicultural quality are to be found. This splendid oak, with perhaps fifteen metres of dead-straight and unbranched trunk, is growing alongside bridleway 85, just inside Sub-Cpt 2/3. Hardly of less value, despite its fork, is the great cherry alongside it. The careful extraction and sale of trees of this quality can help defray the expense of unprofitable conservation management, and at best restore the pleasing situation where home-grown timber is once again turned into furniture of traditional local design and manufacture.

Photo CJS: Ref 11223

PHOTO 5

One undeniable problem throughout the woodlands of Naphill and Downley Commons is the prevalence of holly as an invasive and persistent understorey species, here seen near the southern edge of Cpt 4. Very much a shrub of temperate Europe, it occupies its global stronghold in Britain, and so (unlike the non-native rhododendron which mercifully has never been introduced to the Commons) is a perfectly natural component of these oak- and beechwoods alike. However, measures to reduce its dominance and to promote greater diversity within the woodland flora, form an important part of the management plan for the property.

Photo CJS: Ref 11227



PHOTO 6

Of overwhelming interest and importance in the ecology of Naphill and Downley Commons is its substantial population of veteran trees, which originate from a time when the whole area was far more open, consisting of so-called wood-pasture. Some of these old trees are familiar landmarks along the paths and ride-sides; many more are hidden away in the secondary woodland which has sprung up around them as grazing and other traditional methods of husbandry lapsed, and will warrant clearing around. This old oak - both ecologically and aesthetically just as important dead as alive - stands among the beeches towards the western end of Cpt. 5.

Photo CJS: Ref 11250

PHOTO 6A

The spectacular growth of the sulphur polypore (Laetiporus sulphureus), here in its most conspicuous form, on the oak hulk alongside bridelway 85, now identified as tree 2V3.

Photo CJS: Ref 11311

PHOTO 7

Notwithstanding the importance of the dead-wood habitat, a prime objective is to prolong the life of these old trees as far as is practicable. This great beech (4V1) in Cpt 4 not far from Garden Bottom is a perfect example of the scale of the problem to be faced. Repeatedly pollarded in the past, this tree has long been left to itself. While this has resulted in a specimen of impressive proportions, the height of its crown is rendering the tree increasingly unstable. A branch can be seen to have broken off to the right of the picture, and indeed a similar tree in the left foreground has not long ago come crashing down in its entirety across the path. The re-introduction of pollarding has urgently to be addressed, as does the matter of pollarding young trees anew, so as to perpetuate the cycle.

Photo CJS: Ref 11231

PHOTO 8

Another fascinating relic of earlier times is the juniper, though here not only shading by woodland but also subtle changes in climate appear to be responsible for its decline. This characteristically sprawling and moribund specimen in the western quarter of Cpt 5 (5J in the catalogue) is by far the poorest of the handful of bushes which are known still to exist on Naphill Common, though more intensive and systematic surveying may bring additional examples to light. Deliberate propagation from cuttings may be the only answer to conserving these junipers, and even then it is to be hoped that both male and female bushes are represented!

Photo CJS: Ref 11174



PHOTO 9

The broader rides and glades amidst the woodlands allow grassland and other herbaceous communities to develop and flourish. The ride shown here is near the Clumps in Cpt 4, and continues along the western edge of Cpt 3 where this adjoins the Coppice. Kept open primarily for the overhead powerlines which run along here, the herbaceous vegetation includes important acid-grassland and even heather communities, though bracken is dominant in places.

Photo CJS: Ref 11169

PHOTO 10

A typical, and very attractive, component of the "grassy glade" flora - tufted hair-grass - with another common species, remote sedge, forming the bulk of the herbage in the background. This photograph was taken in the same part of Cpt 4 as Photo 5.

Photo CJS: Ref 11219

PHOTO 11

Manning's Pond, on Downley Common (Cpt 6). The first to receive restorative treatment, initially from Downley Common Preservation Society, this was where the celebrated starfruit first appeared, though there was no sign of it here during 1995. Nevertheless, like the other restored ponds, this one has retained its water throughout the great drought, and damsel and dragon-flies, wasps and a comma butterfly were all to be seen on the wing, or drinking from the mats of sweet-grass and duckweed, in the searing and unrelenting heat.

Photo CJS: Ref 11191

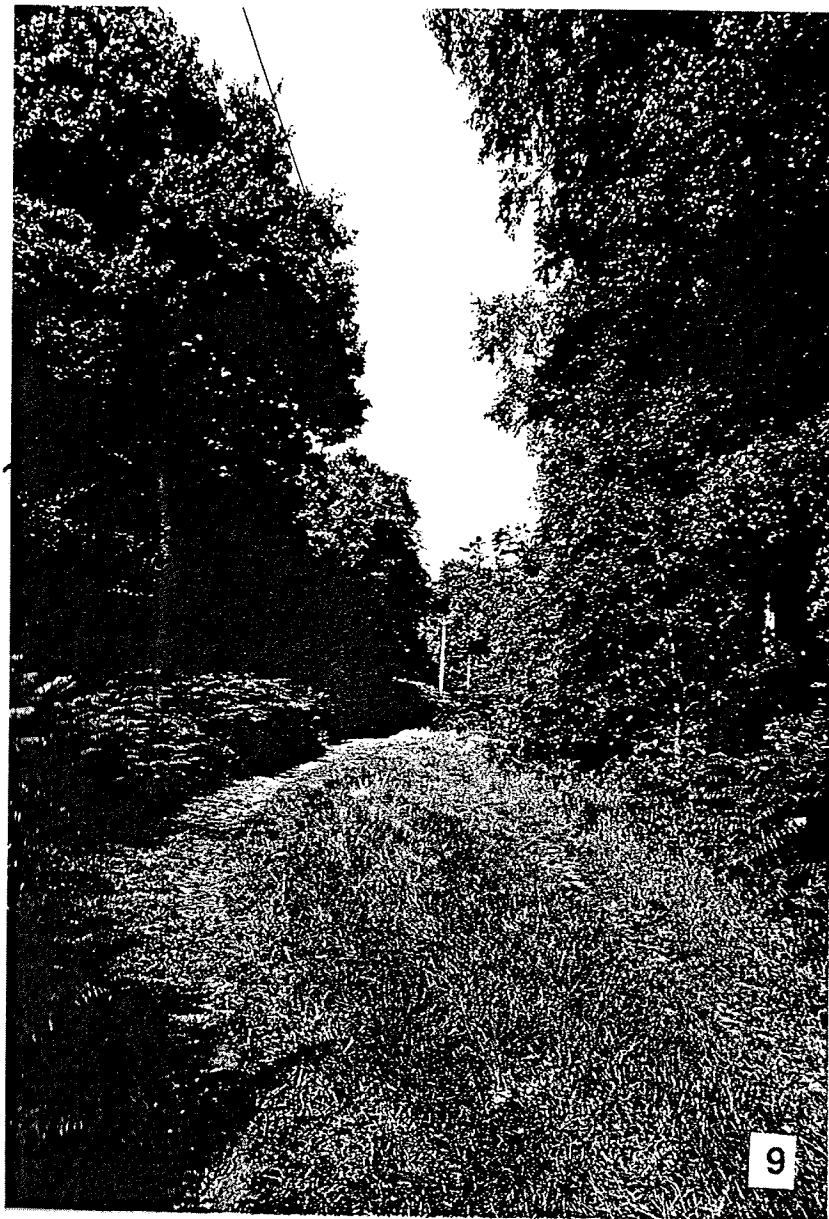


PHOTO 12

A more meadowy type of grassland (so-called neutral or mesophilic grassland), with a substantial variety of attractive grasses and herbs, occurs on Downley Common (Cpt 6), as shown here, and at the top end of Naphill Common near Forge Road in the area known as the Plain (Cpt 3). The yellow flowers of ragwort can be seen to the right of the path in this picture, the white flower-heads of wild carrot to the left. The brown patches are red clover plants dying off in the drought. The grass is mainly tall oat-grass. Knapweed also occurs in this area, as does bird's-foot trefoil. Butterflies seen here included meadow brown and common blue, and grasshoppers were abundant. The brambles and thorn scrub in the background provide shelter and complementary habitat, though simultaneously threaten to eclipse the grassland - another management dilemma!

Photo CJS: Ref 11257

PHOTO 12A

The delightful and seemingly so fragile harebell is, in fact, amazingly drought-tolerant, as was dramatically demonstrated in 1995.

Photo CJS: Ref 11268

PHOTO 13

One of the tethered goats which have been maintaining the pasture on Downley Common (Cpt 6). Animals like these may prove to be one of the most realistic ways of reclaiming and maintaining the more open areas of both commons.

Photo CJS: Ref 11261

PHOTO 14

This substantial belt of hawthorn and blackthorn, with field maple, gean and other trees and shrubs, is essentially a grown-out hedge, and runs along the west side of the southern end of Downley Common (Cpt 6). The blackthorn is heavy with dusty-blue sloes, and the gean likewise with bright red cherries (on some trees these are black). Long-term maintenance of this feature, and others like it, could involve a commitment to a cycle of coppicing and/or laying.

Photo CJS: Ref 11259

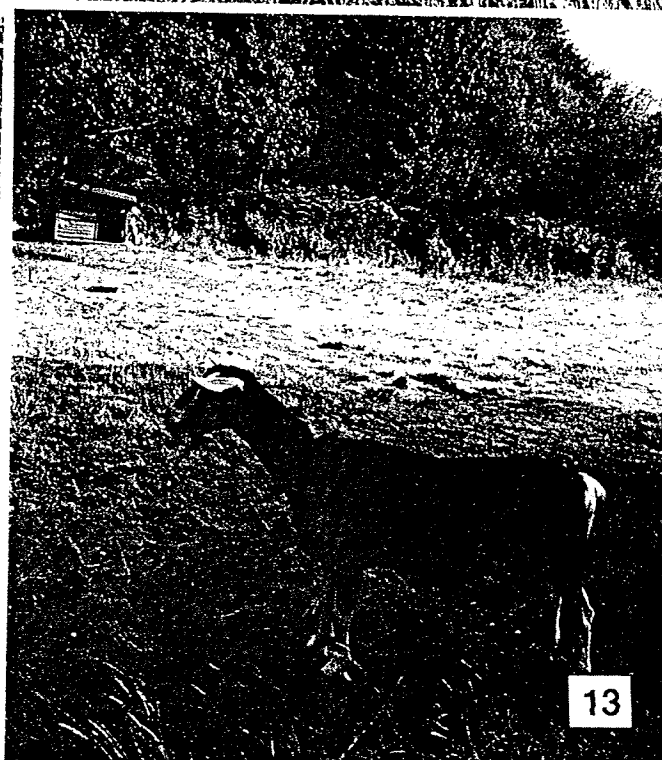
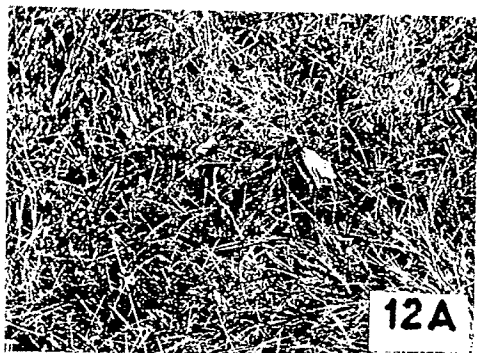


PHOTO 15

Much of Naphill Common's eastern boundary (i.e. Cpt 1) adjoins housing, seen here in the vicinity of Pursells Meadow. Some properties have direct access to the Common, and some residents are registered Commoners, but for local people generally, the Common is a wonderful resource for informal recreation.

Photo CJS: Ref 11202

PHOTO 16

Dog-walking is a popular pursuit. Here John Daly is being enthusiastically led into Cpt 3 from Forge Road by his two charges. The Naphill and Downley Commons Ecological Survey Vehicle is parked against a log to the left.

Photo CJS: Ref 11242

PHOTO 17

Long before mountain bikes were ever thought of, the celebrated Dells on Downley Common (Cpt 6) - location of former clay and flint workings - were a honeypot for local youngsters to practise their cycling skills. This is an early morning shot taken before the first of the day's budding stunt-riders had arrived.

Photo CJS: Ref 11254



PHOTO 18

This footpath is No. 6 on the Definitive Map, and has been waymarked with the Chiltern Society's discreet white arrow (on tree-trunk to right). The path leads off from the Downley Common bridleway in Cpt 6 not far from Manning's Pond, through the welcome shade of this dense blackthorn thicket, towards Cookshall Farm.

Photo CJS: Ref 11194

PHOTO 19

Vehicular access is no longer permitted between Downley and Hunts Hill, and these sturdy wooden posts between the Le De Spencers Arms track and the Humps (in Cpt 6) carry that message plainly enough.

Photo CJS: Ref 11255

PHOTO 20

Not quite a fast enough film to catch these horses on the move, but a pleasing view, nonetheless, of three people enjoying a quiet ride along Naphill Common's Bridleway 85. The riders don't know it, but they are about to cross from Cpt 2 into Cpt 4!

Photo CJS: Ref 11233



PHOTO 21

Jim Crawford is the forester contracted to Tilhill Economic Forestry for the initial work on Naphill Common under the WGS Special Management Agreement. Here he gives his chainsaw a check-over on the foreloader of his venerable County tractor, before continuing with the thinning work to widen the ride (Bridleway 84) seen in the background, and clear around the old pollards. This is the boundary between Cpts 1 and 2, about mid-way up Cpt 1.

Photo CJS: Ref 11204

PHOTO 22

A pleasing stand of developing oak in Cpt 1, recently cleared of holly. This is, as usual, common or pedunculate oak. Sessile oak is rumoured to occur here and there on the Common, and the current thinning work should increase the chance of locating this elusive species.

Photo CJS: Ref 11170

PHOTO 23

The top end of Cpt 1 by the edge of the track from Forge Road to the Heysham complex. The timber extracted from the first thinnings has been carefully placed in unobtrusive stacks, though the operation has drawn criticism from some local people concerned about (1) the danger of children climbing on the logs, (2) the rutted state the ground has been left in, and (3) the coarse vegetation of nettles, thistles and docks which has grown up. The notice goes some way towards resolving (1), the drought delayed attention to (2), and (3) could not be adequately tackled because of the ruts! It was the desire to minimise any further misunderstandings of this kind which prompted the commissioning of this more comprehensive Management Plan.

Photo CJS: Ref 11240



PHOTO 24

Another early priority in the initial phase of the WGS plan has been to clear invading birch from the southern end of Cpt 1. The longer-term objective here will be to encourage more of a grassy or heathland habitat to develop, of the kind which might conceivably bring back breeding nightjar.

Photo CJS: Ref 11252

PHOTO 25

Not just a committee, but a cheerful committee. Members of the Naphill Common Committee meet at Forge Road with the agent for the West Wycombe Estate, Paul Lindon (far left) and Tilhill Economic Forestry's District Manager Stephen Smith (in blue jersey). Committee members represented are, from left and going round clockwise, Jill Shiu, Geoff Pilkington, Daisy Leek (almost hidden), Trevor Hussey, Philip Hussey (Chairman, with map) and Gloria Leflaive.

Photo CJS: Ref 11167



PHOTO 26

British White cattle graze the wood-pastures of Burnham Beeches. The cow here receiving her daily scratch from Deputy Head Ranger Helen Read is in calf: the youngster actually belongs to the cow in the background. The cattle have proved very effective in controlling holly regeneration, and are extremely popular with visitors.

Photo CJS: Ref 11283

PHOTO 27

This view shows how unobtrusive and indeed attractive fencing can be in a situation such as this, though post-and-rail is by no means the cheapest option.

Photo CJS: Ref 11286

PHOTO 28

People who are sufficiently agile can climb through or over the fences, but where more organised access is required, gates and cattle grids serve this purpose. Here, Mark Frater, Head Ranger at Burnham Beeches, checks an ingenious new gate which can be opened equally easily whether on foot, in a wheelchair or on horseback. It swings in either direction and is self-closing. The notice explains about the grazing, and demonstrates the importance of good interpretation.

Photo CJS: Ref 11274



PHOTOS 29/30

Perhaps more comparable with Naphill and Downley Commons (though less than half the size), Inkpen Common, a BBONT Reserve near Hungerford in west Berkshire, has recently been fenced, in this case with post-and-wire (Photo 29), to permit the reintroduction of cattle. The animals, which are Friesian x Hereford bullocks (Photo 30), have thrived well on their summer grazing, needing only a supplementary protein lick in addition to their water supply. The Warden, Mike Stabler, keeps a regular eye on them.

Photos CJS: Refs 11326
11328

PHOTO 31

Holding pens, or coraals, are crucial for moving stock in and out, and for checking their health and veterinary needs.

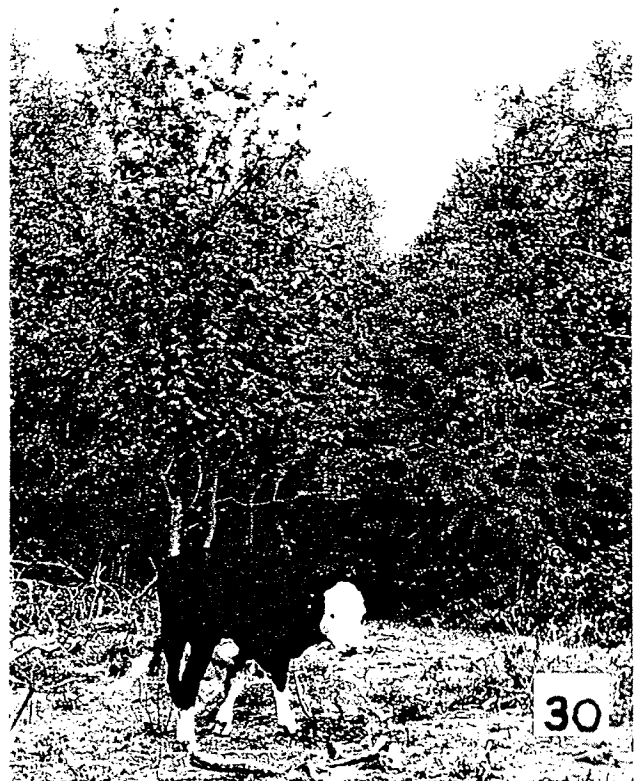
Photo CJS: Ref 11334

PHOTO 32

Although this is the autumn-flowering lesser gorse (Ulex minor), rather than the common U. europaeus which grows at Naphill, this photo shows the spectacular regeneration of this species, as well as grass and heather, and the corresponding control of birch, achieved by the cattle at Inkpen. The numerous webs catching the morning light are of money-spiders.

Photo CJS: Ref 11327

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APPENDIX VI

REFERENCES

and

USEFUL CONTACTS

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USEFUL CONTACTS

BRITISH TRUST FOR CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS. Countryside Centre, Bassetsbury Manor, Bassetsbury Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 1QX. Tel: 01494 536930. Contact: Marion Vere.

BUCKS COUNTY COUNCIL. Countryside Management Service. Planning & Transportation Department, County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1UY. Tel: 01296 383394. Contacts: Chris Damant, Julia Sutton.

BUCKS COUNTY COUNCIL. Footpaths and Bridleways. Address as above. Tel: 01296 382697. Contacts: Mike Overbeek, Andrew Smith.

BUCKS COUNTY MUSEUM. Environmental Records Centre. Technical Centre, Tring Road, Halton, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5PJ. Tel: 01296 696012. Contacts: Kate Hawkins, Neil Davidson.

BUCKS COUNTY MUSEUM. Archaeologists. Address and telephone number as above. Contacts: Mike Farley, Julia Wise.

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION. SE Regional Office, Fourth Floor, 71 Kingsway, London WC2B 6ST. Tel: 0171 835 3510. Contact: Neil Jackson.

ENGLISH NATURE. Thames & Chilterns Team, Foxhold House, Crookham Common, Thatcham, Berks RG19 8EL. Tel: 01635 268881. Contact: Corinna Woodall.

FARMING & WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP (FWAG). Hampden Hall, Wendover Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5TB. Tel: 01296 613223. Contact: Penny Turner.

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS (RSPB). Central England Office, 46 The Green, South Bar, Banbury, Oxon OX16 9AB. Tel: 01295 253330. Contacts: Frank Lucas, Ian Barber.

And not forgetting, of course...

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