

Effingham Common – Commoners' Day in 2010

CHRISTOPHER JOHN HOGGER

The Commoners' Day of 2010 revived a tradition of demonstrating in public the exercise of Commoners' rights on Effingham Common, these attaching to four particular properties. This activity had been previously undertaken annually during the 1980s, less regularly in the 1990s and only in 2001 and 2002 in the first decade of the 21st century. Commoners' Day in 2010 was significantly more elaborate than any of the earlier ones.

Introduction

This event on Effingham Common took place on Sunday 26 September 2010 and was jointly organised by The Friends of Effingham Common (Brian Hendry, Chairman), Guildford Borough Council (GBC, Adam Owen, Trees and Countryside Manager) and Effingham Parish Council (EPC, Sue Morris, Clerk). Its fundamental purpose was, as in many earlier years, to exercise in public view the various Commoners' rights; but on this occasion it was decided to make it a more substantial event to encourage wider public interest in the Common's history and ecology.

The Commoners' Day in 2010 was to an extent a postponement of the Commoners' Day that had been intended to take place on the weekend of 19-20 September 2009. A meeting of The Friends had been held on 6 April 2009 to plan that occasion, but as the year progressed it became apparent that there would not be sufficient time to put all the arrangements in place. At a later meeting that year, on 14 September, The Friends agreed upon a new date for Commoners' Day, Sunday 26 September 2010, and also set dates for six further meetings in which to discuss it – of these meetings, we have the notes emerging from three, these being held on 11 November 2009, 3 February 2010 and 23 June 2010. The notes can be read in Appendix I.

Planning and advertising

Two posters were produced to advertise the day and to indicate the programme of activities; the first, sent out in 2009, was of a preliminary nature but the second, sent out nearer the day in 2010, was more detailed. Both of them display old photographs dated '1920' but we now know that these were taken some years earlier than that. In August 2010 a letter was sent by Arnold Pindar, Chairman of EPC, to residents living near the Common, inviting them to the event. Additionally, a document was distributed by the Clerk to EPC, setting out the practical arrangements. These items are presented in Appendix II.

Literature distributed

Some documents were made available at the event to provide context for visitors. They included a one-page article *A Short History of the Common* written by Jessica Page whilst two others were provided by Guildford Borough Council: *Effingham Common: looking after the wildlife and people* and *Effingham Common: A commoners' rights*. These are shown in Appendix III.

The marquees

Two principal marquees, kindly loaned by the 1st Effingham Scouts, were used for presentations by various groups. They provided essential shelter from adverse weather. As it happened, the weather was overcast throughout the day but the rain held off until just the point at which the event came to its scheduled end in the late afternoon. Despite these conditions the organisers were surprised and delighted that 296 visitors were recorded at the official entrance points, besides many more who went unrecorded.

Two of the organisers – Brian Hendry and Peter Bergman (respectively Chairman and Secretary of The Friends) – heroically slept in the marquees during the preceding night in order to safeguard them.

The smaller marquee contained a display by Effingham Local History Group (ELHG). These included timelines, maps of the Common showing relevant properties, nearly 20 photographs (including some from the Mary Rice-Oxley Postcard Collection scanned by ELHG), printed recollections by some long-term residents and character quotes from various oral histories recorded by ELHG member Yvonne Shaw. We now know that there were a few factual errors in this material. Tables and display boards were kindly loaned by EPC. All the photographs were ones that now appear elsewhere in ELHG's printed output or on its website. The above-mentioned recollections and quotes are shown in condensed form in Appendix IV.



Figure 1 Entrance to the Common, with a board for recording visitor numbers.

Visitors were able to enter the Common from many points and it is likely that many never passed these boards for counting, or perhaps ignored them anyway. So the total number probably exceeded significantly the 296 actually recorded.



Figure 2 The smaller of the two marquees.



Figure 3 ELHG's display in the smaller marquee, on one side of the boards.

This event was ELHG's second opportunity to make its presence and interests known to the public, following its formation earlier in the year. The displays were largely drawn from those used earlier by ELHG at Effingham's Summer Fête (Village Day) held on the King George V Playing Fields on 26 June, when our primary focus was again on Effingham Common.



Figure 4 ELHG's display on the other side of the boards.

The larger marquee contained three displays: firstly, of works for sale by local artist and resident Louisa Botley, the proceeds from which were contributed to orphanages in Kenya; secondly, of the findings of a term-long wildlife project carried out on the Common by Year 4 pupils at St Lawrence Primary School and supervised by their teacher Gill Witter; and thirdly, of items describing the valuable work of the Effingham First Responders who, led by resident Craig Chitty, provide life-saving 24-hour First Aid cover across the parish – the day before, Craig had abseiled down Guildford Cathedral to raise money for the group.



Figure 5 The larger of the two marquees.



Figure 6 Louisa Botley's display of her art works.



Figure 7 St Lawrence School's display of wildlife and habitats, viewed by Gill Witter, a teacher at the school.



Figure 8 Effingham & District's display of the work of Community First Responders.

Animals and Commoners' Rights

There are four properties on the Common having commoners' rights; their locations can be seen on the maps in Appendix III. On this occasion the rights for all four were exercised to some extent, either by their occupants or by proxy. The total number of animals grazed was less than the sum of all the animals listed in the rights of all the properties and they were grazed or tethered on a representative area of Common rather than on the specific areas to which their individual rights pertained.

The animals taking part were: horses, including a 'docile' cob and a Shetland pony; two donkeys Joey and Potter on loan from Merrist Wood (Joey was a rescued beach donkey aged about 8 and Potter was aged about 7); two goats (not strictly mentioned in the registered rights) named Gaia (an Anglo Nubian) and Gwen (a Pygmy), both born in 2009; three sheep comprising Flop (X breed) and Josie and Jocasta (Jacob breed), also born in 2009; two Irish Moiled Cattle cows Dapple and Grace with calves at foot; and three geese comprising two from the rare Steinbacher breed together with their friend, a Brecon Buff. All these animals, apart from the horses, were brought to the Common by Adam Owen's team from GBC.



Figure 9 The 'docile' cob.



Figure 10 The Shetland pony.



Figure 11 Donkeys Joey and Potter.



Figure 12 Sheep – Flop, Josie and Jocasta.



Figure 13 Goats – Gaia and Gwen.



Figure 14 Goat – Gaia or Gwen.



Figure 15 Irish Moiled Cattle – Dapple or Grace with calves.



Figure 16 Geese – two Steinbachers and (at rear) one Brecon Buff.

Traditional crafts and pastimes

It is known that fairs used to be held on commons, the obvious locations near many villages because they were wide, flat and open. At such events many crafts, skills, sports and recreations would have been seen, including juggling. We were fortunate on this occasion to have had artist and juggler Hattie Hyder, wearing traditional juggler's costume, to demonstrate her skills and to teach some of them to the visitors.

The important agricultural skill of hurdle and fence making was meanwhile demonstrated by Rob Stringer, who had given similar demonstrations at several previous GBC countryside events.

A traditional cricket match was staged throughout the afternoon by Effingham Cricket Club, who also kindly provided welcome barbecue food and refreshments.

Finally, given that commons were often used in the past for archery practice, we were fortunate to have with us longbowman Paul Messett – a member of the Company of Yeoman Archers, a not-for-profit body that raises monies for the Charities of the Armed Services – to demonstrate his skill and to provide visitors with on-the-spot tuition.



Figure 17 Hattie Hyder (at left) teaching her skills.



Figure 18 Rob Stringer demonstrating hurdle making.



Figure 19 Paul Messett (at left) teaching archery.



Figure 20 Effingham Cricket Club in full flow.

History and ecology

Two guided tours, led jointly by Adam Owen and Sue Morris, were arranged for visitors during the afternoon, focusing on the special features of the Common's history and ecology. They began with introductory talks next to the GBC information point where there were many related pamphlets and documents on wildlife and land management in the Borough.



Figure 21 GBC's tent, displays and information point.



Figure 22 Sue Morris and Adam Owen ready to give their guided tours.

Sue's talk used a diagram to illustrate the extent of the Common, its historic division between the two manors and the locations of the four properties with rights. She explained that what made Effingham Common special compared to many other commons is that it still had those rights, which became registered only after a hard-fought twenty-year campaign by parishioners. She noted the fact that the Common was privately owned and that the general public do not have the right to do what they want there; the right to roam was limited to people on foot, whilst dogs could not roam in the breeding season because of ground nesting birds. The role of common land historically was for cottagers to be able to graze animals supplementing their diet or household economy and working as transport animals (eg donkeys).

Adam's talk explained that the Common presented a variety of different ecological habitats and environments – woodland, grassland, wetland, ponds and water courses – which benefited in their own ways from differing management techniques. He pointed out that the Common on the eastern side of Effingham Common Road had not been mown or grazed and was going over to scrub, which the main Common would also rapidly do if not actively managed. He then gave examples of some of the wildlife to be found here and discussed how one could maximise the chances of obtaining the widest range of wildlife, viz:- by leaving the grass at different lengths and by cutting the wooded edges back in 'scoop' shapes rather than in straight lines. He explained why reintroduction of restoration grazing would help with both the wildlife and the management of the land. Consideration was being given to re-excavating the overgrown pond, to expand the opportunities for wildlife. More generally, he noted, the Borough was keen for local people to report information about the wildlife (eg the species seen) and to protect and enhance it.



Figure 23 Visitors setting off on a guided tour.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures 1-23: from Christopher John Hogger

Appendices I and II: documents from the archives of Effingham Parish Council

APPENDIX I

Notes of Meetings of The Friends of Effingham Common

Meeting to discuss Effingham Commoners' Day 9.00 am, Monday 14 September 2009, Effingham Parish Room

Present

Cllr Liz Hogger, Effingham Parish Council and Guildford Borough Council
Adam Owen, Parks and Countryside Manager, GBC
Jessica Page, former Chairman, Friends of Effingham Common
Cllr Ian Symes, Effingham Parish Council
Sue Morris, Clerk, Effingham Parish Council

Apologies

Cllr Eddie Crouch, Chairman, Effingham Parish Council

1. Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Effingham Common

The date had been set as 17 November 2009.

2. Postponement of Commoners' day 2009

Cllr Symes and the Clerk of Effingham Parish Council had reluctantly asked to postpone this – it was agreed the run-in time had been insufficient. However there was still plenty of enthusiasm for the idea from all sides.

3. Date for Commoners' day 2010

A new date of **SUNDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2010** was agreed.

4. Format for Commoners' day

It was agreed that the Parish Council and the Borough Council would aim their efforts at the outcome they wanted, and other groups could contribute if they wanted.

Desired outcome: the Borough and the Parish Council want to increase local people's awareness and valuing of the Common. The simplest and most basic ways to achieve this would be

a) Display of information. Adam's existing DVD presentation which could be run on a loop; also a guided walk on the Common

b) Residents will need to see the rights being exercised, eg grazing (or a placard). Commoners can arrange for someone to exercise their rights on their behalf.

5. Miscellaneous practicalities

Animals – sheep or cattle? Adam can arrange these but they should be only the 'relevant' animals

EPC will try to strengthen public awareness of the history of the Common.

Chris Hogger was volunteered as able to scan photos and set up a web-site

Raising awareness will start now. Adam Owen and Sue Morris will draft a letter to get it going – to be targeted at the people of Effingham. The Commoners themselves also need to be told now.

The Borough can design and print an information leaflet to raise awareness.

A statement of what we want to do will be agreed and taken to the Friends' AGM.

Mary Rice-Oxley (Effingham local historian) will be kept in touch.

6. Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 11 November
Wednesday 3 February 2010
Wednesday 12 May
Wednesday 9 June
Wednesday 28 July
Wednesday 1 September

7. Actions before the next meeting

Adam Owen will draft the statement and a flyer – by mid October
Jessica Page and Eddie Crouch – will look at the text and look out photographs
Liz Hogger will scan these to high resolution.

When the wording has been agreed, Ian Symes will send it to the Cricket Club and Sue Morris will send it to the schools, to ask them if they would like to be involved.

Adam Owen will contact the Land Registry and get a list of all owners of the Common (CP24)

Sue Morris will e-mail the EPC logo to Adam Owen.

Meeting to discuss Effingham Commoners' Day
9.00 am, Wednesday 11 November 2009, Effingham Parish Room

Present

Peter Bergman, Secretary, Friends of Effingham Common
 Cllr Liz Hogger, Effingham Parish Council and Guildford Borough Council
 Adam Owen, Parks and Countryside Manager, GBC
 Cllr Ian Symes, Effingham Parish Council
 Sue Morris, Clerk, Effingham Parish Council

1. Notes of previous meeting

These were agreed. Adam provided Land Registry details of the GBC holding. It was noted that GBC owns Effingham Common Road as well as the Common.

2. Flyer

Various suggestions had been made. Telephone contact details for the three organisations would be added. Print runs were agreed: 10 x A4, 2 x A3, 500 x A5. A poster will be reading in time for the AGM. Logos must be sent to Adam asap.

3. Contact with the Commoners

Adam will draft a letter to the Commoners. Sue will give the up-to-date names and addresses to Adam and proof read the letter. Ian will personally deliver the letters when ready. There was discussion over who is the commoner at Leebrook.

4. Informing the public

Sue will contact the schools. Liz will ask Chris Hogger to get in touch. Adam will put news of this on the Effingham Common web-site. Sue will inform ERRRA.

5. Actions by 3 February

Commoners will be informed
 Schools will be informed
 Flyers and posters will be up
 Ashley at GBC will have produced the list of land-owners / commoners
 All will have begun to assemble pictures, historical and ecological info etc.
 Sue will notify Effingham community groups who might want to be involved
 Sue will find out who might be interested in oral history and try to identify actual or potential local historians
 Effingham PC Chairman's Annual Report will include a section

Meeting to discuss Effingham Commoners Day
9 am, Wednesday 3 February 2010, Effingham Parish Room

Present

Peter Bergman, Secretary, Friends of Effingham Common
 Ivor Gillespie, Friends of Effingham Common
 Adam Owen, Parks and Countryside Manager, GBC
 Jessica Page, Friends of Effingham Common
 Cllr Ian Symes, Effingham Parish Council
 Sue Morris, Clerk, Effingham Parish Council

Apologies

Liz Hogger

The following were discussed and agreed:

1. Format for the day

Timings: 12-4 pm
 Animals to be tethered near the cricket pitch for a petting corner. Adam will organise relevant licences through Merrist Wood.
 Ian will ask the Cricket Club if they would open up to offer (ie sell) refreshments
 Guided tours at 1pm and 3pm
 The day will focus on Unit CL24 on the west side of Effingham Common Road, not Banks Common.

2. Information / posters / display material to be available on the day

Diagram of which properties with commoners rights exist, and where they are
 Diagram of which rights exist on which bits of the common – ie pictures of the relevant numbers of horses, donkeys, geese etc laid on a map
 Diagram of 'Your rights as a member of the public' on the common
 Diagram of special habitats
 Photo comparisons – then and now
 Map and route for guided walks.

3. Progress on notifying folk

Drip feed information now, then a big push in August.
 The letter for the commoners will be sent signed by GBC, EPC and the Friends.
 Jessica will ask the Horsley Countryside Preservation Society for their copy deadlines so an article can be placed. Sue will provide detail and info.
 Sue will approach schools.
 Adam will book space in the GBC press release queue.
 Friends of Effingham Common are being briefed.

4. Actions by the next meeting

Source material and text for the leaflet, texts and resources for visitors on the day will be assembled.

5. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 12 May, 9.00 am, Effingham Parish Room

**Meeting to discuss Effingham Commoners Day
9 am, Wednesday 23 June 2010, Effingham Parish Room**

Present

Brian Hendry

Liz Hogger

Adam Owen

Jessica Page

Yvonne Shaw (Effingham Local History Group)

Sue Morris

This was an interim meeting to discuss practical arrangements for 26 September.

1. Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 28 July and Wednesday 1 September.

2. Local history

Sue passed on two boxes of finds from Home Farm Estate to GBC, whose property they now are. It was agreed they can be on loan in Effingham. Adam has a history of the Common, written by an amateur historian who used to know the area, that he will send the Group. Helen Gilbert, SCC Registration Officer, is researching whether there is any information about which animals should be grazed where.

3. Attractions for 26 September

a) Animals

Adam has a completely self-contained mobile farm unit including animals, generator, hand-washing, bins, signs etc (run by Luke). It is important to avoid a knee-jerk reaction after the Godstone issue; children can still touch animals.

b) Conservation grazing

It was agreed that cows will be put on the Common for temporary grazing as permitted under new legislation for about a month before and after the event, within an electric fence. This will be restorative/conservation grazing at a density of less than one cow per hectare and unlikely to damage the ground. Cows are easier than sheep to find in Surrey, are visible, less at risk of trouble from dogs. This is just the first year and possibly sheep can have a go next year. Volunteers to monitor the animals and the fencing are needed, ideally from the nearby houses.

c) Guided walks at 1pm and 3pm

Adam and Sue will lead, ecology and history respectively, 30-45 minutes duration

d) Cricket Club

Brian to ask them to confirm what they would like to do, for publicity details

e) Gathering point – main information centre

This will be in the square between the cricket pitch and the road.

SM to ask Scouts to provide a marquee.

f) Information / stalls on the day

GBC will have displays about the management of the common; signage about the guided walks
Effingham Local History Group will have:

- a display about the history of the Common
- information about Mary Rice-Oxley's images and book; does Mary want a stall? Liz to ask her
- a group collecting oral history and memories
- music. Hilda to find musicians who might want to be there

Cricket Club – do they want a stall to encourage new members?

Farm shop – Sue to ask James Nicholls if he will approach Badger Farm

Hurdle maker – Adam to ask his contact if he would like to be there

Hog roast – Sue to ask Andrew Hunt if he would like to run one

Effingham First Responders – Sue to ask if they want a recruiting stall as well as being on duty (unwary drunks might be bitten by adders).

All stall holders to bring own tables and chairs; vehicles off site by 11.15 unless part of the display; when we know how many stalls we are expecting we will tell people what pitch size they can have / what size marquee is needed.

4. Toilets

Adam will organize a bank of 4 portaloos near the gathering point.

5. Access (discouragement of cars, parking etc)

All publicity material to encourage people to walk; if driving to park considerately, but to mention (in very small writing) proximity of Effingham Junction Station Car Park.

Brian will send Adam information of how many left or right arrow signs on posts, to direct pedestrian routes to the main events area on the day, are needed (from Heath View, Heath Way, Forest Road, station, and village shops). These will be installed by GBC on the Friday before.

Brian will contact James Browne / SCC Rights of Way to get the Public Footpaths across the Common re-cleared and fully signed in advance of the day

Letter to go to all residents bounding the Common alerting them to the event asap. – Sue to write
Sue to inform PCSOs as soon as possible.

6. Advance publicity material

All information to be with Adam by the end of July, for printing by GBC during August.

Adam will organize a banner to go up on the Common itself from the beginning of September; dates to be fixed with Velcro so the banner can be re-used in future years.

A3 posters for around the village – Sue to let Adam know how many could be needed.

Sue to send the schools a second reminder.

7. Press

Adam has commissioned a photographer and GBC can do Press Releases; please can Liz see a draft before they go out.

8. Guests

Adam to invite Cllrs Jen Powell, Jenny Wicks and Andrew French

Sue to send addresses of commoners to Adam

APPENDIX II
Planning and advertising

Effingham Common – A celebration 26 September 2010



The Common from the Station 1920



Cutting hay 1936

Effingham Parish Council, the Friends of Effingham Common and Guildford Borough Council will jointly celebrate Effingham Common

The Common is very important to Effingham today but in the past it would have been more than that – an essential source of sustenance for villagers. For over 1000 years ancient rights of grazing and estovers (collection of fallen deadwood) allowed the occupiers of certain properties to use Common Land.

There are still many commons around the country today but Effingham Common is special in that it is one of the few where Commoners' rights have been preserved and still exist.

In 1968 the Commoners' rights of four properties were registered allowing only the owners of these four properties the rights of estovers and to graze the common.

Next year the annual ritual of exercising these Commoners' rights is to be resurrected and celebrated.

Please look out for further details, which will be forthcoming. If you would like to be involved in helping organise this day please contact us.

Effingham Parish Council



T. 01372 454 911

Friends of Effingham Common

M. 07774 706 786



GUILDFORD
BOROUGH

T. 01483 444 771

E. adam.owen@guildford.gov.uk

A Celebration of Effingham Common

Sunday 26 September, 12 to 4pm

Effingham Common Road near the track to Effingham Cricket Club

**Bring the family to see the annual exercise of Commoners' rights
Find out more about why Effingham Common is so unusual and special**

Admission free. Attractions include:

Animals	Meet the sorts of animals which still have the right to graze areas of the Common
Guided tours, 1pm and 3pm	Introduction to the unique ecology and the unusual history of the Common. Jointly led by Adam Owen, Trees and Countryside Manager, GBC, and Sue Morris, Effingham Local History Group (each tour approx 40mins)
History of Effingham Common	Photographs of the Common in earlier times; also information and extracts from oral history, provided by Effingham Local History Group. Come and give them your memories of the Common. Publications about Effingham history & East Horsley local history for sale
The special ecology of the Common	Display of work from a term's project by Year 4 pupils of St Lawrence Primary School
Cricket match	On site since the mid 19 th century, Effingham Cricket Club is one of the oldest regular users of the Common. Come and enjoy a timeless village scene



Grass cutting by hand



The common from the station 1920



Indian Farm 1920

Also

Artist Louisa Botley who lives by the Common will bring along some paintings/cards inspired by it, and will be available to chat. Louisa is in her gap year raising money for 3 orphanages in Kenya. Profits from sales will all go to this cause • **Archery practice** When Lords of the Manor were responsible for providing trained men, open spaces like commons were regularly used for practice. Longbowman Paul Messett will train you (£5 for 15 mins, £15 for 50 mins. All profits to Army Benevolent Fund and army charities) • **Juggling** Village commons were the obvious site for local fairs where attractions like this would have been seen. Let Hattie Hyder entertain you • **Hurdle-making** Rob Stringer will show how sturdy fences are made from the sort of materials you might collect on a common • **Jelly legs** On the previous day, Effingham resident Craig Chitty will have abseiled down Guildford Cathedral to raise money for Effingham First Responders who provide 24 hr First Aid cover for our residents, and for this event. Come and ask him how much he raised • **Common keeper** In the past Effingham Common had a 'keeper' who kept order; today Effingham and East Horsley Neighbourhood Police are in support.

Above correct at going to press

Light refreshments Available in the Cricket Pavilion

Transport and parking Walk if you can – don't bring the car. If you do, please park considerately (Effingham and East Horsley share a nearby station). There is no parking available on the common.

Weather This event will go ahead whatever the weather. Marquees kindly lent by Effingham Scouts

*Event jointly organised by The Friends of Effingham Common, Guildford Borough Council
(adam.owen@guildford.gov.uk) and Effingham Parish Council (01372 454911; www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk)*

To all residents and Residents' Associations of roads bordering or near Effingham Common:
Banks Way, Berrington Drive, Copthorne Place, Effingham Common, Effingham Common Road,
Forest Lane, Forest Road, Heath Way, Heathview, Howard Road, Lovelace Close, Lower Farm
Road, Nightingale Road, Old Lane, Old Lane Gardens, Orchard Close

Dear Neighbours of Effingham Common,

Guildford Borough Council, the Friends of Effingham Common and Effingham Parish Council all cordially invite you to

A Celebration of Effingham Common

Sunday 26 September 2010, 12- 4pm

We look forward to welcoming you to this event, jointly planned by our three organisations, so that you can enjoy and appreciate the special characteristics of the Common. One of the most important of these is the Commoners' ancient rights to graze animals and collect fallen wood – rights which have been mostly lost elsewhere, making Effingham Common very special and unusual. You will be able to witness animals grazing on the Common again for the first time in some years. This is an important ritual that helps to protect the Common for the future.

Other attractions will include:

- information on the history and ecology of the Common
- animals to meet and pet
- guided walks
- marquees with special exhibitions
- local stalls

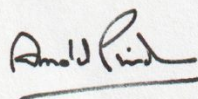
Look out for full details on the posters which will be appearing nearer the day. The main events will be located on the Common between the Cricket Pavilion and Effingham Common Road.

We are writing to you, as neighbours of the Common, to give you advance news of the event which is being advertised primarily in the immediately local area (Effingham and East Horsley). To minimise the impact on you, the publicity will strongly promote leaving cars at home if possible and walking to the event, but we wanted you to be aware that there might be some extra traffic in this part of Effingham for just a few hours and to thank you in advance for your understanding and support.

Guildford Borough Council will provide signs and arrows around the edge of the Common indicating the pedestrian routes, while GBC and the Surrey County Council Rights of Way team will make sure all Public Footpaths and Bridleways on the Common itself are unobstructed and well signed.

We are looking forward to a happy and historic day, and we hope you will enjoy attending and taking part.

Yours faithfully



Adam Owen, Manager, Trees and Countryside, Guildford Borough Council (adam.owen@guildford.gov.uk)
Brian Hendry, Chairman, Friends of Effingham Common
Cllr Arnold Pindar, Chairman, Effingham Parish Council (Clerk to EPC 01372 454911)

3 August 2010

**A celebration of Effingham Common
Sunday 26 September**

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Dear All,

I enclose some details about organisation for the day and hope that it will help with your planning.
Any problems, do get in touch.

This is our first attempt so if there are some teething problems it will not be a surprise, but we hope we have covered most things!

Best wishes

Brian Hendry, Chairman, Friends of Effingham Common

Adam Owen, Trees and Countryside Manager, Guildford Borough Council

Sue Morris, Clerk, Effingham Parish Council
Clerk2010@effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk
01372 454911

Who is where

There are two versions, depending on weather. If you don't like the look of your location or it is not suitable, let Sue know ASAP.

If the weather is GOOD

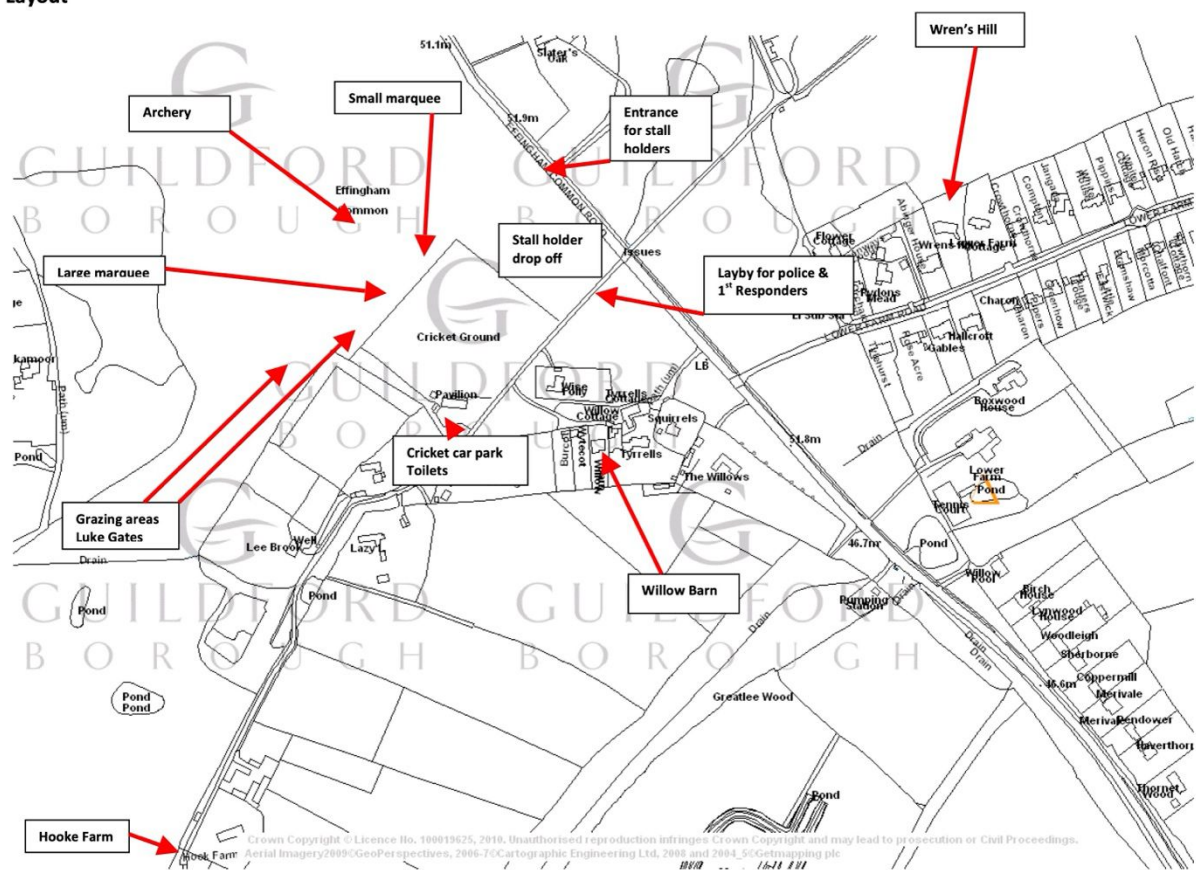
OUTSIDE - FIXED	OUTSIDE & CIRCULATING	LARGE MARQUEE	SMALL MARQUEE
Volunteers counting visitors on arrival	Welcome committee & special guests	GBC Info stands	Effingham Local History Group stall
Live animals	Identifiable organisers circulating	Friends of Effingham Common stall	Sale of local history publications - HCPS
Hurdle-making demonstrations	Exercise of Commoners Rights	St Lawrence Primary School	Sophie – Surrey Archaeology
Longbowman	Guided walks	Louisa Botley art (pref. in a well-lighted position)	?Neighbourhood police
Cricket match	Yvonne & tape-recorder	Effingham First Responders info & abseiling fund-raising result	
Refreshments at cricket pavilion	Juggler	? Scouts membership etc	
Portaloos	Police	(? Scouts food stall)	
4 litter stations	Jon Frasier - GBC photographer		
Parking for stall holders	Guy Martin, photographer from <i>L'head Advertiser</i>		
First Responders 4 x 4 vehicle			
First Responders treatment tent			
(? Scouts food stall)			
Brian's barbecue in own gazebo			
12	9	7	4

If the weather is BAD

OUTSIDE - FIXED	OUTSIDE & CIRCULATING	LARGE MARQUEE	SMALL MARQUEE
Volunteers counting visitors on arrival	Welcome committee & special guests	GBC Info stands	Effingham Local History Group stall
Live animals	Identifiable organisers circulating	Friends of Effingham Common stall	Sale of local publications
	Exercise of Commoners Rights	St Lawrence Primary School	Sophie – Surrey Archaeology
Longbowman	Guided walks	Louisa Botley	?Neighbourhood police
Cricket match		Effingham First Responders & abseiling fund-raising result	Hurdle-making demonstrations
Refreshments at cricket pavilion		? Scouts membership etc	Yvonne & tape-recorder
Portaloos	Police	(? Scouts food stall)	
Parking for stall holders	Jon Frasor - GBC photographer	Juggler	
First Responders 4 x 4 vehicle	Guy Martin, photographer from <i>L'head Advertiser</i>		
First Responders treatment tent			
9	7	8	6

No Brian's barbecue

No Scouts food stall outside, but could still be inside?



What to bring

Bring any tables, chairs, display stands, cushions, sunglasses, refreshments, specialist kit, a person to hold the fort while you go to the loo, Blu-tak, give-away flyers, comments books with working biros, stones to hold things down if it is windy etc, that you need. If you have any problems acquiring or transporting your stuff, get in touch with Sue Morris ASAP.

Electricity supply

There isn't any! Charge up your batteries!

When and where to arrive

See the map.

Please bring your kit to the Common and set up between 9.00 and 11.30am on Sunday morning. You can drive your car temporarily onto the Common so you can unload near to where you will set up, and drive on again to collect up at the end of the day. Use **the entrance from Effingham Common Road which will be signed 'stall-holders entrance' on the day and unload in the area called 'stallholder drop off' on the map**. All cars need to have left the Common by 11.30am. The gate will be unlocked again at 4.00 for you to drive back on and collect your stuff. If you have friends coming, remind them to *walk*, not drive if at all possible (suitable outdoor footwear etc), and that there is a handy station not very much used on a Sunday nearby.

Parking during the event

We have allocated you parking as follows. We hope you can manage with one vehicle each.

On the track to the Cricket Club, near the pedestrian access to the Common (there is a small layby)

First Responders' vehicle

Neighbourhood Police

No-one else!

At Wren's Hill, Lower Farm Road (6th drive on the left – parking kindly provided by Jessica & Tony Page)

Gill Witter, St Lawrence Primary School

Lousia Botley, artist

Paul Messett, archer

Hattie Hyder, juggler

Cricket Club pavilion area

Cricket Club members and visiting team

Invited County / Borough Councillors who may attend (max 4 on present replies received)

Vehicles for disabled visitors

No-one else!

In front of Willow Barn (accessed from the track to the cricket club; kindly provided by Brian Hendry)

Adam Owen

Photographers

At Hooke Farm, far end of the track to the Cricket Club (kindly provided by Ivor Gillespie)

GBC Rangers

Scouts vehicles (ie equipment delivery)

Rob Stringer, hurdle-maker

Sophie Unger, SCC Archaeology

Any First Responder volunteers who have to come in cars

NB Ivor has kindly said he can accommodate up to 12 cars, so if there is an emergency need, bear this in mind.

For safety:

The Merrist Wood van and animal trailer will have to stay on-site near the animal compound in case of any problems.

The GBC countryside vehicle will also be on-site for the duration of the day, to assist anyone who may get stuck, need a lift etc

Insurance

Guildford Borough Council has Public Liability insurance which would cover **visitors** who have accidents or unforeseen problems for which the facilities or arrangements could be held responsible. Stall holders or providers of attractions **must take great care to think about public safety**, and may need additional insurance if something is beyond a normal risk. Do get in touch if you need to talk about this.

Queries on the day

These three organisers will be on site at all times. They will be wearing hi-visibility arm bands:

Adam Owen, GBC

Brian Hendry, Friends of Effingham Common

Sue Morris, Clerk to Effingham Parish Council

NB. Adam and Sue will be giving guided talks between 1-1.45pm and 3-3.45pm.

Members of GBC Parks and Countryside team and Rangers will be wearing clothing with the GBC logo. Effingham Parish Councillors and committee members of The Friends of Effingham Common will be wearing name labels.

Medical emergencies

Effingham First Responders are kindly providing First Aid cover. They will have a small treatment tent on site. They will also have their paramedics' 4x4 vehicle. **NB they will also be on call for all of Effingham and district, so it remains a possibility that some staff may get called away during the event.**

APPENDIX III
Literature distributed

A SHORT HISTORY OF EFFINGHAM COMMON

From 1066 the King of England claimed that he owned all the land in England. This was described in the Domesday Book. He then gave or let most of it to Lords of Manors who cultivated it in unfenced fields or strips. Some land, which was usually poor land or land too heavy to plough, could be used by villagers to graze animals, find sticks for fuel and so on. These were the 'common' fields.

By the late 1700s the population had grown. There were also enormously improved machines to cultivate land, so that much more was usable. This resulted in a desire for larger fields (not strips) with hedges and fences. Parliament passed a series of Enclosure Acts which meant that villagers' rights to graze animals (pasturage), pick up firewood (estovers), cut turf (turbary) and take fish from ponds (pescary), could be confined to much smaller areas. However some common land was still usually left for them. Sometimes this was called 'manorial waste'.

Effingham Common and the Commons Registration Act 1965

Effingham Common consists of land which was in two different manors, Effingham Eastcourt and Effingham La Leigh. This is why the area to the east is known as Effingham Eastcourt and that to the west, as Hooke Common. In 1965 an Act was passed by Parliament which allowed all commons and village greens to be registered as common land. This would prevent owners from selling them for development. Effingham Parish Council helped the owners of four properties (The Willows, Leebrook, Slaters Oak and Huckamoor) to claim their commoners' rights on Eastcourt and Hooke commons. The then Lord of the Manor disputed the claim. The subsequent court case was won by Effingham, and the Common and the commoners' rights are now safe. The 'rights' go with the properties in perpetuity, not with the people / owners at any particular time. 'Exercising' the rights regularly helps people understand what Effingham Common is, and why it is like it is.

Today the major part of the common is owned by Guildford Borough Council, but there are several other owners of various smaller parts. Owners of common land must not install fences or barriers or permanent structures of any sort, because the commoners' rights to graze etc must not be impeded in any way.

Animals which Effingham commoners have the rights to graze

Horses, ponies, cows, sheep, geese, donkeys.

There are also rights of estovers, picking up wood.

Written for 'A Celebration of Effingham Common', 26 September 2010

by Jessica Page on behalf of The Friends of Effingham Common and Effingham Local History Group

Effingham Common

Looking after the wildlife and people



Unimproved wet grassland, East Court, Effingham Common



What is common land?

Common land has had many different definitions over hundreds of years. None of which are definitive. Today, for land to be true common, it must have been registered under The Commons Registration Act 1965. Commons date back to the remnants of the Manorial System however, by 1965 many that have been in existence for generations were not registered. This led to numerous disputes. The Commons Act 2006 made changes to the registration and the management of commons in the hope of resolving some age old issues, whilst increasing relevance to the modern era.

Who looks after the common?

Effingham Common is a registered common owned by over 27 individuals. The largest area is owned by Guildford Borough Council and this covers East Court and Hooke Common as shown on the access map overleaf.

Why is the common important for wildlife?

The area owned by the council has areas of open grassland, mixed broad-leaved woodland, agriculturally improved pasture and ephemeral ponds. Public footpaths and a bridleway run along the edges of the site, with Effingham Common Road running along the north-eastern boundary.

The grasslands of Effingham Common are ecologically important as they support a considerable number of different insects, including 16 species of butterfly, 26 types of moth and 51 different kinds of beetle. This means there is a diverse number of birds which use the site. Similarly the wet woodland also supports many insects, especially 10 varieties of craneflies and 26 species of hoverflies in the wetter areas. This combination provides a very unique area for plants and wildlife to live.



www.guildford.gov.uk



Hoverfly on umbellifer plant (Photo by Jon Fraser)

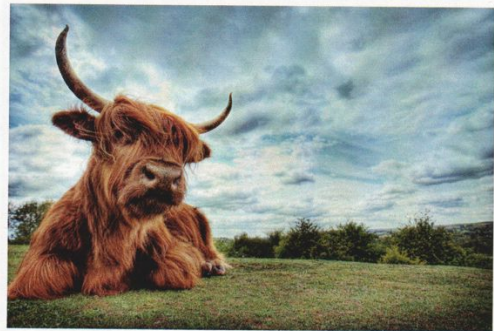
How are these important plants and wildlife protected?

The woodland is relatively young, less than 50 years in most areas. As the woodland ages it will become more important for wildlife. However, it is essential to stop the woodland expanding across the grasslands as this will kill the grassland. Therefore the edge of the woodland is regularly cut, with much help from volunteers; the Friends of Effingham Common. The grassland is presently cut and collected by machine.

How was the common managed in the past?

Throughout Effingham Common's long history reaching back to manorial times in the pre-conquest era, tenants of the land have been grazing. It is only since 1980 that the practice has ceased. Over such a long period of time grazing creates conditions that species of plants and animals adapt to and create their lifecycle around. Uneven grass heights combined with bare earth patches from trampling prevent any one species from dominating.

Mowing gives two distinct grass heights; long and shorter (but not short). These limited conditions allow only a small number of species to thrive. Also the sudden change from long to short grass can have a severe impact on insect and especially beetle populations. There are many plants and insects that depend on grazing as part of their life cycle. If grazing does not return to the common many of the insects special to the common will be lost. The best way to maintain grassland is to use the methods by which it was created i.e. grazing. This will reintroduce the conditions necessary for niche plant species to return. In short, grazing is better for wildlife.



Highland cow at rest (Photo by Jon Fraser)

Are there problems with grazing?

There are many regulations protecting common land. One such regulation is common land cannot be fenced without permission from the Planning Inspectorate. This requires much consultation and agreement. In the past people used to shepherd their animals so there was no need for fences, or the fences were not on the common.



Modern society is now more industrialised and people enjoy the countryside for leisure, to escape from the stresses of modern living, rather than working the land. Conflicts can arise between different users of the countryside and it is important to consider every aspect when deciding on a change to wildlife management.

However, if the four commoners decided to exercise their rights tomorrow you could see 2 horses, 3 ponies, 2 donkeys, 11 cattle, 46 sheep and 37 geese grazing the common. This would be perfectly legal as it is their 'commoners' right. The animals do not have to be controlled from straying into private properties, the law states it is for private properties to secure their premises from commoner's animals.

People and wildlife

It is very important that people can freely enjoy Effingham Common. The common is a large area that offers much to the visitor, whether for exercise or for those with an interest in wildlife. In 2002 the Friends of Effingham Common were established. The group works closely with the council to look after the common, supported by Effingham Parish Council. Each year local residents join the countryside team on the common to complete tasks such as cutting back the willow, improving access, erecting signage and restoring the old ponds. Everyone is welcome to join in and if you would like to help please contact the countryside team on the details below. Even if you do not wish to get involved directly you can help protect Effingham Common simply by keeping an eye on things.

Telling us about what birds, butterflies and the myriad of insects you may have seen is always of interest as well as hearing about problems such as flytipping, dumping of garden waste, bonfires outside properties and illegal parking on the common. It all helps.

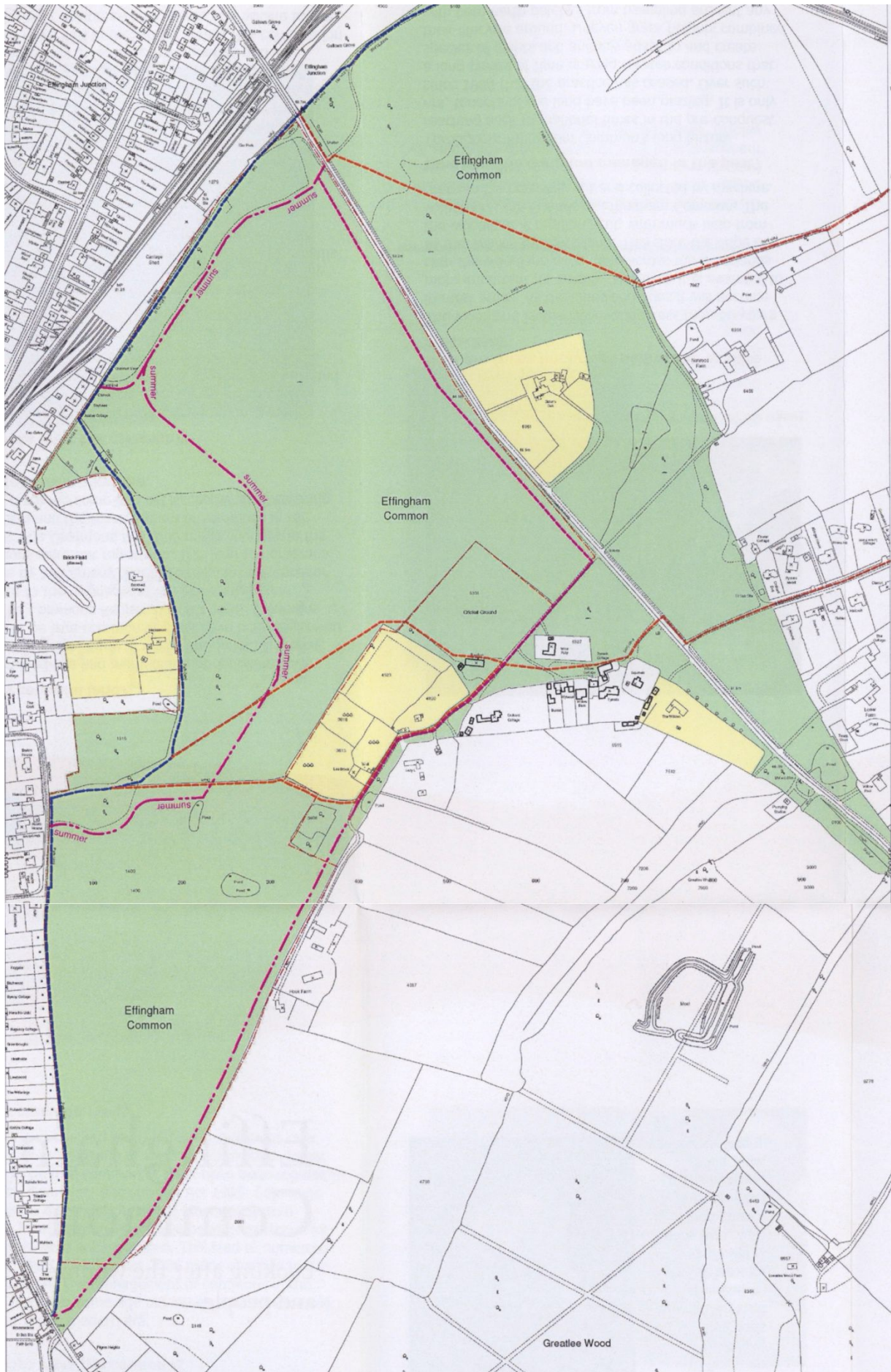


A Friend of Effingham Common cutting back scrub round a pond

Guildford Borough Council's Trees & Countryside Section work to re-establish and maintain important habitats and green spaces. We aim to balance our management to give the best possible conditions for wildlife, whilst providing access for all.

Parks & Countryside Services
01483 444 771
countryside@guildford.gov.uk

www.guildford.gov.uk



KEY:



= common



= properties with commoners' rights



= public footpaths



= bridleways



= permissive bridleway

= proposed permissive bridleways
(summer = for summer use only)

= GBC ownership

Shown on the map are the existing rights of way. The council is considering an extension to the permissive bridleway so riders can gain access all round the common. The problem at present is many riders do not follow the true right of way which can cause the clay soils to become very pitted and waterlogged; this in turn makes the ground difficult for walkers. It is hoped by improving riding surfaces and through education everyone can enjoy the common responsibly.

If grazing returns to the common the same access will remain and just like 30 years ago visitors to the common will walk amongst grazing animals.

Access on the common

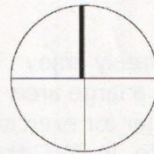
Many people believe they have a right to enter common land. Although this is usually the case under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the access laws applied to common land are the same as any other piece of privately owned land.

Fortunately Effingham Common is access land and the largest part is owned by Guildford Borough Council. This means people can walk anywhere they wish on the common land, not just on the public footpaths.

However, this right does not mean you can cycle, ride a horse, drive a vehicle or park a vehicle anywhere on the common.

The only place you can ride a horse or cycle on Effingham Common is on the bridleways, or permissive bridleways.

N

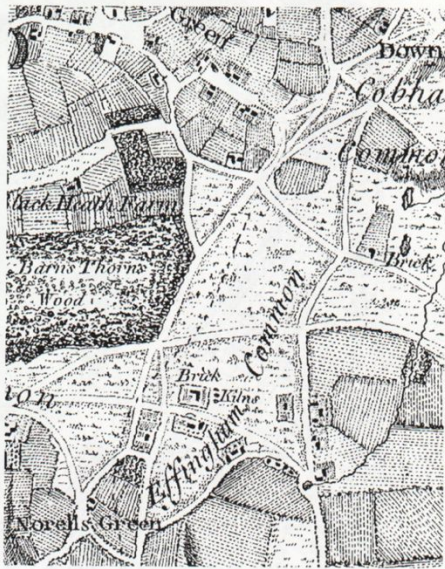


Effingham Common footpaths & bridleways scale 1:25000

NOTE: all designations are for illustrative purposes only
and do not infer or confirm any legal definitions

Effingham Common

A 'commoners' right's



Map of Effingham Common, Roque 1770

What is common land?

Common land has had many different definitions over hundreds of years. None of which are definitive. Today, for land to be true common, it must have been registered under The Commons Registration Act 1965. Commons date back to the remnants of the Manorial System however, by 1965 many that had been in existence for generations were not registered. This led to numerous disputes. The Commons Act 2006 made changes to the registration and the management of commons in the hope of resolving some age old issues, whilst increasing relevance to the modern era.

Popular Misconceptions

Common land is owned by the public **X**

Common land is usually privately owned by individuals or organisations, it is not owned by the people **✓**

Any person has a right to enter common land **X**

Although this is usually the case under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the access laws applied to Common Land are the same as any other piece of privately owned land. Not including those who possess 'commoners' right's **✓**

Public can collect fallen wood **X**

Only those with 'commoners' right's that include the removal of wood may do this **✓**



Highland cattle grazing meadow (Photo by Jon Fraser)

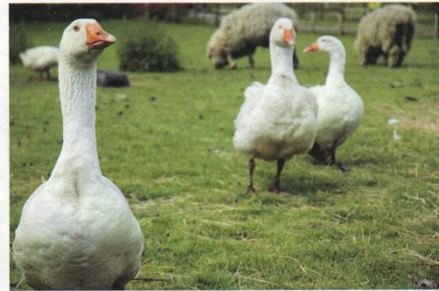
Six Rights of Common

1. **Pasture** – grazing of specified numbers of cattle, sheep, horses and geese.
2. **Pannage** – turning out of domestic pigs into wooded areas for acorns, beechmast, chestnuts etc.
3. **Piscary** – right to catch and process fish.
4. **Estovers** – wood and bracken a commoner may take for fuel or repairs.
5. **Turbary** – the removal of peat for fuel or thatching.
6. **Common in the Soil** – right to take stone, sand or minerals.



Statistics

- 373,570 hectares of Registered Common Land in England.
- 57% of this is designated SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).
- 35% of 7,039 units of common land have registered rights of Common.
- 1,900 commons are ownerless.



Geese and sheep grazing

A brief history of common land

Commons are known to pre-date parliament and the modern monarchy. They were a result of the Manorial land ownership system that was created when land was largely ownerless. It was a type of 'Warrior Aristocracy', where land was rewarded to Lords and Knights for loyalty, on which they would oversee agriculture and the upkeep of the manor. By the 8th century the giving of a landholding became standard, not just as a reward. At this time the land was now owned but the peasantry kept their customary rights. This was the beginnings of common land.

The Commons Act 1285, also known as 'the statute of Westminster the second', established landowners rights to 'approve common land'. This was not necessarily a good thing. It enabled landowners to fence off land for profitable agricultural use, leaving less common land for the peasantry. This caused conflict between landlords and commoners for hundreds of years until landlords 'improvement' was regulated under the Law of Commons Amendment Act of 1893. This system has now been abolished, but with many areas of common land left in existence.



A brief history of Effingham common

When the great national drive to improve the yield of agricultural land began in the late eighteenth century, many landowners completely reorganised the way village land was farmed (the enclosure movement). Many commons were taken into private farming use and, despite protests, villagers in many areas lost their customary 'commoners' right's.

This did not happen in Effingham. At that time, the area we now call Effingham Common belonged to the Lords of two different manors: the Manor of Effingham, and the Manor of Effingham East Court. Both introduced Enclosure Acts, but these did not affect the common. However, there was a great village battle over the common still to come.

By 1965, there was national concern that remaining commons were being sold off for one purpose or another, or being built on, so historic green spaces were being lost and villages spoiled. An Act was passed which allowed villages to register not only their commons, but also any surviving 'commoners' right's. This would mean the common was preserved from development for ever, and the 'commoners' right's could never be taken away from them.

By this time one family owned the land of both Effingham manors. Effingham residents wanted to register Effingham Common, but the Lord of the manor(s) opposed this feeling, perhaps understandably, that as he owned it, it was his private land to do with as he wished. A village campaign was started and residents contributed a considerable

amount of money to pay for the court case needed to challenge him. Many ancient documents and proofs were exhaustively researched, examined and discussed in court.

Finally, in 1972, the judgement was handed down. The common was registered, and four Effingham properties had successfully proved their entitlement to 'commoners' right's. These are now preserved in perpetuity.

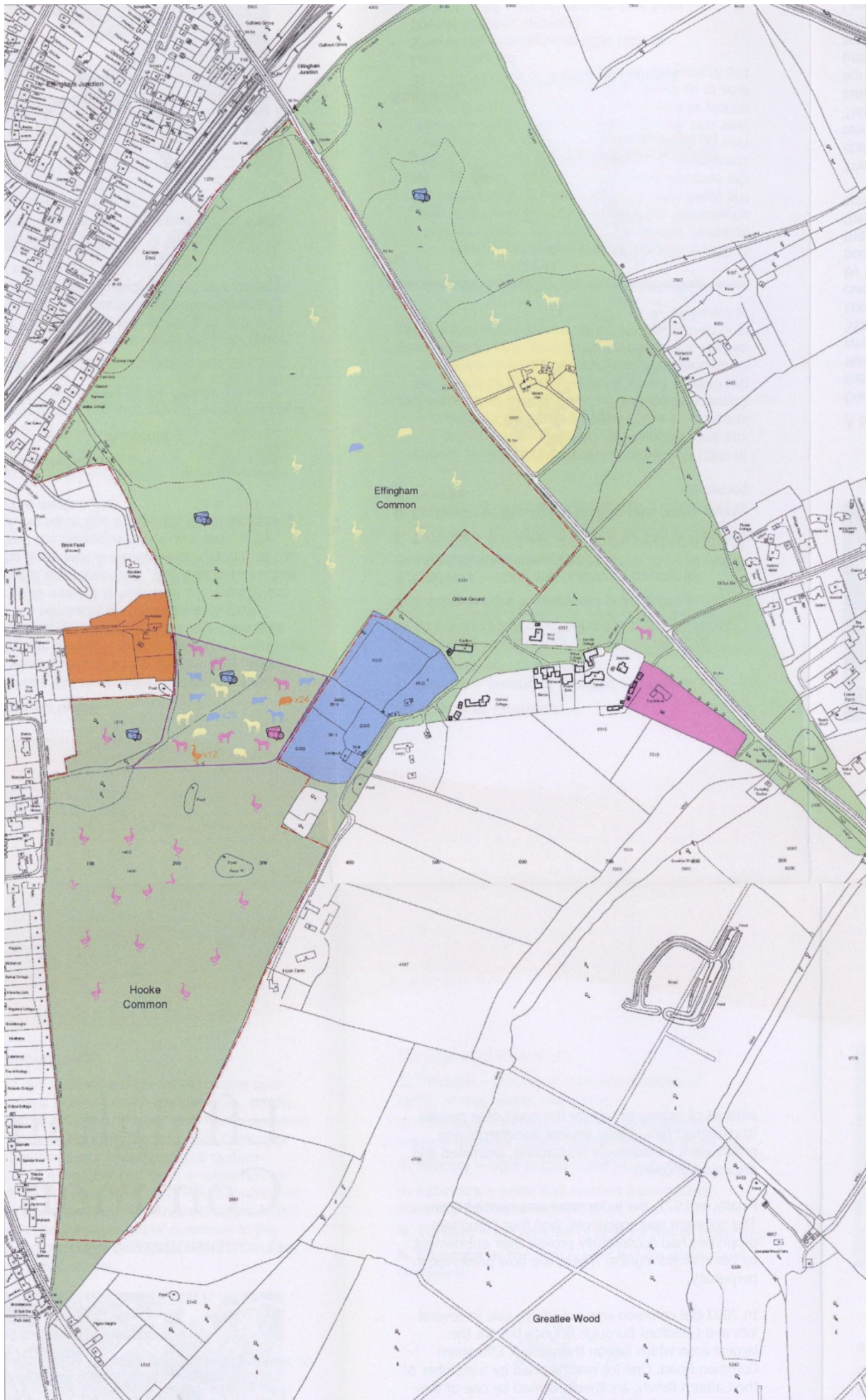
In 2002 the common was put up for sale in several lots and Guildford Borough Council bought the largest area which lies on the west of Effingham Common Road. One lot was retained by a member of the Calburn family, another is owned by one of the commoners and there are various other owners of parcels of land. Effingham Common has always had a land owner, but this makes no difference to the rights of common.

Guildford Borough Council manages the main common, and surveys show it is a very important countryside site for plants and wildlife. Sadly over the years many of the birds which used to frequent the common have either declined in numbers or gone completely. There used to be plenty of nightingales, now no more. However, the skylarks return every year and are nationally protected. There is a wide variety of insects and butterflies. By restoring the land to its former glory it is hoped that birds such as the Nightingale will return.

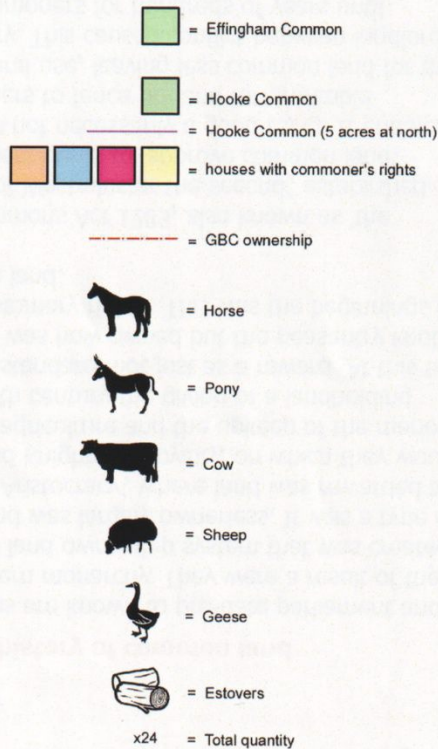
Parks & Countryside Services

01483 444 771
countryside@guildford.gov.uk

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KEY:



'Commoners' right's

There are four properties that enjoy 'commoners' right's on Effingham Common's East Court and Hooke Common.

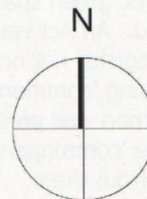
These are shown on the map as coloured properties.

These rights were bestowed hundreds of years ago, but were nearly lost in 1965 when 'commoners' right's in England and Wales were reviewed.

Effingham parish council won a long legal battle to retain these rights for the properties (see the back for more details). The properties and their rights are shown on the map opposite.

The grazing rights of each property are coloured the same as the property and the correct number of livestock are shown. Note they are only allowed to graze a specified number of animals in each particular place.

Sadly no commoners regularly exercise their rights to graze any more and this is why we celebrate the rights of the commoners in September, to remind visitors and local residents that Effingham Common is a rare and valuable place for the community.



Effingham Common
scale 1:25000 (at A1)

NOTE: all designations are for illustrative purposes only
and do not infer or confirm any legal definitions

APPENDIX IV

*Recollections and character quotes displayed by ELHG***Adrian Estler**

“Leebrooke Farm was occupied by Adrian Estler. He was a character.”

“Adrian was a great supporter of the [cricket] club and he played for them and he used to give us transport to away matches. This transport was in the form of a very battered and ancient Rolls Royce the doors of which didn't open, and I can't remember a top ... anyway we had to climb over the doors to get in it. There was usually about half a dozen of us and if you can visualise Adrian being a somewhat tall man, never immaculately dressed in any shape of form and wore an enormous hat, and we'd turn up for away matches in this ramshackle vehicle.”

“Adrian was quite a good cricketer and in home matches we'd turn up with children to be amused and when we were batting, Adrian used to get hold of the horse, William, and most of the children had rides on this horse during the course of the afternoon.”

Feuding Farmers

There was bad blood between two local farmers in the 1940s – let's call them H and M.

“H used to ride his horses over M's farmland which upset him no end, as a result of which M got his tractor and drove it at H on the Common one day – luckily everyone escaped unhurt but because of this M tried to put some fencing round the Common. But a Brigadier Faviell and Adrian Estler used to go out at night and cut this fencing for two reasons: they had Common Rights and being a Common it couldn't be fenced, and ultimately, M was forced to take the fencing down. There was another story concerning H and M in that H was aware that M was paying far too much attention to H's wife and as a result of which H and his sons chased M round the Common with a horsewhip.”

Feisty Ladies

Two spinster ladies owned farmhouses nearby – let's call them Miss M and Miss O.

“Miss M had on her grand piano a picture of her with her Prince of Wales feathers where she'd been presented at court and she was a very large lady. She rode a white horse which was rather highly strung and on several occasions it used to go all over the road carrying on, with traffic building up on either side and Miss M rather red in the face but well in control. Miss O unfortunately was a bit of a drinker. She owned a shot gun and in her worst moments if anyone turned up in her drive she used to fire on them with the shot gun so she was someone people fought shy of. [When she] died people going into [her house] opened the cupboard doors and were covered in empty gin bottles which fell out on them ... various doors were peppered with shotgun pellets.”

Birds and Birdsong

Recollection from Ivor Gillespie, Hooke Farm 2010

“When I came [in about 1968] there were a lot of nightingales, and there haven't been any in recent years, until last year, coming home from town, there was a nightingale singing in the carpark at the station, and this year I have heard one once. Swallows and martins are much less frequent as are peewits – lapwings. There were a lot of lapwings flying up and down on the Common and of course there used to be a lot of skylark song. All of that is diminished. I don't hear any skylarks' song now although they tell me there are still skylarks on the Common.”

Effingham Cricket

Recollection from Edward Crouch, 2010

“Cricket has been played on that part of the Common reputedly for more than 100 years. The site was given to the Cricket Club by the Parish Council. I played there from the late 40s to the early 60s when the ball was hitting me more than I was hitting it. But to have a half-day's fielding in the outfield at the beginning of the season was quite hard work and you needed a good day's rest afterwards. I remember also fielding one day and a kestrel caught a vole and came and perched on one of the stumps within a few yards of me and religiously ate it while I was trying to concentrate on the fielding. It was very boggy in the outfield ... it was pretty sticky stuff early in the season. And it was also a while before we got the square into any sort of proper condition. Bearing in mind we didn't wear helmets in those days, you had to duck and weave quite a bit if a fast bowler was on!”

Changing Landscape

Recollection from Jessica Page, 2010

“These are my memories of the Common just before the second world war. My recollection is that it was quite close, rather nice, grass which had been obviously browsed by sheep ... it was really rather pleasant and I think I can even remember seeing some harebells. And it had large may bushes and blackthorn all over it. But by 1939 the bushes were getting more and more huge and there was less and less grass in

between and you really had to thread your way through. Then the war came and I remember seeing these big machines on the Common and they just tore everything up ... it looked so different because the whole thing was flat and open. It was then ploughed and for the rest of the war it was used for Dig for Victory and there were various crops.”

Childhood at Wise Folly

Recollection from George Ranger, told to Mary Rice-Oxley in 1991

George Ranger's grandfather lived at Wise Folly before the second world war, and kept geese, sheep and a donkey. George himself lived in one of the ‘wooden houses’ behind Wise Folly. As a child, George used to watch the timber wagons passing by, coming from Davis's sawmill in Church Road, Great Bookham.

Additional comment by ELHG

Another familiar sight for residents on the Common from the early 1900s through until the 1920s would have been the baker from Effingham village, delivering with his horse and cart.

Boys' Brigade Camp

In the early 1900s, local philanthropist George Pauling paid for boys in the Catholic Boys' Brigade from the Clapham and Balham areas to camp on Effingham Common. Not everyone appreciated the opportunity! In 1903 one boy sent a postcard saying “Lovely scenery, poetical sights but dreadful life – couldn't stand it – boys singing the whole night – couldn't sleep – got up with an awful headache – I'm better off in Balham.”