



Wimbledon Common wins Gold at London in Bloom 2015!

We are delighted to report that Wimbledon Common won Gold in the "London Common of the Year" category in this year's London in Bloom competition!

Peter Haldane, our Wildlife & Conservation Officer, attended the award ceremony in Richmond Park earlier this month and commented "This award is a tribute to the commitment of our staff, and volunteers, and their dedication to maintaining the Commons as the incredible open space they are."

The London in Bloom Campaign is designed to celebrate and recognise the passion Londoners have for greening our capital city and the judges were impressed with our conservation work and the management of our natural features, wildlife and flora.



Peter Haldane accepting the award on behalf of the Commons from Joyce Bellamy MBE



Diary Dates

Bat Walk

Wednesday 14th October.

Meet at the Ranger's Office for a 6.15pm start. Stout footwear and a torch recommended.

Volunteering

Saturday Morning scrub Bashers

3rd & 24th October

7th & 21st November

19th December

First rare beetles, now snails.....

Most of us probably dismiss snails as nothing more than a pest in our gardens, but we recently learnt that Wimbledon Common is home to a population of Britain's largest, and one of its rarest, European land snails, *Helix pomatia*, the Roman Snail.

Lack of fossil evidence suggests that it was likely to have been introduced to the UK by the Romans as a food source. They have a body length of about 10cm and a shell measuring 5cm in diameter and became so popular in cuisine that they are now rare enough to be legally protected. Their whereabouts on the Commons therefore must remain a closely guarded secret!



The Roman Snail, photograph by Mike Rappolt

What to look out for during October

Flying this month....

Birds - Our local expert, Dave Wills reports recent sightings of Hobby, Whinchat, Reed Bunting, Yellow Wagtail, Northern Wheatear, Swallow, Mute Swan (*on Rushmere*), Meadow Pipit, Common Buzzard, Siskin, House Martin, European Stonechat and Sand Martin.



Butterflies and Dragonflies -

Although there are not too many to be seen now, if we do get warm sunny day, you can still see the odd Meadow Brown butterfly on the wing as well as Common Darter and Hawker dragonflies.



Mushroom picking...

As autumn approaches, it is the turn of fungi to populate the woodland. Fungi are another important part of the ecology of the Commons as they "recycle" plant debris and leaf litter into nutrients, breaking it down into the soil. We do allow picking, under permit from the Ranger's Office, of 250kg per person. Please contact us for more information.

Maintenance Works

From the end of September, foresters will return to the Commons' woodland to continue with our Holly thinning programme (funded by the Forestry Commission), focusing on the wooded area between the Gravelly horse rides and steadily follow the course of Stag Ride towards Queensmere.

Holly grows incredibly vigorously and can quickly block out the growth of any other flora. But it is a vital piece of the Commons' ecology jigsaw, providing shelter for birds and a valuable source of food into winter, so we leave at least 10% in each area cut, and this year we are also leaving additional stands.

Our Maintenance team have also been removing tree stumps from the Plain to help with future mowing, and will also be cutting back three areas of heather on the Heath - this will create different age structures within the heather. The seed is then used to improve heather coverage in other areas.

Down at Putney Lower Common, the team will continue with the woodland clearance and, weather permitting, will give the grass another cut.

