

# Local Heritage Study Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons

Editor – Lindsay Griffin

**FOREWORD** by Christine Stott



The initiative for this study came from a grant application from Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society (H&CCPS) to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which was made in January 2001 as a Local Heritage Initiative. The application included an education programme, practical management works and a course to improve the skills of local volunteers in the use of chainsaws. Chris Woodley-Stewart, the Countryside Officer of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), suggested that a written study emphasising the importance of the Commons and promoting their heritage value might also be included. A proposal for this study was therefore incorporated in the grant application which was successful. The Society greatly appreciates the money which the Heritage Lottery Fund has provided since it has enabled work to go ahead which might otherwise have been hard to finance and it has enabled the Society to widen its vision of what it can do.

Lindsay Griffin was asked to co-ordinate the written study and she has consulted the H&CCPS committee, its membership past and present and other local organisations to bring the document together.

This study has provided an excellent opportunity to review the history of the Commons over the years and to document changes in management strategies in more recent times. We hope that it will provide our members and other interested people with information about the Commons, record the contribution of many local people to their maintenance and encourage further community involvement in preserving a valuable local resource. Although we intended to include a history of the local community in this study we now realise that it will take much longer to complete this section. Much of the work is under way and will be made available as a separate, loose-leaf document. It is intended to produce what we have to date, even though it is very much a work in progress, in the hope that it will stimulate further local interest. Further additions will be made as they become available. The planned wider study will include interviews with older and long-standing residents, further histories of individual houses on and around the Commons, and records of our public buildings and of our local clubs and organisations. The Commons are not only home to flora and fauna but also to a rich mix of human beings who all have different memories and different experiences to record. Families whose names crop up in records of the parishes several hundred years ago live side-by-side with those who have been here for only two or three generations, and those who have come much more recently. We hope that this study is only the beginning and that we can go some way to recording a cross-section of their activities and endeavours. It is also hoped that we can make use of our local web-site [www.cholesbury.com](http://www.cholesbury.com) to share information that we find.

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