



Chailey Commons Society

Newsletter of the Chailey Commons Society Winter 2011 - 2012

CHAIRMAN'S SCRIBBLINGS

Welcome to our winter Newsletter. Up until the end of January it had been mild and kind to our heating bills! Not so good from nature's point of view as it looks as though things are a little confused again with primroses showing and some shrubs thinking they should flower. Now that February has started we are having a more traditional winter with a strong easterly blast from Siberia. Let's hope it doesn't last too long!



Red House Common – winter's morning



Red House Common – winter's evening

Our November meeting was a very interesting presentation by David Plummer on Badgers, and we were all fascinated by his illustrated talk. Thanks to David for that.

No meeting in December and our Results Meeting in January is always very interesting and revealing, showing us the details of Red House Common and any changes or new flora and fauna.

We are now getting ready for our new survey season of Lane End Common during 2012. Please let us know if you would like to help.

May I wish a warm welcome to our new members and I look forward to 2012 and all the activities which we have planned.

See you soon

FROM THE RANGER

Fencing Project

The fencing/gates etc work is proceeding with installing gates first, then affixing the fences. Currently Memorial Common is being completed and then on to the other two commons and the water supplies to the troughs have been connected.

Consultations are in hand for the grazing stock and there will be a period of consolidation when all the fencing has been completed, and this will involve information for interested people and details concerning the completion of the project. More information in due course.

Clearance Work

On Red House Common there is clearance work ongoing by myself and other rangers by the car park area opening views out to the north. There are some new ground features being revealed and these will be of interest to the archaeology and local history group in the Society. See a separate description elsewhere.

I know many of you particularly enjoy Red House Common for walking and exercising dogs, so do please be aware of any ditches and holes which may be appearing. Do also bear in mind others when allowing dogs to roam freely, and please use the large dog poo bin provided at the car park for helping keep the common clean.

On the south side of Red House there is a further section of birch woodland in front of St Georges to be cleared which will open up views across the A272 to the Plumpton ridgelines.

Crispin Kirkpatrick
ESCC Countryside Ranger
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HONEYDEW

I am sure that you have noticed the sticky 'goo' that sometimes coats the windscreen of your car, especially if parked under a lime, sycamore or oak tree. The answer is, of course, Honeydew.

Honeydew is the results of millions of aphids feeding on the leaves. They puncture the tissue of the leaf and then suck up the sugar-rich sap. This they imbibe in vast quantities excreting the excess. The sap contains simple sugars and a very small amount of protein. This protein is what the aphids need to grow and reproduce, hence the 'rain' of excess honeydew falling to the ground below. It coats cars and vegetation alike. This abundance of sugar attracts a myriad of insects, butterflies, bees, wasps and flies. Our Hairstreak butterflies, purple and brown, and the Holly Blues, all feed on the honeydew thus making them difficult to see, high up in the canopy. Ants too love honeydew and can often be seen tracking up the tree trunks of infested trees and plants.

The sugary mass will go mouldy in warm damp weather creating a black coating on everything. The only remedy is to wash it off with water, which the rain will eventually do. The black mould will inhibit growth if left too long.

Jenny Barbour

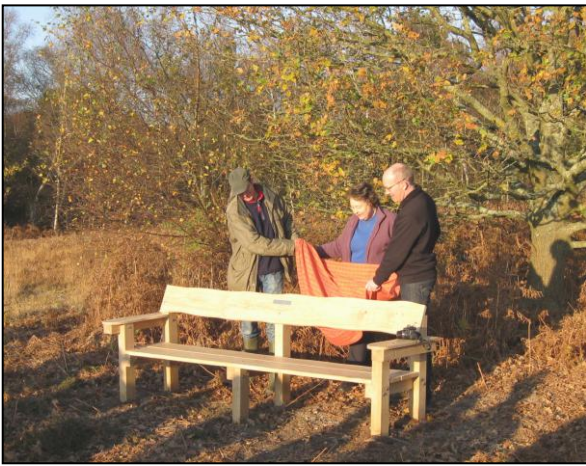
Romany Ridge and somewhere to rest

For those of you who walk across the commons, especially Romany Ridge, I expect you have noticed something new?

Following a generous bequest from the late John Smitherman, we were able to provide a new seat by the path at the north end of the common for those wishing to rest awhile when out for a walk.

Our picture shows Pam and her two sons testing the seat in the lovely sunshine of the day. John Smitherman was, for many years, a leader of our bird walks and one of our real experts on the birds of the area, not only recognising them from sightings, but having the knack of picking out the songs and calls for identification, especially useful in the summer months when the foliage everywhere was thick and the birds would be hiding away





The seat was made and installed, and the family, and friends, were invited to the unveiling ceremony. The Rev. John Maskell kindly came along to bless the seat, and, after a short gathering, and much trying out of the seat, everyone went along to May Cottage Tea Room for a celebration cup of tea.

Our grateful thanks to John for his most generous bequest and to Jim Edwards, of the Monday Group, for making up and fitting the seat, and to Pam and family for making the afternoon a memorable one.

Do try out the seat sometime.

Local History

New wartime trenches on Red House Common

The rangers have recently been clearing birch and gorse scrub from the sandstone ridge on Red House Common just to the west of the car park off Warrs Hill Road. In the course of this they have uncovered two new 'V'-shaped trenches dug into the top of the banks of one of the braided tracks that cut through this area heading down the slope to the Ouse crossing at Sheffield Bridge. Superficially these trenches resemble those on the eastern side of Memorial Common. The main differences are that the arms of the 'V' are much longer; the trenches are narrower and much shallower.



It's possible that this pair of trenches was abandoned before being completed, as there is a much deeper one further down the north facing slope. The trenches here would have commanded a very extensive view across Red House Common which was used as a military training area during the Second World War. Indeed it was on this slope that in August 1942 Trooper James Edgecumbe from the Reconnaissance Corps was killed when the Bren Gun carrier he was travelling in overturned.

Ian Seccombe

Red House Common Surveys 2011

Our Results Meeting on January 19th was a very enjoyable and interesting with illustrated presentations from some of our excellent volunteer surveyors.

The Bird Surveys were presented by Ian Woolsey and provide much detailed information, comparing year to year, in rotation, for the commons.

The survey for 2011 recorded some 58 species, considerably up on the 35 seen on the last survey of Red House in 2006, which is excellent news and due in part to the increased number of surveys that were carried out and particularly in the winter. Whilst some species have been seen for the first time on the common and others have made a welcome return after years of not being seen, some others unfortunately were either missing (such as the **Swift**) or their numbers were down on previous years (i.e. **Stonechat**).

See elsewhere in the Newsletter for a couple of example maps showing Ian's data recorded for the Tit and Finch Families.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The New Year has brought us two new members who are both very welcome. They are Nancy Wiginton and Rachel Bennington.

This brings me to the new membership year and the renewal/standing order form in this newsletter. May I ask patrons and members to review their existing standing orders to ensure they are for the correct amount. If your standing order is correct you need do nothing at all, as the subscription will be collected in February, thank you very much. If you wish to renew your membership with a cheque or cash or set up a new standing order please send the form with payment if required, to me at the address below. Subscriptions remain £10.00 for Patrons, £5.00 for Members and 50p Junior Members.

Why not make a gift of membership to a friend, neighbour or member of you family? We have a host of activities to look forward to this year, ranging from our 2 outings to Wakehurst Place to watch Badgers in May, the Coach Outing to Iping & Stedham Commons in June and the Coach Outing to the London Wetlands Centre in October.

<http://www.chaileycommons.org.uk>

Nick Holden,
5 Roseleigh Gardens, Scaynes Hill, West Sussex RH17 7PU
(Tel: 01444 831084)

MEETINGS

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

Saturday March 31st 2.00.p.m.

Ecological Survey of Lane End Common

A Familiarisation Walk of the common for surveyors and helpers. Come along and see what is involved. Ends approx 4.00.p.m.

Saturday April 15th 2012 9.30.a.m.

Bird Walk with Ian Woolsey

A walk on Lane End Common to see and hear the new migrant arrivals.
Ends 11.30.a.m.

Saturday May 5th 2012 10.00.a.m.

Archaeology and Local History Group Walk.

A walk with Linda Ball to discover features of Lane End Common.
Ends approx 12.00.midday

INDOOR MEETINGS

7.30. p.m. Chailey Village Hall TQ 394189

All talks illustrated unless otherwise stated

Thursday February 16th 2012

The Sussex Air Ambulance – A talk

Thursday March 15th 2012

Pills Potions and Patience

A talk by Peter Hill

TOPICS AND SPEAKERS

Do you have an interest in a nature related subject and would like to tell us about it, or know someone who would?

Our Programme Secretary – Jenny Barbour – is always pleased to hear of ideas and suggestions for speakers and topics for our winter indoor meetings. Please let us have details at any of our meetings or by telephone to 01825 722841

Firework parties are strictly prohibited on the nature reserve. Large stands of dry dead bracken, which could go up like a torch; mean the fire hazard is far too great. And, besides putting life at risk, uncontrolled fires cause immeasurable damage.

May we remind our members that they attend all the Society's meetings and events entirely at their own risk. The Society cannot take responsibility for loss of property or injury to persons during our events.

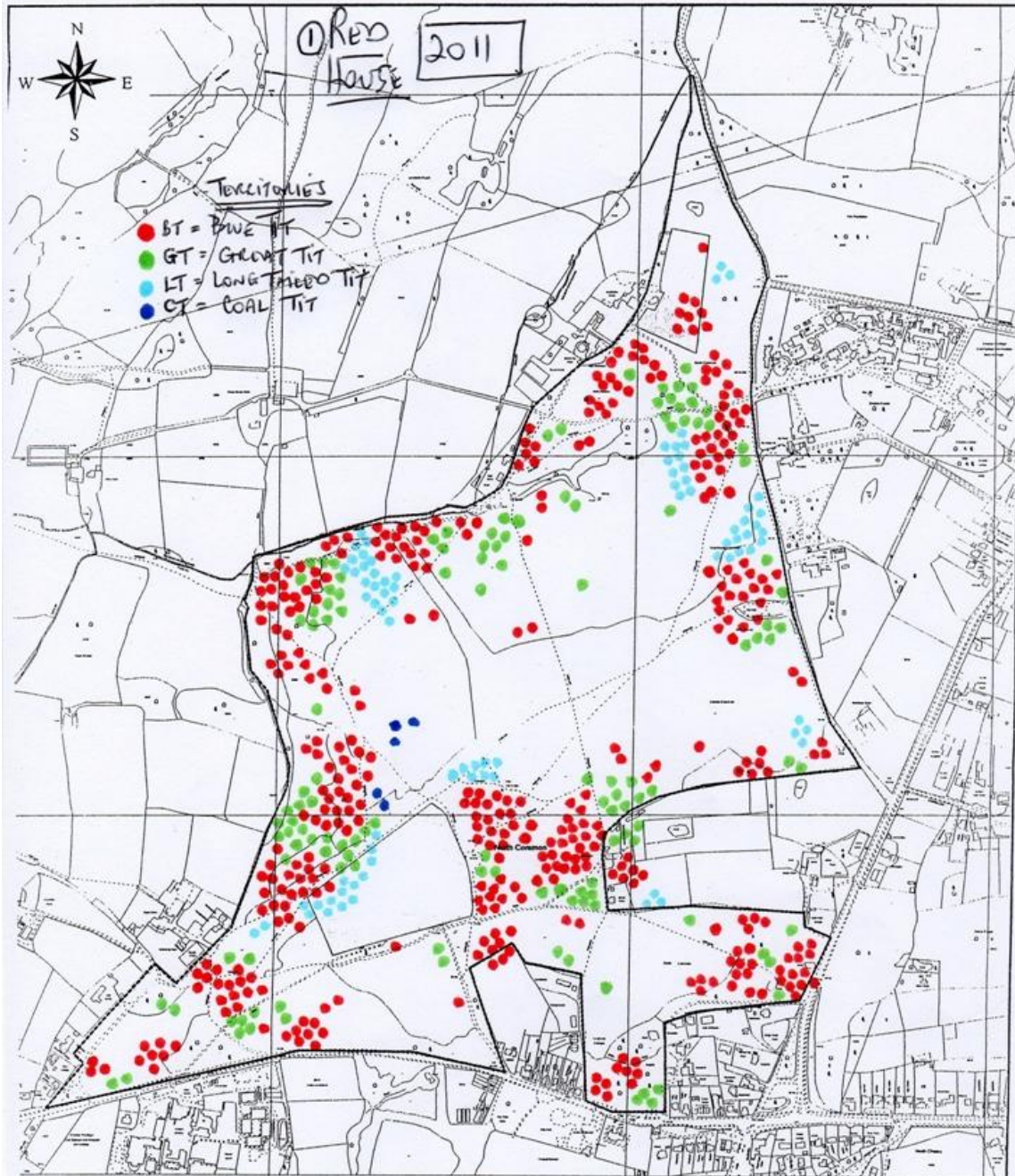
**NOTICE OF 48th
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
CHAILEY COMMONS SOCIETY WILL HOLD
THEIR
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
ON
THURSDAY MARCH 15TH 2012
IN
CHAILEY VILLAGE HALL
CHAILEY
AT 7.30.P.M.**

ALL ARE WELCOME

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES
2. MINUTES OF AGM 17.03.11
3. MATTERS ARISING
4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
5. TREASURER'S REPORT
6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Survey results for the Tit Family



East Sussex County Council

Scale : 1:5000

John Wilkins
 Director of Transport and Environment,
 East Sussex County Council, Lewes.

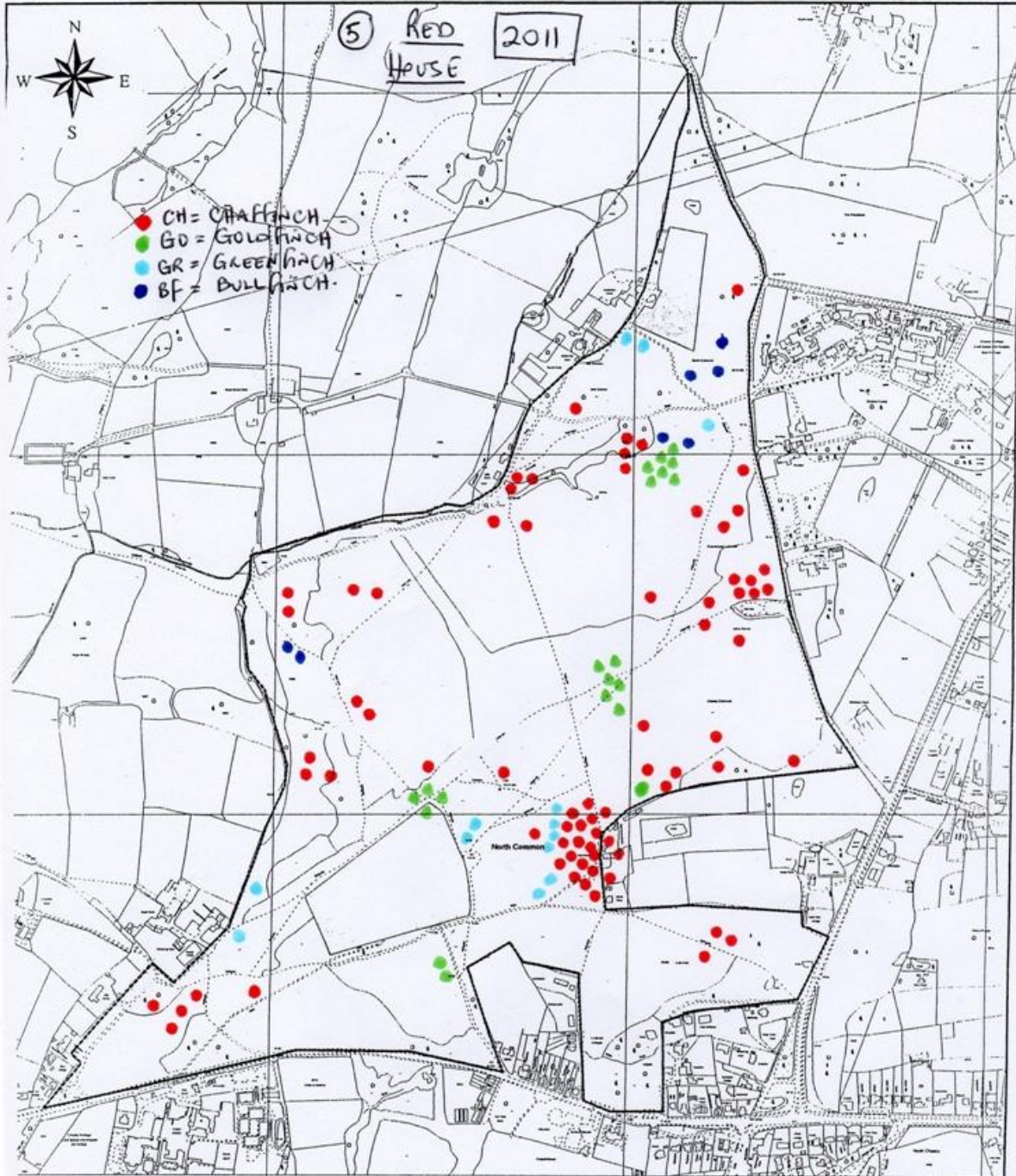
Date : 23 March 1999

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Drg. No : RED HOUSE

Drawn :

Survey results for the Finch Family



East Sussex County Council

Scale : 1:5000

Date : 23 March 1999

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 Director of Transport and Environment,
 East Sussex County Council

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