



Bird's foot trefoil flowering on the Common



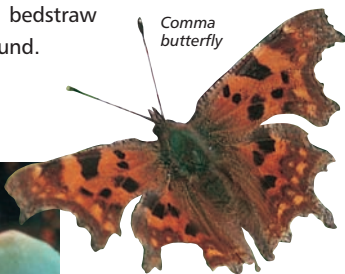
Coulsdon Common Chain Gang volunteers

for Wildlife

The woodland tree species include oak, birch, ash and cherry with an understorey of hawthorn, holly and yew. These areas have a high proportion of standing deadwood. This is a valuable habitat for a variety of invertebrates that help it decay and for hole-nesting birds.

In damp autumn months a wide selection of fungi can be found on the trees or emerging through the leaf litter below.

Grassland covers less than a third of the Common and consists of chalk, neutral and acidic types. Typical plants of the chalk are rough hawkbit, pyramidal orchid and yellow rattle and you can also find the nationally rare, greater yellow rattle. Neutral areas are abundant with knapweed and bird's foot trefoil. In the acidic areas tormentil, heath bedstraw and sheep's sorrel can be found.



Comma butterfly



Fungi flourish in the autumn

THE CITY COMMONS

Coulsdon Common is one of seven open spaces, known as the City Commons, found on the borders of South London and Surrey. We work with local communities to enhance the aesthetic, cultural, historical and biological interest of this unique resource for future generations.



The City of London Corporation is a uniquely diverse organisation, which not only promotes and supports the City and provides it with a full range of services but also provides wider services for London and for the nation as a whole. As part of this provision the City Corporation funds the Open Spaces Department, which manages over 10,700 acres of parks, gardens and open spaces by charitable trust for public recreation and enjoyment.

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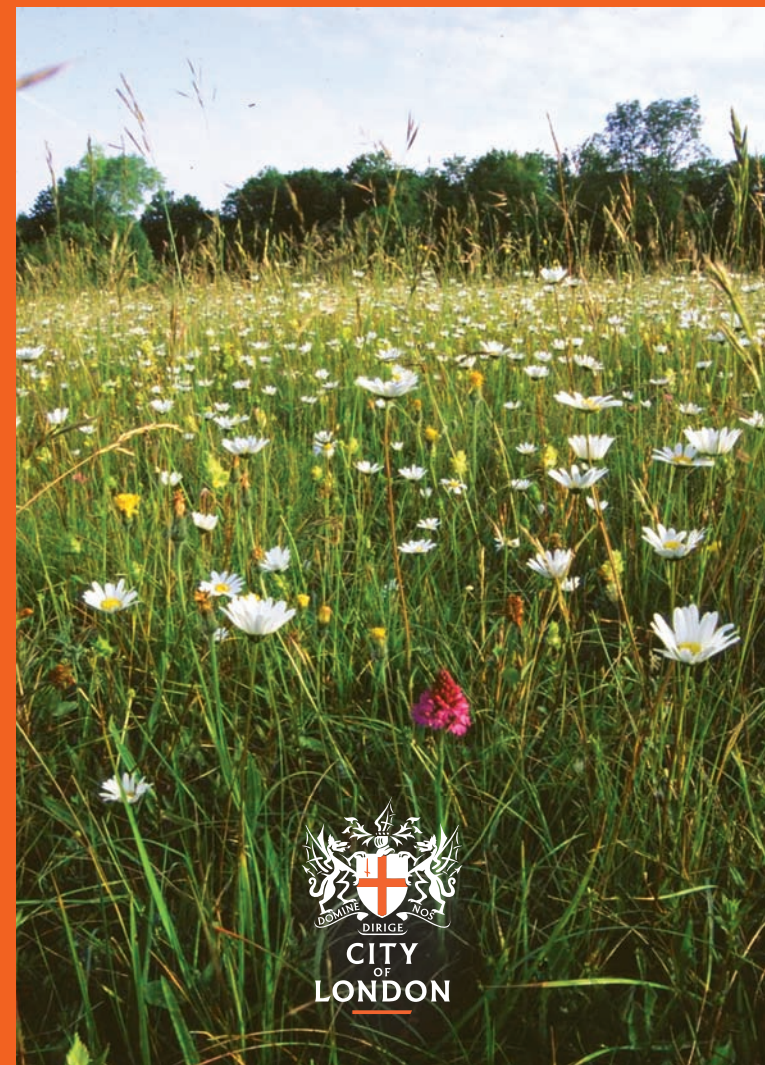
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COULSDON COMMON



Welcome to Coulsdon Common

We hope this leaflet will make it easy for you to find your way around the different areas of the Common.

Coulsdon has a varied mix of habitats for you to discover. These include ancient woodland which in spring is enhanced with the colour of bluebells. In summer the chalk grassland flourishes with many flowers which provide a food source for butterflies and other insects.

Glades on the acidic soil support remnants of heathland where heather and gorse survive from days gone by. Take a walk through the woodland and you will find a pond where you can sit and relax. This is a tranquil area where frogs, newts and dragonflies breed.

As you explore this Common you may come across people carrying out a variety of rural activities including hay making and woodland management. You will of course at times find our cattle and sheep grazing in meadows.

Bluebells in Ryden's Wood

Bluebells

Heathland habitat of gorse and heather



The windmill in the early 20th century. R. Packham collection

for History

As you wander around look out for an old white iron post bearing the crest of the City of London Corporation. This curious object is called a coal post. It marks the 1861 boundary of the London district. The name coal post comes from the City's practice of taxing coal and wine brought into London.

The tax began in 1667 to pay for the rebuilding after the Great Fire but by the 19th century the money was being used for general purposes including the payment of the Coulsdon Commons. The tax lapsed by 1900 but the posts still survive in an irregular circle around London, two of which can be found on the Common.



Coal post

The windmill enclosure marks the spot where a post-mill once stood. This was in operation from 1777 until 1898, when it stopped working. It was pulled down in 1924. This gives us a clue that this now wooded area was once open grassland and heath, as it would not have been efficient to site a windmill in the middle of a wood. A smaller post mill stood for a similar time nearby, on the site of Windmill House.

for People

One of our summertime guided walks



As well as enjoying the area on foot, riders are provided for with a network of permissive horse rides; cyclists may use these also. The western side of the Common is quite flat and is particularly suited to those with mobility problems, but due to the nature of the clay soil these areas can be muddy in winter. Whilst in this area you can enjoy watching the local club play football, then retire to The Fox public house to quench your thirst.



Sussex cattle

As part of the management of the grassland we use cattle and sheep to graze the Common. In spring look out for new born lambs in the grazing areas near the Estate Office.

Throughout the year we provide guided walks to share our knowledge of the area. Details can be found on notice boards, in our newsletter and on our website.



Jay

Southdown sheep in The Maze in autumn

