

From: **BOOKER COMMON & WOODS PROTECTION SOCIETY**

OUR OBJECT is to protect the amenities and environment of Booker Common, and to protect the interests of the people who use it.

Booker Common comprises 63 acres of grassland and woodland. Many think of the Common only as the grassland around the cricket pitch (i.e. the postal address). In fact the greater part of the Common, approx. 9/10ths, is the woodland to the west of Horns lane, and northwards towards Booker Hill Estate. **We are fortunate in having this beautiful woodland on our doorsteps, but the Beech trees are under threat and it's up to us to try and protect them for the future.**

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

1. **Spring Clean-up:** 70 local residents gathered 2 tonnes of rubble and hardcore and transported it direct to the dump. 5 tonnes of other rubbish was also collected and later taken away by the Council; but they have yet to remove the burnt-out cars. Most of the rubbish came out of the woodlands and the clean-up has greatly improved this amenity for everybody. Thank you to all who helped.
2. **Autumn Clean-up.** This will be organised when the undergrowth dies back, Oct/Nov. All those willing to help please contact Mr. Bob 'pick-it-up' Lynch on H.W. 33809.
3. **Dumping & Tipping.** Recently there were several appalling cases involving many tonnes of material in different parts of the woodland. Various members have made statements with evidence pointing to the culprits. These are being investigated by the appropriate authorities with a view to prosecution under the Litter Act 1958 and/or Amenity Act 1978. It is always distasteful to give evidence but these are flagrant cases of vandalism, and however distasteful fire needs to be fought with fire.
4. **Now about fires.** Recently 3 fires were started in the woodland requiring the fire service. The danger to the entire woodland is obvious particularly in dry periods, but more sinister was the burning of a children's encampment made of branches and leaves. Last year two children were burnt to death in such an encampment. It will help if parents warn their children of the danger of fires in the woods both to themselves and others.
5. **Public Safety on the Common.** Concern has been expressed by members about the dangers to pedestrians from vehicles on the Common. Property has already been damaged, and it is only a matter of time before somebody is injured — or worse. The Committee has held a meeting with Wycombe District Council and Smith-Woolley, the Estate land agents, to discuss the matter. The problem is complicated and will take time to arrive at a solution which will protect both pedestrians and those entitled to legal vehicle access to their properties. No action will be taken until after a public meeting at which views can be aired on any proposals put forward. So don't be alarmed by any wild rumour.
6. **"Beech Trees under threat in the Chilterns"** (newspaper headline). The newspapers are right. The young Beech trees are under threat from squirrel destruction and Beech bark disease. In addition, new growth can only be harvested 50/100 years ahead, and the rate of loss is very high over this period. As a result there is little economic incentive to invest money in the cultivation of Beech trees, particularly in today's economic situation. On the other hand soft woods can be economic and harvested in much shorter space of time. But how unattractive they are as compared with the Beech trees. The Chiltern Society is considering a Protection Scheme across the Chilterns, but it is up to us to protect our own backyard in our bit of the Chilterns.

The Society has initiated two schemes for protecting the Beech trees.

- i) **The Squirrel Watch]**
- ii) **Adopt a Beech tree]** full details from Allan Duggin — H.W. 25665.

Squirrel Watch: Walkers in the woods can help by phoning H.W. 25665 if they notice fresh bark stripping from around the base or higher up on the main stem.

CAUTION: don't try and deal with squirrels yourself. In any case **all** shooting on the Common is forbidden without written and lawful authority — for obvious reasons.

Adopt a Beech tree: Join a working party on a Sunday morning from 10.30 — midday, and help preserve selected trees, and ensure that your children's children enjoy the Beech trees as we do today. (ring H.W. 25665)

CAUTION: Nobody is authorised to attempt tree preservation work unless in an official working party.

7. **Your financial help is needed:** We have over 200 paid-up members from 115 households near the Common. All work is voluntary, but expenses are heavy (this letter alone cost approx. 6p). **Please support with an annual subscription of £2 per household.**

[Existing members: your receipt for 1982/3 sub should be attached; if not phone H.W. 31560).

To: The Treasurer, Booker Common & Woods Protection Society, "Birinji", Booker Common
1982/3 Subscription for the whole family: £2 enclosed herewith. Date

NAMEPhone No

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