

# Booker Common & Woods Protection Society.

Newsletter No. 44. April 1998

Reg'd Charity No. 289871.

## WALKER'S VIEW.

BY RON WALKER, CONSERVATION SECRETARY

The future of Booker Common is in your hands, it is also in your backyard, and consequently its attractiveness reflects on the value of your properties..

***Litter Blitz on Sunday 26th. April 1998.***  
*10.00am to 12.30pm.*

YES! I would like your help with the forthcoming litter blitz, which is our regular attempt to keep the Urban Commons clean & tidy.

We will contact as many of our regular helpers as possible, but if you want to be part of the team, & don't want to feel left out, please contact me (tel. H/W 444824) if I'm not immediately available, please leave a message on H/W 525665.

### Assembly points:

- a) On the green below the Squirrel Pub, Squirrel Lane.
- b) Arundel Road entrance to Booker Woods - routing down to the Lane End road party.
- c) At the junction of Rydal Way & Booker Woods; to route along Lane End Road & Horns lane.

Plastic bags are provided & filled bags will be collected along the way. Strong gardening gloves, strong footwear, & rainproof garments are advised. Remember, It is *Your* backyard, so please telephone & offer your help to tidy it.

May we look forward to seeing you on the day?

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## YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS OF WAY.

BY ALLAN DUGGIN, SOCIETY CHAIRMAN.

We are especially privileged in having on our doorsteps, countryside so beautiful that it carries the legal protection designation 'Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB). It also carries carries Legal Rights of Way & Right of Access to our Urban Commons.

More & more people are choosing to avoid driving & walking on our exhaust polluted roads, & are walking the designated & numbered Public Right of Ways (PROW's), taking advantage of the cleaner air & open environment. These designations enable the public the rights of passage across private lands, but *only* along these specific routes.

The nature of the right will depend on the type of of way, which under common law can be either;

- a) A *footpath*, on which the right of way is on foot only.
- b) A *Bridleway*, on which there is a right of way on foot or on horseback only.

There is also a right of public access for 'Air & Exercise' on Urban Commons - which includes both Booker & Newmer Commons. This does not apply to designated Rural Commons. We urge everyone to use this right of access sensibly by keeping to the footpaths in woodland areas. To trample elsewhere in the woods inhibits the natural regeneration of native Beech trees and woodland ground flora.

*It is vital to prevent these rights of way becoming obstructed by natural growth which stops people from passing through.* Society volunteers spend much time & effort in clearing the undergrowth to allow free passage. We have recently had assistance in this from The Rambler's Association.

These are *your* rights of way - use them or lose them.

## Footpath Obstructions & Their Implications.

It is in the nature of things that wind-blown trees obstruct footpaths, & subsequent fast growing undergrowth increases that obstruction. Walkers therefore move off track to circumnavigate the obstruction, & trample existing undergrowth to the detriment of both the natural Beech tree regeneration & woodland flora.

There have been such occurrences on footpaths 111 & 112 (see map on page 3). The Society offered to reopen the footpaths with mechanical aids, provided that Bucks County Council would install footpath signposts, & arrange with the Landowner for the way-marking of trees with white arrows.

*"Breathes there the man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said  
This is my own, my native land!"*

Sir Walter Scott (1771 - 1832)

In order that the public no longer needed to be at risk by walking on the highly dangerous Lane End Road on reaching the western end of footpath 112, the landowner offered to extend this footpath along the common to join with bridleway 110 (see map on page 3). But this is a 'permissive path', not a designated ROW, and thus does not qualify to be shown on the definitive ROW map.

The Society hired the necessary mechanical equipment (at a cost of £164.50), & our volunteers completed the job by 20th. January 1998.

The Rambler's Society gave us invaluable help in this project, for which we thank them.

Another obstruction had a much more serious implication because it was caused by a deliberate act. This impeded the public legal right of access to Newmer Common through the narrow bottleneck between the private properties of Beechwood House & Yew Tree House.

This is the only entrance open at all times from footpath 143 on the northern side of the common, to the customary route across the common on bridleway 110 on the southern side.

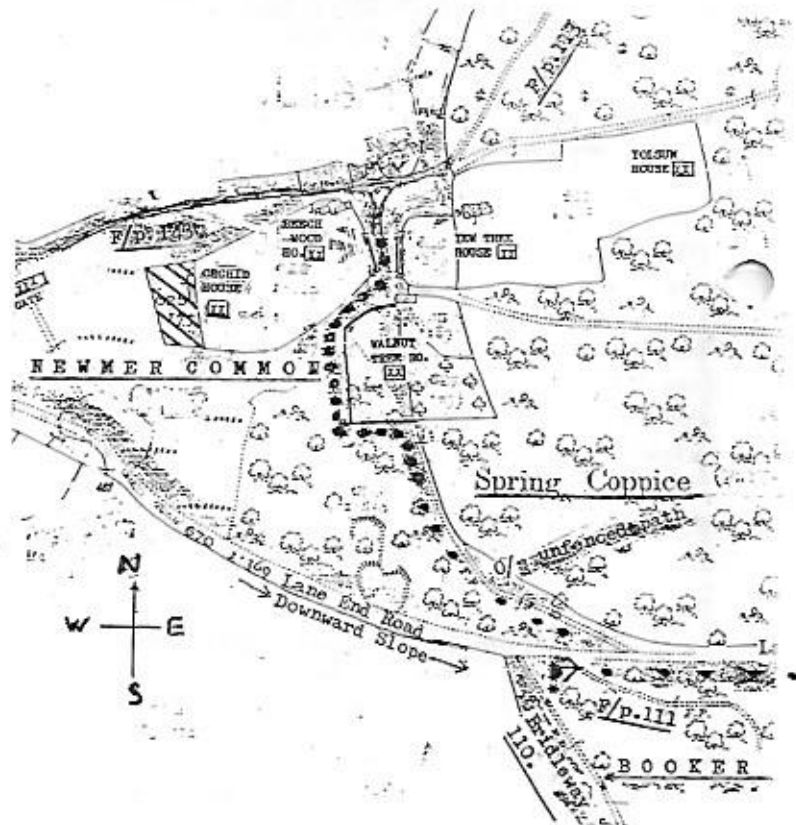
Society volunteers removed the obstructions to Booker tip. The Landowner subsequently gave the owner of Beechwood House permission to plant trees & shrubs on the common between his property & Yew Tree House, with the proviso that a footpath be left for his (the Landowner's) usage.

The Society applied to Bucks County Council for this north/south route to be designated and numbered (see dotted line on map). This would mean that any further obstructions would constitute a criminal offence. Another benefit would be that the route would be signposted and published in the definitive ROW map. This would ensure that walkers would be spared the hazardous walk between ROW's 110 & 143.

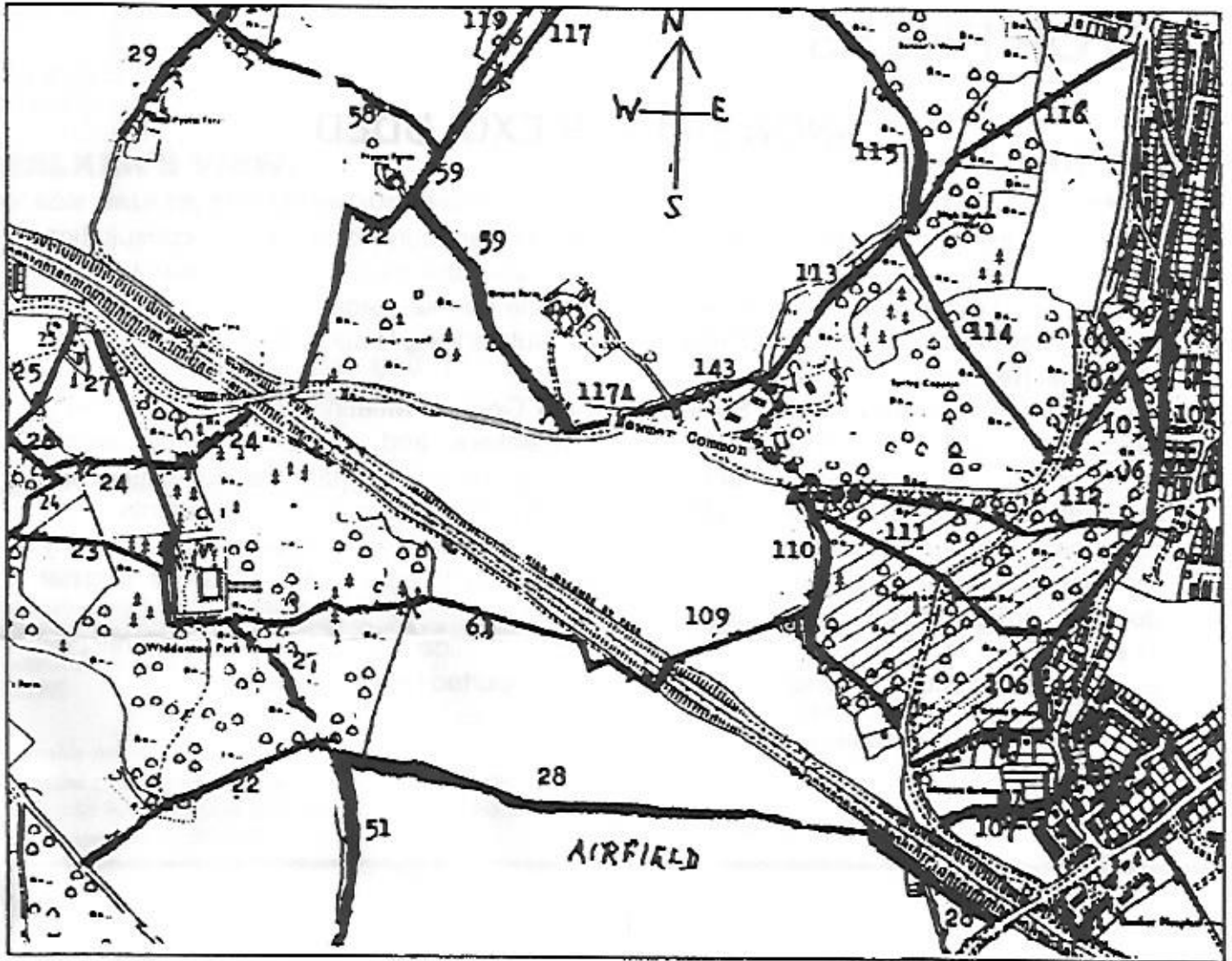
Due to complex legalities, only users of this particular route prior to 1961 (37 years ago) are permitted to give evidence. Following our Newsletter in July 1997, 22 elderly residents stood up to be counted & gave invaluable written evidence.

Bucks County Council will hear the case on 22nd July 1998 (provisionally). Any members of the public may attend in the public gallery.

For final details of time & venue, please telephone Mrs. Freemantle, Definitive Map Officer, at Aylesbury. 01296 383951.



## Map of footpaths in Booker & Newmer Commons.



The map illustrates that this route is the *only* safe route between the footpath networks separated by Newmer Common, & avoids walking along the heavily used, narrow, unlit & unpaved Lane End Road.

Those who prefer walking with like-minded companions could telephone The Rambler's Association, either Jeffery Smith (01494 534495, or Ted Swan on 01628 483430.

They would be pleased to give you details of all planned walks in this area of outstanding natural beauty - YOUR area.

If you would like to join our regular team of conservation volunteers, please contact Ron Walker on 01494 444824.

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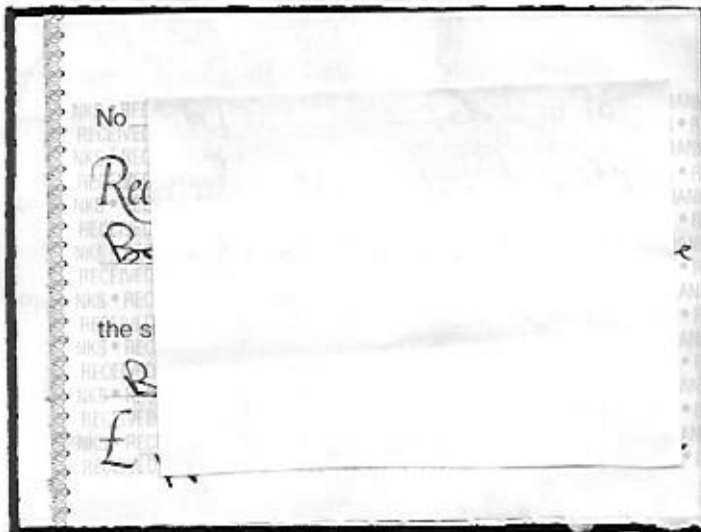
## STOP PRESS -

### ANOB and ASR EXCLUDED

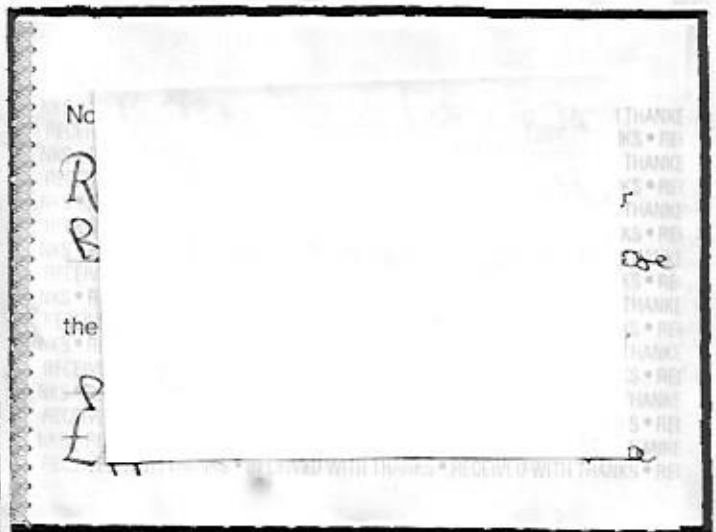
Wycombe District Local Plan Review proposals were announced at a public consultation meeting on 2nd April 1998. The Council has decided that building development in this review period will exclude the two greenfields on the northern side of Booker Common at Sands. They remain designated 'Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and an 'Area of Special Restraint'.

Members will recall that at the Society's Annual General Meetings in 1996 and 1997, Wycombe Council Planners were Guest Speakers and members made strong representation against development. Subsequently, on your behalf, the committee has attended other Council Consultation Meetings and together with many local residents made continued written representations. The fact that the society was supported by so many residents its opinion carried much weight in argument against the Councils original development proposals.

The moral is that future events can be changed and guided by continued and persistent argument and factual evidence, especially when supported by local residents.



Receipt for 1997/8 Fighting Fund donation.



Receipt for 1997/8 annual subscription.