

# Commons News



Wimbledon  
and Putney  
Commons



Wimbledon Common

Putney Heath

Putney Lower Common

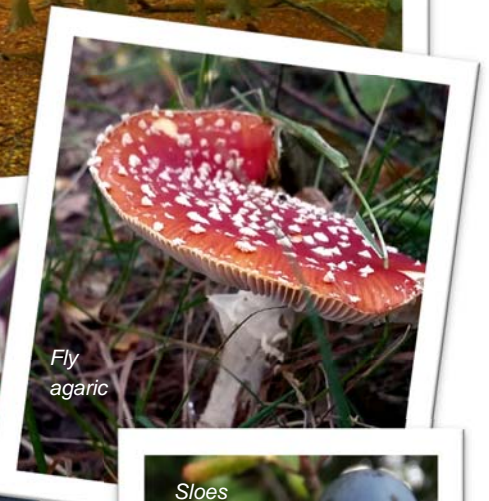
October 2015

Writing this Newsletter every month brings home the changing of the seasons, and never more so as we move from summer into autumn. The variety of species of plants and trees on the Commons gives us such a vibrant and riotous show of colour...it cannot fail to lift the heart!

Although it's the russets and yellow of the leaves that catch our eye, look a little deeper and there is other colour to be found - from the purple of sloes to the red of holly berries and rose hips, and the wonderful *Amanita muscaria* (Fly Agaric) - one of the most iconic and distinctive of British fungi with its red cap and white spots. Found in woodland, particularly around Birch and Pine, it is a food source for some flies and beetles, but it is renowned for its toxicity and hallucinogenic properties in people so please don't eat it!



Rose Hips



Fly  
agaric



Sloes

## Repairs to the Southern Pound

At the junction of Parkside and Cannizaro Road is one of the two cattle pounds on the Commons. Dating back to the days when cattle and sheep were grazed on the Commons, they were used to house cattle that had strayed, or to impound those seized in payment of debts. The Pound has recently had some repair work carried out to replace some of the rotting timbers. Using solid oak, the repairs are sympathetic to the remaining timbers.



## Rare Sighting of Short-eared Owls on Putney Heath

Dave Wills, our local bird expert, was delighted this week to spot two migrant Short-eared Owls on Putney Heath.

A species in decline, this is only the fifth record on the Commons since 1974. Their declining numbers are of concern across Europe and they are an Amber List species.

In the UK they breed primarily in Northern England and Scotland, but in winter there is an influx of birds from Scandinavia, Russia and Iceland to northern, eastern, and parts of central southern England, especially around the coast.

Other recent sightings on the Commons include: Lesser Redpoll, Siskin, Brambling, Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Stonechat, Common Buzzard, Goldfinch, Shoveler and Common Snipe.



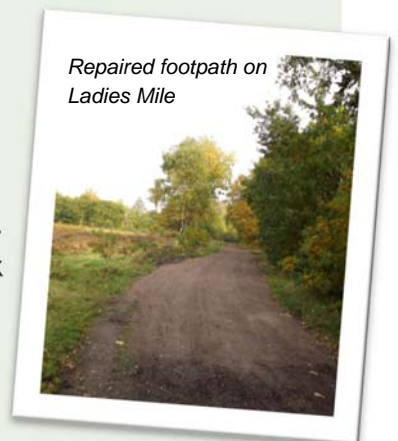
## New Development at Putney Lower Common

The development of the old Putney Hospital site continues apace. The Conservators recently held a “drop-in” evening at All Saints Church to give residents an opportunity to see the proposed landscaping plans for the area and to chat to the Conservators and the Landscape Architect about the proposals. Those attending completed a short feedback form with questions on issues such as lighting, the use of bollards and planting and this feedback will help inform the Conservators decisions on the way forward.

## Maintenance works...

Our programme of path repair work continues and this week we had some substantial repairs carried out on Centre Path; near Scio Pond and on Ladies Mile.

A popular track with cyclists, the latter runs through an area of “wet



heath” and so very quickly becomes a quagmire in wet weather. Hopefully that will now be a thing of the past!

## Diary Dates

We are working on a super programme of events for all the family in 2016, some of which we can confirm now, and others we will have in place over the next couple of months....so keep an eye on future newsletters for more info!

**Volunteering** - Our regular Saturday Morning Scrub Bashers group continues. Dates for the rest of 2015 are: 7th & 21st November, 19th December

**9th February 2016** - Evening Talk - Details TBC

**March/April 2016 date TBC**  
- Bat and Moth evening

**June 2016 date TBC** -  
Wimbledon and Putney Commons BioBlitz



**11th September** - Wimbledon and Putney Commons Open Day

**18th September** - Fungi Walk - booking will be required for this event - details to follow.



As reported last month, the next stage of Holly thinning work continues in the woodland in the south west of the Wimbledon Common.