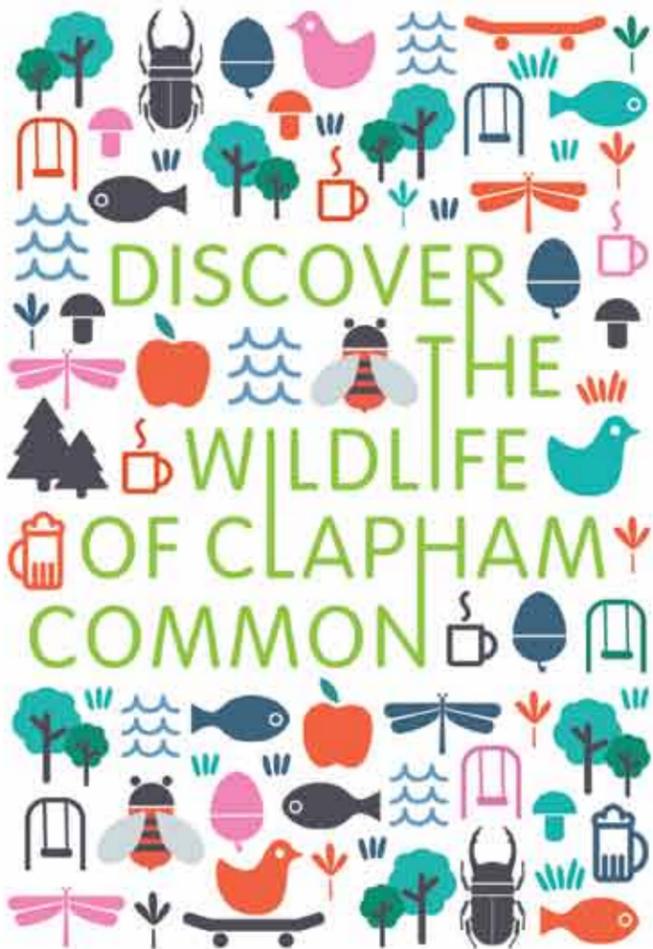


We are the Friends of Clapham Common. We love the Common and want to protect it for everybody. It is one of London's largest open spaces. We plant trees, bulbs and wild flowers to encourage insects and birds. We hold events for families and children throughout the summer. Why not take out family membership for only £15 a year and help us protect the common?

## HELLO



- 1 Follow the trail (marked in red) around Clapham Common. The walk should take you around an hour, allowing for the slower pace of children and stopping times. Start your walk by **Eagle Pond**. The ponds on Clapham Common were formed after gravel extraction many years ago. Exotic Egyptian geese breed here – **can you find them? Can you spot a willow tree or a water bird's nest in the reeds?** Find our interpretation board to the west of the pond – **what does it tell you about the different trees that grow by the pond?**

- 2 **Shallow wetland.** This area will be created over the next few years, especially for wildlife such as newts, frogs and water-loving insects. In the summer you will be able to see dragonflies and damselflies laying their eggs on the water plants.

- 3 From the board, turn around and walk across the field behind you to the next board you can see. By this board there is a huge dead trunk lying on the ground. This is **English elm**, a tree that now cannot reach maturity owing to a plague of beetles in the 1970s (Dutch Elm Disease). Dead wood is very important for wildlife – look carefully at the insects in the cracks. Stag beetles, millipedes, centipedes and fungi all make their homes in dead wood. **Can you spot any today on this tree trunk?**

- 4 Carry on using the path towards Clapham South. **Nursery Woods** is to your right. These woods were once used by Lambeth Council to grow young trees for use in all the borough's open spaces. Friends of Clapham Common have planted yew, holly and cherry trees in here. Make your way around to the bottom tip of the woods. In spring you can see native English bluebells growing here. **Can you see the difference between this and the Spanish bluebell elsewhere on the Common?**



### Key:

Friends of Clapham Common Nature Trail

- 6 If you went to our orchard, carefully re-cross Windmill Drive to **Mount Pond**. This is the largest pond on Clapham Common and is home to a wide variety of fish and water birds. Take care not to disturb fishermen! Many different water birds live on Mount Pond – such as tufted ducks, moorhens, coots, greylag geese and mallards. **How many can you see?** There may be nests on the island or in the reedbeds. Sometimes foxes venture on to the island to steal birds' eggs and chicks.
- 7 **The Alps.** Head in a diagonal direction, to the left over the sloping ridge known as The Alps towards the hard surface pitches area and Battersea Woods. In summer this part of Clapham Common is covered in beautiful wildflowers. **How many different types can you see?** Friends of Clapham Common have seeded fanny, wild carrot, knapweed and salad burnet, which flower from June to September.
- 8 **Battersea Woods.** Take the path through Battersea Woods towards our interpretation board and the footpath. Battersea Woods is an open area of woodland with a mixture of shrubs and medium-sized trees. There are lots of wild plum trees with white, snowy flowers in February. Large plane trees and false acacia are on the western edge. There is a natural wet area at the centre, which is important for wildlife. The Friends have planted alder trees there. We have also planted young fruiting trees - hazel, hawthorn and crab apple. **What types of creatures do you think might come here for food?**

- 5 From the tip of Nursery Woods walk back towards Windmill Drive along the **Victorian 'ride'**. If you wish you can cross The Avenue at the pedestrian crossing to take a look at our **community orchard**, planted next to the tennis courts. **How many different fruit trees can you see?** If it's ready the fruit is free to pick!

- 9 From our interpretation board outside Battersea Woods head back along the main path to the **Bandstand**. Lots of different trees can be seen from here – such as London plane, sweet chestnut, large-leaved lime and hornbeam, some planted by the Friends. Just near to the cafe, La Baita, **can you find the old tree with the natural beehive inside?** Watch the bees coming in and out – but take care! And don't forget to take a look at the special Jubilee oak tree planted by Friends of Clapham Common in 2012, to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

## TREES ON THE COMMON

Many different trees grow on Clapham Common, keeping our air and soil healthy and clean, and providing nectar, fruit and nuts for animals, insects, birds – and people - to eat. **How many different trees can you spot on Clapham Common?**



English oak  
© Lancashire Lass Photos (Flickr)



Large-leaved lime  
© Hornet Photography (Flickr)



Horse chestnut  
© M. Oxley



London plane  
© M. Oxley



Holly



Pussy Willow  
© M. Oxley

## FRUIT ORCHARD

Our orchard is near the tennis courts. Many local people, including children, helped us to plant it in 2012. When it's ready everyone will be able to pick the fruit. **Can you see any fruits growing on the trees?**



Black mulberry



Apple tree  
© Hornet Photography (Flickr)



Pear  
© Gliysiak (Wikipedia)



Wild plum  
© Hornet Photography (Flickr)

## INSECTS ON THE COMMON

Insects are important because they fertilise flowers, which make fruit or seeds. They break down fallen leaves and branches to make new soil, and become food themselves for birds and bats. **Take a look closely at flowers and fallen trees on Clapham Common. Can you see any insects?**



Stag beetle (female)  
© PTES



Tortoiseshell butterfly  
© Natural England/Peter Wakely



Honey bee  
© Natural England/Paul Lacey

## WILDFLOWERS

Wild flowers grow on mounds on the Common and, along with brambles, produce food for birds. In March and April bluebells grow in the woodlands. **Can you spot any?** If the pollen is creamy white and the flowers are all on the same side of the stalk it is an English bluebell. All others are Spanish ones.



Native bluebell  
© Hornet Photography (Flickr)



Ox eye daisy  
© Al Blunden (Flickr)

## BIRDS ON THE COMMON

Many different birds live and breed on Clapham Common. Smaller birds like blue tits, wrens and blackbirds make their nests in the woodland areas. Others, such as waxwings and fieldfares only visit in winter or early spring. **What birds have you seen on the Common today?**



Carrion crow  
© \_pauls (Flickr)



Blue tit  
© Stuart JPP (Flickr)



House sparrow  
© Natural England/Allan Drewitt



Fieldfare  
© Natural England/Allan Drewitt



Blackbird  
© Natural England/Julian Dowse



Waxwing  
© Stuart JPP (Flickr)

## WATERBIRDS

Water birds live in or near the ponds and make nests amongst the reeds. Geese graze on the open grass nearby, while smaller birds dive in the water for pondweed. **How many different water birds can you spot today?**



Grey heron  
© Natural England/Allan Drewitt



Moorhen  
© StuartJPP



Tufted duck  
© \_pauls (Flickr)



Mallard  
© \_pauls (Flickr)



Greylag goose  
© Countryman1946 (Flickr)



Egyptian goose  
© Max A Helicar (Flickr)

## MAMMALS ON THE COMMON

Mammals use the Common to find food. Grey squirrels and wood mice collect nuts and seeds to eat whilst foxes prey on worms, birds' eggs, and, occasionally, very young chicks. They also eat up our food waste! Most mammals are very shy, but you are likely to see squirrels on the Common. **Did you see any today?**



Grey squirrel  
© Turnbulls3 (Flickr)



Wood mouse  
© StuartJPP (Flickr)



Fox  
© Natural England/Paul Glendell

Bats live in mature trees and old buildings. Their homes are called roosts. They fly over Clapham Common to catch insects to eat. **If you're walking on Clapham Common at dusk in summer or autumn, see if you can spot any bats.**



Daubenton's Bat  
© Hugh Clark / Bat Conservation Trust



Brown long eared bat  
© Hugh Clark / Bat Conservation Trust

## FISH

Fish keep our ponds clean by eating algae and other small organisms. On Clapham Common some are introduced especially, such as carp, for fishing competitions. Smaller fish are eaten by large birds such as herons. Fish need oxygenated water to thrive, so plenty of water plants and marginal plants are necessary for a healthy fish environment. **Can you see any birds (or people!) fishing today?**



Common carp  
© Dr Iain Boulton