

Harpenden Common

Client - Harpenden Town Council

Production of an Interpretation and Learning Plan and subsequent implementation of proposals

Contract value £45,000

This project covered both interpretation and education. The web-based learning resource includes a nature trail and habitat studies relating to woodland and acid grassland. It is supported by a series of outdoor interpretation panels providing visitors with orientation and interpretation about the rich history and wildlife of Harpenden Common. The package was developed in close consultation with local teachers, historical societies and through consultation with local people to capture personal memories and stories.

- Community reminiscence evening
- Nature trail with 'Explore and Discover' theme
- Schools resource packs
- Series of pond interpretation panels
- Orientation map panels
- 5no wildlife and history panels
- Revised nature trail routes and marker posts



Harpenden's 'Ups and Downs'

The woodland behind the football pitches, known as the Brickie Dells and St. John's Wood, has grown up relatively recently to cover what was once a landscape known locally as the 'Ups and Downs'. This was where clay was dug for making bricks, leaving a series of pits and mounds in the earth.

Records from the 1700s refer to brick kilns on the common. Although none have survived, they are likely to have been close to these clay pits, hence the name 'Brickie Dells' ('Brick Kiln Dells' or 'Brick Hole Dells'). The kilns were like huge ovens where bricks were fired with heat from burning furze (gorse) branches.

St. John's Wood has grown from self-seeded oak trees, many probably burned by jays or squirrels. The woodland is being managed to ensure that the heaviest trees have plenty of room to grow to their full potential between open woodland rides and glades, which encourage more wildlife.

Managing the 'Ups and Downs'

The Brickie Dells are being managed by Harpenden Town Council to improve their wildlife value. The heathburn is managed to make sure daylight can still get through to the woodland floor, allowing wild flowers to grow.

Lark and blackbird nestlings are safe and well under parental care of a lark and blackbird, waiting for a chance to fly.

John's Wood is a woodland of young oak and birch, which has been managed to be a good habitat for the woodpecker.

Harpenden Rovers

Harpenden Rovers Football Club was founded in 1928 and had to wait 54 years for its pavilion, which is named after Jim Peary who served as Treasurer for 27 years from the founding of the club to when he died in 1985.

Today the club has four teams of players ranging from 16 to 50 years of age who play at various levels in the West Herts and Mid Herts Football Leagues.