

11 May 2011

Working for the Common Good in Lamberhurst

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded a grant of £49,900 to support a Kent village in sharing memories and taking care of their local common land.

Over the coming 18 months, Lamberhurst Parish Council will invite local residents, young people, and visitors to find out more about the village's Commons. People's recollections will be recorded and wildlife will benefit from the project which, inspired by the story of a local man, has been called 'Jack Frost's Footsteps'.

At the turn of the 20th century, a local cooper called Jack Frost lived on Lamberhurst Common in a wooden hut, and coppiced the nearby hazel trees to make spiles for fencing and faggots for lighting fires. Local history records that Jack was remembered as 'a dear old man' by the school children that used to visit him, and that his home was a cosy and warm place to be.

In recent years, the common has become overgrown in places, with a changing local population often unaware of its presence and place in the community. The Lamberhurst Local History Society has already traced some of the stories associated with the land, houses, and nearby businesses of the common. The tales that have emerged have indicated a connection between local people and the common dating back hundreds of years.

Thanks to the help of the HLF, the council will be able to support volunteers in making the common more accessible through clearing pathways, and building a boardwalk and pond dipping platform. Newly installed information panels will host soundboxes that play recordings of oral histories from local people. In these ways, the project will follow in Jack Frost's footsteps to create a warmer welcome to the common for local people and visitors alike.

A series of public events will be held to help celebrate the wildlife of the common, which includes important species such as great crested newts, pipistrelle bats, and kingfishers. An after-school club will also make use of new facilities and equipment purchased with the grant, to help young people to explore and learn about the countryside around them. Finally, a website will be set-up to help gather people's recollections of the common, and provide a place for them to share their stories from today, and record any wildlife that they see.

Commenting on the award, Barbara Uren of Lamberhurst Parish Council said, "We are delighted that the HLF has been able to support our project, which will capture the life of the common both past and present, for the enjoyment of everyone to come!"

Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South East England Stuart McLeod said: "This project will give villagers the opportunity to discover more about how the common affected the lives of those living locally in past times, and how to preserve and protect its biodiversity in the future. "

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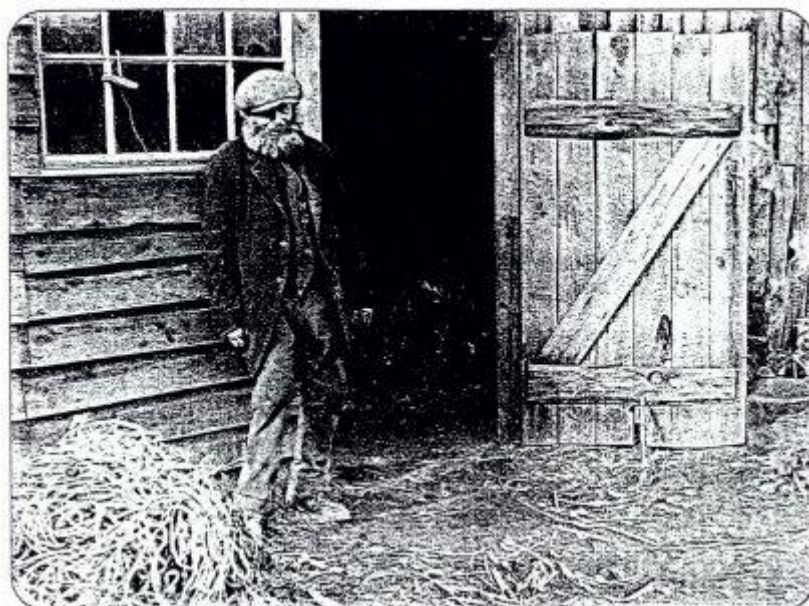
For further information

Please contact Jane Frostick, Greenspace Officer at the Kent High Weald Partnership on 01580 212972, or jane.frostick@khwp.org.uk.

Notes to Editors

Lamberhurst Parish Council owns and manages the Lamberhurst Commons for both their wildlife interest and recreational value to the local community. The Kent High Weald Partnership is a conservation organisation that links the community and countryside, and is working alongside the parish council to help them to achieve their aims. Website: www.lamberhurstvillage.co.uk; www.khwp.org.uk.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK. Website: www.hlf.org.uk.



Jack Frost, outside his house in the Gravel Pit of Lamberhurst Common



The important wildlife pond of the Gravel Pit, at Lamberhurst Common