

# FRIENDS *of* LONG LANE PASTURE

## NEWSLETTER

No. 18 July 2011

*Pasture open every Saturday and Sunday: 10am – 5pm, and bank holidays*

### *It's Time for the Great Blackberry Pick*

Now is your chance to pick your own local **blackberries**. This year there is a huge crop to harvest at the Pasture, and still leave plenty for the birds and the beasts. Berries from most of the brambles are now ripening nicely with our resident blackbirds already enjoying the crop. The large patch of Himalayan blackberry will be ready to pick a bit later on so there should be plenty around, even into early September. Every weekend we will have some containers and boxes available for your harvest, but please bring your own if you can. We will have bramble jelly and jams for sale (but come early for these as supplies are limited), and recommended recipes. **A donation in return for your pickings is appreciated.**

### *Summer Wildlife*

The **Blackcap** and **Whitethroat** have been in fine voice and a **Lesser Whitethroat** seen. A **Crow** was observed flying up from the pond with a frog in its bill, and a **Red Kite** flew over being mobbed by a **Gull** and then **Crows**. A family of mother and **four ducklings** arrived in late June. Two of the ducklings are still with us enjoying the pond, and growing up rapidly. There have been sightings of **two young foxes**, and of **slowworms** which seem to have happily survived the winter. So far, it has been an excellent year for butterflies, with numerous **Orange Tips** throughout April and May. A **Brimstone** butterfly was seen egg laying on the alder buckthorn bushes in the Butterfly Border. **Small Tortoiseshells** are making a welcome return. Our list of **moths** recorded on the Pasture now exceeds 100, with more added each time we have our trap out overnight. The flowers in the meadow and Butterfly Border are putting on a fine display, attracting plenty of honey bees, bumble bees and other insects. We have put a number of information notices for visitors about the Pasture's wildlife at the side of the grass paths. You can find out more about the Pasture's butterflies and moths on **23 July** – come along to enjoy **the Big Butterfly Count** ([www.bigbutterflycount.org](http://www.bigbutterflycount.org)) with us.



### *We Welcome Special Visitors*

On the evening of 26<sup>th</sup> June we were delighted to welcome to the Pasture: Councillors Ross Houston, Alison Moore, Graham Old, Andrew McNeil and our MP Mike Freer, amongst other invited guests. This was an opportunity to explain what we have achieved over the past year and why the Pasture needs to be protected as a valued greenspace in Finchley to benefit local people and wildlife.

***There is a display about the Pasture at Finchley Central Library from 18 July to 1 August.***

*If you have changed your e-mail address, now wish to receive this Newsletter electronically or would like to volunteer, please get in touch: [enquiries@longlanepasture.org](mailto:enquiries@longlanepasture.org)*

*We'd love to hear from you!*

## *The Hedgehog's Return*

On 21<sup>st</sup> May in the early hours of the morning a lone **hedgehog** was spotted happily foraging on the Pasture. This is the first time we have had a confirmed sighting of a hedgehog here in over ten years.

The hedgehog is in dramatic decline in the UK – with around 300,000 fewer in Britain than a decade ago. It is thought only around a million hedgehogs remain in Britain. Some 50,000 of the spiky creatures die on our roads every year. It is hard to monitor the hedgehog because it is a nocturnal creature, so road casualties are the best evidence of population. The People's Trust for Endangered Species watched for dead hedgehogs on our roads and noticed that the numbers fell by almost a third in the past decade. From an average of 1.8 hedgehogs recorded per 100 kms (62 miles) in 2001 there were only 1.3 last year. The slump in casualty sightings came despite a marked increase in traffic on the 250,000 miles of roads monitored. The number of cars on the roads is rising but we are still seeing a decline in sightings of casualties, which suggests that the population is declining quite dramatically. In rural areas, more intensive farming practices and larger fields are reducing the hedgehog's natural habitat and the prey like slugs and centipedes that it feeds on. By setting aside undisturbed areas on the Pasture and creating compost and rotting hay heaps we are providing a place where hedgehogs can thrive. So, we now hopefully look forward to another sighting.

## *Thanks*

A big thank you to all who voted for us with green tokens at Waitrose, North Finchley – we received a much appreciated cheque for £250 from your support. We are very grateful to the 14<sup>th</sup> East Finchley Guides who cleared bramble re-growth and gave our seats a good clean as part of their community work programme. We are also grateful to the parents of children from Akiva School who came to the Pasture with their teachers and gave us a generous donation. Donations are vital in supporting our work at the Pasture.

## **Don't Miss Our COMING EVENTS**

**July 23rd**

**Saturday**

10am – 5pm

**Butterfly Day in National Butterfly Week**

This is a special event focusing on the Pasture's butterflies. We may have caterpillars and moths to show you too! There will be help on hand for identification, to record what you see and build up our sightings list.

**August 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Saturday**

10am – 12 noon

**Moths**

We are taking part in European Moth Night, looking at moths from our trap run overnight. We have over 100 different species on our site list but are looking to increase our records. This event will be postponed in the event of bad weather.

**September 10<sup>th</sup> Spiders, Bees and Bugs**

**Saturday**

10am – 5pm

In the early autumn the Pasture is alive with grasshoppers, spiders and other creatures living in the long grass. This is a chance to find out more about these small creatures, to observe the beautiful wasp spiders and how our resident bees are getting on.

*Visit our website: [www.longlanepasture.org](http://www.longlanepasture.org)*