

# FRIENDS *of* LONG LANE PASTURE

## NEWSLETTER

No.1 October 2004

First of all, thank you – all of you – for giving your support to the campaign to save Long Lane Pasture from the developers. Your subscriptions and donations have made it possible to obtain an access licence from the Council so that we can begin to survey wildlife and assess what needs doing. We have taken out full insurance, and even have our own first aid kit. There are enough funds in hand for us to begin setting up a trust and negotiating a lease from the Council.

### **Wildlife**

During the summer the Pasture has been alive with insects and other creatures including shield bugs, seven-spot ladybirds, huge numbers of grasshoppers, bees, hoverflies, red ants, dragonfly and damselfly. We have recorded 14 species of butterfly including Brimstone, Peacock and Common Blue. (We are keeping a full list of course.)

Thanks to **Ann Brown**'s moth trap, a complicated combination of linked extension cables from various sources and electricity provided by **Wayne Armsby**, who has the good fortune to live almost next door to the Pasture, we were able to add 13 new moth records to the site wildlife list during one evening in mid-August. Yellow underwings (Lesser Yellow, Large Yellow, and Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing) were particularly well represented. Perhaps the most beautiful were the Ruby Tiger and the Brimstone (*moth*, so we have both the butterfly and the moth). We know that cinnabar moths are present having seen the caterpillars on flowering ragwort by the embankment. We intend to continue recording moths throughout the year.

**Derek Warren**, our official wildlife recorder, has noted 25 bird species this year. At least one pair of whitethroats nested in the dense brambles and a pair of bullfinches successfully reared their young. Flocks of goldfinches seem to be in permanent residence. A goldcrest, a tiny and rather surprising visitor, was observed in September and the heron from the Pentland lake has occasionally called in.

Frogs and a newt were spotted in the wet ditches in the spring and early summer. Fox tracks cut paths through the long grass and disappear into the brambles close to Pointalls allotments and the railway boundaries.

Three young adults, thought to be this year`s cubs, have regularly been seen enjoying both the allotments and the Pasture so we have good reason to believe there is a den in the area. Our first bat, a pipistrelle soprano, was seen hunting over the site in midsummer. We look forward to seeing a few more.

All our sightings since being granted access in May have confirmed that the Pasture is truly a haven for wildlife. There is much still to do – wildflowers, grasses, aquatic life – so if you can help with the surveys, please get in touch.

### **Access**

The ground is quite treacherous: very uneven, with waterfilled holes, brambles almost everywhere, and many self-sets that have taken hold. Inevitably rubbish has been dumped, though it is not as bad as it might have been. All are reasons why we haven`t invited everyone to come and explore, but we will do so as soon as it seems safe. (There has been some unauthorized access, most notably by thieves who used the Pasture as a means of gaining access to the allotments and stealing tools and equipment.)

### **Plans**

We are delighted to be able to tell you about **Julie Toll`s** interest in the Pasture. She is a Landscape and Garden Designer with an international reputation who has a special interest in designing for wildlife and whose designs have been awarded seven Gold Medals at the Chelsea Flower Show over the past few years. Julie has been to the Pasture and we`ve talked about the kind of thing we think you would like to see. She has details of the site and is now preparing a design for us which should be ready by the end of the month. We will arrange a meeting to show you Julie`s plan and give everyone the opportunity to comment on it.

### **Contact:**

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