

FRIENDS *of* LONG LANE PASTURE

NEWSLETTER

No. 16 October 2010

Into Autumn

The Pasture has been glorious throughout the summer. Autumn is now well on the way with the blackberry crop coming to an end, having been harvested by both visitors and our resident wildlife alike. The Himalayan variety in a large clump near the railway line fruited later ensuring a long picking season for all. The Butterfly Border has had a wonderful show of flowers and we have recorded 12 different butterflies on the Pasture this year. It was good to note an increase in the number of Common Blues, probably due to larger patches of vetch (the caterpillar food plant) which is re-establishing after clearance of bramble.



High summer was ideally suited to the many insects and other invertebrates: grasshoppers, hoverflies, honeybees, bumblebees, butterflies and moths, dragon and damselflies, froghoppers and many more. As the flowers were successfully pollinated and their bright colours faded other inhabitants of the Pasture start to be seen again. Recent sightings have included slow-worms, voles, toads and frogs, and the exciting Wasp Spiders (up to 20 recorded this year within the undisturbed grass circle), so aptly named with their bright warning colouration.

Also not to be missed at the huge fruiting bodies (toadstools) of some of our fungi. They spend most of the year as microscopic mycelia of hyphae (masses of tiny white threads) under the soil. Autumn is the season when most fungi produce the familiar spore-bearing toadstools which when dry, disperse billions of tiny spore to colonise new habitats. This year on the Pasture there are already some really splendid examples (large tawny funnel cap) as well as a number of smaller species.

Councillors Visit

Whatever the season or weather, we are always proud of the Pasture but even so there are times when we keep our fingers crossed for a lovely sunny day. That's exactly what we got when we invited our MP and Councillors to come and see what has been achieved since we campaigned and reprieved it from development.

After a couple of false starts, it was decided that our Open Day, Sunday 27th June, was the best time for everyone to get together and would round off the day nicely. As the date got nearer and the forecasts were more and more encouraging we felt that it was definitely going to be the kind of evening that called for Pimms. We already had our display set up and our gazebo erected for the Open Day (just in case it rained), which acted as a perfect sun shade because it was still very hot despite being after 5pm.

Mike Freer, who has always been one of our supporters, had, in fact, never been to the Pasture before and he declared himself very happy with what he saw, as well he should be because it was truly looking its magnificent best with the wildflower seeds scattered on the bank of the pond having produced a splendidly successful display of colours. Ex Mayor, Councillor Brian Coleman, who had officially opened the Pasture last year, said he could see lots of changes since his last visit. The Councillors, including Alison Moore, Leader of the Labour Group, had individual tours of the whole Pasture and all who attended had a thoroughly good evening, topped off with a cream tea, the jam for which was made from fruit picked on the Pasture. The general consensus was that Long Lane Pasture has been a tremendous success and is a true asset to the Borough.

A New Buzz in the Pasture . .

There has been much concern lately about the decline in the honey bee population, so it is good to be able to report that we have now started to keep bees in a secluded area of the Pasture. We acquired them in July as a small 'nuc' (nucleus) and since then the worker bees have been storing honey so they have food through the winter. The queen has been busy laying eggs and enlarging the colony, prior to settling down for the autumn/winter clustering inside the hive – honey bees do not hibernate, but do not fly when the temperature is below about 8-10°C. Whilst a full colony in summer may contain 40-60,000 bees, there are usually only about 10,000 left to start foraging again in the spring. If our bees overwinter successfully, then perhaps there will be 'honey for tea' next summer in Long Lane Pasture!



A New Trustee

Maureen Delandro has been appointed as a Trustee to the Long Lane Pasture Trust, the formal body which holds the Pasture's lease. Maureen writes: *I have been on the Management Committee for 3 years, helping to plan events, the work programme and general care of the Pasture. As a Trustee I will now be able to make a bigger contribution to the continued existence of this important site. Luckily I live a five minutes walk away and so a short walk on Saturday mornings to the Pasture and my time spent there gives me exercise, fresh air, and the feeling that I am in the country and helping to maintain this wildlife habitat. This involves planting, bramble clearing and on hot days watering the plants and shrubs in the Butterfly Border. To see the enthusiasm of children and adults who often say 'they didn't know it existed' when they visit, is gratifying. Many people then join the team helping out. That the Pasture could once have become a housing estate is a testament to the work and commitment of the volunteers before my time. Continuing their success whilst enjoying and benefitting from my contribution to committee and gardening work is a privilege.* Maureen replaces Janett Durrant, one of our original volunteers who helped us fight to save the site. We are grateful for Janett's support during her time as a Trustee.

In Appreciation



Derrick and Beryl Thomas have donated a splendid new bench, in memory of Derrick's mother. This is located close to the bird feeding station. Kurt Weinburg has kindly given us a 'butterfly house' as a cosy hibernation place for insects over the cold winter months, and we have received a selection of rare wildflower seeds from John Rogers. We are very grateful indeed for these contributions.

And, a very big thank you to the following who have all generously given donations during 2010:

Akiva School	David Smith
M D Cotter	P S Snook
Christine Gordon	Graham & Mary Stacy
Andrew Herxheimer	Brian Stewart
Sally Hillman	Elizabeth Terry
Sheila Knowles	J D & E Tyler
Stroma Leith	Bart Van Haesebroeck
P J & J S O'Dea	Kurt Weinburg
Peter Olney	Bob & Sue White
John Rogers	Nicholas & Helen Wyber
Catherine Schmitt	Jacqueline Wulff-Cochrane
Margaret & Roy Satterthwaite	

We rely on donations to meet the cost of safeguarding the Pasture. We encourage all our current and future donors to sign up to Gift Aid adding a further 25% to donations. A form to do this is included in our leaflet – now available in waterproof dispensers on the Pasture.

Now on our website: Annual Report and Accounts for 2009. Visit www.longlanepasture.org

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