

# FRIENDS of LONG LANE PASTURE

## NEWSLETTER

### No 26. Spring 2014

Hello, and welcome to another edition of our Newsletter, with your editor, Donald Lyven. As



winter quickly slips away & the days lengthen with spring, it's time to review the wettest winter I can ever remember, and also to look forward to another year at Long Lane Pasture. But first, here is a message from our Chair:

*We are delighted to have received a grant from the People's Postcode Trust to enable us to buy a Ride-on Mower & a Brushcutter. These will be of immense help; no more costly hired equipment constantly breaking down at the wrong time.*

*The People's Postcode Trust is a charity that exists to fund small community groups such as ours, and that relies for its income solely on*

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*players of the People's Postcode Lottery. For more details please go to:*

[www.postcodelottery.co.uk](http://www.postcodelottery.co.uk)

*We are very grateful to them. We are equally delighted that the Panton Trust has given us a further grant which we will use to help manage the annual winter flooding, as well as to replace many of our overused tools.*

Dennis Pepper

The Pasture Trust applied to the People's Postcode Trust last October, specifically for funding much needed Ground Maintenance Equipment, in order



East Finchley Christmas Festival

to keep the extensive labyrinth of grass paths on the Pasture in good order. While these grants are always welcome, most are for

specific purposes. Long Lane Pasture Trust is still reliant on the generosity of our regular donors and money collected by sales of seeds, books, preserves and calendars at festival stalls, and the donations from visitors during the Pasture summer blackberry pick.

### Rain, Rain, Go Away

Unfortunately, the exceptionally wet weather the UK experienced this winter meant that for much of January & February, the Pasture had to be closed to the public due to the sodden ground. Despite



this, the committed band of intrepid volunteers still met every Saturday morning from 10am to midday, to carry out necessary tasks like hay raking,

bramble clearing, general tidying and tree planting. Wellington boots and rainproof gear was essential wear at times, but the important maintenance work must go on throughout the year. If you would like to join the group, please turn up on any Saturday morning and lend a hand; gloves and equipment are provided.

Geologically the Pasture slopes gradually towards the north east, allowing much of the excess rain water to eventually feed



into the main pond. However, a small patch of the Pasture that suffered pollution in the distant past, started to leach oil from below due the rapidly rising water table. By careful management, this



was successfully diverted and prevented from reaching the pond, & has naturally been diluted and filtered by the grass areas in between.

Despite the recent drier weather, it will take longer for many paths to recover, due to the extraordinary amounts of rain we had; especially where clay was exposed during last year's earth moving scheme to flatten a mound in order to raise a sunken path.

**Please take extra care on the paths, especially during wet weather.**

## Featured Plants: 1, Hawthorn

Hawthorn, *Crataegus monogyna*, is probably the commonest hedgerow shrub, and can be found throughout the UK. It provides food for more than 150 different insect species, so is a valuable plant to have at the Pasture. It has lobed leaves and is covered with clusters of white flowers in May. By autumn the flowers have turned into the red haw berries so loved by birds. It has long, sharp thorns and as a hedge forms a very secure barrier. Hawthorn is a deciduous species and tolerates a wide variety of conditions, including polluted and exposed sites.



## Featured Plants: 2, Summer Snowflake

Summer snowflakes, *Leucojum aestivum*, have small bell-shaped white flowers, with a lime-green spot at the end of each tepal, held on long drooping stems. It grows in wet-tish meadows or shaded damp copses & riversides. It is a misnomer; as it flowers later than most other similar flowers in late spring and not summer as its name may suggest. There is a small patch of summer snowflakes among the Ash trees by Frank's bench.



## Flutterby News

According to observational data from Butterfly Conservation, last year was the best for butterflies for more than 7 years, with some species doing exceptionally well. We noticed at the Pasture an increase in small tortoiseshell, peacocks, commas & red admirals, and even had groups of black hairy caterpillars happily feeding on stinging nettles. It is hoped this year will be even better for butterflies, able to build on the good fortune of last year's dry sunny weather; and already we have seen several adults of the above at the Pasture emerge from hibernation, as well as a brimstone, orange tip and an unexpected painted lady!



## The Pasture's Bees

Sadly, and probably due to the damp relatively mild winter, two of the Pasture's resident bee colonies failed to survive the winter. However, the remaining colony is now very active and

has been divided in two. Fingers crossed for a very warm and productive summer.

## Pasture's Other Critters

In January, a stowaway was found in the bird food bin! A field mouse had climbed into the dustbin used to store the feed, but was unable to climb out! It had chewed ragged holes through all the plastic bags of various foods! I took this photo of the chubby fellow just before the relieved rodent was allowed out and able to get a much needed drink of water.



Also recently seen was a slow-worm under one of the strategically placed corrugated iron sheets, where many creatures like to shelter. She has lost part of her tail, but is no less active & was seen voraciously feeding on ants.



Frogs have been busy too, and many of the ponds now have lots of tadpoles wriggling about. Newts have also been seen, as well as pond skaters. Several mallard ducks have visited the main pond, joining the resident pair of moorhens. A charm of goldfinches regularly visits the feeders!



Please try to make it to some of our events this year. Or come along and enjoy the wild beauty the Pasture has to offer; and bring a camera! Please print out the separate 'Events' page and display it prominently! Until next time, bye!



Sun up over dew sparkled snowdrops on Octavia hill

Please visit our website: [www.longlanepasture.org](http://www.longlanepasture.org)

Email: [longlanepasture@gmail.com](mailto:longlanepasture@gmail.com)

Contact editor: Donald Lyven on 0772 774 8209

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256 Long Lane, Finchley, N3 2RN

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