



LONG LANE PASTURE

NEWSLETTER

NO. 38 WINTER 2018

Gosh, a month has already gone, but the year still feels new as we patiently try to get through each winter's day, hoping the weather gets that little bit more bearable as the evenings become ever-so lighter. To ease the wait for Spring, and the signs are already emerging, welcome to a new edition of the Pasture Newsletter!

Love or hate it, Christmas zipped by at its ever-increasing rate as the years go by. And as lovely as the traditions and sentiments are, I see it increasingly as an interruption to the more enjoyable part of the year; the growing season, and those halcyon days of summer when the pace of life seem to slow down during a stint of long hot July days, and warm endless evenings... But will we ever get a summer like 1976 again?

Brrr it's cold...

So, before the thermometer rises above 10°C, let's take a look back at the marvellous snowfall much of the UK and London experienced on the morning of Sunday 10 December...



The forecasts given the week before were for wintry showers, with the Met Office predicting snow well to the north of London. But one trusty Barnet based amateur meteorologist on Twitter, @LondonSnowWatch, was putting out carefully calculated predictions, in tweets several days before, indicating the snow would spread its blanket of joy much further south, due to

increasingly colder air approaching the UK from the east and meeting the wet weather from the west. Question was, would Finchley be under this meteorological battleground...

On the Saturday evening I charged up my phone and camera batteries and got an early night. I awoke at 7:30 am to the sound of rain lashing down outside and a quick peek out the window revealed a dark drenched garden.

Back to bed obviously; but then at around 8am there was suddenly an eerie silence outside... Tweeted reports seen on the mobile from local people indicated that the rain had ceased and that snow was beginning to fall. Another look outside revealed yes it *was* snowing, and indeed settling nicely! Definitely time to get up...



By the time I left the house the snow was already several inches thick, & even the main roads were covered. Buses had ceased & the Northern Line service was also suspended; I was waiting at East Finchley when it was announced! There was no option but to walk to the Pasture. I went via Henlys Corner and Stephens House where I took several photographs, but my main mission was to photograph Long Lane Pasture before it thawed.



Apparently Barnet Council had sent its gritters out from their new location based in Wealdstone; yes, in the neighbouring borough of Harrow, very early in the morning to trundle round the streets; but the rain inevitably washed everything away..!

If only Barnet Council had watched the weather events more closely on Twitter, or still had their gritters based closer, centrally in the borough as they used to be, the roads might not have been as treacherous and clogged with cars. Although one has to wonder why so many people thought they could treat the morning as just another Sunday despite the four inches of laying snow. Lack of filled yellow salt bins at junctions also makes you realise, either someone is not planning ahead; or cutting costs is deemed more important than residents' safety.



On arrival at the Pasture around eleven o'clock, there were not many animal tracks visible as seen on previous occasions; presumably as the snow hadn't been down long and it was still snowing, obliterating any earlier trace of nocturnal activity; but I did find some, so a fox had also been out to take a look at the magical scenes.



Under the snow, the ground was extremely soft and muddy, so the Pasture was not open to the public. Once the bird feeders were topped up I went round taking many photographs of every view possible; because you never know if it will ever snow this heavily again, and an opportunity like this could not be missed.



As it hadn't been too cold in the days before, the main pond was not frozen; but the pond was covered in a layer of slush so it must have been very near to freezing over. The pigeons and starlings made noisy forays to the bird food, as the more timid tits, finches and robins took their chances; darting speedily into the melee and out again just as quick, with a life-sustaining morsel. Eventually I had to make the journey home, which was uneventful apart from the many cars at odd angles & frustrated people vainly pushing cars and a lot of anger...



Signs of Spring

The first brave snowdrops appeared during early January, their fresh green shoots easily visible before Christmas. And when the bulk of them were all out, the patches on the embankment definitely showed an enlargement over previous

years, and was wonderful to witness. Eventually we would like the entire side of Octavia hill, as we like to call it, covered in snowdrops, but it will take quite a few years to achieve this.



The first flowering white crocus was spotted in late January, & the traditional big yellow daffodils are just a few short weeks away from blooming.



Despite the frequent bouts of cold dull rainy weather and biting easterly winds, all signs are pointing to a possible and much welcome early Spring; and surely it's just a coincidence that Easter is early too this year!



Return of the bees!

We have some very welcome news to report; honey bees have now returned to the Pasture! Deena, one of the plot holders on the allotments adjacent to the Pasture, was keeping bees on a site about a mile away that was proving difficult to access at times. It is fortuitous that we are able to provide a home for these hives, and consequently good news for the allotments and surrounding gardens, as a hard working army of tireless pollinators has arrived right on their doorstep! Please remember, if you are visiting the Pasture, do not disturb or enter the bee enclosure at any time.

Run to help!

On Saturday January 13, we were delighted to welcome another visit from the hard-working people of Barnet GoodGym. Nine of their courageous members arrived during the soggy afternoon and soon set to work after some warming-up exercises. The amounts of bramble and wet scrub they raked up and barrowed over to the compost heap would have taken our loyal volunteers weeks to achieve. And they weren't done then; with a brisk run back to their starting point at the Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley!



They later gave a lovely write up about their time here on their blog; and we eagerly look forward to next time they can come, & are really grateful for all their hard work. A big THANK YOU!

That's all for now; until Spring, goodbye! Donald

Please follow the Pasture on Twitter: [@LLPasture](#)

Please visit our website:

www.longlanepasture.org

Email: longlanepasture@gmail.com

Contact editor: Donald Lyven on: 0772 774 8209

This Newsletter is issued by the Long Lane Pasture Trust:
256 Long Lane, Finchley, N3 2RN. Registered Charity No:
1122236