

FRIENDS *of* LONG LANE PASTURE

NEWSLETTER

No.9 May 2008

OUR FRANK

It is with great sadness we have to tell you that one of our founding Friends, Frank Derrett, died suddenly on Easter Sunday. It has been a huge shock to everyone who knew and cared for him as he seemed a very fit man and liked nothing better than to be out and about on Long Lane Pasture. Whether picking up litter, digging a trench, cutting back bramble, repairing the mower, every weekend – and at other times too – Frank was quietly getting on with it. It is impossible to express how great a loss he is to all of us involved in the work team. He was a Trustee of the Pasture and also on the Management Committee and was, indeed, quite irreplaceable. Friends were well represented at his cremation service where Wayne Armsby gave a heartfelt appreciation.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife and family.

We would like to have a permanent memorial to Frank on the Pasture in the form of a bench with an appropriately engraved plaque. Whilst it is true that he was more of a doer than one who liked to sit and contemplate, he loved the Pasture and had a clear vision of what it would be like one day. A bench will be where anyone may sit and enjoy what he helped to create. We also plan to place a plaque by an oak he planted.

If you would like to contribute, please send your donation, made payable to Long Lane Pasture Trust, to our Treasurer, Wayne Armsby, 256 Long Lane, N3 2RN.

Thank you.

Although not as bleak as last year, the weather was still not kind to us at our **Annual Meeting on 19th April**. Nevertheless 16 enthusiastic Friends met to hear ~~from~~ Ann Brown talk about our work over the year and see for themselves the progress we have made. There was the new fencing to inspect, the pond to admire, and above all the vistas to enjoy across the whole Pasture now that we have removed so much bramble. The original vegetation is recovering and old meadow species beginning to return. The newly planted cross-field hedge was showing signs of coming into leaf. Most of the shrubs have survived the winter despite the ground being heavily waterlogged. Friends were warmly thanked for their generous support, contributing nearly £1500 over the year. The National Lottery provided substantial grants through Breathing Spaces Places and Awards for All programmes. We ended the year with a bit more in the Bank, but face additional costs this year when the lease will – we hope – finally be ours.

Currently the **lease negotiations continue**. Progress *is* being made, though it doesn't often seem like it. The Council has produced a second draft, the starting point for further negotiations as we try to iron out the remaining areas of disagreement: which boundaries we are responsible for; what right Eastern Electricity has over the major supply cable running across the site; how any disputes

will be handled; and supervision when the Pastures are open to the public are the main ones. And we are still far from happy with the Council insistence that they should have a 5-year break clause.

With the warmer weather many of the **pond plants** are showing signs of recovery and those newly planted in the autumn are beginning to grow. The clumps of purple loosestrife are particularly vigorous despite the attentions of the Canada geese that arrived early in the spring. They have now departed, to our considerable relief, to be replaced by three mallards, which are considerably less destructive. Some stretches of the pond bank have been seeded with a wildflower mix and are showing just a hint of green. A good example of Nature's resilience: we have a bumblebee nest in the pond spoil. We have purchased a lifebuoy, an essential piece of safety equipment though a bit of an eyesore. It will soon be erected at the end of the footpath.

We have bought some new **plants** and taken advantage of the offer of 144 lavenders which will join our rapidly developing butterfly border. A new plant to add to those already recorded on the site is salsify, which is quite rare in the wild. It is sometimes cultivated as an unusual vegetable as it has an edible root something like a thin parsnip and is likely to be an escapee from the allotments. The flowers are a very attractive large purple-coloured daisy. Over the next few weeks we hope to conduct a buttercup survey. There is a theory that the more petals there are on a sample of 100 creeping buttercups the older the meadow where they grow might be and we are keen to establish the undisturbed greenfield status of the Pasture.

We will report more fully on our **wildlife** observations in the next issue.

The Pasture has been on television, but if you don't regularly watch South Korean television you will have missed it. There was, however, a short film by a London-based journalist showing us hard at work one Saturday morning (apparently volunteering is an odd concept in Korean culture). The film succeeds in showing how attractive the Pasture is. It looked wonderful with daffodils in full flower and geese on the pond, providing a good advert to encourage tourists from Korea to visit London and at the same time suggest that everyone can do something to help their local environment.

Next event coming up

7th June Wildlife Day (10am – 4pm)

The Pasture is at its best now, with meadow flowers, plentiful birdlife, butterflies and moths. This is National Moth Day/Night so if the weather is kind visitors will be able to see some these attractive insects which we will have trapped the night before.

Future Events

26th July Butterfly Day (as part of Save Our Butterflies Week). We will hold a number of butterfly walks and provide information on the butterflies you can expect to see on the Pasture.

16th August Annual Blackberry Pick

In addition to which: the work group is on the site every Saturday from 10-midday.

You are very welcome to call in and see what is happening and how much the Pasture has changed.