

# FRIENDS OF LONG LANE PASTURE NEWSLETTER *LIVE*

## No 28a Autumn/Winter 2014

*Festive Greetings, and welcome to this special extra edition of the Long Lane Pasture Newsletter. We*



*currently publish three editions a year which are sent to our members by email to cut costs, save paper and it enables the reader to increase font size and see the photographs in better detail.*

*Sign up today with an email address to receive the latest six page edition; or alternatively, visit our Website and see all the previous newsletters. Donald Lyven, Editor*

### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PASTURE

Long Lane Pasture was purchased by the Finchley Urban District Council for public enjoyment and recreation on 22 February 1912. On 22 February 2012 the Mayor of Barnet planted an oak tree on the embankment area to commemorate this landmark.



The Pasture has changed little in 100 years, except that its cut hay no longer provides fodder for London's horses, and horses no longer graze here. However, in 1999 after years of neglect, the Council decided the land was surplus to requirements and decided to sell it for housing development. This created a public campaign to keep the Pasture as green space. The decision was overturned and in 2006 the land was designated for community use. Many of the wildflowers on the restored damp meadowland are now thriving again and although there

is no public footpath leading to a bridge across the railway, there is a network of paths for visitors to meander along to enjoy the changing vistas.



Older Finchley residents can recall varied leisure activities here: it was once the home ground of the local football team 'Squires United'; many enjoyed family picnics; children used to fly their kites; and classes from

Manorside School came for nature study and made displays of grasses and wild flowers.

It is proving as popular today as it was at the turn of the 20th century. The Pasture has outlived many threats and is now half its original size, but continues as a delightful greenspace for both people and wildlife.

### WINNER OF AWARDS



*It's been a good year for Long Lane Pasture.*

*We've been awarded a Green Flag as one of the best community green spaces in the country and London in Bloom*

*has again placed us in its 'outstanding' category, the only place in Barnet to be awarded this status.*

*Funding from the People's Postcode Lottery Trust has enabled us to buy a ride-on mower and a brush cutter, while the Panton Trust has helped us replace worn-out hand tools and buy new equipment as well as build up our reserves.*

*We had a visit from 60 young volunteers from the National Citizen Service; a marvellous boost for us which we hope will be repeated next year. Long Lane Pasture depends entirely on grants, donations and the work of volunteers. If you live nearby and would like to be involved in our pioneering work, drop in on Saturday mornings (10 a.m. to midday) when you can boost our small band of regular volunteers and make the Pasture even better in*

**2015. Dennis Pepper, Chair of Long Lane Pasture Committee**

### PASTURE FLUTTERBIES

2014 was both good and bad for butterflies seen on the Pasture. We were encouraged by early sightings of small tortoiseshell, red admiral, comma, peacock and even a painted lady; but still worried by so few sightings of common blue and holly blue butterflies. Even when orange tip, speckled wood and brimstone were seen this spring, numbers were down compared to years gone by.



But it was not all bad. During the first weeks of July the signature species of the Pasture, the grassland butterflies were everywhere. Large skipper, small skipper and Essex skippers were soon followed by meadow browns, ringlets

and hundreds of dainty gatekeepers, with sometimes dozens on the same plant that would flutter about in all directions when approached. Of course, throughout the year, the omni-present small white and large white, that seem to have no monthly variation, are reassuringly seen, though not I suspect to the pleasure of plot-holders in the neighbouring allotments! All told, 18 butterfly species were seen at the Pasture during 2014.



## FEATURES OF THE PASTURE

Long Lane Pasture has many interesting features. There



are half a dozen ponds; the main one is visited by waterfowl where Moorhens and Mallards have raised young. Dragonflies and Damselflies breed in every pond along with newts, frogs

and toads. Aquatic beetles and Mayflies are active in the warmer months and birds and bees also visit the ponds to drink.

On the south corner near the Northern Line there is



a high bank where a Vista sign shows what the buildings are along the fine Finchley skyline.



There is Undisturbed Circle, an area where nothing is done, that is home to many bugs & grasses undisturbed

by human activity.

There are bee hives, fruit trees and swathes of brambles that prove popular with visitors in late summer picking delicious blackberries before depositing money for them in the donations box.

There are bird feeders and nest boxes, foxes, field mice, slowworms and even the occasional hedgehog seen! Please come along and discover all that the Pasture has to offer.



## THE PASTURE CALENDAR 2015

The ever-popular Long Lane Pasture calendar for 2015 is available now! With all new photographs taken during the past eleven months, it gives an insight into the

wildlife that can be seen and activities undertaken at the Pasture during the year. Copies of last year's calendar were sold and posted to various parts of the world, with one even known to be hanging in Parliament!

Only 200 of these exclusive calendars are printed and at £5 with envelope they are an absolute bargain. They will be available to buy every Saturday morning at the Pasture or here at the East Finchley Christmas Festival on Saturday 6th December from the Long Lane Pasture stall. We hope to see many of you there!



The photograph used for the ninth month was a long exposure taken by Lucy Nowell during the evening of the harvest moon in September. The Pasture was lit up, and



though we have additional lighting from the nearby North Circular Road, the moon was casting shadows. It would have been essential in ancient times for assisting with

the gathering of crops during harvest time before autumnal weather set in. The evening is also the time for a whole range of nocturnal wildlife activities on the Pasture. Moths, bats and foxes are all active at night, along with hedgehogs and various creepy crawlies.... I'm sure they are all grateful the gate is firmly locked!

## Finally, a Merry Christmas to one and all!

You can now monitor Pasture activity on Twitter.

Please follow: [@LLPasture](https://twitter.com/LLPasture)

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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