

Autumn 2017

wren

Wildlife & Conservation Group

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a word from the chair

Anyone walking on Wanstead Flats in early January may have seen the big new fly-tip dumped in the site of special scientific interest. Did those responsible for this eyesore consider the damage they were doing to an area valuable both for nature and for people wanting to go for a walk in a green space? Of course they didn't.

They acted without a moment's thought for anyone else's wellbeing. As well as damaging the site, they created another bill for the Epping Forest authorities, who have to organise the tidy-up. The rate of fly-tip prosecutions is increasing, thanks to

the efforts of Forest keepers and others, but this is a drain on the authority's valuable resources – money that could be spent more usefully on other projects.

In the big scheme of things, this is a small incident, but it's another reminder of the negative impact we as a species are having on planet Earth. The government's welcome ban on the use of plastic microbeads has got people thinking about other forms of waste that we could eliminate. For example, the equivalent of 136 billion plastic milk cartons end up in the world's oceans every year. These degrade only over a very long period – they'll still be around long after we've passed on – building up in the stomachs of sea turtles, strangling sea birds and burying beaches where terns and turtles nest. Sometimes these problems seem insuperable, but there are things we can do to help. On a personal level we can, for example, take a reusable water bottle out with us, rather than buying water in plastic bottles. Or we can say we don't need a plastic straw in our drink. And

on a larger scale we can lobby retailers to use greener alternatives, and politicians to act. Many alternatives already exist and can be substituted. Where they don't, manufacturers need to be given a strong nudge in the ribs. Think globally, act locally. The future of our planet is at stake.

One person who would certainly have agreed with that sentiment was long-time Wren member, all-round naturalist and Jubilee Pond advocate and guardian Fred Wanless, who sadly passed away shortly before Christmas. Please turn to the next page to see an obituary for Fred.

Tim Harris
Chair Wren Group



Litter kills

People's rubbish doesn't look nice and spoils the enjoyment of our green spaces for everyone. But aside from its environmental impact, flytips and other litter also pose a real hazard to wildlife.

If you see a flytip or excess litter on Epping Forest land please report it.
Call 020 8532 1010 (24 hours) or mail epping.forest@cityoflondon.gov.uk



Fred Wanless

May 1940 - December 2017

Fred Wanless, an outstanding local naturalist and longstanding member of the WREN Group, died recently. Here is an appreciation by his friend and fellow WREN Group member Rob Howell.

Fred Wanless was a grumpy old man, well that was the image he liked to project and to be fair to him his act could be quite convincing at times. However, Fred wasn't really a grumpy old man but a caring man with a love of the natural world and a man of great compassion.

Fred was born in the May of 1940, his father was killed on the beach at Dunkirk shortly after Fred's birth and Fred often wondered if his father knew of his birth before he died. Fred spent most of his education at boarding school and, unlike many of his generation seems to have found it a mostly enjoyable experience saying that it toughened him up and gave him a sense on independence that he retained throughout his life.

On leaving school Fred started work at the Medical Research Council at Mill Hill. This was a period that he really enjoyed. His work involved photography and this was an interest that stayed with him and was used with great success in the works he produced on the flora of Wanstead Flats. His time at the MRC seems to have been spent between preparing slides for the Director, a Nobel prize winner and playing chess with a colleague in the darkroom.

Fred had a life-long interest in spiders and moved from the MRC to the Natural History Museum as a researcher. Fred had continued his education after leaving school at evening classes and although he did not have a degree was successful in his application at the Natural History Museum despite the rest of the interviewees being graduates. This was something the he

was rightly proud of. In his time at the museum Fred published a number of academic papers and gained a world-wide reputation for his scholarship. Fred also supervised the studies of post-graduate students and was generous in the sharing of his knowledge and the giving of his time. Fred travelled extensively as part of his research working notably in Borneo and Botswana. Rather more geographically varied than alphabetically. His biggest disappointment was being moved to the study of nematodes, not a species with which he had great affinity although he does still appear on television repeats of a documentary on the Loch Ness monster talking about the nematodes in the Loch and again published peer reviewed papers. He always maintained that it took ten years to become proficient in any field of study.

“ I don't believe in God
but, if he can create
something as beautiful as this
flower I could almost
believe in him ”

On his retirement Fred became increasingly involved in the work of both the Wren Group and the Lakehouse Lake project of which he was a founder member. He was a member of committee of the Lakehouse Lake Project and gave academic credence to the group through his study of and publications on the flowers, the trees and the grasses and rushes of Wanstead Flats and its environs. These books showed meticulous

attention to detail, skilful illustration and beautiful photography. It is a measure of Fred that he published them himself and charged nothing for them rather asking for a donation to be made to a charity which was dear to him. Fred was a taxonomist believing that the categorisation of species was essential to their understanding. He believed that Linnaeus should have received greater recognition than Darwin and acted as secretary to the Linnaean society for a number of years. Taxonomy was at the heart of his work whether studying spiders, nematodes or the local flora.

Fred was well known for his love of animals, in particular of cats. Visitors to Fred's would be offered coffee only after all the cats had been fed. Apart from his own cats his house was well known by the local strays as a place where a meal could always be guaranteed.

Fred had been a keen sailor, sailing mainly on the south coast. He recalled the time that, when he was acting master as the boat was bought into a mooring. The craft gently glided into the mooring only to gently glide past the mooring into a group of other boats. Someone (!?) had forgotten to take the sails down. The situation was made worse by the fact that this all took place in the late afternoon opposite a pub whose garden was full of summer drinkers. Little sympathy was shown.

Although not a religious man Fred once commented, having spent an afternoon describing and photographing a small flower he commented, 'I don't believe in God but, if he can create something as beautiful as this flower I could almost believe in him'. Fred was not a demonstrative man. A few years ago, on being shown the draft obituary for a friend, Fred, whilst in agreement with the body of the text queried the use of the word 'love' and felt that it wasn't really necessary.

Fred Wanless was an unassuming man but, in many ways a great man. He will be remembered by his family and many friends with affection, with many fond memories and with love.

trees in the landscape

Second photographic exhibition at the Temple

'Trees in the Landscape,' our second photographic exhibition at the Temple, is now on display during weekend opening hours until early spring.

The twenty-one photographs show various aspects of trees in the Wanstead and Epping Forest area, in all seasons from winter snow to autumn glory. Some images show details such as fungi doing its work, birds using nest holes, and spring catkins, and others show the sheer beauty of trees and groups of trees, both in a forest and a more urban setting.



The exhibition launch was very timely as it coincided with National Tree Week, bringing home the message that trees everywhere are a vital part of the ecosystem and it is essential that we protect them.



These photographs had to be selected from 240 entries and it was heartening that the project inspired so many people to take their cameras, go out there and think about how to take a good picture of a tree.

The launch was preceded by a walk for 30 people, led by Tim Harris, and the launch itself was attended by over 50 people who enjoyed a good natter and some excellent tea and cake. Thanks to Wren volunteers for this. Many thanks also to committee member Tony Morrison for printing and framing the images so brilliantly.

In addition to local Councillor Paul Merry, we were lucky to welcome Epping Forest Artist in Residence Marion Sidebottom, who displayed some of her meticulous photographs of ancient Forest trees. We hope to see more of her work in future.

Article by Gill James.
Pics by Mary Holden





01



08



07



02

trees in a landscape

Some of the wonderful entries to the latest Wren and Friends of Wanstead Parklands photographic exhibition. These and more can be seen at the Temple in Wanstead Park until early spring.

- 01. A misty Wanstead Park by Adrian Ryan
- 02. Wanstead Flats Sunrise by Jon Lethbridge
- 03. Beautiful Decay by Dave Gordon
- 04. Hornbeam bark in Chalet wood by Rosamund Mykura
- 05. Beeches in Epping Forest by Andrew Spencer
- 06. The Forest by Lesley Midda
- 07. Winter Snow in Wanstead Park by Jackie Morrison
- 08. Chingford Plain by Ronald Andrews



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03



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A very welcome visitor to the recent 'Trees in a Landscape' exhibition was Epping Forest Artist-in-Residence, Marion Sidebottom.

Marion has been working in the forest since April 2017 on a project called 'You Can't See the Trees for the Woods'. During the first part of her project she created character portraits of some of the ancient trees which were shown in an exhibition called 'Portraits of Ancient Trees in Epping Forest' last July in the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge. More recently she was featured on BBC London News in November to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Forest Charter.

ancient trees

& the People of Epping Forest



Since August she has been working on part 2 of her project which is about the people who live, work, study and visit the forest. She has been out and about over the last few months talking to people to find out about their tree stories for an exhibition next March called 'Ancient Trees and the People of Epping Forest'.

Marion's research involved a day with the Conservation Arborists working in Pole Hill where she ascended in our MEWP to photograph them in action and talk about their work.



Mick Collins with the aptly named 'Beer Belly Oak'



Mother introducing her son to an ancient oak

She spent a day with Constable Keeper Mick Collins exploring some of the lesser-known areas of woodland owned and managed by the City of London. Marion photographed a half-term activity run by



Resident and volunteer Forest Keeper Juliette Harvey at the Lost Pond

the Field Studies Centre which introduced children to the wonders of the forest. She also took part in an FSC day's course in Woodland Ecology and Management with adults from all around the country run by Andy Deane. The naturalist Tricia Moxey told her tree story to Marion and gave an insight into the natural history of the forest.



Naturalist Tricia Moxey at High Beech

Marion also spent time accompanying walking groups and speaking to residents to find out why the forest is so special to them.

You can catch Marion's latest exhibition

'Ancient Trees and the People of Epping Forest' at The View, 6 Rangers Road, Chingford, E4 7QH from 3rd March until 2nd April.



Andy Deane talking to students about woodland ecology

Marion will be running various events during the exhibition which will include a Tree Photo Walk, a 'Meet the Artist' event and a competition to win a limited edition print. An online storybook and gallery of tree stories will accompany the exhibition.

This project is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

You can see more of Marion's work online:

Twitter @MarionSide

Facebook @Marionseye

Her website

www.marionsidebottom.co.uk has a link to the project blog

turned out nice again

Article and pics by Peter Aylmer

Our series of nature rambles is now well under way, taking Wren members to some of London's great places for wildlife with 'Walk and Talk' leader and guidebook author Peter Aylmer.

It might not have been a particularly wet autumn, but Wren Group walkers could be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Our two autumn walks were damp affairs, but not so much to dissuade hardy souls. The latest take us north and then east to Essex with even more rain.



Our October date was wet enough to put off the regulars, but three new walkers joined me and remained stoic throughout. We found that the upper reaches of north London's Dollis Brook form a good little excursion whatever the weather.

It sounds like a lengthy journey from east London – start from Totteridge & Whetstone tube, return from Edgware – but in fact it's perfectly practical, and for the nature lover, hay meadow and marsh, pasture and nature reserve all feature.



Wren walkers near the source of the Dollis Brook

The stream we were following forms the headwaters of one of London's major rivers, the Brent. In its earlier course, the Brent is none too romantic, curling through temples of sport, commerce and industry as it wends its way through Hendon and Wembley (though a couple of years ago, on the Capital Ring, Wren walkers found an excellent country park at Hanwell).

By the time it gets properly north, in London terms at least, the Dollis Brook has retained a wide green corridor that functions both as a lung for local humans

and a channel for wildlife. Although it's perfectly walkable throughout its length – the Brook only become the Brent three miles further south – its final five miles provide an increasingly rural excursion, culminating in open fields close to the Hertfordshire border.

The highlight is undoubtedly Totteridge Fields, seven enclosed rough pasture lands with a little nature reserve at the finish. Here, marsh plants like bog stitchwort, and others like meadowsweet, all flourish. Moat Mount Open Space, at the very summit of the walk, is good too, with views over distant woodland. The final descent, beside another Brent tributary the Silk Stream, took us through the former ornamental gardens of a great house – no problem spotting rhododendron!



Woodland beside the Silk Stream

The wet start had lasted barely an hour and something similar weather-wise happened on the December walk too. This time we were much closer to home, enjoying a four-mile stroll round the village of Havering-atte-Bower north of Romford – catch any bus to Havering Park from Romford station. Essentially, it's two contrasting parks with a village in the middle. The mostly wooded Havering Country Park, at start and finish, was once royal land: there were two palaces

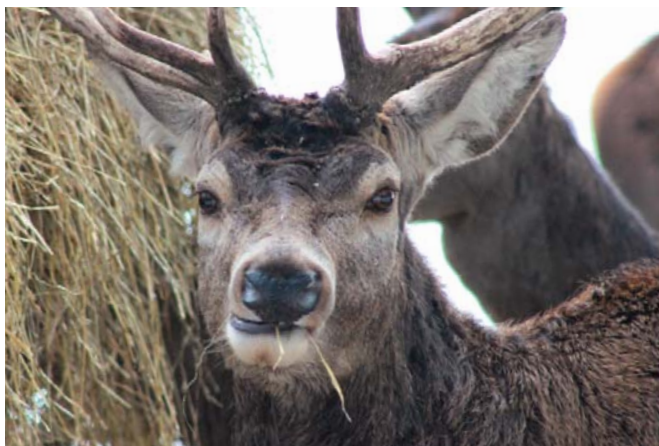
here, one of them essentially the eastern equivalent of Windsor. The tiny firecrest, the size of a wren, lives here, but alas not seen by our group of seven.



The Wellingtonia avenue in Havering Country Park

Bedfords Park is more open, with ponds and meadow, and a deer enclosure not far from our half-way stop, the café maintained by the London Wildlife Trust; it sells bagged carrot expressly for sale to the deer.

While we were in the café, the rain stopped, the



Deer in Bedford Park - The Park's cafe sells bagged carrots expressly for the deer

temperature dropped from around 10C to nearer 5C, and the sun started to push through. It was a delight to wander across Havering-atte-Bower's village green, stocks and whipping post still in place in the burgeoning sunshine, and a positive pleasure to drop through the Wellingtonia avenue back in Havering Country Park, the great redwoods towering above us. At the end, a spectacular view of distant London in the twilight: what better way to finish.

These two walks feature in Peter Aylmer's two guidebooks for Cicerone Press. The Dollis Valley Greenwalk is Walk 12 in *Walking in London*, and the Havering-atte-Bower walk is Walk 8 in *Walking in Essex*.

Walk and Talk by Peter Aylmer



Future Nature Ramble dates

Wednesday 21 February and Thursday 19 April.

Meet 10am at Stratford station, outside Jubilee line platforms 13-15. Just turn up, no need to book. Bring a snack, drink and Oyster or Freedom Pass. Back about 4.30.



Tony Abbott and Tim Harris looking out over the Rom valley

walking in london

Park, Heath and Waterside

The Wren Group's very own 'Nature Ramble' leader Peter Aylmer has written a book on his popular rambles around the London area. Wren members have contributed greatly to checking out the routes - which include Wanstead Flats and Park - and have helped with the photography too.

This new addition to the London walking book market, combines Peter Aylmer's practical experience of the walks included, with a thematic approach to different forms of wildlife to which each walk gives access.

Here, Wren committee member and keen walker, Kathy Baker reviews Peter's new book *Walking in London - Park, Heath and Waterside*

Publisher: Cicerone (ISBN: 978 1 85284 813 2) £12.95

<https://www.cicerone.co.uk/product/detail.cfm/book/813/title/walking-in-london#.WdYd1mhSxEY>

A close-up photograph of a mushroom gill, showing the fine, parallel ridges of the gill structure. The color is a warm, light brown or tan. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the gills.

autumnal fungi

Article by Tricia Moxey

As the season change some living organisms become more obvious within habitats. The fruiting bodies of various fungi tend to appear in late summer and some last until the first frosts of winter.

One spectacular species which can be found in the local grasslands is the spectacular Parasol Mushroom, which can be 50 cm tall with a cap the size of a dinner plate! Sometimes, in areas of shorter grass, circles of greener, longer grass appear which are caused by the Fairy Ring Champignon which breaks down the dead leaves of grasses, recycling the nutrients from within them.



Macrolepiota procera, the Parasol Mushroom - Pic by Tony Morrison

The annual fungus walk on 29th October in Bush Wood was very well supported, but as very little rain had fallen during the preceding weeks, the soil was dry and fungal fruiting bodies were in short supply! Happily, with some diligent searching it was possible to find sufficient specimens to demonstrate the varied features of several different forms. A golden Field Cap was held up for all to see as was a rather smelly egg stage of the Stink Horn. Specific species associated with rotting wood such as Candle Snuff, Turkey Tails, Stump Puffballs and different species of fairy bonnet were spotted as were

some clusters of black-spored Wood Worts on twigs. A bracket of a *Ganoderma*, or heart rot fungus, which rots the central core of old trees, was also found.



Yellow Ochre Brittle Gill - Pic by Tony Morrison

However, it was encouraging to find two species of mycorrhizal fungi, one a gill fungus, a Yellow Ochre Brittle Gill and the other a sponge toadstool, a Penny Bun. Using these examples, it was possible to explain the important role that such species play in supporting the healthy growth of trees and outline the latest scientific evidence of how the hidden underground and extensive mesh of fungal threads links most tree roots in a wood, enabling chemical communication to take place between them. This network is colloquially known as the wood-wide web!

A notable feature of this woodland is the presence of the Clouded Agaric, which forms fairy rings of pale grey robust toadstools some 12 cm tall. We were lucky to find a few Fly Agarics under some birches, and considering the dry conditions, it was a pleasant and profitable morning and demonstrated that you can

always find something of interest if you look carefully!

A further excursion took place on 11th November to examine the close-mown turf of the City of London Cemetery. This habitat yielded a host of Hairy Earth Tongues and various coloured wax caps, as well as minute examples of Moss Caps. A group of Earth Stars were also noted growing on the gravel near the South Crematorium.



Fly Agarics - Pic by Andrew Spencer

A walk across of some made ground yielded several fine groups of the impressively large Lawyer's Wig, scaly topped fungi standing some 15 cm tall. Interestingly this area also provided a good haul of flowering plants still in flower, indicating that it is worth searching for interesting specimens throughout the year!



Article by Tricia Moxey

autumn bird report

by Tim Harris

A morning walk around the Wanstead Park 'patch' on 9th January had already been productive for me, with three pairs of Wigeon seen loafing in the middle of The Basin. After checking the Ornamental Water in a fruitless search for a Kingfisher or Grey Wagtail, I decided to take a look at Perch Pond. It was a choice I was not to regret ...



Egret is an unexpected visitor

Heading in the general direction of the tea hut, I noticed that a woman walking her dog ahead of me had stopped and reached for her phone. I followed her glance and realised she was taking a picture of an egret standing in the shallows.



Great White Egret, Perch Pond, Wanstead Park - pic by Bob Vaughan

No surprise there, since Little Egret is a regular visitor to the Park. Then the bird turned its head – revealing a monstrous yellow bill. There was no mistaking the area's first Great White Egret. After a few minutes the bird transferred its allegiance to the southern shore of the lake, but too close to a Grey Heron. There was the briefest of stand-offs, then the heron took umbrage and flew at its rival. I then witnessed the remarkable sight of the two birds flying a circuit of the lake, before the egret settled once more on the north bank.

There has been plenty of other avian interest in our area. Bush Wood was a great place to go for a walk

and listen to bird song in early January. A visit there quickly debunks the idea that bird courtship starts in the spring.

From the first week of the year, woodpeckers were drumming, Blue Tits were performing display flights and many other birds were in song. This wood's tangles of Holly and veteran trees hosted two Firecrests, a pair of Nuthatches, singing Stock Doves, and a Treecreeper – not bad for a small area of woodland on the edge of Leytonstone!

With the Ornamental Water gradually filling up, it was nice to see Shovelers doing their 'slow spin' trick to stir up food, small parties of demure Teal and a selection of Mallard, Gadwall, Moorhens and Coots. A second-winter Mediterranean Gull was another visitor to The Basin, but it didn't stay for long. Water Rails were heard and seen by the



Mediterranean Gull (2nd Winter) another visitor to the Basin - pic by Tony Brown

Shoulder of Mutton pond and the River Roding. Meanwhile, a flock of finches in the Exchange Lands, next to the Empress Avenue allotments, seemed to



Stonechat - pic by Tony Brown

get bigger every time I visited. By 11 January it was at least 70-strong, and made up of Goldfinches, Greenfinches and Chaffinches, with a couple of Reed Buntings tagging along. No Bullfinch, though.

Two Stonechats are wintering on Wanstead Flats, where there is also a pair of Little Owls. And a small group of Skylarks has reappeared? At the time of writing this numbered five birds. Meadow Pipits seem to be in short supply.



Only one Skylark seen since the turn of the year - pic by Tony Morrison



Meadow Pipits also in short supply this season - pic by Nick Croft

While 2017 now seems like a long time ago, it's worth remembering the 'autumn of the Hawfinch', thousands of which invaded the UK from – it is thought – Romania. This magnificent finch has a beak strong enough to split cherry stones, and our little corner of London didn't lose out as at least 16 were seen between 9 October (Leyton Flats) and 4



Longing back to the 'autumn of the Hawfinch' when thousands invaded the UK from Romania - pic by Wiki

November. This total included an astonishing nine counted by James Heal as they flew over Wanstead Flats on 28 October.

What's next?

A really cold spell, with lakes frozen in the Midlands and North, could see an influx of wildfowl and waders into our area.



Lapwing in flight - pic by Nick Croft

Maybe there'll be a Red-necked Grebe on The Basin, a Smew or Goosander on the River Roding, or a skein of White-fronted Geese over the Flats? Or maybe not! With its UK population on the increase, one day a lucky observer is going to find a Bittern in the reedbed at Shoulder of Mutton. Look out also for fly-over Lapwings, Golden Plovers. And keep your wits about you to clinch the ID of any Snipe or Woodcock you inadvertently flush.

Tim Harris





Winter's Artist

by Suzanne Bates

An awesome scene the artist paints,
expert and deft his hand.

Brush strokes swift, he draws with ease, a
winter wonderland.

Landscape sketched from memory,
heavens and land entwine

Rapidly the scene is set, exquisitely divine.

Pine trees reaching tall and proud, like
statues standing still.

There is no wind to speak of, more an icy
winter chill.

Strong branches dusted with the snow
stretch their fingers high

As if welcoming the blanket bequeathed
by the darkened sky.

Crisp snowflakes twirl like dancers,
pirouetting to and fro,

Waltzing to their silent tune toward the
ground below.

Pale moonlight showers diamonds,
generously all around.

Its treasure glints and sparkles upon the
hardened ground.

Snowfall in shades of silver envelops the
land below,

Lighting up the darkness with its soothing,
gentle glow.

Mellow in its nature, no preference where
it lays

Takes refuge where and when it can,
throughout the winter days.

Though bereft of colour is the scene,
prevailing grey and white,

Its awe inspiring beauty is apparent day
and night.

Who nonchalantly paints this scene, for all
on earth to share?

His strokes proficient every time, precise
and so aware.

Jack Frost paints wondrous pictures with
his palette of frozen dew,

Then stands back when his work is done
and proudly admires the view.

don't forget

It's that time of year again to keep an eye out for our feathered friends.

Provide fresh clean water every day.

Give kitchen scraps like cheese, cooked potato and bread.

Clear up uneaten food at the end of the day as it could attract rats.

Avoid giving salted nuts and only give peanuts from a good supplier.

Clean feeding areas regularly to prevent any disease.

now & then

In each edition of the Wren newsletter we will be showing you a picture of a street in our area taken around 100 years ago and how it looks today. Just for fun have a guess where this picture was taken (answer back page). If you would like to see your area in this slot why not get in touch and we will see what we can do.



in plane sight

Cobbled together from the internet by Tony Morrison

London Plane is the most frequently seen tree in London and the capital is flooded with them. If you walk along any street and pick out the most impressive tree you see, the odds are that it will be a London plane. Now take a closer look. Observe that they have round spiky nuts dangling down from their branches, usually in pairs. Observe the bark which seems to be multishaded. In fact, if you look closely you will see that this is caused by its flakiness. This phenomenon is in fact what makes the London plane so adept for London, because this process of shedding its bark protects the tree from pollution. These qualities, you will see all year around.

However, the plane is not the most common species in London – that honour going to the apple tree, mainly hidden in gardens. None-the-less the plane remains the most iconic in London. All in all it is a tree that can be said to be a true Londoner born and bred, to the extent that it even took the city's name.

The plane tree accounts for more than half of London's tree population. Yet despite being so common it was only 'discovered' in the mid-17th century by John Tradescant the younger in his famous nursery garden and ark in Vauxhall. And 'discovered' in the sense that there's a possibility the tree did not exist before this time.

So why was London's most popular tree so late on the scene?

The London Plane is most likely a hybrid between the American sycamore and the majestic Oriental plane. It took a long time for these 'lovers' to meet - the relationship hampered by growing on opposite sides of the planet. However, the voyages of the early modern

period with routine collections of specimens being brought home led to the American sycamore's journey from its native eastern America, and the Oriental plane from south-east Europe. The first account of the Oriental plane in Britain is found in William Turner's 1548 book: *Names Of Herbs*. While the American sycamore perhaps arrived some 150 years or so later at the beginning of the 17th century.



The London Plane Tree flourished due to its hardy characteristics - the 'flaky' bark of the tree sheds allowing the tree to rinse away the city grime.

The London plane would then have hybridised when its 'parents' found themselves sharing the same space. It may even be that this was in the very Vauxhall garden where Tradescant first found the tree since both were present there.

Nobody thought to plant them along pavements in the capital, however, until the Paris-inspired craze for tree-lined boulevards crossed the Channel in the mid-19th century. The Victoria Embankment, completed by Joseph Bazalgette in 1870, was lined with London planes the next year, and other new thoroughfares such

as Northumberland Avenue soon followed. The tree was planted en masse at a time when London was black with soot and smoke from the Industrial Revolution and when population expansion forced even greater urban development. The 'London Plane' flourished due to its hardy characteristics.



Usually leaf shape is good for identifying trees, but the London plane leaf does look a bit like the leaves of other trees such as sycamore. The bark is a better identifier.

As the capital went on expanding it became the practice for all but the meanest suburban streets to have trees. In late-19th-century Camberwell, according to an account of the planting there, the best and widest avenues got the large trees such as the plane and horse chestnut, while streets slightly lower down the social scale made do with limes, laburnums and acacias. (The houses of the poorest class faced "unadorned tarmac".)

London's 900,000 street trees are made up of around 500 different species and cultivars



London Plane distinctive seeds - helping it to be one of the most recognisable trees in our city centers.

But in most London streets the plane ruled supreme. It was hardy and adaptable - the distinctive trunk of the London Plane having that 'flaky' pattern allowing the bark to break away in large flakes in order that the tree cleanse itself of pollutants. Daily London grime simply rinses away, leaving the beautiful maple-like leaves a lush green. The tree also requires little root space and can survive in most soils. However, it does grow to some 30 metres tall so when trees line a street they can cause problems for London buses and overhanging wires. But then it's also an unusual tree in that it can flourish despite pollarding (the pruning of branches that often gives the tree a club-limbed appearance).

"Nothing very remarkable is to be found in the way of street trees in London, the everlasting plane having been used almost to the exclusion of every other species," wrote the forester AD Webster in 1920, estimating that planes made up 60% of the trees "used for shade and ornamentation".

Today, according to the tree enthusiast Paul Wood, that figure is as little as 4% in inner London, shrinking further to 1.4% in greater London. The plane's dominance was already weakening in the inter-war period, when smaller, shorter-lived and faster-growing trees – the silver birch and the bird cherry, for example – began to populate the new crescents, closes and avenues of the

further suburbs. But the growth in variety since then is astonishing.

According to Wood's reckoning, 900,000 out of a total of 8.4m London trees grow on a street, and those 900,000 street trees are made up of around 500 different species and cultivars (*London's Street Trees: A Field Guide to the Urban Forest*).



Majestic plane trees provide comforting shade for those sheltering from the summer sun in London's Berkeley Square.

The best place to view mature London Planes is perhaps Berkeley Square. Here the 30 or so examples were planted in 1789 and are among the oldest in the capital. More locally are those to be found in the City of London and Manor Park cemeteries, with mature planes around 20-25m high probably planted in the mid-19th century when the cemeteries were created. Younger siblings can be found lining some of the local streets and notably there are those surrounding Wanstead Flats. With the advent of the photographic postcard in the early 20th century we have a record of when these were planted.



Above - a picture postcard dated around 1903 shows Aldersbrook Road adjacent to Alexandra Pond on Wanstead Flats. You can clearly see London Plane trees newly planted and supported by props. Below - the same spot showing the trees today.

A familiar friend that has been around for so long, the London Plane is not as invincible as its great stature might indicate. They could last for another century - though they may not. Cost is against them: mature trees need more money to look after, which helps explain why local councils resort to ruthless pollarding or even destruction of trees to lessen the 'inconvenience'.



The London Plane tree - a victim of its own success. Hardy and adaptable - able to cleanse itself of pollutants. The tree also requires little root space and can survive in most soils. However, it does grow to some 30+ metres tall so when trees line a street they can cause problems. A common solution is to pollard the branches of the tree as here in Capel Road in the London Borough of Newham.

There is also the prospect of disease. The 42,000 plane trees that line the Canal du Midi in southern France are all to be cut down because of a cancer known as “plane tree wilt”, which has recently been reported as far north as Paris. The disease was accidentally introduced from the eastern United States through a number of southern European ports during World War II on infected crating material, and it spread rapidly through Italy and into Switzerland. Although its progress through France was initially slower, recent reports confirm the fungus is spreading northwards at a much faster rate than in the previous decade. It was also recently reported in Greece. Will the planes that decorate the streets of cities such as Paris and London share the same fate?

Scientists have warned that the ash tree was likely to be wiped out in Europe by the fungal disease ash-dieback, along with an invasive beetle called the emerald ash

borer. Hundreds of thousands of young ash trees have already been destroyed in the UK in an attempt to prevent the disease spreading. It would be catastrophic if the London Plane should go the same way.

“If the disease gets to London the impact would be catastrophic. It would kill a large number of plane trees very quickly. The Mall would disappear practically overnight, as well as Broadway and Berkeley Square. They would take a long, long time to replace”.

Jago Keen, Chairman of the Arboricultural Association

The lack of plant diversity in British cities, and in particular London, has left them acutely vulnerable. Local councils now plant a number of different species – in part for economic reasons and in part to minimise the threat of disease. The olive, the American sweetgum, the nettle tree, the Himalayan birch are among the trees that represent the new practices in planting: small trees for the short term, easily replaced, planted in mixed groups to curb the transmission of disease and, with luck, adaptable to a changing climate. Street trees do all kinds of practical good that couldn’t have been foreseen when they were first planted: carbon sequestration, water runoff absorption and so forth. But beauty remains the real reason for their

There is a lot of pressure to plant plane trees because they are iconic, but the challenge is you lose them all in one go.

“The Arboricultural Association has been lobbying for more diversity in order build up eco-system resilience”.

Jago Keen, Chairman of the Arboricultural Association

being. In total, they cost the London boroughs between £40m and £45m a year, having somehow endured, in Wood’s phrase, as “one of the last locally defined areas of civic life”. In all their glorious variety, they stand as a living monument to the municipal instinct, cheap at the price.

Researched by Tony Morrison



Report suspect trees to the Forestry Commission via the Tree at: www.forestry.gov.uk/treelalert
Please supply photos of the symptoms, full details of the location, contact details and, if possible information about the age of the tree (e.g. mature or recent planting).

More information goto www.ltoa.org.uk

Leafhopper Zyginella pulcha rescued from the pond at the Community Garden

bug life

In Forest Gate Community Garden

“ So much wildlife attracted to one small patch being left for nature. So much difference to the lives of local residents - a special part of Forest Gate.

Rose Stephens

”



Forest Gate Community Garden with Artist in Residence Rosemary Stephens. Here she is beside her stunning macro photos which are on display there.

Wren member Rose Stephens is a self-taught naturalist and artist who was born in Newham and still lives there - in Forest Gate, close to Wanstead Flats.

Recently Rose was made 'Artist in Residence' at Forest Gate Community Garden. The Community Garden is a green space in the heart of Forest Gate for wildlife, plants and people. Volunteers work as Garden Hosts in small teams to open the garden to the public providing a place where people from all walks of life and cultures can meet, relax, garden and learn about nature and wildlife.



In the past Rose has used photographs as a basis for her work - painting from pictures taken in the area. More recently, she has started to express her fondness of all things natural solely in the media of photography.

Rose has an extraordinary eye for seeing the detail in the nature around her. This she has recently used to her advantage by taking up 'macro' or close-up photography. The exhibition at Forest Gate Community Garden shows a series of macro photographs of bugs taken in the Garden last summer.

You can like Rose's work on her Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TheNatureofWansteadFlats>

To find out more about Forest Gate Community Garden goto <http://www.fgcommunitygarden.org> or why not visit and see Rose's wonderful exhibition.



Pictures courtesy of FGCG website



country rambles

Now well out of print, the *South Essex Recorder's Country Rambles around Ilford* was published in 1910. Its author Geo. E. Tasker recounts more rambles in our local area.

The guide describes in detail 26 walks of varying length, starting and ending at a railway station or a tram terminus (as they were) in or near Ilford in Essex. Walks include areas such as Ilford, Aldborough Hatch; Barkingside; Chadwell; Hainault Forest; Seven Kings as well as the more local Wanstead Park, Wanstead Flats, Valentines Park, Wanstead and Snaresbrook.



Granbrook Road, Barkingside, 1903

Route 14

From tram terminus, Barkingside, Fairlop Station, Hog Hill, Collier Row, Marks Gate, Little Heath, to Goodmayes (7 miles)

From the tram terminus proceed down Barkingside High Street to Fullwell Hatch (see Route 12). Branch off to the right down Forest Road, and in a few minutes Fairlop Station is reached. A little farther on is Forest Farm and its cottages, with VR., AP 1855 and 1857 on them. The property belongs to the Crown, and the houses were built after Hainault was disforested. Away on the right is seen the tower of West Ham Asylum at Little Heath.



Edwardian children in Happy Valley - a local name for Little Heath, Goodmayes, 1909

About a quarter of a mile from the farm house is Fairlop Oak Recreation Ground (25 minutes from the trams). It is named after the famous Fairlop Oak, which grew almost exactly opposite the pavilion and close to the hay and straw ricks in the large field across the road. The opening ceremony was performed by the Prince of Wales on the 22nd May, 1909, as President of the London Playing Fields Society, by which body the ground

was laid out, and is now controlled by them. The Ilford Council's portion adjoins, but was not included in the Prince's programme; it is indicated by a bordering of trees along the front. At the junction of the two fields is Seven Kings Water, on its way from Cabin Hill in Hainault Forest to feed the lakes in Seven Kings, South, and Barking Parks. A little way on the right is Hainault Road, which leads to Little Heath. Passing some mushroom fields on the left, Hog Hill is soon reached (50 minutes from trams). The road to the left leads to Chigwell Row (see Route 15), that to the right to Collier Row, which is the route now to be followed. The large entrance gates belong to Hainault Lodge, whose red roof is a familiar landmark. The original house was probably used as a hunting lodge by our sovereigns during their frequent hunts in Hainault Forest down to the end of the Stuart Period. It afterwards became a keeper's or verderer's lodge, and is now leased from the Crown as a private residence by Mr. F. Green, J.P., who has partly re-built it.

The house is marked on a map of 1774, and is shown to be entirely in the forest. It is said that in the reign of "Bluff King Hal" the occupier had a very handsome wife, and that in order to see her, Henry commanded her husband to kill a buck from the forest and bring it to him, and at the same time to present his wife at Court. Just inside the gates is the porter's lodge, built about 30 years ago. It is interesting because it bears on its front the Royal Arms in stone with the present quarterings, which, although weather-beaten, cannot therefore be of great age. The arms were originally built into the side wall of Hainault Lodge, but were removed by Mr. Green to their present position during alterations. Almost opposite the house are the public Golf Links made in the forest by the L.C.C., and opened 23rd October, 1909. From Hog Hill to Collier Row is a mile. A little way down the hill on the left is a school, beyond which is

"Heptarchy Field." Just before reaching the hamlet are Crown Cottages with "V.R. 1861" on them, beside which is the site of another of the old Meer Stones of Waltham Forest mentioned in Routes 16 and 20. The stone which stood here was called "Collier Row Stone," but the original has unfortunately been lost; an iron tablet at the base describes it. In 1709 the men of Romford re-set this stone, thereby gaining 60 acres of common land. Beside it, as in the case of the Havering and Forest Bounds Stones, is an iron boundary post indicating the limit of the City Coal Dues area. If it is not desired to follow the road round, a field path may be taken here to the right, affording a short cut to Marks Gate, three-quarters of a mile distant. At Marks Gate the road divides, that to the left past the old windmill comes from Chadwell Heath, as described in Route 16.



Beehive Hotel, Hainault, early 1900s

The turning to the right past the Wesleyan Chapel is Billett Read - a little more than a mile long - at the far end of which is St. Chad's Well. A few yards past the well turn to the left, through Little Heath, and down Barley Lane (also a mile long) to the trams by Goodmayes Station. Time from Marks Gate, 45 minutes.

What to see in winter

By Tricia Moxey

There is always a degree of uncertainty about the weather. Will the coming months bring high winds, crisp snow or just some long spells of overcast grey and rainy days when we will be slithering about in the muddy countryside? Being outside even for as little as 20 minutes a day is sufficient to bring health benefits so wrap up warm and get out there!

One of the great pleasures of being outside during the winter months is the chance to see frost on many of the fallen leaves, the dead stems of grasses or ferns. This tends to highlight their form and textures which might be so easily overlooked and thus, the seemingly ordinary is transformed into something magical!

An instructive activity is to make a note of flowers that are actually in flower at the turn of the year as many flowers are responding to the mildness of the current winter season. This list can include just the 'wild ones' or can include those found in gardens too! Comparisons year on year are interesting and of course there are some insects which will find them vital

sources of nectar and pollen. There are several types of Mahonia, which are in full flower at this time of the year and some of the winter flowering Viburnums are sweetly scented, too. Primroses and Sweet Violet are now in flower from late autumn through to spring and in addition you may well find Dandelions, Chickweed and Hogweed. What will be your score? More than 25 is a good one.



Towards the end of January the catkins on Hazel start to lengthen and once fully expanded, they shed their pollen grains which can then be blown about to be caught on the stigmas of the tiny red female flowers. As the days lengthen, the leaves of Honeysuckle start to grow to be followed by sprouting shoots on Elder bushes. Look out for the yellow

flowers of Coltsfoot as they push through the barren ground of roadside verges or wasteland sites.

Those who feel the need to mow their lawns in winter may have continue to do so if the ground temperatures remain above 6°C for several days, but for many of us, it is preferable to leave it slightly longer. This gives you the chance to notice that the uncollected leaves will disappear underground as

various species of earthworm remain active, pulling different leaves into their burrows. Recent research using an infra-red webcam has revealed that the 25cm long Night Crawling Earthworm, *Lumbricus terrestris* shows a particular preference for the fallen leaves of Alder, Ash and Birch over non-native Eucalyptus, Sweet Chestnut and Sycamore. Interestingly in the 1880's Darwin came to similar conclusions without the help of webcams! You could conduct your own experiments to see which leaves are preferred – some worms apparently even like chocolate!

It is easy to overlook the smaller components of vegetation, but the bright green mosses are more obvious as many species produce their seed capsules on long stalks at this time of the year. The tops of walls, fallen logs, rockeries,

lawns and the tops of flower pots are all good places to find these interesting plants. The British Bryological Society has produced a downloadable guide to *Common Mosses and Liverworts of Town and Garden*. Check out the website to download your own copy!

www.britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk



events diary

January

Thurs Jan 18th: Practical work. Meet: 10am. Work to be confirmed. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Sun Jan 21st: Waterbird count in Wanstead Park. Meet: outside the Tea Hut, Wanstead Park - near E12 5EZ. The first of the year's monthly counts of ducks, grebes and other waterbirds is likely to produce some very big counts, especially of Gadwall and Mallard. The information we collect is fed into a national database to monitor the health of these birds' populations. The count starts at 10am and usually finishes around 12:30. For more information, contact Tim Harris (tel: 07505 482328; email - tharris0457@gmail.com)

Thurs Jan 25th: Practical work. Meet: 10am. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Sat 27th Jan: Coach Trip: Dungeness RSPB Reserve (nearest town is Lydd, Kent, TN29 9PN) 7am to 7pm. £18.00. Pick-ups - 7.00am at Redbridge Tube Station, then 7.05 at Gants Hill, then 7.10 at Newbury Park. The location of

Dungeness, jutting into the English Channel, makes it ideally placed to watch for migrant birds arriving or departing, with wheatears, swallows, martins and warblers regularly seen. From the visitor centre you can look out through a huge picture window at all the water-birds on the large gravel pit just outside, often a rare grebe or diver is among them. There are six hides on the main nature trail.

Last booking date 19 January 2017. Booking essential. Details about booking (including booking forms, payment, pick-up points etc.) go to <http://ww2.rspb.org.uk/groups/images/13112017214559.pdf>
Tel: 01708 250585 or 07967 343861 E-mail: mmikeboy015@gmail.com

Sun Jan 28th: 11am -1pm Wanstead Park Nature Club
The Temple, Wanstead Park. RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch children's activity Age 3-7 years old. £3.50 per child. Children must be accompanied.
Take a walk to the Heronry Lake to see what birds are around. Try to identify them and record them as part of the Big Garden Birdwatch Weekend. Make some bird models and listen to some stories. Contact: jcbillingham@yahoo.co.uk

February

Thurs Feb 1st: Practical work. Meet: The Stables, Empress Ave 10am. Work to be confirmed. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Sun Feb 4th: Practical work. Meet: The Stables, Empress Ave 10am. Work to be confirmed. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Thurs Feb 8th: Practical work. Meet: The Stables, Empress Ave 10am. Work to be confirmed. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Tues Feb 13th: North-east London RSPB illustrated talk: the Thames Estuary and North Kent Marshes

Location: Gwinnell Room, St Mary's Church, 207 High Road, South Woodford, E18 2PA.

Rolf Williams describes the abundant bird life of the area and looks at how a new Thames crossing will affect it.

Time: 8 pm. Price: £4.00 for RSPB & Wren members; £4.50 for non-members (no charge for schoolchildren). For more information tel: 020 8989 4746; email nelondonRSPB@yahoo.co.uk

Thurs Feb 15th: Practical work. Meet: The Stables, Empress Ave 10am. Work to be confirmed. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Sun Feb 18th: Waterbird count in Wanstead Park. Meet at Tea Hut, Wanstead Park - near E12 5EZ. The penultimate winter count of ducks, grebes and other waterbirds is always a hard one to call. If there's been a freeze-up further north, but our lakes remain ice-free, we may have a bumper count of diving ducks. The information we collect is fed into a national database to monitor the health of these birds' populations. The count starts at 10am and usually finishes around 12:30. For more information, contact Tim Harris (tel: 07505 482328; email - tharris0457@gmail.com)

Thurs Feb 22nd: Practical work. Meet: TBC. 10am. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Sat 24th Feb: Coach Trip: Frampton Marsh RSPB Reserve, Frampton Roads, Frampton, Boston, Lincs, PE20 1AY. 7am to 7pm. £18.00. Pick-ups - 7.00am at Redbridge Tube Station, then 7.05 at Gants Hill, then 7.10 at Newbury Park.

A major new extension to this coastal wetland reserve includes a reedbed, large freshwater scrapes and wet grassland. These habitats have all been created to bring the wildlife of the Wash closer to you. Frampton Marsh is at the leading edge of visitor and habitat nature conservation planning. Designed to maximise every aspect of the new habitats and facilities for wildlife and visitors. There are three hides for you to view nature. New facilities include a visitor centre with toilets and a refreshments area where you can get a hot or cold drink and a snack. Read more at <http://ww2.rspb.org.uk/groups/northeastlondon/events/#A1hJcqY0SpxPqodi.99>

Last booking date 16 Feb 2018. Booking essential. Details about booking (including booking forms, payment, pick-up points etc.) go to <http://ww2.rspb.org.uk/groups/images/13112017214559.pdf>
Tel: 01708 250585 or 07967 343861 E-mail: <mailto:mmikeboyo15@gmail.com>

Sun Feb 25th: 1pm 'TURF WARS'

The Temple, Wanstead Park

An illustrated talk by local historians & Wren Committee members Mark Gorman and Peter Williams.

Learn about the struggle to cultivate Wanstead Flats and the

surrounding area in the last century.

Tea and cake afterwards: donations welcome!

£3.00 payable on the door. Please book your place

beforehand as space is limited: pows.wanstead@gmail.com

March

Thurs March 1st: Practical work. Meet: TBC. 10am. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Sun March 4th: Practical work. Meet: TBC. 10am. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Thurs March 8th: Practical work. Meet: TBC. 10am. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Thurs March 15th: Practical work. Meet: TBC. 10am. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning

Sun March 18th: Waterbird count in Wanstead Park

Location: Meet outside the Tea Hut, Wanstead Park - near E12 5EZ. The last of our monthly winter counts of ducks, grebes and other waterbirds will probably show a falling off in numbers of Gadwall and Tufted Duck, but maybe the chance of an early Garganey on its way north. The information we

collect is fed into a national database to monitor the health of these birds' populations. The count starts at 10am and usually finishes around 12:30. For more information, contact Tim Harris (tel: 07505 482328; email - tharris0457@gmail.com)

Wed March 21st: Wren Group AGM

Location: Wanstead Golf Club, Overton Drive, Wanstead.
7:30pm. Speaker to be arranged.

Thurs March 22nd: Practical work. Meet: TBC. 10am. All tools and gloves provided. Finish soon after 12. Contact Peter Williams 020 8555 1358 or 07716 034164 on the morning /3

Sat 24th March: Coach Trip: Lakenheath Fen RSPB Reserve (nearest town is Lydd, Kent, TN29 9PN) 7am to 7pm. £18.00. Pick-ups - 7.00am at Redbridge Tube Station, then 7.05 at Gants Hill, then 7.10 at Newbury Park.

At Lakenheath Fen, the RSPB has converted an area of arable farmland into a large wetland, consisting mainly of reedbeds and grazing marshes. The cranes which bred for the first time at Lakenheath Fen in 2007 should be more visible at this time of year. There are four viewpoints and one hide along the nature trail. There are toilet facilities in the visitor centre and they sell hot or cold drinks and snacks.

Last booking date 16 March 2018. Booking essential. Details about booking (including booking forms, payment, pick-up points etc.) go to <http://ww2.rspb.org.uk/groups/images/13112017214559.pdf>
Tel: 01708 250585 or 07967 343861 E-mail: <mailto:mmikeboyo15@gmail.com>

links

Links

Got any links to go on this page? Get in touch
wreneditor@talktalk.net

Wren links page <http://www.wrengroup.org.uk/links>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/WrenOrg>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/wrenwildlife>

Local

Wanstead Wildlife
<http://www.wansteadwildlife.org.uk/>

Friends of Wanstead Parklands
<http://www.wansteadpark.org.uk/>

RSPB North East London Members Group
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/northeastlondon>

Wanstead Birding Blog
<http://wansteadbirding.blogspot.co.uk/>

Epping Forest
<http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/Pages/default.aspx>

British Naturalists' Association
<http://www.bna-naturalists.org/>

Bushwood Area Residents' Association
<http://www.bara-leytonstone.org.uk/>

East London Nature <http://www.eln.yorkshirefog.co.uk>

East London Birders <http://www.elbf.co.uk/>

Friends of Epping Forest
<http://www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk/index.htm>

East London Nature <http://www.eastlondonnature.co.uk>

Plenty of info here about walking in Essex - including the forest <http://trailman.co.uk/>

National

The Wildlife Trust <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org>

BBC Nature <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature>

BBC Weather <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather>

British Naturalists Association
<http://www.bna-naturalists.org/>

RSPB <http://www.rspb.org.uk/england/>

UK Safari <http://www.uksafari.com/index.htm>

Natural England <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk>

The British Deer Society
<http://www.bds.org.uk/index.html>

London Natural History Society
<http://www.lnhs.org.uk/>



nature club

by Becky Wynn

Brr! It's certainly getting colder, darker and much more wintery. And some of us are even beginning to consider hibernation. But don't! To beat the January blues, Wanstead Park children's nature club will be back on Sunday 28 January and focusing on our feathered friends.

Our winter nature club for children under 7 coincides with the RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch, the world's biggest bird survey. This event sees around half a million people taking one hour to count the birds in their garden and provides a vital snapshot of the UK's birds each winter.

At nature club we will be learning about the birds that like to visit our gardens,

as well as taking a walk to Heronry Lake to see which birds like to make Wanstead Park their home. We will also be making some craft birds and bird feeders, and will end the session with some stories.

This will be the third session of our quarterly nature club based around the seasons. Our autumn club attracted over 30 children who enjoyed an autumnal leaf hunt and made some fantastic collages with their collections of nuts, leaves and twigs.

So please wrap up warm and join us! When: Sunday 28th January from 11am - 1pm.

Where: Meet at the Temple, Wanstead Park. Cost: £3.50 per child

Contact: jcbillingham@yahoo.co.uk or becky.wynn@gmail.com

now & then

Were you right ?

The Spotted Dog Public House, Upton Lane, Forest Gate

the oldest domestic building in the LB Newham, has been in a dreadful state of desolation and decrepitude ever since the night in June 2004, when the latest in a long line of landlords made his final call of "Time!" and so ended a tradition of hospitality stretching back over 500 years (E7 Now and Then).

