



Autumn 2025

wren

Wildlife & Conservation Group

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a word from the chair

My family's bags were packed. I stood on top of the hill, where I had stood earlier in the day and watched flames that reached 60 metres in height, and watched the sun rise over the closest thing I have ever seen to armageddon. The hillsides and valleys were black, with black smoke still filling the air. The night sky - where visible through the smoke - was pale pink from the rising sun and the faint lines of orange glow that stretched as far as the eye could see (about 20 miles towards the sea). As the sun rose, it brought with it a new day of dangerous work for over 2000 firefighters. The silence of the night was replaced with the hum of helicopters and planes. Planes nose-dived out of sight into valleys to drop their payloads of water and fire retardant and the helicopters flew into the smoke precision drop their own loads on to the remaining fires.

After four days of burning, thanks to the heroic efforts of the firefighters (26 of whom were hospitalised), and some miraculous low-lying rain clouds that dragged a layer of dampness over everything but also dragged the acrid smell of smoke into our lungs, the worst wildfire in France since 1949 was out.

An area larger than Paris had been destroyed, forest and wildlife wiped out, agricultural land reduced to carbon, livelihoods and homes destroyed, and sadly one human life lost (a lady from the village where we shop who refused to be evacuated).

My wife's French home was spared by the fact that the wind happened to be blowing in the opposite direction. In the UK, some of the peat bogs have burned for weeks and fire fighting is hampered by WW2 ordnance explosions. Even closer to our East

London home, Wanstead Flats yet again carries the large black scars of the toxic combination of heat waves and human carelessness and stupidity. Disposable barbecues, cigarettes, and even fireworks!

Another summer where it felt like yet again the world was on fire is drawing to a close. The climate crisis continues to deepen, the toll on the planet and its inhabitants continues to worsen. My guess is that nobody reading this needs reminding not to use disposable barbecues in dry grassland or set off illegal fireworks, but we do all live in communities where we can continue to have dialogue to help people treasure the wildish and communal land that we are lucky to share with each other.

All is not completely lost. Wildfires have always occurred, of course (we just

sadly get more of them now we live in a warmer climate), and nature has bounced back.

I have recently watched migratory birds like Common Redstart and Willow Warbler feed in amongst the blackend stalks of burnt Broom.

What currently is burnt and looks dead will soon enough be green and vibrant; possibly even more fertile than before.

Nature is resilient. To a point. Let's try not to break and burn it completely.

James Heal
Chair Wren Group



then & now

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



skylark ...

by Tim Harris

*'He rises and begins to round
He drops the silver chain of sound
Of many links without a break
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake ...'*



The evocative opening stanzas of English poet George Meredith's *The Lark* Ascending perfectly capture the essence of a male Skylark's spring song-flight. The poem, written in 1881, inspired Ralph Vaughan Williams to compose his single-movement work of the same name on the eve of World War I, with a violin beautifully playing the role of the lark.



Epping Forest staff briefing volunteers on the days work to come removing the Skylark fencing and restoring the paddock to normal use.

For many people the Skylark's song epitomises the British countryside, an exuberant outpouring of joy to herald a new spring. Although, sadly, changes in agricultural practices have resulted in the species' population declining dramatically in recent decades, we still have a few birds on Wanstead Flats. Since they are ground-nesters, Skylarks face more problems than most birds during the breeding season. Rats, foxes and crows may take the eggs, and people and

dogs disturb parent birds incubating eggs. A rat eradication programme has helped but not much can be done about the foxes and crows. By 2021, the lark population on the Flats – the closest to the centre of London – had fallen to just three pairs.

With the larks on the brink of extinction locally, the City of London Corporation, supported by the Wren Group, fenced off two areas where they breed between March and the end of August. Initially they used unsightly and unsustainable green plastic, but for the last two seasons rope has been strung between the wooden fence posts instead. This is less visually intrusive, can be reused – and it works. Human and canine footfall within the roped areas has virtually been eliminated in the sensitive spring and summer months.

A lark's year

Early in the spring, each male lark makes prolonged song-flights, spiralling ever higher while constantly emitting Meredith's unique "silver chain of sound". Counting the number of singing males is the best way to determine how many birds there are, and this year the season started with three. Apart from the song-flights and occasions where the birds feed on the shorter grass of the model aircraft runway, it is notoriously difficult to work out what the birds are doing. Since most of their activity – feeding, building nests, laying eggs and feeding young – is conducted in thick grass, which grows taller as

spring turns to summer, long, patient hours of observation are required.



Wren committee members Marion Lobo and Moira Duhig getting their hands dirty making good the Skylark Paddock after a succesful breeding season.

This year's three breeding pairs made five breeding attempts this year, at least four of which got to the stage of adults feeding young. An end-of-season walkover of the two roped-off areas produced a count of between eight and 10 birds, meaning that a minimum of two (and possibly four) young were fledged this year. Growing the population on the Flats will take time, but I'm hopeful that our three pairs will have increased to four next spring.

by Tim Harris



take three books

Three great books, with differing takes on the natural world, offer real challenges and insight for nature lovers.

Lake District based farmer and writer, James Rebanks has already produced challenging books in the The Shepherd's Life and English Pastoral. But his latest book The Place of Tides is a more reflective work, written when Rebanks is at a cross roads in his own life.

Rebanks goes on a journey of self discovery, involving spending time out with two of the women who work with eider ducks on the Norwegian outer islands.

Rebanks spends three months with Anna and Ingrid, preparing nesting sites for the ducks. Also, seeking to protect the birds from predators like otters, mink and sea eagles.

The account is beautifully drawn, showing Anna as someone totally absorbed and fulfilled in what she does (Ingrid is the apprentice). It is Anna's last season doing the work that involves the final act of

collecting the eider feathers from the vacated nests. These are then used to make eiderdowns.

An old skill but being kept going by the women.

The picture is one of humans and nature in balance living sustainably together. Rebanks is at something of a cross roads in his life, driven and burning up - ignoring the things that matter. The three months with Anna and Ingrid see him relax and get things back into perspective as a result of this interchange with nature and someone who has got the equilibrium right. A real cathartic process.

Chloe Dalton goes on a similar journey of self discovery by a different route in Raising Hare. Dalton is working in a political advisor role at the Foreign Office, when COVID hits. She ends up living, isolated in the country.

The story begins when she finds a leveret in the road. She brings it home, searches everywhere for information on what to do to bring up the young hare.

A rather beautiful story emerges as Dalton's life is tied to the leveret, which remains based in the house but escapes to the surrounding fields during the day, then returns. It has several young, with a variety of domesticity.

Dalton discovers nature through her interactions with the hares. She becomes a champion for the hares cause.

It is a fascinating story that manages to avoid the sentimental. Dalton for instance refuses to name the animals, seeing this as part of the humans efforts to colonise the wild world. A great insight.

John Lewis Stempel has a similarly unsentimental attitude to nature.

A farmer, Lewis Stempel shoots for the pot. In many ways, he is the doyen of nature writers.

The breadth of his writing is unrivalled, managing to set things in the natural context yet drawing in literary, musical and other references. So there are the works of Shakespeare, John Clare, William Wordsworth and Thomas Hardy. Similarly, the Kinks, Pink Floyd, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Edward Elgar get mentions.

A Natural History England is different to the first two books, covering estuaries, park, downs, beechwood, river, field, village, moor, lake, heath, fen and broad and coast. Lewis Stempel goes to different areas for these terrain, such as the Thames Estuary, the Southdowns, Burnham Beeches and the Yorkshire Moors.

The book is packed with interesting insights, such as that the decline of cuckoos being linked to changes in farming. And that there are much better conditions for cuckoos in Scotland (30% increase) and Wales (stable) than England (declining). The route back to Africa seems to play a role in survival rates. The Scottish and Welsh birds go south east via Italy, while English birds go south west through Spain.

Another interesting view is that well managed grouse moors can be beneficial for biodiversity and other bird species.

Lewis Stempel is not a fan of driven shooting but points to how managed moors retain good heather levels. "When management ceases,

the waders - the curlew, the plover, the lapwings - who shared the moor with the grouse decline," writes Lewis Stempel.

All three of these authors provide valuable insights on the natural world and in the case of Rebanks and Dalton the human psyche. They have a real resonance for those of us who find solace in our own natural world in this area. That being part of nature, as we walk park and flats, watching birds and animals, observing fauna and insect life.

I highly recommend all three books to anyone

looking to learn more about the natural world and maybe even about themselves.

Cllr Paul Donovan



Paul Donovan is a Labour councillor for Wanstead Village ward, Redbridge Council and a blogger paulfdonovan.blogspot.com

*"Put your phone away - look up not down.....
.....because this world is amazing."*



Thirsty sapplings

The Queen's Canopy project on Wanstead Flats involves a grove of 70 silver birch trees planted in late 2022 to commemorate Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee and her reign. The project, managed by the City of London Corporation, is part of the national Queen's Green Canopy initiative, which saw people planting trees across the UK to create a lasting tribute to the Queen. Here's Wren member Sharon Coles' take on how things are going and the importance of seeing a job through.

On the Wanstead Flats “Fairground” side, between the area used by the funfair and the children’s play-park there is a small area of wild grassy land peppered with anthills.

This area was chosen to be part of the nationwide “Queen’s Canopy” project, wherein 70 young trees were planted in various urban areas nationwide to celebrate the late Queen’s Platinum year as monarch. Seventy silver birches were planted with a ceremony in December 2022, its mission was to, “create a legacy to honour the Queen’s leadership of the nation, focusing on planting sustainability, and benefitting future generations.” Unfortunately, here it has failed as only two of these trees have survived, due to lack of after-care planning and lack of connection with any local community groups.

Another set of whips was planted in 2024, this time with a cane and sheathed in plastic corrugate. I surmised these were planted to cover up the neglect and failure of the 2022 trees. Of these, there are two survivors. (I haven’t been able to find out exactly when or how many were planted.) I have recently discovered a third, the last remaining whip of this second series, still wrapped in its plastic sleeve; we will wait to see if any leaves appear.....

Sadly, there was no after-care provision planned for either of the plantings, by

means of liaison with community groups and local schools, as was included in the project mission. Therefore, although heralded as a community inclusive project, all but a total of four of these trees have died as a consequence of lack of community inclusion. I wonder whether the copses planted in other areas around the country have fared better than ours.

I decided to start watering the two visible saplings towards, what was to be, the end of the first heat wave. A neighbour pointed out the water taps at the edge of the longer grass which I had not realised were there, making it much easier than carrying from home.

During the second heatwave I realised it was important to enlist others in this venture, and started chatting to passers-by to join in. Some pointed out the presence of two more saplings which were below the level of the long grass. Tying red ribbon around each tree made them stand out more easily and I provided watering bottles at each tree and at the taps. They are doing well and hopefully people will continue to water them until we have some significant rainfall. When the Autumn school term starts, I will be contacting local schools and discussing how they might become involved as well.

article and pics by Sharon Coles



Wheatear on Wanstead Flats - pic by James Heal

bird report

Spring Migration 2025

Does Spring seem like a long time ago? It does to me too, but while Autumn migration is well underway, I thought we should look back at the first migration period of the year. How did it stack up against past Springs? And, what were the best birds?

Report by James Heal



It is fair to say that from the perspective of the diversity of species, Spring started well with 87 species of bird in March (five higher than average), and our best April ever with a massive 105 (a monster 13 birds more than average for the month and the only time ever a month other than September has delivered over one hundred birds for the patch).



Tree Pipit - pic by Bob Vaughan

Spring started slightly later than usual with our first Spring passage migrant being found by Louis on 22 March on Wanstead Flats (getting his name etched into the coveted Wheatear sweepstake finder's trophy - yes, we really do have one!) But the 22 March also delivered a much rarer bird than Wheatear. Bob Vaughan found a Black Redstart also on the Flats. While we get a handful of Common Redstarts on migration, this scarcer cousin was the second in recent history on the Patch and the first for

12 years (a patch life tick for me accordingly). 22 March also produced a flyover Marsh Harrier and later that evening, Bob's nocturnal migration recorder detected a Redshank flying over (our sixth), so almost certainly earning 22 March 2025 the title of best day in March on the Patch ever and one of the best Spring days ever.



Mandarin Duck - pic by James Heal

Other great days that stand out for me include: 8 October 2016 when I found a patch first Yellow-browed Warbler on the same day that we had a flock of White-fronted Goose, and Ring Ouzels on the patch; 20 October 2018 when Rustic Bunting (one of the rarest birds ever found on the Patch [by Nick Croft] - only the third for London - was complemented by a flyover Barn Owl, another patch mega, certainly at the time); and the monster day last year on 9 September when the first Nightjar since 1893 was found on the same day that we had Wryneck, Pied Flycatcher, and Barn Owl. These

days come very infrequently and they become imprinted in the memories and legends of the Patch.

Anyway, dragging myself back out of memory lane and back to our brief analysis of the Spring...

Other good birds for March included a rare sighting of Goshawk on 24 March by three local birders, along with Rook, Bullfinch, a very early Tree Pipit on NocMig, and Firecrest amongst others.



Pied Flycatcher and one of three Spotted Flycatcher on Wanstead Flats this autumn - pic by James Heal

As mentioned, April was a record-breaking month and the best birds included: Grasshopper Warbler (mentioning first as only the second found in recent times and found by yours truly), Great White Egret, Barnacle Goose, Woodlark, Whimbrel, Mandarin Duck, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nightingale, Cuckoo, Shelduck, Bullfinch, Caspian Gull, Mediterranean Gull,



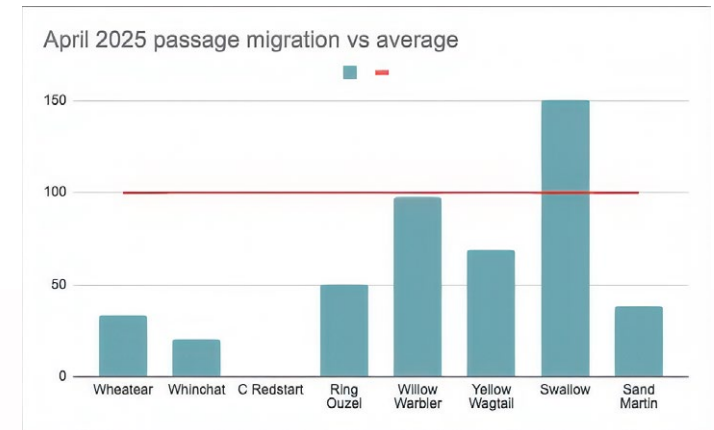
Ring Ouzel on patch - pic by Jonathan Lethbridge

Rook, Marsh Harrier, Ring Ouzel, and Tree Pipit.
This impressive list was also supported by some

night recordings of a small number of waders.

By comparison with March and April, May was a bit of a disappointment. We recorded 82 species (almost six lower than average) in May with an unseasonal Goosander found by Paul Donovan probably the best bird, followed perhaps by Nightingale.

While Spring saw some great birds and a pretty good diversity, the numbers of our passage migrants was generally pretty disappointing as this chart showing most of the classic passage migrants were really quite down in number compared with average (represented here are the April numbers rebased as a percentage against the mean).



Wryneck - pic by Nick Croft

counting dragons

If there is one order of insects that fascinates me more than the others it's damselflies and dragonflies.

They are not as beautiful as some butterflies and moths perhaps. But when looked at closely, they have a rather ethereal power and grace.

They are also superb flyers, putting on breathtaking aerial displays, and some dragonflies can fly at 30km/h, which is faster than Usain Bolt.

Damselflies and dragonflies are also the most effective predators; one study showed that they successfully nab their prey 90% of the time, far more successful than, for instance, the big cats.



*Male Norfolk or Green-eyed
Hawker - pic by Bob Vaughan*

Wren have been monitoring butterflies locally. Tim Harris, with the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, set-up a standardised walk covering varied habitats in Wanstead Park.

This is known as a transect. For two years now, Lucinda Culpin has organised a weekly walk along this transect to record and count all the butterflies between April and September. These counts are logged into a database and provide vital information on the current state of our butterfly populations both locally and nationally.

I would like to start something similar with dragonflies and damselflies. About 45 species breed in the UK, and there have been just over twenty seen in Wanstead. This year two locally rare species of dragonfly have been seen in unprecedented numbers in Wanstead Park. Single Scarce Chasers have previously been seen just a few times in Wanstead, but this year at least 6 were seen in the OSW and on the Roding. Norfolk or Green-eyed Hawker was seen once in 2023 on Heronry, but this year four were seen at the west end of Heronry.

Is this a genuine range expansion of these two species, or is it a consequence of the peculiarly hot dry summer this year? Systematic monitoring should help answer these questions and will show fluctuations in numbers of other species some of which are recent colonists to the park.

I have contacted the British Dragonfly Society (BDS), and they have provided details on how to monitor damselflies and dragonflies. There are two methods, the first is a slow walking transect alongside ponds, but it is also useful to sit and record at sites with a good view of emergent pond vegetation. I think we can combine these two approaches. The next problem is how to identify the species we are likely to see, this is usually more difficult than with butterflies. There are some very good videos available from the BDS showing how to distinguish all the British species. In practice only about 10 damselflies and 10 dragonflies are likely to be seen locally which helps narrow the task of identification down, but we will need to see the right details. It will probably be best to work in teams, with a close focusing pair of binoculars and a camera able to take close-up photos available to each.

The best times to monitor will be warm days with sun and low levels of wind. This then is an initial call for anyone interested in walking through Wanstead Park (or sitting by a pond) on a fine summer day counting dragons.

by Bob Vaughan



Bob will publish more details nearer the time. But if you are interested please contact him at badger.vaughan@gmail.com.

*Female Scarce Chaser - pic by
Bob Vaughan*





Sudden Shower

by John Clare

Black grows the southern sky, betokening rain,
And humming hive-bees homeward hurry bye:
They feel the change; so let us shun the grain,
And take the broad road while our feet are dry.
Ay, there some dropples moistened on my face,
And pattered on my hat--tis coming nigh!
Let's look about, and find a sheltering place.
The little things around, like you and I,
Are hurrying through the grass to shun the shower.
Here stoops an ash-tree--hark! the wind gets high,
But never mind; this ivy, for an hour,
Rain as it may, will keep us dryly here:
That little wren knows well his sheltering bower,
Nor leaves his dry house though we come so near.

*Sheltering in East Copse, Wanstead
Flats - pic by Tony Morrison*



*Muslim Hikers walk in the Forest
last year - pic Kadeer Ali*

epping forest
for everyone to L♥ve

Engaging people from all backgrounds is not just the right thing to do, but also vital for the Forest's future. Here, Peter Lewis, Chief Executive of Epping Forest Heritage Trust, argues that unless people come to know the Forest, they will not come to love or care for it, or want to protect it for generations to come - and this means people from all communities.

London is one of the most diverse cities in the world. When I worked for Ken Livingstone in the run up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games we did some research that showed London had significant populations of people living in London from every single one of the 200 plus nations who compete in the Games.

Yet data shows that both nationally in relation to access to green space, and locally in relation to Epping Forest, people from some communities do not visit the Forest as much as others.

At Epping Forest Heritage Trust (EFHT), we think



Muslim walkers took a break in the ancient woodland - pic by Kadeer Ali

this is an existential threat to the future of the Forest as if people from all communities do not visit the Forest they will not come to love and care for it as we do.

We also have an organisational value of

inclusion, and have been piloting work over the last 2 years to welcome people from all communities to the Forest. We have learnt a lot over that time, and have recently [published a report](#) which shares the outcomes of that pilot work as well as learnings from it.

In summary, over that period of time we have worked with 35 different community organisations, co-created 57 different activities and welcomed 1962 new people to the Forest.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with people enjoying discovering the Forest in a way that best suits them and their communities. For example:

‘The walk was amazing as I got to meet other like-minded people and gain more insight into nature. I would recommend anyone to come even if you’re nervous as everyone is so kind and welcoming.’ Nawal

Helen, Stories and Supper: ‘Noreen and Graham from EFHT led a wonderful walk for members of our charity which supports refugees and people seeking asylum. They were enthusiastic, knowledgeable and welcoming and it was a great introduction to Epping Forest for our members.’

And even more importantly perhaps we know that people introduced to the Forest through these co-created events have continued to build their connection to the Forest, some coming on our regular monthly walks or the Big Walk, and others taking part in conservation activities

to actually help improve the biodiversity of the Forest. All our activities in the Forest are more diverse and representative of local communities, and we are very proud of that.

Polling undertaken in partnership with Waltham Forest Council in 2023 showed that 30% of Black & 48% Asian residents had never visited the Forest compared to 17% of white residents, reflecting the visible reality that people from more diverse communities visit the Forest less than white people.

However, very sadly, and genuinely scarily for many people who participate in our activities, as well as for some of our volunteers and staff team, these stories of harmonious engagement are in stark contrast with the anti-Muslim riots last summer and far-right protests this year, which have even more sadly had a particular focus at the Bell Hotel in Epping itself.

At EFHT we are absolutely committed to continuing our community engagement work, while at the same time ensuring the safety and wellbeing of people who come on our events. We firmly believe that Epping Forest should be for all.

That means that we are absolutely delighted to have recently received a new 3-year grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for our programme "Epping Forest Heritage for All". This programme, in partnership with our friends at Muslim Hikers and Black Girls Hike, and with the support of the City of London Corporation, will enable us to build on this pilot work, and work with even more local community organisations with a specific focus on engaging people from all communities in the heritage of the Forest. We hope not just to build stronger connections between people and the Forest's rich past heritage, but also to develop, create and share new heritage stories as part of the programme.

Epping Forest Heritage Trust's strategy has a core value of being inclusive, and is underpinned by a Theory of Change that says that unless people come to know the Forest, they will not come to love or care for it, or want to protect it for generations to come.

If you would like to help support our work in this area, or know of community organisations who would like to work with us, please do get in touch.

Peter Lewis

Chief Executive,
Epping Forest Heritage Trust



*"Put your phone away - look up not down.....
.....because this world is amazing."*

Now autumn is upon us it is time to set out plans for Wren Groups habitat management and conservation work.

Habitat management has been a key Wren Group activity for many years. We have a large selection of hand tools, and a tool shed to the rear of the Keepers' cottages in Wanstead Park. It is here we meet for most of our activities.

We have been able to build up a regular set of activities to help the Corporation, both in the park and on Wanstead Flats. We regularly meet with a member of the management team of the Forest, have a walk around and agree some key priorities for the coming season.

So why not some and join us. All tools and gloves are provided, as is basic training in health and safety about the forest. It is an excellent way to keep fit, and we work in virtually all weathers. You do not have to commit to anything – just turn up if you fancy it on the day. And also you see Epping Forest in such a detailed way, sometimes on hands and knees, so it is a wonderful way to come to appreciate this stunning environment on our doorstep.

From the beginning of October we will meet each Thursday morning at 10am and we usually finish soon after midday. We also meet on the first Sunday of the month, same timings.

We provide all tools and gloves. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear for mud. You can usually work at your own level if you are out of practice doing this kind of manual labour.

Venues for the first part of the season;

OCTOBER - Thursdays - 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th. Sundays - 5th (Meet Temple).

NOVEMBER - Thursdays - 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th, (All Meet Stables). Sundays - 2nd (Meet Temple)

DECEMBER - Thursdays - 4th, 11th and 18th (All Meet Wanstead Flats Skylark area). Sundays - 7th (Meet Temple).

Dates and venues are liable to change so please check the website or Email me if you have any questions - <mailto:wrengroup.distribute@gmail.com>

Peter Williams

Team leader - Wren practical work

A person wearing a blue jacket, a high-visibility yellow vest, blue jeans, and a black beanie is working in a field. They are using a tool to dig or clear the ground. The background shows a grassy field with some trees and a green curved line across the top.

practical work

and finally ..

<https://wansteadbeerfestival.co.uk/charities/>

Wanstead Beer Festival

The Wanstead Beer Festival – now in its third year – will be taking place in the halls of Christ Church from 1pm on 4 October.

The festival comes together to raise money for charity. The 2024 event raised an amazing £4,000 for local charities and good causes and with your support the team hope to raise even more in 2025. The local charities and good causes selected for 2025 are detailed on the [CHARITIES](#) page. This year the event will also be raising funds for the Wren group.

As well as a great selection of beer there will be delicious Barbeque food cooked fresh and served all day.

“There will be more than 50 beers from across the country, including many local breweries, plus cider, gin, wine and food. Over 700 people attended last year and we hope for even more this year, so come along and share a beer with friends and neighbours,” said organiser Paul Donovan. The £10 admission fee includes a special Wanstead Beer Festival glass.

Tickets are available now on Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wanstead-beer-festival-2025-tickets-1383837658689?aff=ebdsoporgprofile> But be quick as it's likely to sell out fast.



.... don't forget

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

- ☐ Provide fresh clean water every day.
- ☐ Feed a seed mix meant for wild birds.
- ☐ 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..



then & now

Were you right ?

Alexandra Lake, Wanstead Flats, in the early 1900s with the Courtney Hotel on Aldersbrook Road behind and how it looks today.

The more recent view was taken around 2011. A more recent picture is impossible to obtain owing to scrub and sapling growth totally obscuring the view. Parts of the lake have also become silted - changing the overall layout and causing flooding on the adjacent road. This scrub encroachment is almost certainly caused by the ending of cattle grazing on the Flats around 1996 and changes in scrub management.



links

Wren links page www.wrengroup.org.uk/links

Facebook www.facebook.com/WrenOrg

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

Wanstead Wildlife

www.wansteadwildlife.org.uk

Friends of Wanstead Parklands

www.wansteadpark.org.uk

RSPB North East London Members Group

www.rspb.org.uk/groups/northeastlondon

Wanstead Birding Blog

wansteadbirding.blogspot.co.uk

Epping Forest

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/Pages/default.aspx

British Naturalists' Association

www.bna-naturalists.org

Bushwood Area Residents' Association

www.bara-leytonstone.org.uk

East London Nature www.eln.yorkshirefog.co.uk

East London Birders www.elbf.co.uk

Friends of Epping Forest

www.friendsofeppingforest.org.uk

East London Nature www.eastlondonnature.co.uk

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

Wild Wanstead - greening up the local area

www.wildwanstead.org

BBC Nature www.bbc.co.uk/nature

British Naturalists Association

www.bna-naturalists.org

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

Field Studies Council (FSC)

www.field-studies-council.org

London Natural History Society

www.lnhs.org.uk

Natural England www.naturalengland.org.uk

RSPB www.rspb.org.uk/england

UK Safari www.uksafari.com

The British Deer Society www.bds.org.uk

The Wildlife Trust www.wildlifetrusts.org



Egyptian Geese by Tushar