

Summer 2018

# wren

Wildlife & Conservation Group

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# a word .....

*The Chair, Tim Harris, is taking a well-deserved break from introducing the summer newsletter. To introduce this issue we have local naturalist, Wren Committee member James Heal.*

**Everyone loves summer, right? The weather, the holiday season, the long days. What's not to like?**

Let me start by being the Devil's advocate. As a birder, first and foremost, June and July are infamously dull: Spring migration, and the chance of interesting birds dropping in on passage, is over, and Autumn migration is still a couple of months away from beginning; and, birds are less vocal - the males have either secured their territories and successfully bred, or, they haven't, and may have moved on.

But this lull in activity just requires a bit of extra effort or a slight shift in focus. Just recently, I was lucky enough to witness successfully fledged young Lesser Whitethroats on Wanstead Flats. These skulking warblers are often very difficult to see and are often only given away by their distinctive jingling song. When the one or two locations of singing bushes fall silent, you can't be sure of the reason why. And so I was thrilled to see that at least one pair have been successful.

Summer is also a fantastic time to turn our attention to other local wildlife. Vegetation reaches its blooming zenith and there are invertebrates everywhere. As we progress through the summer weeks, new butterflies emerge almost as if they are colourful calendar markers. Brown Argus and Common Blue from late May, and then the three local 'skippers' follow as do Meadow Brown, then Ringlet and, eventually, Gatekeeper. We have had fantastic numbers of Purple Hairstreak, and a few of us were even lucky enough to see the first

Silver-washed Fritillary for the local area in Wanstead Park.

All we have to do is look carefully. The annual BioBlitz weekend we held on 23-24 June was an excellent opportunity to do just that and we found some wonderful wildlife whilst having a lot of fun doing it.

It won't be long before the screaming Swifts leave our skies and return south again. Although we might still be feeling summery, autumn migration will be upon us sooner than you might think.

James Heal  
Wren Committee



## 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](mailto:epping.forest@cityoflondon.gov.uk)





# bio-blitz 2018

The Wren Wildlife Group bio-blitz was back for a fourth year of nature activities at the end of June – and it turned out to be the most successful bio-blitz we've held.



Supported by the City of London Corporation, the Wren Group's team of experienced naturalists and wildlife-watchers gained the help of experts from further afield to find, identify and explain the life stories of all the birds, bugs, plants and beasts they could find over the course of just one weekend.

The BioBlitz was not just about having fun. Everything identified and counted was fed into local and national databases helping to promote and protect our area for everyone.



*Never too young to become a nature watcher - young naturalists study their catch in the Pond Dipping event - pic by Tony Morrison*

Every year the committee applies positive thought to produce sunshine, warmth and cloudless skies. Every year it works! Maybe we were a bit too successful this year, with afternoon temperatures soaring above 30C and probably keeping some people at home in the shade - but generally the conditions were ideal for watching nature. We also had competition from the England v Tunisia game on the Sunday afternoon!



*One of the key purposes of the BioBlitz is to get young people interested and involved in their environment. Young people interested in nature are much more likely to look after it - pic by Tony Morrison*

With interactive activities for youngsters, grown-ups, beginners and experts alike there was something for everyone, including guided walks, a nature table, a dawn chorus walk, a bat walk, pond-dipping, grass-sweeping, slug-luring and more. Twelve activities, spread over the weekend, attracted several hundred people, and there was something for everyone with an interest in the natural environment.



*Pond dipping was very popular on one of the hottest days of the year - pic by Tony Morrison*

Tricia Moxey imparted bucketloads of fascinating information on trees, insects, wildflowers and pretty much everything else natural on walks in Wanstead Park and on Wanstead Flats. Children were able to wade about in the cooling waters of Wanstead Park's ponds in search of screech beetles and dragonfly



*Local expert Tricia Moxey - a mine of information and an expert on everything natural starting her walk around Wanstead Park - pic by Tony Morrison*



larvae, under the guidance of Derek and Cathy McEwan. Francis Castro led a bat walk, which discovered Leisler's Bat in addition to the usual pipistrelles, Noctule and Daubenton's and walking through Wanstead Park's woodland by torchlight on a warm, starry night was memorable.



*There's always one !!! - pic by Tony Morrison*

A walk with the Ferndale Area Residents' Association didn't get far beyond its starting point near Davies Lane School, but it more than made up a lack of distance with a multitude of fascinating sightings, many found by some of the very young FARA participants.



*Susie Knox from Wild Wanstead talking about her project to green the area and improve the lot of local wildlife - pic by Tony Morrison*

Starting the full Sunday programme, 15 early risers joined James Heal for a 5:00 am dawn chorus walk around Bush Wood, where Ringlet butterflies were on the wing in good numbers. People with an interest in bees and wasps were able to take advantage of Tony Madgwick's expertise, ably



*Epping Forest Centenary Trust's new duck champion project officer Ute Villavincencio was on hand to answer all duck related questions together with fun things to do - pic by Tony Morrison*

assisted by committee member Mirza Rashid. Those with an interest in spiders were able to join the indomitable David Carr, who worked solidly for several hours on both days in the blazing heat – and without a hat! – in search of our eight-legged friends. His efforts were rewarded with some nationally scarce species. Given the very dry conditions, Penny and Nick had more success in their quest for slugs and snails than they'd expected.



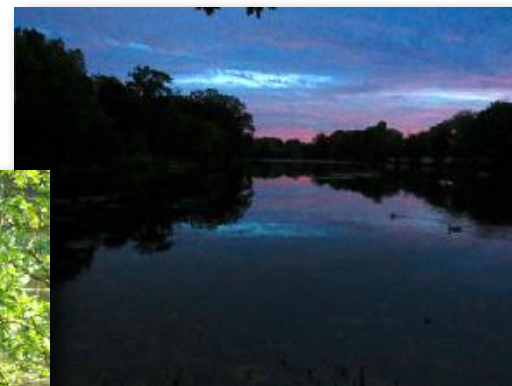
*Pond dipper Cathy McEwan takes a well earned breather after a long but very enjoyable day - pic by Tony Morrison*

Several good friends offered information, children's games and friendly faces on stalls in The Temple paddock. Epping Forest Centenary Trust's new duck champion project officer Ute Villavincencio was there, as were Susie Knox and Chris Gannaway from Wild Wanstead and the London Wildlife Trust, respectively. Meanwhile, Louis and Gosia ran a very popular nature table, and shared volumes of advice about the natural world.



# bio-blitz 2018

*in pictures by Mary Holden*







# local ferns

Article by Paul Ferris MBNA

**Wanstead, and the surrounding areas, are not really well situated for harbouring a variety of fern species. Many ferns tend to favour damper and shadier habitats, and whereas – perhaps particularly in the Forest – shade may be available, the required dampness is generally lacking.**

Ferns flourish best in the British Isles in the more westerly areas, where the rainfall is significantly higher than here. It might not always seem like it, but the Thames valley east of London – and indeed much of East Anglia – is very dry compared to other parts of the country, hence lack of fern species. However, a variety does exist, although some have to be searched out, some can be overlooked, and many species are small in quantity.





Bracken in Bush Wood. Pic by Paul Ferris

Perhaps the most familiar fern to many people is **Bracken** *Pteridium aquilinum*. There are large tracts of this in Epping Forest, although around here it is more common perhaps in Gilbert's Slade than elsewhere. There are some significant patches in Bush Wood, but it is much less common in Wanstead Park, and even more so on the Flats. Next in quantity and familiarity – maybe – is **Male Fern** *Dryopteris filix-mas*. This is the 'shuttlecock' shaped fern, and quite a few examples may be found in Wanstead Park. This type of fern may also



Male Fern – On Wanstead Flats. Pic by Paul Ferris

be encountered in people's gardens, although some of these may be horticultural varieties or perhaps not *D. filix-mas* at all, but similar species bought from nurseries and the like.

In an early publication about the plants of Wanstead Park I wrote that Chalet Wood "...was perhaps the best area of the park for cryptograms (ferns)". *D. filix-mas* was common here, together with other species, but since the wood has evolved into "The Bluebell Wood", many of these have now gone. That is partly our own fault: in the early stages of doing work in the wood to enhance the bluebells, we tried to be careful about not grubbing out ferns along with the brambles. Over the years – with varieties of people doing the work and including some non-Wren Group teams – I believe mistakes have been made, more and more have been removed or lost their habitat, and ferns are now few.



Hart's-tongue – On a railway bridge by the Alders Brook. Pic by Paul Ferris

The west end of Chalet Wood, however – not so cleared as the rest – does still harbour a few ferns. Some years ago I discovered a nice clump of **Hart's-tongue Fern** *Phyllitis scolopendrium*, perhaps the third most common, and easily recognisable. Checking very

recently, this clump is even more luxuriant, and has even given rise to another. The City of London Cemetery is a good place to find examples of this species, commonly growing out of the shady sides of large old kerbed memorials, or their associated headstones. There is also an attractive and plentiful array on the brickwork above the foot-tunnel leading from the Alders Brook "bridle" path to Little Ilford. These may be a good example of how the tiny reproductive spores of these plants have been wafted down the railway lines by passing trains. The species can also sometimes be found growing from front-garden walls, and there are some nice ones on the Dell bridge.



Water Fern – In the Aldersbrook. Pic by Paul Ferris

Near the railway foot-tunnel just mentioned is the Alders Brook itself. In 1998 and again in 2008 this slowly-flowing stretch of the brook was covered in an unusual species of fern: **Water Fern** *Azolla filiculoides*. This floats on the water much like duckweed, and can give the surface a reddish hue. It can appear on a body of water quite suddenly, and then disappear – perhaps even the next year – just as quickly. It has also appeared in Alexandra Lake on Wanstead Flats, in Wanstead Park and in the Bulrush Pond in Gilbert's Slade.





Polypody – On a gravestone in the City of London Cemetery. Pic by Paul Ferris

Garden walls are a local habitat that can provide a living-space for ferns. Old mortar can provide an appropriate substrata, and the chance of an out-of-the sunlight north-facing wall can provide the shade. They need looking for, though, because anything less than Hart's-tongue or perhaps **Polypody** *Polypodium vulgare* can be tiny and insignificant. A Polypody grows from the top of the wall fronting the Golden Fleece pub in Capel Road, and it has been there since at least January 2016. Again, though, Polypody species growing in the vicinity of people's gardens could be other species than *P. vulgare*,



Black Spleenwort – On a front-garden wall in Capel Road. Pic by Paul Ferris

perhaps derived from garden centres. Not far from the Golden Fleece a north-facing front garden wall has **Black Spleenwort** *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* as well as **Wall Rue** *Asplenium ruta-muraria* growing from it. These are small plants, and I have no reason to believe that they were deliberately introduced; it is just that they find the conditions favourable. There used to be rain-gutters on the platforms of Manor Park Station that also harboured these species, but these have now been filled in. Habitat loss?



Wall Rue – On a front-garden wall in Capel Road. Pic by Paul Ferris

I mentioned the City of London Cemetery, and this – I consider – to be one of the best places to find ferns around here. By the very nature of the gravestones, there is usually one or more shady sides, often enhanced by trees, and the varied nature of the material used to construct these may provide a suitable chemical conditions. It is worth bearing in mind that we don't have any naturally-occurring rock formations around here, so material used in gravestone construction may come from far afield; the cemetery is a good place to do a bit of geology, too! I have in the past found a specimen of **Adder's Tongue** (fern) *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, and also **Lady Fern** *Athyrium filix-femina* although both have now gone. However, other species are present. As well Black Spleenwort, there is **Maidenhair Spleenwort**



Maidenhair Spleenwort – On a gravestone in the City of London Cemetery. Pic by Paul Ferris

*Asplenium trichomanes*. This was found a few years ago by botanist Ken Adams, and from his records I knew which "half" of the cemetery it was in. I guessed from the types of gravestones where this might be, searched for it and found it in about three sites. It is easily overlooked – at least I find it so. Much more readily observable is the large **Royal Fern** *Osmunda regalis*. This has been deliberately introduced into both of the cemetery's ornamental ponds, and is easily seen. **Broad Buckler** *Dryopteris dilatata* is also present in the cemetery, but not in quantity.

I think that I have covered all of the fern species that I know to be present around these parts, and this amounts to nine species known to be present, plus one which could re-appear and two which I think have now gone. Apart from a couple of species – and these not really plentiful – they really do need searching out, but it is good to know that even in this water-parched, lacking in hills, valleys and sunken roads part of the country, there are still examples of these plants to be found.

Article by Paul Ferris MBNA

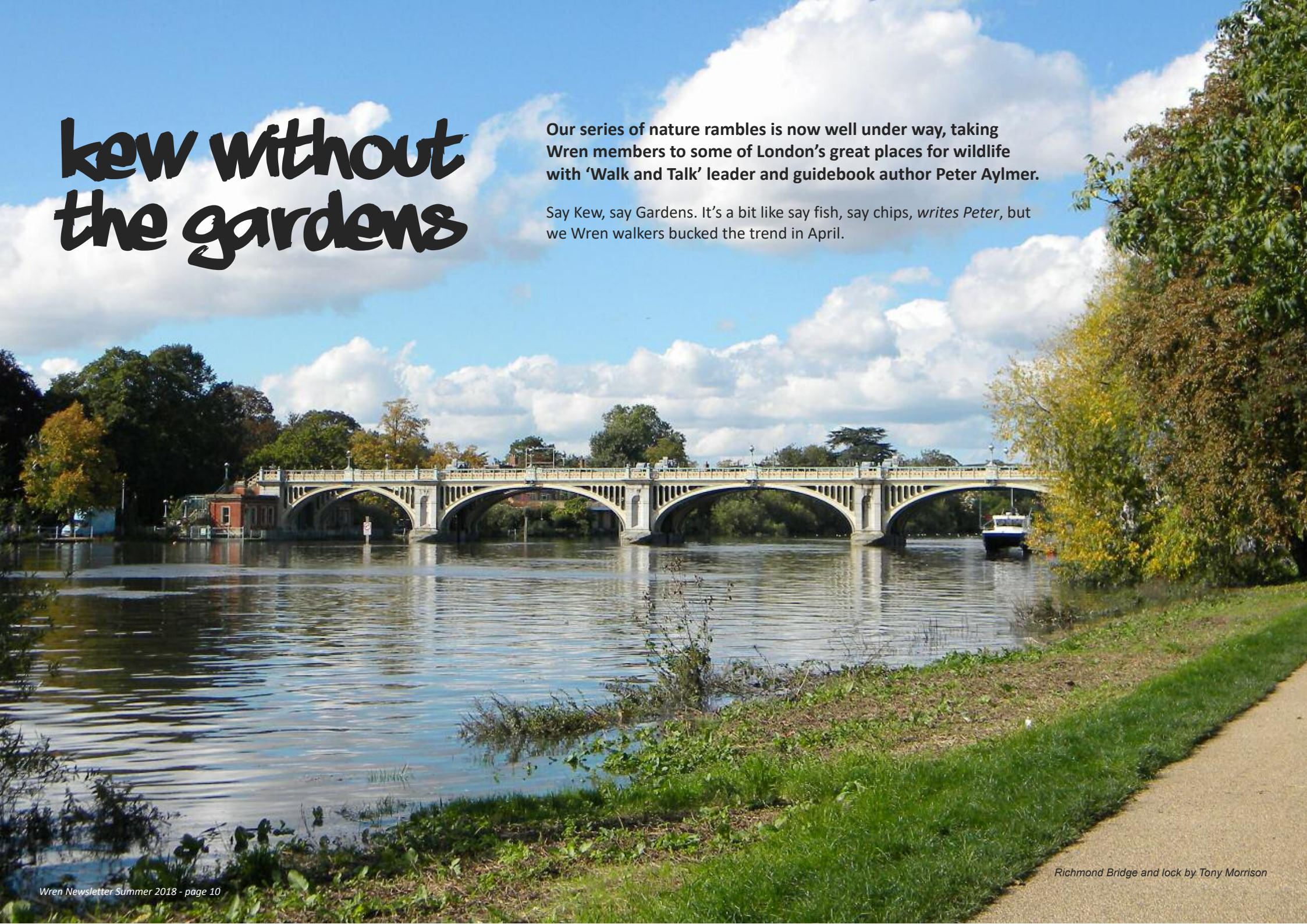
Read more on Paul and his work on his splendid website [www.wansteadpark.org.uk](http://www.wansteadpark.org.uk)



# kew without the gardens

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.

Say Kew, say Gardens. It's a bit like say fish, say chips, *writes Peter*, but we Wren walkers bucked the trend in April.





The Gardens host one of the world's great botanic collections, a serious scientific research institute as well as a great place to wander round both open spaces and no fewer than six Grade 1 listed buildings. But it needs a day all of its own to do it justice.

It's not widely known that the Thames Path is in fact two trails in one in London, or at least its tidal stretch downstream of Teddington. It's easy therefore to put together circular walks using the Thames bridges. My favourite of all of these links Kew, Isleworth and Brentford, and it's this six-mile circuit that we set off to on a splendid spring day.



*Wren walkers and Isleworth - pic by Peter Aylmer*

The point about this walk is its variety. Starting from Kew Bridge, we rubber-necked into the Gardens to start with, enjoying the vistas that stretched all the way down to the pagoda at the Gardens' edge. But from there, the Thames Path becomes unexpectedly rural, tree-fringed



*Isleworth from across the Thames - pic by Peter Aylmer*

with the open space of Old Deer Park on one side and the river, and its varied waterfowl, on the other. The views across are varied too: industrial Brentford first, then Capability Brown's Syon Park, and finally village-like Isleworth, its core not too much changed since Georgian times.

Though it's not difficult to continue to bustling Richmond and its bridge, there's a slightly lower crossing at



*On the Thames Path west of Kew - pic by Peter Aylmer*

Richmond Lock (see main picture) which made sense to us. This splendid piece of late-Victorian iron work contains not only a lock but also a tide barrier, which helps maintain upstream water levels – and so, conserve fish stocks.



*Richmond Bridge - pic by Tony Morrison*

Of course, on crossing our views were reversed, but there was so much going on on the left bank that we barely looked across. And if Brentford sounds like an anti-climax, it's not; the Thames Path sticks as close as it can to the last stretches of the River Brent, where herons intermingle with surviving boat-yards and old coke depots.

The June walk was scheduled for an out-of-London foray to Hadleigh Park, between Benfleet and Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. Alas on the morning of the walk my wife Barbara received the sad news that her father had passed away, so there was no question of my leading the group.



However nature ramble regular Dave Playford stepped bravely into the breach – it helped that I'd been that way a few weeks before to check the walk for a reprint of my *Walking in Essex* guidebook, and so had precise written instructions to hand.

Hadleigh Park is well worth the trip from east London. It includes the Olympic mountain-biking course from 2012, now reconfigured to suit all grades of rider, but still just as hilly! There is a wide variety of habitats in the park, from saltmarsh to woodland and grassland, and this diversity brings a diversity of wildlife too, including 27



*Hadleigh Castle - pic by Peter Aylmer*

species of butterfly. As a centrepiece though you can't do much better than the atmospheric ruins of Hadleigh Castle, subject of

one of John Constable's major works and living proof that you should not build large stone buildings on unstable Essex clay.

Article by Peter Aylmer



## Nature Ramble dates

The next walk – and the last in the series, as sadly our walk leader is moving to Essex – will be on Thursday 16 August. For both, 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.

# 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.

Peter's new book *Walking in London - Park, Heath and Waterside* available from 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 summer of moths

Our area is lucky to have a great variety of butterflies and moths. At the time of writing this piece, in early July, 28 species of butterflies and 188 moths had been recorded on the patch since the start of the year. Wanstead Flats and Wanstead Park were the best places to look for butterflies and the day-flying moths. Most of the nocturnal moths were attracted to a bright light I put out in the back garden of my house on the Lakehouse Estate.



**Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus***

This is the smallest of our 'brown' butterflies, and it has had a particularly good year locally, with good numbers on the wing in June on Wanstead Flats and in Wanstead Park.





**Barred Yellow *Cidaria fulvata***

Scarce in our area, the larvae of this nocturnal moth feed on the leaves of dog rose.



**Lesser Tawny Tubic *Batia lunaris***

This tiny moth, just a few millimetres long, was attracted to my light trap. Its caterpillars eat tree bark and decaying wood.



**Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica***

Whoever said brown was dull? This moth gave me the runaround in the Old Sewage Works in early June. It flies in sunshine and warm overcast weather and is very alert and readily disturbed.



**Elephant Hawk-moth *Deilephila elpenor***

Rosebay willowherb is a favoured food plant for the caterpillars, while the adults drink nectar from honeysuckle. This was a welcome find in my garden in late June.



**Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae***

This day-flying grassland moth was flying in Wanstead Park in June.



**Early Thorn *Selenia dentaria***

This leaf-like moth has two generations in our area, in April-May and August-September.



**Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus***

The first of the skippers to take to the wing, this butterfly was in the Old Sewage Works in late May.



**Lime Hawk-moth *Mimas tiliae***

London plane and lime trees are food plants for the caterpillars, but the stunning adults don't feed.



**Blotched Emerald *Comibaena bajularia***

Regular to my garden in small numbers, the caterpillars of this moth eat oak leaves.



**Peach Blossom *Thyatira batis***

Like so many other caterpillars, those of these beautiful moths feed on bramble.



**Poplar Hawk-moth *Laothoe populi***

With its bizarrely shaped wings, this one - in my garden in June - is also a favourite. The caterpillars feed on poplars, aspen and willows.



**Yellow Shell *Camptogramma bilineata***

It flies by day as well as at night, and is often disturbed in the rough grassland of Wanstead Flats. Caterpillars feed on sorrel and chickweed.





**Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra***

This was a real surprise when it turned up in my moth-trap. Although the species breeds in South-West England, this July arrival was almost certainly a migrant from continental Europe.



**Maiden's Blush *Cyclophora punctaria***

Oak leaves are popular with lots of caterpillars and those of this nocturnal moth – photographed on my kitchen wall in May – are no exception.



**White Ermine *Spilosoma lubricipeda***

Nettles and docks provide the food for the larvae of this absolute beauty, in the wing in June.



**Mother Shipton *Euclidia mi***

A beautiful day-flying moth that breeds on Wanstead Flats and in the Old Sewage Works. This one was near Davies Lane School in June.



Pictures and commentary by Tim Harris

## 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 ahead). If you would like to see your area in this slot why not get in touch and we will see what we can do.





# horrible hemlock

by Gill James



**SOCRATES NEWSFLASH:** We all know that the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was put on trial charged with impiety and when asked to choose his manner of death, he chose to die from drinking hemlock. He was an old man by then, and many think that he just wanted to experience what it was like to die in this way. According to an eye witness, it took some time for the poison to affect his limbs, and finally his heart, and that he died as stoically as one would expect of such a great man.

**WREN GROUP GOES WILD:** This spring the Wren Group took upon themselves the task of clearing some of the hemlock which is flourishing near the River Roding. This area has pretty much been left to itself, but some sections have been managed to encourage wildflowers and invertebrates such as butterflies. The tall hemlock plants were beginning to shade out this habitat and needed to be cut back. The intrepid Wren Practical Work team were warned to cover up in order to prevent the plants from touching the skin. It was duly cut back and carted away; only one person received a rather nasty rash and blister on the arm. No-one ate any, because we all knew what happened to Socrates....

**LOCAL NAMES:** Hemlock (*Comium maculatum*) is a member of the carrot family. Common names include poison parsley, badman's oatmeal, bunk, break-your-mother's-heart, cartwheel, devil's flower, gipsy flower, curtains, hare's parsley, lady's lace, nosebleed, pickpocket, scabily hands, stink flower, devil's blossom, and honiton lace.

**HOW TO RECOGNISE IT:** It is commonly to be found growing locally in Wanstead Park and on Wanstead Flats. It is a tall handsome plant, growing up to 1.5m-2.5m tall, with an attractive white flower in spring. It is similar to cow parsley, but its distinguishing feature is the **smooth green hollow stem, which is spotted or streaked with red or purple blotches near the bottom half.** If you are a fan of foraging for wild food, this is one of those plants which should not end up in your salad. Touching it won't kill you, but eating it just might. Quite a few plants which grow wild and in our gardens are toxic, but this one is quite special.

**HORRIBLE HISTORIES:** Hemlock is poisonous in all its parts. The poison 'coniine' affects the central nervous system, and if taken in sufficient quantities can cause death by muscular paralysis. In medieval times it was used as an ingredient in an early form of anaesthetic in a 'soporific sponge' used in surgery. A number of people in recent times have mistaken the leaves for carrot or fennel or the root for parsnip and died after eating it for supper.

More sadistic Wren members may particularly enjoy this account from the delightful website [thepoisongarden.co.uk](http://thepoisongarden.co.uk):

*'Between 1972 and 1990 there were 17 cases in Italy of hemlock poisoning after eating wild birds, a common practice. The birds feed on hemlock but are unaffected by it. The toxins remain active, even in some of the cases, after the meat had been frozen for storage. One person died from respiratory failure after 36 hours and another three died of kidney failure.'*



# fun with hedgehogs

article by Paul Ferris MBNA

The Wren Conservation and Wildlife's BioBlitz Weekend was an opportunity not only to get a lot of eyes (and ears) out looking for our local wildlife, but also to bring to the attention of some of the public that there is actually wildlife out there.

And some of that – in fact a lot of that – wildlife is under threat. Mainly from us (Humans). Did anybody put *Homo sapiens* on a recording list, by the way?





The Wildlife Trusts' stall, managed by representatives from London Wildlife Trust, were bringing people's attention to the plight of hedgehogs these days. At the Wren Group's gazebo, situated near to the tea hut, Gill James happened to mention to me that she had a dead hedgehog at home. It had been found near to Aldersbrook Riding School (the stables), at the end of Empress Avenue.

When I suggested that she ought to have brought it along, Gill seemed a bit surprised, but – from previous experience on Group displays in the past – I asked her if she could get it, which she did.

Gill returned with a shoebox, and as soon as I opened it, I guessed we'd be on to a winner with this carnivore. Or ex-carnivore. I asked the first small group of children what they thought might be in the box; of course the response was along the lines of "Well, it could be anything."



*Dai the dead hedgehog - pic by Mary Holden*

With my usual flair for engaging children, I said that by the nature of things it couldn't be anything, that it must be something, and that the size of the box it was in obviously limited the possibilities. Opening the box, the general comments were usually "Hedgehog". Children are so clued up these days – particularly as some of them had never even seen a live one. Or even a dead one, except maybe from a car.



*Poor Dai looking so flat was an indication as to the cause of death - pic by Mary Holden*

My next question went along the lines of "What's wrong with it?", to which the usual answer was "It's dead." My questions went on to what may have killed it. "Shot?", "Dog?" and "Fox?" were suggestions that cropped up. My responses to those varied between "Who would want to shoot a hedgehog?" to "Touch those spines, then."

Turning the hog over, I showed them where the belly had been. Luckily, Gill's hedgehog had lost all its internal organs somehow, and was more-or-less mummified. In other words, it was mostly empty. But

there was a spine (the back-bone one), and that was broken and also the specimen was somewhat flat. A somewhat serious motor car encounter was the usual consensus.

My final suggestion was that we perhaps ought to do something about the serious problem of cars squashing hedgepigs. I had two major suggestions for the children. One was that we could make cars a lot lighter and smaller, so the little urchins had more of a chance. This was generally met with derision by the children and embarrassed laughter from the adults. But I had another idea: we could make hedgehogs a LOT bigger.

Finally, we had the idea of getting suggestions for a name for the hedgehog. These eventually included the usual or obvious Holly, Prickles, Hector, Hedgie, Spikey and Harriet. (There wasn't enough left to determine gender). But to my mind the very first suggestion led to the best name. Whether the lad said "Di" (for Diana, perhaps) or "die", I don't know. But I heard it as "Dai" and – somewhat politically incorrectly, and probably lost on the kids anyway – suggested that "...was a bit Welsh". So between us we came up with "Dai the Dead Hedgehog". Wonderful!

Those that we'd got interested we were able to direct towards the Wildlife Trust's exhibit near the Temple, and it just goes to show how enticing, informative and fun a squashed hedge-pig can be.

Paul Ferris, 2nd July 2018

Photos by Mary Holden.





# aldersbrook garden trail

by Gill James

The inaugural Aldersbrook Open Gardens Trail was a huge success on Sunday 3rd June. Under a blue sky and a blazing sun 15 gardens on the Aldersbrook Estate opened their doors to raise money for Cancer Research and the Aldersbrook and Wanstead Riding for Disabled people.



*Aldersbrook residents opening their gardens in June all in aid of the charity - pic by Tony Morrison*

Over 300 tickets were sold and the large numbers of visitors created a festive atmosphere -with friends old and new meeting to celebrate, catch up and exchange gardening tips. The gardens ranged from the

very small to the very large, some laid out by nature, others by professionals but each with its own charm and individuality, including the Aldersbrook Community Garden which is hoping to recruit new volunteers. The stables opened for tours and was a popular venue for families-as was the edible garden with children's activities.

Home baked cakes were washed down with huge quantities of tea, coffee and prosecco. The pizza oven in Empress Avenue was fired up and proved the most popular stop for refreshments. Many visitors splashed out on plants and seedlings and the grand total raised on the day was £3875 - including a donation from our very generous and supportive sponsors Stow Brothers.

Local photographer Tony Morrison recorded the event and his work will be displayed locally during the Wanstead Art Trail.

Organisers are delighted with the success of the day and look forward to the next trail in 2020.





*Firefighters worked tirelessly over the weekend stopping the spread of a grass fire from destroying property and a Site of Special Scientific Interest on Wanstead Flats. Picture credit Helen Mathias / EyeContact Photography*

# fire on Wanstead flats

Firefighters were called on Sunday July 14th to what was to become London's biggest-ever grass fire. At the height of the fire, more than 10 acres of grass was alight and smoke drifted across busy roads, which was visible for miles, causing local road closures.

Firefighters fought with the fire well into Monday to prevent it damaging property and destroying a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI) on Wanstead Flats.

Wren chair, Tim Harris, was interviewed by the Newham Recorder about the impact of the fire on local wildlife. Thanks also to Peter Williams for a historical perspective.



More than 225 firefighters were called to the scene and 40 fire engines attended from stations including Walthamstow, Leytonstone and Hainault. London Fire Brigade's 999 control officers received over 110 calls about the fire which was visible for miles.



More than 225 firefighters and 40 fire engines attended the worst grass fire in London's history. Here firefighters can be seen on Centre Road where, in spite of their efforts, the fire jumped the road, coming perilously near the nesting site of skylarks and other ground nesting species. Pic London Fire Brigade

London Fire Brigade Group Manager Rob Davies who was at the scene said: "This was a large grass fire and while Wanstead Flats is an area of grassland, crews had to work very quickly to stop it from spreading. Smoke was making conditions very difficult for firefighters and causing a lot of disruption to local roads.

"We have attended over 20 grass fires this month as the hot weather has made the ground especially dry.



Grass fires can embed into the ground, continue smouldering and pop up in a different place. Crews were there over night to keep damping down the smouldering earth. Pic by London Fire Brigade



The extent of the fire on Wanstead Flats. The fire jumped Centre Road but luckily just missed key areas for ground nesting bird species. Pic - National Police Air Service

A considerable area of the Flats that has been affected is a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI). Tim Harris, chairman of Wren and Wildlife Conservation Group said:

"The good news is that, although the fire covered an extensive area, and jumped Centre Road, the key ground-nesting species - the skylark and meadow pipit - are nesting just south of the affected zone, so they escaped," he said.

"Thanks are due to the fantastic work of London Fire Brigade in making sure fire extended no further."



The affected area is a site of scientific interest SSSI. Luckily Wanstead Flats' iconic skylarks have escaped the wrath of the huge wildfire that engulfed the grassland

Wanstead Flats is the closest location to the centre of London where skylarks nest and their population is in decline naturally due to agricultural practices. The wildlife affected will be birds nesting in patches of



broom, gorse and bramble, including whitethroat, dunnoek and wren. The chicks of these species usually become fledged – meaning that they are able to fly - between April and July each year. However, any unfledged chicks will have likely perished in the blaze. The fire will also likely reduce the numbers of these bird species next year as there will be very much less habitat for them. Returning birds will have to compete for territory in the same area they won't have the same breeding success.



*Firefighters worked tirelessly over the weekend stopping the spread of the fire from destroying property and a site of scientific interest on Wanstead Flats. Picture credit Helen Mathias / EyeContact Photography*

While these bird species will reduce next spring the vegetation is very resilient and it is hoped the habitat will begin recovering with the damper autumn weather. However, the main damage of the fire will have been to invertebrates, with the larvae of a whole range of

moths, butterflies, beetles as well as grasshoppers and bush-crickets destroyed.

“A considerable area of the Flats has been affected. As a heathland site of special scientific interest, the vegetation is very resilient and we expect the habitat to begin recovering with the damper autumn weather.”

*Corporation of London*

## Every Cloud has a Silver Lining

With luck the first signs of re-growth should be seen in a few weeks if we have rain and by next spring, although there will still be signs of the burn, vegetation will be growing up again. The grasslands should be return to their original glory by spring 2020 assuming there are no further fires.

The recent fire has also exposed a large amount of litter that had been hidden among the bramble. Once the immediate situation has been taken care of, Tim Harris hopes that a community event can be arranged to remove it all.



*Fire damage in the summer of 2006. Looking south towards Capel Point, at the corner of Woodford Rd/Capel Rd, and Canary Wharf in the distance. In total 30 acres was affected. Note how the paths were not burnt as they are gravelly and compacted.*



*The same view that autumn. Notice how the vegetation on the right (mainly broom) has grown so extensively*



This recent fire may be the worst grass fire in London's history but it is by no means the first. Wren practical work organiser Peter Williams looks back.

The summer of 1976 marked the culmination of a prolonged drought which had begun in April 1975. Now known as the Great Drought in Britain when the country was ravaged by grass and heath land fires for over two months. From 22 June until 26 August - nine weeks - the weather was consistently dry, sunny and hot.



Summer 2006 - Centre Road was closed for a couple of days as water supply was a problem and the hoses ran across and down it. This is near the Centre Road carpark.

By April 1976 the drought had become extremely serious, not only for the water-supply industry but also for agriculture. The topsoil in East Anglia had turned to



A ghostly fire engine on the Flats. You can see how dry this grass was in 2006.

dust and was being systematically eroded by stiff easterly winds, and farmers warned of poor yields unless the rains came soon. They didn't.

A Drought Bill was rushed through Parliament, water consumption was restricted as reservoirs and aquifers



Not July 2018 but summer 2006. In the past grass fires on Wanstead Flats happened on a regular basis although the recent fire has been the first big one in some while.

dried out, the parched countryside turned from green to brown and from brown to white as the last vestiges of moisture disappeared, and there were extensive heath and woodland fires in southern England. Finally a Minister for Drought, Dennis Howell, was appointed to co-ordinate water conservation. Within three days it had started raining.



Another regular sight during past hot summers (but not more recently) is Alexandra Pond drying out. This picture was taken before the pond was dredged and mounding around the pond formed with the spoils (perhaps someone can remind me of the date). Pic by Tony Morrison

The centrepiece of the summer, meteorologically speaking, was a truly unprecedented heatwave which lasted from 22 June to 16 July - 25 consecutive days - on each of which the temperature climbed to 27C or more (the 80s F) somewhere or other in the UK. Even more remarkable, the temperature reached 32C (the 90s F) on every one of the 15 successive days from 23 June to 7 July, inclusive. (Source Philip Eden website [weatheronline.com](http://weatheronline.com).)



## 2006 was also a drought year in the UK

The 9th August 2016 marked the tenth anniversary of the largest fire on Wanstead Flats for many years. It burned several acres of ground and made the news. It was a hot dry summer and the fire started near the north end of Centre Road.

There was a strong north westerly breeze blowing so it spread rapidly to the south east amongst the long grass only stopping when it reached the cut grass of the playing fields. The damage covered an area equivalent to 15-20 football pitches. Eight fire engines attended and Centre Road was closed for several days whilst they were damping down hot spots which kept flaring up in the hot, dry and windy conditions. The last fire engine left nearly a week later.

## There is a long history of fires on the Flats – the first account is from 1835 of a fire covering 20 acres

There was no organised fire brigade at this time (just tiny wooden parish manual engines) so there was no option but to call out the army's Royal Engineers from Woolwich Barracks. The sappers dug trenches to contain the fire, not to fight it. Interestingly, to this day

the fire brigade in Paris is a regiment of the French army and hence are called Sapeurs (sappers) Pompiers.

### THE EXTRAORDINARY FIRE ON WANSTEAD FLATS.

At an early hour yesterday morning the Captain's company of Sappers and Miners, consisting of 70 men, who had been sent from Woolwich, in consequence of an order issued to the Admiralty by the Home Office, recommenced their work of digging a trench of five feet in width and from six to eight inches in depth, around the burning surface, and at three o'clock in the afternoon had accomplished their work. This precaution, which if adopted in the early part of last week, would have prevented much of the mischief done, will, it is hoped, prevent the fire from spreading farther, and allay the fears of the inhabitants of the surrounding neighbourhood.

After the soldiers, who had been assisted by several workmen employed by Mr. Spring, the Deputy Lord of the Manor, had completed the trench, they were engaged for some time in setting fire to several spots within the enclosure, which had not before ignited, in order that it might the sooner burn out. Should, however, the present weather last, and not a very heavy fall of rain come on, it is supposed by those who pretend to be conversant with the nature of the soil, that it will be some weeks before it exhausts itself. The extent of the damage is found not to exceed twenty acres, but this for some time to come will be rendered useless, and will, as has been before stated, be a great loss to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who had the right of pasturage.

Fires continued to be a feature in the nineteenth century, often caused by what we now call anti-social behaviour.

they would hope no more.—The fires that happened within these few years seem now, in the retrospect, to have been strangely destructive. In the dry season of 1835, a gipsying party who had made their tea among the underwood on **Wanstead Flats**, neglected to put out the **fire**; and the consequence was a conflagration which laid waste twenty acres of pasturage. It required the digging of a deep trench by a company of sappers and miners from Woolwich to stop the mischief at last. Two or three weeks



A still smouldering BBQ having been dumped under a tree trunk in Centre Copse, Wanstead Flats. This pic was taken days after the biggest fire in London's history. I can't believe that this is not a deliberate attempt at arson - no-one can think that using a BBQ in this drought, yet alone dumping hot coals, can be safe.

## What You Can Do

- ❑ If you see a grass fire, don't attempt to put it out yourself as grass fires can travel very quickly and change direction without warning. Call the fire Brigade on 999 and let them know where the fire is.
- ❑ Never leave camp fires or barbecues unattended and extinguish them properly after you have finished using them
- ❑ Clear away bottles, glasses and any broken glass to avoid them magnifying the sun and starting a fire
- ❑ Dispose of smoking materials such as cigarettes safely
- ❑ Explain to children the dangers of playing with and lighting fires



# adopt a tree

by Tony Morrison

It's hard to imagine that not so long ago much of the country was under water. Now at the height of summer, we stand a good chance of having a hosepipe ban.

With climate change very much in the news we should perhaps expect more extremes in our weather. All the more reason we should appreciate the benefits that trees provide.

They put oxygen in the air and take out carbon dioxide. They create cooler micro-climates under their canopies. They create much needed shade, protecting us from harmful solar rays. They even help to clean the air by filtering out dust particles and pollutants, not to mention the desirable effect they have on softening the urban landscape.

Every year your local council plant young trees in our streets to replace trees that have died or become diseased or damaged.

Unfortunately, hot dry summers can take their toll, especially so on young recently planted trees. Though your council will probably arrange for regular watering of new plantings, drought conditions will always kill a few trees. So this year why not adopt a tree?

If you have a young street tree outside or near your house or workplace, we are asking you to water it, please. You may notice a plastic pipe sticking out of the ground next to the tree, usually with a green cap on it. It would be great if you could pour water into the pipe and around the tree pit, whenever you can during the summer months. If you can water daily, or even once or twice a week with a bucketful (washing up water will do) it would really help the tree to survive and to become established. To save on precious water use old bath water or other recycled water such as that from the dishwasher or water butt.

Your local Council will of course continue to water its newly planted trees as part of their regular maintenance programme but trees give us so much why not give a little back - every little helps.



## why you should love a tree

- ☐ Trees produce oxygen. Two mature trees will provide all the oxygen a family of four needs for life.
- ☐ Trees also act as giant filters that clean the air we breathe. Trees absorb pollutants and reduce dust levels.
- ☐ To produce its food, a tree absorbs and locks away carbon dioxide in the wood, roots and leaves. Carbon dioxide is a global warming "greenhouse" gas.
- ☐ Trees help cut noise pollution.
- ☐ Every summer sees more and more droughts in the London area. Trees help prevent water running straight down drains and out to sea. Underground water-holding aquifers are replenished with this slowing down of water runoff.
- ☐ Trees provide shade for car parking and help reduce skin cancer levels.
- ☐ Trees cool the air in built up areas by evaporating water from their leaves.
- ☐ Trees feed and shelter wildlife.
- ☐ Trees form "green corridors" connecting urban habitats with each other and with the countryside.
- ☐ Trees reduce wind speeds reducing heat loss in winter from buildings.
- ☐ In leafy streets, trees can increase property prices by up to 7% (Source, National Urban Forestry Unit).
- ☐ Research shows that a view of nearby trees improves concentration levels in schools and reduces stress level for adults at work.
- ☐ Trees provide us with timber and paper.







# Country Summer

by Léonie Adams

Now the rich cherry, whose sleek wood,  
And top with silver petals traced  
Like a strict box its gems encased,  
Has spilt from out that cunning lid,  
All in an innocent green round,  
Those melting rubies which it hid;  
With moss ripe-strawberry-encrusted,  
So birds get half, and minds lapse merry  
To taste that deep-red, lark's-bite berry,  
And blackcap bloom is yellow-dusted.

The wren that thieved it in the eaves  
A trailer of the rose could catch  
To her poor droopy sloven thatch,  
And side by side with the wren's brood—  
O lovely time of beggar's luck—  
Opens the quaint and hairy bud;  
And full and golden is the yield  
Of cows that never have to house,  
But all night nibble under boughs,  
Or cool their sides in the moist field.

Into the rooms flow meadow airs,  
The warm farm baking smell's blown round.  
Inside and out, and sky and ground  
Are much the same; the wishing star,  
Hesperus, kind and early born,  
Is risen only finger-far;  
All stars stand close in summer air,  
And tremble, and look mild as amber;  
When wicks are lighted in the chamber,  
They are like stars which settled there.

Now straightening from the flowery hay,  
Down the still light the mowers look,  
Or turn, because their dreaming shook,  
And they waked half to other days,  
When left alone in the yellow stubble  
The rusty-coated mare would graze.  
Yet thick the lazy dreams are born,



# bees and honey

article by Paul Ferris MBNA

After a meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June with Tony Morrison, the Wren Conservation Group's newsletter editor, we walked back home across Wanstead Flats. We hadn't been discussing newsletters or editing, nor anything to do with wildlife or conservation, but rather the sad closure of our local bus-stop, courtesy of Newham Council. It is not only wildlife that can suffer cuts.

We wondered what was going on down by Alexandra Lake, and I went to the few people there, who had chucked a bicycle into the lake and were erecting some structures which seemed to relate to an abandoned children's playground. I asked them what they were doing, and "Filming" was their answer, but for what film they wouldn't say. They assured me that they had a licence from the Conservators of Epping Forest, so that must be alright.





Strolling home on a track across the rough grassland just south of the sand-hills that give the lake its alternative, if local, name – i.e. the Sandhills Pond – I was enraptured (if that isn't too spiritual a term) by all the forms of grasses, the yellow flowers growing amongst them, the other-coloured ones too, and the sound of a skylark ascending not so high into the heavens (if that isn't too poetic and spiritual a description) that I could just stand and watch as well as listen. It was just one of those nice days and gentle experiences.

The following day the whole area was “swamped” with vehicles and personnel. The rest of the film crew had joined in. Tony said to me that “there were more vehicles in the area than on the M25...!!!”

With disgust and sadness I sent a brief email to Tim Harris, Chairman of the Wren Group. It said little more than “Skylarks yesterday, film crew today.”

Unexpectedly, and shortly after, I received a phone call from Martin Newnham, Head Keeper for Epping Forest, just checking on my observation and confirming that they had been given permission to film there. I explained that that was rather unfortunate, as the skylark I'd seen the day before might not be too happy. I certainly wasn't too happy, and I'm not even a skylark.

Then followed a rash of emails, initially sent to Tim, who copied them on to me. More and more people seemed to be getting involved. I responded to one from Geoff Sinclair – Head of Operations – in which he stated that the film crew “are in an area ....well away from the skylark nesting area”.

I felt I ought to respond to this and explain that although well away from the main nesting area, this relatively small patch has for years provided a nesting site for one

pair. Also, that it wasn't just the skylarks that might be disturbed, but because of the nature of the soils there (sand and gravels) there were other aspects at risk, including plants and mining bees.

Both Tim and I were saddened, disappointed and concerned that after years of providing information about habitats and wildlife to the Conservators of Epping Forest, this seemed to have been disregarded in favour of income. Bees and Honey.



Well, it is easy to turn ones disappointment into a rant. Perhaps that's why for a good few years now I have (almost) stopped banging my head against a solid Forest wall. That hurts.

The last email I received, addressed to Tim as well, was a very understanding one from Geoff Sinclair. I was really pleased to receive that, because in effect it was an admission and apology for getting things wrong in licensing that film shot, and a “thank you” for bringing the matter to his attention. In addition, Geoff suggested that, following this incident, it might be in order to investigate how things might be done better in the future, particularly – perhaps – taking local knowledge

into account.

By Friday the massed personnel, vehicles, broken swing, abandoned bike and filming frame were all gone. There were a couple of holes (too big to have been made by mining bees) where a see-saw had stood, some flattened grass and some cigarette butts. Of course, those may have been left by any visitor. But also left behind was a very apt artefact. It was a plinth – looking like stone but actually, I think, wood – which had a plaque on it. This read (word for word, spelling for spelling) *This nature preserve was made possible by the generous donation of THE GLENGROVE HOUSE MEMORIAL TRUST*. Well, fancy donating a jammy Glengrove House Memorial Trust to the Forest! And it had spread out some grass, too. Hold on: there are the mining-bees, and then there is fly-tipping...

And what of the Skylarks? I didn't hear them on a visit the day after, but that doesn't mean that they are no longer there. However, during 2009 and 2010, Thames Water Authority installed an underground pipe-line intended to carry water from a bore-hole in the Old Sewage Works (Aldersbrook Exchange Lands) to the Redbridge Water Treatment works near Redbridge roundabout. This involved using a large machine named the *Longborer* to create a horizontal bore to carry the pipe, boring under the south arm of the Ornamental Water and across the Plain. Now, up until then there had annually been a pair of larks nesting on the Plain. Apart from here there isn't much else of a suitable habitat in Wanstead Park for Skylarks, so just one pair had enough room for a territory. After the disturbance caused by that boring, the Skylarks have never returned to the Park. It takes only one disturbance to finish things off.

And the title of the film? Tim suggested it might be called “The Lark Descending”?

Paul Ferris MBNA 15th June 2018



# look out for .....

Hints by Tricia Moxey

The tall pink spires of the Rose Bay Willow Herb often indicate areas of burnt ground as its fluffy seeds germinate on such areas of Wanstead or Leyton Flats.

Of course, the purple flowers on the Heather are a special delight on part of Wanstead Flats where this heathland plant is spreading as a result of conservation measures. 150 years ago, this species would have been much more widespread across the intensively grazed ancient common lands of the Greater London area, but changes in land use on most of them means that it is now a much rarer plant within the confines of the M25.

Brambles are now in flower, providing nectar and pollen to many insects. Brambles come in many different forms: some of which will produce small fruits, but others grow large juicy blackberries. Many of you will know a good spot to gather plump blackberries to enhance an apple pie or turn into jelly! Why not see how many different varieties you can find? The recent Springwatch programmes have shown just how many creatures nest and feed in Bramble patches, but Brambles do tend to

take over, especially in a good growing seasons when they can grow several centimetres per day!

In Australia where European Brambles are an invasive plant, DNA profiling of the various forms is being carried out to find the most effective means of biological control. In the UK much of the time by conservation volunteers is spent on Bramble 'control'.

Of possible concern to those who like to produce their own sloe gin is the discovery that a number of Blackthorn bushes in the area are infected with a fungus which distorts the developing sloes. They become like an empty bag with no stone inside. The fungus is *Taphrina pruni*, a pathogen that causes the Pocket or Bladder Plum Gall, by producing chemicals which distort the developing fruit. The twigs on infected plants may also be deformed with small strap-shaped leaves. I have seen it too on some of the fruits on the ornamental plum trees in local streets.

It would be helpful to know how widespread this is in the Wanstead area as sloes are an important part of the winter food for birds such Blackbirds, thrushes, Redwings, Fieldfares, Woodpigeons and mammals like Foxes and Woodmice.

August! June and July are the pits, birding wise, in your local inner city patch, so it's time to look at other stuff, but then August arrives and the excitement really kicks in. Expect returning waders by the end of July, and Wheatears from mid-

August. Then of course it gets manic: can't wait!

If you're in the Park around August time, Small Red-eyed Damselflies will put in an appearance, as well as Common Darter and Emperor dragonflies. Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper butterflies will be everywhere there is long grass.

Family groups of Skylarks may be feeding in the areas of long grass on Wanstead Flats come August. Also there will be Large, Small and Essex Skipper butterflies and – hopefully – Burnet Companion moths. From mid-month, more and more birds will be feeding in the Elders and Bramble bushes around Long Wood, in the SSSI and near Alexandra Lake. Look for Blackcaps, Garden Warblers, Lesser Whitethroats and thrushes. Near the end of the month Spotted Flycatchers will hawk for insects in the same area, and there may be a Common Redstart or two.

At the height of summer there are a number of flowers which catch the eye. One in particular is the white Ox-eye Daisy, which is frequently seen alongside roads. It is often included in wild flower mixtures. Red Poppies naturally grow in disturbed ground, but additional plantings have been made this year as a reminder of the start of WWI.

Other members of the daisy family in flower at this time of year including the spiky purple-headed Spear Thistle and the yellow-flowered Ragwort, Hawkbits and Hawkweeds.





## Geoff Boshier

On 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018, long-time Wren Group members Richard Oakman, Peter Saunders, Valerie Saunders, Kathy Olley and myself attended the funeral of Geoff Boshier at the City of London Cemetery.

I suspect that many present-day Group members will not recognise Geoff's name, but considering that the group began in the early 70's, that is perhaps not surprising. We have had a lot of people joining and leaving the group in that time, and Geoff's passing leaves those of us who knew him sad, of course, but with some great memories of when he took such an active part in the Wren Group's activities.

Geoff was a builder by trade, and this work and similar skills he turned to – and the perfection to which he worked – made him much sought-after when work was required. Within the Wren Group, he – together with his beloved Land Rover – was a great asset in

getting tools and equipment to Wanstead Park, and work done. He took charge of the practical work side of things – ably assisted by Pete Saunders amongst others, and much of the early work for example in Chalet wood to enhance the bluebells, and on Lincoln Island for the daffodils, was carried out with Geoff taking a major role.

On field trips, Geoff wasn't necessarily the most experienced in spotting or identifying things, but he was always a pleasure to have along, as much for his wit as anything.

Apart from the Wren Group – of which he was a paid up Life Member – he loved walking in the countryside and sailing and fishing trips. Sadly, he began to suffer from a form of dementia, and gradually became less able to participate in those things he loved. His wife, Sue, cared for him lovingly until he passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2018. He was 71 years old. Sue, of course, was also a

long term member of the Wren Group, and our sympathies go out to her.

Those of us that knew him will certainly miss him, but his memory will remain with us – perhaps when we walk through the bluebell wood which he helped to create.

Paul Ferris  
13<sup>th</sup> July 2018



## now & then

Were you right ?

*The fountain at the southern end of Wanstead Flats, at the junction of Capel and Woodgrange Roads was erected in memory of Joseph Fry (1809-1896) who was responsible for the construction of many drinking fountains, for people and horses, around London. The older picture was taken c1905. The recent picture was taken around 2006 - the area has since been subject to roadworks and the fountain has been moved.*





# links



## Links

Got any links to go on this page? Get in touch  
[wreeditor@talktalk.net](mailto:wreeditor@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/>