



## FRIENDS OF QUEEN'S WOOD Autumn Newsletter 2016

[www.fqw.org.uk](http://www.fqw.org.uk)



### HERBS IN THE WOOD - DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY WE HAVE?

**Saturday September 10 2.00pm:** Take a gentle walk, led by herbalist Kim Walker. Learn about folklore and the history of use of plants found in Queen's Wood. Join the walk at the Lodge in Queen's Wood just off the Muswell Hill Road.

Burdock



Elder



### FOR YOUR DIARY:

**Sunday October 16 2.00pm at the Lodge.**

Tree Identification walk, led by Maria Precedo and Lucy Roots. If you are not sure about your trees or just want to enjoy the wonderful variety in the wood, this is for you. And maybe join -

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## **The Citizen Science Project**

**by Maria Precedo**

Without wanting to wish away summer, let's keep an eye out for Autumn! *Nature's Calendar* (the Woodland Trust's phenological project) continues and *The First Signs of Autumn* is already underway. Phenology is the science of recurring natural events and recording these is useful in evaluating climate change. Anyone interested in participating through Queen's Wood should contact [precedomaria@gmail.com](mailto:precedomaria@gmail.com). Don't worry if you are not confident about your identification skills - the walk which we are running on 10 October will help and everyone is welcome.

Hornbeam in Autumn



## **A NEW WEBSITE**

**by Michael Johns**

Members who use our website will have noticed that we changed its layout completely at the beginning of August. Parts of our old website were getting out of date and we were very fortunate in finding a volunteer who likes designing websites and who agreed to build a new one for us from scratch. Colin Morton lives in Chesterfield and has never seen Queen's Wood but we hope you will agree he has caught the spirit of

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the wood remarkably well. We are extremely grateful to him. There are still one or two pages we want to add and if you notice any glitches or think it could be further improved in any way, please let us know.

## **NEWS FROM THE WOOD**

**by Lucy Roots**

The mature trees in high summer showed full growth after the rainy cool June and the new hedge below the Lodge garden is flourishing. We hope to plug any gaps there with new saplings in the autumn. Sadly, in the area coppiced in 2007/08 near the Wood Vale entrance many young trees are dying. The casualties are goat willow and young birches where squirrels have stripped off the bark. This is, of course, an ongoing problem.

We know that conifers ooze resin but oaks as well can exude a beery smelling liquid. On a large oak tree near the Lodge cafe, many wasps were seen feeding on the liquid and one day a lone slug was getting happily drunk!

TCV volunteers have continued their useful work by preventing damage on the ancient boundary bank near Onslow Gardens with a path diversion, removing invasive plants, dead hedging round our few orchids, moving one of the magnifying posts to make them more accessible to children and erecting notice boards. We do welcome their help in addition to our own volunteer work.

Part of medieval bank



This summer we have agreed to a two week holiday course for children run by the Forest Schools group and they have really enjoyed getting to know the wood and have treated it with respect. It is good to know that a new generation will grow up with some understanding of the ecology of woodland and appreciate its value.

The new Bat Interpretation Board has been installed near the Lodge cafe. Thank you to all members whose donations helped to fund this plus a grant from the council. Our Bat Walk on Friday 2 September will start with a simple unveiling. No fireworks though!

## **A WOMEN'S AID EVENT**

**by Alison Watson**

This year for the first time FQW sponsored a day in the Wood for a group of women from a nearby hostel. Maggie Scrimgeour, who led the day sent us this report:

We had five women (including the worker from the refuge) and six children. It was a nice size intimate group, but would have been possibly better with double that amount, which is what I thought we would have.

We did some lovely activities, and started with a walk, identifying some of the most common trees, especially the elder, which we made tea with, and also used to make some beads later on. We made 'ojos de dios' (god's eyes) with wool, using sticks, which they took home to hang in their houses, and we made some clay spiders and hedgehogs. The women and children were really involved in all the activities, and the one 13 year old boy also got involved as we made a bow and arrow which he then learnt how to use. (His mum said he usually spent all the time on his computer so he took an hour to warm up and get involved...and then it was great to see him play too!)

Everyone really enjoyed the day, and my favourite image of the day (which they haven't sent me yet) is how we all looked at 4 when we left the woods. A bundle of women and children carrying beautiful wool things they had made, and tiny pots and clay ornaments, with a bow and arrow and some wands, and messy and muddy and

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exhausted, all laughing and relaxed.

In conclusion, I asked them to fill in a form and they said they all enjoyed the activities and being outside and learning about the native trees. They also said that previously they hadn't really used London's green spaces and now they would, especially as they had some ideas about what to do.

## **HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE WOOD**

**by John Dorken**

Diana Clements, a leading light in the London Geodiversity Partnership, and Mike Hacker, a long-term Friend and an expert in the local archaeology and history, led a fascinating and informative joint walk with Highgate Wood comparing the geology and archaeology of the two woods in July. The walk showed up just how different the two woods are. Highgate Wood with its largely flat terrain is thought to lie at the edge of a major icepack from the last Ice Age and had accumulated through glacial movement large deposits of sand and gravel from as far away as the Weald and even the West Country. On the basis of these and the ready availability of clay it became a major site for brick and pottery making going back to Roman times. Queen's Wood, on the other side of the edge, has much steeper terrain, characterised by a number of small valleys, created by fast flowing streams resulting from melting ice and snow and harboured more typical woodland activities. There is an excellent exhibition of the forces at play in the information hut in Highgate Wood.

Typical steep valley in Queen's Wood

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## **LATEST NEWS ABOUT BIRDS IN THE WOOD**

David Darrell-Lambert, who has done several bird surveys for us has been watching a nest of hobbies in the wood and says that they have at least two young. And he also saw four tawny owls flying around, suggesting there were two or three young owls among them.

## **WORKING PARTY DATES**

25 September

30 October

27 November

from 10.30 to noon. Meet at the Lodge. Tools are provided but please bring your own gloves and if possible a mobile phone to keep in touch with the working party leader.

## **YOUR COMMITTEE**

**Chairperson** John Dorken

**Treasurer** Michael Johns

**Membership and newsletter** Alison Watson

**Ecology liaison** Lucy Roots

**Infrastructure** David Warren

**Arts events** Jane Warren

**Conservation** Sarah Graham Brown

**Citizen Science** Maria Precedo

**Publicity** Janet Shapiro

Photos by Michael Johns and Mike Hacker

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