



MARCH TALK

Protecting Wildlife in London's Royal Parks through Mission: Invertebrate

Wednesday March 17th 2021 7.30pm

Online talk by Alice Evans: Project Officer for Citizen Science and Adult Learning in the Royal Parks



Devil's Coach Horse - photo Janine Young



Spider on toolshed - photo Lucy Roots



Large red damselfly = photo Dan Hackett

Mission: Invertebrate is a project aiming to enrich wildlife in the Royal Parks, some of the largest and busiest greenspaces in London. We're doing this by supporting invertebrates, the parks' most important inhabitants that all other wildlife relies on, through getting people of all ages together to improve habitats in the parks.

To join ask for a link to be sent, email meetings@fqw.org.uk

PROPOSED FLOOD MITIGATION SCHEME

As many of you may remember, some two years ago Haringey Council let us know in very general terms about a natural flood mitigation project which it had in mind to undertake in the Wood. The purpose would be to reduce the risk of flooding on lower ground in the Wood Vale area and beyond to the east of the Wood.

The underlying concept is to daylight the existing underground pipe network taking surface water through the Wood and adding natural flood management features, such as holding pools and leaky dams, designed to reduce the flow of water at times of heavy rainfall. A few weeks ago the Council outlined its proposals. The scheme envisaged is a substantial one, costing some £250k. The Council plans to start the work around the middle of March.



Flooded area near Wood Vale - photo
Michael Johns

We understand the need for a scheme to guard against flooding downstream of the Wood and we are broadly in favour of the concept. If done well, it has the potential to enhance the value of the Wood as a nature reserve and an attractive place for visitors. But there is a risk that, if done badly, the initial works and the long-term changes involved could damage the ecology of the Wood and access for the public. Given our unique knowledge of the Wood we are now working with the Council and its consultants to identify where there could be adverse impacts and how these can be mitigated, though we do not yet have the up-to-date plans. The timetable for firming up the detail of the project is very tight but it is vital that the Council should not rush into a poorly designed scheme which harms the Wood in the long term.

The Council is currently expected to go out to public consultation on the scheme in February. We are asking it to hold a public meeting with the full plans made available. As soon as it does so we shall get in touch with you again so that we can fully reflect your interests and concerns in responding to the consultation.

ANCIENT WOODLANDS OF NORTH LONDON

Talk by David Bevan on 13 January

David gave a fascinating talk to over 40 people on Zoom; in case you missed it, here are a few notes on what he had to say:

Ancient Woods are defined as being present before the year 1600, because prior to that date few trees were planted, and many grew up or were planted after that date. Coldfall Wood and Queen's Wood are examples of ancient coppiced woodlands, which are thought to be of 'primary' origin, having direct continuity back to the 'wild wood' of six thousand years ago. Since then, they have always been wooded. By contrast, woods that have arisen from sites that were not previously wooded, are called 'secondary' woods. For example, the wooded area around the top of the Highgate Bowl (on the Parkland Walk), which was quite recently a grassy railway embankment, is now 'secondary' woodland. Much of the Parkland Walk is now secondary woodland,

David carried out a detailed botanical survey of Queen's Wood in 2007 - just before the recent coppices were cut. This enabled him to compare the new floras of the coppices with that of the non-coppiced parts of the Wood. By 2020, an additional 70 species were recorded that had not been found during the 2007 survey. Hornbeams were coppiced for their exceptionally hard wood. The last commercial coppice was done in 1930s.



Coppicing in 2014 - photo Michael Johns



Slender St John's Wort - photo David Bevan

The Yellow Pimpernel, and many other coppice plants, can survive in the seed bank (below the surface leaves) for up to 50 years. Viable seed of the Slender St John's Wort has been recorded in seed banks for up to 200 years!

The wild Pear is very rare. David was thrilled to discover two in Queen's Wood. As a result of coppicing in the area, enough light has been let into the wood to enable it to flower and even produce small pears. Oliver Rackham, the great authority on woodland in Britain, says it is one of the rarest trees



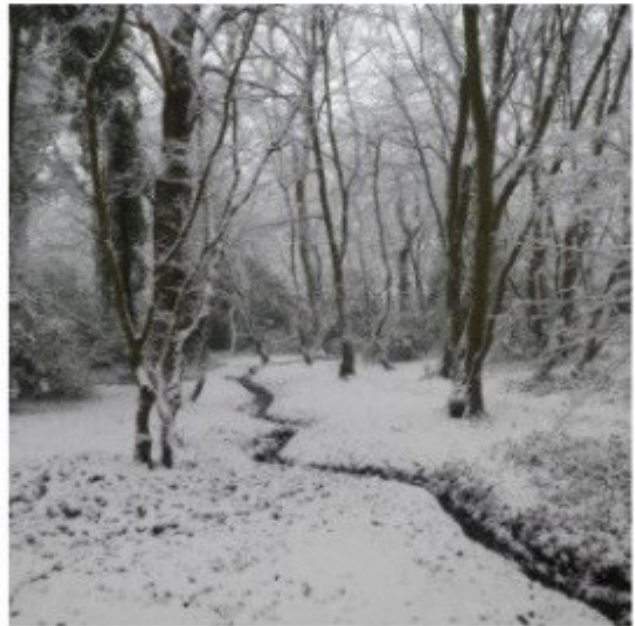
Wild pear - photo Michael Johns

2021 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Have you paid your sub yet this year? If not, please do so now. There is a lot going on and we don't want anyone to miss out. If you are not sure, please email membership@fqw.org.uk.

SNOW IN THE WOOD

24 January



Photos - Michael Johns

POSSIBLE BREACHES OF COVID REGULATIONS

Some members whose homes back onto the wood report having been disturbed by noisy gatherings in the wood. Quite apart from the disturbance, these could be unsafe in current circumstances. If you are aware of serious breaches of the Covid-19 rules, the police have set up arrangements to report incidents online. See Metropolitan Police [website](#) for details.

WORKING PARTY DATES

Because of Covid, working parties have been suspended for now. If you would like to do any work in the wood on your own or with members of your family, please email Lucy on lucyroots20@gmail.com

YOUR COMMITTEE:

We are delighted that Laura Dekker has agreed to be co-opted onto the Committee. Laura loves the wood and will be taking special responsibility for social media.