



Crack-willow
(Withy)

Friends of The Withey Beds

Spring 2013

Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Update

Hazel Godfrey had planned to return to work on the **willow hide** in June last year. However, due to the very wet weather this was postponed and postponed and postponed. The hide is in need of some TLC but it now looks like the work will take place in April, at the earliest.

You may recall in the last newsletter there was a photograph of a barn owl emerging from the owl box at The Withey Beds. The photograph was taken by our Tree Surgeon, Richard Lee. Richard has since been back to The Withey Beds and spent several hours hiding out trying to capture an image of a kingfisher. As you can see from the photograph below his endeavours were more than worth while.



Future Events

On **Monday 22 April** the Friends of The Withey Beds will hold their **AGM** at the Council Offices. If you would like to be a little more involved in committee matters and the Local Nature Reserve or write for the newsletter then why not come along at 7:30pm and meet the rest of the group?

At 2pm on **Sunday 12 May** the Friends of The Withey Beds will be leading the annual **guided walk** to the Local Nature Reserve, as part of Ricky Week. The walk will, as usual, start at the Batchworth Lock Centre where there will be short talk about the history of the canal before we make our way along the Ebury Way (for around one mile) before entering the scenic grounds of the Watford Piscators. After exploring the various lakes and learning more about the fishing complex we will cross over Moor Lane to the LNR. Once at The Withey Beds we will hear

why the site is so special. Please wear suitable shoes and join us for an enjoyable afternoon.

The Friends of The Withey Beds will be at the Aquadrome on **18 and 19 May** manning their stand at the 21st **Rickmansworth Festival**. Hazel Godfrey, who created the willow hide at the LNR, will be showcasing her work along with the Friends group in the Environmental Marquee. Why not come along and meet committee members as well as taking the opportunity to listen to some live music, watch a boat tug-of-war on the canal and may be have a beer or two?

Join the Countryside Management Service on a **mini beast safari** at the LNR on **Tuesday 13 August**, 10:30am-12pm. You will learn some fascinating facts and discover more about the important role insects play in the food chain. Why not come along and help us record the wildlife and contribute to the site monitoring. Wellies recommended; bring mini beast catching nets if you have them. Parking will be available on the opposite side of Moor Lane, at the Watford Piscators, just before the bend in the road where Moor Lane becomes Tolpits Lane.

We are in the process of updating our membership records. As part of this exercise we would like to collect your email address to improve our communication with you. We have already confirmed those email addresses we have on file. If we have not yet contacted you by email and you are happy for us to store this information, please would you send your name and email address to friendsofwitheybeds@gmail.com. David Parry – Membership Secretary.

Membership subscriptions are overdue. If you have not yet renewed for last year please contact the Treasurer at 16 Sandy Lodge Road, Moor Park, Rickmansworth, WD3 1LJ with your £5.00 or the completed Standing Order form to continue your valuable support. The Friends would be grateful if you could pay by Standing Order as it makes administration easier. You can contact the Treasurer at peterrobin2007@googlemail.com

WHERE IS THE WITHEY BEDS LOCAL NATURE RESERVE?

As you travel along Moor Lane, from Rickmansworth, the entrance to The Withey Beds is on your right - about 150m after the entrance to the Moor Park estate (where the security guards sit in a small building).

The LNR entrance has a green vehicle barrier and kissing gate. If you go over the River Colne on to Tolpits Lane, then you have gone too far.





Maple Lodge Nature Reserve

Situated in Maple Cross, Maple Lodge Nature Reserve is 40 acres of mixed habitat, owned by Thames Water who lease it to the volunteer members of Maple Lodge Conservation Society. Regular work parties from the Society are responsible for maintaining and enhancing the reserve.



From the Clubhouse Hide there is a view over the lake, and the feeding site attracts a wide variety of birds and animals. Strategically placed posts here and elsewhere provide kingfishers with good fishing perches.

The Plantation area has been planted with native trees such as oak, alder and ash. The alder cones attract mixed flocks of siskin, lesser redpoll and tits. The mature trees and hedges provide nest sites for many common birds.

The Paddock is carefully managed and is only cut twice a year. During the summer it is a haven for wild flowers, butterflies and warblers.

The Wild Flower Meadow is protected by a rabbit-proof fence and is home to marbled white butterflies in mid-summer. It also houses a barn owl box from which young have successfully fledged.

Marsh Lake and Clubhouse Lake support breeding wildfowl including gadwall, teal, tufted duck, shoveler and little grebe. The reed beds are visited by reed and sedge warblers as well as the occasional bittern.

The Long Hedge contains an ancient mixture of shrubs and trees with flowers to attract insects and butterflies, followed by berries for wintering birds. Mammals present on the reserve include fox, weasel, common shrew and harvest mouse.

There are 10 hides on the reserve so that people can observe wildlife without disturbance. Seats and benches are also sited around the reserve so that visitors can pause and enjoy the peaceful setting. Where practicable, areas of the reserve have been made wheelchair accessible, including a number of the hides.

The clubhouse has toilet facilities with disabled access. Car parking is available in the nearby social club car park and there is disabled parking next to the entrance to the reserve.

Membership of Maple Lodge Conservation Society is open to anyone with an interest in conservation and natural history. The Society also welcomes visits from interested groups. Access to the reserve is via membership or by pre-arrangement with the Society.

For more details please contact the Chairman, Keith Pursall, on 07580 535986 or keith@maplelodge.org