



# The Longlander

SEPTEMBER 2022 ISSUE 08



# Welcome

**Autumn arrives, harvests are taken, and new seeds are sown!**

**The last three months since our last Longlander issue have involved a lot of developments for Long Lands Common.**

**We held our Annual General Meeting, we concluded the membership consultation on our Food Forest project, we undertook a selection process to pick our delivery partner for White Rose Forest funding to plant 9000 trees on the Common, and just days before going to cyber-print we held a “green hay” spreading day on site to enhance the diversity of plant life in the Common’s East field.**



*Photo Credit: Margaret Buck*

**Of the above, probably the biggest news we have is the selection of a delivery partner. This unlocks the White Rose Forest funding we’ve applied for and gives a pathway to planting almost ten thousand trees (not to mention, also laying \*actual\* pathways), hopefully starting this winter season – keep an eye on your email inboxes for that, because when we have our first batch of trees coming in, we’ll be needing lots of volunteers to join in with the planting efforts!**



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*

**I am also pleased to report that, having concluded our membership consultation over the summer, the Long Lands Common membership have voted 99.97% in favour of proceeding with the Long Lands Community Food Forest project. More on this, as it develops.**

**So, for now please do enjoy this issue of our Newsletter. Much has been done in our steady pace towards establishing the Common as a true forest and nature reserve, and the fruits of that effort will continue to ripen across this harvest season!**

**If you would like to contribute to The Longlander by writing an article, or want to send us your letters and photographs, then get in touch at: [thelonglander@yahoo.com](mailto:thelonglander@yahoo.com)**

**Ben Skinner - Chair of Long Lands Common**

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# News From Long Lands Common

## Plum Seed Gathering

On Tuesday 2nd August a small group of enthusiastic foragers gathered at Bilton Hall Drive to collect wild plums, in particular the seeds.

A few plums were consumed on the night (so delicious) but the majority were taken away to have their seeds removed, washed and dried.

The seeds are being stored for later use in the Food Forest project.



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*

## Long Lands Commons Merchandise!



<https://long-lands-common.teemill.com/>

We are very excited to announce that we have an online shop. We have t-shirts, jumpers and hoodies for men, women and kids in various designs, all made from organic materials and printed in the UK in a factory powered by renewable energy.

Please visit <https://long-lands-common.teemill.com> to place your order!



# News From Long Lands Common

## Container Delivery

After months of planning and preparation we took delivery of two shipping containers on the 21st June.

The smaller of the two containers will be converted into a compostable toilet in the near future.

The larger of the two is being used as a storage area/site ranger hut. Affectionally named Carl's shed in memory of Carl Nelson, husband of our board member Linda. Carl founded and ran Veloheads in Starbeck, supporting young people into adulthood via vocational training and work experience opportunities. Carl was an enthusiastic supporter of Long Lands Common, a driving force of positive energy and inspiration to all who knew him. Huge thanks to Carl and Linda for their donation that paid for the containers.



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*



*Photo Credit: Ben Skinner*

## Green Hay

Volunteers gathered and spread 'green' hay on both the 10th August and the 11th September. A record number of volunteers gave up their time, vehicles, energy, equipment and expertise to start the process of creating a wildflower grasslands at Long Lands Common.

Big thanks to Dorothy and Ian Griffin who allowed us to practice our scything skills and collect "green" hay from their species-rich wild meadow.

The ground at Long Lands Common was harrowed a couple of days before in preparation; removing the dead grass and exposing the soil.

The green hay contained wildflowers and grasses just as they were shedding seed and still 'green'. The hay was scythed by an enthusiastic group, many of whom had never previously used a scythe. The cut hay was quickly transferred to Long Lands Common where another team spread it by hand, allowing the seed to drop. Thanks to all who volunteered. We cannot wait to see the results next year.

# News From Long Lands Common

## Yellow Rattle Seed Collection



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*

**Meet Dorothy and Ian Griffin. They have been managing a meadow in Staveley for 20 years. At last count they have over 100 species of wild flowers.**

**On Saturday 16th July we had the pleasure of visiting and, under their guidance, collecting yellow-rattle seeds.**

**When the flowers of yellow-rattle fade, the brown calyxes in which the tiny seeds ripen can be seen and heard - they give a distinctive 'rattle', hence the common name.**

**The seeds will be spread on Long Lands Common in the autumn to help change the grassland back to meadow. Yellow-rattle is an annual that thrives in grasslands, living a semi-parasitic life by feeding off the nutrients in the roots of nearby grasses. The yellow-rattle will allow more native species to push their way through.**

**Huge thanks to Dorothy and Ian for such a warm welcome and the knowledge that they shared. Thanks to both Dan Carne at Woodmeadow Trust and Kevin Walker (Head of Science at the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland) for arranging.**



# News From Long Lands Common

## Big Butterfly Count



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*

**Around 40 members participated in the inaugural Long Lands Common Big Butterfly Count on Saturday 6th August.**

**This is an annual UK-wide count organised by the charity Butterfly Conservation. It's a very important citizen science project which contributes hugely to our knowledge on how different butterfly species are fairing and informs where resources are targeted to help declining species.**



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*

**The event started with a picnic where members shared stories, jokes and sandwiches. Counts were performed in 15 minutes blocks. Our invertebrate expert Keith Wilkinson MBE gave advice and help with identification. Various reference books, recording sheets, and ID charts were made available for use.**

**Despite a fairly strong breeze, over the course of 2 hours or so we counted a total of 82 butterflies.**

**The Small White was out in front with 23 logged, plus plenty of Large Whites, Small Coppers, Speckled Woods and Meadow Browns. Other species spotted were Green Veined White, Gatekeeper, Comma, Red Admiral and day flying moths Silver Y, Twin Spot and Grass-Veneer.**

# News From Long Lands Common

Thanks to everyone for your interest and enthusiasm for this event. Special thanks go to Keith Wilkinson MBE for lending us his time and expertise, and to Site Rangers Miranda Dunstan, Amy Morey, Ian Burl, Geoff Foxall, Barry Slaymaker and John Jackson for all their help on the day, including a frantic hunt for lost car keys!

For further details on the Big Butterfly Count please have a look at the information on the Butterfly Conservation Website: <https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>



Photo Credit: Edward Lee



Photo Credit: Edward Lee



# News From Long Lands Common

## Annual General Meeting

We held our second Annual General Meeting on Saturday the 25th of June. Those attending got to discover all about the work going on over the last year to transform our collectively owned farmland into a Community Woodland Nature Reserve.

On the day there were display areas showing some of the history of the Long Lands Common project so far, a bio-blitz, a volunteers' tent which was the place to go to hear about the various opportunities on offer, get inspired and get involved and a trap camera display showing footage of night time visitors to the site.



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*

A fundraising raffle and refreshments stall raised just over £500. The raffle stall was packed with fantastic prizes and there was a mouth watering range of cakes on the refreshments stall. Raffle prizes and cakes were all donated by our members.

A community picnic preceded the AGM. Board members then gave an update on the years progress including finances.

1. Secretary's Report
2. Woodland Creation Officer's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Presentation of the Food Forest Project Concept and online consultation instructions
5. Member's Q&A on the Food Forest Project
6. Elections to the Board of Directors
7. Elections of Officers
8. Member's Q&A (General Questions)

# News From Long Lands Common

After the AGM, Linda, Lily and Daisy Nelson officially opened Carl's Shed - a new Site Ranger's hut/storage area. Carl's shed was declared open when a beautifully handmade hay rope, made by Carl's daughter, was removed. Visitors could then view the Long Lands Common history exhibition inside.



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*

**There were some changes to the board of directors.**

**Directors Standing Down: Jo Smalley, Ben Aston, Lucy Bagnall**

**Directors Re-elected: Chris Kitson (Secretary), Allan Smyth (Treasurer), Trish Sanders, Rick Brewis**

**Directors Elected to the Board: Linda Nelson, Miranda Dunstan (Membership Secretary), Edward Lee**

**Directors Remaining on the Board: Ben Skinner (Chair), Ian Fraser, Artemis Swann, James McKay, Geoff Foxall, Barry Slaymaker, Angela Jex, John Jackson, Richard Lord, Rod Beardshall**



*Photo Credits: Edward Lee*



# News From Long Lands Common

During the AGM there was also be the chance to hear more about the exciting new Long Lands Community Food Forest proposal. Kate Wilkinson gave a passionate vision of the transformative project and attendees were asked to vote on whether we should move forward with the idea by purchasing a nearby piece of land. Members voted in favour.



*Photo Credit: Edward Lee*

Thank you to everyone who made the day possible. Our army of volunteers who prepared the site putting up tents, prepared the toilet facilities, put up exhibitions, made signs, baked cakes, poured tea, lent tools, guided people to the site, made everyone feel welcome and informed, our board members who give so much of their time, energy and expertise and you the members who continue to show such immense support for Long Lands Common, whether it's donating raffle prizes, buying shares or just encouraging us to keep going.

The sun shone, your faces smiled and our hearts swelled.



*Photo Credits: Edward Lee*

# Site Rangers Corner



*Photo Credit: Roy Coote*

## By Roy Coote

### Why I became a Long Lands Common ranger (and why might you?)

Well, I have to be honest here and say that part of the attraction for me was in the name. For me the word “ranger” evokes a vision of a shadowy and enigmatic figure hanging around in inns whilst awaiting the chance to secretly and safely escort hobbits across Long Lands Common.... and so, of course, I signed up like a shot for the induction. Pretty early in the induction session it was disappointingly clear that I wasn’t going to meet anyone called Baggins .... but all was not lost; surely I could stride across the fields scanning the horizon with narrowed, piercing eyes and every so often drop slowly onto one knee and reach down for the animal droppings beside the animal tracks that had caught my eye? Then, while still staring moodily into the middle distance, my eyes narrowing further to barely slits, I would sniff and then taste those droppings and declare that a vixen, carrying a freshly caught rabbit, and her two cubs had passed this way only an hour ago?

Now you may think this is just a product of my over-active imagination, and you’d be right, but there is more than a grain of truth here because, personally, being a Long Lands Common site ranger is about how it makes me feel. I have visited the site only a handful of times so far but I have stopped in the middle of the meadow and gazed into the sky watching a Red Kite wheeling slowly above me... and lowered myself onto the log bench on the mound whilst a Small Skipper butterfly landed on a thistle only inches away from my leg.... and sat on the edge of the big pond whilst male Emperor Dragonflies flashed emerald green and sapphire blue in the sunlight patrolling the airspace above the females laying their eggs.



**It feels like the whole world has been gently slowing whilst I've been on the site. Each time a feeling of contentment has nudged gently but insistently into my consciousness as I thought, "Where else can I go for a few hours and feel this close to nature and know that I am doing something so worthwhile?" Yes, I have experienced the wonders of nature before and yes, I have, once or twice, done something worthy and selfless but I don't think I ever done those things together. Let me tell you, it is a unique combination that feels like I am stripping away the vestiges of my corporate, working life and getting a small glimpse into my own soul....**



*Photo Credit: Roy Coote*

**Okay, okay, I hear you say, enough with the soul-searching and flowery prose, I get it, you're getting back to nature, and all that, and feeling smug about it. What about the practicalities, though, because I want to be a ranger too and what if I can't identify animals just by tasting their poo? Well, you shouldn't have any concerns on that score because this feels like a team where we are all learning together. We have a very active WhatsApp group where we share photos or descriptions of what we've seen on our visits and the group puts forward identification suggestions. Further sessions are promised to help us improve our identification skills but really you just need to be observant and take notes and it's amazing what the Long Lands Common ranger team (including Ranger Google) can tell you.**

**Recording the wildlife on site is a key part of what the site rangers do, of course, but we are guardians of our protected corner of the Shire...ahem, Harrogate... and that means checking the boundaries are secure, picking up litter, watering the tree saplings and so on. There are occasional human visitors to the site as well so we must also be the friendly and welcoming face of Long Lands Common.**

**I'm looking forward to playing my small part in the transformation of the common and it will be great to see the ambitious plans of the Long Lands Common committee to grow it, quite literally, into a managed natural asset for the community. I plan on visiting a couple of times a month to get my contentment fix and well, if I'm not there, just make sure to check the dark corners of the local hostelryes...**

# Community Food Forest

## Long Lands Common Community Food Forest Update



*Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson at Henbat Permaculture Gathering*

**By Kate Wilkinson**

**At the AGM there was a huge amount of support for the Food Forest project, expressed not only in votes, but also in words of encouragement, enthusiasm, in pledges to volunteer and even in tears. This all gives the group courage. It means so much to us to feel supported by you and connected with the whole Longlands community. I wanted to start with a huge thank you to every Longlander for their support.**

**After the AGM, the last thing that I was expecting was a telephone call from a journalist.. But I suppose that just shows how much I have to learn! Since then, I feel like I have a new part-time job, trying to describe Permaculture to people who have never heard of it, and communicating the Food Forest vision. The article in the Stray Ferret was just the beginning.**

**It has been wonderful to welcome some new people to the group. Although we do not yet have a piece of land to work on, there are many ways in which the Food Forest already exists - it is metamorphosing, germinating, from a seed-idea into a rooted, living reality. The Forest is growing into a community and a way of doing or thinking.**



# Community Food Forest



Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson

For us, being part of the Food Forest means finding ways to generate all the energy we need as we go along. That means making space for rest, for play and for celebration alongside the work. We are planning foraging walks, art projects and more Permaculture workshops. This winter we will begin raising young plants. It is also really important for the group that our roles stay sustainable - they shouldn't feel like heavy burdens.

In that spirit, we designed our next meeting as an Alternative Harvest Festival. After all, we are interested in re-learning some of the old ways of being indigenous to this place.

I received a useful question from a Longlander about how the crops will be used. I thought I would share my answer with you:

***"The Food Forest is a response to many problems we see in the world around us, including the Cost of Living crisis and ill health due to poor nutrition. As with any food-producing system, there will be times of year where the abundance of a particular crop will just be overwhelming. It's hard to give away rhubarb in rhubarb season!"***

***In Permaculture design, we recognise that any surplus can become pollution if it is not used or shared.***

***The destination of the many crops and yields is not fixed. This is a multi-generational project and we will need to be able to respond to changes over time as well as the availability of volunteer resources and the changing needs of the wider community.***



Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson



# Community Food Forest

***Secondly the Food Forest group will harvest and hold stalls and festivals which will raise funds to support the maintenance of Longlands Common and the Food Forest.***

***Thirdly, we hope to have a team of cooks and bottlers and dryers and fermenters to make preserves and learn ways of storing crops for other seasons and yes, that includes cider and juice for Long Lands events!***

***We will also be looking to make connections with local community groups such as food banks so that the produce can contribute to the reduction of hunger and food-poverty in the area".***



Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson



Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson

**Finally, I was lucky enough to attend this year's Permaculture Wales Gathering at Henbant Farm. I met with farmers and ecologists and foresters all working hand in hand with nature and her patterns. We shared pickling tips in the kitchen, we learned how the nutrient density of foods depends on the health of the soil. It is easy to feel overwhelmed and alone in a prevailing culture which doesn't take care of people or of the planet as it should. But the truth is, as human creatures, as part of nature ourselves, we are never really alone. I'll leave you with some things I overheard at the Gathering:**

**"There's no before, no after. It's all during"**

**"Humans are keystone omnivores"**

**"We are equipping nature with tools and allowing it to express itself"**

**And finally, from Permaculture farmer Rachna Reddy**

**"Listen to people. Go with the good feeling. Be on. Be open. Just go!"**



# Ancient Oak Acorn Collection Days at Ripley Castle

By Kate From KindleWoods



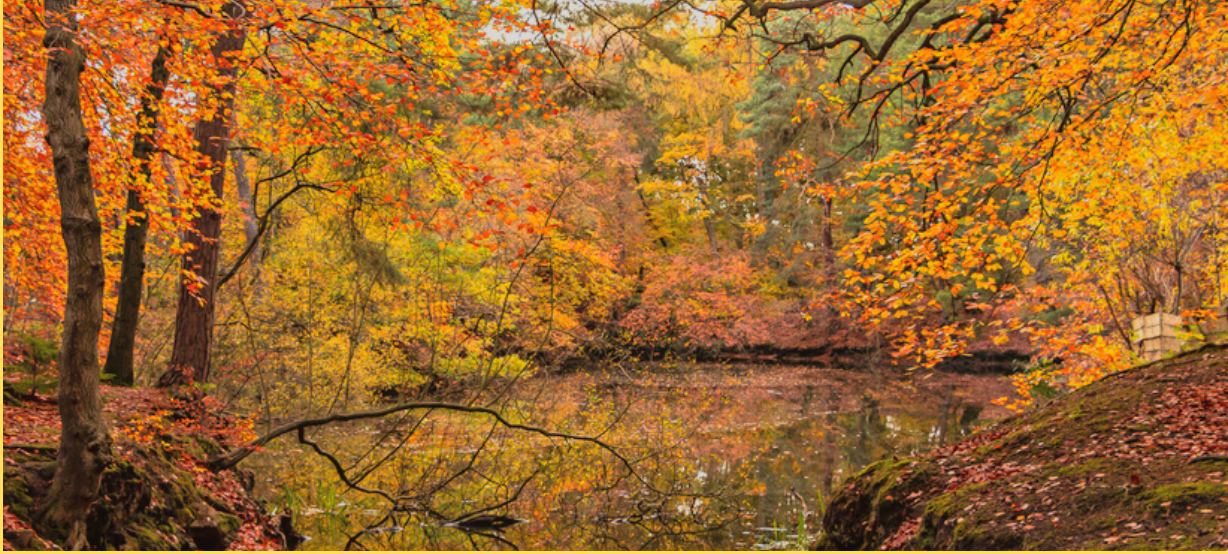
*Photo Credit: Ian Fraser*

**Can you help? KindleWoods CIC is working with the White Rose Forest (White Rose Forest - White Rose Forest) across the Royal Forest of Knaresborough and beyond to collect acorns from ancient and veteran oaks this Autumn. The acorns will then be taken to a tree nursery to be grown on and planted to support the restoration of oak woodland locally and ensure the genetic legacy of these important trees. We'd love your support.**

**KindleWoods is holding collections with KindleWoods volunteers on the 25th and 30th September at Ripley Castle, just north of Harrogate. There will be two sessions, 10am til 12pm and 12.30pm til 3pm and you can attend both if you wish. Long Lands Common board supports this project and is asking that our supporters volunteer to help KindleWoods on the two collection days at Ripley Castle estate.**

**Ripley has several veteran oak trees, some fantastic ancient oak trees, some of which are 1000 years old. Join us outside the castle tearoom at 10am, where we will walk over into the magnificent grounds to collect. Bring a pair of gloves, your lunch and warm clothing, waterproofs and sturdy footwear. We will keep you topped up with cups of hot tea and biscuits! To register your interest contact Ian Fraser (Long Lands Common) at: [ianfraser3@me.com](mailto:ianfraser3@me.com) or sign up at [www.kindlewoods.com/acorns](http://www.kindlewoods.com/acorns)**

# Autumn Leaf Colour Changes



*Photo Credit: Artemis Swann*

**By Ralph Hipps**

*Trees are like our silent guardians, watching over us in a manner of speaking, providing us with the oxygen we need for the carbon dioxide we return. When walking through a woodland and being with trees, there is a pervasive calm that studies have shown can improve individual well-being. They also give us stunning display of colour every Autumn. Here, we look at what happens and why we get the beautiful colour changes.*

Autumn is a season of new leaf colour, and a stroll in autumn can be visually stimulating as well as mentally soothing. The poet John Keats in his 'Ode To Autumn' calls this a time of 'mellow fruitfulness', a period of comfy ripening: fruit comes to fruition and leaves mature, turning shades of ochre. The reason behind this shows how connected life is to the environment: as the earth spins, 'sunlight wanes'. Trees decide to lose unnecessary chlorophyll that absorbs sunlight and leave behind colours of yellow, orange and red. However, this dependable sign of the season is not guaranteed. Leaves have adapted over a long time to yearly light, but if the climate starts to change too dramatically, as seen this summer, then leaves may start turning and falling earlier and we may see trees becoming unwell if this becomes the norm.



*Photo Credit: Artemis Swann*



# Autumn Leaf Colour Changes

Asking why leaves change colour can be like looking into a wishing well and trying to see where it ends! It can become complicated in our minds as we look to understand and end up questioning nature as a whole. Basically, leaves change colour because their chemical makeup changes in response to the changes in light.

So here's the science bit. [The Woodland Trust](#) website has an in-depth feature on this phenomenon of leaf colour. It explains, there are different chemicals inside leaves: green chlorophyll, yellow carotenes, and reddish anthocyanins. Trees stop making new chlorophyll in the autumn; the loss of heat takes away the leaf's ability to do so and the leaf goes to the yellow carotene colour; though if there is still some heat, then leaves can make the red anthocyanin colour.



*Photo Credit: Laura Reed*

Another article from [Woodlands.co.uk](#) explains that red colouring arises from anthocyanin's response to sugar (just as our teeth can change colour from too much sugar). So leaves can be red, yellow and green.



*Photo Credit: A. Kiinsta*

The science behind leaf changes also tells us as humans when the seasons start and when they finish. It signals to us on a non verbal level that winter is coming and to start our preparations. In days gone by this would have been gathering fruit and wood ready to use during the cold months. We still do this now to some degree but, rising temperatures have seen leaf colour changes start taking place earlier which could impact our own rhythms of life and it wouldn't be autumn without that blaze of colour!

Nature is constantly moving and changing with the seasons instead of staying still. There is a constant race as life adapts to the environment. Leaves could simply remain one colour but instead adapt to the environment like other life forms. Takayoshi Koike explores the phenomenon of 'Autumn Colouring' in Japanese deciduous species.



*Photo Credit: Artemis Swann*



# Your Nature Finds

In this issue, we feature a Bee enjoying the flowers from Angela Jex, a Grasshopper from Miranda Dunstan, a very lovely set of Badger footprints from Jane Johnston, some bird action from Ben Skinners camera trap and a beautiful six spot burnet taken by Cate Quinn.

Life is most certainly flourishing at Long Lands Common!



We would love it if you sent us your captures of what you've found and we'll do our best to feature them!

Email your photographs to: [thelonglander@yahoo.com](mailto:thelonglander@yahoo.com)

or

Tag us in your pictures on Twitter [@LongLandsCommon](https://twitter.com/LongLandsCommon), on our Instagram [@longlandsccommon](https://www.instagram.com/longlandsccommon) or over on our [Facebook page](#)