

Friends of The Withey Beds

Spring 2007

Local Nature Reserve Update

As most of you have hopefully seen by now the new **boardwalk** is currently under construction at The Withey Beds. Work began in late March and is due to finish any time now. The boardwalk will link the two bridges which were recently constructed with the help of funding from Groundwork Hertfordshire. We are hoping to officially open the boardwalk in June, so keep an eye on the local paper for a date and time, as well as other events which might be taking place.



Future Events

Sunday 6 May sees the return of the popular **Dawn Chorus** at The Withey Beds. Blearly eyed birdwatchers are invited to join our local bird expert, Anna Marett, who will be on hand from 4am to help unravel the confusing world of birdsong and lead a walk around the LNR. This event is part of the International Dawn Chorus Day organised by the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and offers a great reward for anyone making this early morning visit.

Pay a visit to The Withey Beds as well as the beautiful lakes of the Watford Piscators on Sunday 13 May during the annual **guided walk**. Meeting at the Batchworth Lock Centre at 2pm there will be a 1.5 mile walk along the Ebury Way before reaching the fishing lakes where you will be treated to a guided tour. From here we will cross over to The Withey Beds and learn more about how this distinctive site is managed for wildlife.

The final event for May is the **Rickmansworth Festival** on 19 and 20 May where the Friends of The Withey Beds will have a stand. Hazel Godfrey, who helped build the willow hide, will also be there demonstrating her crafts.

In June look out for **glow worms** in the field. These have been seen on dry warm nights over the past two years.

On 23 August there will be a **childrens' bird box building** activity at The Withey Beds where we will be making boxes for blue tits, great tits, robins and sparrows to name a few. The event is free but does require advance booking.

If you want to learn a little more about the creatures of the night why not come along to a special **moth night** on 11 September at 8:30pm. The Countryside Management Service will be setting up a moth trap and telling you a little more about these fascinating creatures. There will also be the opportunity to look at the moths up close. You might even be fortunate enough to see a Privet Hawk Moth, below, as we did last year.



For more information on any of these activities contact Kay FitzGerald on 01923 727105 or at kay.fitzgerald@threerivers.gov.uk

The Committee are currently looking for new members. You don't need to have lots of spare time – just enthusiasm! Whether you fancy increasing your fitness and delivering newsletters at the same time, would like to be involved with the financial matters or have a creative flair and would like to help design the newsletter then just get in touch at witheybeds@google.com

Bird News by Anna Marett

The breeding season is in full swing and very early morning visits will reward the visitor with a rich chorus of bird song.

Three tit boxes have been erected and a boardwalk and two bridges now means an easy ramble around the reserve.

Look out for whitethroats and chiffchaffs singing at the tops of bushes and trees and the resident birds including thrushes, finches and woodpeckers will be busy feeding young.

Kingfisher can regularly be seen dashing along the river and disappearing under the bridge. Mallard often can be seen with their young on the pond by the path.