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Marking his territory: Robin in blossom at Long Lane Pasture. Photo Donald Lyven

Calls to safeguard the fabric of our library building

By Daphne Chamberlain

East Finchley has lost many library resources, making it all the more vital that we can still protect the beautiful Grade 2 listed building on the High Road. Adaptation to part commercial use is underway, due to be completed in August, but there are many features named in the listing that users want protected.

Adam Gee, co-founder of EFLUG (East Finchley Library Users Group), has written to all three of the organisations involved in the adaptation. These are: Barnet Council; Capita, the contract administrators and designers; and S.W. Bruce, the contracted builders.

EFLUG have asked all three to confirm that the Grade 2 Listed Status is known and understood in detail, and that every detail will be respected and safeguarded. They have also asked for clarification as to who is responsible within each organisation for this safeguarding, as published paperwork had not made this clear.

Responses so far

Barnet Council replied that the alterations being undertaken were in accordance with Listed Building Consent. They said that management of the works onsite, and of SW Bruce Ltd as principal building contractor, is being undertaken by Capita on their behalf, and that it is going ahead in close coordination with the Council's Conservation Officer.

The Barnet statement continued: "All parties are duly aware of the listed status of the building, and of the individual

elements listed within the building, and are proceeding with care and respect to these elements."

S.W. Bruce have said: "Our company has extensive experience in undertaking projects in Listed(Buildings)andBuildings of Historical Nature and our site team understand the protocols for working in such environments." At EFLUG's request, they have also passed on to their site team the need to respect and protect listed features, "over and above the usual formalities."

At the time of writing, there has been no response from Capita. Complete listing can be seen at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1390575>.

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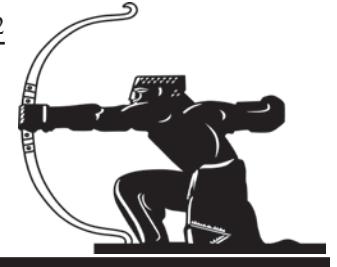
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Early birds deliver a delightful earful at dawn

By Linda Dolata

I suspect I am in the minority in thinking that 4.45am is the best time of the day, but even so we had an excellent turn out for the dawn chorus event at Long Lane Pasture on the last Sunday in April.

In the past we have walked around in a group, but this time everyone seemed to find a favourite bench or tree to wait quietly for the birds to do their thing, and for the sun to rise.

The blackbirds as ever were in full-throated song, each declaring its territory loudly and tunefully. A song thrush with its repetitive but so-pleasing melody caroled from the top of one of the poplars lining the North Circular, and even included facsimile police sirens in its repertoire. Somehow they sound much nicer when the thrush is the source of the sound.

Tuneful and harsh

The blackbird, thrush, robin, wren and blackcap all have wonderful songs, which everybody should do their best to hear at this time of the year... and all do still sing during the day, not just at dawn to welcome the sunrise.

Close to where the song thrush perched on high, a pair of crows tend the nest that we watched them construct last year. Other recognisable arias came from a pair of competing blackcaps, then minute wrens who have such loud brave voices for such a tiny bird.

As the time passed, other less tuneful calls were included in the chorus: the crows and their cousins the magpies were in evidence as was a single jay with its harsh call. A total of seven mallards went over, no doubt a female being pursued by several potential suitors, then a pair of honking Canada geese.

Flying lollipop

A good range of tits, bluetit, great tit, coal tit, and finally a single long-tailed tit were all heard and then seen. It is rare to see the beautiful little 'flying lollipop' of a long-tailed tit on



Flight of magpies: Just some of the dawn chorus birds at Long Lane Pasture. Photo Donald Lyven

its own, but this one was so busy collecting insect larvae that it obviously had nestlings to feed. We know they have bred on the pasture in the past, as last year their tiny neat round nest was spotted, concealed in the brambles.

The resident moorhen was there too, while starlings, sparrows and pigeons haunted the bird feeders and overhead were seen an elegant seagull, wood pigeons, and doubtless other

feathered vertebrates not listed.

We are very lucky in being next to both the railway line and allotments, which more than doubles the area for the birds to inhabit.

For anybody who has yet to visit the pasture, it is open every day at this time of the year, located on Long Lane, opposite the fire station. To know more, pop in on a Saturday morning or look for our stall at East Finchley Festival this month.

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