



Rooted in nature: Tudor Primary pupils plant new saplings at Long Lane Pasture

Eco-warriors plant for the future

By Jacqueline Lotan

Children from Tudor Primary School joined hands with volunteers at Long Lane Pasture to plant trees, initiating the growth of a mini forest in the heart of our neighbourhood.

The young eco-warriors eagerly got their hands dirty, digging holes, placing saplings, and nurturing the beginnings of what promises to be a flourishing area of new growth in the green haven opposite the fire station in Long Lane, N3.

By actively participating in the creation of the mini forest, they learned the importance of

environmental conservation, teamwork and community involvement.

Tudor Primary School is just a short walk from the pasture and pupils have been enjoying half-termly visits there to take part in creative outdoor learning sessions led by local artist Laura Fox.

Laura says: "The importance for children to spend

time outside in nature is indisputable for physical and mental health, so sessions have been designed to give time for play and open research of the environment. "For example, it is not uncommon for a child to be averse to touching mud. But by the end of the sessions, they love the sensation and have overcome a personal challenge."

Wayne Armsby: champion for the underdog

Volunteers at the Long Lane Pasture Trust last month announced the death of their much-loved Treasurer, Wayne Armsby, who died of cancer. Wayne was instrumental in saving the nature reserve from development 25 years ago.

After moving to Finchley, Wayne spent his spare time turning a dumping ground on the Pointalls Allotments site behind his house on Long Lane, N3, into two useful plots, complete with ponds to increase local biodiversity and offer a haven for wildlife.

This achievement proved fortuitous when a local campaign in 1999 to save Long Lane Pasture, an original two-acre patch of The Finchley Common between the allotments and the North Circular, succeeded and the Pasture was transformed by Wayne and others, from an overgrown wasteland into an organised reserve.

Wayne's vision of how the Pasture should look, the tremendous effort he put in and the time he committed was



Much-missed: Wayne Armsby

recognised in 2017, when he received a Barnet Civic Award at the Town Hall, from the then Mayor Cllr David

ardent conservationist and all-around good guy. He will be sorely missed."

Longstaff.

A little Archer

He was also the craftsman who created a companion to the famous statue of Archie on the top of East Finchley tube station (The Archer, August 2019). His slightly smaller wood version, called Alf, was displayed prominently on the roof of his outhouse and was visible to passers-by in Long Lane.

More recently, Wayne fought a protracted legal battle through the courts that eventually saw Pointalls Allotments move from a company back to council control.

Donald Lyven, chairman of the Pasture trust, said: "Wayne was always a champion for the underdog, a talented artist, urban farmer,

When can we get into Long Lane Pasture again?

By David Melsome

Reader Shan Magnusson wrote to us last month with these questions about Long Lane Pasture, the much-loved mini nature reserve run by volunteers on land opposite the fire station in Long Lane, next to the North Circular.

Shan wrote: "The Pasture is a beloved little treasure in East Finchley and one can find themselves feeling very at ease in the tranquillity of nature there. But why have its opening times been reduced so drastically to just two hours on a Saturday from once, six full days a week?"

"We are indeed grateful to the volunteers and understand the problems with vandalism in the past, however, the opening times are extremely restrictive. Can nothing be done to open for at least Sunday's full day?" We shared Shan's questions with the Long Lane Pasture team and here's what volunteer Harriet Copperman told us: "We understand the disappointment for many locals that the Pasture is not open as it used to be. However, at this time of year it has always been closed, except for 10am-12noon on Saturdays when we're working there."

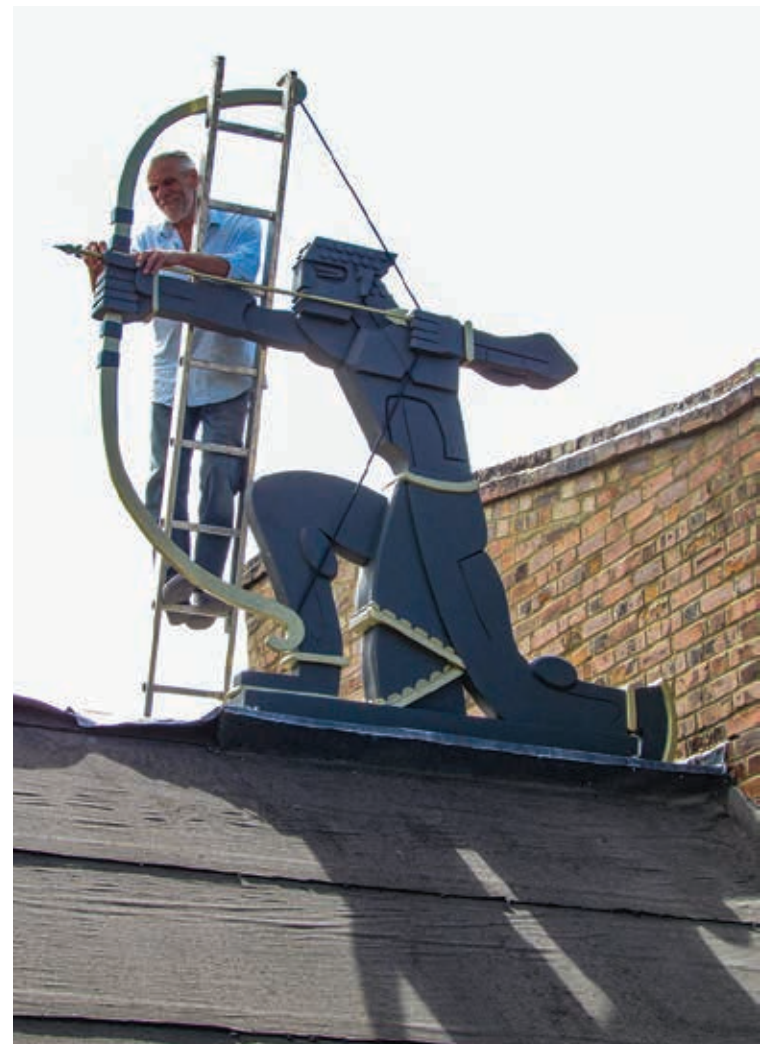
"This is because of the flood-

ing, which this year is really bad. Gradually as the conditions improve, we have then left the Pasture open, either for the rest of the day, or for both Saturday and Sunday, aiming for daily opening by or before Easter.

"However, while the week-day closure is partly because of the vandalism, it's mainly because the person who valiantly opened and closed the Pasture and kept an eye on it on a daily basis for around 20 years is now no longer able to do so.

"About five or six of our regular volunteers have stepped forward and shared out the task of visiting at 10am and dusk on Saturdays and Sundays for the main part of the year. If there are school or other groups who want to visit the Pasture on a particular occasion, we would do our best to accommodate those groups, as we do already.

"New or potential volunteers are always welcome to drop by on Saturday mornings to have a chat with any of us, or give it a try. We can usually find something suitable for all levels of energy and fitness. Please send inquiries or comments to longlanepasture@gmail.com."



A second Archie: Wayne with Alf, his rooftop cousin to East Finchley station's famous statue