



Wolvercote Commoners'

NEWSLETTER December 2018

WISHING EVERYONE A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS

A Winter Poem

Losing Track

*In the morning I dress warmly -
the gate clangs - the sky is purple
- wherever you went in winter we
go now - following the cart tracks past the
whitening bones of geese, broken sticks, feathers,
lost trainers - allotments all frosty cabbages -
horses stand frozen - steamy breath - dogs running
sideways sniffing the ground - river flowing fast
past the ancient hut circles - hills mauve - black
crows - boots sucking into icy mud - endless cargo
train heading north - reindeer on the meadow
somewhere far away...*

Jane, Rafael & Simon

Time to help a Hedgehog — Feed them to fatten them up for hibernation. You can use cat food (but not fish) BUT no dairy or bread, also leave them fresh water. Leave an untidy corner in your garden (good for bedding and a food source) and leave small holes in your fencing so they can roam.



DON'T FORGET THE COMMONERS' CAROLS

Monday 17th December 6.45pm

Baptist Hall, Lower Wolvercote

with the Kennington

Brass Band

& of course Father Christmas



A New Picnic Area is born!

After two consecutive Commoners' work-days of heavy bramble bashing an area by the canal was cleared, which will make a great new picnic area on the canal's edge by Ball's Bridge*. Probably just one more work-day is needed to complete the work and then it should be fully cleared and ready for summer picnics. Not only



We even found the remnants of a foam mattress, which had to be cut up before it could be removed

did we have to remove masses of the dreaded brambles, we also found mounds of rubbish, even including a foam mattress which had completely blocked the ditch.

* For those who might wonder why it's called Ball's Bridge, wonder no more: The Plough Inn on Wolvercote Green dates from at least 1812, when John Ball was the landlord. He died in 1840, aged 74, but the brick bridge over the canal is still known as Ball's Bridge in memory of his tenure there. It was also the scene of a dramatic fatal incident in 1829 involving Thomas Beesley, a member of a long-established boating family. He was accused of stealing a duck from the common stock on Port Meadow, but just as he was denying it, according to a contemporary account, 'the duck quacked; it was in his pocket!' A fight ensued, when Beesley and some accomplices moved to stand provocatively on Ball's Bridge. In the ensuing fracas John Barrett, a 16-year-old local boy, was fatally wounded when Beesley 'without the slightest provocation,' witnesses said, 'struck him a terrific blow on his head with a bludgeon'. Beesley then fled across Port Meadow, to be rescued by some friends in a boat. However, he was soon apprehended, and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation for manslaughter.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Next Commoners' Open Talk

Tuesday 15th January

Simon Kenton '...but doesn't it get cold in winter?'

Myth busting and stories from 15 years afloat.

White Hart Garden Room at 7.30pm

If you would like this Newsletter emailed to you please email medesign@ntlworld.com

Don't forget Village Work Mornings second Saturday of every month

Meet outside the Village Hall at 10am (bring gloves, wellies and any gardening tools you have). Children welcome

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Chair: Mary Brown (01865 236897) Secretary: Eleanor Woods (07815 557630)