

# Monken Hadley Common Trust

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Registered Charity Number 1199156



## Biodiversity Newsletter March 2026

Dear Member,

Following on from the ecology report which was commissioned by the Trust last year a biodiversity group has been formed to study, map, nurture and encourage the flora and fauna on the Common and as spring comes we will be surveying and mapping our valuable and beautiful veteran trees in order to decide how best to preserve them.

Work will continue on uncovering the long dormant seed bed lying under a swathe of brambles on the exceedingly rare acid grassland close to the tree line to the west of the common. The area is easily recognisable by the gorse, heather and uneven, bumpy surface made from the many anthills. Exposure of the sub soil on similar glacial deposits elsewhere has led to the re-emergence of dormant plant species like heath bedstraw and tormentil and provided further habitats for invertebrates - lizards, solitary bees and butterflies such as meadow browns and small heaths. The ants themselves are a crucial food source for birds – they are the green woodpecker's primary food source.

You may be wondering about the plantation which has recently appeared at the western end of the woods, some of it protected by dead hedging! Our woodland, broadly speaking, is made up of a large number of trees of similar age and we do not know what effect the increasingly extreme weather and change in climate will have on it. However, we do know that a range of species and ages is essential in a healthy woodland. This area was selected for a project by The London Tree Ring, part of the countryside charity, CPRE, to trial the planting of three species of tree for coppicing: hazel, hornbeam and sweet chestnut (the last introduced by the Romans 2000 years ago). This ancient form of woodland management will introduce a new generation as well as material for future dead hedging projects to protect our most valuable trees, provide new habitat and protect sensitive areas. It also crucially encourages biodiversity by providing another environment as much needed sunlight reaches the woodland floor – we will see what wildflowers might emerge from their slumber.

On the following page is a copy of the information board which formed a part of the CPRE's recent presentation to parliament.

This is a short introduction to what we hope will be a flourishing woodland project and we would welcome the expertise or physical input of volunteers on a regular or occasional basis.

For more information, to get involved, or simply to give us some feedback, please contact [biodiversity@mhctrust.org.uk](mailto:biodiversity@mhctrust.org.uk)

100  
YEARS



Campaign  
to Protect  
Rural England

# Creating a nature network around the capital

## The problem and the CPRE solution

Across England, fragmented green space around cities is limiting nature's ability to recover and adapt to climate change.

The London Tree Ring is a bold, long-term project responding to the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and disconnection from nature experienced by many Londoners.

Creating a connected ring of habitats around the capital, including the planting of many new trees, will increase London's resilience to climate change. Radial routes will link the ring to more central, nature deprived areas and increase public access to green spaces.

### The Tree Ring will deliver:

- Carbon sequestration through tree planting.
- Increased biodiversity through a rich mosaic of connected habitats.
- Reduced vehicle emissions through attractive green routes for cycling and walking.
- Improved mental health through community involvement.
- Increased environmental awareness and skills, from schools to green apprenticeships.



## The London Tree Ring

As the London Tree Ring moves from research to implementation, we have identified a dozen "demonstrator sites" including Monken Hadley Common and Woodland in Barnet.

This is a large, 70-hectare site, mostly wooded with some open land. The vision for this site is not about creating brand new woodland, but about effectively managing and protecting the assets we have. Much of the current woodland is dominated by relatively few tree species of similar age, with a lack of diversity and succession with prolific holly and broad-leaved laurel inhibiting new tree establishment.

Dead hedging and haloing are being used as techniques to protect newly establishing coppice and veteran trees. New sweet chestnut, hazel and hornbeam will diversify the age structure and provide coppice products, for the use in future management activities.

A social contractor the Harington Scheme is aiding delivery, while providing supported employment placements and progression to work for youth trainees.



Find out  
more here:



*Two years ago, I read a Guardian article about a potential "Tree Ring" for London. Fast forward, after endless desk-based work to identify suitable sites behind me I'm delighted to be out planting trees in our 10 "demonstrator sites".*

Bill Byrne, Lead Volunteer on London Tree Ring, CPRE London

[www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)

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