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Bug blog

New York has Spider-Man, East Finchley has Bugwoman. This mysterious (alas, not masked) nature lover is a life-long Londoner, now living in the county roads.

As a child she spent most of her time in her pocket-hanky sized garden in Stratford, digging up insects with her mother's cutlery and marking ants with paint so that she would recognise them individually when she saw them next.



A ladybird in Bugwoman's garden in the County Roads.

Now a slightly scruffy middle-aged woman (her own description), Bugwoman is still fascinated by the plants and animals that surround us even in the midst of the city. She has promised to write about them on her blog every Saturday for

Here's a small extract:

One of the things that I most recommend if you feel downhearted, or stressed, or distracted, is to find a little piece of greenness and sit in it for a few minutes. It can be a garden, a city square, a park, a field. I can guarantee that after a few minutes, you will notice something. Maybe there will be an insect doing something interesting, or a leaf that doesn't look quite like all the others. If you close your eyes, you will hear birdsong threading its way between the sounds of the traffic and the chattering of passersby. For a few minutes you will be taken out of your head and into the big, rich, varied world around you, with all kinds of organisms going about their daily lives. If you are like me, you will realise just how much you don't know, and your curiosity will be piqued, but more than that you will be restored to your true, animal self, the one that knows that the deadline, the perceived slight, the to-do list, are all superficial compared to the hum of bees and the insistent pounding of sap below the bark.



A frog in Bugwoman's garden

the next five years (her first post was on 15 February this year) so she spends the week finding interesting creatures and plants to discuss with her readers.

Recently, she has also been posting on Wednesdays about the 'weeds' that grow unnoticed and uncelebrated at the bottoms of walls and which pop up unexpectedly in her garden.

Bugwoman is not a scientist or a wildlife expert, but she is curious, and loves to share what she discovers. Recently, she has recorded an angry squirrel in Cherry Tree Wood, celebrated the appearance of mistle thrushes and discovered that Shepherd's Purse is used in a Japanese festive dish.

She has stalked snails and slugs with a spotlight on a Saturday evening, and used the algae on the bark of the London Plane trees on the High Road to help her find her way home. You can enjoy Bugwoman's adventures on <http://bugwom-anlondon.com/>



Rosa, two and Lucy, one, get watering.

Our beans are growing

By Susie Huntington

I saw the plant and seed exchange advertised in the last edition of *THE ARCHER*. It was the first year we had been and I will definitely be returning next year. I took my one-year-old daughter along and she enjoyed selecting seeds and beans, some of which are heritage varieties not available in the shops. We've planted them in our old recycling boxes in our garden in Leslie Road and I'm hoping the anti-rodent/fox netting works. So far, so good.

Fancy that, it's Wossy

Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society is delighted to announce that its president and TV chat show host Jonathan Ross has once again agreed to judge the children's fancy dress and the adults' fancy hats competitions at the Summer Flower Show on Saturday 14 June at the Free Church Hall in Northway, NW11, from 3.00-5.30pm.

As well as the usual competitive classes for flowers, fruit, vegetables and other home-grown produce, for the first time there will also be a table at the show with

home-made jam, marmalade and other preserves for sale

in aid of the North London Hospice.

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