

The Withey Beds

Roesel's bush crickets normally have short wings, yet they are unable to fly. However, when population densities are very high, fully-winged individuals are produced which can fly great distances. Listen out between July and October and you may just hear the high pitched, continuous, buzzing of the males in the distance.



Roesel's Bush Cricket



Oak Jewel Beetle

The oak jewel beetle is a rare beetle which has recently seen its range expand. It favours ancient woodlands and pasture woodlands where the larvae burrow in and under the bark of old and dead oak trees.

Solitary bees live on their own rather than working with lots of other bees. The adults can be seen for around eight weeks each year when they are out and about pollinating plants. Only the females can sting and they only do this when they are extremely angry.

Solitary Bee

Soldier flies are small flies often associated with wetland habitat such as that found at The Withey Beds LNR.

The soldier fly here is typical of marsh and pond edge habitats.

Soldier Fly



How to get to The Withey Beds Local Nature Reserve



There is no car park at The Withey Beds so parking is extremely limited.

By train:

The Withey Beds is less than a 20 minute walk from Moor Park tube station.

By bus:

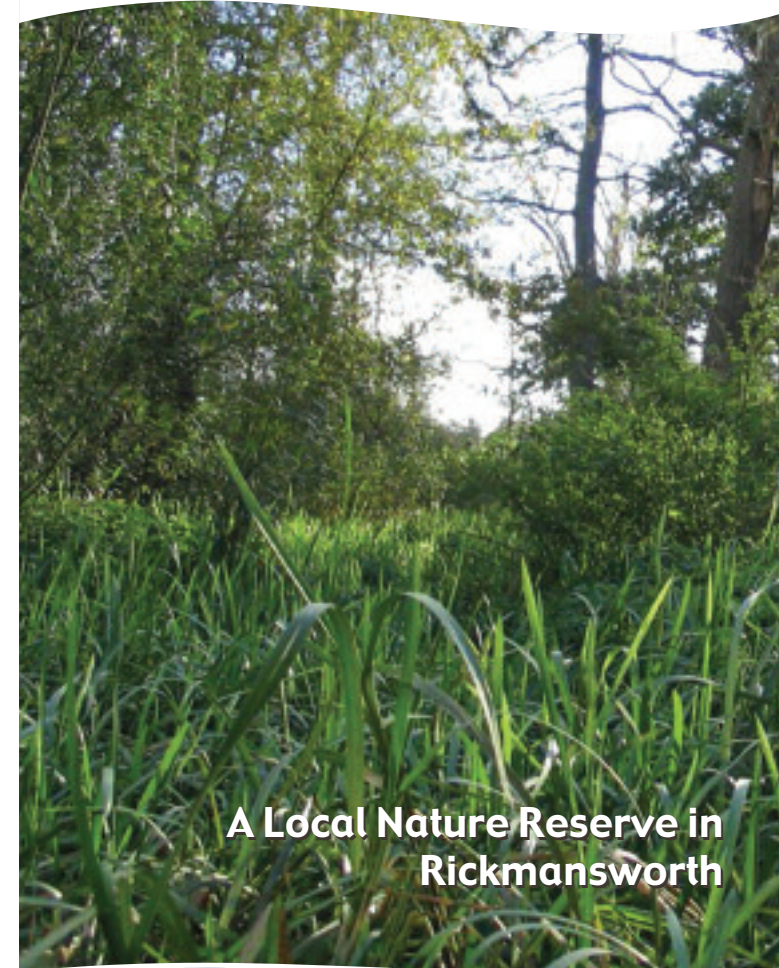
There are regular buses to Rickmansworth. Contact Traveline for information on 0871 2002233.

For general information contact Three Rivers District Council on 01923 776611. www.threerivers.gov.uk

The Countryside Management Service works with communities across Hertfordshire to help them care for and enjoy the environment. Telephone 01992 584433. www.hertslink.org/cms

The Friends of The Withey Beds are actively involved in the promotion and enhancement of the LNR. To find out more about the Friends of The Withey Beds go to www.thewitheybeds.org.uk

Produced by FitzpatrickWoolmer - 0800 130 3630



A Local Nature Reserve in Rickmansworth



What can you find?



Why is the Local Nature Reserve so important?

Throughout the 20th century wetlands have greatly declined within the district, as well as on a national scale. A drier county, changes in land use and urban development have all contributed to this. As such The Withey Beds Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is one of the few remaining wetlands in Hertfordshire.

The LNR also offers a variety of habitats and supports some fascinating plants and animals, particularly birds and insects which are characteristic of swamp and fen. For example, four invertebrates which are of a high national importance have all been found at The Withey Beds LNR. These are the oak jewel beetle, a soldier fly, a solitary bee and Roesel's bush cricket.

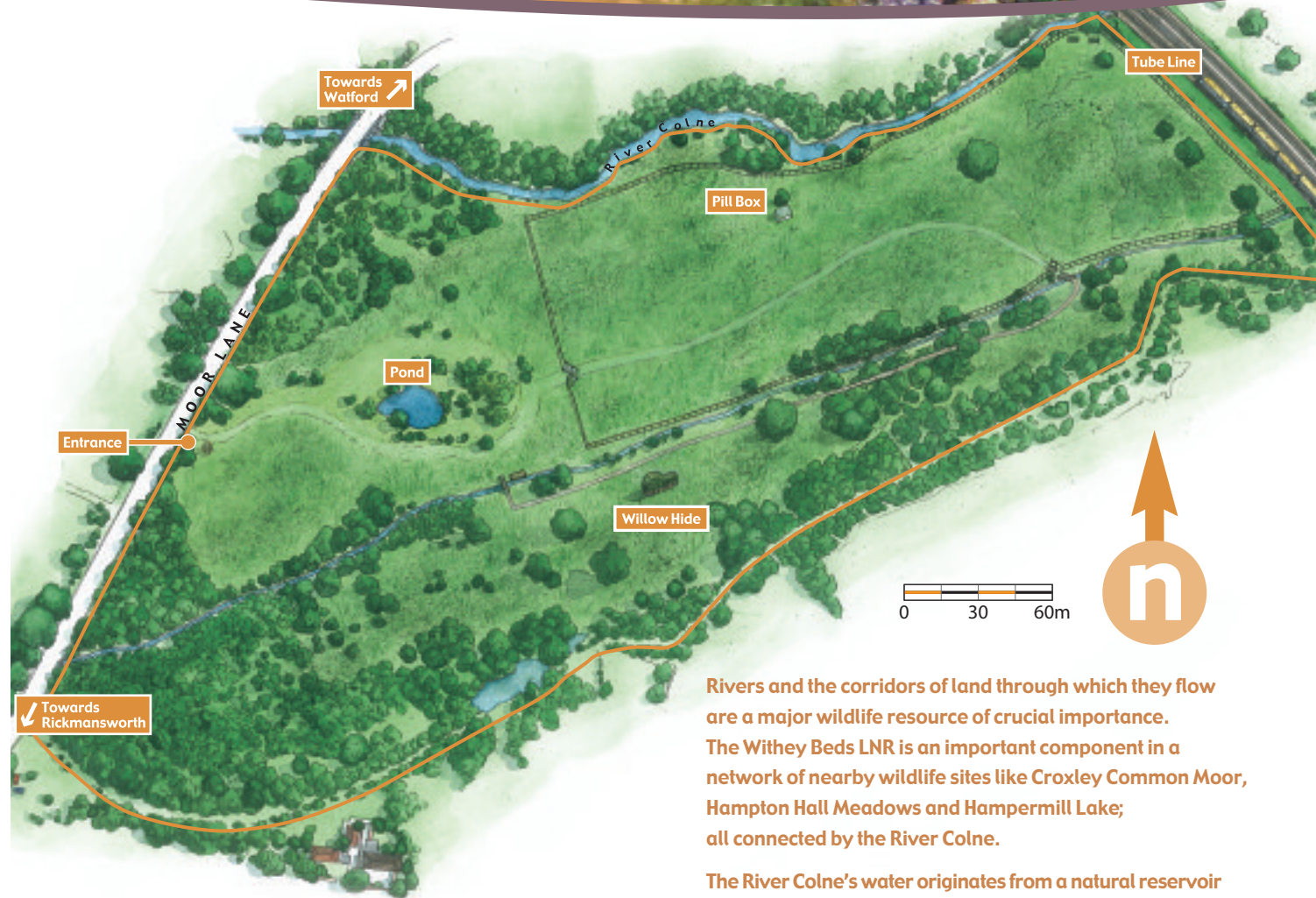
The diversity of habitats include wet woodland, mature standard trees, swamp, marsh, drier grassland, standing and fallen dead wood, open ditches and the River Colne. It is this diversity which provides an ideal habitat for many species.

The River Colne and its floodplain provide resources which have attracted people for thousands of years. Situated within a designated Area of Archaeological Significance The Withey Beds LNR is adjacent to a string of major sites of prehistoric, Roman and Medieval date; including the nationally important 'Manor of the Moor'.

Why is The Withey Beds called The Withey Beds?

'Withey bed' is an old English term used to describe the growing of different species of willow for coppicing. They once formed an important part of the local village economy; supplying poles for basketwork, thatching, firewood and many other uses. The withey beds in Rickmansworth were traditionally coppiced to provide such products and this form of management resulted in the varied habitats becoming established.

Today, The Withey Beds LNR is still managed using traditional techniques. The rotational coppicing of willow helps preserve the character of the site and grazing with cattle, or cutting and removing the vegetation within the field, will help halt



encroaching scrub as well as preserve the character of this special site and allow wildlife to continue to flourish.

The wet grasslands at The Withey Beds LNR have long been part of a traditional livestock farming system, with grazing by cattle creating and maintaining a habitat rich in plants and invertebrates. Wet grasslands have the potential to provide habitat for wading birds such as Snipe and Sandpipers while winter floods can attract large numbers of wildfowl.

Rivers and the corridors of land through which they flow are a major wildlife resource of crucial importance. The Withey Beds LNR is an important component in a network of nearby wildlife sites like Croxley Common Moor, Hampton Hall Meadows and Hampermill Lake; all connected by the River Colne.

The River Colne's water originates from a natural reservoir called an aquifer in the underlying chalk. When you turn on your tap at home the water comes from the same source. Please try to conserve water, keep the River Colne flowing and help the wildlife that depends upon it.

The Withey Beds LNR is owned and managed by Three Rivers District Council. They are assisted by the Countryside Management Service and a group of local volunteers. If you would like to join the Friends and help promote The Withey Beds LNR, please contact the Friends of The Withey Beds via www.thewitheybeds.org.uk