

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

(Registered Charity No.1085476)

Annual report: 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015

We have had another busy year, with some 1,322 workdays in Roe Green Walled Garden and 344 in Fryent Country Park. SEWA Day volunteers paid their annual visit to FCP in October, working on the acid grassland strips. We have also benefited from additional help from local residents in the never-ending battle against rough sleeper camps and their accompanying rubbish. This has allowed more of BHCG time to be spent on planned work in the Park.

The Masons Field project was extended until March 31st and we broadcast more seeds (including the dust-like seed of two orchid species), and planted more bulbs and wildflower plugs. This year's fruit trees were planted by the Parks team – a welcome relief from hard labour! A second scrape was dug near the first one. Several colourful and informative interpretative boards have been put up on the periphery, and a range of leaflets and booklets have been produced on history, habitat and wildlife. A poster exhibition has been set up for visitors to RGWG. Project-funded training events were held on butterflies, spiders, floodplain meadows, soil fauna and flies.

We have developed close links with the Urban Orchard Project, resulting in a training session on stone fruits at Bush Farm in July, and two pruning days in January and February in the linear orchard and Bush Farm respectively. In September, we hosted a big apple pick in FCP, and this should become an annual event. Some of the harvest provided freshly-squeezed apple juice on our September Open Day. We have made a good start on repeat hedgelaying at Bush Farm, and managed a complete sweep at RGWG.

We continue to develop our resources at RGWG, and the year ended with the installation of a capacious wooden gazebo in the back yard, paid for out of Brent Council's community funds. This will have many uses, including displays on Open Days and teaching sessions during children's events. Over the past 2 years, 37 conservation certificates have been awarded to youngsters under the John Muir Award scheme. The Garden is also providing opportunities for young people participating in the Government's Head Start scheme. We held 3 Open Days this year, and October saw a visit by a Russian group with, like ourselves, a keen interest in apples as a part of a nation's heritage – and as the main ingredient of some irresistible delicacies! The Garden was awarded a Green Flag Community Award.

We even found time to let our hair down. John Muir Award participants enjoyed a summer sleepover in RGWG, and we held a summer party in July, a Diwali party in October, and a Christmas party in December.

Well done, everyone.

John Barrington (Chairman)