

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 42 – August 2008

ROE GREEN WALLED GARDEN

Summer at the Garden has been very active. At our late Spring Open Day the Mayor of Brent, Cllr H Patel, officially opened our Wildlife Rise invertebrate house. So now our wildlife has a luxury home with all mod cons.

At our June Open Day we were honoured by a visit by Sarah Tether MP, and many other visitors were able to enjoy the garden and refreshments provide by Vrinda and her team. As we were part of the Garden Squares Open Weekend we also had photos and a mention in the London Landscapes Magazine.

The building of our shed (the replacement for the garage) continues at a steady pace. The Devon Bank has flourished in ideal conditions. We have had a steady sale of plants and recycled items. And – the great news is that we have been awarded the Green Pennant for the 4th year running.

Kim

Hay Harvesting helps generate Flora in Fryent Country Park

The harvesting of the hay meadows in the Park (as opposed to flailing) qualifies for government funding, and this requires proof that we are taking steps to increase the number of flower species in these areas, as harvesting of the hay can affect the number of flora species in the field.

For the first time for several years we have succeeded in bringing in a contractor to harvest the hay, which was carried out in July. The hay will be going to an organic farm in the High Wycombe area.

We continually monitor the changes in proportions of flora species across the Park as a whole. We carry out surveys of the meadows on several Sundays prior to the hay being cut. This involves randomly selecting a number of quadrats (one metre squares) in the fields to be surveyed, and noting all the different species of grass and other plant species within the square. This year we have noted a more restricted range of species, which is partly due to the nature of the soils but also reflects the problems caused by having to flail cut rather than harvest in preceding years. Flailing leaves a mass of plant debris which builds up over the years to produce a thick mat which only the coarsest grasses and other tough plants can penetrate.

If regular hay harvesting is re-established, then, hopefully there will be a reduction in the mat coverage and an increase in the number of flower species colonising from the seed bank

John Barrington

The pain of clearing ponds in Fryent Country Park

Leslie had told us what needed to be done for the project. Cut back overhangs around paths, clear blackthorn from the area around the ponds, clear the paths to the ponds and clear out any overgrown vegetation and debris in the ponds. We could choose what we wanted to do.

I chose the ponds as did some of other female volunteers. Arabella was in the pond already, There were chest waders waiting for me. I couldn't wait to get in. The water was quite cold and it was a warm sunny day. Putting them on and getting in the cold water was easy. It was using the muck rake, and trying to keep myself upright was the hard part.

I was Arabella's second in command so I held on to the end of the muck rake. It was very heavy to lift and throw out to drag the parrot weed which was covering the surface of the pond. It was really satisfying dragging out all that rubbish and parrot weed.

This was the east side of the pond. Arabella then went towards the south side, fell in and got soaked. You can appreciate how deep it is. We broke for tea early so she could get something hot inside her.

Arabella and I worked tirelessly and we did make a difference clearing the pond. The work was very fulfilling. We had a lot of walkers passing by and one even stopped to take photos.

Those are the times when you don't want to leave. I am counting the days when we go back there to do it again.

Janet



The following week Arabella and Janet are still clearing the ponds

Fryent Country park has been chosen as a London Regional Finalist in the Natural England 'Future of Farming' award.

We are open at Roe Green Walled Garden Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 2pm. Sundays we are out in Fryent Country Park carrying out conservation project work. Please see the web site below for the programme of projects at Fryent Country Park or telephone the garden. Feel free to join us in our conservation projects at Fryent Country Park.

We are now collecting old pottery garden pots and would appreciate any you no longer want. Also, scrap metal and bric a brac.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Countryside Day – Sunday 21 September 2008 at Fryent Country Park 11am to 6pm

Next General Meeting – Saturday 4 October 2008 at 10.30 am at Roe Green Walled Garden

Note We need help for Countryside Day both on Sunday 21st and Saturday 20th. In particular, we are always short of volunteers on the Saturday setting up our marquee. If you can help please contact the Garden or the Chairman.

Contact numbers: Garden 020-8206-0492 (answerphone if nobody there)
 Chairman 0208-206-0589

Also at our website: www.bhcg.ik.com
and at www.brent.gov.uk/parks (for the Biodiversity Action Plan)