

# BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

## 'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 50 – April 2011

Please Note - our new web site address is [www.bhcg.btck.co.uk](http://www.bhcg.btck.co.uk). Also for Fryent Country Park, see [www.brent.gov.uk/parks](http://www.brent.gov.uk/parks)

### **Roe Green Walled Garden**

Our Christmas Party was unfortunately marred by the snow. It was on the day when the snow really hit us. Still, around 20 people turned up and made the best of it.

We have successfully grafted a mistletoe plant onto a branch of one of our apple trees. We did this by crushing a mistletoe berry onto a nick in the branch. It is over three years since the graft took place, but it has finally 'taken', and the mistletoe seems to be thriving. Another 'attraction' for visitors to the Garden!

Representatives from 'Froglife' visited for a survey of Park and Garden - and were amazed to see hundreds of toads in the top pond and newts in the Garden. A TV company also visited the garden for a TV interview - watch this space! Roe Green School also visited and enjoyed looking at the wormery and ponds.

Many of our goldfish have disappeared, but on a particularly sunny day on 8<sup>th</sup> April some of them re-emerged along with many newly born fish.

Our tadpoles came and went very quickly. They were probably taken by the mallard which has been wandering around the garden of late.

*Bernard*



A mallard in Roe Green Walled Garden

### **Butterfly survey on Fryent Country Park 2010**

Our recorders for 2010 were Simon Mercer, Michael Berthold and Leslie Williams. The survey takes place every week from April to September.

London wide and nationally, butterfly numbers are down on previous years and this is becoming a serious national problem. David Attenborough is leading a project to help our dwindling butterfly

population - by encouraging people to plant food plants in their gardens ie borage, lavender, and erysimum. In the park all three Skippers - Small, Essex and Large have very much reduced numbers.

Speckled Wood is keeping its numbers up. The Gatekeeper, Comma and Brimstone are all increasing slowly.

Red Admiral can be seen on warm days. Meadow Brown has been much reduced in numbers for several years - especially when the hay stopped being harvested. Hopefully they will increase as hay is now harvested . The Blues are weather dependent. The Small Heath appears to be extinct from Fryent Country Park.

2011 has started well - a number of Brimstones have been seen, possibly due to our planting of alder buckthorns in the Park. In fact we noticed several Brimstones landing on the alder buckthorn (their food plant) literally as we were planting the trees.

Debbie has also recorded six new moth species in the park - total now 160.

*Kim*

### **Environmental Stewardship at FCP**

Leslie is a member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management which publishes a quarterly journal called 'In Practice'. For the March 2011 edition a theme had been chosen by the Editor to cover Agri-environment and Ecology. Leslie kindly co-authored an article with me called 'Monitoring the Restoration of Hay Meadows under Environmental Stewardship'. The meadows are those at Fryent Country Park (FCP) and my participation is because I represent the Barn Hill Conservation Group. I've achieved this through several seasons of work with the annual survey of the meadows and our work putting this into a computer record.

Environmental Stewardship (ES) is supported by the Government and aims to secure environmental benefits. ES agreements may stipulate outputs such as how to cut the meadows or how to reduce the quantities of undesirable species. At FCP the ES has encouraged the restoration of meadows and their species richness.

Our article explained the method we used to survey species in the meadows and how the survey results in June are incorporated into management plans for late summer/early autumn. In 2009 and 2010 extra cuts of the meadows had reduced the surveyed frequency of creeping thistle. There was also a reduction in the build-up of thatch, a layer of debris that reduces plant species richness.

*Simon Mercer*

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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 from 10 am to 12.30 pm carrying out conservation project work. Our new programme of projects will start again in May. Please see the web site below for details, or telephone the Garden. Feel free to join us in our conservation projects at Fryent Country Park. Training and Refreshments provided. A free Green Gym at your disposal!

We are now collecting old pottery garden pots and would appreciate any you no longer want. We also collect scrap metal such as copper, brass, aluminium, including aluminium cans

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Garden Squares Open Day at Roe Green Walled Garden: Saturday 12 June, 11am to 5pm

Dates for Newt Club for children 5-12 yrs approx:

Saturdays 30 April, 4 June, 2 July, 10 September starting at 12.30 pm

Contact numbers: Garden 0208 206 0492 (answerphone if we are unable to answer)  
John (Chairman) 0208 205 2040

Website: [www.bhcg.btck.co.uk](http://www.bhcg.btck.co.uk)