

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 53 – April 2012

Fryent Country Park

On 5th Feb the Park was white with snow. This was deep in the meadows, the trees glistened in the sunshine and were just magical. Photographers were out in force – together with sledges, snowballs, and children having fun.

During these winter months we have worked on oak coppicing and the moat. We have continued with the dead hedge along the mounds – a good habitat for wild life. We have done open centre form pruning in the orchard.

Over 200 fruit trees and alder buckthorn have been planted on the mounds and masons field – these will be recorded in the Royal Record as part of the Jubilee Woods project run by the Woodlands Trust. The Trust's objective is to get 6 million trees planted this jubilee year.

The exceptionally low water levels in the ponds has had a detrimental effect on frog spawn, which is much lower than previous years. The water level is possibly the lowest it has been since monitoring commenced in 1983.

Kim

Roe Green Walled Garden

We have worked hard over the winter improving the flower beds and herb garden. These have been tidied and new flowers and herbs planted. The new pergola is complete and the flowers around it are beginning to show now that spring is here.

The newt club has had the first meeting of the spring / summer term. We planted the first early potatoes in a raised bed. We then produced a sculpture using pebbles, with each pebble representing a member of an audience cheering on a rock band. This piece of art is now on show at the garden – watch out Tate Modern.

Bernard

Froglet Mysteries

I have been working as a volunteer on the conservation projects at Fryent Country Park and at the walled garden in Roe Green. As a volunteer there is great satisfaction in contributing to the betterment of the environment but the work and visits always leave me wanting to know more about nature and how it works. For instance in early March I was in the garden with several other volunteers when we decided to check out whether the newts had emerged from hibernation. Not one was found but we uncovered a tiny (3cm from head to tail) beautifully formed frog. It was a common frog with a distinctive mask around its eyes and stripey legs. Its colour was an astonishingly bright tan which contrasted with the dark colouration of its patterned markings. Its spring and leap was hugely entertaining. It was in true Disney style, a very cute frog.

But it raised a few questions for me, not least why such a young frog or froglet was there in the first place when spawning had just taken place in the garden pond. When I returned home I decided to refresh my memory on the life-cycle of the common frog (*Rana temporaria* 7-9 cm). Eggs are laid usually between March and April but depending on the weather, it could be as early as December. Did this froglet belong to an early spawn? This is unlikely as the period from egg to tadpole to froglet is usually around the 18 week mark and then add some more time for growth. This froglet was considerably bigger than those emerging from the tadpole state. It seems to me that this froglet was born last spring. Frogs become sexually mature in their third year and this little one was too small. So it would have survived last summer in the garden eating insects, snails, slugs and worms. As the cold weather approached it would have gone into hibernation re-emerging as the days lengthened and the temperature rose.

David

A blot on the landscape

Unfortunately some of the work we have to do on our Sunday projects at Fryent Country Park involves picking up litter - and not just litter but rubble and discarded household items as well. So far this year we have collected over 80 bags of litter – but what are the other objects we pick up?

Rubble, bricks, fencing and posts , tables, chairs, a metal bed (complete), One water tank, a ladder, telephone., dart board, animal cage, stakes, bucket, clothing, sunshades rotary dryers, shoes, large toys, bikes, trains, flourescent tubes, bowls, wire, shelving, etc etc. All this is taken to the nearest road for collection by LB Brent. We have a wonderful country park, and yet it seems to be used by some people for emptying their lofts.

Bernard



A sample of litter picked up at Fryent Country Park

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 January. 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 or Roe Green Walled Garden. Training and Refreshments are provided. A free Green Gym at your disposal!

We are now collecting old pottery garden pots and old keys for a mosaic. We collect scrap metal such as copper, brass, aluminium, including aluminium cans, which help in fund raising.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Annual General Meeting: Saturday 26 May 2012 at 10.30 am

Newt club catering for children's activities on environmental awareness
Saturdays 28 April, 19 May, 23 June, 15 July starting at 12.30

Open Day (part of London Garden Squares): Saturday 11 June 11am to 5pm

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

Website: www.bhg.btck.co.uk