

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 54 – August 2012

The good news is that both Fryent Country Park and Roe Green Walled Garden have once again been awarded the Green Flag – a National Award for the very best parks and community gardens.

We are also pleased that part of the access path by the orchard in Fryent Country Park is being resurfaced by LB Brent, which is great news for both disabled people and users of push chairs. Also, access into Mason's field has been made easier by the installation of a ramp over the ditch at the 'ancient' pathway, Green Lane. We have continued to plant trees in Mason's Field as well as clearing the path through Green Lane.

Kim

Pond Dipping at Roe Green Walled Garden

I was invited down to the Open Day at Roe Green Walled Garden in June and I really enjoyed it. The Garden is a great venue for pond dipping and with two ponds one can compare one with the other. The ornamental brick pond is biologically far poorer than the lined pond with natural banks. This is due to the goldfish which eat all the invertebrates.

There were freshwater shrimps which are crustaceans like crabs and lobsters, and waterlice which crawl on the bottom and eat their own poo. There were huge numbers of waterfleas which are not fleas but another group of crustaceans, the cladocera. Their most famous member is a genus called daphnia which you give as live food for goldfish. The animals that we saw under the microscope were a cousin of daphnia called Simocephalus Vitellus. All these tiny animals do not have English names. At this time of year waterfleas are all female and they give birth without fertilisation. This is called parthenogenesis and is also found in aphids and some types of fish.

We did catch sticklebacks and baby common newts and they were the most popular animals by far. Look for the feathery gills of the baby newts also called efts. These gills extract oxygen from the water. Soon they will disappear, being replaced by a lung allowing the newts to leave the water.

I always enjoy coming to the walled garden and I think they put on a really splendid event.

Simon Braidman

How to get roped into volunteering

I had never thought of volunteering to work at Roe Green Walled Garden, although I have always thought that this garden is lovely place. It has two ponds which are full of wildlife, vegetable plots fruit bushes and trees as well as flower beds. There is also a play area for small children.

One day last October I called in at the Garden and was looking at the books in the big barn. I happened to remark to Kim that the books had got in a bit of a muddle and would she like me to tidy them and categorise them.

The answer was an immediate 'yes'. So that is how I became a 'volunteer'. It seems that looking after the garden has, of course, first priority, and the barn and its contents are cared for when there is time available.

I duly went to work on the books and then tidied up all the other articles that were for sale. As we get so many donations of books and articles I have discovered that this is a never ending job. But it still gives me time to do work in the garden itself and get to know our regular visitors, which adds to the enjoyment.

Pat

Ant Hills on Barn Hill

It is unusual to see the vast array of ant hills on the landscape of Barn Hill, as they are usually covered in undergrowth. However, earlier in the year they were exposed after the undergrowth was cut back, and it was an opportunity to take a photograph. These ant hills are really huge – up to a foot high. The

acid grassland on this part of Barn Hill provides an attractive habitat for the yellow ants to create the ant hills. Similar ant hills are to be found in other areas of acid grassland such as Richmond Park. The ants provide food for the green woodpeckers, helping to promote the rich biodiversity we have in the Park.

Bernard



Ant hills on Barn Hill

Recycling of Vegetable Oil

Did you know that the diesel engine was originally designed to run on peanut oil? The petroleum industry subsequently offered a cheap alternative by labelling one of its by-products as “diesel fuel”. And so that's how diesel fuel became the fuel for the Diesel engine and vegetable oil, as greener cleaner less toxic fuel supply, was forgotten. Recently, though, there has been an upsurge of interest in recycling used vegetable oil into ‘bio-diesel’.

Brentfield Environmental Services Trust (B.E.S.T), who have started providing transport services to Barn Hill Conservation Group, are keen to explore the possibility of locally producing bio-diesel from used cooking oil. If you have access to quantities of used vegetable cooking oil, please ring: Mike on 020 8964 9181 / 07940 395 708 or email bestinbrent@yahoo.co.uk. Mike Hudson

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 September. 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. We collect scrap metal such as copper, brass, aluminium, including aluminium cans, which help in fund raising.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

General Meeting: Saturday 1st September 2012 at 10.30 am
Open Day Saturday 15th September 11am to 4pm

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

Website: www.bhcg.btck.co.uk