

# BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

## 'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 55 – December 2012

Brenda Hatcher, a founder member of the BHCG set up in 1984, passed away in September. She worked tirelessly for BHCG until a few months before her death. For many years Brenda was treasurer and grants secretary of the Group.

Brenda looked after our large number of tools, painstakingly painting each tool with an identifying yellow colour. Brenda was there on our projects in Fryent Country Park, planting trees, clearing ponds, picking up litter, cutting back blackthorn. Up until two years ago she would walk from her home to our Walled Garden headquarters and back again a mile away, and on Sunday mornings she was on the rota to come to the Roe Green Garden early Sunday mornings to get the tools ready for the projects at Fryent Country Park.

For many years our Xmas parties were held at Brenda's house. Many will remember her home made bread and punch.

A service was held at the Unitarian church in Islington, where Kathy paid a tribute to Brenda on behalf of our Group. A commemorative plant was also planted in her name at the Walled Garden. We will miss her.

### **Roe Green Walled Garden**

We have achieved the Green Flag for community gardens once again, and been awarded an 'Excellent' rating in the London in Bloom competition. We have had a bee hive installed at the back of the Garden. We have also reorganised the bed in front of the cottage.

We have carried out significant maintenance activities. In particular, it had been noticed over the last year that the concrete around the 'cottage' was cracking up, making the access to the toilet more uneven. This led John E to investigate the problem. He dug up part of the concrete only to discover that there was a huge root of a tree underground that was pushing up the concrete. The root ran along the side of the cottage and, if left, it could have penetrated the building, causing serious damage. John cut off the root and removed it. He then concreted over to restore the paving. A job well done.

This autumn Dennis V has repainted the metallic gates and the fencing which were beginning to rust. They are now a smart dark green. Look out for more dark green metalwork around the Garden.

Bernard

### **Fryent Country Park**

The Park has achieved a Green Flag award once again and was awarded a Silver Gilt in the London in Bloom competition. Our main autumn task has been to work on Masons field, which we very much hope will be designated as part of our nature reserve very soon. We were helped by 42 volunteers who joined us for a SEWA day in November.

Fruit trees have been planted and one area has been farrowed and planted with a wild flower mix, to include lady's bedstraw, cat's ear, oxeye daisy, tufted vetch poppy and yellow rattle. This mix, plus eight other meadow flowers, will help return the former sportsground to a more interesting grassland, good for insects, mammals and birds.

LB Brent has provided ward working funds for wild flowers to be planted on the mounds on Fryent Way, including plant plug plants and 5000 wild daffodils. We are in the process of planting these on the mounds..

Over the whole of the Park we continue to pick up litter and household waste – the results so far from 1 Jan this year are over 320 large black plus all the big items – you name it we have picked it up, and transported it to the nearest road.

Kim

### **Good luck Herbert**

On a dull grey day in November we had a visit from a small hungry hedgehog – who really appreciated John’s offering of broken biscuits. We called him Herbert. But – there was a problem – Herbert was small – too small to survive the winter and he should have been hibernating.

We contacted the British Hedgehog Preservation Society who confirmed that a hedgehog needs to weigh at least 1.5 lbs to survive our winter – and Herbert did not look like he would pass that test. So they gave us the name of a hedgehog carer who lived in Harpenden.

A box was found for Herbert with some warm towels and more biscuits. Dennis V acted as Ambulance Driver and took Herbert to the carer, where he was duly weighed and found to be only 8 oz so definitely needed looking after. Next spring when he has grown big and strong he will be released into woodland.

It is really good to know that we have hedgehogs at Roe Green – they were once very common – 60 years ago we had 30 million hedgehogs – now we have less than a million. The decline has been caused by lack of habitat and the use of herbicides and pesticides. Kim

### **Fryent’s Rolling Stone**

You are walking through the woods at Summers Croft when you hear a drumming sound – is it a woodpecker, or the echoes of a famous musician who used to live here? The Rolling Stones celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in November 2012, and Charlie Watts drum rhythms, which guide many of the band’s most memorable songs, were developed here.

Just after the Second World War, Middlesex C.C. reluctantly agreed to let Wembley Council build a temporary “pre-fab” estate on this corner of their Regional Open Space. Charlie was six years old when the Watts family moved into an aluminium bungalow at 23 Pilgrims Way in 1947. The Pilgrims Way estate was home to around two hundred children, but a neighbour remembers Charlie from the age of ten, practicing on his drum kit in his front garden. He went to school at Fryent Primary in Church Lane, then moved on to Tylers Croft Secondary Modern (now part of Kingsbury High).

Towards the end of 1962 three former members of this band asked Charlie to join their new group, The Rolling Stones. A Pilgrims Way neighbour remembers Mick Jagger coming round to collect Charlie on their way to gigs, in an old van with a stuffed crocodile on top.

The “temporary” Pilgrims Way estate was finally closed in 1972, with most of the land returned to public open space. While Fryent’s “Stone” has rolled on, one last fragment of a concrete “pre-fab” base remains, as a seat beside a footpath in the Country Park, gathering moss. Philip Grant

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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 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 12 January 2013 at 10.30 am

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)