

# . BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

## 'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 64 – December 2015

### **Fryent Country Park**

Fruit picking at the Park started at the beginning of September and with the help of many volunteers and the London Orchard Project we picked and distributed over 3/4 of a tonne of apples including some new varieties. Many of the apples were juiced and they made a delicious apple juice which we sold at the Open Day.

Once the bird breeding season was over we began cutting back and reducing the blackthorn to encourage a more diverse habitat. Many wild flowers soon grew once they had more light. Some of our thickest hedgerows are now being scalloped back to the original hedge line, which has tended to make them less attractive to rough sleepers.

We have good news on our slow worms as these have been found in more parts of the Park, so appear to be thriving, together with our frogs and toads. Meadows and hedgerows are becoming a dwindling resource country wide, but at Fryent Country Park we not only have conserved them but have enlarged them, making a wonderful habitat for our many insects, birds and mammals.

We are glad to say that the situation with rough sleepers in the Park has improved over the last few months. We are still clearing sites with the help of the local residents associations, but there seem to be less camps than last year. In 2015 we have cleared 93 illegal rough sleeper camps, which included 49 mattresses. The total number of sacks of rubbish we have removed from the Park this year is 1023.

Kim

### **Hedgehogs**

We still see these beautiful and interesting mammals but far less than we used to. In 1950 there were 30 million hedgehogs in the UK. By 1995 we only had 1.5 million, a terrific drop in numbers. Between 1660 and 1800 many were killed as there was bounty on their heads: and then along came Beatrix Potter who wrote about Mrs Tigglywinkle and this helped to save them.

We now have many hedgehog hospitals saving injured hedgehogs and taking in young hoglets, which cannot survive our winters if they weigh less than 8 ozs.

Why have we lost so many hedgehogs? We have destroyed our meadows and hedgerows in which they flourish, and we have used herbicides and pesticides so killing the insects, one of their main foods, plus worms, beetles, slugs and snails.

Please help our hedgehogs by signing up to the hedgehog street campaign; and in your garden you can leave a wild corner, build a log pile, place ramps on ponds, and remove anything that could entangle them, such as netting, elastic bands, plastic holders for cans of drinks. Finally, avoid the use of pesticides and slug pellets, and watch out for them when strimming.

Please go to [hedgehogstreet.org](http://hedgehogstreet.org) and become a hedgehog champion. Many thanks

Kim

### **Roe Green Walled Garden**

In September we had our 'apple' Open Day. We sold juice from the apples we collected at Fryent Country Park the previous week. We had on display hundreds of apples and tens of varieties. Also in October we had a harvest lunch for our members, and in November a Diwali lunch.

In November we hosted a visit from the Brent children visually impaired club and joined them in a scarecrow making session. The braille signs we have set up in the Garden were found to be of great use.

We were pleased to welcome Alex from Frog Life who came to assess the 'New Zealand pygmy weed' in our wild life pond and to see what could be done about it. Quite a lot of pygmy weed had

built up in the pond starting around the edges of the pond, but stretching into the centre of the pond. Pygmy weed is very prolific and is difficult to get rid of.

Alex and Carol waded into the pond to remove a large area of the pygmy weed. As an experiment this area was covered with a light excluding weed mat and it will be monitored to see if the pygmy weed returns.

Alex took the opportunity to remove the considerable weeds in the pond, which will encourage the newts to mate.

Thanks to Kim and Carol who created a stumpery in the empty space at the back of the workshop. The logs for the stumpery were reclaimed from Roe Green Park, and we added ferns and plants, mainly clematis. Another small project to add to the interesting features in the Garden!

We are continuing to host and support Head Start students in the Garden. We currently have six hard working young people who are progressing through a programme amounting to 16 hours voluntary work.

In spite of all our hard work we still have time for a laugh and a joke as can be seen in this snapshot of Kim and Vrinda.

Bernard



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

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

General Meeting

Saturday 16 January 2016 10.30am

Contact number: Garden 0208 206 0492 (answerphone if we are unable to answer)

Email: [barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com](mailto:barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com)

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