

. BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 65 – April 2016

Fryent Country Park

We have continued our work each Sunday in the Park, hedge laying the orchard and scalloping a number of hedgerows to reduce the blackthorn and make better habitats for our insects, birds and mammals. We have cleared a lot of scrub by Meade and Great Cowlays ponds and created refuge habitats for amphibians (typically newts frogs and toads) and reptiles (dragons) which will help to increase the populations of these interesting creatures.

We have made a completely new hedgerow on Short Down East, by creating a dead hedge and planting fruit trees on one side.

We have also planted 50 fruit trees (damson, apple and plum) in Masons field and the linear orchard, and 120 alder buckthorn within the Park. All these trees have been provided by the London Stewardship Fund which supports Fryent Country Park as it is a site of metropolitan importance to London. We are also attempting to graft mistletoe on a number of selected trees in the Park, just as we have successfully done in the Walled Garden.

An area of acid grassland has been opened up around the lower slopes of Barn Hill, which improves the panorama through the area and is in keeping with the original Humphrey Repton design.

We have also continued to pick up litter and rubbish. Fortunately the number of bags we are collecting are considerably lower than last year (95 bags up to mid March as opposed to 336 bags last year). So things do look as if they are improving – let's hope it continues. Kim

Composting in the Walled Garden

After one year volunteering at the Walled Garden I consider that the most impressive assets of the garden are the three large compost "bins" - really magnificent timber constructions - the work of previous volunteers. Being an avid composter of all things in my own garden I noted that there had been no attempt to aerate the bins by turning their contents. In addition I found that there was a constant need to pick out those bits of wood and plastic that would not naturally reduce to compost.

With some trepidation I enquired whether there would be any objection if I attempted to turn over the oldest filled bin. The reaction was mixed, ranging from "is it really necessary ? is'nt the natural weight of material enough ?" to "well if YOU want to - go ahead" So, encouraged by this enthusiastic response I did, over a period of a month or two, manage to turn over the oldest bin. Fortunately it became obvious to all that the resultant compost was a superior material altogether- especially without bits of wood or plastic I had removed.

It is really gratifying to report that after my making further encouraging remarks about doing regular turnovers I was greeted one day by other volunteers happily announcing that they had managed – in a cooperative effort - to turn another compost bin in my absence. That saved a lot of backache on my part. Let us hope that regular turning continues to the benefit of the whole garden and its workers. It may be of interest to note that when turning one bin I found that, yes, indeed the sheer weight had had an effect – in fact there was evidence of internal spontaneous combustion ie. a circle of ashes in the centre of the pile. I have never before seen this in any compost bin - such is my ignorance !
Pete

Butterfly Project

BHCG is wholeheartedly committed to the London Butterfly Project, a project which aims to map the distribution of each butterfly species in Greater London during 2016.

Organised by the London Natural History Society, the project is working with people and organisations to improve information on butterflies in London. Knowledge gained will help to work out how best to restore, conserve and manage our green spaces and habitats for butterflies and other species.

Everyone can help in this project. Just record the name of the species of butterfly, the date and where you saw the butterfly (ie address, park, garden, street). If you have an iphone you can use the app (irecord butterflies or ispot) to locate the grid reference and submit. Records can also be submitted on line

Or you can send them by email to londonbutterflyproject@btinternet.com. Or bring your records into our office at Roe Green Walled Garden. Kim

Roe Green Walled Garden

Once again this winter we have carried out many of those so essential maintenance activities. The door frame to the barn had been in need of repair for some time and our menfolk, Jim, Dennis and John E set to it to build a new frame and paint it.

Thanks also to Jim who has rescued the trellis seat at the back of the garden, which was beginning to look worse for wear after nearly twenty years. Jim has also created insect homes out of discarded tree trunks and has also built a number of security signs. Thanks to everyone who has worked on these projects.

We are pleased to announce that we have been awarded a grant from Santander Bank to build a greenhouse with access for wheel chair users. The greenhouse will be located in place of the raised beds at the side of the barn. We have already removed the two raised beds and created a new single raised bed at the rear of yard.

We have had numerous school visits . In March we had a visit of 120 5-6 year old children from a local school. We talked to them about insect and reptile habitats. Further visits are planned for April and May.

For the first time since we have been at Roe Green Walled Garden we have spotted a red kite and a sparrow hawk. The red kite is very familiar in the Chilterns, but perhaps they have now ventured into North West London. Bernard

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 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

AGM Saturday 21 May at 10.30am
Open Day, part of London Squares Saturday 18 June 10.30 - 5pm

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

Email: barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com

Website: www.bhcg.btck.co.uk