

# . BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

## 'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 66 – August 2016

### **Fryent Country Park**

Our work in the wet and muddy conditions of the winter months has paid dividends in Masons Field, where there has been a display of our wild flower plantings in our newly created meadow, with the beautiful fritillary (snakeshead lily) - a protected species, sneezewort, cowslip salsify, ragged robin and lady's bedstraw, all made a good show. Our new fruit trees have all blossomed and are producing fruit.

The garlic mustard and red campion gave a wonderful display on a bank in Bramble Lane. These seeds had been carefully planted by Frankie one wet and cold Sunday, but wow - what a display. Great Burnett has also appeared, self seeded from the green hay.

Red kites have been seen and recorded in the Park and we also have a healthy population of toads. During the bug hunt led by Simon Braidman a Southern Hawku and ruddy darter (damselflies) were seen among the many insects found.

Kim

### **Roe Green Walled Garden**

The Garden has been awarded a Community Garden Green Flag for the 11th year running, so if you haven't visited recently come and see an award winning garden, and if you would like to help you will be very welcome. We have also been entered in the London in Bloom award. During the summer term over 300 children visited the garden to learn about habitats.

Our vegetables are growing well, together with our fruit. We were open for the London Garden Squares Open Day along with over 200 London Gardens.

Jim has worked hard designing, making and fitting new permanent sides to our gazebo. Our stumpery has also been extended by our young volunteers.

Our bee hives continue to thrive under the expertise of Aline. Bees but other pollinating insects are having a hard time at present, so we have planted bee friendly plants in the Garden. The National Botanic Garden of Wales survey shows that native hedgerows and woodlands are vital for the survival of bees, and our Sunday team spend much time protecting our beautiful organic hedgerows at the Park.

Kim

### **New asparagus bed in the Walled Garden**

This year I have undertaken the creation of an asparagus bed. I requisitioned a little used raised bed behind the garden proper and began my preparations. Since asparagus is so long lived and prolific it requires very good husbandry in the way of ground preparation. I did a double dig from end to end in order to lay down a good foundation. The pundits – and suppliers of asparagus roots – recommended a layer of well rotted horse manure. Nobody could lead me to a source of this essential commodity. Eventually I found a stable in the vicinity of Elstree where one could freely pick up as much of this invaluable material as needed. So over a period of a couple of weeks I acquired some 12 large sacks and dug this into the plot. My preparation was in December and planting only took place at the end of March. So now all we can do is wait to see if the planted roots survive my attentions and look forward to sampling some asparagus in May/June 2017, with ever increasing crops over the next 20 years.

Peter

## **Volunteering at Fryent Country Park**

I really enjoy my Sunday mornings on Fryent Country Park. I enjoy the work, and the team, and working with the team. I'm always learning new things about conservation work and about the natural world, particularly from Leslie. For example, after working on removing ragwort from Masons Field in late July just before the hay cut, I now know a lot more about this plant and its varieties.

I grew up near by and as a youngster I used to love exploring Barn Hill as we called it. Cattle grazed in the fields back then in the late 1950s, and there were stiles at each entrance. The hedges were thinner as I recall, and the trees taller. (Or was I just smaller?) As a boy I spent much time poking around in the ponds which were more open and exposed than now, though there were fewer of them.

I'm particularly concerned about the threats to the Country Park. There are invasive species like Japanese Knot Weed and pervasive ones like blackthorn, bramble and bind weed that require a lot of effort to keep in check. There are increasing types of tree disease. There are harmful human actions ranging from the careless throwing of litter to deliberate fly-tipping, plus rough sleepers. And so on. But the more we are there taking action and being seen to be taking action the more we can counter the threats and sustain the open space for everyone. That's why I'm always encouraging people to come and join us on a Sunday morning.

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.

Maurice

## **The London Butterfly Project**

Please continue to record and butterflies you see and send records to londonbutterflyproject@btinternet.com or drop them off at Roe Green Walled Garden

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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 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**

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Open Day                                     | Saturday 10 September 11. - 4pm |
| General meeting                              | Saturday 24 September 10.30am   |
| Apple picking project at Fryent Country Park | Sunday 2 October 10am           |

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

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