

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 68 – April 2017

Fryent Country Park

Since January the Sunday Team have cut back lots of bramble which has been encroaching on the meadows. Further hedgelaying has been done at Bush Farm orchard. This looks really good and will be great for our insects and small mammals. Through a donation, 16 poplar trees have been planted on the Poplar Avenue as the present poplars, now more than 70 years old, are coming to the end of their lives. Extra days have been spent at Masons field orchard where bramble has been removed around the trees, and made into dead hedges - another habitat for wildlife. Also our work revealed some beautiful lichens and bracket fungi. Unfortunately we are still clearing much household rubbish from this orchard. To date this year 21 bags of litter plus large items have been collected.

Kim

Roe Green Walled Garden

We had an unfortunate situation back in March, when, in the middle of the night, the brick wall adjacent to the greenhouse fell over in a gale. The wall was part of the original Victorian structure in the garden, but had been buttressed up in one or two weak areas many years ago. The stumpery was damaged by the wall and had to be re created. Many thanks to the Garden Centre Birchen Grove who have donated twelve ferns plus bark to replace the ones which were crushed. Happily Brent Parks organised the rebuilding of the wall using the original bricks.

We are introducing a new feature in the garden – a wild flower meadow by the side of the gazebo. We look forward to seeing this in flower in the summer.

So far we have enabled 37 young people to carry out various projects in our garden, as part of the Headstart or Duke of Edinburgh scheme. The scheme entails each person carrying out 16 hours voluntary work, at the end of which we present them with a certificate. 37 certificates have been issued in the last year.

Bernard



Welcome to our garden

Impressions of a Headstart volunteer at the Garden

I can confidently say that my volunteering at Roe Green Walled Garden has changed my life. Although this may seem like a hyperbolic statement, I shall soon justify it with a recounting of my experiences there. I came to the walled garden in early August 2016 as part of the Headstart programme following NCS, choosing this volunteering opportunity over the other options because it

involved working outdoors and less human interaction relatively. I didn't really understand the environment I was entering, having very little prior knowledge of gardening, but very willing to learn. I arrived at this absolutely beautiful location, where I met the other volunteers, who were working on a long-term project, mainly the stumpery. I made fast friends with those that also came from Headstart, and regularly looked forward to returning to Roe Green every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The stumpery project really let me coming into my own, combining physical exertion with creative expression. My work at the walled garden also greatly helped me to understand and embrace my faith, as I was completely immersed in nature, connecting me more to it. For this reason I decided to adorn the frame placed at the rear of the stumpery with runes, which are seen as sacred symbols in my religion. This spiritual awakening helped my find more purpose in my life, as I renewed work with even more vigour in an attempt to beautify the world and help return more of it to a natural state. I have seen many new volunteers come and go, so I have learnt of many lives, their loves and hates, letting me understand people better in general. The skills that I have learned will prove invaluable in my later life, as most of them have direct applications for home and garden improvements. George

Frogspawn in Fryent Country Park

Spawning this year was during late February to early March and the survey of frogspawn at the same time. Counts of frogspawn at FCP totalled 1736 clumps. This was the highest since 2009 (2096 clumps), though clumps declined to 257 in 2014. Spawning coincides with the end of the winter when ponds are likely to hold their maximum water, and there are usually 28-29 'ponds' to survey. In 2017, 25 ponds held water, the lowest since the exceptionally dry winter of 2011/12 (18 ponds). Frogspawn occurred in 12 ponds and one ditch. Toadspawn was observed in one pond.

The Sunday project Team

Creeping Thistle in Fryent Country Park

Creeping Thistles are good for wildlife but undesirable in hay meadows as they are un-palatable to livestock. And while the hay harvesting and conservation of the meadows is aimed at increasing species richness, Creeping Thistle is a species to avoid. For some years we have been using the data from the late June surveys of hay meadows to identify any fields with high frequencies of Creeping Thistle. Where possible these fields have received a second cut, later in the summer. While grasses and many meadow wildflowers are adapted to repeat cutting, the Creeping Thistle declines as cutting is increased. Does it work? In 1992 Creeping Thistles were found in 48% of quadrats in the meadows, reducing to 10% in 2008. In 2016 the frequency was reduced to 1%.

The meadow survey team

The London butterfly project

Can you help by recording any butterflies you see in the London area? Please could you let us know of the species, date, and place seen anywhere - in gardens, roads, parks etc or record on the website londonbutterflyproject@btinternet.com

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, but it has to be **non-magnetic** such as copper, brass, aluminium, including aluminium cans. We sell this, which help in fund raising.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Annual General Meeting	Saturday 20th May 10.30am
London Garden Squares Open Day	Saturday 17th June 11am to 4pm

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

Email: barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com

Website: www.bhcg.btck.co.uk