

. BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 86 – April 2023

The Barn in the Walled Garden

The Barn renovation project has proceeded throughout the winter with the funds provided by the NCIL grant. In the last newsletter we reported that we had installed a new roof and electrical points in the barn. We have now installed a partition in the barn so that we can separate the workshop from the brick sales and 'museum'. We have skimmed the floor to make it even. We have installed electrical points on the outside walls of the barn so that we can avoid too many trailing cables when we need to use electricity outside. We have also repaired rotted timber we found in the exterior walls of the barn. Jim has also built from scratch new shelving all around the inside of the barn.

This has been the biggest project our Group has undertaken in the last 22 years. We have had to move everything out of the barn, disposing some of it, and storing the rest. Several contractors have been involved and these had to be selected with the right skills and qualifications and their work coordinated and budgeted.

All this work has proceeded smoothly, expertly project managed by John Parker. John has worked tirelessly on this project for several months, which has taken a lot of his personal time on site, all through the winter, often on days when the Garden was normally closed. We are fortunate that John has been able to call on his experience as a project manager for British Gas in his working days.

Bernard

Fryent Country Park

Our Sunday projects have included cutting many overhanging branches above paths to keep our paths open and safe. We continue to scallop in a number of meadows and within a few weeks wild flowers appear.

At Bush Farm we have done more hedgelaying and Miguel and Padraig have become experts at this ancient country craft – working towards their Duke of Edinburgh awards. In Masons Field Ali has installed four more bird boxes which, we are sure, will be of interest to our local birds.

In March a mistletoe plant was found growing in a fruit tree in an orchard in the Park. Mistletoe is semi parasitic and needs nutrients from a host tree. We are not sure whether the plant we discovered was from seeds dispersed by the mistlethrush or from our own attempts to push mistletoe berries into our fruit trees. It should be noted that recently mistletoe has become established in trees around Wembley.

Kim

An oasis run by the best of us

Every Saturday morning my son, Zack, asks whether we are going to the 'Wal-GaGa'. He then follows this with a gesture to demonstrate jumping in puddles and riding his bike. What he is referring to is the Roe Green Wall Garden, where he has frequented since he was a toddler. Now two years old it has become a fixture of our weekend outing, an unmissable trip, and we are so lucky to have it.

A sanctuary run by the very best in our society, it is a place of community, of friendship, great banter and possibly the most consumed amount of tea on a Saturday morning. Come rain or shine the gates are open, the volunteers of all ages come, there is work to be done, jokes to be dispensed, and Zack needs to make up his mind if today is about the sandpit or just the bike. It is a place that fosters intergenerational solidarity and a sense of purpose. It contributes immensely to the wellbeing of so many people.

Whilst I do not profess to be a green fingered, flora connoisseur, what I do know is that spending time in such serene outdoor places does wonders for your health and happiness. The longevity gained in one's life from being outside, continually connecting to nature and people, and generally being more active is undisputed.

This is a place of public service, the kind you might find at the NHS, in a school, at a garden or community centre, or even at home – all combined in its four walls. I wish more young people took up the opportunity to participate. I wish more awareness of it secures the next generation of dedicated volunteers. I hope that the great stories get passed on.

For as long as we can, we shall be there, to be part of the memories, to share some cake, for when Zack is able to pronounce words better, for now and forever. Hashi Mohamed



Zack finding his way through Fryent Country Park

Fryent Country Park and Beane Hill butterfly summary 2022

Monitoring is during the months of April to September and involves a walk along two transect routes, to count the butterflies. Eighteen species of butterflies were recorded on the monitored transects at Fryent Country during 2022. However, few butterflies were observed in the Park during August and September. Possibly the parched condition of ground vegetation could have been a factor.

The Gatekeeper, one of the later season butterflies, had its lowest transect counts for many years. However, numbers of other grassland Satyrinae subfamily butterflies had reasonable numbers including the Speckled Wood, the Ringlet; and the Meadow Brown which remained the most numerous of the butterflies at the Country Park. The Marbled White which has established at Fryent Country Park only in recent years, had its highest counts to date. A favourite food-plant of the adult Marbled White is the Common Knapweed growing in meadows, though the caterpillars eat grass.

Numbers of the Large Skipper; and of the Essex Skipper and Small Skipper remained low. The Brimstone is a sight of spring and has been encouraged to the Park by the planting of Alder Buckthorn. The other species recorded were Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Orange Tip, Small Copper, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Peacock and Comma.

The butterfly transect team

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 Walled Garden. Feel free to join us in our conservation projects at Fryent Country Park or Roe Green Walled Garden. We are still collecting old pottery garden pots. We also collect scrap metal such as copper, brass, aluminium, which help in fund raising.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Annual General Meeting	Saturday 27 May 10.30 am
Open Day	Saturday 29 April (11am to 4pm)
Open Day	Saturday 1 July (11am to 4pm)
Contact number:	Garden 0208 206 0492 (answerphone if we are unable to answer)
Email:	barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com
Our Website:	www.barnhillconservationgroup.org