

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 91 – December 2024

Please note that our telephone number has now changed to 07421 437441

'Let nature be your teacher' William Wordsworth

A quote made over 200 years ago and still relevant today.

I'm going to share with you a few words about the enrichment my four year old grand daughter has received from her weekly visits to the Walled Garden.

For over a year now, she has jumped in puddles, balanced on path edges and logs, and ran across the grass in all weathers. She has watered plants and mastered filling the watering can from the rainwater butt, a job we adults take for granted, but relies on a good hand-eye co-ordination, which needs nurturing in childhood.

Now she can name so many birds and insects even if not identifiable. I pointed out the 'duck' in the pond and she reminded me 'it's a mallard', remembering what Kim had already told her. Ask her what she likes doing best other than tinkling the tea bell and she will proudly tell you it's collecting slugs 'that eat nannan's flowers', closely followed by feeding the worms. She loves throwing the odd banana skin into the compost heap and can't resist a squeeze and smell of the rosemary, mint and lavender leaves.

She has seen the bees and the hives, hedgehog homes, pond skaters, and damsel flies to name but a few and last week touched, in her own words, (the whiskery) head of a cardoon. Her confidence has grown as she has been welcomed by all. How I wish all our next generation have this amazing opportunity to be taught by mother nature herself. Anne

From Roe Green Walled Garden to professional zoologist

I was an infant when I first visited the Roe Green Walled Garden. Happy times playing in the children's play area, making 'cakes' in the sand pit, and drinking 'tea' with my older sisters at the teddy bears' picnic.

My interest in nature started at the Walled Garden. Kim talked to us about great crested newts, and tadpoles and all the birds and bees that visited the garden. I would spend hours looking for invertebrates in my own back garden. Throughout my years of volunteering for the BHCG I've been involved in various projects both at Roe Green Walled Garden and Fryent Country Park and I have acquired core skills and learnt a great deal from being a part of the conservation efforts of BHCG. I acquired my Great Crested Newt licence via my work at BHCG which has been a stand out in my CV when showing it to prospective employers. At 18 I left London to study for a Bachelor's degree in Zoology at the University of Lincoln. I then completed a Masters' degree in Biodiversity, Conservation and Nature Recovery.

I am now in my first months of a four-year PhD, focusing on exploring human-bird interactions in terms of the risks of avian influenza (i.e. bird flu) and antimicrobial resistant bacteria (i.e. bacteria resistant to antibiotics). I have been involved in various ecology and conservation projects. This work includes being the co-lead of the Lincoln Swan Project, a bat

count recorder for Lincolnshire Bat Group, wildlife rescuer for Yorkshire Swan & Wildlife Rescue and being an ambassador for the British Hedgehog Preservation Society.

I would not be where I am today if it weren't for the foundations I set with BHCG and the knowledge that was passed on from fellow volunteers. I would highly recommend all young aspiring ecologists and zoologists to get involved in their local conservation group. It has been the making of me.

Raul Lobo

Thumbs up for ivy

Fryent Country Park has a variety of ivy throughout the woodlands and has enormous benefits to the wildlife. Study by Oxford University discovered that it was found to absorb some harmful pollutants from the atmosphere. Birds such as dunnock, flycatchers, wrens and robins prefer to nest and roost in this plant. The berries, nectar and pollen are essential foods for a variety of insects and birds. This is especially important during winter months when other foods are scarce.

It has also been found that buildings benefit from this plant as it acts as a buffer in extreme temperatures and humidity and also reduces the severity of frost. If you walk past an ivy clad wall or tree on a sunny day in late summer and early autumn you will see and hear hoards of bees, flies, wasps and butterflies that have been attracted by the rich nectar and pollen.

Carol

Our precious meadows at Fryent Country Park

In the Park we have some of the most beautiful flower rich meadows in London. Over 52 types of grass species and 243 wild flowers have been identified in these meadows. The variety of grasses include crested dogstail, meadow barley, meadow brome, cocksfoot and yorkshire fog and the wild flowers include pink oxtail, poppy, primrose, shepherds purse, teasel and willow herb. All these grasses and flowers are important food plants for our many insects, butterflies, moths, bush crickets, spiders, ladybirds, hoverflies, and especially our bumble bees of which there are 24 species in the UK. Bumble bees are very efficient pollinators. They are in great need of help as numbers are falling.

During 2024 our volunteers have collected 353 bags of litter, plus mattresses, settees, cabinets, duvets, hoovers, an axe, motorbike, fencing, tables, pram, nappies etc.

Previous years figures were: 2023: 321 bags, 2022: 284 bags, 2021: 354 bags

Kim

Please note we are now a collection point for used ink jet printer cartridges. If you have any used printer cartridges please bring them along. We have a box for them in the 'cottage' and we can get them to a recycling centre. Inkjet cartridges only – not laser printer cartridges.

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 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

General Meeting

Saturday 25th January 2025 10.30 am

Telephone number: 07421 437441

Email: barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com

Our Website: www.barnhillconservationgroup.org