

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 94 – December 2025

Kathy Northcroft

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Kathy Northcroft who passed away in November at the age of 98. A short summary of the eulogy at her funeral is detailed below.

After she retired from teaching around 1983 Kathy became involved with a team doing conservation work in the Barn Hill Open Space which later became Fryent Country Park. In the spring of 1984 this team formed Barn Hill Conservation Group and in 1988 Kathy was elected Chair of the Group and held that position from 1986 to 2008

She led by encouraging all aspects of the Group's conservation work; including leading walks, giving talks, contributing to articles, making grant applications, explaining the Group's work at exhibitions and for years, leading the Group's activities at the annual Countryside in Brent Day.

Kathy was particularly interested in the hedgerows in Fryent Country Park and their history, as over the years, many of the hedgerows had been depleted. Kathy set out to restore the pattern of hedgerows that were shown in maps from 1597, by planting of new woodlands. She would plant the seed that she had collected from trees in the Country Park and after a few years growth, the saplings were planted onto the Park to become the large trees we see today in the hedgerows. She also helped digging ponds and irrigation channels

Kathy was also one of the team which planted thousands of daffodil bulbs along the verges of Fryent Way. She supported the process for the Country Park's hay crops to reach 'Organic' standard under the soil association organic scheme. She also gave several talks to local community groups and for a time was the secretary the Wembley History Society,

As Chair, Kathy was instrumental in establishing the headquarters for Barn Hill Conservation Group in Roe Green Walled Garden and creating there a community garden and a demonstration wildlife site.

We all pay tribute to Kathy for all her work for conservation.

Bernard

Roe Green Walled Garden – A mini haven for insects part 2

A butterfly I glimpsed for the first time in the walled garden, is the Small Copper, which we identified using the RGWG's copy of 'The Butterflies of London' by Leslie Williams (published by London Natural History Society). They feed along the Walled Garden's nectar rich borders.

Numerous other insects are provided with a suitable habitat at the walled garden, but I only have space to mention a few. Beautiful dragon and damselflies are often seen hovering above the pond skaters miraculously perched on the surface of the wildflower and fish ponds. Next to the bug high rise, the large patch of nettles is essential for many butterflies to lay their eggs. Hidden away, the stumpery, filled with decaying logs, provides a great place for beetles to live. Amazingly, stag beetles have been seen in the garden, which is wonderful as they are in decline across Europe. Mowing the lawn in front of the cottage less frequently leaves ant nests undisturbed. Our male and female thrush come down to feed on the ants. Sadly, thrush numbers are also in decline.

Being at the lower end of the food chain, insects provide food for all animals and are crucial for biodiversity. This highlights the importance of creating a more diverse and rich habitat for insects to thrive, thereby slowing the drastic decline in their numbers

Jackie

Our garden and park in bloom

Roe Green Walled Garden was awarded both gold standard and also best small conservation area in the London in Bloom competition.

Fryent Country Park was also awarded gold standard, an award for which our Group greatly contributed, ensuring that the Park is as litter free as possible, as part of the work we do in the Park every Sunday morning

Our volunteers have been very active in collecting litter and fly tips each week. So far this year we have collected 306 bag of litter plus the usual and unusual large items – fridge, and freezers, saw blades, mattresses, bags of cement, 30 whisky bottles, and 135 vodka bottles (all empty). The Park would no longer be a park without the dedicated team of litter ‘pickeruppers’.

The park has over 50 species of flora and fauna and it is a shame that just a few people want to spoil it
Kim

The Day I Met the Pond’s Secret Resident

Last Sunday’s bramble-clearing session in the old pond turned out to be slightly more eventful than expected. Armed with gloves and loppers, I confidently stepped forward... and my foot promptly disappeared into a hole I’m convinced wasn’t there five seconds earlier.

As I was trying to regain my dignity, the ground beside me suddenly erupted and a very startled fox shot out of an adjacent tunnel. We shared a split second of mutual panic — him wondering why a human was crashing through his ceiling, me wondering why the ground was producing foxes.

So yes, the pond is a bit clearer now, and I’ve learned to check for unexpected tenants before stepping anywhere.

Sundays at BHCG are always full of surprises and great encounters! Nadia

From A Walled Garden Novice.

A casual walk around the walled garden in March last year inspired me to volunteer. Seeing a few people working and a lot of weeds, that was it. Two days later I was back. With no forms to complete, no courses to attend, just bring your own gloves, tools provided and get on with it. Any time given gratefully accepted. Exactly what I was looking for, within ten minutes I was working.

An experienced gardener, I know many plants but little about wild flowers, even less about the wildlife. My first sighting of a newt and I thought it was a baby lizard! I'm learning fast. Little did I know there was so much more to it here than just weeding. Turning my hand to a bit of painting, both artistic and preservative. Planting up new flower beds, even skip rummaging. You never know what job will be waiting.

I've always loved gardening but how much more enjoyable to do it as part of a group and all the camaraderie that comes with it. I get so much more out of it than I ever expected to. Now what's next?.
Janet

We are open at Roe Green Walled Garden Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10.30 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 24th January 2026 10.30 am

Telephone number 07421437441

Email: barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com

Our Website: www.barnhillconservationgroup.org