

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 93 – August 2025

Roe Green Walled Garden – A mini haven for insects

In preparation for the Roe Green primary school summer visit, Anne and I discovered that there are three main types of bee in the garden. The bumblebee, solitary bee and honey bee that are all well catered for in terms of food and nesting sites at the Walled Garden.

Bees collect nectar and pollen to feed themselves and their larvae. We observed many bees foraging happily on plants that have been grown to encourage insects. Lavender, foxglove, sunflower, campanula, geranium, cowslip, borage, St John's wort, ox-eye daisy, cornflower, clover, daisy and dandelion were speckled with bees imbibing nectar through their hollow tongue (called a proboscis). Last week I noticed bees on the cardoon flowers in front of the cottage. During autumn bees feed on the ivy flowers behind the cottage. Flowers in the garden come in various shapes and sizes which is important as some species of bees have short tongues, such as buff-tailed and white-tailed bumble bees and some long tongues, including the garden and common carder bumblebees. Solitary bees can nest in the specially constructed bee hotel and bug high-rise or in the crevices of the dry-stone wall. Bumblebees can nest at the bottom of the compost heaps, hedges, tall grass as well as in the old flower and teapots which have been purposely placed on the ground. Honey bees nest in the beehives.

Whilst moving from flower to flower, most insects are vital pollinators for many wild and garden plant species' reproduction as well as being essential for most fruits and many vegetables to crop.

According to The Wildlife Trusts, honey bees pollinate 5-15% of insect pollinated crops which leaves 85-95% relying on wild pollinators such as species of bee, wasp, beetle, butterfly, hoverfly, fly and moth.

Jackie

Fryent Country Park

Once again we have been awarded the Green Flag for both Fryent Country Park and the Walled Garden. At the Walled Garden in May we have had one of the most successful Open Days ever, judging by the number of visitors on the day and the number of cups of tea served.

The organic hay harvesting at Fryent Country Park was completed in July in one day and we had a good crop. We have continued to introduce more wildflower to the meadows, which will add colour to the panorama as well as adding nutrients to the soil. In Honey Slough West field our meadow buttercups have increased this year. This is really good as they have struggled for a number of years.

We have carried out a lot of work on our ponds – especially on the extensions to Warrens pond. At Dormes Mead pond we planted some branched bur-reed taken from Warrens pond. Branched bur-reed has strong, fibrous roots which bind soil and sediment, and helps prevent bank soil erosion, improves water quality and helps support pond wildlife. Some of the ponds dried up in the very hot weather and we were able to remove a large amount of rubbish, including a garden chair. (how sad that people do that to our beautiful ponds). Special thanks to Colin and Carol for this job. Many paths have also been cleared and that has increased the variety of wild flowers.

Several of our volunteers (including our Duke of Edinburgh award students) have been learning the basics of meadow surveying using Quadrats. We continue to support many young people of different nationalities doing their D of E projects at both intermediate and higher level. Elodie, one of our D of E students has recorded her experience below.

Kim

Elodie's Experience

I chose to volunteer with the Barn Hill Conservation Group at Fryent Country Park for my D of E award. These Sunday morning sessions taught me much about conservation and biodiversity. I was shown how to use woodland tools safely, and how to scallop to let more light into an area, which

increases the number of wild flowers and grasses to make habitats for animals, birds and insects. I helped to look for the pin head size eggs of the brown hairstreak butterfly on blackthorn bushes.

I identified a number of butterflies including the brimstone - bright yellow, like butter. I did coppicing to help the trees to regrow. I saw the pond frozen. When cutting bramble I was taught to bend the knees as you don't hurt your back. I did hedge laying – a very ancient craft and I always enjoyed the sound of the horn at 11 o'clock – tea break and usually delicious cakes.

I am really happy to have volunteered with the conservation group as it helped me to socialise and meet new people and learn new skills.

Thank you to all the Barn Hill group members who have shared their knowledge with me
Elodie Maillet

The Old Barn Shop

There is a saying or is it a song? It's not what you do it's the way that you do it! I hope I have so far managed to do my best for the Roe Green Walled Garden shop.

Everyone has welcome me and I feel part of a very special team of volunteers who all work extremely hard. Also I know everyone has appreciated what I have achieved so far in making the Wall Garden shop a more inviting place for visitors. I didn't want to waffle on too much so I have written a poem that I feel captures my experience of working in the Walled Garden Shop.

Working in the Old Barn Shop has been blooming hot.
It's dusty, musty and Harrods it's not!
Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday it's open.
In every corner you'll find an ocean of, bric-a-brac, toys and books.
That's not all the Old Barn holds,
But not if you're looking for gold!
There's artwork and board games to choose
But don't count on finding any booze.
Lunchtime is not to be missed; when the bell rings, we eat like kings!
Maybe that's just not true,
But it's good to take a break with a biscuit and brew.
You may think this poem is not the best
But working in the Old Barn Shop definitely beats the rest!

Poem by Mary Jackson Aug 2025 (who does not claim to be Shakespeare, Shelley or Keats)

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' at the Walled Garden 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 10.30 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 September. 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 27th September 2025 10.30 am

Telephone number 07421437441

Email: barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com

Our Website: www.barnhillconservationgroup.org