

# BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

## 'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 78 – August 2020

### **Walled Garden**

The Walled Garden is currently closed to the public because of covid19 but we are planning to re-open very soon. We have continued to cultivate the vegetable plots and carry out maintenance of the garden with a small number of volunteers, ensuring that we followed the full social distancing rules.

Our wild life pond has been shrinking in size over the years, mainly due to the water lilies taking so much water. We recently decided to undertake the huge task of digging out the pond and creating a smaller pond with a better water replenishment system.

Liana and Helga have described their involvement in this project in their article below. Helga is in the process of working towards her Duke of Edinburgh award.



Kim, Jade and Helga digging out the pond

### **Digging out the wildlife pond**

Two weeks ago I had the great opportunity to start working beside the volunteers in the Walled Garden on a project to redesign the wildlife pond, which was originally built around thirty year ago.

Our first step was to remove submerged pondweed which was mainly concentrated on the edges of the pond and whose roots became caught between the pond lining and the matting. Then we proceeded to remove the water lilies which were mostly concentrated around the centre of the pond.

Like the pondweed's roots, most of the water lilies' roots were caught between the pond liner and the matting, making it significantly harder for them to be removed, especially as they were very large. The removal of the roots was a dirty job at times. The marshy conditions of the pond led some people to fall over or become stuck, as well as getting extremely muddy (which was fun). Once the water lilies and their large roots were removed, the water table had slightly risen. During the week of the heatwave the methane that was trapped in the soil below began to rise causing both the mud and the water to smell horribly.

We rescued several newts and discovered lots of slugs as well as water spiders and other insects. There were also lots of empty shells and rocks in both the soil and the matting.

The activities of the Conservation Group are focused on Fryent Country Park as well as the Walled Garden. The Park offers a beautiful countryside landscape, which gave me the opportunity to develop a close relationship with the flora and fauna of Great Britain.

Helga and Liana

### **Activities in Fryent Country Park**

It has been a strange summer at the Park, but lots of families have discovered this oasis for the first time, as a wonderful place for exercise, walks and for children to run and play. And see nature at its best.

Projects on the Park were curtailed for several weeks but gradually started again, firstly with just four members and this increased with all the familiar faces returning, and we also welcomed new members. We kept our social distancing and all our tools were disinfected by one volunteer. We caught up with much conservation work, and because of the large numbers of visitors to the park at the peak of summer with the good weather, inevitably much litter was left. We must give praise to some of our members who went out picking up litter on a daily basis at times.

We recently helped at a nature event for children and parents organised by the Brent local authority and also supported by the police. We provided information to visitors on matters relating to the wild life and natural resources in the Park.

Many people will have seen the amazing display of irises around the Barn Hill pond back in May. We managed to take a photograph of the scene looking at its best.



Irides in flower around Barn Hill pond

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We are back carrying out our Sunday conservation projects in Fryent Country Park from 10 am to 12.30 pm. Our new programme of projects will start again in September. 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. Training is provided. A free Green Gym at your disposal!

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

General Meeting      Saturday 10 October 10.30am  
To be held out of doors due to covid

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