

# BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

## 'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 75 – August 2019

### **Activities in the Walled Garden**

We have been awarded the Green Flag for the Walled Garden once again. We have also been assessed for London in Bloom, both for our garden and as part of Brent's overall application. We have created new small mini-meadows around the pond and also at the back of the garden. These were praised by the Green Flag judge.

A stone wall using kerbstones donated to us has been set up around the raised bed at the back of the barn. Thanks to Scott and John P who have manoeuvred these heavy stones into place.

John E is currently resurfacing one of the paths which was breaking up. Jim has laid paving stones by the side of the barn to make a walkway.

Our keen vegetable growers have had a really good harvest this year. We have grown cauliflowers as well as beetroots, marrows, chard, and the usual beans tomatoes, potatoes and shallots.

We have continued to have visits from local children's nurseries, with a lot of interest usually shown in the fish pond.

Amongst the wild life spotted in the garden we have recorded herons, kites, buzzards and a little owl. Also great crested newts have been seen. Fortunately several of our volunteers have a licence to handle them.

Bernard

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

Record numbers have attended and enjoyed our Sunday morning projects at the Park. During the bird breeding season we could not cut back in the woods but we have cleared many footpaths of overhanging branches. While working we have also enjoyed the varied wildlife of the park – the population of both the marbled white and ringlet butterflies has increased– and red kites have been recorded flying overhead.

24 hay meadows have been surveyed and new wild flowers such as betony and narrow leaf bittercress have been recorded without having been planted. Haymaking has been much in evidence in recent weeks and 32 meadows have been cut for their premium hay for animal food and haylage. We have tackled Japanese knotweed, a very invasive plant - and, using our specialist technique we are succeeding in gradually reducing it in the Park.

One Sunday we were joined by the Wembley Park troggers picking up litter, for which we are very grateful. During the summer months we have picked up more than 75 bags of litter. This included 20 bags collected on one particular Sunday – obviously a very popular weekend for visitors.

At the beginning of August a bat walk took place.

Kim

### **Occasional walks**

This summer some of the Sunday volunteers decided to get together for occasional mid-week country walks. We've walked along the Chess River valley from Chesham to Chorley Wood; along part of the Southdown's Way from Southease near Lewes to Alfriston and down to the coast near Seaford along the meandering river Cuckmere; taken a circular route around part of the Chilterns near Wendover, passing near Chequers and Coombe Hill with wonderful views across the Vale of Aylesbury; and, most recently, explored the River Thames near Henley. The walks have been quite demanding, averaging about 10 miles. In each case we've travelled by public transport. The walks have been open and we've been joined by a variety of interesting friends. If you wish to hear about future walks please

ask Maurice to add you to the e-mail list [maurice.gold@idnet.com](mailto:maurice.gold@idnet.com). The plan is to have a mix of shorter and longer walks. Ideas for different places to go are also welcome. Maurice

### **Discover more about the Duchess of Sutherland**

The Walled Garden is rightly proud about its origins, as part of a country house estate, "The Cottage", built in 1899 for Mary, the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland. On **Friday 20th September 2019**, Wembley History Society will be hosting an illustrated talk about her life and times, presented by her great-grandson, **Bruno Bubna-Kasteliz**. Bruno's talk (originally scheduled for October 2018) is entitled "**Power Play – a Tale of Victorian Values**", and will take place at **English Martyrs' Hall**, Chalkhill Road (top of Blackbird Hill), Wembley, HA9 9EW, starting at 7.30pm. Non-members of the history society are very welcome to attend, for a £3 contribution to help cover costs. Further details are available from: [philgrant69@gmail.com](mailto:philgrant69@gmail.com).



You will possibly have seen at the walled garden a photograph of the Duchess in her diamonds, but this picture of her above (from Bruno's collection) has an interesting story. It was painted around 1885, as a portrait of "May Mitchell" (as she then liked to be known). It is thought to have hung behind a curtain, on the wall of the Duke's cabin on his steam yacht. Why? Because, at the time, the Duke was still married to a close friend of Queen Victoria, and "May" (20 years his junior) was his mistress! Philip Grant.

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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 Garden. Feel free to join us in our conservation projects at Fryent Country Park or Roe Green Walled Garden. Training and Refreshments are provided. A free Green Gym at your disposal!

We are now collecting old pottery garden pots. We collect scrap metal, but it has to be **non-magnetic** such as copper and brass. We sell this, which help in fund raising.

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Open Day September	Saturday 14 September 11 to 4pm Free Entry. Good bargains and food
BHCG General meeting	Saturday 28 September 10.30am
Wembley History Society	Talk about the dowager Duchess of Sutherland, owner of 'Kingsbury Manor' in 1899. For details see main body of text above

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

Email: [barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com](mailto:barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com)

Website: [www.bhcg.btck.co.uk](http://www.bhcg.btck.co.uk)