

. BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 80 – April 2021

Walled Garden

Throughout the lockdown, we have maintained a rota for working in the Garden. The new wildlife pond has filled with water over winter. We are in the process of laying wild flowers around the edge of the pond and will be acquiring floating pond plants which will be good for the newts to lay their eggs.

We have succeeded in getting the Victorian workshop repointed with lime cement mortar in the areas where the cement was loosening. We were greatly helped by a grant from Brent NCIL. Bernard

Fryent Country Pak

A small number of dedicated volunteers have continued to work on the Park, maintaining social distancing and bringing their own tools.

Overhangs on the paths have been removed and the work on the Humphry Repton landscape has continued to restore the area to its original design back in the 18th century. We have also worked on the Gadderbrook stream area to open up the brook to much more light, which will allow many wild flowers to grow, and we shall soon see a carpet of celandines.

The pond at the top of Barn Hill has been cleared of the overgrown vegetation and sediment. A grant was obtained by LB Brent to enable Froglife to manage this project. The water level in the pond had been noticeably going down because of the vegetation, and this has now been replenished after the winter rains. The pond supports a large variety of wildlife, including frogs toads and newts and the reeds provide the needs of the ducks to make their nests.

Our frog spawn count in the Park has yielded the second highest number of clumps on record. 2285 clumps were found in 14 of the ponds.

There is still a problem on the Park with household rubbish being thrown from a few houses backing on to the Park. How sad they have such a beautiful country park just outside the back of their gardens and they choose to spoil it for people and the 550 species recorded that inhabit the park. Kim

Copicing in Fryent Country Park

Over the years many of the original hedgerows in the park have been overtaken by bramble and blackthorn resulting in local flora being stifled.

For some years our volunteers have been endeavouring to cut back both these plants. It's known as 'scalloping', where swathes of the blackthorn and bramble are cut down to ground level to allow in more light, thus enabling the wild flowers to flourish. This process also opens up areas in front of our mighty oaks making them more visible.

The resulting cuttings are then piled neatly deep inside the hedgerows, which will eventually become homes for voles, field mice and various insects.

Anyone visiting the park will have noticed that several areas have been opened up and footpaths widened, making improved views through the woodland. Also benches have been cleared of encroaching shrubs at the back, which used to attract litter. Carol

Creation of a leaky wier in the Park

We constructed a leaky wier in the Park on a tributary ditch leading to the Gaddebrook stream. The ditch extends across the Park and in the rainy season the water in the ditch can cause the Gaddebrook stream to flood.

The leaky weir will slow the flow of water downstream and cause a temporary flood in the meadow around the leaky weir, which will enable flood meadow plants (such as Great Burnet and Meadow Sweet) to flourish.

The leaky weir is the first one of its kind we have built and we intend to create additional ones along the ditch. Bernard



The leaky weir created by John, Colin and Mike

Butterfly records for 2020 Fryent Country Park

Two transects are walked every week during the butterfly season. 26 different butterflies were recorded. The Brimstone had highest count and the Small Copper the highest count over the last few years.

More than 200 species of wild flowers and grasses have been recorded in the meadows, Yorkshire Fog being the most common. Common Vetch, Cranesbill, Cat's Tail, Lesser Stitchwort, Common Mouse ear and Goat's Beard were also prevalent.

All the records from surveys are sent to the national monitoring schemes and the biological records centre. If anyone is interested in surveying they are welcome to join the scheme. Kim

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, subject to social distancing. 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. 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

Annual General Meeting Saturday 15 May 2021 10.30am

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

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