

BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 90 – August 2024

Simon Mercer

Thirty years ago Simon joined Barn Hill Conservation Group and became a loyal and regular volunteer since then. Sadly Simon died on 8 July 2024. In those 30 years Simon made a great contribution to Brent Parks.

At Fryent Country Park he walked miles mowing the paths. He did the tools rota, and made sure the tools for the Sunday project arrived at the correct venue. He planted hundreds of trees in the ancient hedgerows and orchards. He helped to restore the Humphry Repton landscape, made scallops, cleared overhangs, helped to establish Masons Field as a nature park, and helped to build the first stag beetle home on the park.

He was an expert on butterflies and did the butterfly and hay meadow survey each summer which provided data locally and nationally, and of course he picked up hundreds of bags of litter. He also designed the first website for our Group.

Thank you Simon for making Brent Parks a great home for all creatures great and small and for people to enjoy the beauty and peace of Fryent Country Park. We will miss you Kim

An inspiration to all

Over several months we have been happy to welcome weekly visits to the Walled Garden by children from the Village School - a school for children with special needs. Around twenty children have been coming, aged 10 to 18, under the guidance of their dedicated teacher Jozefina Kovalcikova. They have become an integral part of our Garden community.

We volunteers in the Walled Garden have all been very impressed by the commitment Jozefina has shown in using our Garden to create an inspiring outdoor classroom for the children, and, recognising the children's enthusiasm we have offered the school a vegetable patch specifically for their use.

Jozefina sees this patch as a cherished space where her students practice therapeutic horticulture—preparing the soil, planting onions, tomatoes, and potatoes, and regularly tending to their crops. Alongside their hands-on activities, the students have explored the scents of different roses, discovering that yellow roses have the most delightful fragrance. Their curiosity also led them to study herbs, learning their names, uses, and even making herbal teas. The garden further serves as a lively classroom for literacy and maths, where students label plants and objects and compare the sizes of natural objects.

The students enthusiastically participate in seasonal garden activities such as picking strawberries, sweeping leaves, cleaning the drainage channels around the flower beds, using different garden tools or mastering the use of a wheelbarrow. They also enjoy observing the fish pond throughout the year, noting the changes from winter to spring, and learning about the life cycles and behaviours of the fish.

Jozefina views the connection between the Garden and the classroom as beautifully illustrated by the students' creative works. They recently completed a series of paintings inspired by their experiences in the Walled Garden, which they proudly exhibited during our Open Day. Some of these artworks captivated visitors and I understand that some were purchased, marking a wonderful achievement and further inspiration for the students. Bernard

Our Open Day

The Open Day in the Walled Garden had been set for 1 June, and about two weeks before, we started scanning the weather forecast for signs of sun amongst the weeks of rain.

As 1 June approached there was a buzz in the air to get the Garden looking at its best, weeding, grass cutting, edging, sweeping and, yes, giving an extra clean to the toilet and kitchen. Last minute bunting was needed to give the occasion a festive feel. Scrap material was found and transformed into lengths of colourful triangles draped everywhere.

The big day came and it was overcast and cold but thankfully not raining. The weather did not stop visitors flocking to the Garden and the sun did finally make a couple of appearances. We pulled out all the stops to produce a scrumptious selection of home made cakes and toasted sandwiches to satisfy the continual queues of people.

We had plenty of fun activities and games for children and adults, and a tombola. A team from North West London branch of the RSPB was there to answer everyone's bird questions and to test their skill at bird identification. Bee keepers Aileen and Gloria, who look after the two bee hives in the Garden, were present and we were treated to two very informative talks about bees. A newt was found by one of our newt handlers and shown to those who had never seen one before. There were many recycled bargains to be purchased in the 'barn' and plants to be bought which had been grown from seeds in the Garden,

Our Open Day was an opportunity to showcase our conservation work and encourage new volunteers to join us. When the last visitor had left we reflected that despite the cold weather it was a brilliant day, and we had helped spread the conservation message. And most important no one went home hungry.

Rose



Our home made thimble game

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' 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 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 28th September 2024 10.30 am

Contact number: number is changing. See web site

Email: barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com

Our Website: www.barnhillconservationgroup.org