



CHAIR'S REPORT 2012



Annual review time, every year sees change and progress, slowly but confidently moving forward towards our assured future. Noah's Ark Children's Hospice had the planning application approved in February this year, an application that included the new Environmental Building from where we, in collaboration with London Wildlife Trust, will be based. This building will demonstrate many important aspects of sustainable design, both in materials and technology. Watch this space!

Next year is the 21st anniversary of the Friends group and we plan to put together something special by way of acknowledging all that is owed to 20 years of volunteering for our important charity. We hope to gather memories, photographs so please spread the word and our request. There will be an appropriate event in 2013.

We need to congratulate ourselves in all that we have achieved with amazing contributions of your valuable time and support. Our volunteer Trustees, our volunteers managing the website, our volunteers who are keeping the nature reserve accessible and the volunteers who deliver leaflets, help with the admin, help with cleaning the classroom, carrying out repairs, help open the centre for visitors and community events. Our Volunteering Mondays since September have become a weekly event as opposed to last year's monthly and we seem to keep everyone busy with tasks and they keep coming back! Next week the BioBlitz takes place, the most ambitious event we have embarked on in recent years and involving not only our volunteers but many experts who are kindly donating their time too. There is so much goodwill and enthusiasm for what we do – what great feedback.

A brief summary of the highlights of the year:

July 17th – The Big Lunch Picnic – Dr Agneta Burton, OPAL Co-ordinator for East of England led us in an OPAL Bug Hunt.

August 6th – Barnet LWT Group organised a Moth and Bat Evening. 23rd LWT Youth Group continue clearing our pathways.

October 1st – Flat pack container constructed. 26th Make a Difference Day Hedge Project (completed 19th Nov) 26th Big Draw "Pumpkins, Bats and Monsters" half term event attracted over 100 children and 56 adults. Thanks to Geoff Barrett for his inspiration and hard work and to the calm approach of all volunteers coping with the visitors!

January 2012 Quiz Night – a successful and enjoyable evening with thanks to our Quizmaster – Terry.

February – LWT Corporate Group finish QE Hedge and clear the last part of the Arboretal Trail.

March 1st – First school visit of 2012. LWT Youth Group plant up a Hazel and Crab Apple copse with the remaining whips from our Woodland Trust Community Trees Pack.

April 1st – Spring Event. 13th Activity Afternoon during Easter break. 28th Dawn Chorus Walk – a rather damp morning brightened by Robert Husband's expertise and sense of humour.

May – another LWT Youth group clear tarmac and paths.

June – our usual events suspended because of clashes with Jubilee celebrations but all energies towards BioBlitz in July.

Our Reserve and Maintenance Team have led on all the hiccups facing us during the year, assembly of our flat pack container, fallen trees, burst pipes, broken glass to name a few, in addition to the general demands of grass cutting, path maintenance and the endless battle with brambles! We held a "Make A Difference Day" event to plant a new prickly hedge within the South (QE) Path. A brilliant turnout and we have all been happy to see the heavy rain settle the whips in! A recently held a weekend to repair, by clever recycling, a length of the paddock fencing achieved all it set out to do with some happy team work. We thank a team from Noah's Ark that cleared out the other end of our building and painted to deter intruders.

We are grateful for the support of The Hadley Trust and London Wildlife Trust that is enabling us to work towards the production of a new management plan. Annabel is leading on this for us. We have had an Arborological Survey conducted, a Phase I Habitats Survey and several local experts are advising and helping for which we are most grateful. Our BioBlitz is also an event that has been enabled by the financial support from The Hadley Trust and will feed information into the management plan. We acknowledge the support of our corporate member, Thompson's Flooring.

We continue to facilitate school visits, both self led and centre led by Annabel Foskett. We will have had 37 class visits this year which takes our stats over 1,000 children, 25 Centre led visits, 12 Self-led visits, 15 schools visiting of which 4 were new plus a Cub Scouts group doing their nature badge. The Wildabout Nature Club has continued to run a monthly programme for primary school children. This was launched in 2004. We now have to find new organisers as those founder organisers need to step back – thank you to Jenny Arnold and Penny Antoniou who have been brilliant leaders.

We have many varied links to organisations in the community, The Rethink Walking Group, The Network, U3A Barnet Natural History Group, Brookdale Allotment Gardens, Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteers and SPACES (who always include information about us in their newsletters). The Barnet Beekeepers Group still use the centre but the beehives will not return until the site is occupied.

I come to the end of my three years as Chair and have been grateful for the support of thirteen hard working fellow trustees. I also need to acknowledge here how grateful the Trustees have been to the education team that has supported our service over the years, Lynda Conrad, Pam Dawson and now Annabel Foskett. Their enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication has produced a service that is valued by the teachers who visit.

We still need more help! No cause for complacency. Please spread the word. Please get involved. Please don't be shy about coming forward – we don't bite!!! Thank you to everyone for your valuable support. Our membership remains steady and thank you to all who have paid your membership for the forthcoming year (you will receive an email or note if you have paid) and if you have not, I do hope that you will be able to.

Sue Bird
Chair of Trustees
9th July 2012