

Brent Island Trust

Newsletter, June 2021



A Message from Graham

Best wishes to all of our members as the Summer weather seems to have finally arrived, and what a beautiful display of wildflowers can now be seen on The Island, particularly on the lower meadow where the Yellow Rattle has appeared in profusion this year and the various colours of the wildflowers are a real delight! The insect population certainly seems to be enjoying them too!



One of our long serving committee members, David Worrall, has tendered his resignation from the committee due to his other commitments. I would like to thank David personally and on behalf of the Brent Island Trust for his highly valued contributions over the years. This does mean, of course, that we would like to recruit another member to join us on the committee. The work and responsibilities are much more enjoyable than onerous, so if you feel that you would like to join, please let me know!

The Island is, of course, open and available to all, and many people over the years have used the Island to gather together in groups to celebrate a wide range of events. We only ask and expect that people remove all of their litter when they leave The Island to allow all of us to continue to enjoy this wonderful facility. You may recall that I sent out an email last month about the partying that had taken place on The Island over the Bank Holiday weekend which left behind large amounts of litter and dangerous broken glass as well as a broken gate which has now been repaired. I can tell you that, fortunately, there has been no repeat of this regrettable and criminal behaviour.

I now have contact numbers to report any such activity in the future which we hope, of course, will not be required. If, whilst you are on The Island and happen to witness any rowdy or unruly behaviour, please contact either me on 01364 72803 or 07771 821009, or Phil Dean on 01364 649189 or 07879 994963 so that we can contact the relevant authorities if necessary and ensure that The Island remains a safe and pleasurable place. I sincerely hope that this has been a "one-off" incident which will not be repeated.



Wildlife on The Island

Gaynor Thomson daily walks a dog on The Island and uses the few minutes of calm to spot avian wildlife with great success. In recent weeks she's reported a Wren's nest, five Buzzards circling overhead, Great Spotted Woodpeckers calling, two Mallards and a Treecreeper. Near the viaduct was a Dipper and pair of Grey Wagtails. My bird book says of the latter's nest site "ledge, recess, hole, crevice or pipe in often overhanging bank, rock-face, bridge, wall or other artefact, or among tree roots or ivy; almost invariably by water and usually less than 2m above.....", which fits the Island environment perfectly. Two other birds were probably Goosander but await a formal identification.

Laurette Guest also spotted this rather beautiful Dusky Crane's-bill. 'A New Flora of Devon' describes it as an introduced plant but still rare.



Thanks to Gaynor and Laurette. If anyone has wildlife sightings or photos they'd like to share with our membership please do let us know – see contact details at the end of the newsletter.

Island Maintenance

- **Fencing:** recently the broken, rusty barbed wire to the right of the lane leading down to The Island gate was replaced with shiny, new wire together with several new posts.
- **Invasive Species:** We have just removed several clumps of Skunk Cabbage that was growing in the leat. We did this several times last year to prevent it from flowering and seeding and it does seem as if the growth is rather less this year. We removed a few Himalayan Balsam plants from around the Island last year, so if you do see any on your visits to the Island, please let us know where it is hiding!
- **EE (the mobile phone company):** has supported our Island maintenance work over a number of years by providing several willing volunteers for a day in the summer to bash bracken, chop brambles and any other tasks which need doing. On 23rd June this year they will also be spreading more aggregate on the path between the gate and bridge.



Graham Royle and John Hoare in action.

Dates for your diary

- **Annual General Meeting 2021:** Covid-19 rules permitting, we have set the date for this year's AGM on 12th October. Our fingers are firmly crossed that we will, once again, be able to enjoy the speaker's talk, each other's company and the traditional cheese, biscuits and wine!
- **Christmas Fair 2021:** as usual, this will be on the first Saturday in December which this year is the 4th.

Dog Fouling

We've been in touch with the locality officer from South Hams District Council to see if signs can be put up on Millswood Lane reminding dogwalkers that they are requested not to let their dogs foul the lane and that there are bags and a bin just inside the gate. A number of stickers have been put up in the lane and signs will be mounted towards the top of the lane.



Brief Notes

- In the past several members have remembered us in their will. If you are making or renewing your will any help for our funds would be greatly appreciated.

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