

# Brent Island Trust

## Newsletter, November 2021



### A Message from Graham

Dear Members,

I will not pretend that life has yet got back to normal, but are we at last beginning to see the return of some of our normal activities? Let us all hope so! It was great to see a good number of members turn up for our recent Working Party on The Island and a great deal of tidying up was achieved. Paths cleared of brambles and overhanging branches, pruning of the willows around the apple trees, dog holes filled in with earth to help prevent accidents and falls, a lot of grass cuttings repositioned and a substantial amount of the brash produced placed on top of the bank repair to help make it stronger and more robust. It is great to see the new growth of several willows along the edge of the repair by the river which will help the natural process of integrating the repair to become part of the riverbank. My thanks and appreciation to those who gave up their time to come along and help.

A few of the band of helpers enjoying a well earned break!



Our next event is fast approaching, yes Christmas is coming! After an enforced non-appearance last year, we will be holding a Christmas Stall event outside the Village Shop on Saturday 4th December. This is a great opportunity to raise funds and create awareness of The Island and your support and help would be much appreciated. More details are given below. It should be great fun and I hope to see and meet you there!

Best wishes, Graham Royle. (Chair)

### Christmas Stall!

December 4<sup>th</sup> will see the welcome return of our annual Christmas Stall outside the Village Shop between 10.00 and 12.00. The now traditional carol singing will be accompanied by all the usual features, including the sale of cakes and a tombola, so do please start thinking about possible contributions now. We will have a box in the Mare and Foal charity shop for you to leave tombola prizes from 17<sup>th</sup> November and cakes can be brought to the stall on the day or contact Graham (details at the end of this newsletter).



## Brent Island – Movie star?

Many of you will have spotted the extensive team of actors, camera operators, sound people, health and safety personnel et al. which descended on the village in early October. This was for a future cinema release with Jim Broadbent playing the starring role in the film of the book *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*. The story passes through South Brent and Harold Fry was to have been recorded bathing in the river by The Island. Alas, the weather had other plans as the first set date was rained off and the second attempt ran out of time. Will it still happen? We don't know - but certainly other parts of the village will be in evidence when we get to see the finished production.

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## 2021 AGM – is the Goosander Brent Island's sexiest bird .....

.....was the question Peter Reay eloquently addressed to the almost 30 members and friends who gathered for this year's AGM after a gap last year due to COVID-19. His talk was generously illustrated with photographs charting the history of the Goosander from its first Dartmoor record in 1931 to the first breeding record on the river Avon in 2003 and up to date statistics on the daily departure times of the birds from their night time stay on the Avon Dam reservoir. It seems to be one of the few successful birds with breeding in Devon having expanded hugely from few records in the 1977-1985 survey to the county-wide distribution in that of 2007-2013.



Evocative photos and videos of Goosanders on the Avon Reservoir were complemented by others showing some of the other birds to found there including Cormorant, Grey Heron, Kestrel and Nuthatch. Males are quite distinctive but females and the young are hard to distinguish which are called brownheads. We thank Peter for a fascinating talk, and can only apologise for challenges with the projection equipment.

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## Riverbank Repairs

We're delighted to see that the riverbank repairs just upstream of the linnay survived with flying colours the recent inundation which resulted in several tree trunks moving down the river. In 2019 the riverbank was rapidly being washed away and so Westcountry Rivers Trust undertook repairs comprising sweet chestnut stakes driven into the riverbed, substantial cross branches lashed to the uprights and the cavity filled with brash. Periodically we've added more brash and we can now see new vegetation growing which all helps to stabilise the bank and will (fingers crossed) last for many years to come.



## Helping The Island

There are many ways that members help to maintain and fund The Island – joining Working Parties and donations to the Christmas stall are just two ways described above. However, have you thought you'd like to help by joining the committee. It's not an onerous role as we meet just every other month and you can pick up as many (or as few) activities as your time allows. It does, of course, let you to have your say on how The Island Trust is managed. If you'd like to find out more please do contact our chair Graham Royle whose contact details are below.

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### Contacts:

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