

Brent Island Trust

Newsletter, August 2022



A Message from Graham

Dear Members,

The recent heatwave, together with school summer holidays, has seen a lot of people and families visiting The Island to relax, picnic, play, enjoy the peaceful surroundings and swim or paddle in the river. What a wonderful place we have on our doorsteps! Following our last newsletter's article on swimming, and with the encouragement of one of my daughters, I ventured into the cooling waters myself and had a very enjoyable swim!

Last month saw The Island represented at the "Fair for South Brent" which was very well attended, and our stall attracted a lot of interest both in The Island and also the Moth and Bird groups we shared our stall with. We were also very popular with the youngsters collecting badges! Overall we felt it was a good use of our time and will certainly support this event in the future, should it be repeated. Many thanks to all those who visited!

Finally just a word of caution to all dog owners. I am sure that you are aware that there was an incident last month when a dog got its paw stuck between the granite setts outside the gates to The Island. I have posted a warning sign on our gate so please take care. While Brent Island Trust doesn't own or have any responsibility for the lane, we are considering what, if any, action we can take to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

FAIR FOR SOUTH BRENT



Best wishes, Graham Royle. (Chair)

Our Meadow Wins Praise

Many of you will know that The Island is a member of the Avon Valley Project who have advised us on its management for wildlife and have generously provided Yellow Rattle seed to help the growth of various other wildflowers. The Project is run by Lynne Kenderdine of Devon Wildlife Trust with the aim of "Restoring and re-connecting precious wildlife habitat in the Avon Valley". Lynne visited The Island on 26th July and was both pleased and impressed with the profusion of wild plants - especially in the lower half of the meadow. Her message was a clear 'well done' and to continue with our management plan. For more information on the Avon Valley Project look at <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/what-we-do/our-projects/avon-valley>



Himalayan Balsam Galore

We stay alert to the growth of Himalayan Balsam on and around The Island. It is one of several non-native species which Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) describe as “a threat to Dartmoor's precious wildlife and habitats because they displace native plants and disrupt ecosystems.” In the past, people from the DNPA came along to remove the plant from The Island but recently we noticed some in the middle of the bramble and nettle area at the bottom of the meadow. On closer inspection we realised that



it was much more extensive than we'd thought and so we were keen to remove it before



its 'exploding' seeds flung themselves even wider. Wearing protection against brambles and nettles, three intrepid people from the committee went to The Island on 3rd August and spent a couple of hours removing all the balsam we could find – including more growth just upstream of the fallen 'elephant' beech. The photos show some of the action and the result which fully filled the back of a Passat hatchback car.

EE's Annual Visit

Volunteers from EE, the mobile phone network provider, paid us their annual visit on 11th July and were presented with a substantial list of tasks for them to get stuck into. This included path clearing, bracken bashing and pulling, filling holes made by dogs, cutting back a dead tree at the top of The Island and several others. They tackled these with enthusiasm and by lunchtime they had successfully accomplished all of them. Many thanks to the EE volunteers!!

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 21st June. All nominated committee members were elected unopposed but if you'd like to help on the committee with any aspect of managing The Island which fires you up, please do contact us (contact details below). There's always room for another committee member. Our guest speaker was local environmentalist, Tim Ferry, who spoke eloquently and knowledgeably on “*Nature Recovery on Dartmoor*”. Tim sees recovery as the next step on from rewilding and he shared with us his vision of what Dartmoor could become in the future with not just belted Galloway cattle but also wildlife including deer, wild boar, cranes, red squirrels and more. He discussed the benefits to be gained from peatland restoration and natural flood management and gave examples of restoration from Dendles Wood, Piles Copse and Wedlake. The meeting concluded with refreshments of cheese, biscuits and fruit accompanied by wine and soft drinks.



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