

# Brent Island Trust



## Newsletter October 2023

Welcome to our October Newsletter, I hope it finds you well. The weather has recently changed from being very mild although rather damp, to being colder and definitely feeling like Autumn is approaching. The leaves on our trees around The Island are turning various lovely shades of yellow and brown and starting to drop in large numbers as the cold weather affects them. All seasons have their own beauty, but perhaps the most striking for me is Autumn as the trees display their farewell colours and insects and mammals make their own preparations for over-wintering. There are still a number of adult butterflies, such as Red Admirals on the wing, some of these, as well as Peacock butterflies may well be finding quiet, sheltered places to hide and hibernate through the Winter, hopefully to emerge ready to mate early in Spring. Some of these may enter sheds, garages or even houses in search of safe hibernation, so please try not to disturb them or maybe carefully place them in cool places where they can remain safe until warm days in early Spring.

I hope to see you at our next Working Party and at The Xmas Stall, see below for details.

Graham Royle, Chair BIT.

### Meadow Update



Thanks to John Severn for mowing the field and to Tim Harvey and his team. It was wonderful to see so many young helpers on The Island from our local Scouts, together with parents and siblings. I counted 27 at one time and as the old adage says “many hands make light work” so we were able to rake up the cut grass and remove encroaching bracken from the lower meadow in record time.

### Electrofishing



On, Friday 4 August, at the Island, Phil Dean met with representatives from Westcountry Rivers as they undertook the electrofishing survey. The conditions were very different from previous year, when there had been very little water flow and the survey recorded 29 fish 19 trout 10 salmon. On 4 August the water was running much more vigorously and only 5 fish were recorded; 1 trout and 4 salmon.

Until WRT have completed their surveys along the length of the River Avon it will not be clear as to why the numbers were so different. Was it due to different water conditions or has there been a significant drop in the fish population? We certainly hope that it was the river conditions that affected the survey this year!

### Storm Agnes

Storm Agnes, at the end of September, was responsible for bringing down several trees around and just beyond the Island. One has fallen from the far bank towards the Island near the back of the Linhay, another has fallen just beyond the viaduct

## River Avon Water Quality



You may have seen much in the media recently about the significant problems our rivers, including the Avon, confront in maintaining clean, healthy, environmentally-sound water quality. In response to this, the Avon River Champions (ARC) has been formed as part of The South Devon River Champions whose remit is to “restore wildlife habitat, adapt your lifestyle, prevent pollution and campaign for sufficient investment from government and water companies - to Clean Up our Rivers.” Naturally, this is very much in tune with Brent Island Trust’s philosophy – people often swim from the Island’s ‘beach’ and we want to protect wildlife on and around The Island. ARC is

recruiting volunteers to monitor water quality at points along the entire length of the Avon and so members of the Trust’s committee recently attended ARC planning meetings and also, together with other interested people from South Brent, went on a Citizen Science Investigations training course organised by Westcountry Rivers Trust. Here we learned various techniques to measure water quality with the aim of monitoring the Avon and also the Glazebrook which we’ll be doing on a regular basis. We’ll let you know the results and how the project is progressing in future newsletters. For more information see <https://www.avon-river-champions.org/>.

**Island Working Party.** Saturday 4 November 9.30am – 12pm

### Christmas Stall

On Saturday 2 December from 9.30am we will be taking up our regular spot outside the Village Shop for our Christmas Stall. Featuring a tombola, cakes, mince pies and jam and other items for sale, whilst being serenaded throughout by carol singers, we look forward to seeing you all. If you would like to contribute to the stall, we will have a box in the Village Shop for you to leave tombola prizes, from 17 November. Cakes, mince pies and jams can be bought to the stall on the day or contact Graham or Geraldine (details at the end of this newsletter).

### Forthcoming events

Christmas Stall: Saturday 2 December 2023 outside the Village Shop 9.30am – 12pm

Easter Egg Trail: Saturday 30 March 10am – 4pm at the Island

30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event: Saturday 21 September 2024. Anyone who has any ideas of how we can celebrate this event or who would like to help organise the event please contact us.

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**Contacts:** Website: [brentisland.org.uk](http://brentisland.org.uk) ; Graham Royle (Chair) 01364 72803, [grahamroyle@outlook.com](mailto:grahamroyle@outlook.com)

Geraldine Coleman (Secretary) 01364 388477, [geraldinemcoleman7@gmail.com](mailto:geraldinemcoleman7@gmail.com)