

Welcome!

*Editors: Robert Gray
& Tom Siddons*



Finding people in your area who share your ideas about protecting the environment is not always an easy task. In the last year, however, Brent Friends of the Earth has been growing in numbers and showing local people that it is possible to make a difference in your area.

The last year has seen the group promoting recycling in Harlesden, making eco-friendly Christmas cards in Willesden, organising a public debate about Heathrow expansion with local politicians and forming links with Brent schools.

In this first edition of our newsletter, local residents like Mary show us how they do their bit for the environment. There are also green travel tips, news about Brent Friends of the Earth's work to protect the environment, plus the launch of our new website.

Happy reading!

Brent Friends of the Earth **online!**

Our new website has been steadily growing over the past couple of months - read about our latest events, see pictures and find out about getting involved with the group at www.brentfoe.com

Green Tip: Car Clubs

Save thousands of pounds a year while doing the planet a world of good - join a car club! Find out more at www.carclubs.co.uk



Freedigitalphotos.net

Brent Friends of the Earth

A year in the life of our hard-working volunteers - the highlights.

Shoutabout Week

Brent Friends of the Earth organised visits by local MPs to schools in Brent. The kids had the chance to quiz MPs on the environment and showed that they have some great green ideas, too.



Green pupils in high level talks over environment

Thanks: Harrow Observer



Dr Green

The Doctor was busy at summer festivals with a stream of visitors getting their free Green Health Check.

Heathrow debate

We organised a local meeting where politicians, including Sarah Teather (MP) explained how Heathrow expansion plans mean more noise, pollution and risk of accidents. Brent council have since spoken out against the expansion.



Read and recycle

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. Once you have finished it, please recycle or, better still, give it to a friend.



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Dig for victory:

Brent allotment life

By Mary Evans



I've had my allotment since March 2006. It's in Birchen Grove near the Welsh Harp and is a beautiful spot with lots of tall trees. I share the allotment with a friend – it's great to have a chat over the digging and someone to share the highs and lows. People are friendly and always willing to help out and give advice.

We grow a range of vegetables, soft fruit and flowers – last year the sweet corn failed to ripen through lack of sun but the soft fruit did well and we had a good crop of strawberries and gooseberries. I tend to go once or twice a week (I have a part-time job so it is quite easy to fit in my time at the allotment).

Digging over the plot is hard work and sometimes weeding seems endless but there are huge rewards. It's a lovely peaceful place to be and there is nothing more satisfying than taking your own produce home to eat. The fruit and vegetables taste wonderful, quite unlike anything that you can buy.

If you would like to know more about allotments, call Brent Council on 020 8937 5633

Greece by train

Green travel

Thanks to Pam Laurance



Travelling to Paris by train is a familiar trip nowadays, but people often don't realise how easy it is to travel further afield in Europe – without setting foot on a plane. In the summer of 2006 Pam Laurance and Ian Saville travelled to Greece, making the entire journey by train and ferry.

Pam explained her reasons for travelling this way: "We wanted to minimise our effect on the environment" (travelling by train produces far fewer greenhouse gases than going by plane). "It also meant that we got to see places that we wouldn't otherwise have seen – Bologna, in particular, was spectacular."

The trip was organised using the website www.themaninseat61.com which they used to plan a route via Paris, Bologna, Bari and Patras. The trip took about two days, which involved sleeping in a sleeper carriage. "Sleeping on the train was not always comfortable," Pam reported, "but we did meet very friendly and interesting people."

We asked Pam what would encourage more people to travel this way. "People need to understand more about the harmful effects of flying," she said, "and it also helps if you have a bit more time to spend travelling."

Monthly meetings

Brent Friends of the Earth meet on the second Wednesday of each month. Why not come along and get involved? **Check www.brentfoe.com for details.**