



Photos: Emma Howard

## Brent Park Nature Reserve and Dollis Valley Green Walk

EMMA HOWARD

Over the last two years, I'm sure we have all looked for new walks on our doorstep in order to avoid the crowds and enjoy a bit of variety. To my surprise, I found a lovely new walk from the Suburb over to Brent Park which runs parallel to the North Circular Road. I had often seen the tall trees of the park behind the flats on the road here but never guessed how nice the hidden treasure behind it is.

The footpath along Mutton Brook takes you in an easterly direction until the Mutton Brook joins the Dollis Brook which rises in Barnet and flows through Finchley. There is a children's playground just before the point where the streams merge to form the Brent River. If you turn left here, you emerge on Bell Lane and you cross this to arrive at the park. The small park is a Grade 2 nature reserve managed by Barnet. The

Brent flows through the park and is home to egrets and a variety of ducks, grey wagtails and other interesting birds.

The main feature of the park though is a large pond and two smaller ponds, remnants of a lake constructed as a duck decoy long before our time. The wooded island on the large pond is home to swans, moorhens, ducks and other birds. There is often a heron fishing on the middle pond. The viewing platform on the large pond enables you to take a good look as part of the walk round the ponds. You can also access the park from Brent Street and the North Circular Road. The weir and two fairy tale style towers near the Brent Street access are also rather fun.

This spring a pair of swans has been proudly raising their five cygnets which are now getting big, and mum is now sitting on more eggs. The moorhens have raised several babies in their second litter.

Do take a stroll there if you haven't previously done so.

## Hedges

Keeping our pavements free for pedestrians

Photos: Isabelle Ficker

ISABELLE FICKER

Thank you to those who are helping keep pavements free for pedestrians by pushing bins to one side after collection. It makes such a difference, particularly to the elderly, disabled and parents with young children and prams.



Willifield Way privet

There has been a lot of talk recently on the HGS Chat Line about overgrown hedges. As a community, we can all help pedestrians by keeping our hedges properly cut back. To take a couple of Suburb leases at random, they state: "The front fence shall be of York stone kerb nine inches high above the path with close clipped green privet behind." This suggests two things: (1) that keeping hedges properly trimmed is the householder's responsibility; and (2) that the hedges should not extend beyond the York stone kerb. This leaves a good two paving stones' width available to pedestrians, in addition to the grass, tarmac or brick verge. Maybe that should be the guiding principle.

Hedges invariably grow taller and wider over time, even if one keeps them closely clipped, so cutting them back from time to time (top/outside/inside) over a three year cycle, before birds start nesting, helps to keep them in check and also rejuvenates them.



Wildwood Road Holly



Hedge being rejuvenated in Hampstead Way

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Photo: Shelley-Anne Salisbury

## The West End Café

SHELLEY-ANNE SALISBURY

Reverend Ian Tutton's delightful West End café has been open since May this year on a Saturday morning between 10-12, serving teas coffees and biscuits for a modest contribution. Located on the West lawn of Central Square it's a lovely stop off after a dog walk or a stroll and a great meeting place for HGS residents.