

# ***GARDENS FOR WILDLIFE***

**Issue 31 Summer 2011**

**Supported by Marsh Ltd**

*Gardens for Wildlife is a local initiative (which operates in the area between Newmarket Road and Lakenham Way and between the inner and outer ring roads). We distribute newsletters free to all houses in this area and we welcome everybody to talks and outings.*

*You can now access this newsletter on the community web site [www.townclose.org.uk](http://www.townclose.org.uk)*

I want to begin by thanking Julie, who has now left the district, for the time and work she put in as chairperson. I also want to thank Dilys, who is stepping down as secretary, for the wonderful newsletters she has produced over the last five years. She has single-handedly put the newsletter together, found illustrations and articles, and seen to its publication and initial distribution. She has very often organised the speakers and outings as well! We owe her a big debt of gratitude.

Gardens for Wildlife has now reached its tenth anniversary. It started during the foot and mouth disaster, when I had to walk the dog round the streets, and noticed many front gardens were giving way to car parks. Knowing how much our native wildlife depends on gardens I felt sorry about the habitat loss. I found there were other people with similar concerns, and we met and set up Gardens for Wildlife. With help from the City Wildlife Officer we printed our first newsletter, which included a questionnaire about what wildlife people had seen in their gardens.

Jean managed to secure us a grant, and I was lucky enough to get Marsh, who are in our little area, to print subsequent newsletters that Liz edited. Marsh have kindly supported us ever since.

From the first, meetings were well attended, and we found keen naturalists and some people with already established wildlife gardens in our patch. In fact, the most obvious result from the questionnaire was that the more interested you are, the more you see.

Over the years we have had fascinating talks. These are now held in the Hewett School and everyone is welcome. I have learned a lot. I have set up a feeding station, moved the pond to a sunnier spot, established a little wild area, got a bird-bath, and have a much more interesting garden as a result.

The group has regularly enjoyed looking round local gardens, and several times visited Town Close School grounds, kept with wildlife in mind for many years by Tony. We have also been on wonderful walks and outings. Wandering through lovely surroundings, chatting to neighbours, and looking at flowers, birds, dragonflies and butterflies is a perfect occupation for a summer afternoon.

I don't think we have made much impact on front-garden disappearance - but there may be those of you who have kept yours, or planted trees or hedges in shingle who might not otherwise have done.



We couldn't have kept going without your support. I would like to thank all those who have organised meetings, led or arranged outings, and the little group who regularly distribute the newsletter. And, of course, everyone who comes along to support and contribute to our events.

We hope that Gardens for Wildlife will be able to continue into the future. It seems it might be a good idea to include news from other voluntary organisations which operate in our area - so do let us know of your existence. We also hope we can find more people able to help with small jobs, so the burden doesn't all fall on one person's shoulders. If you would like to be involved in any way do get in touch, and we will send you an invitation to our next AGM in September (see below).

*Juliet*

### **Your Committee**

As you know, we are looking for a new chairperson and secretary/editor to take over at the next AGM in September. Maybe a couple of people would like to share one of the roles. We do now have some new people joining our committee so we think we can continue. If you would be interested in helping in any way do ring 454683 (dilys.jones2@btinternet.com) for more information.



(from Mitchell Beazley pocket guide to Trees by Keith Rushforth)

### **The Trees of Earlham Cemetery**

The oldest/easternmost part of Earlham Cemetery is like a nature reserve. On 7th May 15 of us walked round to enjoy the variety of trees with Norman guiding us on the identification. We were amazed at the number of different oaks - the most stately of these seemed to be the Hungarian Oak whose leaves can grow to 8 inches long. Other very attractive leaf forms were the Tulip Tree and the London Plane, and a new one to many of us was the Tree of Heaven.

## ***WALKS***

### **SATURDAY 11 JUNE 2011 at 2.30pm**

#### **WALK at Neatishead**

Our Chairperson Julie moved out into the county in February and has offered to lead a walk.

Directions from Julie: Go through Wroxham and Hoveton and out on the Stalham road and turn **right** just past Hoveton Hall to Barton Turf and Neatishead. Continue along that road for about 2 miles until you reach a sharp left turn with a road on the right to Three Hammer Common.

You will see a sign at this junction for Camping and Caravanning. Turn **right** here and continue down the hill towards the school. Then take the sharp bend to the **left** at the school (School Road) and continue for about ½ mile past an old red telephone box and turn **left** at the crossroads down King Street. Go along this road for about ½ mile until you reach a small triangle of grass where you turn to the **right** and then after 100 yards turn **right** into Water Lane marked as a dead end. Our house is the third one after the peppermint green cottage and brick house and is cream and faces you as you turn the bend. There are two entrances and you can take either and there is parking. Post code NR12 8BL

We shall have a look at her country garden and then stroll to Alderfen Broad and back – about 45 mins. It can be soggy in places so stout footwear/wellies required. (Followed by a cup of tea.)



We normally organise a **Garden Walkabout** in May or June in our area but this year there is going to be a special two day open gardens event in the Golden Triangle with around 30 homes taking part. Some of the gardens are in our area and no doubt some of you would like to support this event:

**SATURDAY 25 AND SUNDAY 26 JUNE 2011 - 10am to 5pm**

**“ G O L D E N   G A R D E N S ”**

**a TWO DAY OPEN GARDENS EVENT in the Golden Triangle, Norwich.**

For one weekend only there is an opportunity to look at some of the gardens in the Golden Triangle area of Norwich.

The event is part of the Campaign for Later Life in Norfolk which aims to raise awareness of the work of Age UK Norfolk and Age UK Norwich. All proceeds raised over the two days will go towards developing services for older people in our county.

Whatever your gardening tastes you will be encouraged by the variety of layouts on offer. There are wild gardens, family gardens, allotments, patios with pots and gardens providing homes for chickens and ferrets.

Entry to the event will be by brochure, one person per brochure, priced at £5 per brochure and will give access to all gardens including the Plantation Garden for both days.

The brochures for the Golden Gardens will be out on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

The brochures can be purchased or pre-ordered by sending a cheque to Age UK Norfolk (see below for details). The brochure(s) will then be sent as soon as they are printed.

Cheques should be made out to Age UK Norfolk and sent to the following address:

Age UK Norfolk

Golden Gardens Event

300 St Faith's Road, Old Catton

Norwich NR6 7BJ

Please write Golden Gardens on the back of the cheque. Along with the cheque, please include contact details letting us know who and where to send the brochure.

Alternatively, payment can be made over the phone (01603 787111).

The brochures will also be on sale at the following places:

Waitrose at Eaton: on 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May

Arnolds at Waitrose Eaton: from 21<sup>st</sup> May

Arnolds on Prince of Wales Road: from 21<sup>st</sup> May

Notcutts Garden Centre, Norwich: on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June between 10am and 4pm (10.30am – 4pm on 19<sup>th</sup> and 10.30am – 12 on 26<sup>th</sup>)

Just to confirm, the gardens will be open from 10am to 5pm on the Saturday and Sunday. On the Sunday musical entertainment will continue until 7pm at the Plantation Garden on Earlam Road.

For further information about the Campaign for Later Life in Norfolk please visit

[www.acnorfolk.org.uk/campaignforlaterlife](http://www.acnorfolk.org.uk/campaignforlaterlife)

There will be press coverage nearer the time. To find out more about the event please contact Pat Brickley on 01603 785216 or email [goldengardens@acnorfolk.org.uk](mailto:goldengardens@acnorfolk.org.uk).

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### **Saturday 16 July 2011 at 2.30pm**

### **WALK round High Ash country park for flowers and birds.**

**This undulating countryside just outside the city has been laid out as a nature reserve. Fields have been planted with flowers with seeds for birds, so, hopefully we shall see both. There is also a small wooded area, a pond and, if we reach it, a little stream.**

From the Homebase roundabout take Barrett Road and at the traffic lights at the bottom of the hill turn **right** signposted Long John Hill/Stoke Road. Continue on this road over the A47, through Caistor St Edmund, pass the blue 'P' sign to the Roman Town on the right, and take the next turning to the **left**. This is a small road leading up a hill, and you can park on the verges at the top where a small road comes up from your left. This is where we shall meet at 2.30pm. If you need, or can offer a lift, please contact Juliet on 623816. Wear stout shoes as the ground may be uneven.

*(Please be aware that we are an informal group and we do not hold public liability insurance. Visitors attend walks and talks at their own risk.)*



On 29<sup>th</sup> March Graham Ford of the Norfolk Beekeepers' Association came to talk to us about 'Honey Bees and Beekeeping' and this talk attracted our biggest audience yet. It was a very informative talk from a real expert and we all came away amazed at how clever bees are and how wonderful nature is. (We also got the message that if you are considering keeping bees it is important to do a course with an experienced keeper on how to look after them, and the Norfolk Beekeepers' Association can advise on this.)

## **REPORT FROM THE COURSE ON ‘CARBON CONVERSATIONS’**

Some of you will have noticed the invitation to take part in a series of meetings called ‘Carbon Conversations’ which appeared in a newsletter last year. Prompted by Julie, I made the effort to drag myself out of the house on a cold winter evening and find out what it was all about. I have to say that I’m really glad that I did – thanks Julie!

The conversations were facilitated by Juliet and Lois, and Margaret kindly lent us the use of her dining room for the events.

In the context of the risk to so many of the things that most of us value from the current rate of climate change, the objective of the conversations is to support people to consider how they can reduce their personal carbon footprint.

These could have been heavy and uncomfortable conversations – there are certainly lots of things about the way I live which leave room for improvement! But our facilitators, helped by the workbooks and materials that have been developed by the Cambridge Group, ensured that everyone could join in comfortably. I never left the meetings feeling ridden with guilt (as I thought might be the case before I started the series) but rather went away with positive ideas about things that I might do to contribute to the reduction of carbon.

The approach was supportive and the board games helped get us all talking. As a group we discussed the potential of a range of possible actions, some small (eg drawing curtains at dusk, taking a closer look at where and how food is produced and packed) and some much larger that would need lots of thought and planning (eg taking advantage of grants to put panels on the roof and sell electricity to the national grid). I think that everyone found something that they would try and change, possibly not something that they hadn’t thought about before, but the group certainly helped promote resolve.

It was particularly good that the conversations were organised in our neighbourhood – fits the “act local, think global” agenda really well! I also enjoyed getting to know some more people who live nearby. I find it’s always cheering when you recognise people out and about when walking round locally.

I would thoroughly recommend this course to anyone who is interested in how they can contribute to the reduction of climate change.

*Helen*

### **Carbon Conversations**

We hope to run another Carbon Conversations course in the area next year, probably facilitated by different people. Date, time and place will be arranged to suit as many as possible. If you are interested, please contact Lois [loishill@live.co.uk](mailto:loishill@live.co.uk) 630297.

## **Carnage in Cecil Road!**

On the evening of 19<sup>th</sup> April my son arrived at our house in Cecil Road. As he came towards the porch he saw “a huge grey, brown and white bird of prey” feasting on a pigeon on the path. The bird looked at him for a second before flying off. It left a trail of feathers and a half-eaten carcass. We think it may have been a sparrowhawk.

*Jenny G*

(Since receiving this I have had 3 more similar reports and each time the prey has been a pigeon. It seems such a dramatic event for our urban area. *Ed*)

## **Life in Brian Avenue**

There are lots of birds singing way before 4am, so spring has arrived at last and what a warm spring it has been. A few sparrows have already fledged. We appear to have more sparrows this year and I hope more will survive.

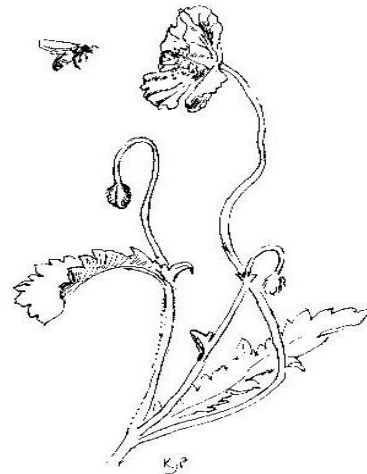
Blue tits are nesting in my pyracantha on the garage wall and are very active flying in and out of the nest box every minute or two. They seem to be finding lots of insects for their young and my presence close by does not deter them.

I had a sighting a month ago in the Fakenham area of a red kite, and was told by a friend who works at the College that he often sees one in the area flying northwards, so we need to keep our eyes open. (For those who cannot identify a red kite, it is a slim long winged bird of prey that hangs in the air and its tail is deeply forked.)

The swifts have arrived at last, a week or two later than last year, and I shall be pleased when I see their young beginning to fly – a noisy but wonderful sight!

If you are able to get down to Whitlingham Broad the flag iris are a lovely sight at the moment, and the young ducklings!

*Jenny C*



**Want to know more about encouraging wildlife into your garden? The RHS and The Wildlife Trusts have produced [wildaboutgardens.org.uk](http://wildaboutgardens.org.uk)**

## **CALLING ALL CONTRIBUTORS AND ILLUSTRATORS**

We are an informal group and we rely on your input and participation. If you can write a short article or even just a snippet, do please support us and get in touch. Ring the Newsletter editor at 454683.

Email: [dilys.jones2@btinternet.com](mailto:dilys.jones2@btinternet.com)

If you would like to be on our membership list (free) in order to receive notification of our AGM ring Giti on 662146.