



July 2018  
to  
September 2018

Our website  
[www.friends-of-rccp.co.uk](http://www.friends-of-rccp.co.uk)

Rangers Office  
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Issue 80

# Friends Newsletter



Margaret tending the flower bed in front of the rangers' office. This is making a bright and colourful first impression to visitors using the main entrance from the car park.

## Sunday Teas.

After my plea for help to continue to organise 'Sunday Teas' twice monthly, I was very pleased to welcome Tracey Hills, and Bridget Asher and Danuta Szeliga to the team.

It has recently become quite difficult to get enough people to serve, especially in the afternoons, so we had to close at lunchtime on May 5<sup>th</sup>. At the last Friends of RCP meeting it was decided to close the third Sunday in July, August and September and hopefully reopen on October 21<sup>st</sup> with more offers of help- I appeal to everyone to ask around and help us get more servers [and bakers, too] if we are to continue opening twice a month. I am very grateful to the regular helpers - bakers, servers, setters-up - who have helped to make 'Sunday Teas' so popular that now we need reinforcements! Sue Jackson.

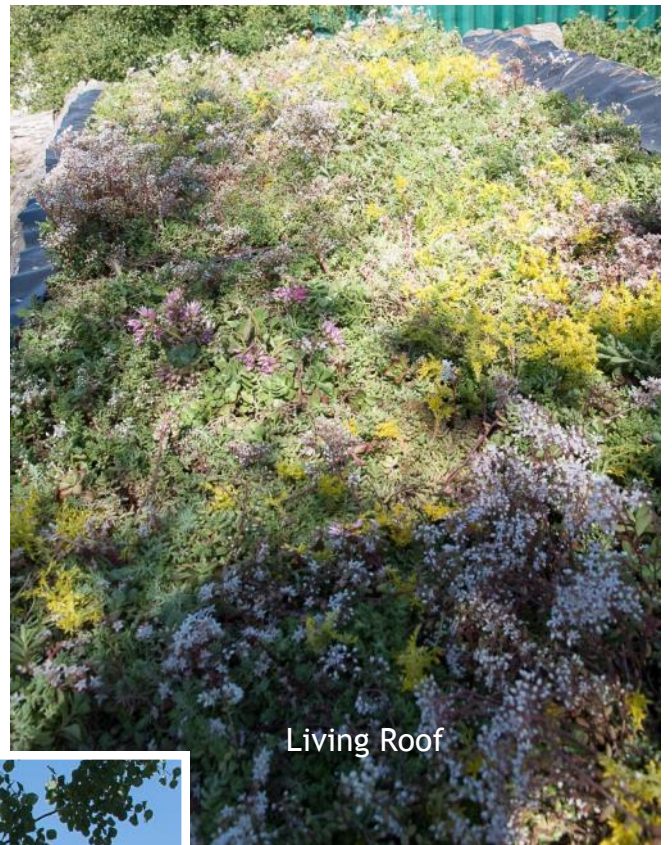
## The Garden of Friendship

Work has continued on construction of the shelters, bases and paths with that work led by Roger. Carving of seat backs has been led by Jean and Kate with help and instruction on tool sharpening from John R. Zoe has supported this project throughout with advice, chain sawing and quite a lot of lifting of timber.



All the shelters have been erected and the living roofs installed.

The work to be done includes finishing the paths with top dressing and the mosaics which have already been made.



Living Roof



The seats need to be finished and installed on top dressed bases.

The old raised beds are to be modified and refurbished. The front bed will be lowered and covered to provide more seating, and the rear one planted up.

The pond will be kept and that area tidied up.

## Carving the Seat Backs for Garden of Friendship.



Friends are busy carving the backs of benches which will be placed in the Garden of Friendship.

The wood is oak and from Wytham, a lovely wood to carve.

Each of us decided on a wildlife subject and created our own design.

For some of the Friends it is a new experience, but with advice and help from John Randall on the use of tools and how to keep them sharp during carving, very important, has been a big help to us all.

Earlier in the year John took on the mammoth task of sharpening all our tools, which is very much appreciated.

Looking forward to seeing the benches installed.

Jean





## Wytham

Once again an intrepid group of friends have spent the week in Wytham. I arrived on Monday, whilst some had come down earlier. Our main task was to help build a bridge across a stream in the wood. The resident staff had already sourced a trailer full of timber.



The existing bridge had collapsed and so was lifted out by Nick's hydraulic grab. Nine enormous logs were next lowered into position, using the grab. Then battens were nailed to keep the logs together. The top surface of the bridge was built using 11 giant planks and nailed down. Hand rails on each side completed the structure. Nick then brought two loads of road planings to grade up to the bridge edge. Zoe suggested that we should have a troll, every bridge needs one,! Tracey googled a suitable picture and so on Wednesday afternoon I begged some scrap timber off Nick and working with Tracey began to construct one.



This was finished off the next day and we all went down to the bridge to install it. The friends also constructed a patio base next to one of the kilns. Monday and Thursday nights were pancakes and Maple syrup around the campfire whilst Tuesday and Wednesday night we ate at

Jacob's Inn. On Thursday we also tried out a new pub, the Plough???, a beautifully historic building. Many thanks to Nigel, Kevin and Neil, great working with such lovely people. Roger

## Bug Houses Thanks to Laura for these notes and pictures.



Rosemary & I spent a day installing some solitary bee nesting towers over the back of the Friends Field

There are three stakes with holes of varying sizes drilled in, and three stakes with three metal cutlery drainers attached, and each is filled with builders sand. The holes on the sides and the open top allows for bees to make their nests in.

I will keep half an eye on them over the next few weeks and then we may be installing a couple up at the orchard too



Rosemary, Steve, Paul & I made two bug nesting habitat piles using waste material from the compound and around. They have bamboo canes, last years grass cuttings, bits of bark, wood with holes drilled in, and a rotten wood stump at the bottom. They have been covered over with chicken wire to secure them. These two are in the Friends Field.



*Sapyga quinquepunctata* - a parasitic cuckoo wasp which lays its eggs in red mason bee nests. The workshop bee house has resident bees within it; I think they are red mason bees



## Concrete Bugs

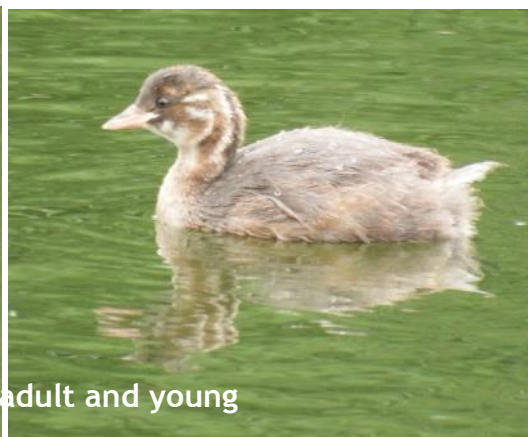


The Ladybird Trail gets a spring makeover.

## John's Jottings



My favourite season is drawing to a close, but what a strange spring it has been. Late winter weather persisted into April, followed by quite decent and sometimes quite warm weather throughout much of May and June. Some of Britain's summer visiting birds arrived late. Swift numbers in particular were slow to build up, but since late May they have regularly been seen over the Park. Not all species were late: our first Swallows were seen on 8th April, and incredibly House Martins were seen on 31st March. The first Cuckoo was heard on 25th April. Even though breeding started quite late for some species, I would imagine some have fared quite well. Certainly the Blue Tits and Great Tits using the nest boxes at nearby Sharphill Wood had a bumper year.



Little Grebe adult and young

There was a pair of Great Crested Grebes on the lake towards the end of March, but seemingly only one remained through April and hasn't been seen in recent weeks. We had hoped they

would breed, and perhaps the species will breed here in future. They require at least 1ha of territory, so I would imagine our lake is just about large enough, and its depth and gently sloping margins should be fine. The main food of the species is fish, so whether we have enough fish to sustain a pair (along with other fish-eating birds such as Cormorants) is uncertain. Little Grebes have bred again, and the adults and chicks are often to be seen at the southern end. Our Mute Swans produced 9 cygnets, which appeared on 6th June, and at the time of writing all were doing fine.

Some of our birds will become less obvious from now on as they stop singing and in some cases keep out of the way during their late summer moult. However, the best is still to come for some of our invertebrates such as butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies. I particularly like Banded Demoiselles, which have been quite



Common Blue Damselfly

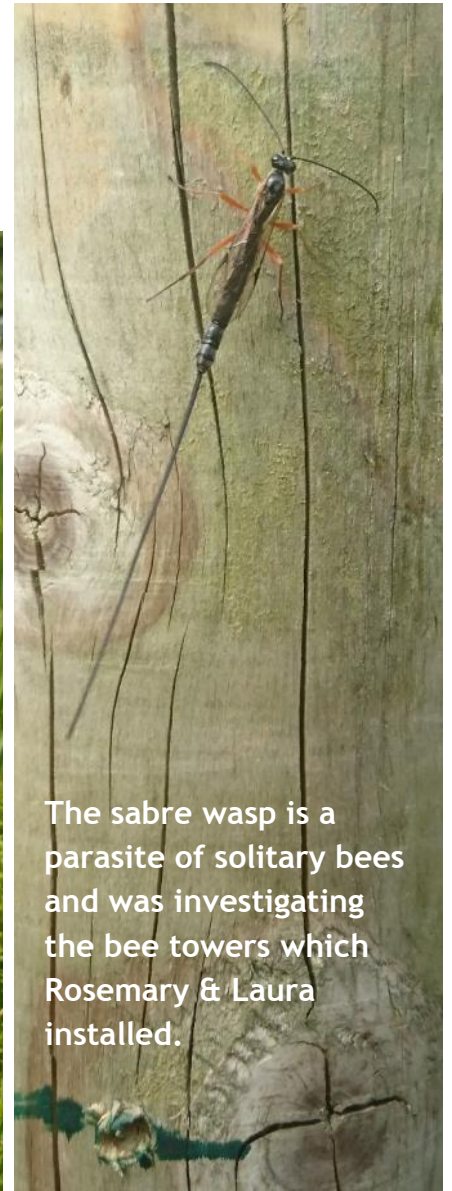
prominent at a number of sites in the region I have visited recently.



Bee Orchids



Southern Marsh orchid



The sabre wasp is a parasite of solitary bees and was investigating the bee towers which Rosemary & Laura installed.



Five Spot Burnet Moths

An incident worth noting occurred on 1st June, when Keith saw a Grass Snake being attacked by Magpies. The snake survived after the birds were scared off.

Finally, I thought the display of Southern Marsh Orchids around the lake was fantastic, their colour contrasting with other flora there. Mick counted 1156. Also I understand there are a few Bee Orchids hidden around the lake and elsewhere.

# Work Days

The Friends' work days will be held every Wednesday.

Meet at the Rangers' Office at 9.30 am.

New volunteers always welcome

Registered Charity No 1079665

## Honey and Jam

We have Park Honey and Jam for sale.

## Suggestions for 20th Anniversary

Dorothy would like suggestions for a 20th anniversary celebration to be held later this year. This will be decided at the next meeting of the friends. Please think about this and discuss informally with friends before the meeting.

## Dates for your Diary

The next full Friends' meeting will be on Wednesday September 19th at 1.30pm in the Education Room.

The Summer Social is still to be arranged but is likely to be July 18th.

Sunday Teas will be August 5th, September 2nd, and October 7th.

Linger by the Lake on Wednesdays July 18th, August 1st, August 15, September 5th, September 19th and October 3rd.

## Wytham Autumn 2018

Sept 10th -14th 2018. Main work will be laying another section of the hedge started last year. It would be helpful to know the approximate numbers to pass on to Neil to help his planning.