

Summer Newsletter

Grant Funding in Action

**Children at The Collett School
have been enjoying a new sensory
garden thanks to Box Moor Trust**

A grant of £2,440 awarded last year to Friends of Collett has enabled the school to develop their nature trail and to construct a vegetable patch for the children to plant and care for. The project has helped to provide a school-wide resource that aids the teaching of a range of different curriculum areas, such as science and geography. It is also giving pupils increased confidence, helping them with development of leadership skills, improving well-being and behaviour and giving them greater motivation in school. Learning to cook some of the produce is also helping the children in a very practical way, teaching them life skills. In addition, growing of crops such as cabbages and spring greens has helped to provide fresh veg for the school's pet rabbits!

Fundraising Lead & Trustee Rhea Dickman said, "The difference this project has made is incredible! It is wonderful to see our young people out in nature and enjoying this area which has been previously unusable. It is able to be accessed by all of our pupils across the school and thoroughly enjoyed".

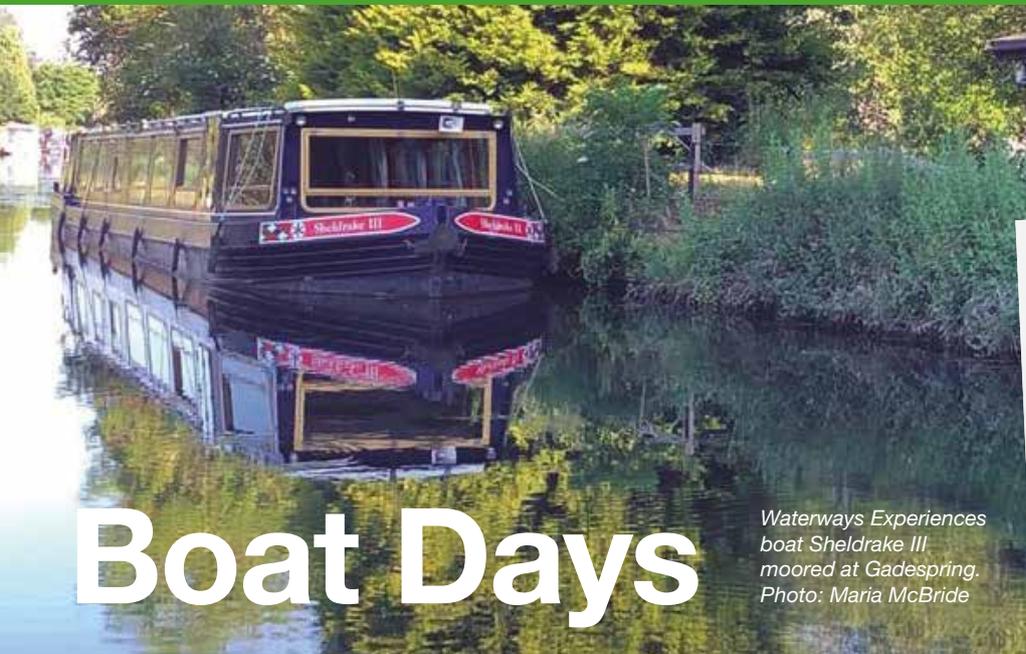
The Friends of Collett is a registered charity that supports The Collett School for Special Educational Needs. The school caters for 120 children aged between 4 and 16 with a diverse range of needs. They are one of the few 'all through' schools accepting and caring for children from 4 years upwards to early adulthood.

The school anticipates that the garden will be further developed in the future, as funding allows.



Photos: Elaine Rushton





Boat Days

*Waterways Experiences
boat Sheldrake III
moored at Gadespring.
Photo: Maria McBride*

With restrictions finally beginning to relax after many months of strict adherence to Covid rules, the Trust is slowly getting back to delivering some of our popular children's wildlife activities. Over the course of a couple of weeks in June, over 200 children from three local primary schools, Boxmoor, Chaulden and St Roses, were lucky enough to enjoy wildlife days at our lovely Gadespring site, learning about the natural world and in particular their local environment. On their visits, the children saw frogs, toads, damselflies, newts, birds, moths, wildflowers and lots of underwater creepy-crawlies from our special dipping pond. Several were even lucky enough to see one of our introduced water voles feeding on apples.

Since acquiring Gadespring in 2011, Trustees, staff and volunteers have worked hard to preserve and enhance the unique wetland habitat of this fascinating former watercress farm, and wildlife there has flourished as a result. It is one of the key sites involved in our water vole reintroduction project, and these iconic little mammals are regularly seen there and are known to be breeding.

Trust Chairman David Kirk said, "Our thanks go to Waterways Experience from Nash Mills for their assistance in bringing over their fabulous wide boat Sheldrake III to use as a static floating classroom during these activities. We hope that they will be back carrying out their special cruises very soon."



Photos: Tawny James



Shearing Time

Used on Trust land for conservation grazing, our rare breed Norfolk Horn sheep are glad to be rid of their thick fleeces at the start of the summer, and here's a great shot of our Senior Estate Ranger/Stockman Bob Mansbridge helping them out with that! From time to time, we send the fleeces to be processed into balls of wool and you can buy it direct from our website shop at: www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/shop/norfolk-horn-pure-wool2/

Photo: Tawny James



New boy on the block!

Emperor by name, Emperor by nature. This lovely Norfolk Horn ram, along with some new ewes, ewe lambs and a ram lamb, have been brought in from a farm in Buckinghamshire. Our sheep play a key role in conservation grazing, so it is important to regularly introduce new bloodlines so that we can continue to improve our flock and maintain its vigour, as well as helping to prevent the rare Norfolk Horn breed from dying out.

Photo: Tawny James



Photo: Aaron Cooper

Swift action

Sadly, swifts are in trouble. The UK has seen numbers plummeting, with a 53% decline between 1995 and 2016. You may recall that last year, in partnership with Lockers Park School and Selco, we provided a number of nest boxes to homes around the local area. It's fantastic to see that Aaron Cooper of Still Cast Photography has recently captured a swift flying over the moor in this brilliant photo!

Fingers crossed we can SWIFTLY increase their numbers to bring them back from the brink! If you wish to help, you could build and install a swift box. Visit www.bristolswifts.co.uk/swift-nest-box-design/ to see the design from 'Bristol Swifts'.

Forging Links

Here's Heather, our Senior Environmental Awareness and Community Ranger, meeting with Ikram Rahman and Wazid Islam of the Dacorum Bangladeshi Welfare Association. We are looking to further our relationships within the community in order to ensure that the Trust land is accessible to all. If you and other members from your community wish to see how the Trust land can work for you, please contact Heather at education@boxmoortrust.org.uk

Chicken of the Woods

Here is Senior Estate Ranger Matt Shrimpton posing with a fantastic example of a fungus called 'Chicken of the Woods'. It is a common species in the UK, growing mainly on oak tree trunks but can also be seen on the trunks of yew, cherry, sweet chestnut and willow from late spring to autumn. It is a bracket fungus and is distinctly sulphur-yellow in colour. It gets its name from the texture of its flesh, which is said to resemble cooked chicken. It is considered an edible fungus but has also been known to cause upset stomachs in some people – and of course you should never eat any fungus found in the wild unless you have expert knowledge!



Photo: Peter Samson



Photo: Julie James

Boxmoor Good Neighbours Picnic



Photo: Elaine Rushton

Boxmoor Good Neighbours, in collaboration with the Box Moor Trust, arranged a picnic lunch at the Old Barn at Westbrook Hay on the afternoon of June 10th.

The setting could not have been more perfect for our 12 neighbours, who, like the rest of us, have had their normal way of life severely restricted by the pandemic. For many older people this has meant that the past year has been even more isolating and lonely, so Boxmoor Good Neighbours decided that a picnic lunch in the fresh air would be an ideal way of bringing them some enjoyment and welcome relief. The warm weather played its part, with a stunning view of the Bourne Valley as the

backdrop to the event. Lunch boxes were served, together with tea, coffee and soft drinks and the guests spent a relaxing afternoon eating, chatting and enjoying the countryside views. The visit was rounded off with a talk from Box Moor Trustee Dennis Furnell, a naturalist and broadcaster, who spoke about the valuable ecological work undertaken by the Trust. The occasion was a great success that was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. A second picnic was planned for 14th July.



Photo: Bev Kirk



Pick it, bag it, bin it!

Some of you may have noticed our fantastic new signs around the Trust land. Hopefully we can all work together to combat the problem of dog fouling and be 'dog poo heroes'. Let's keep our beautiful moors clean and safe. Dog poo can be so harmful to humans, livestock and wildlife. So don't be a poo bag tosser - pick it, bag it, bin it!

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