

Withymead News

News from Withymead, Little Meadow and the Anne Carmael Charitable Trust (ACCT)

Welcome!

What a strange summer we've had so far! First, those baking hot days in June, and then the rain and winds in recent weeks. The long range weather forecasters at Accuweather are predicting daytime temperatures above 20°C and little rain right through to mid-September, which is good news for migrating birds or animals stocking-up for the winter months.

Summer has been busy for the wardens with our regular open days, but also visiting parties, including Brownies, students from Oxford University, conservationists interested in rare species and an art group. Over the coming months we are organising an Austrian Scythe Course at Little Meadow and a Photography for All course at Withymead - see Dates for your diary.

We have been fortunate to be awarded several grants this year which is helping us to improve the visitor experience at Withymead and little Meadow. See Jenny's article about our new all-terrain wheelchair to help make Withymead more accessible for people with limited mobility. There are a lot of other things happening in the background, and we are looking forward to letting you know more in the next newsletter.

Our last **Cream Tea Open Day** for this year is this Bank Holiday Sunday, and we are open to visitors on Bank Holiday Monday too. But we are also open by appointment, so don't forget that you can always phone-up or email to make arrangements to visit us. It's a wonderful place to bring your family or friends and just enjoy nature first hand. We look forward to seeing you.

Rebecca Joice
Chair of Trustees

Dates for your diary

Cream Teas and Open Days (2.00pm - 5.00pm)

- 27th August - Cream Tea & Open Day
- 28th August - Reserve Open Day

Courses

- 9th September - Austrian Scything Course**
Little Meadow 9.30am-3.30pm
£40 inc tuition, loan of scythe and refreshments
- 10th October - Photography for All**
Withymead Nature Reserve 9.30am - 1.30pm
£30 inc refreshments

Other events

- 1st December - Goring Late Night Shopping**
Come and visit us at our stand at Davis-Tate



Ruby-tailed wasp at Withymead

Notes from the Wardens

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Access for all



All-terrain wheelchair on a test run

Thanks to the generosity of the Lucy Woodward Charitable Trust, we have been able to purchase an All-Terrain Wheelchair for visitors to use when they visit the Reserve.

The Trustees of the ACCT are keen to focus on education and *'to deploy Withymead effectively as an active site for education and lifelong learning in topics related to the environment and conservation.'*

Regular visitors will know that much of the Withymead site is comprised of reed fen and wetland. Early in the reserve's formation, with the help of volunteers from the Sonning Common and Wallingford Green Gyms, these areas have been made accessible to visitors through the construction of a wooden boardwalk which runs through the middle of the reed fen. The boardwalk has become one of the key features of the site and one which adds to the unique visitor experience.

We are very aware that a wetland site can be difficult for people with limited mobility to negotiate, and have endeavoured to make parts of the site more accessible for everyone. Now that we have a lightweight all-terrain wheelchair and improved pathways and tracks, visitors with limited mobility will be able to access some of the more difficult areas of the site. They will be able to enjoy the wildness of the reserve and to take part in outdoor activities which they may have found difficult to access in the past.

For more information email info@withymead.org, phone 01491 872265 or have a look on our [website](#)

Jenny Hedge
Trustee

Notes from the Wardens

The Sparrowhawks have fledged and there are four of them moving around the Reserve, but they are still being fed by the parents. Unfortunately they are eating the songbirds, but that's how nature works. We've also had Tawny Owl chicks which have fledged their nest, but they are more often heard than seen.



Female Wasp Spider

The insects on the Reserve are flourishing and we've had a few surprises including a beautiful Ruby-tailed Wasp and a female Wasp Spider. Wasp Spiders are normally found along the south coast but are known to be spreading northwards.

We were very pleased to welcome the Goring in Bloom Judges to the reserve in July. Goring in Bloom is about conservation and biodiversity, as well as beautiful flowers and hanging baskets. The judges have always enjoyed their visits to the Reserve in the past, and this time they were treated to a boat trip back to Goring.



Grass snake

We have continued to re-home lots of slow worms and other amphibians from a local building site. Earlier in the year Sonning Green Gym helped to build a hibernaculum or refuge in preparation for their arrival.

Sue and Roger
Withymead Wardens