



Inside this issue:

<i>Summer Fête</i>	1
<i>Success</i>	2
<i>Patsy & the newsletter</i>	2
<i>Colour My World</i>	3
<i>Turning my life round</i>	3
<i>Volunteering at R&B</i>	3
<i>Contact Details</i>	4
<i>Thanks to...</i>	4
<i>Future Plans and Events</i>	4

Gardening Tips

- Clear away plant debris where grubs and larvae overwinter. This will reduce pest attack and provide food for wildlife.
- Place fat balls for birds in areas where you know you will have pest problems next spring. Blue tits will get used to visiting and will spy the aphids very early on in the New Year!
- Leave hollow stemmed plants such as angelica, for ladybirds to hibernate in.

WINTER EDITION



Summer Fête

A lot of effort and hard work went into making the day a great success, plus a plentiful supply of tea and biscuits! There was a good turnout of people from the local communities, as well as further afield.



Raffle prizes aplenty!

We had planned the day to ensure there were plenty of activities for the whole family, including an introduction to using a wood-pole lathe, how to make bird and bat boxes, a dream-catcher workshop, and face-painting and games for the younger members. There was also a raffle, bric-a-brac and book sales, and an irresistible selection of superb, home-made cakes, to keep all participants well-nourished!

With 200 people attending, and £500 raised, plus lots of well-wishing, we all felt it was a fantastic day. All involved at Root & Branch worked extremely hard both to prepare for the event and on the day itself, so a big thank-you to everyone who helped to make the Summer Fete such a great success. We're already looking forward to our next one in 2005!

"Life is a great big canvas; throw all the paint you can at it." - Danny Kaye

**This issue is funded using general funding.
(Would you like to sponsor an issue?)**

The success of Susie Nettleton with the help of ROOT & BRANCH



*Susie &
fresh garden flowers*

I started coming to Root & Branch in July 03. I think I was the first Gardener to attend, as well as the manager Liz and a bunch of friendly volunteers.

I started coming to Root & Branch because of a low period in my life and also I was not long out of hospital.

In the past year I have been attending R&B three days a week, as a result I feel that I have regained my confidence and I am happy again. I feel healthier and relaxed and I

have made lots of new friends.

A day at R&B is a good laugh and very enjoyable.

I have learnt lots of new things, such as the harvesting of crops, planting out of plants and flowers, plus being able to choose which flowers and veg to sow, as well seed sowing and taking cuttings of plants and the art and crafts which are often on offer.

Thanks to the help and encouragement R&B has given me, I have been able to achieve a goal of mine

and return to University to continue my History Degree.

My mum could see the difference in me only after a day spent with the gang. I am definitely looking forward to coming back at Christmas to see everybody, but in the meantime I will miss them all.

R&B is great fun, with lovely friendly people and plenty of tea and biscuits, I recommend you come and join in the fun.

Susie
xxx

The developing Garden.....



*Did we REALLY
grow this?*

We have been developing the garden at Root and Branch for just over a year now and it has advanced beautifully. The vegetable garden has taken on a mature atmosphere thanks to the sculptural cardoons (*Cynara cardunculus*), which although only sown last autumn are now three feet tall, and displaying magnificent purple-headed thistle-like flowers. The central pathway is being planted

with attractive winter foliage plants such as grey leafy pinks, (*Dianthus sp*) and *Euphorbia cyparissias* whose foliage is already turning a deep red. Willow obelisks created at one of the workshops this Spring are supporting *Clematis tanguticus*, a pretty clematis known by its yellow, citrus-skin-like flowers. These attractive climbers were successfully sown from

seed in Autumn 2003. The aim is to eventually construct a lovely pergola alongside the main footpath, but in the meantime the obelisks and a few wonderful chimneys donated earlier this year are being utilised to provide attractive elevation to the garden.

'Colour My World' - Art Workshop

In August 2004, Steve Spiers from Oxford Survivors approached Root & Branch to ask if we would be interested in hosting a three-day art workshop, as part of a *National Institute for Mental Health in England* funded project they had set up. As there are a number of budding artists in our midst, we eagerly accepted. Later in September, Graham

Woodall, an experienced artist who has many years experience teaching art, visited to facilitate this three-day workshop. Throughout the three days, participants learnt a variety of art techniques including drawing with pastels, painting, papier maché, printing, ink work, sculpture, and more! Members from Oxford Survivors joined us in our creative

endeavours, and everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable time. Our objective is to create a free-standing art laden frame to be displayed early next Spring (venue to be announced), and then on to the Oxford Museum of Modern Art in September 2005 (and then maybe the Tate Modern?!!!. ..).



*A few examples.
(Or how to get some peace!)*



Nick in his element

Turning My Life Round, by Nick Day (Gardener)

Wake up to hangover city.
I pull myself out of bed, wash and go
down stairs, grunt good morning.
Then the one eyed god is king.
The ruler without words makes me
watch all day long.
5.30 beer time and the routine starts
again.

Then one day mum's friend sent me
information about R&B and the rest of
the story begins.

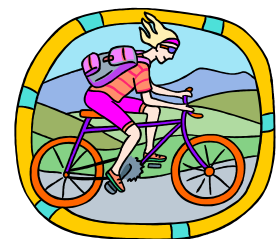
Lovely people to look after us, lovely
people to work with.
My life is turned round something to
look forward to.
The rut is broken and I thank you so
very much.
Root and Branch rules OK.

Volunteering at R & B by Helen

Before R & B...
"Monday morning again,
another boring day at the
library". (sigh)
Since R & B...
"Monday morning has
come again, can't wait to
get there!"
Wanting to learn more
about gardening, a friend
suggested I volunteer at
R & B. Now my days
spent there are the
highlight of my week.

I have much admiration
for this therapeutic
gardening project and of
course the people who
have made it possible:
gardeners, staff and
volunteers and Adam the
farmer who provided the
premises. Out of a patch
of barren land, they have
worked (tirelessly)
together to create a
garden oasis set in
beautiful surroundings.

Never a dull moment,
lots to learn and do and
warm, caring, friendly
people to work with. It's
not all toil! Various
workshops and plenty of
tea and cake breaks too.
The saying you reap
what you sow couldn't
be truer. Every day I
have brought home
either gorgeous flowers
or delicious vegetables,
and all organically grown
of course!



*Must...
Get...
There...
Quickly!*



Westmill Farm
Watchfield
OXON
SN6 8TH

Phone: 01793 780380
Email: info@rootandbranch.freeserve.co.uk

Manager: Liz Clarke.
Horticultural Director: Patsy Dyer

Charity No. 1088493

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Watchfield Parish Council for £50 donation.

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- *The Community Fund*
- *Oxfordshire County Council*
- *British Trust for Conservation Volunteers*

DO YOU HAVE...

...any gardening equipment, blacksmithing equipment, carpentry tools and art & craft items you no longer need and would like to donate to R&B?

We are also looking for a digital camera, so if there are any floating around that are looking for a home, please contact R&B.

We would also be interested in a sewing machine & accessories.

Financial donations are also greatly appreciated!

Future Plans and Events with R & B

- Dry stone wall
- Wildlife pond
- Woodcraft Workshop
- Herb Garden
- Forge
- Fruit Garden
- Bee Keeping
- Mosaic Workshop
- Terrariums
- Wildlife Weekend Sun 10th April
- We will be holding two storytelling events on 2nd & 3rd February 2005



Banging the drum for R & B!

"No man who has once heartily and wholly laughed can be altogether irreclaimably bad." - Thomas Carlyle
"Never eat more than you can lift." - Miss Piggy