



Newsletter



Canterbury Environmental Education Centre

Spring 2009

Welcome to our Spring 2009 Newsletter

We are all very busy ensuring the Centre runs smoothly, keeping the reserve ship shape, and delivering our Environmental Education Programme and our vast array of events. I hope you enjoy reading about our activities throughout this newsletter.

Nature is very busy too...

That familiar sound of Spring at CEEC... Dave's brushcutter is in the air once more. A more appealing sound is that of our regular visitors, the Cettis Warblers, announcing their arrival in Canterbury with their very loud and distinctive call.

The Cuckoo Flower has been flowering well. The Peacock, Speckled Wood and Orange tip butterflies are in their element with the sunny start to this years Spring and the Orange Tips seem to be fluttering around in abundance.

Carp, Bream, Roach and the perennial Pike have also been stirring in the lake and Sebastian and Sarah Swan seem to be happy on their new found nesting site opposite Seb's Throne.

All we need now, to make it perfect (as Pa Larkin would say), is the lovely, familiar call of the first Spring Cuckoo. Although it hasn't been heard up to the 5th May, it will be here soon. We will then know this year is truly up and running.



Judith Roberts. Interim Head of Centre

Spring surprise visitor! By Karen Matthews



We were lucky to capture this amazing photograph of a Kingfisher sitting in the dogwood opposite the visitor centre, sitting very near the trail named after him!

The water level was high in the lake after a week of heavy rainfall. Filled with an abundance of small fish and other aquatic creatures.

The Kingfisher came one week every day at the same time to fish for food and we have seen him on a few occasions since.

We are hoping to build a Kingfisher Bank on the Nature Reserve opposite the Friend's bird hide so the Kingfisher will have a safe haven and that the public will also have the opportunity to glimpse a Kingfisher.



The Kingfisher



Wildlife Garden by Dave Pritchard



Increasing the value of our wildlife garden was our main aim and we achieved this by making some small alterations for example by leaving an area of grass un-mown and planting the borders with nectar rich flowers to increase their value to insects, such as a butterflies.

The staff at CEEC have all worked hard as a team to achieve this. We hope it will benefit schools as well as INSET courses.

The ongoing work includes:

Planting willow pencils and Hawthorne along the fence to encourage a more natural hedge.

Fruit and vegetables have been planted in raised beds and tyres.

Buddleia and lilac have been introduced to attract butterflies into our garden.

We have log piles which act as shelters for mini-beasts and small mammals which hibernate during the winter months.

We have added another compost bin.

Overall we are pleased about what we have achieved in such a short time especially as we work so hard, with our own individual jobs.

We have a new display at the centre which includes bird and bat boxes, bird feeders, hedgehog shelters, flowers and plants to attract insects into the garden, but most of all our very own insect hotel, if you are puzzled then come down and have a look!

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Events 2009:

- 7th June ~ Grand CEEC Discovery Day
- 28th June ~ Beginners guide to digital photography
- 12th July ~ Intermediate guide to digital photography
- 6th August ~ Mini Buzz Club
- 7th August ~ Buzz Club
- 31st August ~ August Bank Holiday Trail
- 20th September ~ Organic Gardening
- 11th October ~ Big Draw
- 18th October ~ Fungi Foray
- 30th October ~ Halloween Spooktacular
- 21st and 22nd December ~ Santa's Grotto

Happy gardening!

Events by Karen Matthews

One event that was trialled last year was Santa's Grotto. This turned out to be a popular event.

We had really positive feedback; the children enjoyed the crafts that we had on offer, as well as the talk they had with Father Christmas. One parent said "it was the best Santa's Grotto they had ever been to".

There are many more interesting events re-running due to their popularity this year, from organic gardening, photography to a fungi foray.

Many events were over sub-

scribed last year, especially Halloween and if this happens again this year then we may hold the event on another day, so as not to disappoint.

On the 7th June 10—4pm we are hosting our annual Friends Open Day. With guided walks, an art challenge, face painting, a raffle and more. Its always been a popular event and we hope to see you all on the day! Please tell everyone you know about it!

On August Bank Holiday Monday we have a special trail to enjoy. These involve finding clues around the Reserve and solving a puzzle from the clues and you win a prize.

During the Summer Holidays we are running the ever popular Mini Buzz Club and Buzz Club sessions. With various themes to enjoy.

Please keep checking our website for up to date information. Most events are drop in though to book tickets the number is 08458 247 600.



Easter Trail '09



V-Volunteering by Liz Earley and Beth Williams

I've been volunteering at CEEC for nearly 3 months now. My main duties have been helping out on the reserve as well as occasionally assisting with education.

I'm really enjoying experiencing the wide variety of work that goes on at the centre especially at the moment as Spring develops.

I've been helping at the allotment, pruning the rose bushes and planting potatoes as well as planting up flower beds around the centre.

I've also replaced the fencing around Frog Pond and am constantly monitoring the fast growing vegetation around the trails.

I'm looking forward to a busy, but hopefully enjoyable Summer at the centre! Liz.

I've been volunteering at CEEC since November. I've mostly been helping Anna and Diane with the educational side of things.

Since schools are in almost daily at the moment I've been very busy. I've even had the opportunity to lead an Art Naturally class by myself which is excellent experience.

One of my highlights so far has been helping out with the young wardens Buzz Club. We were lucky to find four Bank Voles in some mammal traps that had been set out the night before. Everyone had a great day.

It's been great watching the seasons change at such a beautiful centre and introducing so many children to nature. Beth.

vinspired

The volunteering site for 16-25 year olds in England



Sensory Garden by Beth Williams

Our sensory garden has been having a bit of a spring clean lately.



The beautiful rainbow arch has been repainted and had matching rainbow ribbons and wind chimes attached.



The greenhouse has now become a great for the ears and the eyes.



It will be a noisy summer with our new and improved musical washing-line. All made from recycled materials –



Overview of Education by Diane Crush



So far this year the number of schools has doubled and the range of young people visiting has expanded from reception through to post graduates.

Existing education programmes have been reviewed and modified and new courses have been put in place including a KS3 sustainability day which supports the current sustainable schools programme.

An INSET course has been prepared and delivered to Canterbury College Child Care students and Christchurch University PGCE students spent a week at CEEC working on a special project.

We have taken part in an ICT initiative to set up video conferencing between CEEC and local Primary schools.

Teachers and students have already visited and flash meetings between CEEC and pupils took place in April.

Along with top tourist attractions in the county we are part of the Kent Children's University Project. We have produced a special Education Pack and we had our first "students" over the Easter Holidays.

Our V volunteer Beth has worked on the sensory garden - painting the greenhouse, renovating the musical washing line and making a dragonfly mosaic out of old pots.

The CEEC team had a task day in January and sorted out the Wild Life garden. A display is now in place with ideas for visiting schools.

So we are very busy with a lot of new initiatives and striving to achieve our mission statement -'to be the premier provider of environmental education and learning for all in Kent'



Video Conferencing

Reserve by Dave Edgar



All the ponds have been well maintained this year, thanks to the efforts of Canterbury College Volunteers. Who did a good job of thinning the reed in Eastern Pond amongst others.

They also chipped in with a bit of hedge laying at Butterfly Bank, which they really enjoyed.

A group of boys and girls from St Edmunds got stuck in to some scrub bashing on Butterfly Bank this year.

This is a valuable task, that helps the snakes and lizards who use it to warm up in the sunshine, and of course enables the flowers and plants that attract the butterflies to thrive.

Large flocks of goldfinch, have been seen on the reserve this year. And the long tailed tit population looks set to be on the rise.

Hot news!!

The V for volunteer 16—25 scheme is to be extended for another year! For more details on this have a look at our website.



Canterbury College Students

Go wild in your garden! by Dave Pritchard



Why not start your own wildlife garden in your own back yard, or redevelop your existing one and give nature a helping hand.

Help wildlife around your home, school or community garden by providing:

A bird feeding station to attract our feathered friends to the bird table



Hedgehog shelters or log piles gives them somewhere to hibernate

Plants for insects

Wildlife pond or even an upside down bin lid, add some rocks inside as this is good for frogs



Wildflower areas'

Trees' and shrubs'

Bird and bat boxes

Compost bin



Working on our wildlife garden

There is a lot more that you can do to help the wildlife right on your doorstep, so why not give it a go, its fun and it also gives nature a chance!



Canterbury Environmental Education Centre



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**Find out about
Canterbury's best kept
secret, less than a mile
from Canterbury Cathedral**



nationalgrid



Opening Hours:

**Open 10~4pm school holidays
Monday to Friday**

**Also open August Bank
Holiday Monday**

£2 per person

Under 5s and members free

**Children under 16 free with a full
paying adult with a Canterbury
residents card**

**We hold many events throughout
the year please see our website
for details or our events leaflet**

Canterbury Environmental Education Centre is one of 19 Country Parks managed by Kent County Council. For further information on these parks, visit www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent.

CEEC Team Members:



Left to Right:

Dave Pritchard,
Dave Edgar, Anna
Williams, Judith
Roberts, Diane
Crush and Karen
Matthews



Left:
Liz Earley



Left:
Beth Williams

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:



Alex Ewing has organised the next Dormouse monitoring. Children must be accompanied by adults. The dormouse monitoring will have some off track walking and will last two and a half hours. There are still a few places left please book through the centre. The dates are as followed:

Sun May 24th - Dormouse - Commence 09.00

Sun Sept 20th - Dormouse - Commence 09.00

Maximum numbers for each will be 6. Please wear stout shoes and suitable clothing for all surveys.

All places are on a first come first serve basis.

Please recycle me

KM